Analyzing cultural expatriates' attitudes toward "Englishnization" using dynamic topic modeling

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Abstract

Several Japanese multinational corporations (MNCs) have recently adopted an English-only policy known as "Englishnization". This study examines the impact of this policy using computer-assisted text analysis to investigate changes in cultural expatriates' perceptions of Japanese work practices and values over time. Cultural expatriates are a significant but underexplored outcome of globalization. Despite the recent proliferation of studies on the internationalization of Japanese MNCs, few studies have focused on cultural expatriates' perceptions of corporate language policy in social media texts. This study analyzes a corpus of 208 posts from Rakuten, a Japanese MNC, on Glassdoor from 2009 to 2020. The findings suggest that these posts can be divided into three content groups: the threat of a foreign corporate culture, embracing the Rakuten way, and perceptions of leadership and marginalized status. Further, the posts reveal how Rakuten's corporate language policy, as an instrument of internal internationalization, impacts external internationalization. The dynamics of "Englishnization" reveal a pressing issue facing Rakuten: namely, how to balance multinational cohesion with monolingualism and multiculturalism. This paper aims to demonstrate that dynamic topic modeling could enhance our understanding of the manner in which cultural expatriates and the English-only policy affect the internationalization of Japanese MNCs. It contributes to the literature by examining cultural expatriates' perceptions of Japanese work practices and values from a diachronic perspective.

Keywords: cultural expatriates, corporate language policy, social media, computational sociolinguistics, dynamic topic modeling, Englishnization

1. INTRODUCTION

Several Japanese multinational corporations (MNCs) have adopted English as the official corporate language in the past few years. Because Japanese is the dominant business language in Japanese headquarters (HQ), language has become a major hindrance to internationalization (Conrad and Meyer-Ohle 2019). Communicating in English directly, rather than through bilingual employees, gives native English speakers more nuanced knowledge and facilitates communication between HQ and subsidiaries (Neeley 2017). Neeley (2017) showed that an organization-wide English-language mandate in a Japanese company also transferred Japanese work practices and values to American subsidiaries. Employees in subsidiaries are compelled to assume a foreign way of thinking and behaving. Such employees are conceptualized as "cultural expatriates," representing a growing and underexplored demography (Neeley 2017).

Many employees find themselves in complex cultural settings (Brannen, Garcia, and Thomas 2009). Zhang (2021a) used computer-assisted text analysis to examine employees' perceptions of an English-only policy over time in a Japanese company; he analyzed a corpus of 704 posts from a social media platform from 2010 to 2018. Since his study relied only on data written in Japanese, it did not account for employees who spoke languages other than Japanese at the HQ or employees located in offices outside Japan. The focus of the current study is non-Japanese employees working in foreign subsidiaries of a Japanese MNC.

Social media could provide insights into a company's culture. Currently, social media platforms attract more interest than alternative sources of information that reflect public opinions (Alalwan 2018). In particular, the wealth of social media data makes it easier to study employee satisfaction and corporate culture and provides better insight into employee perceptions (Moniz 2016). Of interest to this study is Glassdoor (https://www.glassdoor.com/), an important social media platform where current and former employees anonymously review companies and their management (Luo, Zhou, and Shon 2016). However, few studies have utilized Glassdoor as a data source to examine how employees' perceptions of corporate culture change over time.

The present study uses social media datasets combined with dynamic topic modeling (DTM), corpus methods, and text analysis to investigate these corporate cultural perceptions. Research on cultural expatriates and the role of language as a trigger of cultural frame switching is scant; therefore, this study addresses the gap and explores the change in cultural expatriates' attitudes toward corporate culture over time. More specifically, the study investigates non-Japanese employees' perceptions of Japanese work practices and values transmitted by English-only language policy over time. Therefore, the following research questions arise:

Q1 - How do cultural expatriates perceive changes in corporate culture?

Q2 - How could computer-assisted text analysis be exploited to help researchers and practitioners better understand temporal trends in employees' opinions on social media?

The study focuses on Rakuten, an electronic commerce company based in Tokyo, Japan. The company has 14,826 employees worldwide and operates across 29 countries and regions. In February 2010, Hiroshi Mikitani—the founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of Rakuten—mandated English as the official language of the corporation (Nixon 2015). Rakuten employees

worldwide were required to be proficient in English (Neeley 2011). In 2005 and 2010, Rakuten bought US-based LinkShare and Buy.com and rebranded them as Rakuten Advertising and Rakuten.com, respectively.

This study contributes to the existing literature in four ways. First, the study analyzes the attitudes of cultural expatriates toward "Englishnization" over time. Second, the study uses a methodological synergy for research on cultural expatriates. Previous research has analyzed various contexts of cultural expatriates through traditional methodologies such as interviews, surveys, and ethnography (Brannen, Garcia, and Thomas 2009; Brannen and Thomas 2010; Neeley 2017). Third, the study aims to identify how Englishnization, as one instrument of internal internationalization, impacts external internationalization. Fourth, the study combines DTM with social media datasets and provides insights into cultural expatriates' perceptions of Japanese work practices and values from a diachronic perspective.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Cultural Expatriates

Cultural expatriates are "people who are temporarily or permanently detached from their home culture while still operating in their own country" (Neeley 2017, 5). Jameson (2007) makes a similar distinction by describing cultural expatriates as people with "an individual's sense of self derived from formal or informal membership in groups that transmit and inculcate knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions, and ways of life," and they consist of six components: vocation, class, geography, philosophy, language, and biological traits with cultural aspects. Cultural expatriates portray self-identity, defined as "the self as reflexively understood by the individual in terms of his or her biography" (Giddens 1991, 244). Yagi and Kleinberg (2011) define cultural identity as a dimension of self-identity and one's self-concept that concerns perceptions of "who I am" as a cultural being. Keeley (2001) acknowledges that non-Japanese employees are considered an out-group, even when they work in subsidiaries in their home country. Kankaanranta and Lu (2013) argue that the use of business English as a lingua franca—or a common language—in international business can have a homogenizing effect on the cultural identities of the speakers. Jameson (2007) argues that cultural identity is also influenced by close relationships, and changes over time. The close relationships could include family members, friends, and colleagues, with whom interaction occurs frequently (Kankaanranta and Lu 2013). Some native English-speaking informants exhibit linguistic ethnocentrism, do not understand that English is the lingua franca of international business, and assume that "it was their country, their culture, and their market that were of interest" (Neeley 2017, 59). This conception of language ideology, which has been defined as "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (Rumsey 1990, 346), can lead to potentially discriminatory or stereotyped assumptions (Cogo and Yanaprasart 2018). Language plays an important role in expressing cultural norms and beliefs (Ringberg et al. 2010) and can be used as an instrument in the creation and recreation of power (Gaibrois 2015). However, the policy of monolingualism is not a guarantee of success in interpersonal interactions (Welch and Welch 2008). Brannen, Garcia, and Thomas (2009) propose a four-

category framework to understand the different ways that bicultural individuals or biculturals experience and manage their two identities (see TABLE 1). Biculturals are people who have internalized more than one cultural profile (Brannen and Thomas 2010). In Table 1 below, a person categorized as "Both/And" identifies with and integrates two cultures. A person typified as "Either/Or" also identifies with both cultures but changes orientation and behavior according to context.

Num	Bicultural Types	Definition
1	One-Home	One-home biculturals identify mostly with one of their two cultures
2	Neither/Nor	Although aware of—and perhaps even participating in—both of their cultural identities and customs, Neither/Nor biculturals feel marginalized and are conscious about not fitting in with either of their cultures
3	Either/Or	Either/Or biculturals identify with both of their cultural identities, but change their orientation and behaviors based on context
4	Both/And	Both/And biculturals identify with both of their cultures and combine them in various ways

TABLE 1. BICULTURAL TYPES

2.2 Internationalization of Japanese MNCs

To date, several Japanese MNCs have adopted traditional Japanese human resources (HR) practices, characterized by long-term employment and development, seniority-based compensation and promotion, enterprise-based unions, and teamwork orientation (Tung 1984; Morishima 1995; Jacoby 2005). They exhibit an ethnocentric management style, wherein Japanese expatriates are delegated to control overseas operations, and HQs in Japan make decisions for the subsidiaries (Conrad and Meyer-Ohle 2019). This Japanese style of human resources management (HRM), along with the ethnocentric management style, is the primary reason for the inability of Japanese MNCs to attract and retain global talent (Kopp 1994a; Keeley 2001; Froese and Kishi 2013). To counter these challenges, some Japanese companies, especially newly emerging firms, are aggressively internationalizing their HRM practices by emphasizing "internal internationalization" at HQs and "external internationalization" in foreign subsidiaries. Japanese MNCs tend to enhance Japanese employees' language and intercultural skills to effectively manage foreign operations and hire highly skilled non-Japanese employees

(Sekiguchi, Froese, and Iguchi 2016). Extant studies have consistently reported major issues of "external internationalization." The ethnocentric staffing policies and Japanese style of HRM practices, such as seniority-based compensation, make companies unattractive to non-Japanese employees (Froese and Kishi 2013). Japanese expatriates hold key positions in foreign subsidiaries (Wong 1996, 2010; Black and Morrison 2010), while the local staff has limited opportunities for promotion (Kopp 1994b). Japanese expatriates lack the language skills and cultural background to communicate with highly skilled local employees (Shiraki 2007; Conrad and Meyer-Ohle 2019). Neeley (2017) argues that while Englishnization enables US-based native speakers and Japanese colleagues to have direct exchanges without a translator, the use of the common language enables greater dissemination of Japanese cultural values.

2.3 Computational Sociolinguistics

Computational sociolinguistics is an emerging research field that integrates sociolinguistics and computer science to study the relationship between language and society from a computational perspective (Nguyen et al. 2016). An increasing number of computational linguists have shown an interest in studying language in a social context. Although computational linguistics has significantly contributed to our understanding of the informational dimension of language, it has made little progress in modeling the social dimension (Elangovan and Eisenstein 2015). Sociolinguists traditionally collect data using surveys and ethnographic research as main methods (Milroy and Gordon 2008; Tagliamonte 2006).

Social media is a rich and easy-to-access source of abundant informal information, providing the opportunity to investigate language in social contexts (Johannsen, Hovy, and Søgaard 2015). Language is an instrument used by people to construct their social identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2005); hence, some studies have focused on automatically inferring social variables—such as gender and age—from texts (Nguyen, Trieschnigg, and Meder 2014). However, to the best of the author's knowledge, no study has conducted a trend analysis of cultural expatriates' perceptions over time. Therefore, this study employed a natural language processing (NLP) tool based on sociolinguistic insights to model and analyze data that reveal the evolutionary nature of topics on cultural expatriates' perceptions of corporate culture.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data Collection and Preprocessing

The corpus developed for this study consisted of posts extracted from Glassdoor, one of the largest review websites for employers in the world. The website provides extensive details about the latest jobs, company ratings and reviews, CEO approval ratings, salary reports, interview reviews and questions, benefits reviews, and office photos. At the time of research, there were approximately 70,000,000 reviews and evaluated scores of 1,300,000 employers posted by current and former employees. The website has about 50,000,000 unique visitors per month. By using customized web crawlers, the author downloaded data on Rakuten from February 2009 to November 2020, resulting in 208 reviews and a corpus of 49,497 words. The posts included upper- and lower-case letters, different parts of speech, and commonly used

stop words (such as "the," "a," "an," "in"). Therefore, the following preprocessing steps were adopted: converting the text data to lower-case, eliminating punctuation, removing certain stop words, and lemmatizing the words. Modules in the *gensim* library[1] written in Python[2] language such as *gensim.parsing.preprocessing* and *gensim.utils* were used to perform these tasks.

3.2. Computer-assisted Text Analysis

Computer-assisted text analysis is performed using NLP as a critical technique (Nelson 2020). NLP, together with topic modeling, was employed by this study to model and analyze data. Topic modeling is a collection of NLP algorithms, which use the co-occurrence of words to uncover the latent thematic structure in documents (Blei 2012). Thus, topic modeling can be employed with critical discourse analysis that provides elaborate analytical techniques and theoretical depth for interpretation (Törnberg and Törnberg 2016). Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) proposed by Blei et al. (2003) is a popular topic modeling tool for discovering main themes from large datasets. LDA structures the data into words, topics, and documents, which are generated from randomized mixtures of hidden topics (Vayansky and Kumar 2020). Thus, LDA calculates the percentage of words in a document d that are currently assigned to topic t, and the percentage of times the word w was assigned to topic t over all documents—or p (topic t | document d) and p (word w | topic t), respectively. The approach is especially recommended for studies using social media where space is often restricted (Hong and Davison 2010). DTM, the algorithm applied in this study, is used to model the evolution of topics in a corpus over time (Blei and Lafferty 2006). In the DTM as a pre-discretized analysis, time is discretized into several periods, and time within each LDA is used to analyze documents (Blei and Lafferty 2006, Zhang 2021b). As an unsupervised text classification method, DTM can reduce complicated text into more interpretable lists of words. Other topic modeling algorithms such as the LDA do not expect time-tagged data; however, DTM leverages the knowledge of different documents belonging to a different time-slice to map how the words in a topic change over time. Combining DTM with content analysis provides a better understanding of the dynamics of social representations in a comparative and diachronic view (Nguyen et al. 2016; Zhang 2021b).

This study uses a three-step text analysis process (Zhang 2021a, 2021b): corpus construction, pattern detection using human-centered computational exploratory analysis, and pattern refinement using guided deep reading (FIGURE 1). In the first step, patterns were detected by using DTM. In this case, the first year (2009) had 2 articles, the second (2010) 3, the third (2011) 2, the fourth (2012) 11, the fifth (2013) 5, the sixth (2014) 19, the seventh (2015) 22, the eighth (2016) 30, the ninth (2017) 43, the eleventh (2018) 40, the twelfth (2019) 19, and the final year (2020) 12. In the second step, the groups of topic words produced in the quantitative step were examined qualitatively to gain insights into each topic. In the third step, the patterns identified in the first step are inspected to determine if the earlier interpretation of the computational output in the second step was valid. The patterns in the third step were identified through a computationally guided deep reading of the top five documents for each of these topics as well as representative

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[1] The library was installed with pip: pip install gensim.
[2] Downloaded from https://www.python.org/downloads.

documents from the remaining topics. Computer-assisted text analysis played a key role in processing the corpus and reducing complicated text to informative groups of words.
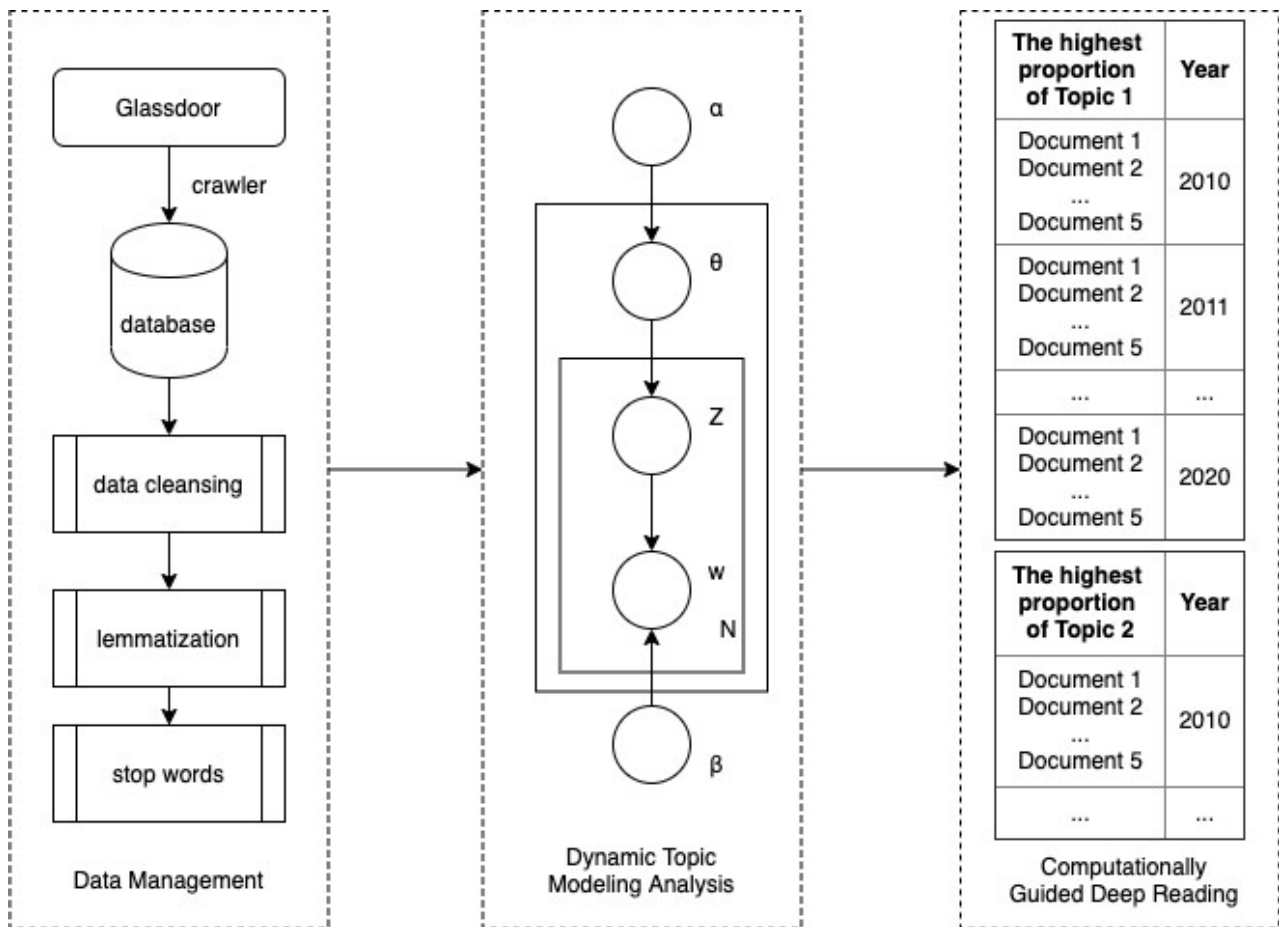

FIGURE 1: DATA AND PROCEDURE

4. FINDINGS

After data collection and preprocessing, the *ldaseqmodel* function in the *gensim* package was used to implement DTM analysis and generate topics. To decide the number of topic models generated objectively from the corpus, this study adopted the selection method proposed by Tanimoto (1958), which checks the difference between the coherence and stability per number of topics. A general rule of the method is to create LDA models across different topic numbers, and then check the Tanimoto coefficient and coherence for each topic. The Tanimoto coefficient, also known as the Tanimoto index, is a statistic used for measuring the similarity and diversity of sample sets (Chung et al. 2019). Coherence measures a single topic by the degree of semantic similarity between high-scoring words which co-occur across the text corpus. The ideal number of topics will maximize coherence and minimize the topic overlap based on the Tanimoto coefficient. FIGURE 2 shows that the ideal number of topics is three. Therefore, this study chooses three topics for the DTM model.
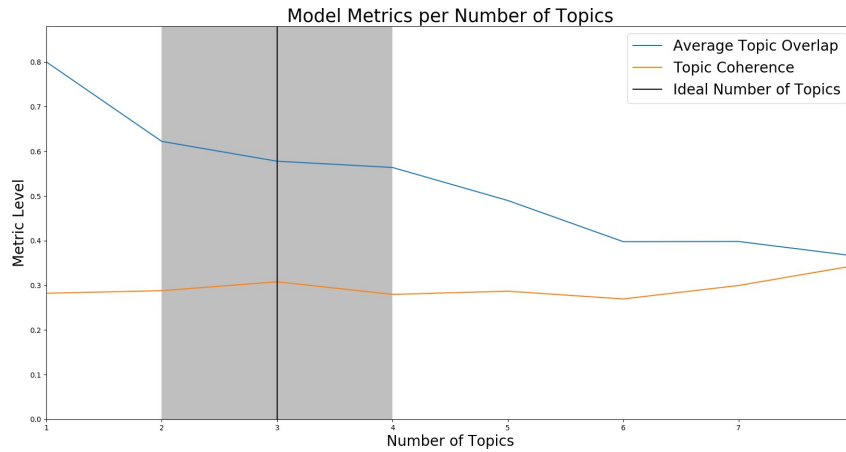
FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF TOPICS

The posts were clustered into three prevalent topics using DTM. The words generated for each topic are listed in TABLE 2. FIGURE 3 displays the trends in each topic, calculated by the topic popularity of all topics for each year.

Num	Topic	Keywords (time = 2020)
1	The threat of a foreign corporate culture	"work," "company," "great," "person," "employee," "good," "management," "lot," "team," "office," "culture," "benefit," "lunch," "leadership," "time," "place," "free," "environment," "manager," "project"
2	Embracing the Rakuten way	"company," "work," "team," "employee," "rakuten," "great," "person," "office," "opportunity," "good," "place," "sale," "management," "culture," "client," "job," "environment," "business," "time," "best"
3	Employees' perceptions of leadership and marginalized status	"company," "management," "employee", "person," "rakuten," "manager," "work," "japan," "business," "problem," "lack," "leave," "hr," "good," "team," "promote," "time," "low," "high," "com"

TABLE 2: THREE TOPICS AND THEIR RELEVANT KEYWORDS

	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
2009	0.81	0.19	0.00029
2010	0.4	0.14	0.46
2011	0.3	0.35	0.35
2012	0.56	0.31	0.12
2013	0.55	0.3	0.15
2014	0.5	0.3	0.19
2015	0.58	0.25	0.17
2016	0.51	0.32	0.17
2017	0.46	0.38	0.16
2018	0.47	0.36	0.17
2019	0.49	0.35	0.16
2020	0.5	0.34	0.16
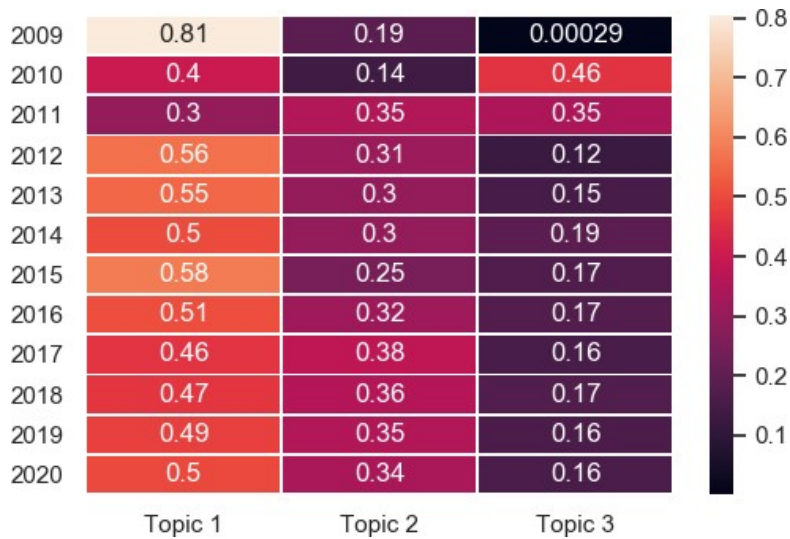
A. HEATMAP
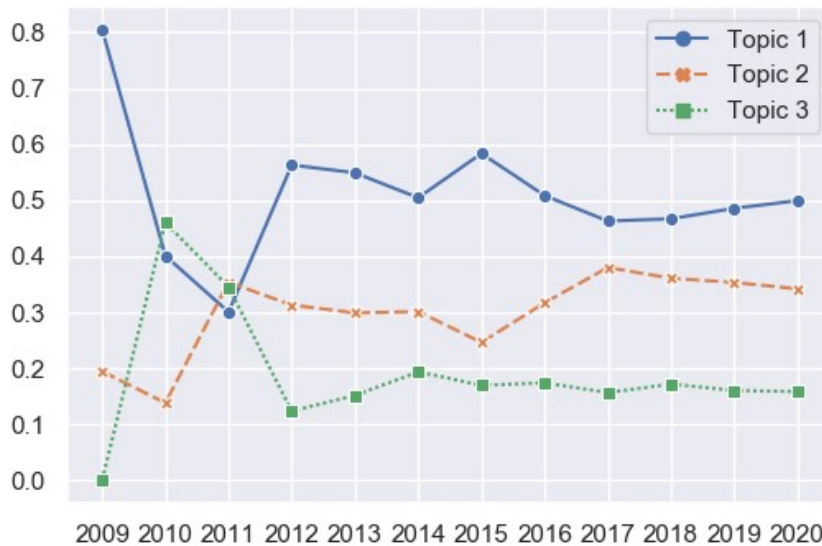
B. TRENDS

FIGURE 3: TOPIC POPULARITY OVER TIME

To better illustrate the importance of the words used for discussing the evolution of each topic, a visualization of these topics is presented below, with word clouds that highlight core words and phrases using size and color depth. A topic modeling exploration tool, pyLDAvis[3], is used to explore the relationships between the three topics and their most relevant terms. FIGURE 4 presents the spatial distance between the interactions and the three topics among the top 30 most relevant terms for each topic. The pie charts on the left, which represent the proportions of each topic in the corpus, indicate three topics. The presence of an interaction between two topics means they are connected. If there is no interaction, then they are mutually independent. The right bar represents the 30 most relevant terms for the selected topic. FIGURE 4 shows that all

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[3] The library was installed with pip: pip install pyLDAvis.

three topics are independent of each other. The right blue bars represent the overall frequency of individual words in the corpus. These proportions are significant because they indicate the level of importance of a term in the corpus. For example, the words "Englishnization," "English," and "policy" do not appear in the three topics in the corpus. Therefore, these words are not representative of the three topics. The identified topics are the threat of a foreign corporate culture, embracing the Rakuten way, and perception of leadership and marginalized status. FIGURES 5, 6, and 7 show word clouds of three topics. The size of each word is based on the proportion of its probability of occurrence and changes over time.
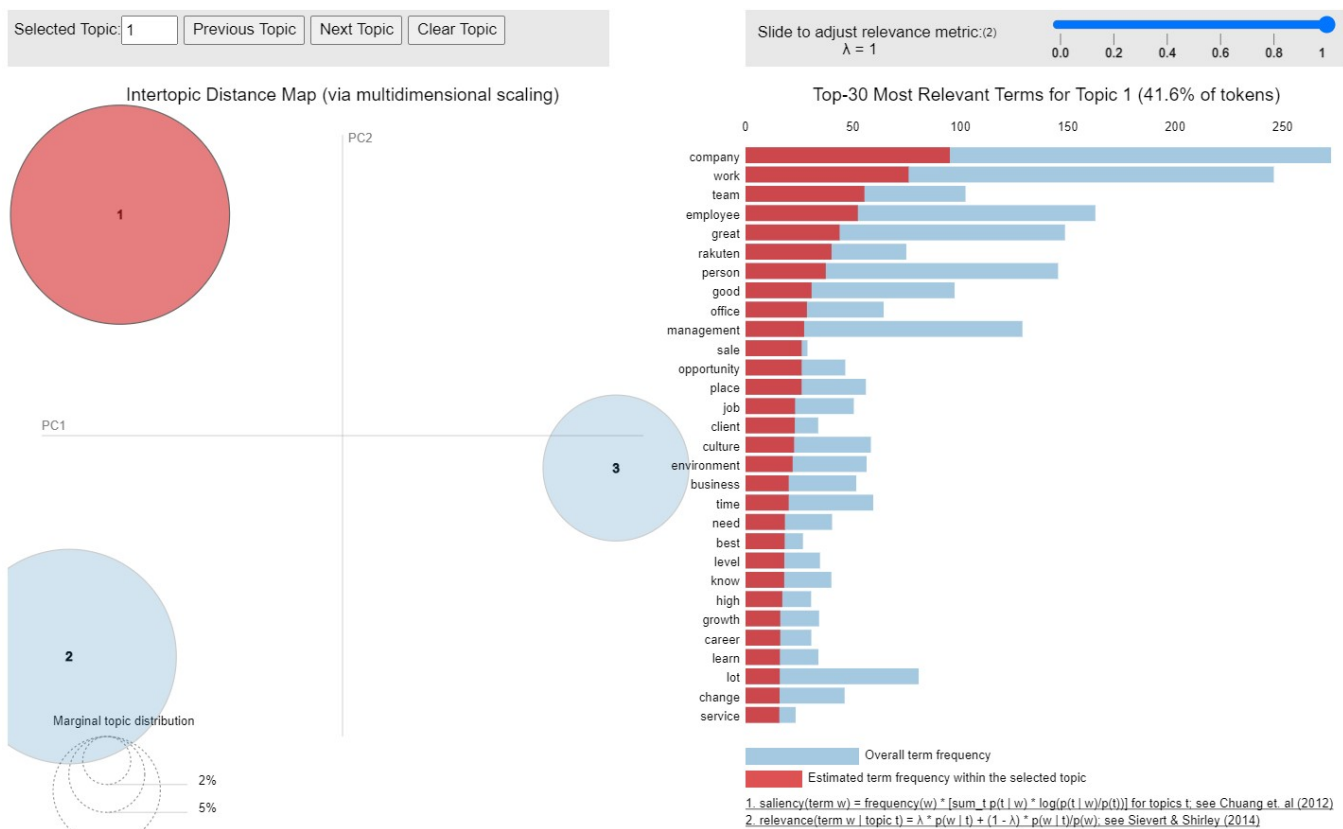
a. EMBRACING THE RAKUTEN WAY
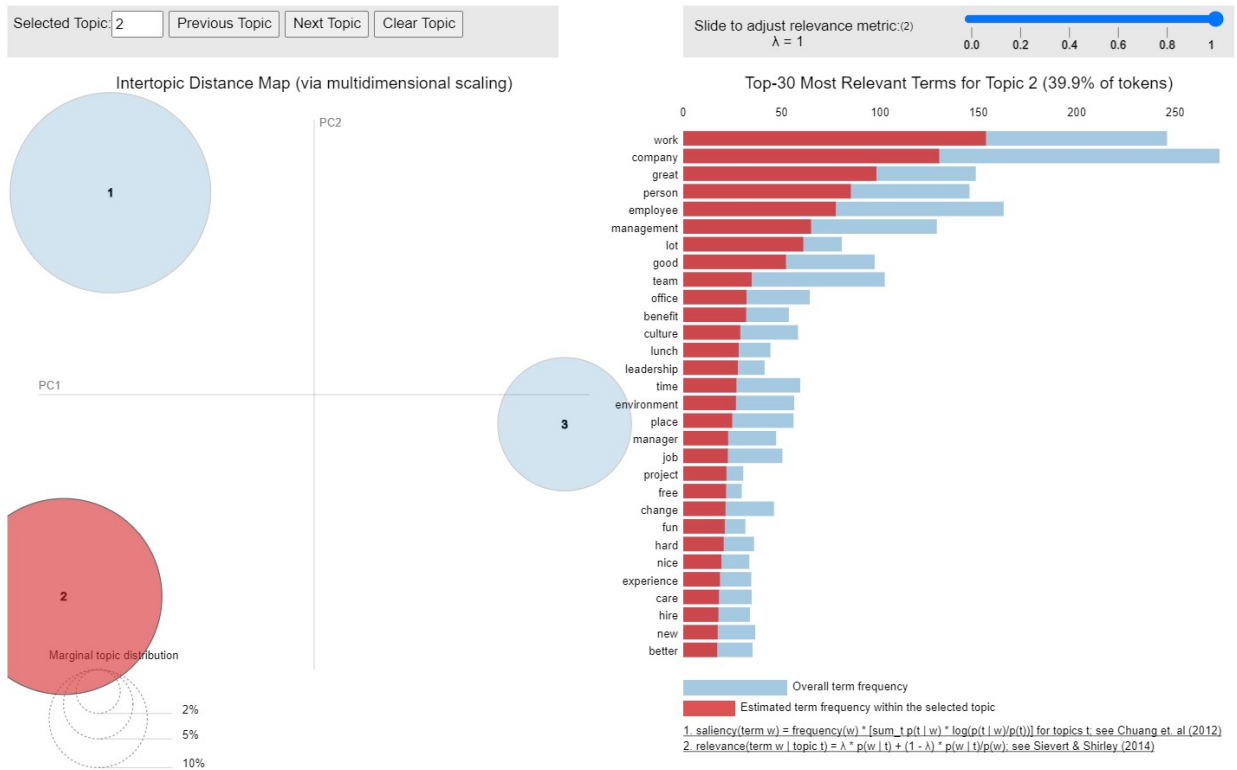
b. THE THREAT OF A FOREIGN CORPORATE CULTURE
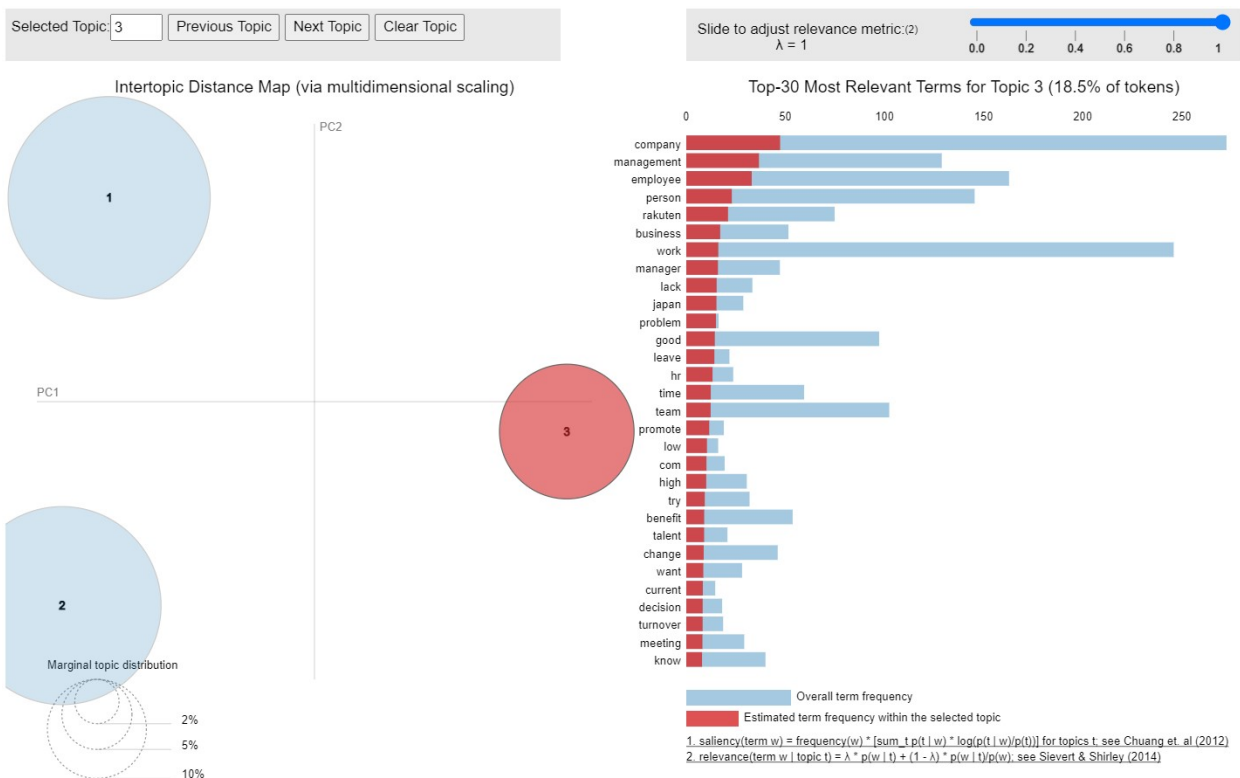
c. EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP AND MARGINALIZED STATUS

FIGURE 4: INTER-TOPIC DISTANCE MAP OF TOPICS

4.1 The Threat of a Foreign Corporate Culture

The first topic—related to Rakuten's organizational culture changes in daily work practices—is rather broad, and has remained central to the discussions over the years. Discussions generally focus on how non-Japanese employees adjusted their perceptions and their place in the company. As shown in FIGURE 5, the most frequently used words in Topic 1 were "company," "work," "team," and "employee," and these remained highly stable from 2009 to 2020. The focus in the first years of Englishnization (2010 to 2013) was primarily on the subsidiary employees' adaption to the organizational change due to the acquisition by Rakuten: "lots of work, competition with other companies is fierce" in 2010; "fast-paced (learned more here in 1 year than at other places in 2–3 years)" in 2011; "a lot of pressure and unrealistic expectations (goals, work hours, tasks, etc.) put on employees. Hearing the same feedback every week/day does not make anyone work harder" in 2012; and "Ambitious goals, supported by the parent company Rakuten" in 2013. A close reading of the documents from 2014 revealed that some employees discerned that Rakuten had infused the American subsidiaries with Japanese culture four years after the mandate, which is illustrated in the following posts:

Extract 1

Post title: It's an interesting company

Content: It is a Japanese company, but expanding globally, so they welcome non-Japanese employees. (No. 39, 2014, San Francisco, Former Employee, Positive Outlook)

Extract 2

Post title: Good place to learn and move on

Content: Weird culture. The company is a mix of OC culture (pretty fair on work/life balance) and Japanese culture (late hours, put in your face-time, don't leave till your boss leaves, etc.). It partially depends on which group you're in. (No. 35, 2014, New York, Current Employee, Positive Outlook)

Extract 3

Post title: Lack of leadership!

Content: Japanese militaristic management which means management through fear and intimidation. This is NOT a modern US workplace with a sharing flat structure. It is top-down and managed by Japanese account managers elevated to all C level positions including the CEO. Leadership is weak and only knows how to emulate their Japanese counterpart which doesn't seem to work in the US. Leadership knows little of the US market and competition which makes it difficult for this company to compete in the US. It's not a happy place to be especially for account managers or if you are female. (No. 56, 2015, Aliso Viejo, Former Employee, Negative Outlook)

Some clearly expressed their desire to "stay away" from the company from 2018. The superficial change in corporate language did not westernize work practices and work values. Instead, it transformed the company into a more hierarchical organizational structure, making it less attractive to non-Japanese employees. For example, employees were forced to watch the Asakai meeting, held in the HQ every Monday morning, due to Englishnization. Excerpts below provide more detailed reasons and highlight the threat:

Extract 4

Post title: Stay away

Content: * It's difficult to communicate with coworkers in other locations or departments since tools aren't standardized * Constant meaningless meetings where attendance is required and monitored working from home is treated suspiciously * Meetings are scheduled outside working hours regularly * Act on employee feedback and stop trying to force the Japanese working style on American workers * Also invest in training for employees. (No. 128, 2017, San Mateo, Former Employee, Negative Outlook)

Extract 5

Post title: Run away as fast as you can

Content: * Tons of red tape when working with the teams and process in Tokyo * Forced to sit through a 45-minute presentation at 9 a.m. every Monday morning where you're force-fed the latest company propaganda * HR is really lackluster, not enough training available * Lots of office politics and insane matrixed management structure * If you are not Japanese, prepare to hit the "bamboo ceiling" at some point (No. 144, 2018, San Mateo, Current Employee, Negative Outlook)

All the excerpts above elucidate that the source of the threat was Japanese work ethics and social customs. With the implementation of Englishnization, local employees continued to have limited opportunities for promotion and faced difficulties communicating with the staff in the Japanese HQ. It seemed these concerns were not rare. Thus, the topic highlighted that Englishnization helped Japanese HQ to promote Japanese work practices and values and turn the American subsidiaries into a cultural mix.

Before the implementation of Englishnization, it appeared that the frequency of Topic 1 might be decreasing dramatically in the corpus overall. However, one year after the mandate, there seemed to be an increase in the popularity of the topic, which is particularly central from 2012 to 2020 (see FIGURE 3). In the last seven years, the focus of this topic remained at around 0.5, and it was also consistently the most frequent of the three topics.

FIGURE 5: WORD CLOUD OF TOPIC 1 FROM 2009 TO 2020

4.2 Embracing the Rakuten Way

In contrast to the interpretation of threat, the second topic focuses on embracing the Rakuten way (see FIGURE 6). As shown in FIGURE 6, words such as "company," "employee," "team," and "work" stand out since they were used more frequently in the original text. "Company" and "employee" remained major words, but "good," "great," and "opportunity" became more prominent after 2012. Some employees appeared to be optimistic about Rakuten's status quo and the future, and took pride in Rakuten's culture. Therefore, "Rakuten's success here will be a model for other high growth and successful companies." Below are some typical fragments:

> Extract 6
> Post title: Getting better all the time
> Content: To the local guys: Keep it up! Overall, everything is great, and the issues I mentioned almost feel like nitpicking. To the heads in Japan: Maybe be a little more forward focused for internal software, and really evaluate the cost of those transitions more closely in advance of making decisions that impact our daily life as

severely as mission-critical software. (No. 45, 2015)

Extract 7
Content: The Rakuten One strategy is not for everyone. Some employees of acquired companies wish to keep their old ways, resist change, dig in. Hence natural conflict takes a high degree of collaboration to resolve. As a company born in Japan, Rakuten has certain cultural ways that are not for everyone (or new to the Valley). Some employees make fun of our weekly all-hands meetings (conducted globally), our inspirational comments from the CEO and other founders, the respect and care for our workplace, and our willingness to give non-performing employees a chance to hang-on a little longer and try to improve rather than your too-typical Valley company cut-and-run approach. The Rakuten One strategy also means changes, reorganizations, consolidations, new training programs, new ways of recruiting, common ways of paying and measuring performance. Change is sometimes difficult for some people. And some people are afraid they will be passed by with this movement. Our coworkers from Japan are sometimes slow to adapt to Valley/US tech norms, and often break the rules with side-bar conversations in Japanese (we're an English-speaking/writing company). This makes some people uncomfortable, especially those with less experience working in culturally diverse environments. (No. 162, 2018, Salt Lake City, Current Employee, Positive Outlook).

The two excerpts above illustrate that some employees adapted to the cultural change and embraced the mixed working method. Some cultural expatriates, the most skilled in the lingua franca, perceived the "Japanese way" as a change in a culturally diverse environment rather than an "identity threat". Other comments highlight the pride more directly: "Nothing negative from me. I love this company," "Hats off to the management for making this sudden and unexpected transition for all of our team to work remotely. We have been given wonderful support and care for the wellbeing of all of our employees. Thank you, Rakuten."

As shown in FIGURE 3, the popularity of the topic seems to decline from 2009 to 2010, but increases significantly from 2010 to 2011, then declines gradually from 2011 to 2015, and increases again from 2015.

| 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |

FIGURE 6: WORD CLOUD OF TOPIC 2 FROM 2009 TO 2020

4.3 Employees' Perception of Leadership and Feeling of Marginalized Status

The third topic—employees' perception of leadership—is somewhat connected to the first topic but focuses on the marginalized status resulting from leadership. The marginalized status can be expressed as "Your employees work hard and love the company, but once they feel like they are being left in the dark about changes in directions for the company, they lose faith in management." Those who resist the leadership are therefore falling into the category of "marginalized people." In other words, they need to do something to get rid of the marginalized status, such as job-hopping to another "real" American company. The focus in the first years (2010 to 2013) was on terms relating to leadership in general, such as "management," "employee," "Japan," "manager," and "HR," but also on negative terms such as "opaque," "inability," and "limited" (see FIGURE 7). The following fragments show the perceptions of the changes in leadership from 2009 to 2012:

Extract 8

With the departure of the founders and original top management, after a buyout by a Japanese firm, management objectives and metrics are increasingly opaque. (No. 1, 2009, New York)

Extract 9

I don't believe that Rakuten truly views their employees as people or has respect for them. People are boiled down to KPIs, and this reflects in the compensation and morale at the company. Please treat the US employees at Linkshare with respect and

continue to provide the morale-boosting activities that used to happen. (No. 2, 2010, New York)

Extract 10

I found it to be the poorer side of how management treat[s] their staff. This includes the infiltration of the parent company Rakuten and their pawns that run the show. (No. 6, 2011, Client Development Manager, New York)

Extract 11

Inability of the management to guide and bring employees together under the parent company's (Rakuten) vision (No. 10, 2012, Aliso Viejo)

Extract 12

New Rakuten (Japanese Amazon) management and lack of job security. (No. 17, 2012, Aliso Viejo, Former Employee, Negative Outlook)

The above excerpts from 2009 to 2012 show that local employees criticized the insufficient understanding of the leadership teams about the work ethics of the US subsidiaries. The changes in daily work practices, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and Asakai meetings, decided employees' perceptions of the status quo and future. The feelings of marginalization expressed by employees implied that in Rakuten, many US-based employees were prompted to leave the company due to a lack of leadership direction: "job growth is limited; good amount of turnover" in 2013; "Lots of turnover. Plenty of people [are] moving on to greener pastures" in 2014; "Upper level management lacks direction and vision that could align this company with tech progression. High-employee turnover. Lots of employees leaving" in 2015; "Due to the high turnover of employees, people from other departments get put into marketing positions, when they clearly have no marketing experience. Even with the new CEO, CTO, COO...etc. announcements, if you don't change or at least reevaluate your current management and leadership... this company is still bound to fail from these same individuals... a big 'restructuring' is in progress" in 2016; and "Ton of layoffs and also heard [a] bunch of sales guys left" in 2017.

Employees also compared their situations with Japanese expatriates who could rent luxurious houses and will never get fired:

Extract 13

In case you don't do what they tell you to do: a) If you were assigned from Japan, probably you will be assigned back to Japan and never again assigned to [the] US again. b) If you are [a] US employee, you will be fired or invited to leave very quickly. After you leave the company, all the current problems will be assigned to you. It is how they survive and hide the problem. So, they are always hiring new employees.

P.S.: Japan Rakuten Card is [the] worst. They are the source of current management in Card US. It means the source of [the] issue may be on the Japanese side. Those problems [explain] the high turnover of very good employees and also why US employees have low [salaries]. It also explain[s] why the president thinks the US employees are lazy. But I don't know if the president does not know it. (If he knows, then something is very wrong). My advice to the president would be: I think you need to solve these problems as soon as possible. Please, fix Japan and US management. Only permitting managers from one team to another does not solve the problems only hides because the current team managers, group managers and department managers are the ones causing all these problems. This is my last review in this company. (No. 150, 2018, Software Engineer, San Mateo, Former Employee, Negative Outlook)

Extract 14

Post title: Ethnocentric in their management style

Content: No one gets fired, low performing, problematic employees are moved to other departments or shipped back to Japan. [The] overall company strategy is a shotgun approach. It literally changes on [a] quarterly basis, and it's mainly driven by the CEO and passed down to his Yes-men! (No. 186, 2019, Product, San Mateo, Current Employee, Negative Outlook)

The above fragments show strong claims: after an eight-year mandate, the company increased expatriation and adopted a more ethnocentric staffing policy. Employees expressed their perceptions of leadership and sense of dissatisfaction with the organizational hierarchy through remarks such as "Shake off the Yes-men, from IT to HR to Facilities, to all business groups. Stop bending backward to please the CEO" and "Moving to California is useless if you keep the rigid, hierarchical mindset that prevents creativity from thriving."

The topic of employees' perceptions of leadership and feelings of being marginalized emerged in 2009 and was spurred by the announcement of Englishnization in 2010. It decreases significantly from 2010 to 2012 but increases again from 2012 to 2014 and appears to remain relatively stable from 2014 to 2020. As shown in FIGURE 7, words such as "management," "employee," "company," and "work" stand out from 2009 to 2014. However, after 2015 "management" and "company" were still major words, but "lack," "low," "Japan," and "leave" became more prominent.

FIGURE 7: WORD CLOUD OF TOPIC 3 FROM 2009 TO 2020

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Social media platforms make it feasible to analyze the opinions of key stakeholders (Xiang et al. 2015; Kwok and Yu 2013). By examining posts on Glassdoor, this study provides some new insights on the interconnection between language and culture.

First, it is interesting to see that the frequency of occurrence of keywords related to Englishnization from 2009 to 2020 was zero, whereas the term "Japanese" was used 66 times. Cultural expatriates expected the language mandate to lead to an open-ended and enduring source of opportunities for career advancement (Neeley 2017). This study, however, shows that American employees cannot actively identify with the English-only policy. They never mention the policy in their posts.

Adopting English in HQ was found to have no direct relevance to work practices in American subsidiaries. While Japanese employees in HQ had to adopt English, speaking English should be natural to American employees. Thus, one can hypothesize that an American employee might be aware of the English-only policy without identifying with it. Those expectations of

career advancement on the part of cultural expatriates should be ascribed to global expansion rather than linguistic ethnocentrism. This study can contribute to the ongoing discussion on monolingual solutions, which constitute a conventional and simplistic style of thinking (Martin 2009).

Second, this study has proposed automatic content analysis using DTM and social media data to measure perceptions of Japanese work practices and values transmitted by the English-only policy over time. These results align with the literature on DTM, which enables one to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of social representations from a comparative and diachronic perspective within a contextual framework (Chandelier et al. 2018).

Extant studies of biculturals have provided topic categories, including the following: One-Home, Neither/Nor, Either/Or, and Both/And (Brannen, Garcia, and Thomas 2009; Brannen and Thomas 2010). Topic 1 (The threat of a foreign corporate culture) was the most popular topic between 2012 and 2020. This topic draws attention to the Either/Or type of cultural expatriates, suggesting that cultural expatriates started to identify with their American and Japanese identities around 2014; however, they perceived the forcible imposition of Japanese work practices and values at the workplace as a threat.

Neeley (2017) also observed that the Japanese way, described pejoratively as "isolationist" or "pre-global" in mindset, was a threat to the cultural expatriates' sense of their own American identity. The results of this study are consistent with previous findings, which suggest that while cultural expatriates' perceptions of the contrast between their two cultures are strengthened, they resist the "Japanese way" and link "stay away from the company" to "getting rid of the threat." Japanese work practices and values are seen as posing a threat to the status of English as the corporate language and symbol of American identity.

Topic 2 (embracing the Rakuten way) was the second most popular topic, and its popularity remained stable between 2011 and 2020. The prevalence of this topic shows the popularity of Both/And cultural expatriates. The literature suggested these Both/And individuals identify with both of their cultures and leverage various cultural identities in a unique and idiosyncratic way (Brannen, Garcia, and Thomas 2009). The data show that these cultural expatriates disagree with other employees who resist the cultural change. They think "the change is not for everyone," and even persuade people not to believe those negative reviews on Glassdoor and "come and see for yourself."

Topic 3 (perception of leadership and marginalized status) was the least popular. The data show that the posts are often connected to cultural expatriates' perceptions and portray them as a marginalized group. Arrival at the Neither/Nor type happens in several ways. For example, these cultural expatriates choose not to identify with the American or Japanese operating styles because of leadership headed in the wrong direction. The study results have sinister implications for the adoption of a common corporate language, which often introduces new barriers (Welch and Welch 2008). Cultural expatriates with a strong competence in the company language may still feel excluded if they are not comfortable with the Japanese work culture they must adopt.

Finally, another relevant insight drawn from the findings is related to the traditional emphasis of employing local staff to fill the positions formerly dominated by Japanese expatriates to attract and retain valuable non-Japanese talent (Sekiguchi, Froese, and Iguchi 2016). Researchers have argued that changing from an ethnocentric toward a polycentric or geocentric staffing policy could potentially help overcome obstacles for the external internationalization of Japanese MNCs (Beamish and Inkpen 1998; Schaaper et al. 2013). Conversely, this study suggests that setting English as the official corporate language could generate unintended consequences of increasing expatriation and impeding localization. When translators, "bridge individuals" or bilingual employees who facilitate communication between HQ and subsidiaries, became obsolete at Rakuten with the implementation of Englishnization, the Japanese HQ, sent more expatriates to fill senior positions in the American subsidiaries. Neeley (2017) also highlighted this in her study and explained that the superficial change in language patterns to become more direct did not necessarily translate cross-company into a less hierarchical organizational culture.

Thus, the present study contributes to the ongoing discussion on the interplay between Englishnization and organizational culture. As previously mentioned, Zhang (2021a) concluded that an English-only corporate language policy results in a mixed corporate culture at the Japanese HQ. However, the present study found that the organizational culture of overseas subsidiaries has become more hierarchical due to Englishnization. These results align with existing research on the internationalization of Japanese MNCs (Wong 1996, 2010; Black and Morrison 2010). A close analysis of the dynamics of Englishnization reveals a pressing issue facing Rakuten and other Japanese MNCs with regard to the balance of multinational cohesion with monolingualism and multiculturalism.

Based on the Glassdoor analytics data of 208 reviews from 2009 to 2020, this study reveals key insights into the analysis of cultural expatriates. The DTM and content analysis elucidate the cultural expatriates' perceptions of Japanese work practices and values from a diachronic perspective. Moreover, the study results have implications for viewing Englishnization as one instrument of internal internationalization, which could have a negative impact on the external internationalization of Japanese MNCs.

This study is a small step toward using the computational text analysis method to examine the experiences of cultural expatriates. However, the study has some limitations. First, the data collection was limited to a single company and social media platform. Second, although the data collection period was long (2009–2020), the data size was not particularly large. Taking a broader view, future studies could collect data from various companies and data sources. Last but not least, future research could combine DTM with other techniques, such as sentiment analysis, to examine changes in cultural expatriates' sentiments regarding Japanese work practices and values.

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