

# Translation and Trust:

A Case Study of How Translation was Experienced  
by Foreign Nationals Resident in Japan  
for the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake

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# Declaration

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## Publications and presentations from this research

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Cadwell, P., 2014. Employing Ethnographic Principles to Examine Translation and Interpreting in the Great East Japan Earthquake. Unpublished conference paper at: *2<sup>nd</sup> Durham Postgraduate Colloquium*, 31-JAN-2014, Durham, United Kingdom.

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# Abstract

Patrick Cadwell

## Translation and Trust: A Case Study of How Translation was Experienced by Foreign Nationals Resident in Japan for the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake

This thesis examines translation and interpreting in a particular context: the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Motivated by the researcher's experience of being resident in Tokyo when the disaster struck, a study was carried out to better understand translation and interpreting in this context using the case of foreign residents who experienced the disaster. A constructivist philosophical approach and the academic traditions of ethnography were adopted when designing the case study, and face-to-face, individual interviews with 28 participants from 12 nationalities (Irish, Dutch, French, German, Sudanese, Tunisian, Chinese, Bangladeshi, American, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealander) made up its core primary data. The diverse linguistic and demographic profiles of these participants provided access to multiple perspectives on the objects of enquiry. These perspectives were then analysed over six phases of thematic analysis to describe and explain how foreign residents communicated and gathered information, how translation and interpreting formed part of these activities, and why any of this was important. The analysis suggested that the objects of enquiry can best be understood as written and oral interlingual and intercultural transfer, dominated by the Japanese-English language pair, carried out mostly by volunteers known to the user, to create products that were not always received as translations, but that were valorised when seen to produce timely information of adequate quality. It also suggested that a lack of sufficient resources and a strongly culturally-bound space of interaction created problems for translation and interpreting. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that trust was a significant category in these data. For this reason, a socio-cognitive model of trust was selected and applied to the data to describe and explain the role that translation and interpreting played in some foreign residents' decisions to trust and to argue for the importance of these phenomena to the existence of trust in this and other disasters.

Keywords: translation and interpreting; disaster; Great East Japan Earthquake; case study; ethnography; trust theory



## Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis enquires into the phenomena of translation and interpreting in disaster situations and uses the concept of trust as a theoretical lens to further examine these objects. A disaster is taken here to be ‘[a] serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope’ (UNISDR 2009: 9). A disaster can also usefully be thought of as passing through four phases: pre-event, lasting only seconds or minutes; event, lasting about one week after onset; response, lasting about one month after onset; recovery, lasting about one year after onset (WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific 2012: 58). The thesis situates its arguments mainly in the small body of literature in the domain of translation studies on the topics of disaster translation and interpreting, but also engages with certain literature in associated areas – disaster studies, crisis communication, computational linguistics, sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and business studies – to ensure that all important themes are considered. These themes include the profiles of translators and interpreters working in disaster settings, the practical and ethical issues that they encounter, ways to support and improve their work, as well as the voluntary capacity of much of these efforts and how the interaction between volunteers and official disaster responders can be improved. The literature also discusses the methods of communication used in disasters – especially information and communication technology (ICT) – and how they correspond to collaborative translation, to machine translation (MT), and to translator and interpreter training. A detailed review of the above literature and of the academic debates therein is presented in Chapter 2.

The scope of this thesis is limited largely to one disaster context: the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake (the 2011 disaster). This context was chosen firstly because of the researcher’s own experience of the setting; he was resident in Tokyo at the onset of the disaster. In addition, though, Japan is an information-rich, digitally-enabled society. It has a population of foreign residents, multiple links to the global community, and is frequently exposed to high-risk threats such as earthquakes and tsunamis. As such, studying the long and complex context of the 2011 disaster was expected to reveal a large volume and wide variety of disaster-related communicative activities that would potentially involve translation and/or interpreting. The context was examined to answer three questions:

- How did foreign residents communicate and gather information during the 2011 disaster? (See Chapter 4)
- How did translation and interpreting form part of foreign residents' communication and information gathering in the 2011 disaster? (See Chapter 5)
- Why are issues of translation and interpreting important to the 2011 disaster or to other disaster contexts? (See Chapter 6)

A methodology – adapted from the work of Kaisa Koskinen (2008) and situated in a constructivist philosophical frame – was developed to answer these questions. Koskinen applied a selection of ethnographic methods and was guided by an overall ethnographic ethos to present a case study of a translating institution (ibid.: 3, 37). Similarly, the case study methodology in this thesis was informed by certain methods and theories from ethnography to describe, understand, and explain the phenomena of translation and interpreting in the 2011 disaster using the case of foreign nationals who were resident in East Japan at the time. Koskinen's work was adapted for this research because her methodology was suited to the 'situated analysis of a particular group of people' (ibid.: 36), because it offered ways to systematically capitalise on a researcher's previous personal experience of a research context, and because it promised guidance in negotiating the insider and outsider identities that a researcher with such past experience holds. Face-to-face, individual interviews with 28 participants from 12 nationalities (Irish, Dutch, French, German, Sudanese, Tunisian, Chinese, Bangladeshi, American, Canadian, Australian, and New Zealander) made up the core primary data gathered using this methodology. These and other secondary data were analysed using a form of thematic analysis operationalised from Braun and Clarke (2006) in which themes were developed over six phases that progressed from participant-led, to interpretive, to abstract analysis. Discussion of the architecture of theory and method that was used to gather and analyse the data in this thesis and of the practical steps implemented within this architecture is provided in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 begins to provide an answer to the first research question posed in this thesis; how did foreign residents communicate and gather information during the 2011 disaster? To do so, it describes the environment in which communication and information gathering were being carried out, it indicates the types of foreign resident who were involved in these communicative acts, and it analyses in detail how these foreign residents went about these acts. Specifically, the chapter comprises an overview of the disaster, an explanation of how the boundaries of this enquiry into the disaster have been established, the researcher's autoethnographic account of his experiences of the disaster, short descriptions of four other

foreign residents' experiences of the disaster, and an illustration of some of the content of relevant communication and information gathering.

This detailed exploration of how the foreign residents in this case study communicated and gathered information in the 2011 disaster began to indicate that issues of language and culture may have been involved in the communicative scene for them. Chapter 5, then, begins a more rigorous and systematic examination of the phenomena of translation and interpreting and proposes an answer to the second research question in this thesis; how did translation and interpreting form part of foreign residents' communication and information gathering in the 2011 disaster? The main aim of this chapter, therefore, is to explain the 'what', 'when', 'where', 'how', and 'who' of translation and interpreting in this one disaster context. The chapter establishes that the phenomena of translation and interpreting are worthy of academic enquiry and operationalises a definition of these phenomena for this research. Hence, Translation (operationalised in this research with an uppercase T) comes to mean: a process of written and oral interlingual and intercultural transfer, dominated by the Japanese-English language pair, carried out mostly by volunteers known to the user, to create products that were not always received as translations, but that were valorised when seen to produce timely information of adequate quality and when seen to come from trusted sources. In short, this chapter provides empirical evidence – admittedly on a small scale, but rigorously gathered and analysed nonetheless – that Translation was received and provided by foreign residents in the 2011 disaster and begins to suggest that it formed a significant part of their experiences. But was Translation, in fact, really important for the foreign residents in this study?

Chapter 6 deals with this topic and proposes an answer to the final research question in the thesis; why are issues of translation and interpreting important to the 2011 disaster or to other disaster contexts? A review of the literature showed that there is precedent to a limited extent for using the concept of trust as an analytical category in translation studies, especially with regard to issues such as professionalism, ethics, and collaborative practices. This review also showed that trust is a much-discussed and highly relevant concept in disaster contexts, especially in relation to disaster communication. As a result, trust was deemed to be an appropriate conceptual lens through which to systematically examine the case study data and answer the final research question. Specifically, the thesis makes use of a socio-cognitive theory of trust developed by Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) in which they identify and formalise the conceptual components and relationships that are necessary and sufficient to theoretically explain the phenomenon of trust. This theory is complex and takes time to explain, but it is also robust, well-delimited, and has good explanatory power

for the purposes of this thesis. The explanations provided by the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model indicate that Translation is, at times, theoretically relevant to the concept of trust. Therefore, as trust can be shown to be important to the 2011 disaster and to other disaster contexts, we have a viable answer to the final research question in this thesis; Translation is important to the 2011 disaster and beyond because of its relationship to trust.

With answers thus proposed to the three research questions in this project, the thesis ends in Chapter 7 by setting out the contributions of the thesis to knowledge, by arguing for the significance of these contributions while recognising their limitations, by identifying and refuting alternative answers to the final research question, and by identifying prospects for future work arising out of the thesis.

*‘All understanding, and the demonstrative statement of  
understanding which is translation, starts with an act of trust.’*

*George Steiner, Philosopher (1929 – present)*

## Chapter 2 – Literature review

### ***2.1 Introduction***

This research enquires into the phenomena of language and culture in times of disaster with a particular academic focus on issues of translation and interpreting and on how these issues relate to the concept of trust. As a result, this thesis engages with the relevant literature and academic debates in the domain of translation studies in particular.<sup>1</sup> However, it also looks to the literature in associated areas – disaster studies, crisis communication, computational linguistics, sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and business studies – to review all relevant important themes. Even so, the final aim of this thesis is to contribute to the literature in translation studies, and reference to other literatures will be accordingly limited in scope.

This chapter begins in Section 2.2 with an illustrative review to indicate the scope of authorship and the major themes related to translation and interpreting in disaster settings in the literature. There follows, in Section 2.3, a more detailed discussion of this literature. Then, Section 2.4 presents a review of literature on the concept of trust: the analytical category that has been used in this thesis to tie the research findings into a coherent narrative.

### ***2.2 Literature on translation, interpreting, and disaster: scoping review***

A series of title-only searches of the Elsevier Scopus and Google Scholar databases were carried out using the logic that academic authors place keywords from their abstracts in their titles. These databases were chosen for their relevance to publication within translation studies. The search strings created were made up of keywords taken from the research questions set out in Chapter 1 along with certain synonyms and variations of these words. It must be acknowledged at this point that the selection of these databases and the keywords used introduced a significant English-language bias to the literature reviewed. Research on relevant topics is likely available in other languages but has not been referenced here. Nevertheless, the searches initially returned 911 academic works, with 632 coming from Scopus and 279 coming from Google Scholar, as has been detailed in Table 2–1.

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<sup>1</sup> While certain authors working on issues of interpreting may prefer to situate their work in the discipline of interpreting studies rather than translation studies, this disciplinary distinction has been ignored here for convenience.

Search string used in Scopus database:	No. of results before relevance check:	No. of results after relevance check:	Search string used in Google scholar:	No. of results before relevance check:	No. of results after relevance check:
TITLE (disaster AND translat* OR interpret*)	48	5	allintitle: disaster translate OR translation OR translator OR interpret OR interpreting OR interpreter	32	7
TITLE (emergency AND translat* OR interpret*)	257	16	allintitle: emergency translate OR translation OR translator OR interpret OR interpreting OR interpreter	113	18
TITLE (crisis AND translat* OR interpret*)	129	3	allintitle: crisis translate OR translation OR translator OR interpret OR interpreting OR interpreter	93	5
TITLE (earthquake AND translat* OR interpret*)	181	2	allintitle: earthquake translate OR translation OR translator OR interpret OR interpreting OR interpreter	39	3
TITLE (tsunami AND translat* OR interpret*)	17	0	allintitle: tsunami translate OR translation OR translator OR interpret OR interpreting OR interpreter	2	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>279</b>	<b>33</b>

**Table 2-1. Search of titles relevant to this thesis in the Scopus and Google Scholar databases**

Searches relating to the keywords ‘emergency’ and ‘crisis’ accounted for the majority of these 911 works. The relevance to this study of these works was checked by reading their titles and, when necessary, their abstracts. This showed that most of these works dealt with medical interpreting or translation in the emergency wards of hospitals or with the translation of information relating to an economic crisis (e.g., translation at the time of the Global Financial Crisis). These are high-risk contexts, but they do not correspond to the definition of a disaster set out in Chapter 1. Therefore, such works were not seen as being relevant to this thesis and were removed from consideration. It was also necessary to remove any works which used the concepts of translation or interpretation outside of the meaning of interlingual or intercultural transfer. Thus, this scoping review did not consider any works that:

- used translation only to mean ‘change into’ (e.g., translate from theory to practice);
- used interpret only to mean ‘understand’ (e.g., to interpret findings);
- referred to translational science or knowledge translation approaches to research;
- referred to ‘technical translation’ in the sense of monolingual simplification of complex technical concepts or details.

Following this relevance check, 59 titles remained (see, again, Table 2 - 1). 26 titles remained in Scopus and 33 remained in Google Scholar. Once the overlap of any titles that appeared in both of these databases had been accounted for, 21 individual works dealing with translation or interpreting in disaster settings remained. As such, this initial scoping review of the literature indicated that discussion on these topics is not extensive. Within

this small body of literature, then, what are the main issues of concern? Table 2–2 provides a summary.

Research focus:	Author:	Title:	Text type:	Domain
Volunteer interpreting	Doğan and Kahraman (2011)	Emergency and disaster interpreting in Turkey: ten years of a unique endeavour	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Volunteer interpreting	Moser-Mercer and Bali (2007)	Interpreting in zones of crisis and war: improving multilingual communication through collaborative virtual learning	Conference paper	Translation studies
Volunteer interpreting	Kurultay and Bulut (2012)	Re-evaluating community interpreting: emergency and disaster interpreting	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Volunteer interpreting	Naïto (2012)	Community interpreting at the time of Great East Japan Earthquake	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Volunteer interpreting	Bulut and Kurultay (2001)	Interpreters-in-aid at disasters: community interpreting in the process of disaster management	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Volunteer interpreting	Powell and Pagliara-Miller (2012)	The use of volunteer interpreters during the 2010 Haiti earthquake: lessons learned from the USNS COMFORT Operation Unified Response Haiti	Peer-reviewed article	Disaster studies
Medical interpreting	Shiu-Thornton et al. (2007)	Disaster preparedness for limited English proficient communities: medical interpreters as cultural brokers and gatekeepers	Peer-reviewed article	Health studies
Medical interpreting	Greenstone (2010)	Use of interpreters with crisis intervention teams: behavioral health units, and medical strike teams: responding appropriately and effectively	Peer-reviewed article	Health studies
Signed interpreting	McKee (2014)	Breaking news: sign language interpreters on television during natural disasters	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Volunteer crowdsourcing	Sutherland (2013)	A voice in the crowd: broader implications for crowdsourcing translation during crisis	Peer-reviewed article	Information science
Volunteer crowdsourcing	Munro (2010)	Crowdsourced translation for emergency response in Haiti: the global collaboration of local knowledge	Conference paper	Translation studies
Volunteer crowdsourcing	Hester, Shaw, and Biewald (2010)	Scalable crisis relief: crowdsourced SMS translation and categorization with Mission 4636	Conference paper	Information science
Computational linguistics	Hu et al. (2011)	The value of monolingual crowdsourcing in a real-world translation scenario: simulation using Haitian Creole emergency SMS messages	Conference paper	Information science
Computational linguistics	Lin et al. (2009)	Exploring the effectiveness of Chinese-to-English Machine Translation for CUR applications in earthquake engineering	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Computational linguistics	Ikeda, Yoshioka, and Kitamura (2010)	Intercultural collaboration support system using disaster safety map and machine translation	Book chapter	Translation studies
Computational linguistics	Tanaka et al. (2007)	Template translation for multilingual disaster information system	Book chapter	Information science
Translation analysis of disaster reports	Lian (2008)	Full translation and translation variation from the perspective of journalism and communication: a case study of Wenchuan Earthquake news reports	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Translation analysis of disaster reports	Harding (2011)	Translation and the circulation of competing narratives from the wars in Chechnya: a case study from the 2004 Beslan hostage disaster	Peer-reviewed article	Translation studies
Translation issues for clinicians, aid-workers	Bolton and Weiss (2001)	Communicating across cultures: improving translation to improve complex emergency program effectiveness	Peer-reviewed article	Disaster studies
Translation issues for responders, scientists	Freeth (1993)	On the problems of translation in the investigation of the Lake Nyos disaster	Peer-reviewed article	Disaster studies
Crisis terminology (French-English)	Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada (2003)	Emergency and crisis communication vocabulary–translation, terminology and interpretation–PWGSC	Government report	Non-academic

**Table 2-2. Detail on the results of an initial scoping literature review**

Table 2–2 indicates that authors have been working over the last decade to draw on a variety of disaster contexts across Europe, Asia, America, and Africa. Publication has not been restricted to journals (but has included books, conference proceedings, and even official reports) and has been largely interdisciplinary in nature, with the dividing lines between translation studies, information science, disaster studies, and health studies becoming



blurred. Authors have been interested in both interpreting and translation and have been concerned with issues relating to the voluntary work of interpreters in disaster settings, as well as volunteer crowdsourcing, and practical issues of how translation is carried out in disasters. For the purposes of this thesis, then, this snapshot of the existing literature supports the idea of enquiring into both translation and interpreting in the 2011 disaster and encourages the examination of diverse channels of publication across various disciplines. It suggests that the thesis should not be restricted to a purely professional definition of translation and interpreting, and it indicates that the thesis should look at the specific ways in which mediated communication took place in the 2011 disaster, considering the interest in the literature in the technological aspects of translation and interpreting.

Of course, much relevant literature was not captured in this title-only search. For this reason, the next section provides a more comprehensive, discursive review based on the researcher's reading of the literature inside and outside the academic sphere, on his attendance at relevant conferences, and on his attempts at publication.

### ***2.3 Literature on translation, interpreting, and disaster: discursive review***

This section discusses the main issues of concern to authors writing on translation and interpreting in disaster settings. It deals firstly with translation studies, then with disaster studies, and finally with other disciplines and works published outside of the academy.

#### ***2.3.1 Translation, interpreting, and disaster in translation studies***

The first dominant theme in the translation studies literature relates to the work of interpreters in disaster settings. A variety of high-risk events that overwhelmed the societies in which they took place have been used as contexts for these studies: earthquakes in Turkey (Bulut and Kurultay 2001, Doğan and Kahraman 2011, Kurultay and Bulut 2012); conflict in Somalia and its effect on the people there and in refugee camps in Kenya (Moser-Mercer and Bali 2007, Moser-Mercer, Kherbiche, and Class 2014); conflicts in Syria or Iraq and their effect on the people there and in refugee camps in Jordan (Businaro 2012, Kherbiche 2009); conflicts involving Finnish military interpreters (Snellman 2014); the combined earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster in Japan (Cadwell 2014, Cadwell 2015, Mizuno 2012, Naito 2012, Naito 2013, Tsuruta 2011). These works explore the influence of linguistic and cultural barriers on the contexts chosen, the profiles and roles of the interpreters working in these contexts, the practical and ethical issues that they encounter in their work, and ways to better support and improve their work. Many authors underline the frequent absence of specialised training in the interpreting work done in these

high-risk settings. However, at the same time, some other authors show that use of the term volunteer can be problematic when applied to these interpreters. They underline that volunteer does not equate with nonprofessional and that some volunteer interpreters working in these zones of crisis do hold professional qualifications. Also, they show that the interpreting work studied is generally not done in return for remuneration, but can come, at times, with other rewards in kind. Much work has been done on what motivates volunteers and on the impact on quality and the professional status of translators (e.g., McDonough Dolmaya 2012, O'Hagan 2011, Pérez-González and Susam-Sarajeva 2012), and these ideas are relevant to the work of interpreters in times of disaster, too.

The second dominant theme in the translation studies literature concerns the role of ICT in disasters and how it corresponds to translation and interpreting activities. Contexts include the use of MT in disaster settings in China (Lin et al. 2009) and in Japan (Ikeda, Yoshioka, and Kitamura 2010), and on how technology can facilitate collaborative translation in disasters in Japan (Kageura et al. 2011). The largest body of work on this theme, though, looks at the use of ICT to facilitate crowdsourced translation and MT efforts in the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. In this disaster, the majority of emergency responders spoke languages other than Haitian Creole and French, the official languages of Haiti. Thus, in an effort to facilitate communication between the residents of Haiti and the responders, technologically-proficient volunteer organisations based outside of Haiti used various technology platforms as well as basic ICT (such as landlines, mobile telephones, or chat rooms) to process the content generated by Haitians and create maps, translate text messages, create person-finder tools, or build MT engines (Lewis 2010, Lewis, Munro, and Vogel 2011, Morrow et al. 2011, Munro 2010, Munro 2013).

In addition to the above dominant themes, other works in the translation studies literature look at the training of translators for work specifically in crisis settings (O'Brien forthcoming), signed interpreting services over television in times of disaster (McKee 2014), how translation is used to structure the narratives or journalistic products around a disaster (Harding 2011, Lian 2008), and whether providing translated information is preferable to providing information in one of the dominant languages of a disaster setting (Carroll 2012).

### 2.3.2 Translation, interpreting, and disaster in disaster studies

Issues of translation and interpreting are notable for their absence in the disaster studies literature. Translation and interpreting (in the sense of interlingual or intercultural transfer) are dealt with in only a cursory manner, if at all. Core texts, such as Drabek (2003, 2010) and Quarantelli (1978, 1987) do not treat these topics at all. In Auf Der Heide (1989), foreign language translators are mentioned as a resource that could be useful in a disaster, but only in an appendix and without any accompanying discussion, and it remains unclear whether this term is taken to include interpreters. Issues of language and culture are treated briefly in Rodríguez, Quarantelli, and Dynes (2006), where these concepts are problematised for the otherness they create, and in Farazmand (2014), where they are considered with reference to disaster researchers working in developing countries and are, again, seen mainly as problems. The sub-discipline of crisis communication is similarly silent on translation and interpreting, and only sparse evidence for consideration of interlingual or intercultural transfer in disasters can be found (see O'Brien [forthcoming]).

However, it is still possible to learn about translating and interpreting in disasters by looking to the disaster studies literature. *Disaster Relief 2.0*, published by Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (2011), argues for increased cooperation and dialogue between humanitarian agencies and technical and linguistic volunteers spread around the globe. This call arose from looking at the experiences of those volunteers who helped process the communication generated by the disaster-affected communities in the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. The work also calls for deeper interactions in future disasters between those responding to and those experiencing a disaster. This document even identifies translation as a perennial hidden issue in disaster relief that causes delays and poor communication, and yet only one paragraph of the 72-page report deals specifically with the topic of translation. There are also useful studies of how disaster responders – especially medical teams – can improve their interactions with translators and interpreters in disaster settings (e.g., Bolton and Weiss 2001, Freeth 1993, Powell and Pagliara-Miller 2012). However, the pitfalls in these interactions tend to be defined by the responder side, and the issues do not seem to be questioned from the perspective of the providers of translation and interpreting in these works or those needing these services.

Much can be learned about the context of the 2011 disaster from the disaster studies literature. For instance, there are comprehensive works on disaster management issues (Claremont 2014, Suzuki and Kaneko 2013), on disaster risk reduction issues (Shaw 2014), on the special effect of education and voluntarism on the disaster outcomes (Shaw and Takeuchi 2012), and especially on the issues brought about by the nuclear element of the

2011 disaster (Birmingham and McNeill 2012, Kingston 2012). However, none of these works deals with linguistic or cultural issues in any systematic way in that they do not reference scholarship or apply any of the categories or theoretical frameworks prevalent in translation studies or other related disciplines such as linguistics or intercultural studies.

### *2.3.3 Translation, interpreting, and disaster discussed elsewhere*

Looking to some other academic disciplines for discussion of translation and interpreting in disaster can be instructive, and the domains of information science and health studies provide several useful references.

Authors in information science and health studies share the dominant concerns of translation scholars detailed in Section 2.3.1; they examine how ICT and the services of interpreters were used in various disaster settings and suggest ways for how these uses could be improved. For instance, several authors working in information science use the examples of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake or the 2011 disaster in Japan to examine how ICT – especially the Internet – can facilitate crowdsourced information processing, translation, and novel forms of information distribution in disaster settings (Hester, Shaw, and Biewald 2010, Hu et al. 2011, Murakami 2014, Sutherlin 2013, Tanaka et al. 2007). The concern of authors in health studies, however, is the need for the specialised training of medical interpreters to allow them to work effectively in disaster or emergency settings, especially to be able to deal with the specific physical and mental health risks and ethical dilemmas involved in such contexts (Greenstone 2010, Shiu-Thornton et al. 2007).

Much can be learned, too, about the general communicative scene in the 2011 disaster by looking to those authors working in the domain of communications. While most of these works deal with issues of interlingual or intercultural transfer tangentially at best, they help to give a detailed understanding of the experiences of those communicating in Japanese in the 2011 disaster. For instance, works deal with: the role played by the mass media in the 2011 disaster (Asari and Kimura 2011, Fukuda 2012); the various communicative methods that were used and their relative effectiveness (Jōhō shien purobono purattofōmu 2012, Kaigo 2012); the different experiences of certain social groups, in particular the elderly or those in rural areas who may have been at an information disadvantage (Tanaka, Shineha, and Maruyama 2012); the importance of trust to disaster communication and how trust in the Japanese government and nuclear power operators was lost (Kageura 2013).

Though authors in the domain of communications fail to deal systematically with translation and interpreting and do not focus on the experiences of populations other than those identifying themselves as Japanese, authors in other disciplines do give us some insight into the experiences of foreign nationals and do address issues of language and culture in the 2011 disaster. In sociology, Ohara-Hirano (2012) examines the disaster from the perspective of Indonesian nurses transferred to Japan after the outbreak of the 2011 disaster. In business studies, Bebenroth (2014) examines how the disaster impacted on foreign employees working at German subsidiaries in Japan in 2011. Meanwhile in economics, Bhula-or and Ikemoto (2014) approach the disaster from the perspective of labour economics and socio-economic development using a study of migrant workers and come to the conclusion that in disaster in Japan ‘[l]inguistic barriers and inaccessibility to “understandable” information are the main problem for foreigners’ (Bhula-or and Ikemoto 2014: 1000).

Finally, works published outside academic channels – especially by major disaster responders, governmental authorities, and NGOs – are another source of rich information on disaster contexts and, to a certain extent, on how issues of translation and interpreting manifest in these contexts. The *World Disasters Report* series and other publications of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are influential and present broad, deep research on various aspects of disaster settings in a practical and user-friendly way. From the point of view of translation and interpreting, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2005) focusing on information in disasters, (2006) focusing on disaster management in a global world, (2013) focusing on technology, and (2014) focusing on culture are particularly relevant. Various reports by other NGOs and governmental authorities tackle the 2011 disaster context specifically and show a particular interest in how to improve disaster-related communication (Appleby 2013, Japanese Red Cross Society 2012, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication of Japan 2013). Disappointingly, though, the reports mentioned so far focus on the supply-side of disaster information, and the voices of consumers of such information are largely absent from these studies.

Of course, translation, interpreting, and consideration of the experiences of foreign nationals of disaster are not entirely absent from the humanitarian and governmental discourse, and some works do treat these issues. The Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada (2003) provides a comprehensive disaster terminology database for translators and interpreters working in the Canadian locales, and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (2014: 200) provides the strongest

recognition so far in this discourse that culture and translation are issues that should not be ignored in disaster contexts. Specific to Japan, too, there are many reports by various NGOs that consider the experiences of foreign nationals of disasters in Japan, identify translation and interpreting as one set of tools that can be used to provide assistance to these populations, and give general advice to foreigners in Japan about what to do if they experience a disaster (Miyagi International Association 2013, Sendai City Government 2011, Sendai International Relations Association 2011, Tokyo International Communication Committee 2011).

## ***2.4 Literature on trust***

Having now outlined the relevant literature and debates concerning the objects of enquiry in this thesis – translation and interpreting in disaster settings – this section will review the literature on the analytical category that has been used in this thesis to theoretically examine these objects in more detail: trust. (See Chapter 6 for this trust-based analysis of translation and interpreting.)

### ***2.4.1 Trust theory***

There are various views taken on the concept of trust in a variety of disciplines: ethics, philosophy, sociology, psychology, political science, economics, and business studies. The accounts of trust across these disciplines fall into two categories: firstly, holistic accounts that attempt to explain trust with reference to broader social or cultural phenomena; secondly, reductionist accounts that ultimately attempt to explain trust through the lenses of subjective probabilities, rational calculations, or strategic self-interest.

#### ***2.4.1.1 Key works in the literature***

Some key authors in the holistic camp include sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1979), organisational theorist Bart Nooteboom (2002), and sociologist Piotr Sztompka (1999). Luhmann and Nooteboom see trust as a way for dealing with the risks and uncertainties of social life. Luhmann sees trust as ‘a device for coping with the freedom of other persons’ (Luhmann 1979 cited in Dunn 1988: 80), and Nooteboom views it as a wager taken on the future options of others and ourselves with respect to behaviour in the face of radical uncertainty (Nooteboom 2002: 188). While still considering social life, Sztompka (1999) considers trust to be a dimension of culture and analyses how cultures of trust can emerge and decay, with particular reference to communist and post-communist societies.

In the reductionist camp we find social psychologist Morton Deutsch (1958, 1973), social scientist Diego Gambetta (1988), and political scientist Russell Hardin (2002, 2006). Both Deutsch and Gambetta draw on aspects of game theory – in particular, the so-called ‘Prisoner’s Dilemma’ game – to explore rationales for trusting and cooperating under various experimental and thought-experimental conditions. For them, trust is usefully reduced to a subjective probability. The main idea might be summarised as follows:

When we say we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him. (Gambetta 1988: 217)

Alternatively, Hardin (2002) argues that much of trust can usefully be explained by reducing it to an explanation in terms of ‘encapsulated interest’, by which he means that we trust another, essentially, because we believe they have our interest at heart in some way (Hardin 2002: 1).

Other less influential, but nonetheless interesting and informative, works on trust include Rousseau et al. (1998), who conduct a review of trust research across disciplines to assess the level of agreement existing on meanings of trust and on how trust is analysed; Möllering (2006), who examines how reason, routine, and reflexivity are involved in the concept of trust to argue that ‘at the heart of the concept of trust is the suspension of vulnerability and uncertainty (the leap of faith), which enables actors to have positive expectations of others’ (ibid.: 191); and Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010), who model the necessary and sufficient components and relationships involved in conceptualising trust from a socio-cognitive perspective.

Adjacent to the study of trust in and of itself, some influential authors use trust as a key category in their descriptions or explanations of other phenomena. For instance, trust features as a prominent concept in Anthony Giddens’ (1991) explanation of modernity and self-identity, it is associated intimately with social capital by Robert Putnam (2000) in his work on community in the United States, and Francis Fukuyama (1995) uses trust to explain the economic life and prosperity of different societies and cultures.

It is not difficult to imagine that conceptual and terminological confusion is rife in the literature on trust, filled as it is with these many perspectives from across disciplines, traditions, research philosophies, methodologies, and motivations. Hardin (2002: xx) warns that ‘[t]here is remarkably wide disagreement over just what trust “really” is even among those who have given the topic a lot of careful thought’. The lack of conceptual consistency is exacerbated by terminological issues, and Hart (1988: 187) asserts that ‘[t]he set of

synonyms to which trust belongs is unusually confusing'. For instance, we find that faith, confidence, belief, cooperation, and probability can all be difficult to distinguish from trust in the literature at times.

#### 2.4.1.2 Consistent themes around trust in the literature

Despite this lack of conceptual and terminological clarity, academics writing on trust seem to agree on two major themes. They all assert that trust is a vital component of the social world, and they all argue that trust requires the presence of risk, uncertainty, or vulnerability.

Trust is important because it helps us to reduce social complexity (Möllering 2006: 85), to make choices about what we can and should do (Dasgupta 1988: 51), and to cope with the complicated division of labour present in everyday life (Dunn 1988: 85). In the 2002 series of Reith Lectures given by Onora O'Neill on trust (transcribed online), she argued that '[e]very day and in hundreds of ways we trust others to do what they say, to play by the rules and to behave reasonably' (O'Neill 2002). In more abstract terms:

Trust can have extrinsic value, as a basis for achieving social and economic goals. It can also have intrinsic value, as a dimension of relations that is valued for itself, as part of a broader notion of well being or the quality of life. (Nooteboom 2002: 2)

O'Neill goes on to point out, though, that we do not assume in placing our trust in someone that they will be predictable or reliable; we know that we could be disappointed (O'Neill 2002). This brings us to the second theme on which there is consensus in the literature; to trust necessarily implies exposure to uncertainty, risk, or vulnerability.

According to Hardin (2006: 27) '[a]ll standard accounts of trust assume that it involves reliance on someone or some agency when there is at least some risk that the agent will fail the trust.' For Deutsch (1958: 266) risk and trust are two sides of the same coin, while other authors argue that trust presupposes a situation of risk (Luhmann 1988: 97, Nooteboom 2002: 5), and that, when we have to act in spite of such risk, '[t]rusting becomes the crucial strategy for dealing with an uncertain and uncontrollable future' (Sztompka 1999: 25). Indeed, other authors anchor their definition of trust itself on such vulnerabilities. For instance:

Trusting behaviour consists in action that (1) increases one's vulnerability to another whose behaviour is not under one's control, and (2) takes place in a situation where the penalty suffered if the trust is abused would lead one to regret the action. (Lorenz 1988: 197)



In conclusion, a review of the literature on trust theory shows us that, while it might be difficult to find agreement on what trust is or how to term it, it can be claimed with assuredness that it is an important feature of our social world and that it is predicated on the risks and uncertainties therein. It is not only scholars in the disciplines referenced here in Section 2.4.1 that take an interest in the concept of trust. Scholars of translation and scholars of disaster are also concerned with issues of trust, and an overview of their discussions on the topic will be given in the following sections.

### *2.4.2 Trust in translation studies*

Trust is not a major analytical category in translation studies, but it does feature as a construct in some influential discussions of translation and is used in some thinking on translation and interpreting, in particular with regard to professionalism, ethics, and the increasing importance of collaborative practices in translation. For instance, Newmark (2009: 26) points out that the first stage in George Steiner's hermeneutic theory of translation is the stage of trust, followed by penetration, embodiment, and restitution. Steiner (1998: 312) even states that '[a]ll understanding, and the demonstrative statement of understanding which is translation, starts with an act of trust'. Trust is a central concern, too, for authors working to define and delimit translation as a profession; they argue that it is in the fostering and maintenance of trust in their abilities and services that translators can make some of their strongest claims towards the status of professional (Chesterman 1997, Pym 2012). Talking about translators who wish to be considered as professionals, Pym (2012: 86) states that '[i]ncreasingly, they will have to realize that what they sell is their seal of approval, their trustworthiness, their responsibility.' Ethically speaking, trust is found in one piece of research to be a key element in how users of interpreting services understand good interpreting (Edwards, Temple, and Alexander 2005). This view on the importance of trust causes the participants in this research to look for these services from informal networks of family, friends, and acquaintances, and the authors argue that this fact has serious implications for the policy and practice of interpreting. Finally, the growing importance of collaborative practices in contemporary translation workflows has led to an increased interest in trust as an analytical category (Abdallah 2010, Abdallah and Koskinen 2007). As translators in collaborative workflows will draw on resources created by others '...the single most important criterion in selecting a translation solution may not be what the solution is, but where it came from, and whether that source is trusted' (De Barra-Cusack 2014: 16). In short, trust, when seen from the perspective of the translation studies literature, is a useful theoretical construct to examine issues of professionalism, ethics, and collaborative practices.

### *2.4.3 Trust in disaster studies and the humanitarian space*

It was shown in Section 2.4.1 that trust theorists claim that trust is vital to social life. The disaster studies literature and reports from various humanitarian responders make similar claims for the significance of trust in times of disaster or emergency. Trust is, indeed, a much-discussed concept in this literature and covers a variety of themes: trust building and failures of trust between the various stakeholders in a disaster; the important role that trust plays in communication and information-gathering during and after a disaster; the way that trust can be seen as a form of social capital; and the relationship between trust and technology in the context of a disaster.

#### *2.4.3.1 Trust and stakeholders in disasters*

Much of the literature in the discipline of disaster studies on trust is concerned with how the parties involved in a disaster – responders, volunteers, local authorities, beneficiaries of response aid, and even researchers – need to have relationships of trust to be able to carry out their respective roles and with how they build trust through sustained contact prior to the disaster's onset (Auf Der Heide 1989, Munro 2013, Shimodaira 2012, Stallings 2002, Stephenson 2005). Of course, the literature also studies many cases where trust failed between the various parties to a disaster and proposes that ineffective communication by or between stakeholders may be one of the reasons behind this failed trust (Goldsteen and Schorr 1982, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2005, 2006, 2013, Katoch 2012, Kowata et al. 2012, Rodríguez, Quarantelli, and Dynes 2006, Rubin 1987, Sato 2013, Society for Risk Analysis Japan 2013).

#### *2.4.3.2 Trust, communication, and information-gathering in disasters*

Trust is seen to be a vital component of communication with the public during a disaster or other emergency; if trust is lacking, effective risk communication will not be possible. 'Information needs to be prepared and disseminated. To be useful, it must be accurate and trusted and it must be understood and used by the community' (Coyle and Meier 2009: 17-18). In relation to communication, trust can be used as a management tool to provide effective warnings, to influence the public's perception of the disaster, and to prevent the spread of rumour (BBC Media Action 2012, Drabek 2010, Miao and Li-ping 2011, Quintanilla and Goodfriend 2012, Society for Risk Analysis Japan 2013, Wray et al. 2006). In addition, authors find that the source of the information is as important as the content in establishing trust (Arlkatti, Lindell, and Prater 2007, Rodríguez, Quarantelli and Dynes 2006, Ruffer 2011).

#### 2.4.3.3 Trust and social capital in disasters

Humanitarian organisations in disaster settings need to be seen as skilled responders, effective partners, and responsible users of donations (Drabek 2010, International Committee of the Red Cross 2011). Trust is the social capital that helps them achieve these goals, and some organisations refer to trust as their ‘brand’ (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative 2011: 39). Trust is difficult to build and easy to lose, so authors in the literature attempt to better understand the complex functioning of trust as social capital (Dussaillant and Guzmán 2014, Nakagawa and Shaw 2004).

#### 2.4.3.4 Trust and technology in disasters

Much of the literature on trust in disaster studies and the humanitarian space relates to trust in social media (Coyle and Meier 2009, Signorini 2011), radio (Appleby 2013, Quintanilla and Goodfriend 2012), and television (Mitomo et al. 2013, Sato 2013). In general, newer technologies are viewed with more suspicion, while older technologies are more trusted. Also, demographic factors – such as age, gender, or digital literacy levels – and fears around information security are suggested as factors influencing the levels of trust in technology in times of disaster (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2013, Quintanilla and Goodfriend 2012). The important role of trust in the adoption of technologies is summarised by Morrow et al. (2011: 17) ‘As one NGO leader said, “You need to face it -- people will not use it if they do not trust it -- if they do not believe it.”’

### **2.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this review of the literature on translation, interpreting, and trust in disaster settings has several implications for the present thesis. The literature supports the value of enquiring into both translation and interpreting instead of translation alone. It encourages the examination of diverse channels of publication across various disciplines. It shows that examining only professional translation and interpreting activities in the disaster would be restrictive and would likely cause informative instances of interlingual and intercultural transfer to be missed. Furthermore, it suggests that discussing communicative methods, how these methods can be improved – especially through technological assistance – as well as discussing the experiences of foreign nationals of the 2011 disaster will be valued not just by scholars of translation but by scholars in other disciplines, too. Finally, it indicates that, while the concept of trust is complex, there is some precedent for its use as an

analytical category in translation studies and great precedent for its use in examining disaster contexts, especially in relation to communication. The next chapter will explain how a methodology was developed for this research and how this methodology helped orient the thesis toward engaging with the existing literature in these ways.

*‘Verum esse ipsum factum.’*  
*(the true is precisely what is made)*

*Giambattista Vico, Philosopher (1668-1744)*

## Chapter 3 – Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how a methodology for this thesis was developed from the work of Kaisa Koskinen (2008) in *Translating Institutions: An Ethnographic Study of EU Translation*. In this work, Koskinen applied a selection of ethnographic methods and was guided by an overall ethnographic ethos to present a case study of a translating institution (ibid.: 3, 37). In a similar way, the present thesis made use of certain methods and theories from ethnography within a case study methodology to describe, understand, and explain the phenomena of translation and interpreting in the 2011 disaster.

The chapter begins by discussing the development of the ethnographic and case study traditions and provides definitions for these methodologies in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively. Section 3.4 then outlines the similarities and differences in the methodologies in Koskinen (2008) and in this thesis, while Section 3.5 situates the thesis within its epistemological and ontological frame. Finally, Section 3.6 explains how these various methods, theories, traditions, and philosophies were converted into the practical steps undertaken in this research.

### 3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography developed out of anthropology and sociology over the last century, and is now a frequently-used method of enquiry in the social sciences (Rist 1980). It is also an increasingly influential approach in translation studies, as will be shown below. The ideas and viewpoints dominant in ethnography have varied over time, and the major turns will now be described.

#### 3.2.1 Development of ethnography

Before the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, scholars relied on traveller accounts to make their studies of humankind. This is referred to in the literature as the period of ‘armchair’ anthropology or ethnography (Tedlock 2005: 475, Wolcott 2008: 14). Ethnography in the field was born in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when trained anthropologists and sociologists in the US, Britain, and France began to study humankind experientially through systematic field studies carried out using scientific methods of observation (Hammersley 1992, Wolcott 2008). The US tradition was pioneered by such scholars as Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber, while the British tradition was begun by such scholars as A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and

Bronislaw Malinowski (Saville-Troike 1989: 5). Some of the main contributors to the French tradition at this early stage were Claude Levi-Strauss and Alain Touraine (Fassin 2006).

Early ethnographic scholars in the US tradition tended to focus on presenting cultural patterns and artefacts, while early scholars in the British tradition tended to focus on presenting social and cultural meanings (Saville-Troike 1989, Wolcott 2008). These presentations, though, were criticised for their haphazard descriptiveness, and attention turned to more problem-based research. The research was still descriptive in nature, but the description provided was intended to answer some question. In 1925, Margaret Mead travelled to American Samoa to examine whether the experience of adolescence as a period of strain depended on one's cultural upbringing, and the resulting work, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (published in 1928), is said to be the first problem-focused ethnographic fieldwork (Tedlock 2005, Wolcott 2008). At about the same time, leading figures in the University Of Chicago School Of Sociology, notably W. I. Thomas and Robert E. Park, were using first-hand enquiry in Chicago's urban environments to answer questions on the social theory of human behaviour (Bulmer 1984).

By the 1960s, postmodernist and poststructuralist critiques of society and culture began to be applied to ethnographic research. Critical theorists questioned the way in which conventional ethnographers at that time defined the 'problems' that they set out to examine, and they questioned the very idea that these 'problems' could be solved. In short, these critiques: questioned modern assumptions about the objectivity and authority of the ethnographic researcher; questioned the power relations that formed the context of ethnographic research in a colonial and postcolonial world; proposed that ethnographic projects should be concerned not with solving problems but with bringing about human emancipation, especially in socialist and/or feminist terms, and with accounting for ethnography's roots in imperialism. These theorists set out to explain the nature of the social order in such a way that it would serve as a catalyst for the transformation of that order (Angrosino 2005, Asad 1973, Gough 1967, Hammersley 1992).

Scholars influenced by two decades of postmodernist, postcolonialist, feminist, and other critical theory, began to question issues of representation and legitimacy in ethnography by the 1980s. The modes of analysis prevalent in critical theories made scholars question whether a researcher has the right to write about someone else's world and worldview. Debates at this turn centred around the idea that the researcher is part of the social world that s/he studies, that the research projects will be shaped by the socio-historic processes, values, interests, and personal characteristics that shaped the researcher, and that the

findings of research have consequences and that these findings may even change the character of the situations that were studied (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). The reflexive turn in ethnography implies that the reader must be aware of the researcher's situation – especially in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, and other key categories found in critical theories – in order to interpret the ethnographic product and that the research should be re-focused on placing the participants' voices at the centre of the process (Sundar 2006). *Writing Culture*, published in 1986 by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, is canonical and greatly debated in the ethnographic literature. It is seen to be part of the postmodern, critical, and reflexive turns. It criticised how previous generations of ethnographers had attempted to claim authority through their detached writing styles, and it recommended writing strategies (such as personalised accounts) to bring the researcher's voice into the ethnographic product (Atkinson 2001).

Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, globalisation and technological developments have confronted ethnographers with another turn. In a networked and increasingly literate world, where communication technology is available even in remote corners, those people ethnographers may wish to research are now in a position to spread knowledge about their own cultures and societies by themselves to wide audiences (Angrosino 2005). Such developments have led to new challenges. How can the boundaries of virtual worlds be established? Is the ethnographer immersed in observation or simply following transient online traces? How should ethnographers treat issues of self-representation, new forms of discourse, and ethical challenges in online environments? If people are recording their own lives and making them public, what becomes of ethnography's descriptive role? Many of these questions are only beginning to be answered. Christine Hine is a scholar working on the challenges of pursuing ethnographic research in a networked world, and Hine's *Virtual Ethnography*, published in 2000, is an early work in the field. More recent works in the area of computer-mediated ethnography include Kozinets (2010) and Boellstorff (2012). Debates around the ethnography taking place in computer-mediated environments are becoming increasingly sophisticated, and there is now a distinction being made between virtual ethnography (e.g., ethnography of an environment such as Second Life where it is a world in and of itself) and cyber-ethnography, online ethnography, netnography, or digital ethnography (in which the physical world is more obviously also a possible locus of investigation). Moreover, the idea of a final monograph being privileged as the main outcome of ethnography is being challenged by these new forms (Hallett and Barber 2014, Hine 2014). Finally, the many new challenges arising out of the global and technological turns have caused a number of ethnographers to focus on ethics. Some in the literature even claim that ethnography is distinctive in the academy for the ethical rigour it now applies to



all stages of the research process. See, for instance, Lederman (2006), Markham (2005), or Warner, (2009).

### 3.2.2 *How ethnography is viewed in the discipline of translation studies*

The disciplinary developments in ethnography detailed above suggest that translators, translation scholars, and ethnographers share some similarities in how they work, how they see the world, and how their worlds are structured. Certainly, processes of interpretation, of writing, of reflexivity, and of dialogue with external research sources are characteristic of all three occupations (Buzelin 2009, Wolf 2002). In particular, Wolf (2002: 183) draws a clear comparison between ethnographers and translators in relation to their engagement with interpretation: ‘While the ethnographer interprets experiences, notes and observations, the translator interprets a pre-given text.’ Valero-Garcés (1995) takes this engagement with interpretation and adds to it a characteristic relativism:

In short, relativism and manipulation of information are present in the task of both ethnographer and translator. Both of them share a series of characteristics as practitioners of an activity that will never end: the activity of translating. (Valero-Garcés 1995: 562)

Meanwhile, Buzelin (2007) sees self-reflection as a category that all three occupations share:

In a certain way, each time they have attempted to reflect upon and theorize about translation on the basis of their own practice, translation scholars and translators have acted as ethnographers. (Buzelin 2007: 143)

World views and philosophies offer up other areas of common ground. Early scholars in translation studies, such as Eugene Nida and Georges Mounin, saw ethnography as a promising approach to solving problems and building theory in the area of translation (Buzelin 2009). Moreover, Hans Vermeer, who developed Skopos Theory with Katharina Reiss, used the work of cultural anthropologist Heinz Göhring in his development of this influential theory of translation (Bahadir 2004). Following the move to a post-structuralist, post-colonialist, critical framework in translation studies – the so-called cultural turn – scholars began to draw on ethnographic research as ways to deal with issues of partiality, historical contingency, and representation (Agorni 2007, Bachmann-Medick 2009) and especially to draw on efforts made by anthropologists to understand the dichotomy between Self and Other that was seen to be a distinctive feature of the work of both the ethnographer and the translator (Wolf 2002).

The cultural turn that revolutionized translation studies occurred in the wake of the important historical period of decolonization. A little later, translation studies adopted the epistemological and critical ideas of the anthropologists, who had earlier questioned their practices and resulting effects...The anthropologists were concerned to know what happened to the translation of otherness when that otherness was little understood. (Brisset 2010: 71-72)

Chief among the ethnographers that provided inspiration at this time were Talal Asad (1973), Clifford Geertz (1973), James Clifford & George Marcus (1986), and James Clifford (1988).

Ethnography is also seen as a repository of methodological tools and approaches that can be used by translation scholars (Hubscher-Davidson 2011). Some projects in translation studies borrow and adapt elements of the ethnographic approach without including some characteristic features of the method, such as fieldwork or participant observation. For example, in one translation project, Martha Cheung (2006) applied the ethnographically-informed idea of 'thick translation' to illustrate the specificity of certain Chinese intellectual concepts from their approximate renderings in English. 'Thick translation' was recommended by Kwame Anthony Appiah (2000) to develop a notion of translation rich in annotations, glosses, and context and was adapted from the concept of 'thick description' popularised by the ethnographer Clifford Geertz (1973: 20–21). In Cheung's practical application of Appiah's notion, certain distinctive, intellectual concepts in Chinese are illustrated by explanatory notes, contextualizing texts, and texts on translation from the historical period in question. The idea of 'thick translation' was also applied by Wakabayashi (2009) as a way to gain insight into Japanese views on translation through a semantic mapping of the domain of 'translation' in the Japanese sociolinguistic context. In another practical application of ethnographic methods, Marinetti and Rose (2013) made use of ethnography's tools for self-reflection to foreground the many negotiations, tensions, conflicts, and controversies that occurred in their translation of a play for the theatre.

Other projects in translation studies are larger-scale projects that resemble more closely research projects in the full ethnographic tradition. For instance, Angelelli (2004) performed the first ethnographic study of the role of medical interpreters in a hospital setting, and Risku (2004) used extensive ethnographic fieldwork to examine the work of translation management and project coordination in one real-world office setting. These works are seen as key developments in the move towards ethnography becoming a more popular approach in translation studies. In other examples, H  l  ne Buzelin (2005, 2007, 2009) used the anthropologist Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory to carry out an ethnographic study of three Montreal-based independent publishing houses, while Peter Flynn (2007) carried out an ethnographic study of literary translation practice in the

Netherlands and Belgium. Then, in the area of computer-mediated ethnography, Magdalena Dombek (2014) used methods tailored specifically to carrying out ethnographic research online to investigate the motivations of a community of Polish Facebook users to contribute to the crowdsourced translation of the Facebook experience. The work on which the methodology in this thesis is based – Koskinen’s (2008) study of the Finnish translation unit at the Luxembourg branch of the European Commission – has also been influential in how ethnography has come to be viewed in translation studies. (Koskinen’s work will be explained in detail in Section 3.4.)

To fully understand the academic tradition on which this thesis project is calling, it is also instructive to examine the ways in which translation is viewed in the discipline of ethnography.

### *3.2.3 How translation is viewed in the discipline of ethnography*

A discourse of otherness runs throughout the development of ethnography, and the study of the Other was long seen as its *raison d'être*. Navigating these Other social worlds has long implied translation and interpreting. Part of the rite-of-passage for the ethnographer was to use key informants from the local culture or social group as translator/interpreters. The researcher was also expected to develop her/his own fluency in the local language. However, it is remarkable how little record there is in ethnographic literature for the issues of translation and interpreting. Agar (1980) declares his own surprise at this invisibility:

One of the most interesting results of my trip through the literature was the scarcity of discussions I found on the topic of translation. Many authors emphasize the importance of language competence in ethnography, and they also note the new problems that are introduced when one must rely on an interpreter. Yet the literature is eerily quiet on the subject. I get the image of nervous ethnographers who are far from fluent trying not to bring up the subject. (Agar 1980: 150)

More recent ethnographic works – such as an often-referenced collection of ethnographies in Burawoy (2000) which explore the interactions of local struggles and the forces of globalisation – still make no reference to translation or interpreting in the sense of interlingual or intercultural transfer. A possible reason for this lack of acknowledgement of linguistic mediation is the fact that the ethnographic process arises from an interpretivist dilemma; ethnographers claim to be interpreting the meaning that the researched people attribute to objects in their social or cultural worlds, but when the interpretivist researcher is doing this through a third party, s/he is suspicious of the vulnerability to confounding extra meanings that this can produce:

Some researchers, especially in anthropological interviews, tend to rely on interpreters and so become vulnerable to added layers of meanings, biases, and interpretations, and this may lead to disastrous misunderstandings (Freeman 1983 cited in Fontana and Frey 2005: 707).

Of course, all this is not to say that language is absent from the ethnographic discourse entirely. Indeed, there is a sub-discipline of ethnography introduced by Dell Hymes in 1962 – the ethnography of communication – that deals with what the speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular speech community, with how he or she learns it, and with how language interacts with all other systems of culture (Saville-Troike 1989: 1–3). A contemporary area of interest among ethnographers is in the role of volunteers, especially children, in the linguistic and cultural brokering of ethnographic interactions (e.g., Reynolds and Faulstich Orellana 2014), and work is being done to emphasise how the systematic study of translation practices can enlighten typical ethnographic objects of enquiry such as meaning, representation, and culture (Sturge 1997, 2007).

In sum, the chapter so far has shown that ethnography brings with it a rich academic heritage that allows the researcher to draw on a variety of methods and theories. It has also shown that there are significant areas of convergence in the disciplinary developments and the academic conversations present in both ethnography and translation studies. Finally, it has equally been shown that there is precedent in the translation studies literature for applying the principles of ethnography to research in the discipline, and that an interest in ethnographic approaches in translation studies (whether full ethnographies or a selective application of ethnographic elements) is growing, but that the same level of interest in translational issues is not present in the discipline of ethnography.

To better understand the ethnographic methods and elements of an ethnographic ethos that have and have not been applied in this research project, an operational definition for ethnography will now be proposed.

#### 3.2.4 Defining ethnography

Based on the discussion above, the following definition of ethnography created by the researcher is proposed for this research: *ethnography is a form of research that provides a holistic description of a culture or society through the integration and interpretation of a variety of datasets that are usually gathered over a prolonged period from an ecologically-valid setting through the researcher's direct experience.* This definition encompasses the

central elements of ethnography that needed to be considered when adapting the Koskinen (2008) methodology to this research.

#### 3.2.4.1 Description

Specifically, it was necessary to consider the extent to which this research would involve the description of social and cultural phenomena. As explained in Section 3.2.2, the term ‘thick description’ appears regularly in the literature. Popularised by Geertz (1973: 20–21), the term refers to the production of an ethnographic account that contains not only observations but also interpretations, commentaries, and contextual detail related to these observations. A feature of the ethnographic method, therefore, is that it describes social and cultural phenomena in great detail. If such ‘thick description’ is done well, it is intended to closely recreate the social or cultural setting in question, to reveal the complex layers of meaning surrounding the ethnographic object, and to give enough context to allow phenomenological understanding (Jones 2010).

#### 3.2.4.2 Culture or society

It was also necessary to consider whether the research would describe a culture, a society, or some other cultural or social phenomena. For some authors in the literature, culture is what defines ethnography. For instance, Clifford (1988) sees ethnography essentially as thinking and writing about culture, and Wolcott (2008) proposes that culture in ethnography serves as the bonding agent that allows disparate bits of data from the social world to be formed into a cohesive whole. However, other authors do not see the principle of culture as being so fundamental. For example Blommaert and Jie (2010: 42) assert that ‘research is ethnographic because it accepts a number of fundamental principles and views on social reality.’ Note that culture is not mentioned. Moreover, the introduction to Atkinson’s *Handbook of Ethnography* (2001) gives prominence to both the social and the cultural:

They are grounded in a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of *a particular social or cultural setting* on the basis of (though not exclusively by) participant observation. (Atkinson 2001: 4, emphasis added)

In fact, a focus on either the social or the cultural is often used as a stamp of the researcher’s ethnographic heritage; scholars in the British tradition tend to focus on society, while scholars in the US tradition tend to focus on culture (Wolcott 2008).

### 3.2.4.3 Integration and interpretation

Another consideration was how this project would integrate and interpret the data gathered. A distinctive feature of ethnography is how it uses its thickly described detail to find the interconnectedness between the cultural, social, political, economic, and other contexts in which the phenomena to be understood are located. Where the ethnographer adds value is in how these observations are organised, analysed, and reported (Wolcott 2008: 46). Keesing and Strathern (1998: 7) highlight the central place of interpretation in their definition of ethnography: ‘The process of recording and interpreting another people’s way of life is called ethnography.’

### 3.2.4.4. Ecologically-valid, ethical datasets

It was furthermore necessary to consider the datasets that would be gathered for this study. The data-gathering process in ethnography will generally produce a variety of datasets to provide as much detail as possible to convey the quality of a personal interaction, a place, or a point in time. The object of study may be recorded in the form of field notes, voice recordings and transcripts, ethnographic encounters, personal reflections, grey literature, maps and diagrams, recorded images, or computer-mediated communications. Many ethnographic objects will be speaking objects, and contemporary ethnographies place importance on having the participants’ voices at the centre of the account (Sundar 2006) and on representing under-represented voices (Angrosino 2005). Since the reflexive turn, these voices usually include the researcher’s own voice. This centrality of participant voices in ethnography implies that ethical issues must be interrogated actively throughout all stages of the research process (Lederman 2006, Markham 2005). While the gathered data may differ from project to project, many authors in the literature see carrying out studies in ecologically-valid settings as the essence of ethnography (see, for example, Brewer 2000: 6).

### 3.2.4.5 Prolonged period

The period of data gathering was another consideration in how ethnography would inform this research. Historically, ethnography has entailed long periods of fieldwork lasting a year or preferably more (Handwerker 2001). Such time in the field was seen as necessary to build relationships, gain trust, recruit informants, and become immersed in the language and culture of a group. It also came to be seen as a rite-of-passage in the career of an anthropologist (Rist 1980). Views in the literature about the period and frequency of visits to the field have changed, as have ideas of what constitutes the field in a networked world.

Thus, recent authors talk of projects ranging in length from several days, to several weeks, to several years (Agar 1980, Hammersley 1992). This raises the question of what period of fieldwork might be considered too short or too long. The consensus in the literature seems to be that '[a] long-term commitment is assumed but there is no specified minimum' (Wolcott 2008: 66).

#### 3.2.4.6 Researcher's direct experience

Finally, it was necessary to consider how the researcher's direct experience of the objects of enquiry would be treated in this research project. 'Observation and participation (according to circumstance and the analytic purpose at hand) remain the characteristic features of the ethnographic approach' (Atkinson 2001: 4-5). It should be noted here that observation in a detached, scientific sense of the word is not what is characteristic of ethnography. Rather, it is better understood as the negotiation between perspectives, between the emic and the etic, between the viewpoint of the insider and the perspective of the outsider:

Ethnographers make a commitment and demonstrate a willingness to participate in the social worlds of their research subjects on different levels: physical, social, mental and emotional. (Jones 2010: 7)

It can be seen from the above why ethnography is referred to in the literature as 'an approach in which the self is instrument' (Wolcott 2008: 45). A corollary of the fact that the researcher is expected to participate in social worlds at different levels like this, though, is that these levels must be strictly bounded in the project. Otherwise, the researcher would not be able to directly observe and participate in them, and analysis would become unwieldy if not impossible.

To conclude, this section has outlined the fundamentals of ethnographic research and introduced the main issues to be considered when applying the principles of ethnography to a research project. As was explained in Section 3.1, both this thesis and Koskinen (2008) – on which the methodology for this thesis is based – present case studies. The following section, therefore, will discuss case study research.

### 3.3 Case study

The term ‘case study’ means different things to different people. Areas of similarity and difference first become apparent by examining how the case study has developed over time.

#### 3.3.1 Historical development of the case study

The case study has been developed over the years in a variety of different disciplines and research traditions. In particular, the study of cases has been crucial to the development of certain health sciences, the law, political science, and anthropology (Swanborn 2010). The case study has also been a widely used design in the discipline of translation studies (Susam-Sarajeva 2009). However, it is in sociology and the social sciences that much of the most active theoretical discussion of the case study has taken place, and this chapter draws mainly on debates in this social science tradition.

In a systematic review of the term *case study* in American sociology, Platt (1992) traces the use of the term to social workers’ case histories and case work, pointing out that the term began to appear in textbooks in the 1920s. The use of the case study in France, though, dates back even further to 1877 when Frédéric Le Play’s *Les Ouvriers Européens* was published (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993). The most significant period in the development of the case study in the social science tradition probably resulted from research done by the Chicago School. The Chicago School refers to studies of social problems linked to increasing urbanisation and immigration carried out at the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago from 1916 to the 1930s (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993, Platt 1992). Here we begin to see some overlap between the case study and ethnographic traditions, as the Chicago School is also claimed as a point of development in the ethnographic literature (see Section 3.2.1). Regardless of the academic tradition to which this school rightfully belongs, its focus is described in both literatures as being on encouraging students to create knowledge in the field through participant observation. Students in this school were advised to ‘go beyond official documents and come into personal contact with poverty and deviance’ (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993: 14). The dominance of the case study in the Chicago tradition was eroded by the rise of the statistical method and the popularity of the survey as a form of social investigation (Platt 1992).



### *3.3.2 Case study typologies*

Despite these tensions between experiential and statistical approaches to social investigation, the case study can embrace both qualitative and quantitative methods (Gerring 2007, Platt 1992, Stake 1995, Swanborn 2010, Yin 2014). A more useful way of differentiating the many forms of case study, therefore, is suggested by Stake (1995: 37-39) and Swanborn (2010: 22). They divide case studies into those that seek to understand and explain relationships of cause and effect and those that aim to describe, understand, and explain some part of human experience. While the two types seek to attain different goals, they are both, nonetheless, inductive approaches in which the researcher moves from empirical observations to engage with broader generalisations and theories. Other influential typologies have been created by Yin (2014: 50), who differentiates between variants of single- and multiple-case designs, and by Gerring (2007: 88), who proposes a typology of case studies based on how the researcher selects the case(s) to be studied.

### *3.3.3 Case study epistemologies*

Linked to the variety in case study types, it should be noted, too, that the method does not imply an invariable epistemological or ontological perspective (Mitchell 2000, Yin 2014). The case study is flexible. Generally, researchers using a case study design adopt either a realist orientation that assumes the existence of an independent reality that can be known by an observer (see Gerring 2007, Swanborn 2010, Yin 2014) or a constructivist-relativist orientation that assumes multiple realities, the knowledge of which is constructed by observers through their experience and perception (see Creswell 2007, Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993, Stake 1995).

### *3.3.4 Key common features*

Despite the many traditions in which the case study is used, despite its many types, and despite the many theoretical perspectives on knowledge and reality that it can incorporate, there are certain core elements that are common to most descriptions of case study design. These are that the case study deals best with ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions; is descriptive; employs and triangulates multiple methods to gather multiple sources of evidence to present multiple perspectives; is progressively focused; is an effective research design when the goal is to generalise analytically rather than statistically. These features will now be discussed in more detail.

The case study is not appropriate for answering questions related to frequency or incidence, but it is a useful method when the main research questions to be answered are ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions (Yin 2014). The object of enquiry in a case should be a complex phenomenon that requires in-depth description before it can be properly understood. A common feature of case study design is that it implies a form of description that is ‘complex, holistic and involving a myriad of not highly isolated variables’ (Stake 2000: 24). A case study will flexibly employ a variety of methods to gather empirical data. These data may include interviews, observations, artefacts, field notes, and documentary evidence. It is the variety of these materials that ensures the depth of description of the object of enquiry and that allows the researcher to generate a holistic and real-world perspective (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993, Yin 2014). In presenting multiple perspectives on the object of enquiry, the researcher will aim to go beyond pure description and achieve understanding and explanation. These multiple perspectives – varied and even competing interpretations and understandings of the object – will be triangulated by the researcher to present the most reasonable explanation as it relates to the theoretical stance taken toward the case (Stake 1995), and the search for the convergence and non-convergence of evidence is standard in the case study process (Yin 2014). The inductive nature of these processes means that any case study design will be open to unanticipated developments. As the study progresses, the organising concepts of the study may need to be changed. However, this ‘progressive focus’ (Stake 1995: 133) should be matched at all times with systematic procedures, methodological rigour, and a commitment to the fair and open reporting of all these developments (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993, Yin 2014). Perhaps because of this openness to flexible and developing methods, the case study is characterised by how carefully and transparently it establishes the boundaries of its enquiry (Stake 2000, Swanborn 2010), so that, as the study progresses, the initial object of enquiry does not get lost or forgotten. In addition, while it is true that some case study researchers seek to represent samples and extrapolate probabilities about cause and effect relationships (see, for example, Gerring 2007), the case study – especially the case study seeking experiential understanding – is better suited to expanding and generalising theories than to generalising to populations or universes (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993, Matthews and Ross 2010, Yin 2014). In other words, in a case study, the researcher is attempting to shed some empirical light on a theoretical concept rather than to make inferences about a population based on these empirical data. However, it must be recognised that generalising from case study data is a contentious issue, and some authors deny the possibility of generalisation entirely; see, for example Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2000) for more detail on these debates.

### *3.3.5 The viability of an ethnographically-informed case study*

It can be argued, then, that a case study design fits well with the fundamental principles of ethnography. Specifically, we have seen that the case study may sometimes employ participant observation and may use the direct experience of the researcher as sources of data. It tries to holistically describe and understand some aspect of human experience, and it triangulates multiple sources of evidence to search for the connections and interrelationships that create a convincing explanation of that experience. In other words, there is clear support in the literature for the viability of Koskinen's (2008) method of presenting a case study using a selection of ethnographic methods and being guided by an overall ethnographic ethos. With this in mind, the next section will discuss the similarities and differences in how such an ethnographically-informed case study methodology was applied in Koskinen (2008) and in this thesis.

### *3.4 Comparing the methodologies of Koskinen (2008) and this thesis*

This thesis responds to Koskinen's call for extended, sociologically-framed empirical work in translation studies (Koskinen 2008: 39, 57). It uses a new context (that of disaster translation and interpreting) to show how 'the principles of ethnography were applied in one particular case study' (ibid.: 12). Adapting Koskinen's methodology to the needs of this research promised to be useful for three main reasons. Firstly, it promised 'a robust and adaptable framework for a situated analysis of a particular group of people' (ibid.: 36); this study aimed for such an analysis of certain foreign residents of Japan. Secondly, it offered ways for a researcher to systematically capitalise on her/his previous personal experience of a research object and incorporate it into the research (ibid.: 8–9, 52–55); the researcher himself experienced the 2011 disaster. Finally, it promised guidance in negotiating the emic and etic tensions created by such insider and outsider perspectives (ibid.: 51, 91). How similar, then, to the methodology in Koskinen (2008) was the methodology implemented in this thesis?

#### *3.4.1 Similarities between Koskinen (2008) and this thesis*

Table 3–1 explains in detail how Koskinen (2008) and this thesis shared the same general methodological framework and ethos, applied many of the same ethnographic methods, and analysed data at similar levels. The table also explains how the roles of the researcher in the two projects were broadly similar, how similar in scale and contextual dependence the two projects were, and how many of the same practical steps were implemented in both methodologies. In addition, the table details how the two research processes aimed for a

similar final research product and had a similar final overall aim.

Similarities between the methodologies in Koskinen (2008) and in this thesis:	Comment:
<b>Framework and ethos:</b> Both research projects use ethnography as 'a loose methodological framework and ethos for the research process' to explore the life and work of certain individuals (Koskinen 2008: 37).	The individuals in question are certain translators in EU institutions for Koskinen and certain foreign residents of Japan for this thesis.
<b>Ethnographic methods applied:</b> Both projects commit to 'an open-ended research process' to using engaged interpretation to understand a social phenomenon, to the 'dialogic combination of different viewpoints', and to the 'combination of different kinds of data, those elicited or provoked and those occurring naturally' (Ibid.: 38), specifically field notes, questionnaires, and interview materials, all of which are collected and analysed using ideas from 'a wide array of disciplines' (Ibid.: 5). Moreover, both projects set out to represent underrepresented voices (Ibid.: v).	Both projects borrow from the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. Koskinen uses organisation theory and cultural studies, while this thesis adopts ideas from socio-cognitive theory and disaster studies. In addition, Koskinen argues that the role of translators has been relatively invisible in the discourse on EU institutions, while this thesis argues that the voices of foreign residents are underrepresented in the discourse on translation and interpreting in the 2011 disaster.
<b>Analytical levels:</b> Both projects conduct analysis at macro, meso, and micro levels (Ibid.: 19, 593) in order to provide an account of the 'multiple sources of data, multiple methods of analysis' and the 'multiple sites and time-frames' (Ibid.: 6) that are generated by an ethnographic orientation. Even so, both projects centre their explorations on the life and work of the individuals at the centres of their studies (Ibid.: 48), and prioritise the insider perspective among the mix of voices being heard (Ibid.: 9).	For Koskinen, this implied an analysis of the EU institutions (macro), of certain translators in those institutions (meso), and of certain texts worked on by those translators (micro). For this thesis, this implied an analysis of the context of the communicative scene in the 2011 disaster (macro), of certain foreign residents in that scene (meso), and of some of their encounters with translation and interpreting through the analytical lens of trust theory (micro). Also, having identified these explicit levels of analysis in advance of the project helped to clearly set the temporal and spatial boundaries of the enquiry – clear boundaries being a distinctive advantage of both the ethnographic and case study methods.
<b>Researcher role:</b> Both projects take the personal history of the researcher as a significant background factor (Ibid.: 8), use the researcher as a central research instrument (Ibid.: 51), recognise explicitly in the research product that they did not undertake the project as a <i>tabula rasa</i> (Ibid.: 37), incorporate extensive self-reflection and questioning of the researcher's role (Ibid.: 9, 37), treat the researcher's own memories as additional sets of data (Ibid.: 52), and acknowledge the ambiguity around the emic and etic perspectives in these projects where the researcher is at once an insider and an outsider (Ibid.: 55).	For Koskinen, this factor arose out of her prior occupation as an EU translator while, for this thesis, it arose out of the researcher's own experience of the disaster setting and personal profile matching that of the target participant.
<b>Scale and context-dependence:</b> Both projects are on an empirically small scale (Ibid.: 7), but nonetheless engage with a large and complex contextual background. All data – especially interview data – are analysed with the contextual setting as a baseline of meaning and as a broader framework of interpretation (Ibid.: 84), and no data set is designed to be interpreted out of context (Ibid.: 87).	For Koskinen, her study centred on the 23 translators in the relevant Finnish unit and on the 11 of these translators who participated in her focus groups. The present thesis was centred on interviews with the 28 foreign residents who agreed to participate in the project.
<b>Practical steps and ethics:</b> Both projects used a short questionnaire administered before talking to participants to ensure data collection and to supplement interview data (Ibid.: 87), kept transcription conventions to a minimum to enhance readability without hampering analysis (Ibid.: 88), felt a moral responsibility toward their participants (Ibid.: 37), provided a brief introduction to the research prior to meeting (Ibid.: 90), intentionally worked to confront questions of ethical responsibility and power in the research process (Ibid.: 55), and ensured participants had an opportunity to read and member check the data and analysis prior to publication (Ibid.: 90) and to give their comments (Ibid.: 10).	While institutional ethical regulation may have necessitated some of these practical steps, these ethical components were largely influenced by the projects' ethnographic approaches.
<b>Final research product:</b> Neither project situates itself in the literature as an ethnography nor claims that its final product should be assessed as a full ethnography. Koskinen (2008) claims that her work 'tells an illustrative story of how and to what extent the principles of ethnography were applied in one particular case study' (Ibid.: 12). Similarly, the present thesis should be assessed as a case study that has nonetheless applied a selection of ethnographic methods and used ethnographic theories as a guiding ethos.	This is an important distinction for assessing the final research products of both projects. What Koskinen showed convincingly is that the logic of a case study can be used to successfully apply a selection of ethnographic methods and principles while still creating a rigorous and theoretically grounded methodology. Moreover, Koskinen showed that a case study can be enriched by this ethnographic framework and ethos.
<b>Final aim:</b> Both projects share a final aim to improve translation practices and processes in a particular social setting (Ibid.: 57).	Koskinen hopes that her work may eventually contribute to an improvement in the European Commission, while this project hopes that it may help in some small way to improve the translation and interpreting activities that occur in future disasters in Japan.

Table 3-1. Similarities between the methodologies in Koskinen (2008) and in this thesis

### 3.4.2 Differences between Koskinen (2008) and this thesis

Despite the similarities between Koskinen (2008) and this thesis, the two methodologies also diverged in significant ways, as has been detailed in Table 3–2. The table shows that the differing objects of enquiry in the two projects led to certain methodological differences

and that, while the levels of analysis in the two methodologies were the same, the strategies adopted to then analyse the data at these levels were different. Furthermore, the table also explains that not all the same ethnographic and case study methods were applied in the two projects.

Differences between the methodologies in Koskinen (2008) and in this thesis:	
<p><b>Objects of enquiry:</b> Koskinen (2008) leaves interpreting outside of the scope of her study (Ibid. 3) focusing only on translation and uses culture as the guiding construct for the study of her object of enquiry (Ibid.: 6). The present thesis, meanwhile, enquires into both translation and interpreting and uses culture only as an element of context and not as a central construct in the enquiry.</p> <p><b>Analytical strategy:</b> Koskinen (2008) operationalises a nexus model of analysis in which the object of study is put as the nexus and connections are made from it to all relevant data sets during the process of analysis (Ibid.: 1-2). The work also uses shift analysis of certain translated texts to conduct textual analysis at the micro level (Ibid. 121). The present thesis, however, analyses its data according to a form of thematic analysis operationalised from Braun and Clarke (2006). This thematic analysis provided an explicit audit trail of analysis with clearly detailed analytical phases and tasks, definitions of all codes considered, and a log of how these codes were derived and manipulated to create a final interpretation. It also replaces textual analysis with a micro analysis of instances of trust, and merely provides a small corpus of real communication (including some translated materials) to better illustrate the context.</p> <p><b>Ethnographic methods applied:</b> Koskinen (2008) utilises participant observation and focus group discussions (Ibid.: 53) as main data gathering tools. However, the present thesis uses ethnographic interviews as the main way to gather data.</p> <p><b>Case study methods applied:</b> Koskinen (2008) did not make use of vignettes in her methodology. However, this method proved a useful tool for highlighting important contextual elements of the present thesis (see Section 4.4.2), and helped to stamp the work more clearly as a case study that was, nonetheless, heavily informed by ethnography.</p>	<p><b>Comment:</b></p> <p>The lack of a claim to be making a study of culture in the present thesis is another major factor in why this work does not situate itself as a full ethnography.</p> <p>The constructivist philosophical approach adopted for the present thesis required an explicit audit trail that would allow the interested reader to attempt to reconstruct and confirm the viability of the researcher's interpretations. Thus, an explicit and detailed analytical strategy was needed. The thematic analysis fulfilled this need better than the strategy used in Koskinen (2008) which was found to be vague and lacking in a clear audit trail. Moreover, interpreting data using a form of thematic analysis is well established in both the ethnographic and case study traditions. See, for instance, O'Reilly (2009) and Stake (1995).</p> <p>The lack of participant observation in the present thesis is a major factor in why it makes no claim to be an ethnography but situates itself, rather, as an ethnographically-informed case study.</p> <p>A vignette is a brief representation of a part of the case used to help illustrate an important aspect of the overall case study (Stake 1995: 128) and is frequently included in case study reports.</p>

Table 3-2. Differences between the methodologies in Koskinen (2008) and in this thesis

To sum up, the methodologies in Koskinen (2008) and in this thesis have been shown to be broadly similar and differed mainly in some of their objects of enquiry, their analytical

strategies, and their ethnographic and case study techniques. What, then, has been learned as a result of adapting Koskinen (2008) to this research project?

### *3.4.3 Learning points from implementing this methodology*

One learning point from adapting Koskinen's (2008) methodology to this research concerned assessment. Combining two similar methodologies such as ethnography and the case study can lead to richer techniques of research and can allow the researcher to call on more diverse datasets and theories. However, it can also make the final research products more difficult to assess. Should the research be assessed as an ethnography, a case study, or both? Both Koskinen (2008) and this thesis claimed to be combinations of both ethnography and case study, but to differing degrees. As a result, it was necessary in this thesis to detail the developments and fundamental definitions of both ethnography and case studies and to make explicit the elements of both traditions that were and were not included in the final methodology. Choosing to situate this thesis purely as a case study would have mitigated the need for this extra work, but would also have diminished the theories, datasets, and techniques that could have been called on, especially to deal with the researcher's personal experience of the object of enquiry and to deal with the ethical responsibilities involved in using others' life experiences as a basis for research. On balance, the combination of ethnography and case study was more advantageous than a case study alone.

Another learning point was to realise how difficult it is to define exactly what makes a methodology ethnographic. For instance, this thesis does not make a study of a culture. Does a culture have to be studied for the methodology to be ethnographic? While Koskinen (2008) does claim to be studying a culture, she was not clear on whether the study of a culture was necessary to define ethnography. While she clearly sets out to explore a 'cultural scene' (ibid.: 40), examine 'the artefacts of a particular culture' (ibid.: 6), and to 'learn from those who inhabit the culture' (ibid.: 37), she also defines ethnography in terms of community ('Ethnography is a holistic study of a particular culture, or community...' [ibid.: 37]) and of society ('The ethnographer attempts to acquire a comprehensive understanding of what is going on in a particular pocket of society, and seeks answers by entering the scene and trying to make sense of it' [ibid.: 51]). Koskinen herself seems to recognise how problematic defining ethnography in terms of culture can be: 'Ethnography, the study of cultures, always implies a theory of culture, but what the concept of culture actually means has become a tricky issue' (ibid.: 40). Culture, indeed, may not have the explanatory power once claimed of it and, with ample precedent in the literature for

defining ethnography in terms of the study of a social setting (see Section 3.2.4.2), it became clear that not studying a culture did not preclude this thesis from claiming to be ethnographic in approach. Additionally, another way in which ethnography can be defined is by the centrality it places on participant observation in the field. Koskinen (2008) combined observation of her target translators in the field with focus group interview data to make her analysis. However, this thesis uses interview data without observation, and the research participants were not observed as they experienced a disaster. Does this lack of observation void this thesis' claim to being ethnographic? Another learning point here was that answering 'yes' to this question would be to take an impoverished view of the possibilities of ethnography. Over and above participant observation, ethnography provided access to novel datasets (e.g., the researcher's personal emails or blog entries), to tools for self-reflection, and to guidance on how to negotiate the interpretation of these personal experiences. Moreover, virtual and online ethnographies are now diminishing the centrality of observation in the field to ethnography, and immersion in the social world around the phenomenon being researched is a more desirable aim (Hallett and Barber 2014, Hine 2014). In short, culture and participant observation are important to ethnography, but they are not the only elements that make a study ethnographic.

A further learning point related to the appropriateness of Koskinen's analytical strategy. Koskinen operationalised a nexus model to analyse her data and used the metaphor of weaving a net to explain how this model tied the various datasets she gathered together (ibid.: 11). However, precisely how she weaved these nets remained too unclear to be of use in a constructivist philosophical frame; the constructivist perspective adopted in this thesis required the presentation of an explicit analytical strategy and a detailed audit trail so that the reader of the research could potentially attempt to reconstruct the researcher's interpretations and independently assess their viability (see Section 3.5 for more detail). For such a purpose, the thematic analytical strategy operationalised from Braun and Clarke (2006) proved more appropriate.

A final learning point concerned the difficulty of replicating Koskinen's microanalysis: that is, the textual analysis of translated documents focusing on shifts. The inability to copy this form of microanalysis arose from the different research contexts in which the two projects took place. This thesis set out to explore whether translated information was used or even needed in the 2011 disaster. Without knowing whether translation or interpreting were used or needed, what value would there be in the detailed analysis of a translated text? Nonetheless, as conducting analysis at the macro, meso, and micro levels was central to Koskinen's methodology, a microanalysis of participants' encounters with translation and

interpreting through the theoretical lens of trust was carried out. (See Chapter 6 for more on this.) In addition, a small corpus of real texts from the disaster (including some translated texts) was presented in the thesis to compensate for this lack of textual analysis. (See Section 4.5.5 for this small, illustrative corpus.)

Now that it is clear how the methodology in this thesis compares to that of Koskinen (2008), and with the knowledge that any differences can be defended with reference to the literature on ethnography and the case study, the next section will clarify the epistemological and ontological perspectives taken on this research, as well as some other relevant assumptions and biases.

### ***3.5 Epistemology, ontology, assumptions, and biases***

The aim of making explicit the ontological and epistemological aspects of this enquiry is to clarify what is being claimed to be known in this research and how this knowledge might usefully be evaluated (Margolis 2004).

This research has not been carried out in a realist paradigm, even though this paradigm is not uncommon in the traditions of case study and ethnography. Realism assumes the existence of a separate, objective reality made up of certain indisputable facts that can be experienced by all in the same way and discovered to be true in the research process (Gibbs 2002). Rather, this research has been carried out in a constructivist paradigm. ‘Constructivism (interchangeably referred to in the literature as constructionism) is an intellectual tradition present in the disciplines of education, psychology, psychiatry, and anthropology...’ (Maréchal 2010: 220) and is a widely used theory of knowledge and reality found in many case studies and ethnographic projects (Stake 1995, Creswell 2007).

Constructivism originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with Giambattista Vico and was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by proponents such as Jean Piaget, Gaston Bachelard, and John Dewey (Glaserfeld 1984, Maréchal 2010). The theory’s original proposition is that we only know something when we make it, because this allows us to understand the components of the thing in question and how these components interrelate. A more sophisticated interpretation of this proposition is: ‘Knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject’ (Glaserfeld 1984: 162). Thus, from a constructivist perspective, everything – even our concepts of what is real and what exists in the world – are the results of human cognition (Gibbs 2002). The important implications here are twofold. Firstly, this then means that our conceptions of what is real, true,



objective, and rational must be seen as artefacts of our own history and are, therefore, culturally determined (Margolis 2004). Secondly, as a result:

The purpose of both lay and scientific knowledge construction is to provide useful, adequate, coherent, stable, or meaningful representations of the world in accordance with particular sets of systemic or sociolinguistic rules and constraints in given contexts. (Maréchal 2010: 220)

If reality, knowledge, and truth are culturally relative constructions based on subjective perceptions and experiences, how then do we find structure and create meaning and valuable knowledge in our world? Constructivists in the biological-systemic tradition assert that we create the experience of ‘reality’ by finding the structures – the ordered ways of behaving and thinking – that allow us to establish repeatable experiences and relatively reliable relations between these experiences (Maréchal 2010). Knowledge is what we build up to order our flow of experience, and viable knowledge is the knowledge that helps us achieve the goals we set in our experiential world (Glaserfeld 1984). From a biological-systemic perspective, this building up of knowledge is carried out individually. This differs from the position taken in the social constructivist tradition, a theory developed by Lev Vygotsky in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wherein knowledge is co-created by people in their interactions with others (Daniels 2008). Whatever the approach, constructivism involves the shaping of our structures of behaving and thinking to fit with those of others around us, and ‘[v]iews held by large numbers of people, especially respected people, are held credible, even factual’ (Stake 1995: 101). However, even these credible or factual views are historically and culturally contingent and are just one representation of how the experiential world can be structured. The most fundamental trait of a constructivist perspective is the idea that we value what we know of the world, not because we claim it truthfully corresponds to some objective ontological reality, but because it is deemed to be a viable way to structure our experiences (Glaserfeld 1984). A constructivist researcher does not claim to say how the world is, but claims to say how some people see it (Gibbs 2002). Working in a constructivist paradigm, then, it is the job of the researcher to propose one viable construction without making any commitment to truth or saying anything about an underlying shared reality (Gibbs 2002, Glaserfeld 1984, Maréchal 2010).

With such plurality of explanation, how then should the knowledge and meaning created in a constructivist paradigm be evaluated? It would not be useful to attempt to evaluate constructivist knowledge in terms of the validity or reliability characteristic of the realist or positivist traditions. These quality criteria assume the existence of an external objective reality that is not present in a constructivist paradigm. Instead, the quality of knowledge created within a constructivist paradigm should be evaluated in terms of the viability of the

new knowledge. The researcher convinces the reader of the viability of her/his constructed knowledge by displaying systematic interconnectedness in discrete elements of evidence that support this construction. Viability is further strengthened when the research is shown to be carried out in a manner that is trustworthy, credible, and transparent. However, the constructivist position always underlines that these viable answers may not be the only answers (Glaserfeld 1984). Margolis (2004: 639) argues for explanations in a constructivist paradigm that are ‘plurally reasonable more than uniquely correct’. For this reason, the constructivist researcher has a responsibility to rigorously investigate rival explanations and maintain an explicit chain of evidence in order to allow the reader to make an informed evaluation of reasonableness and viability. The constructivist researcher also has a responsibility to consider: ‘the problematic status of empirical data and delimitation of phenomena; the problematic status of the researcher resulting from subject-object interdependency or inbetweenness; methodological relativism; the emergence and contingency of research design; and the problematic ethics of results evaluation’ (Maréchal 2010: 224). Ultimately, rather than searching for external, objective truth, constructivists aim merely to provide answers that are in some way valued by the reader. ‘The quality and utility of the research is not based on its reproducibility but on whether or not the meanings generated, by the researcher or the reader, are valued’ (Stake 1995: 135).

Another important step in aiding the reader to evaluate knowledge produced in a constructivist paradigm is to make the researcher’s own subjectivities explicit in the study (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993). For this reason, a brief inventory follows of the assumptions and biases of the researcher that are relevant to this research.

A basic assumption of this research is that translation and interpreting are social phenomena. Many views on the phenomena exist. The idea that they are social is supported in the literature in, for instance, Pym, Shlesinger, and Jettmarova (2006) or Wolf and Fukari (2007).

Another assumption about translation and interpreting made by the researcher in this project is that these phenomena are under-recognised in general. Despite often going unnoticed, the researcher also assumes that translation and interpreting aim to be processes that provide value to those who receive them.

There is also an English-speaking bias in this research. The researcher speaks English and Japanese but recognises that there may be valuable research or empirical data available in other languages that he cannot access. Moreover, an operational decision arising out of financial and time constraints was made to limit the scope of the case study to only those

participants who could speak English. This decision could have excluded the potentially interesting data of participants who did not match this profile.

With respect to culture and society, the researcher holds a considerable bias with regards to multilingualism and multiculturalism. He sees these concepts as beneficial ones that should be encouraged, and he believes that governments and individuals in a state have a responsibility and obligation to treat people from diverse ethno-linguistic backgrounds with fairness.

Finally, with respect to disaster, two assumptions made in this research are that those who experience a disaster will always want more and better information and that the most appropriate solutions to problems in the humanitarian field are the ones that require the least time and resources; adequacy is preferable to perfection delivered too late in disaster settings.

### ***3.6 Methodological steps taken in this research***

The preceding sections of this chapter described the architecture of theory and methodology chosen for this research, as well as the researcher's epistemological and ontological perspectives and relevant basic assumptions. This section will explain how these frameworks were translated into concrete methodological steps in order to move the research from initial propositions to final conclusions. Figure 3–1 summarise these steps and their interactions with the frameworks explained above.

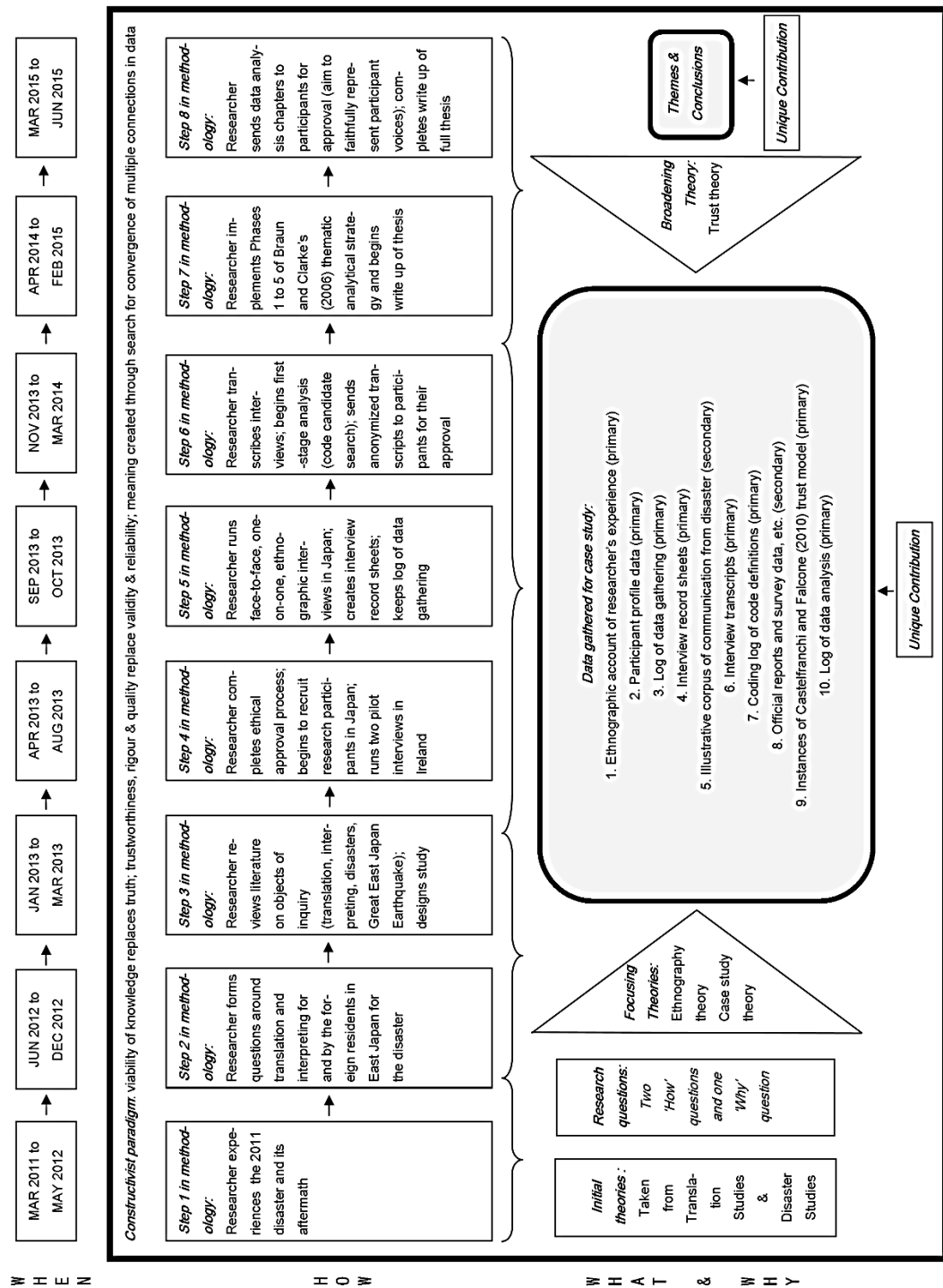


Figure 3-1. Steps for an ethnographically-informed case study within a constructivist paradigm

### 3.6.1 Step 1: Initial theories and lived experience

A case study research design begins with an initial idea about the phenomenon to be investigated; this idea can condition the choice of study, the data gathering and analysis, and even the expected results (Hamel, Dufour, and Fortin 1993, Yin 2014). Care must be taken to acknowledge these predetermined notions and to ensure that the study is designed in such a way that the researcher remains open to having her/his preconceptions about the

case challenged by the gathered evidence (Wakabayashi 2007: 12). For this research, the initial idea was that the phenomena of translation and interpreting are probably a feature of large-scale disasters because of trends in migration and globalisation, because of the international character of much humanitarian response, and because disaster-related information should be available to all on ethical grounds, whatever their linguistic or cultural background. Thus, the original motivation for the project was to find empirical evidence for translation and interpreting using a disaster setting of which the researcher had personal experience: the 2011 disaster. An autoethnographic account of the researcher's experience of the disaster in Section 4.4.1 forms the first dataset in this study.

### *3.6.2 Step 2: Research questions*

An initial review of the literature showed that, while there were data available describing how Japanese people had communicated during the disaster, there was little evidence for how foreign nationals in Japan communicated and, thus, little evidence to show that translation or interpreting had been used or needed. The research, therefore, set out to answer the questions introduced in Chapter 1:

- How did foreign residents communicate and gather information during the 2011 disaster?
- How did translation and interpreting form part of foreign residents' communication and information gathering in the 2011 disaster?
- Why are issues of translation and interpreting important to the 2011 disaster or to other disaster contexts?

### *3.6.3 Step 3: Literature review and research design*

The three specific research questions above were, of course, elaborated over a period of months and only came about as a result of continual engagement with the literature described in Chapter 2. In fact, earlier potential research questions centred on the intersection of translation, social media, and disaster. This topic had gained academic interest following the 2010 Haiti and 2010/2011 Canterbury Earthquakes. However, empirical evidence could not be found to support the proposal that translating social media content would be beneficial during a disaster and, worse still, little evidence was available to suggest that translation and interpreting were, in fact, needed or beneficial at all in the various disaster settings presented in the literature. As a result, the research came to focus on filling this gap in knowledge, and the research questions above were formed to establish

whether a need for translation or interpreting in the 2011 disaster could be empirically supported.

An ethnographically-informed case study adapted from Koskinen (2008) was chosen as the final design for this research, but other methods of enquiry were considered beforehand. An experiment was discounted because it would have required the reproduction of multiple, complex variables that could not be replicated or controlled easily. A survey was also discounted because respondents might have been reluctant to discuss their experience of a traumatic disaster at a distance with an unknown researcher. Participant observation was not attempted because the disaster had largely concluded by the time research began. Finally, a grounded theory design was discounted because the limited time the researcher would spend in the field would not allow for the cycles of simultaneous data gathering and analysis that are required of this approach (Charmaz 2006).

#### *3.6.4 Step 4: Ethical approval, participant recruitment, and pilot interviews*

Ethical approval for this project was received from the Research Ethics Committee of Dublin City University on July 3, 2013. A copy of the official Letter of Approval is available in Appendix A. As this was an enquiry involving human participants into a potentially distressing topic, the project required a full hearing of the committee. One of their concerns was that an attempt should be made to receive local ethical approval from an authority in Japan, the locus of study. Multiple enquiries were made by the researcher to various authorities in Japan, but the conclusion drawn from a response of the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (responsible for research guidance for medical and scientific projects carried out in Japan) was that it is not possible to receive ethical approval for a research project in the humanities in Japan unless the investigators are affiliated with a Japanese academic institution. With no such affiliation possible for this project, it was instead shown that the research had been undertaken in accordance with the broad standards expected of researchers in Japan under the Science Council of Japan's Code of Conduct for Researchers. Potential risks that participants in the research might face were identified and measures to manage these risks were put in place. A review of the disaster studies literature revealed two main risks to participants: a risk that talking about their experience of the disaster could become unpleasant, stressful, or even traumatic; a risk that providing a third-party introduction for the researcher could damage their social standing in Japan. How these two risks were mitigated will now be discussed.

As the focus of the interviews was on the linguistic and cultural aspects of the disaster and not directly on the hardships participants may have endured, it was thought that the

interviewees would be unlikely to experience severe mental health or psychosocial effects. Nonetheless, during each interview, the researcher asked participants to report on their stress levels (see Section D in the interview topic document in Appendix B). If any participant had reported elevated stress, or if the researcher had noticed symptoms of elevated stress, the researcher would have provided the participant with the telephone number and website of Tokyo English Lifeline. This is a free, anonymous telephone counselling service that operates throughout Japan in several major languages.<sup>2</sup> In the end, no participant in this study required counselling. As for the social risk, participants in this research were to be recruited through personal introductions. In a Japanese context, those who provide an introduction take on the role of social (though not legal) guarantor (Bestor, Steinhoff, and Lyon-Bestor 2003). Therefore, the behaviour of the researcher would directly impact on the social standing of the introducer. It was hoped that the researcher's knowledge of Japanese language and culture would minimise the risk of potentially damaging missteps, and it was this social risk that originally motivated the member checking steps taken in this research (see Sections 3.6.6 and 3.6.8).

The Research Ethics Committee requested only one clarification when the application was submitted. They were concerned that, though attempts had been made to manage the physical risks to the researcher in the field, no plans were in place to deal with the risk of psychosocial or mental health distress that he might encounter as a result of his own experience of the 2011 disaster and of repeated exposure to accounts of the disaster. This concern on the part of the committee for the mental and emotional wellbeing of the researcher underlines the presence and central role of the researcher in the ethnographic approach. In the committee's eyes, the researcher's own direct experience would have an impact on the research process, and they wanted the potentially adverse results of this experience to be acknowledged and prepared for. To do so, the researcher set up a protocol for regular communication with his supervisor while in the field so that she would be able to monitor his condition. He also maintained a log of data gathering to monitor and record his own reactions to the data-gathering process and pay special attention to symptoms of stress. (The log will be explained in detail in Section 3.6.5.)

Once ethical approval had been received, it was possible to begin recruiting participants for the study. As explained above, the goal of this ethnographically-informed case study was not statistical generalisation and, therefore, no effort was made to consider target sample size or the representativeness of participants to the population of foreign nationals

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<sup>2</sup> There was a need to be able to provide counselling support in languages other than Japanese because participants were not all likely to be able to speak Japanese.

resident in Japan. Rather, the researcher aimed to enquire into the experience of anyone who met the participant criteria below.

The potential participant:

- identified as a foreign national in a Japanese context;
- was resident in East Japan at the outbreak of the disaster on March 11, 2011;
- self-reported to be confident in speaking, listening to, reading, and writing English;
- was not a minor at the time of interview.

These criteria were chosen to gather empirical data to explore the research questions listed above; to meet the researcher's need to conduct the research through English without the extra time and cost involved in translating questionnaires, hiring interpreters for interviews, and getting transcripts made and translated in other languages; to meet the ethical obligation to seek participants who could consent independently. All participation in the research was voluntary and unremunerated, participants were not naïve to any aspect of the research, and participants were free to withdraw at any time.

Table 3–3 illustrates that most of the participants in this research were introduced to the researcher by current academic colleagues, by his network of contacts in Japan, or by fellow delegates at conferences and seminars attended prior to fieldwork. In addition, the table also shows that some of the participants were already friends of the researcher before the project began.



Participant: Introduced by:	
P1	A colleague of the researcher
P15	A colleague of the researcher
P16	A colleague of the researcher
P17	A colleague of the researcher
P19	A colleague of the researcher
P20	A colleague of the researcher
P23	A colleague of the researcher
P5	A friend of the researcher
P9	A friend of the researcher
P10	A friend of the researcher
P11	A friend of the researcher
P26	A friend of the researcher
P13	A fellow conference delegate
P22	A fellow conference delegate
P25	A fellow conference delegate
P2	N/A - participant was already a friend of the researcher
P4	N/A - participant was already a friend of the researcher
P12	N/A - participant was already a friend of the researcher
P24	An Internet article
P3	Participant 1
P6	Participant 1
P7	Participant 1
P8	Participant 1
P18	Participant 1
P21	Participant 1
P14	Participant 24
P28	Participant 24
P27	Participant 6

**Table 3-3. How participants were introduced to the researcher**

Thus, without the researcher's previous experience of the research setting and without a third party to vouch for the researcher's integrity, it is unlikely that the rate of participation would have been as high. The importance of working with gatekeepers and taking advantage of personal networks of contacts can be seen by the fact that only one participant came to this research by a cold call; the researcher read an Internet article referring to the participant in question which included contact details and used these to request an interview. There is evidence, too, for a significant snowball effect in the recruitment of participants in this study, as 9 of the participants were introduced by a previous interviewee. The fact that none of these participant introductions was made prior to interview suggests that the experience was neither unpleasant nor wasteful for participants. It also supports the need to include flexibility in the fieldwork element of an ethnographically-informed case study. These introductions by prior interviewees also suggest the importance of trust, as it might be assumed that participants would not have suggested others for interview if they had not trusted the researcher.

Not all attempts at participant recruitment were successful. Asking for participation without a third-party introduction proved highly ineffective. Direct requests for interview to

members of various Facebook groups of foreigners who experienced the disaster, to representatives of the US armed forces, to a radio network run especially for American forces in Japan, and to representatives of certain Japanese local government authorities all failed to produce a concrete interview opportunity. The social obligation created by the gatekeeper's introduction is further suggested by the fact that, of all the interviews scheduled in this research, only one interviewee failed to show up, and this person was a Facebook-group administrator contacted by the researcher without any third-party introduction.

The process of recruiting participants for this research was iterative, and the interview stage of the research began before all participants had agreed to participate. Two pilot interviews were carried out in Ireland in July 2013 to allow the researcher to practise his interview technique. These pilot interviews were carried out with former foreign residents of Japan who had been in Japan at the time of the disaster and had returned to Ireland and who were either known to or introduced to the researcher. The pilot interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to learn what questions worked better than others, to identify where his ethnographic interview techniques needed to be improved, to understand how time-consuming transcription would be, and to practise some preliminary analysis techniques. Consequently, the researcher felt some confidence that he would be able to gather and analyse data effectively using the ethnographic interview technique before he made the commitment to travel to Japan.

### *3.6.5 Step 5: Data gathering in Japan*

Following the pilot interviews, the researcher proceeded with participant recruitment. In all, including these two pilot interviews, 28 people were recruited to participate in this research. Table 3–4 displays the profile data of these 28 participants; these participant profile data constitute the second dataset of this case study.

\*Confidence scores are presented in the order:  
speaking/listening/reading/writing.  
A '10' indicates 'total confidence'.

Participant:	Nationality:	Residence during the disaster:	Age range at interview:	Time in Japan prior to disaster	Confidence in English*	Confidence in Japanese*	Occupation at time of disaster
P1	An EU state	Tokyo	20-29	>10 years <15 years	10/10/10/10	9/9/8/7	(Withheld for anonymity)
P2	Ireland	Furukawa	20-29	>1 year <5 years	10/10/10/10	7/8/4/4	Engineer
P3	An EU state	Tokyo	20-29	>1 year <5 years	10/10/10/10	5/4/3/3	Diplomatic officer
P4	Ireland	Tokyo	30-39	>5 years <10 years	10/10/10/10	8/8/7/6	Office worker
P5	Ireland	Tokyo	20-29	>1 year <5 years	10/9/10/10	7/8/5/6	Engineer
P6	Canada	Tokyo	30-39	>5 years <10 years	9/9/9/9	6/7/6/5	PR consultant
P7	Tunisia	Tokyo	50-59	>20 years	8/8/8/8	8/8/5/4	Recruitment consultant
P8	Netherlands	Tokyo	40-49	>1 year <5 years	10/10/10/10	2/6/1/1	Finance manager
P9	United States	Tokai	30-39	>10 years <15 years	9/9/9/9	6/6/4/4	Language instructor
P10	Australia	Mito	30-39	>10 years <15 years	10/10/10/10	7/7/3/3	Restaurant / bar owner
P11	Australia	Tokai	50-59	>20 years	10/10/10/10	8/8/7/7	Teacher
P12	Ireland	Tokyo	20-29	<6 months	10/10/10/10	6/7/8/6	Company employee
P13	France	Tokyo	50-59	>20 years	9/9/9/8	9/9/7/7	Interpreter
P14	United States	Sendai	30-39	>5 years <10 years	10/10/10/10	8/8/8/8	Language teacher
P15	Sudan	Sendai	20-29	>1 year <5 years	5/8/8/7	3/5/2/2	Student
P16	Bangladesh	Sendai	30-39	>1 year <5 years	8/8/8/8	1/2/0/0	Student
P17	China	Sendai	20-29	<6 months	4/7/9/5	7/9/7/5	Student
P18	Ireland	Tokyo	30-39	>15 years <20 years	9/9/9/9	8/9/6/4	Agency director
P19	Australia	Tokyo	40-49	>15 years <20 years	10/10/10/10	8/9/5/6	Advertising executive
P20	Canada	Tokyo	30-39	>5 years <10 years	10/10/10/10	4/4/3/3	Advertising executive
P21	United States	Tokyo	30-39	>5 years <10 years	10/10/10/10	4/5/4/2	Recruitment consultant
P22	Germany	Tokyo	30-39	>6 months <1 year	10/10/10/10	2/2/1/1	Language teacher
P23	Ireland	Tokyo	20-29	>6 months <1 year	10/10/10/10	3/4/5/2	Student
P24	New Zealand	Sendai	20-29	>5 years <10 years	10/10/10/10	7/9/8/8	Japanese government
P25	Australia	Tokyo	30-39	>10 years <15 years	10/10/10/10	8/8/8/8	Sales
P26	Germany	Tokyo	30-39	>5 years <10 years	9/10/10/10	5/5/4/2	IT engineer
P27	United States	Tokyo	50-59	>20 years	10/10/10/10	6/6/2/3	Consultant
P28	New Zealand	Sendai	30-39	>1 year <5 years	10/10/10/10	5/5/3/3	Teacher

**Table 3-4. Profile data of research participants**

It can be seen from Table 3–4 that all participants met the relevant criteria listed in Section 3.6.4; they were all English-speaking, foreign adults resident in East Japan in the disaster. Furthermore, these participants provided the multiple perspectives desired of a case study design; they represent 12 nationalities, were resident in 5 different cities in East Japan, were in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and 50s at the time of interview, possessed a variety of linguistic abilities, and had varied occupations at the time of the disaster.

The interviews that make up the core empirical evidence of this thesis took place in Ireland, Japan, and New Zealand between July and October 2013, but 25 of these 28 interviews were held in Japan during an intensive, four-week period of data-gathering from September 18 to October 13, 2013. These data were gathered more than two years after the onset of the disaster, so it may seem difficult to argue that this was still research in a disaster context. However, aftershocks from the 2011 earthquake continued at the time of interview (a significant aftershock occurred during the data-gathering trip and was referenced in several interviews), the nuclear disaster remained unstable and threatening at the time of interview, and several interviewees spoke of how they did not yet feel that the disaster had ended (see Section 4.3.3). For this reason, the researcher maintained a log of the data-gathering process to record his observations of the context and of his own reactions to the research process.

An anonymised version of this log is included in Appendix C, and it constitutes the third dataset of this case study.<sup>3</sup>

Interviews were the main data-gathering tool used for this project. The interview is used when the researcher wants to examine how somebody experiences and understands something but also how they talk about these experiences (Matthews and Ross 2010), and it is relatively common for ethnographic enquiries to rely on interview material (Koskinen 2008). Thus, the ‘analytically focused discourse’ (Gibson and Brown 2009: 86) that an interview aims to produce was likely to be a methodologically-appropriate way in which to answer the research questions being asked in this thesis. The interview is a flexible research tool: the researcher can choose from various types of interview (individual, group, focus-group), various methods of questioning (structured, semi-structured, unstructured), and various modes (face-to-face, by telephone, online) (Fielding 2003). Such flexibility is suited to the unanticipated developments characteristic of the case study. However, the interview can also be expensive and time-consuming, produce large amounts of non-standardised data, require particular skills in conversation management, and often require participants to come up with answers on the spot (Gibson and Brown 2009, Matthews and Ross 2010). Some of these disadvantages were mitigated by the fact that the researcher had experience as a language teacher and was equipped to build rapport quickly and deal with issues of managing a conversation. Moreover, the topics to be discussed at interview were emailed to each participant before the interview to give participants time to think about the interview topics in advance. These topics covered the participants’ experiences of the disaster, their linguistic needs, and their sense of community in the disaster and can be consulted in Appendix B. This step was not without risk; sending the topics in advance can risk prematurely shaping the data and can be an imposition of time and effort on the interviewee. In this research, though, most interviewees were happy to have the topics beforehand because it aided their memories and helped them to trust that the interview would not cover overly distressing or intrusive topics.

This research attempted to implement an ethnographic method of interviewing. This method resembles the semi-structured interview. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer frames the structure of questioning towards a particular research area while flexibly ordering the questioning in response to the answers provided (Gibson and Brown 2009). Also, in the semi-structured interview, the researcher can be thought of as the

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<sup>3</sup> This log has been fully anonymised and extensively abridged to protect participant anonymity. Furthermore, a reading of this log is not required to understand this thesis. The log is provided merely for interested readers to be able to independently assess how the researcher constructed knowledge in this thesis.

primary instrument; s/he develops and works through ideas with the research participants within the interview itself (Gibson and Brown 2009, Matthews and Ross 2010). As a primary instrument, it is natural in the interview for the researcher to disclose her/his own experiences to break down barriers, build rapport with the participants, and prompt them with discursive resources that may be helpful to their contributions (Gibson and Brown 2009). All of these techniques – common to the standard semi-structured interview – were applied in the present research project. However, the ethnographic interview method differs from the semi-structured interview in three main respects: its form, its attitude to silence, and its encouragement of unrelated anecdotes. The ethnographic interview is less concerned with form and *a priori* content and does not focus on a traditional question-and-answer format (Josephiddes 2012). By expressing interest in a topic rather than asking a question, the researcher attempts to develop this topic through a dialogic process with the interviewee; this technique gives the interviewee time to develop what they actually think about the issue – instead of feeling pressure to answer on-the-spot – and implies that the researcher's interventions are as important as the interviewees' contributions in terms of data (Blommaert and Jie 2010). The ethnographic interview is also strategic in its use of silence; silence is not seen as the absence of speech but as the production of an intervention in the conversation designed to elicit and encourage contributions from the interviewee (Blommaert and Jie 2010). Finally the ethnographic interview views the tangents or apparently unrelated anecdotes contributed by an interviewee as valuable and to be embraced:

Thus, in your interviews, try to have people produce stories, anecdotes. If they embark on one, let them do so and do not interrupt it, even if some voice in your head tells you that the informant is getting side-tracked. S/he is only getting sidetracked in your universe, in relation to your research questions. But the side-tracking may be precisely what there is to find out: a connection between things, one that you had not previously spotted, but which the informant establishes by his/her seemingly erratic and weird jump from one topic to another. Things that in your world are disconnected may be solidly connected in their life worlds, and anecdotes offer you a rich way into that. (Blommaert and Jie 2010: 58)

While the method of questioning was ethnographic, the mode and type of interview chosen for this project was the face-to-face, individual interview. This choice over other modes and types was made to help the participants feel secure talking about potentially distressing topics without the concern of being overheard by another person (Matthews and Ross 2010) and to allow them to focus on the aspects of this complex disaster that were important to them. Each interview began with the participant filling in the questionnaire from which the profile data in Table 3–4 were created. Interviews were scheduled to take about 60 minutes,

but were shorter or longer depending on the interviewee's convenience. After each interview, an interview record sheet to archive the researcher's learning process was created. These sheets are recommended by Gibson and Brown (2009: 95) and Matthews and Ross (2010: 232) and list descriptive information about the context of the interview, reflections on the participant and the process, and initial impressions of the data. They mark a first step in data analysis and, thus, constitute the fourth dataset of this case study; anonymised versions are available in Appendix D.

The number of interviews in this thesis is not large, but this number was a function of the time and resources available to the researcher, the aims of the research, and the theories of knowledge and reality held by the communities to which the research is being addressed (Fielding 2003). Conducting 28 interviews was an achievable goal for a single researcher with one month to spend in the field. Additionally, a case study design in a constructivist frame required only a sufficient number of interviews to provide multiple perspectives on the phenomena under examination that would, where possible, continue until no significant, new data were being provided (Stake 1995, Yin 2014). The diversity in the profiles outlined in Table 3–4 and the systematic interconnectedness found in the interview data convinced the researcher that these conditions had been met. Moreover, though there is no optimal interview number, and though quantity does not denote quality of data gathering or analysis, some guidelines have been established in the qualitative research literature; as few as 6 interviews are deemed appropriate for a study using phenomenology, and 30 to 50 interviews are thought to be suitable for ethnography or grounded theory (Morse 1994: 225).

It should be noted, too, that these 28 interviews took place some 30 months after the onset of the 2011 disaster. The timing of research interventions in disaster settings must not be considered in isolation, but in tandem with issues of access to participants, the safety of the researcher and the researched, the readiness of participants to agree to interview, and the ethical appropriateness of the intervention. While this can lead to research being carried out anywhere from immediately post-disaster to up to five years after onset, the early recovery phase of a disaster is seen to be the optimal time at which to go into the field (Stallings 2002: 83-86). Recovery is generally said to take place from one month to up to one year after onset (WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific 2012: 58). Thus, the timing of interviews in this case study was less than optimal, but well within the bounds established in other disaster studies. A major concern related to the issue of timing, though, was the issue of participant recall in their reporting of their experiences. Despite this concern, a clear correlation between the timing of interviews and the quality of participant

recall has yet to be shown in the disaster studies literature, and it has been argued by some that ‘[t]here is reason to believe that many details of disasters will be recalled to good effect by the people who experienced them firsthand, even when a number of years have passed’ (Grimm et al. 2014: 63).

Following the completion of the interviews, it was also decided to build a small, illustrative corpus of examples of real communication (including some translated texts) from the time of the disaster for use in analysis. The corpus contains transcripts of media broadcasts, newspaper reports, and computer-mediated communication created by various actors at the time of the disaster. These data exemplify some of the communicative and information-gathering acts that took place during the disaster. This illustrative corpus of communication from the disaster is the fifth dataset of this case study and is available in Section 4.5.5.

### *3.6.6 Step 6: Transcription and member checking*

The audio of each interview for this research was recorded using an Olympus VN-711PC Digital Voice Recorder. Each interview was transcribed by the researcher using Express Scribe software. This package aids transcription by allowing the transcriber to control audio playback using keyboard hot keys. Transcribing the 28 interviews in this project required approximately 400 hours of typing time from November 2013 to March 2014. The theoretical view taken on transcription in this project was that it is a partial, iterative, and value-laden representation of the original discourse (Blommaert and Jie 2010, Gibson and Brown 2009). However, the constructivist philosophical stance adopted in this research embraces such subjectivity and considers the various analytic judgements made by the researcher on what to represent and how to represent it as objects for analysis. For this reason, decisions made during the transcription process are detailed in the log of data analysis. (This log will be explained in detail in Section 3.6.7.4.) In line with the ethnographic orientation of this case study, the researcher aimed to produce ‘focused’ transcripts in the typology proposed by Gibson and Brown (2009: 109-118). Such transcripts show not just what was said but also how it was said and include as much contextual information as possible to convey the original quality of the dialogue. Nonetheless, when directly referenced in the body of the thesis, some contextual information – such as filler words, repetitions, etc. – have been removed from participant quotes to improve their readability. Once the transcripts were completed, they were anonymised. These anonymised transcripts are the sixth dataset of this case study and are available in Appendix E.

Following anonymisation, a unique link was shared with each participant showing them where the transcript of their interview (and theirs alone) was stored on the DCU-federated Google App. This form of sharing was deemed to be more secure and ethically appropriate than sending an e-mail attachment of the transcript to each interviewee. This step was the first stage of ‘member checking’: the validation of the knowledge produced in the name of the participant with the option for the participant to provide an alternative wording, to add further interpretation, or to clarify misunderstandings on the part of the researcher (Saldaña 2009: 28, Stake 1995: 115). The participants were asked first to acknowledge receipt of the link. If no additional communication was received within 30 days of delivery of the shared link, it was then taken that they had no feedback to offer, and analysis of the data continued. These conditions were explained to each participant. Member checking is a time-consuming and hazardous step in research; there is always the danger that it may cause the participant to exercise her/his right to withdraw from the study at a time when publication starts to come near. However, the constructivist paradigm of this research and the ethical rigour required in current ethnography to faithfully represent participant voices meant that it was a step that could not be overlooked.

This step proved to be worthwhile. In total, 18 of the 28 participants chose to acknowledge receipt of the transcript. Of course, as Koskinen (2008: 90) emphasises: ‘...relative silence is not to be interpreted as a sign of agreement.’ We cannot, therefore, assume that the 10 participants that did not reply had no problem with their transcripts. What we can say, though, is that, of the 18 participants that did reply, 11 participants had no changes to request, 5 participants had minor changes to request, and 2 participants had significant changes to request. The minor changes included the correction of words misheard or incorrectly transcribed by the researcher and the deletion of some filler words to improve readability. The significant changes to two transcripts were made to further protect the anonymity of the participants. Specifically, the participants asked for their country of origin to be made more ambiguous, for less detail to be given about their time spent resident in Japan, and for a more generic description of their occupation at the time of the disaster to be used. The fact that making these changes allowed these participants to feel better protected and to feel that their voices and experiences were being respected and more faithfully represented in the research made this time-consuming step worthwhile.

### *3.6.7 Step 7: Data analysis*

Though initial analysis began at the interview stage, commencing coding represented a shift to systematically identifying and explaining the interrelationships, patterns, and



categories in the research data. Thus, an appropriate and rigorous analytical strategy needed to be implemented at this point. The analytical strategy adopted was a form of thematic analysis operationalised from Braun and Clarke (2006). In this operationalisation, themes were developed over six phases that progressed from participant-led, to interpretive, to abstract analysis.

#### 3.6.7.1 Participant-led analysis

The first phase entailed multiple readings of hard copies of the interview transcripts to generate a list of code candidates that displayed features of interest to the research. Codes can come in various types, and this research used a mixture of *a priori* descriptive codes, based on the three research questions and defined prior to examination of the data, *in vivo* descriptive codes, generated from the voices of the participants during the coding process, and inductive codes, generated by the researcher when directly examining the data (Gibson and Brown 2009, Saldaña 2009). This first phase produced 79 codes in total.

Then, the second phase of the Braun and Clarke (2006) workflow involved creating a rule-for-inclusion for each of these 79 codes and proceeding again through the interview data to highlight any passages that satisfied the rule. This second and all subsequent phases of coding of the data were facilitated by QSR's NVivo 10 software. This software was used to make the process of analysis more accurate, reliable, and transparent (Gibbs 2002). Such rigour is essential to the constructivist paradigm explained in Section 3.5. The functions of the software that proved useful were its code and retrieve functions, its functions to assign definitions to codes, and its functions to build a log of analytical decisions and to create conceptual networks (Gibson and Brown 2009).

Coding in this research was taken to be an iterative and cyclical act that facilitated the organisation and analysis of data by linking an idea with data that somehow exemplified that idea (Bazeley and Richards 2000, Gibbs 2002, Saldaña 2009). The codes generated formed a focus for thinking about the data and their interpretation with the aim of finding new understanding from the data (Bazeley and Richards 2000, Gibbs 2002). As a result, the codes should not be seen as a product of this research but are better conceptualised as part of the process. For this reason, as recommended by multiple authors in the literature (e.g., Bazeley and Richards 2000, Gibson and Brown 2009, Saldaña 2009), a codebook

was kept of all the coding definitions that were created. This is the seventh dataset of this case study and is available in Appendix F.<sup>4</sup>

Once initial coding had been completed for the interview data, the same rules-for-inclusion were used to work through the secondary data. Seventeen pieces of secondary data are explicitly referred to in the participant-led and interpretive analyses of this thesis. The secondary data included: television news broadcasts and documentary excerpts; a survey of 282 foreign nationals in Sendai; websites, emails, and social media content from 2011; government pamphlets, publications, and photos; a crisis map; an NPO's annual report; a newspaper report. This is the eighth dataset gathered for this case study, and a separate reference list for these secondary sources is available in Appendix G.

### 3.6.7.2 Interpretive analysis

The third and fourth phases in the Braun and Clarke (2006) analytical strategy involved using the above coded data to make interpretations about their meaning and significance. Specifically, the third phase involved combining the coded primary and secondary data into larger groups to produce themes. Again, a rule-for-inclusion process was used here. The main objectives of the fourth phase were to refine and further define the themes and to re-read the hard copies of the data with these themes in mind to ensure that the process of moving to interpretive analysis had not removed the research too far from the original participant data.

Overall, the focus in these two largely interpretive phases was on creating interpretations through a process of triangulation; that is to say, through the search for systematic interconnectedness within the interview data themselves and between the primary and secondary data. Again, from a constructivist perspective, the triangulation process was not carried out to increase the likelihood of truth but to help search for additional and competing interpretations and to identify the most viable of them (Stake 1995). Two frameworks were particularly instructive for triangulation. The first framework was Gibbs (2002: 13-14), which listed various threats to quality in the process of analysis and triangulation. The threats include: an overemphasis on positive cases and an ignoring of negative cases; a focus on the exotic and unusual; unwarranted generalisation; the introduction of bias, vagueness and inconsistency in the analytical process. The second framework came from Hatch (2002 cited in Saldaña 2009: 6) and advises the reader on how

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix F shows that, of the 104 codes in the codebook, 49 were inductive, 31 were *in vivo*, and 24 were *a priori*.

to search for patterns when qualitatively analysing data. Hatch suggests thinking of patterns as varying forms, not as stable regularities, and encourages the reader to examine the data not just for forms of similarity, but also for forms of difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, and causation.

### 3.6.7.3 Abstract analysis

Following any necessary adjustments after re-reading the hard copies of the data with the thematic rules-for-inclusion in mind, the fifth phase introduced abstract analysis and involved the production of a well-defined thematic map that was linked plausibly to abstract ideas contained in the literature to which the research would contribute. In this case study, the overriding argument made visible through the thematic map was about the importance of trust to the communicating and information gathering carried out by foreign residents in the disaster, and the abstract application of trust theory to these data to argue for an important role for translation and interpreting in the existence of this trust. (These abstract arguments will be explained in detail in Chapter 6.) The ninth dataset created for this case study came during this abstract analysis phase and consists of the detailed breakdown and analysis of instances of trust according to the trust model developed by Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) explained in Chapter 6. This dataset is available in Appendix H. The sixth and final phase in this operationalisation of Braun and Clarke's (2006) strategy involved the write-up of the report. It is included in the workflow here to underline that interpretation, abstract thinking, and the refinement of these ideas continued up to the final stages of the writing process.

Figures 3–2 and 3–3 illustrate how the coding described here in Section 3.6.7 was developed from the second phase of the Braun and Clarke (2006) workflow through to the final thematic map.

Red = new code Blue = repositioned code		Red = new code Blue = repositioned code	
Phase 2		Phase 3	
1. Accurate information ABSENT 2. Accurate information PRESENT 3. Actionable information ABSENT 4. Actionable information PRESENT 5. Advice or lessons learned 6. Alarms and sirens 7. Assumptions about disaster 8. Assumptions about foreign nationals in disaster 9. Awareness of framing 10. Beginning of the disaster 12. Changed habits 13. Changed habits of communication 14. Changed habits of information gathering 16. Communal and organised response and recovery 17. Communicating NEGATIVE 18. Communicating NEUTRAL 19. Communicating POSITIVE 20. Complacency 23. Cultural barrier ABSENT 24. Cultural barrier PRESENT 25. Cultural barrier PRESENT for participant 26. Cultural mediation by another 27. Cultural mediation by the participant 29. Culture of disaster in Japan 32. Earthquake 33. Effect of the interview process 34. Ending of the disaster 35. External factors 36. Fly-jin 37. Focus in response or recovery 38. Foreign nationals are a community 39. Foreign nationals are not all the same 40. Guilt 41. Independent and ad-hoc response and recovery 42. Information gathering NEGATIVE 43. Information gathering NEUTRAL 44. Information gathering POSITIVE 53. Knowledge of response and recovery ABSENT 54. Knowledge of response and recovery PRESENT 56. Linguistic barrier ABSENT 57. Linguistic barrier PRESENT 58. Linguistic barrier PRESENT for participant 59. Linguistic mediation by another 60. Linguistic mediation by the participant 61. Memory STRONG 62. Memory WEAK 64. Native language NEGATIVE 65. Native language NEUTRAL 66. Native language POSITIVE 68. Non-verbal non-pictorial communication or information gathering 69. Nuclear 71. Panic ABSENT 72. Panic PRESENT 73. Partner (Japanese) 74. Partner (non-Japanese resident in Japan) 75. Partner (non-Japanese resident outside Japan) 76. Personal judgement 77. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEGATIVE 78. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEUTRAL 79. Pictorial rather than verbal codes POSITIVE 80. Polyglotism 82. Relationship NEGATIVE 83. Relationship NEUTRAL 84. Relationship POSITIVE 87. Rural residence 88. Sensationalism in news media ABSENT 89. Sensationalism in news media PRESENT 90. Single 91. Stress 92. Suburban residence 93. Timely information ABSENT 94. Timely information PRESENT 95. Tone of voice 96. Topics needing cultural mediation 97. Topics needing linguistic mediation 100. Trustworthy information ABSENT 101. Trustworthy information PRESENT 102. Tsunami 103. Urban residence		7. Assumptions about disaster 8. Assumptions about foreign nationals in disaster 9. Awareness of framing 10. Beginning of the disaster 12. Changed habits 13. Changed habits of communication 14. Changed habits of information gathering 15. Characteristics of disaster-related information 1. Accurate information ABSENT 2. Accurate information PRESENT 3. Actionable information ABSENT 4. Actionable information PRESENT 93. Timely information ABSENT 94. Timely information PRESENT 100. Trustworthy information ABSENT 101. Trustworthy information PRESENT 16. Communal and organised response and recovery 28. Culture 23. Cultural barrier ABSENT 24. Cultural barrier PRESENT 25. Cultural barrier PRESENT for participant 26. Cultural mediation by another 27. Cultural mediation by the participant 29. Culture of disaster in Japan 31. Disaster preparation, response, and recovery 5. Advice or lessons learned 20. Complacency 37. Focus in response or recovery 41. Independent and ad-hoc response and recovery 53. Knowledge of response and recovery ABSENT 54. Knowledge of response and recovery PRESENT 34. Ending of the disaster 35. External factors 36. Fly-jin 38. Foreign nationals are a community 39. Foreign nationals are not all the same 40. Guilt 46. Instances of communicating 17. Communicating NEGATIVE 18. Communicating NEUTRAL 19. Communicating POSITIVE 49. Instances of information gathering 42. Information gathering NEGATIVE 43. Information gathering NEUTRAL 44. Information gathering POSITIVE 55. Language 56. Linguistic barrier ABSENT 57. Linguistic barrier PRESENT 58. Linguistic barrier PRESENT for participant 59. Linguistic mediation by another 60. Linguistic mediation by the participant 63. Methodology 33. Effect of the interview process 61. Memory STRONG 62. Memory WEAK 70. Other disaster intercultural communication 6. Alarms and sirens 68. Non-verbal non-pictorial communication or information gathering 77. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEGATIVE 78. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEUTRAL 79 80. Polyglotism 64. Native language NEGATIVE 65. Native language NEUTRAL 66. Native language POSITIVE 95. Tone of voice 71. Panic ABSENT 72. Panic PRESENT 76. Personal judgement 81. Principal perceived hazard 32. Earthquake 69. Nuclear 102. Tsunami 82. Relationship NEGATIVE 83. Relationship NEUTRAL 84. Relationship POSITIVE 85. Relationship with a significant other 73. Partner (Japanese) 74. Partner (non-Japanese resident in Japan) 75. Partner (non-Japanese resident outside Japan) 90. Single 87. Rural residence 88. Sensationalism in news media ABSENT 89. Sensationalism in news media PRESENT 91. Stress 92. Suburban residence 96. Topics needing cultural mediation 97. Topics needing linguistic mediation 103. Urban residence	

Figure 3-2. Thematic map phases 2 & 3 [no. of code is ref. no. in codebook in Appendix F]

Red = new code Blue = repositioned code		Red = new code Blue = repositioned code	
Phase 4		Phase 5	
<p>10. Beginning of the disaster (moves to '2. Context' in Phase 5)</p> <p>28. Culture (moves to '3. Translation' in Phase 5)</p> <p>23. Cultural barrier ABSENT</p> <p>24. Cultural barrier PRESENT</p> <p>25. Cultural barrier PRESENT for participant</p> <p>26. Cultural mediation by another</p> <p>27. Cultural mediation by the participant</p> <p>30. Disaster culture (moves to '2. Context' in Phase 5)</p> <p>7. Assumptions about disaster</p> <p>8. Assumptions about foreign nationals in disaster</p> <p>16. Communal and organised response and recovery</p> <p>29. Culture of disaster in Japan</p> <p>71. Panic ABSENT</p> <p>72. Panic PRESENT</p> <p>76. Personal judgement</p> <p>34. Ending of the disaster (moves to '2. Context' in Phase 5)</p> <p>35. External factors (moves to '2. Context' in Phase 5)</p> <p>46. Instances of communicating (moves to '2. Context' in Phase 5)</p> <p>17. Communicating NEGATIVE</p> <p>18. Communicating NEUTRAL</p> <p>19. Communicating POSITIVE</p> <p>49. Instances of information gathering (moves to '2. Context' in Phase 5)</p> <p>42. Information gathering NEGATIVE</p> <p>43. Information gathering NEUTRAL</p> <p>44. Information gathering POSITIVE</p> <p>55. Language (moves to '3. Translation' in Phase 5)</p> <p>56. Linguistic barrier ABSENT</p> <p>57. Linguistic barrier PRESENT</p> <p>58. Linguistic barrier PRESENT for participant</p> <p>59. Linguistic mediation by another</p> <p>60. Linguistic mediation by the participant</p> <p>63. Methodology (becomes '1. Methodology' in Phase 5)</p> <p>33. Effect of the interview process</p> <p>61. Memory STRONG</p> <p>62. Memory WEAK</p> <p>67. News translation (moves to '5. Rival explanations' in Phase 5)</p> <p>9. Awareness of framing</p> <p>88. Sensationalism in news media ABSENT</p> <p>89. Sensationalism in news media PRESENT</p> <p>70. Other disaster/intercultural communication (moves to '5. Rival explanations' in Phase 5)</p> <p>6. Alarms and sirens</p> <p>68. Non-verbal non-pictorial communication or information gathering</p> <p>77. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEGATIVE</p> <p>78. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEUTRAL</p> <p>79. Pictorial rather than verbal codes POSITIVE</p> <p>80. Polyglotism</p> <p>64. Native language NEGATIVE</p> <p>65. Native language NEUTRAL</p> <p>66. Native language POSITIVE</p> <p>95. Tone of voice</p> <p>81. Principal perceived hazard (moves to '2. Context' in Phase 5)</p> <p>32. Earthquake</p> <p>69. Nuclear</p> <p>102. Tsunami</p> <p>82. Relationship NEGATIVE (moves to '3. Translation' in Phase 5)</p> <p>83. Relationship NEUTRAL (moves to '3. Translation' in Phase 5)</p> <p>84. Relationship POSITIVE (moves to '3. Translation' in Phase 5)</p> <p>85. Relationship with a significant other (moves to '1. Methodology' in Phase 5)</p> <p>73. Partner (Japanese)</p> <p>74. Partner (non-Japanese resident in Japan)</p> <p>75. Partner (non-Japanese resident outside Japan)</p> <p>90. Single</p> <p>87. Rural residence</p> <p>92. Suburban residence</p> <p>96. Topics needing cultural mediation (moves to '3. Translation' in Phase 5)</p> <p>97. Topics needing linguistic mediation (moves to '3. Translation' in Phase 5)</p> <p>99. Trust (becomes '4. Trust' in Phase 5)</p> <p>12. 'Believe' type trust</p> <p>21. 'Confidence in' type trust</p> <p>45. Instances of belief</p> <p>47. Instances of confidence</p> <p>48. Instances of faith</p> <p>50. Instances of reliance</p> <p>51. Instances of trust</p> <p>52. Instances of trust model</p> <p>100. Trustworthy information ABSENT</p> <p>101. Trustworthy information PRESENT</p> <p>103. Urban residence</p> <p>104. Various codes no longer actively pursued in this project (not considered in Phase 5)</p> <p>12. Changed habits</p> <p>13. Changed habits of communication</p> <p>14. Changed habits of information gathering</p> <p>15. Characteristics of disaster-related information</p> <p>1. Accurate information ABSENT</p> <p>2. Accurate information PRESENT</p> <p>3. Actionable information ABSENT</p> <p>4. Actionable information PRESENT</p> <p>93. Timely information ABSENT</p> <p>94. Timely information PRESENT</p> <p>31. Disaster preparation, response, and recovery</p> <p>5. Advice or lessons learned</p> <p>20. Complacency</p> <p>37. Focus in response or recovery</p> <p>41. Independent and ad-hoc response and recovery</p> <p>53. Knowledge of response and recovery ABSENT</p> <p>54. Knowledge of response and recovery PRESENT</p> <p>36. Fly-in</p> <p>38. Foreign nationals are a community</p> <p>39. Foreign nationals are not all the same</p> <p>40. Guilt</p> <p>91. Stress</p>		<p>63. Methodology</p> <p>33. Effect of the interview process</p> <p>61. Memory STRONG</p> <p>62. Memory WEAK</p> <p>22. Context</p> <p>10. Beginning of the disaster</p> <p>30. Disaster culture</p> <p>7. Assumptions about disaster</p> <p>8. Assumptions about foreign nationals in disaster</p> <p>16. Communal and organised response and recovery</p> <p>29. Culture of disaster in Japan</p> <p>71. Panic ABSENT</p> <p>72. Panic PRESENT</p> <p>76. Personal judgement</p> <p>34. Ending of the disaster</p> <p>35. External factors</p> <p>46. Instances of communicating</p> <p>17. Communicating NEGATIVE</p> <p>18. Communicating NEUTRAL</p> <p>19. Communicating POSITIVE</p> <p>49. Instances of information gathering</p> <p>42. Information gathering NEGATIVE</p> <p>43. Information gathering NEUTRAL</p> <p>44. Information gathering POSITIVE</p> <p>81. Principal perceived hazard</p> <p>32. Earthquake</p> <p>69. Nuclear</p> <p>102. Tsunami</p> <p>85. Relationship with a significant other</p> <p>73. Partner (Japanese)</p> <p>74. Partner (non-Japanese resident in Japan)</p> <p>75. Partner (non-Japanese resident outside Japan)</p> <p>90. Single</p> <p>87. Rural residence</p> <p>92. Suburban residence</p> <p>103. Urban residence</p> <p>88. Translation</p> <p>29. Culture</p> <p>23. Cultural barrier ABSENT</p> <p>24. Cultural barrier PRESENT</p> <p>25. Cultural barrier PRESENT for participant</p> <p>26. Cultural mediation by another</p> <p>27. Cultural mediation by the participant</p> <p>55. Language</p> <p>56. Linguistic barrier ABSENT</p> <p>57. Linguistic barrier PRESENT</p> <p>58. Linguistic barrier PRESENT for participant</p> <p>59. Linguistic mediation by another</p> <p>60. Linguistic mediation by the participant</p> <p>82. Relationship NEGATIVE</p> <p>83. Relationship NEUTRAL</p> <p>84. Relationship POSITIVE</p> <p>96. Topics needing cultural mediation</p> <p>97. Topics needing linguistic mediation</p> <p>99. Trust</p> <p>11. 'Believe' type trust</p> <p>21. 'Confidence in' type trust</p> <p>45. Instances of belief</p> <p>47. Instances of confidence</p> <p>48. Instances of faith</p> <p>50. Instances of reliance</p> <p>51. Instances of trust</p> <p>52. Instances of trust model</p> <p>100. Trustworthy information ABSENT</p> <p>101. Trustworthy information PRESENT</p> <p>86. Rival explanations</p> <p>67. News translation</p> <p>9. Awareness of framing</p> <p>88. Sensationalism in news media ABSENT</p> <p>89. Sensationalism in news media PRESENT</p> <p>70. Other disaster/intercultural communication</p> <p>6. Alarms and sirens</p> <p>68. Non-verbal non-pictorial communication or information gathering</p> <p>77. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEGATIVE</p> <p>78. Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEUTRAL</p> <p>79. Pictorial rather than verbal codes POSITIVE</p> <p>80. Polyglotism</p> <p>64. Native language NEGATIVE</p> <p>65. Native language NEUTRAL</p> <p>66. Native language POSITIVE</p> <p>95. Tone of voice</p>	

Figure 3-3. Thematic map phases 4 & 5 [no. of code is ref. no. in codebook in Appendix F]

#### 3.6.7.4 An assessment of Braun and Clarke's strategy

At the early stages of the project, analytical strategies such as narrative analysis, interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), and framing analysis were considered. However, thematic analysis was chosen because of its more frequent application to ethnographic and case study projects than the other three options (Atkinson 2001, Yin 2014), and because a focus on the participants' stories (narrative analysis), experiential identities (IPA), or communicative/discursive frames (framing analysis) might have proved to be more analytically restrictive than a broader thematic search. The Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analytical strategy was labour intensive, especially with more than 280,000 words of transcript data to read through repeatedly over various phases.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, these repeated viewings at different times and with different focuses (sometimes participant-led, sometimes interpretive, sometimes abstract) encouraged fresh insights about the data and led to new realisations and valuable questioning of assumptions as the process of analysis progressed. The development of the researcher's ideas about the data and the major analytical decisions taken can be tracked in the log of data analysis. This constitutes the tenth and final dataset of this case study and is available in Appendix I.<sup>6</sup> Most valuably, the realisation that trust was an analytical category that could be used to tie the major themes of the thesis together – that is to say, the driving force behind the final abstract analysis in this work – came about only in the fourth of Braun and Clarke's six-phase workflow. In sum, the cost in terms of labour-intensive repetition in this strategy was outweighed by the benefit of new insight afforded by repeated viewings of the same data at regular intervals but from different perspectives. Additionally, the costs would have been further mitigated had the transcripts been of a more manageable length.

#### 3.6.8 Step 8: Further member checking and report writing

With the data analysis phase completed, a second member checking step was carried out in which Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of this thesis (the analytical chapters) were sent to all 28 participants.<sup>7</sup> Here participants were once again given the opportunity to ensure that their experiences and voices had not been misrepresented in the research and to provide any

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<sup>5</sup> The mean word count per transcript was approximately 10,000 words, the median was approximately 9,000 words, and the mode was approximately 8,000 words, so all transcripts were relatively long and took a considerable amount of time to read through.

<sup>6</sup> This log has been fully anonymised to protect participant anonymity. Furthermore, a reading of this log is not required to understand this thesis. The log is provided merely for interested readers to be able to independently assess how the researcher constructed knowledge in this thesis.

<sup>7</sup> The participants were sent these three chapters rather than the full thesis to check so as not to impose an excessive burden on them and to ensure that there was ample time after member checking for the full write up of the thesis.

feedback or changes for the researcher to consider. This step also contributed in part to fulfilling the researcher's ethical responsibility to provide the people who might benefit the most (i.e., foreign residents of Japan who might experience another large disaster in the future) with the findings of this research as soon as possible. In the end, only 7 of the 28 participants acknowledged this second member checking step. None of these participants requested any changes and all gave a positive assessment of the work. A representative example is the following line taken from Participant 6's reply: 'I think the mentions accurate [sic] and in context, and I am fine with it as is'. Again, we must remind ourselves of Koskinen's (2008: 90) caution that silence from participants should not be interpreted as agreement. However, some validation for the findings in this report can be claimed by the fact that, when given the opportunity to refute the arguments advanced in the thesis, 7 of the 28 participants did not do so and, on the contrary, supported and positively evaluated the knowledge that was created in the work. With this second stage of member checking completed, the researcher finished the write up of the PhD document and notified his university of his intention to submit the thesis for examination.

### ***3.7 Learning points from implementing the methodological steps***

In addition to the various learning points that have been mentioned in Sections 3.4 and 3.6, two broad, unanticipated lessons were learned by the researcher in implementing Koskinen's (2008) methodology.

The first lesson concerns the importance of trust and its relationship to the emic and etic tensions inherent in any ethnographically-informed project, as well as its relationship to the value of some of the data gathered. A need to build and maintain trust conditioned some of the practical steps applied in this methodology: choosing to use face-to-face, individual interviews over other data-gathering tools; sending an outline of interview topics to the participants in advance of meeting; providing participants with the opportunity to member check the interview transcripts and data analysis chapters. In addition, though, it was the researcher's ability to claim insider status or to display an insider perspective that helped to foster trust and intimacy at crucial times in the interviews. Selectively employing identities in such a strategic way did, at times, lead to some feelings of guilt or dishonesty on the part of the researcher, but these feelings were mitigated by the other ethical steps that were put in place to ensure that the participants did not feel manipulated. Moreover, at other points in the project, it was deemed more important for the research to keep the trust of the participants than to add interesting new data; specifically, three participants initially provided supplementary data that illustrated the thesis' arguments well but then asked that

these data not be included due to their sensitive and personal nature. To maintain participant trust, these data were entirely omitted from the research project.

The second lesson concerns the value but occasional impracticality of the ethnographic interview method. This way of interviewing that encourages tangents, anecdotes, and strategic silence certainly generated rich interview data, helped the researcher to deal with sensitive and potentially distressing topics in the interviews, and encouraged interviewees to remember details gradually over a developing dialogue. Ultimately, though, the success of this method was found to be dependent on several factors. Firstly, time; when under time pressure (e.g., knowing that the participant needed to get back to work soon, etc.) the interview required greater structure and researcher control. Secondly, the participant's character; some people are naturally more or less talkative. For the less talkative people, it was more difficult to leave them in control of the interview or there would have been unproductive, non-strategic silence. Finally, the ethnographic quality of the interviews was also affected by how much each participant felt they had a 'story' to tell. Some participants did not see their experience as being worthy of the title 'story' and they needed more prompting and structure to give more contextual, fuller answers.

### ***3.8 Conclusion***

This chapter provided extensive discussion from the literature on the fundamental aspects of the ethnographic and case study methodologies in order to show that the Koskinen (2008) methodology was appropriate to the aims of the research and to detail the ways in which this methodology was operationalised to describe, understand, and explain the social phenomena of translation and interpreting using the case of the community of foreign nationals resident in East Japan during the 2011 disaster. The next chapter begins the investigation of these phenomena and describes and explains the context in which translation and interpreting took place in the 2011 disaster.



*'Civilization exists by geological consent,  
subject to change without notice.'*

*Will Durant, Historian (1885-1981)*

## Chapter 4 – Context of communicating and gathering information

### *Participant-led analysis:*

*Beginning to answer the following research question:*

- How did foreign residents communicate and gather information during the 2011 disaster?

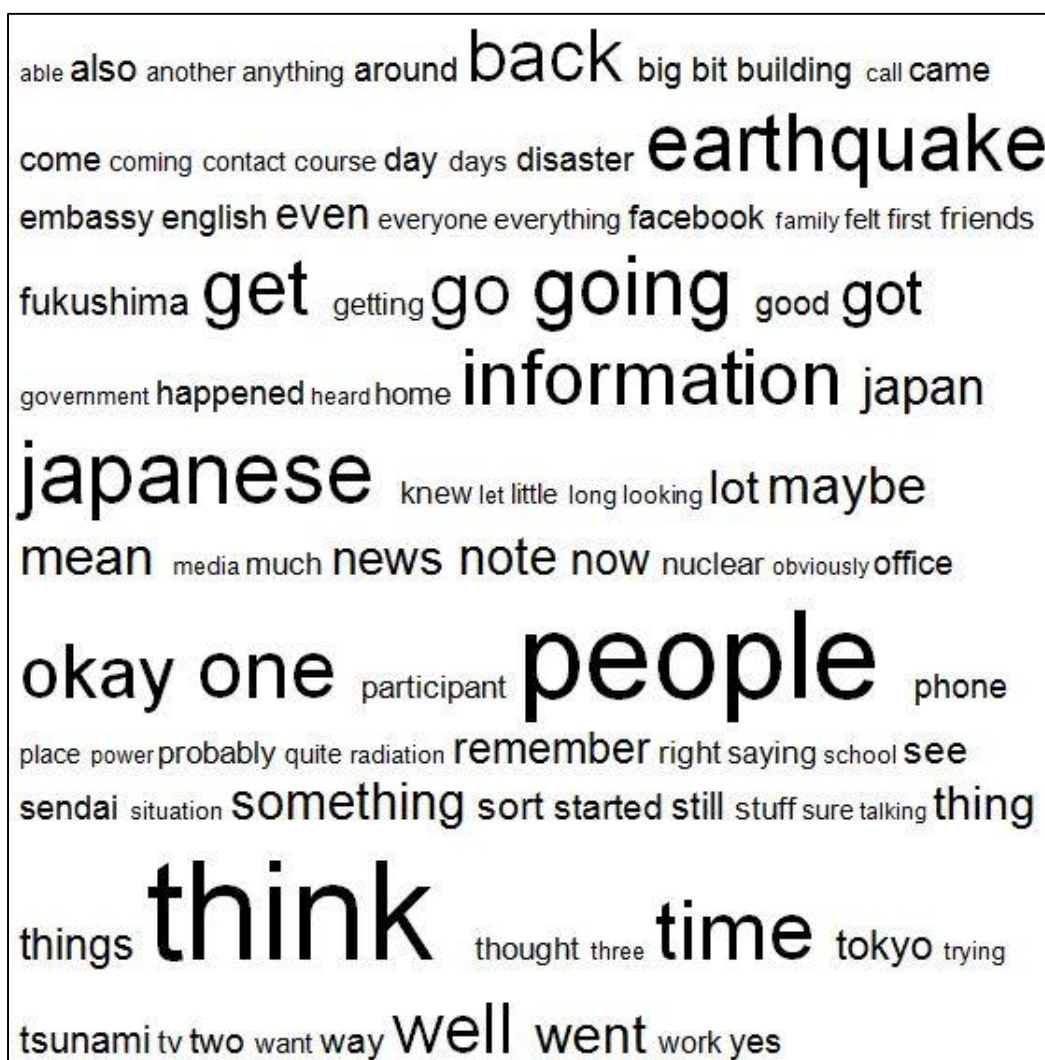


Figure 4-1. Word cloud from coded data used primarily in the creation of Chapter 4<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This word cloud has been created (using NVivo 10 software) from text contained under the following codes: Beginning of the disaster; Disaster culture; Ending of the disaster; External factors; Instances of communicating; Instances of information gathering; Principal perceived hazard; Relationship with a significant other; Rural Residence; Suburban residence; Urban residence. The word cloud displays the 100 most frequent words with a minimum length of 1 character. Only the default stop words for US English pre-set in NVivo 10 software (generally articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions) have been applied to this list.

## ***4.1 Introduction***

This chapter describes and explains the environment in which communication and information gathering were being carried out in the 2011 disaster, indicates the types of foreign resident who were involved in these communicative acts, and analyses in detail how these foreign residents went about these acts. To achieve this, the first half of the chapter presents largely contextual and experiential information, while the second half of the chapter offers descriptive data and findings. The contextual and experiential elements consist of an overview of the disaster, an explanation of how the boundaries of this enquiry into the disaster have been established, the researcher's autoethnographic account of his experiences of the disaster, and short descriptions of four other foreign residents' experiences of the disaster. The findings in the chapter are a form of participant-led analysis in which data from interviews with the 28 participants described in Chapter 3 have been combined with secondary data to create the first arguments that make up this thesis. The chapter begins, though, with a reminder of the catastrophic events that took place in Japan in early 2011.

## ***4.2 An overview of the disaster***

In Japan on Friday, March 11, 2011 at 2.46pm a powerful magnitude 9.0 earthquake created a massive tsunami that set off a serious nuclear disaster. UNESCO (2012: 3) underlines the catastrophic scale of this complex disaster: the tsunami had a run-up height of 40m at its highest point and inundated 535km<sup>2</sup> of land over a coast line of about 2,400km; 128,753 houses were completely destroyed and 245,376 houses were partially destroyed. Furthermore, at the time of writing, 200,495 people remain internally displaced as a result of the disaster (Reconstruction Agency of Japan 2015). The tsunami was certainly the deadliest of the three hazards, and approximately 92% of fatalities in the disaster were by drowning (UNESCO 2012: 3), but the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant was assigned the highest possible rating on the International Nuclear Event Scale and continues, at the time of writing, to be a volatile situation that authorities are attempting to control (McCurry 2015). The estimated economic losses from the disaster are put at some US\$220 billion and recovery operations are predicted to be on-going until 2020 (UNESCO 2012: 3).

The response to the disaster was the largest in Japanese history and involved the deployment of personnel from both national and international bodies. The Japanese Self Defense Forces dispatched almost half of their uniformed personnel, or some 107,000 people (Ministry of Defense of Japan 2011). In addition, the US Military – Japan's sole

defence ally, with forces based throughout the Japanese territory – mobilised approximately 16,000 troops, 15 vessels, and 140 aircraft to assist Japan in search and rescue, reopening transport channels, transport of supplies, and information gathering (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars 2012). Additional humanitarian relief and support were provided on a large scale by organisations such as the Japanese Red Cross Society or United Nations bodies like UNOCHA, UNICEF, WHO, or UNESCO. For instance, the Red Cross alone dispatched 896 medical teams (totalling some 5,300 staff) throughout the worst-affected areas, coordinated the activities of thousands of volunteers, and collected US\$3.89 billion as of April 2012 (Japanese Red Cross Society 2012).

The areas worst affected by loss of life, injury, displacement, and destruction of property in the 2011 disaster were the fishing villages and rural areas of Japan's north-eastern Tohoku region, in particular Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2013). In all, 15,887 people lost their lives, 2,615 are still unaccounted for, and 6,150 were injured (National Police Agency of Japan 2014). Sixty-five percent of those who lost their lives were over 60 years of age (UNESCO 2012: 3), and 41 of the fatalities in this disaster were recorded as having a nationality other than Japanese; three quarters of these foreign fatalities were Chinese or Korean (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan 2012). The numbers of foreign residents registered in Japan dropped dramatically following the disaster, and 41,207 fewer foreign nationals were resident in Japan by the end of March 2011 than had been there at the start of the year; in the three worst-affected prefectures, the number of foreign residents dropped on average 14.3 per cent (Ministry of Justice of Japan 2012).

This overview has attempted to show that the context of the 2011 disaster is important and needs to be understood to interpret the arguments presented in this thesis. However, the scale and complexity of this contextual information are also potentially overwhelming, and this fact reinforces the need to establish boundaries in this enquiry; failing to do so would risk losing the objects of enquiry in the midst of this voluminous context. The next section explains how the boundaries for this case study have been defined.

#### ***4.3 Boundaries of the enquiry***

The long-running and complex disaster described in Section 4.2 showed that many groups of individuals could have been chosen as cases to be studied in this enquiry. Emergency responders, affected communities, or government institutions were all communicating with each other and with the outside world during the disaster. The objects of enquiry in this thesis are the phenomena of translation and interpreting. Therefore, it made sense to focus

on a group that would likely have been producers and consumers of translation and interpreting.

#### *4.3.1 Defining the case to be studied*

It would have been interesting to study Japanese people's experiences of translation or interpreting in this disaster, and this group could have begun to form the case in this enquiry. However, the dominant linguistic and cultural context of Japan is Japanese, and Japanese domestic responders took charge of the majority of response activities. Therefore, it might have been difficult to find expressions of the phenomena of translation and interpreting when viewed from the point of view of Japanese nationals. In contrast, less than 2% of the total population of Japan were registered as being foreign nationals at the time of onset of the disaster (Ministry of Justice of Japan 2012). Thus, foreign languages and cultures would have been unlikely to dominate the disaster scene and, if it could be assumed that a portion of this population of foreign nationals were not competent in a Japanese linguistic and cultural context, then translation would likely have formed part of their experiences of the disaster. Prior disaster contexts in Japan seemed to support these assumptions. Sato, Okamoto, and Miyao (2009) explain that, in the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, foreigners – mostly Korean, Chinese, and Brazilian nationals – made up 2% of the total population in the disaster area but 3% of the fatalities in the earthquake. This happened because these foreigners lived in cheap, poorly earthquake-prepared housing, because they could not understand the emergency communications in Japanese, and because they found insufficient support in other languages. Satisfied that it made sense to focus on foreign nationals as a potential case with which to study the phenomena of translation and interpreting in disaster, the question then became the selection of the most appropriate sub-group of foreign nationals on which to focus.

Foreign nationals in Japan in the 2011 disaster did not form a homogenous group, and even unpacking the concept of foreignness in a Japanese context is a complex and sensitive task. (For an instructive exposition of some of the debates surrounding how language, culture, and identity intersect with ideas of foreignness in Japan, see Gottlieb [2012].) For the purposes of this research, however, it was necessary to be clear about whose experiences were being considered as data. Potential groups of foreign nationals present in Japan for the 2011 disaster included foreign responders, short-term foreign visitors to Japan, and documented and undocumented foreign residents of Japan. Each group will be discussed briefly before the group chosen as the case in this study is explained.

#### 4.3.1.1 Foreign responders

Foreign troops working in a humanitarian capacity as well as specialised and volunteer humanitarian responders from overseas were present in Japan in the 2011 disaster. The US military was the largest foreign presence in the emergency response effort, and the Japanese government requested the US to play a central role for several reasons: the US is Japan's sole defence ally and has forces based throughout the territory; they have a huge response capacity; Japanese and US forces regularly carry out joint military exercises and have a high level of interoperability (Ministry of Defense of Japan 2011, Shimodaira 2012, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars 2012). Other foreign responders performed a largely supporting role and represented a wide variety of countries and institutions:

Countries, territories and organizations with teams on-the-ground at the initial stage included Australia, China, France, Germany, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Mexico, Mongolia, Singapore, South Korea, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, Taiwan, UK, USA, IAEA, UNDAC, and UNOCHA, which all responded with search, rescue and relief activities. (Japanese Red Cross Society 2012: 4)

#### 4.3.1.2 Short-term foreign visitors

This sub-group of foreign nationals is made up largely of tourists, business travellers, and journalists. It is difficult to find records in the literature on the experience of this category of foreigner due to the fact that they were in Japan for just a short time. One mention of this group, however, came in a press conference given by the mayor of Sendai (the largest city in the three worst-affected prefectures). In this conference, the mayor underlined that it was not only citizens resident in the disaster zone that were forced to evacuate to refuge areas, but also tourists and business travellers, and that providing information to such non-residents proved difficult (Matsuoka 2012). Furthermore, it is not difficult to imagine that foreign nationals in this group would have had few established support systems in Japan and might have had little experience of Japanese language or culture.

#### 4.3.1.3 Documented and undocumented foreign residents of Japan

Japan has a strict residency management system for foreign nationals. All mid-term to long-term foreign residents are issued with a registration card and have a legal obligation to register their place of residence with local government authorities (Immigration Bureau of Japan 2011). This means that reliable, up-to-date data on the number of foreign residents in each prefecture of Japan are accessible through the national statistics agencies (E-Stat

2011). These data are detailed and include collated information on categories such as country of origin, purpose for being in Japan, and visa status. Of course, just because an individual was registered in a prefecture does not mean that they were necessarily present at the onset of the disaster, but this group of foreign nationals provided the researcher with a sub-group whose numbers could be estimated and whose profiles could be known. Additionally, not all foreign nationals resident in Japan at the time would have entered the country with the appropriate documentation, and the numbers of such undocumented residents and their profiles are difficult to estimate.

All of these foreign nationals – the US military, other humanitarian responders, tourists, business travellers, journalists, documented or undocumented residents – could have made interesting cases, but this thesis focuses on just one sub-group: documented foreign residents of Japan, specifically those foreign nationals who were resident in the disaster zone at the time of onset of the 2011 disaster. For convenience, all references to ‘foreign residents’ or to ‘foreign nationals resident’ in Japan in the remainder of this thesis refer to this particular case.

This group was chosen for a variety of reasons. As explained in Chapter 3, the researcher had connections to communities of long-term foreign residents still living in Japan as a result of having lived there himself. Additionally, the longer-term engagement of this group with Japan implied that they might have been involved in communication at more varied stages of the disaster. Finally, this engagement with Japan coupled with continued ties to linguistic and cultural contexts beyond Japan promised that this group would hold interesting views on language, culture, translation, and interpreting.

#### 4.3.1.4 A note on foreignness

Adopting the appropriate terminology to refer to the case being studied in this research has been problematic. The decision to use the term ‘foreign resident(s)’ or ‘foreign national(s) resident in Japan’ was made after due consideration of alternative terms and of the issues of language, culture, and identity that the use of such terms entails. In fact, these terms are translations of the terms 在留外国人 (zairyū gaikokujin – which can be glossed as ‘resident foreign national’) and 日本に在留する外国人 (nihon ni zairyū suru gaikokujin – which can be glossed as ‘foreign national resident in Japan’) used in official Japanese immigration literature. (See, for instance, Immigration Bureau of Japan [2011] or Ministry of Justice of Japan [2012]). Nevertheless, it is recognised that the use of the adjective ‘foreign’ could bring with it unintended connotations of ‘other’ or ‘less than’. Moreover, ‘foreign’ in a Japanese context could imply a lack of Japanese linguistic or cultural

competence that would not necessarily represent the case. In the end, it was decided that these terms – though far from perfect – were preferable to the other terms that had been considered. The rejected terms and a brief reason for their rejection are listed below.

- ‘Non-Japanese speaker’ did not reflect the fact that some members of the group making up the case could speak Japanese proficiently.
- ‘Migrant’ conveyed a nuance of ‘temporary’ or ‘transitory’ that did not represent the experience of some members of the group making up the case.
- ‘Economic migrant’ ignored the fact that some members of the group making up the case came to Japan to study or to accompany a partner.
- ‘Expatriate’ in a Japanese context was found to refer to only one urban, high-income socioeconomic group of residents originally from other countries.
- ‘Non-Japanese’ was thought to convey a more profound connotation of ‘other’ or ‘less than’ than foreign national.
- ‘Centre-periphery’ and ‘majority-minority’ conveyed a power relation that does not necessarily reflect the high social status and non-marginalised status of some members of the group making up the case.
- ‘International residents’ was thought to be equally applicable to Japanese people who had lived overseas but were now back in Japan. For instance, the term ‘international school’ is used in a Japanese context to indicate a student body usually made up of non-nationals and Japanese returnees from overseas.

It should now be clear that the group of people being used to make a study of translation and interpreting in this thesis is foreign residents. More specifically, as was indicated above, it is looking at those foreign nationals who were resident in the disaster zone at the time of onset of the 2011 disaster. This specification implies spatial and temporal boundaries that must now be explained.

#### *4.3.2 Defining the disaster in space*

Section 4.2 explained that the worst of the disaster was concentrated on Japan’s north-eastern Tohoku region. However, the officially-designated disaster zone spread over much of the eastern half of Japan’s main island. This is evidenced by the fact that Japan’s 1947 Disaster Relief Act was applied to give relief to areas contained in the following ten prefectures: Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima, Aomori, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba, Tokyo, Niigata, and Nagano (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan 2011). Figure 4–2 represents



on a map of Japan divided into its forty-seven prefectures the areas in which this act was applied. It also indicates the place of residence at the time of the disaster's onset of the 28 participants in this case study (see Section 3.6.5 for detail).

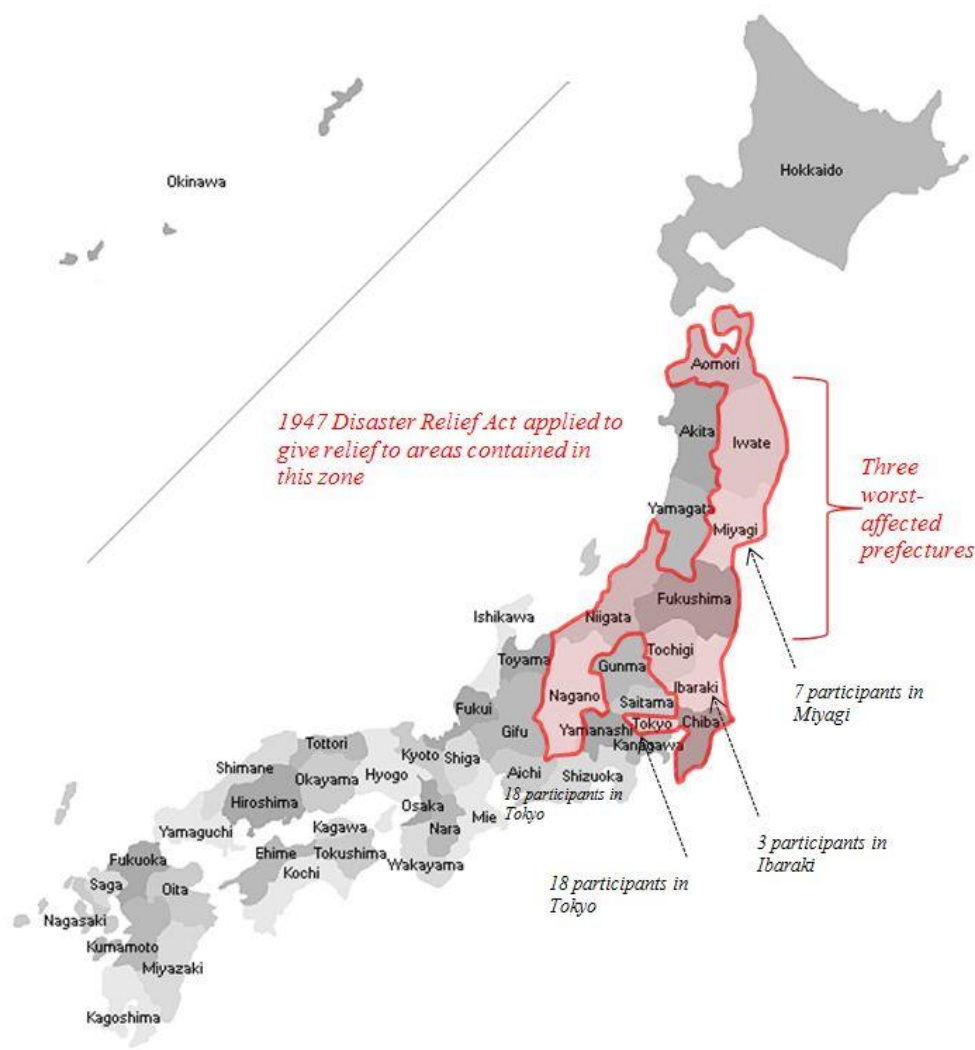


Figure 4-2. Map of the official disaster zone

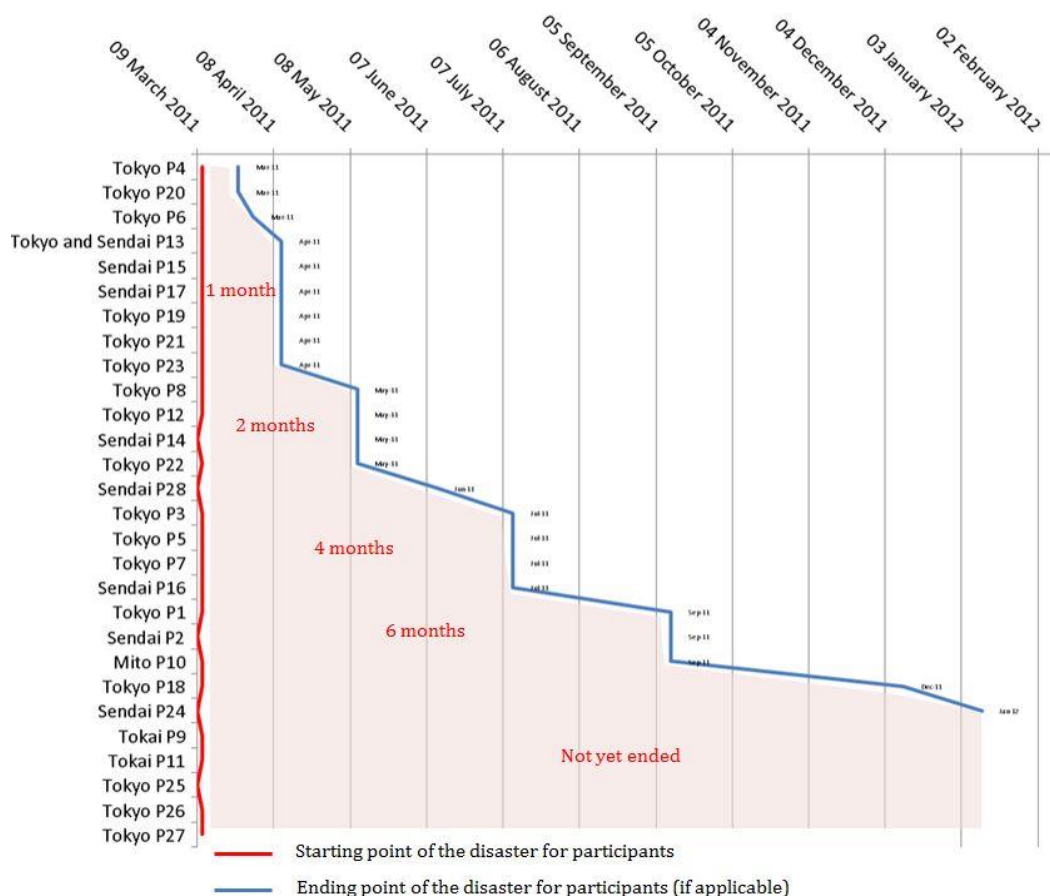
Official records can be used to estimate the number of foreign residents that may have been in these ten prefectures at the time of the disaster. Figures for 2011 indicate that about 670,000 foreign nationals from more than 190 different countries were registered as being resident in this zone (E-Stat 2011). Specifically, 28,830 foreign nationals were recorded as being resident in the three worst-affected prefectures (Iwate, Miyagi, Fukushima) and 649,704 foreign nationals were recorded as being resident in the remaining disaster-hit prefectures (Aomori, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba, Tokyo, Niigata and Nagano).<sup>9</sup> In short, the phenomena of translation and interpreting were open to being explored from the

<sup>9</sup> These records are available in Japanese from: <http://tinyurl.com/n2ucdxq> [Accessed 12 June 2015].

perspective of a large number of potential informants and, if a foreign national was resident anywhere in the red area outlined in Figure 4–2, their data was considered for potential inclusion in this case study.

#### *4.3.3 Defining the disaster in time*

Having defined a sufficient scope in space, it was necessary to establish a scope in time for eligible data. Guidelines proposed by the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (2012: 58) were adapted to choose temporal cut-offs for the disaster. These guidelines define the phases and timeline of a disaster as pre-event (lasting only seconds or minutes), event (lasting about one week after onset), response (lasting about one month after onset), and recovery (lasting about one year after onset). Thus, any data from a few minutes before the first earthquake hit to up to about a year after the onset of the disaster were to be considered for inclusion in this research. This choice was largely supported by data from those who participated in the study. Figure 4–3 graphically represents when participants in this case study felt the 2011 disaster started and ended, with the 28 participants listed on the y-axis and their experiences of time listed on the x-axis, allowing for the temporal scope for the whole group to be plotted.



**Figure 4-3. Graphic representation of when the disaster started and ended for participants**

It should be noted, first of all, that the red line indicating the starting point of the disaster is not smooth. The bumps in this line represent those participants (numbers 14, 28, 2, 24, and 25) who began their accounts of the disaster with the large, 7.2-magnitude foreshock that occurred two days before the principal earthquake. This foreshock acted as an important reference point for these participants and was when they claimed to have entered a frame of mind for getting ready to cope with a disaster. For instance, certain participants found that their sleep was disturbed before the principal earthquake on March 11 or that the foreshock made them think about disaster-related topics, such as the need to buy earthquake insurance. Thus, ‘pre-event’ in this study came to be considered not seconds or minutes but two whole days before the disaster, and so data from this extended ‘pre-event’ period became eligible for inclusion.<sup>10</sup>

Participants varied greatly in how they defined the end of the 2011 disaster; some participants felt it lasted as little as two weeks, while others felt it had not yet ended at the time of interview some two-and-a-half years after onset. There does not seem to be any

<sup>10</sup> The ‘progressive focus’ of the case study method explained in Section 3.3 allows for such changes during the enquiry.

correlation between geographic location and experience of time in the disaster. We might have assumed that those in areas that incurred great damage or that were located near nuclear power plants (such as Sendai in Miyagi Prefecture or Mito and Tokai in Ibaraki Prefecture) would have felt the effects of the disaster longer than those who were further away (for instance, in Tokyo). However, this was not the case, as can be seen from the data labels along the y-axis in Figure 4–3. Despite these varied opinions on when the disaster ended, it would seem reasonable to include data from any point from Wednesday, March 9, 2011 (the date of the foreshock that acted as a precursor to the 2011 disaster) to about one year later, sometime in March 2012.

So far this chapter has argued that an understanding of the context of the 2011 disaster is vital but potentially overwhelming and that, to keep a focus on the phenomena of translation and interpreting, it was necessary to orient the case study on one group of people in one specific place over one defined period of time. The next section works on the premise that, to understand the type of data generated by the people who make up the case in this study, we must first understand some of the ways in which they experienced the disaster.

#### ***4.4 Lived experience of the disaster***

This case study presents a thesis about translation and interpreting, but ultimately it is a story about how people experienced these phenomena as social beings. People's experiences form the bulk of the primary data gathered for this enquiry, and the enquiry's ethnographically-informed methodology recognises the personhood of the researcher in the research process. In order to provide the reader with a sense of what it was like to experience the 2011 disaster as a foreign resident, this section presents the researcher's autoethnographic account of his experiences of the disaster as well as short descriptions of the experiences of four participants selected from the dataset. These accounts focus on issues of communication and information gathering: the elements of disaster experience thought to be most relevant to the phenomena of translation and interpreting. In addition, this section provides a brief summary of how participants in the research experienced Japanese disaster culture; another element of experience that emerged as important context for interpreting this study's findings.

##### ***4.4.1 The researcher's autoethnographic account***

A first-person account of how the researcher came to this research, experienced the disaster, and communicated and gathered information in the disaster is provided here to enable the reader to understand the frames of knowledge and understanding with which the researcher

approached the research questions in this case study and, more broadly, to give the reader a sense of what it was like to live the experience of the 2011 disaster.

#### 4.4.1.1 How I came to this research project

I had been living in Japan on and off for almost eight years when the 2011 disaster struck. I was working in a Japanese company headquartered in downtown Tokyo that had factories, research centres, and sales offices throughout Tohoku and especially in two of the worst-hit prefectures, Iwate and Miyagi. I had been hired into this company to work on translation, language training, and related issues. However, my role had changed over time, and by 2011 I was being asked to deal with international recruitment and international transfers more and more. I did not like this change in my career path, and I missed working solely on translation and proof-reading. Nonetheless, I was happy in my life outside work. I had studied Japanese throughout my time living in Japan, and I had attained the highest grade of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test – a well-known certification of Japanese ability. Therefore, I could speak, read, write, and listen to Japanese well enough that I was able to live independently without assistance from other Japanese speakers. Moreover, my long experience of life in Japan meant that I felt comfortable in a Japanese cultural context.

I stayed in Japan for another one-and-a-half years after the disaster. I stayed because I felt a responsibility to be part of the rebuilding of Japan and of the company that I worked for; many colleagues that I was close to were in the worst areas of the disaster zone when the earthquake hit, and many of the company's facilities and operations had been severely damaged by the disaster. However, as the months wore on, my unhappiness started to increase; I was stressed by the constant aftershocks, my dissatisfaction with my new work responsibilities continued to grow, and I began to miss my family and friends in Ireland more and more. Eventually, I quit my job in Japan and returned to Dublin to begin a PhD.

Initially, I worked with my supervisor to propose a project looking at the translation of user-generated content produced over social media in the disaster. The intersection of translation, social media, and disaster was a topic that had been gaining academic interest at the time of our proposal in early 2012, in particular in light of the 2010 Haiti and 2010/2011 Canterbury Earthquakes. As I began to review the literature on this topic, though, I became frustrated at the lack of empirical evidence to suggest that translating social media content would be beneficial to foreigners in times of disaster. Worse still, I struggled to find empirical evidence that translation and interpreting were, in fact, needed by foreigners when a disaster struck. As a result, the focus of my research changed, and one small contribution that I felt I could make was to attempt to provide empirical evidence

for translation and interpreting being needed in the one context with which I was most familiar, the 2011 disaster.

#### 4.4.1.2. How I experienced the disaster

I was working at my desk in a big, open-plan office on the fourth floor of a ten-story building in the centre of Tokyo when the first earthquake struck on March 11. A new co-worker from Ireland who had just started some months prior was at the desk beside me. I had been through many earthquakes in my eight years of living in Japan, but this was the first time I ever went under a desk for cover. The shaking was strong, but scarier for me was the two-minute length of the earthquake and how it seemed to keep getting stronger; any earthquake I had experienced before that had lasted just a few seconds with the sharpest jolt coming at the beginning. When the shaking subsided, my co-workers and I stood around a television located in one corner of the office. A television was on each floor of the building in preparation for precisely such a scenario. All I remember of that first broadcast is a lot of flashing colours, and I did not take in any of the initial information. After some discussion among the senior executives, the call was made to evacuate the whole building.

The evacuation proceeded smoothly and quickly as these procedures had been regularly rehearsed. We stood in groups outside the building to have our names checked off a list of employees. My first instinct at this time was to tell my family in Ireland that I was okay. I used my smartphone to access Facebook over a 3G connection and posted a status saying that there had been a big earthquake but that I was okay. I never even thought to make a call because I could see all the other people around me unable to get a signal. As we were standing outside the building, the first major aftershock hit, and we became aware that a large crane on top of the building under construction next to us was dangling precariously. We were starting to think that coming outside had not been such a good idea. This decision had been taken by senior executives despite the fact that at annual emergency drills we had been told that the safest place to be following an earthquake was indoors. In the months of aftershocks that followed, announcements were made not to evacuate the building.

There was no sense of panic as we stood outside the building – I clearly remember seeing a Japanese woman in a hair salon continuing to have her hair done – but there was a buzz of anxious energy. Many people were checking their mobile phones, and public address systems were repeating warnings in Japanese that a tsunami could hit Tokyo Bay just down the road. At no time yet had I felt a need for information in my own language. While I had communicated over Facebook in English, I had communicated with most of my colleagues

in Japanese and gathered information so far in Japanese. At about 3.30pm, it was decided by senior executives that anyone who wanted to go home could do so. My apartment was just a ten-minute walk from my office, but many of my Japanese colleagues were facing the decision to walk three or four hours home or stay the night in the office; the transportation system was in chaos, and most trains had stopped and many roads were jammed.

I had always been nervous about earthquakes, so I was prepared in terms of having supplies of water, dry goods, batteries, photocopies of important documents, cash, medicine, etc., in my home. I also knew to fill my bathtub full of water as soon as I got in, in case water supplies would be cut off later. I did, however, stop in at a nearby convenience store to buy some fresh food, and already supplies in the shop were low. My apartment had been built only two years previously and had the most advanced earthquake-proofing. Nothing was damaged and nothing had even fallen off the shelves. The gas had automatically cut off as a fire prevention measure, but power, water, and Internet were still functioning normally.

My first goal on returning home was to call each of my family members in Ireland. I was able to connect to each person's landline or mobile using my prepaid Skype account and the Internet connection at my apartment. The Irish colleague who had been sitting beside me when the earthquake struck joined me in my apartment. We were trying to figure out what was going on. By now, it was late afternoon. I did not own a television, so my first instinct was to turn on the emergency battery-operated radio that I had in my disaster-pack. The radio was just broadcasting long lists of places where tsunami warnings were in effect, so we went online to look for information and found that NHK (the Japanese national broadcaster) was streaming news over certain social media websites. We used the ustream.tv website to follow the live NHK broadcasts in Japanese. At this time, it was mostly a mixture of tsunami warnings, footage from Tohoku, and footage of the oil refinery fire in Chiba near Tokyo. I was helping my colleague – who could not yet speak much Japanese – to understand the broadcasts and discussing what we thought was best to do. After eating some food together, my colleague went home.

Shortly after, a nuclear emergency was declared at the Fukushima power plant. All at once, I was out of my linguistic and cultural comfort zone. While I had been concerned about events so far in the disaster, I had not been concerned about my understanding of these events. The nuclear disaster introduced new, specialised vocabulary and concepts that I was unfamiliar with. I spent the weekend sleeping in my clothes and not leaving my apartment just glued to the live streaming of NHK news on ustream.tv. I focused in particular on the 'Social Stream' function that allowed users to comment (almost

exclusively in Japanese) in real time on the stream being broadcast. I depended on this function less for the content and more for the fact that it made me feel less alone. I also remember checking major news websites in English, such as *The Guardian*, and using Skype to phone home to my family and friends in Ireland. Despite doing some independent information gathering like this, my response to the disaster was largely dependent on direction from my company. I had confidence that they would inform all employees if it was really dangerous to be outside, so I copied what my Japanese colleagues were doing; if they thought it was safe enough to show up for work, then so would I. As a result, I returned to work as normal on Monday morning, three days after the onset of the disaster.

Email records and entries from a blog that I kept while living in Japan illustrate in some detail how I experienced the disaster. This is the entry that I posted on my blog on Saturday, March 12, the day after onset:

The past 24 hours have passed by so oddly. The quake lasted about two minutes, but it felt much, much longer. And since then time has somehow sped up: a whole day in Tokyo has passed in an eerie blink of an eye. I feel powerless and at a loss. We are told that if we are somewhere safe, we should just stay there. We should avoid unnecessary travel because it blocks up the routes for emergency relief and for people who really need to get home. And above all we are told to save electricity: with the nuclear plants in trouble and all the devastation from the tsunami, the people in the north need every kilowatt we can send them. So I have just sat around all day with everything off except my computer so I can watch the streamed news. It's really been like watching a bad movie with all this talk of natural disaster and nuclear meltdown, and at times it has felt like it is happening somewhere else. But then you get another aftershock (we've been getting about 4 or 5 serious shakes per hour – some serious) or hear a familiar place name on TV and it brings you right back to reality. I want to assure you all, though, that I am fine: I'm unharmed and I have shelter, food, running water and power. The worst I've suffered is that I didn't sleep much last night. Please send out your thoughts and prayers to the people in the north.

By April 6, the content of my blog entries was moving much more in the direction of a return to normality:

Signs that things are back to normal:

1. Bottled water is starting to reappear on shelves.
2. People (myself included) are bitching and moaning about stupid, pointless stuff again.
3. I went for a run tonight just bringing keys and my phone; no emergency water, no food, no radio, no torch. (Though the torch would actually have been kind of handy...)

Signs that things are still far from normal:

1. People are talking excitedly about finding sliced white bread in their local supermarket.
2. There are rumours going around that the power saving measures and rolling blackouts will have to continue for two years!!!



3. Companies like mine are having serious, long meetings about how to deal with working in Tokyo in summer with no air conditioning. You guys in Ireland might not be able to imagine, but it's a serious health and safety problem. Our office will easily break a humid 40 degrees in the height of summer, what with all the computers and human heat. Suggestions are on the table that I never thought I'd hear from a conservative company like mine: teleworking (blasphemy!); late-to-night shifts for office work (I like this one as I work late anyway and would get the mornings off!); and even temporarily moving offices.

But April 11 – one month after the disaster's onset – saw a setback in this trend, and I wrote on this day to a friend overseas:

We had ANOTHER sizable earthquake today. We're all just fed up of them at this stage. As soon as you start to forget about them, another one comes along and sets us right back to square one.

I returned home to Ireland for one week at the end of April for a holiday that had been booked prior to the disaster, and by the end of May (about two-and-a-half months after onset) the disaster was over for me personally. I wrote:

I went home for Golden Week (the week-long string of Japanese public holidays in April/May), and it ended up being just the tonic. I completely relaxed, despite a hectic social schedule, and came back to Japan refreshed and over the anxiety that the quake and constant aftershocks had created in me. We've had about 10 significant aftershocks since GW and none of them has ruffled my feathers, not even the one where the early-warning alarm went off in the middle of the night: I didn't open my eyes!

While the temporal boundary of the disaster could be set for me at about two to three months after onset, the effects of the disaster were longer term and, as explained above, it was as a direct result of my experience of the disaster that I changed the course of my career and left Japan to come back to Ireland to work on this PhD.

In addition to issues of communication and information gathering, the emails that I wrote at the time of the disaster also reveal that I was focused on such issues as the danger of panic, the sensationalism of overseas media, and the good job I thought the Irish embassy was doing. Excerpts from March 21 and March 26, ten to fifteen days after onset, represent this mood:

The radiation stories you are probably hearing in the west are likely to be much more sensationalized than the reality. It's true, it is a very serious situation. But at the moment it is localized to that poor area around the plant.

I thought you'd be happy to know too that the Irish embassy have been pretty great in this crisis. We've gotten regular e-mails from them (sometimes more than one a day) trying to give practical reasonable advice about all the things

that have been going on around us. It has been really helpful. I think they've gotten the balance right between warning us all of the severity of the situation and encouraging us to keep a cool head and evaluate the risks as calmly as possible.

In addition, it is clear that I had to deal with some cultural differences in how to respond to a disaster. An excerpt from an email that I sent to my family four days after the disaster illustrates this point:

It might seem strange to be saying I'm back in work, but that really is the Japanese way. There's a culture of just getting on with things. The feeling is that in this group culture, if everyone continues to do their small part (even a small part), the bigger thing (school, company, country, etc.) keeps running. So we're trying to be as normal as possible without forgetting the terrible tragedy and dreadful circumstances that so many of the Japanese people are in. I struggled with this attitude on Monday a bit and just felt the tasks and decisions I was involved in were so trivial and pointless in the scheme of things. But then today, being in work really helped and kept me from going into a spin of panic about the nuclear situation. I mean, I know it's bad, but I don't think it will be the Japanese Chernobyl. And there is really nothing I can do about it, so I may as well try to make the most of each day that is given to me and have confidence that the people in charge are doing everything they possibly can to make the situation better.

This autoethnographic account, of course, represents only one perspective on the 2011 disaster. The next section describes briefly how four participants in the case study lived the experience of communication and information gathering in the disaster in their own social worlds. These vignettes are intended as a complement to and not a replacement for a reading of the interview transcripts in the case study, and simply allow quick access to particularly instructive aspects of certain participants' accounts.

#### *4.4.2 Vignettes of participants' experiences*

The logic for selecting the participant accounts from which to create vignettes was based on three major elements: the frequency with which each participant referred to the units of meaning selected as the main codes to be analysed in this chapter; each participant's Japanese ability; other demographic factors. Table 4–1 shows the number of references that each participant interviewed in this case study made to the units of meaning that have been analysed as the major codes in this chapter. Four participants (who were dispersed throughout the table, who did not seem to represent extremes, and who had provided particularly instructive interviews) were first selected. Then, the self-reported Japanese abilities of these four participants were checked to ensure that they represented a broad

range of language fluency. Finally, it was confirmed that these four participants would have had diverse perspectives on the disaster as a result of their place of residence, nationality, age, and occupation at the time of the disaster. (The information on the four selected participants has been shaded light blue in Table 4–1.)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Other demographic factors, such as gender, disability status, or relationship status could also have led to an interesting selection of vignettes. However, demographic factors can be analytically endless, and five factors – Japanese ability, place of residence, nationality, age, and occupation – were chosen for their relevance to translation and interpreting, to the case, and to the context outlined so far in this chapter.

	Beginning of the disaster	Culture of disaster in Japan	Focus in response or recovery	Ending of the disaster	Instances of communicating		Instances of communicating		Instances of information gathering		Instances of information gathering	Principal perceived hazard	SUM
					NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEUTRAL	POSITIVE			
Participant 2	2	2	7	3	9	8	3	9	4	6	0	53	
Participant 21	1	0	8	3	11	6	2	10	6	3	0	50	
Participant 1	2	2	9	3	8	14	6	4	1	0	0	49	
Participant 8	1	1	5	3	7	12	10	2	2	2	0	45	
Participant 23	2	0	5	1	8	7	3	7	3	4	0	40	
Participant 28	1	1	5	2	5	7	6	5	3	5	0	40	
Participant 13	1	2	3	1	6	13	2	7	3	1	0	39	
Participant 14	1	1	9	1	5	3	6	6	6	1	0	39	
Participant 20	2	3	7	1	3	6	1	6	4	4	0	37	
Participant 25	1	2	6	1	5	1	5	5	5	2	0	33	
Participant 10	5	3	3	3	2	1	5	2	5	3	0	32	
Participant 12	1	4	4	2	4	5	4	2	3	2	0	31	
Participant 24	1	0	3	1	0	5	9	3	6	2	0	30	
Participant 26	1	0	4	1	1	6	3	3	5	5	0	29	
Participant 4	1	1	6	1	3	3	2	5	7	0	0	29	
Participant 9	1	0	6	3	5	5	1	2	6	0	0	29	
Participant 17	1	5	3	2	3	6	3	3	1	1	0	28	
Participant 15	1	1	1	1	3	7	1	3	5	4	0	27	
Participant 16	1	0	7	2	4	5	0	2	3	3	0	27	
Participant 27	1	3	4	2	4	2	2	4	2	3	0	27	
Participant 3	2	1	3	2	5	3	4	1	3	1	0	25	
Participant 22	1	1	3	1	4	3	1	6	2	1	0	23	
Participant 18	1	2	1	1	5	6	0	2	3	1	0	22	
Participant 19	1	2	4	1	5	1	4	1	1	1	0	21	
Participant 5	1	0	1	1	2	4	4	3	2	3	0	21	
Participant 6	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	4	6	0	21	
Participant 11	4	1	1	1	2	1	0	5	3	1	0	19	
Participant 7	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	4	2	1	0	14	
				Confidence in speaking Japanese	Confidence in listening to Japanese	Confidence in reading Japanese	Confidence in writing Japanese	SUM					
				9	9	7	7	32					
				7	9	8	8	32					
				1	2	0	0	3					
				7	8	5	6	26					

Table 4-1. Number of references made by participants to the units of meaning analysed in this chapter

#### 4.4.2.1 The translator

*(Participant 24: high Japanese ability; resident in Sendai; from New Zealand; age 20-29; living in Japan for 5 years when the disaster struck; local government employee)*

This participant was living and working in Sendai when the disaster struck. He was focused on communication and information gathering because of his job in Sendai City Government to act as a liaison between the institution and the foreign communities in the city. He was well trained in how to respond to disaster as part of this institutional structure, and the focus of his role was on working with a team to get relevant disaster-related information from the government and other sources translated and distributed to foreign nationals in Sendai. This was done through radio broadcasts, group emails using lists set up prior to the disaster, Facebook groups, noticeboards, visits to evacuation centres, and public meetings. These methods of communicating and information gathering did not operate in isolation, and methods interacted with each other in feedback loops. When the disaster moved into the recovery phase, his role became focused on ensuring that various administrative forms were translated and that foreign residents would not be blocked by language from volunteering to help rebuild the devastated areas. This participant came from Christchurch in New Zealand, and his family had been affected by the Canterbury Earthquakes several months prior. This background certainly influenced his desire to make contact with his family by mobile phone as soon as possible after the disaster struck and influenced his relief at hearing that foreign friends who had heard him on the radio had posted on Facebook that he was safe.

#### 4.4.2.2 The interpreter

*(Participant 13: high Japanese ability; resident in Tokyo; from France; age 50-59; living in Japan for 27 years when the disaster struck; business interpreter)*

This participant worked in Tokyo as a professional business interpreter at the time of the disaster, and he had just finished interpreting for some overseas clients when the disaster hit. His first effort at communicating was to contact his wife and family by mobile phone message, and then to Skype with the clients that he had just parted company with as soon as he got home. As a fluent speaker of Japanese with a Japanese wife and more than twenty years' experience of life in Japan, his information gathering was largely Japanese-based. He read Japanese newspapers, listened to Japanese radio, and did not own a television. This lack of visual information seems to have delayed his understanding of the devastation caused by the disaster further north. He did consult online French news websites, and

received a lot of information by email from his clients and members of his national community in Japan. A recurring theme in his account was the contrast between the panic and sensationalism of this overseas information compared to the relatively calm tone of the Japanese information. His focus in the disaster quickly came to be about how he could make a contribution to the response. An email from his embassy recruiting volunteer interpreters to go to Sendai the second day after onset provided him with such an opportunity to contribute. He accompanied an overseas search and rescue team up to the disaster zone by bus and interpreted for them for about 72 hours. The mission was cut short over concerns about radioactivity. The interpreting that he did was basic mediation of instructions from the local government officials in charge of the response to the members of the foreign search and rescue team. He highlighted, though, that little linguistic mediation was required because the team was underemployed and had clearly been sent there as a result of political rather than practical need. His account illustrated how little support volunteer interpreters got in terms of explanation of their duties, the hazards they would face, and care after the event.

#### 4.4.2.3 The foreign resident confident in Japanese

*(Participant 5: medium Japanese ability; resident in Tokyo; from Ireland; age 20-29; living in Japan for 3 years when the disaster struck; engineer)*

This participant worked in a Japanese company, had a Japanese partner, and was confident in his Japanese abilities as a result of the three years he had spent living in Tokyo by the time of the onset of the disaster. In his account, he underlined how minimal the effect of the disaster had been on him personally. His focus on the day of onset was simply getting home to the suburbs of Tokyo, so he was interested in the information being provided by Japanese-language television and the information that was available on Japanese-language websites that he could check using his mobile phone. Overall, Japanese television and various Internet sites were the main methods of information gathering to which he referred in his account. As for communicating, he was able to use Facebook initially to let his family in his home country know that he was safe and to see how his foreign friends in Japan were experiencing the disaster. However, after March 11, he returned to using the same methods of phone and email that he always used to keep in touch. It was only in relation to the nuclear disaster that he expressed any real stress or change in behaviour. He felt conflicted by the different messages about the disaster that he was receiving from sources in Japan and from sources overseas. In trying to understand what was going on with the nuclear disaster, he became dependent on English-language sources, and he expressed surprise at how poor the standard of multilingual communication of Japanese experts was in relation

to the nuclear issue. It was clear from his account that his strong feelings of belonging to the Japanese company for which he worked guided how he responded to the disaster, and he saw his position as no different to that of his Japanese colleagues.

#### 4.4.2.4 The foreign resident with no confidence in Japanese

*(Participant 16: low Japanese ability; resident in Sendai; from Bangladesh; age 30-39; living in Japan for 18 months when the disaster struck; student)*

This participant was doing research in a Japanese university in the disaster zone at the onset of the disaster. He was working at the university when the earthquake struck, but his pregnant wife – who had accompanied him to Japan – was home sick in their apartment several kilometres away. Getting back to her and knowing that she was safe were his main goals at the outset of the disaster. It turned out that she had evacuated to a refuge centre along with friends from the foreign community in Sendai. As a result, the participant's first communication was all face-to-face and took place either in English (with his Japanese co-workers and with other Japanese and foreign nationals in the refuge centre) or Bengali (with the other members of his community). Once the participant had been reunited with his wife and friends, his communicative focus shifted to using his mobile telephone to lobby his embassy to send a car to collect him, his wife, and other fellow nationals from the disaster zone. He thought to charge his phone at a power point in a local hospital. With almost no confidence in his Japanese ability, the participant was completely dependent on the help of other foreign nationals who were more fluent in Japanese. He managed to gather information about the disaster largely by having television broadcasts in Japanese received through a car navigation system translated for him by a friend, by contacting his embassy, and by telephoning a fellow national located in a safe part of the city who would access online news websites on his behalf and report back. While the participant was complimentary about how the Japanese government responded to the disaster overall, he showed surprise at the fact that Sendai, a city which claims to be an international city and which has a large number of overseas university students, offered so little information in other languages, especially through television broadcasts.

#### 4.4.3 How participants experienced Japanese disaster culture

One final element of contextual information that is useful to understand before proceeding to the findings in the second half of this chapter is the idea that Japan has a unique way of responding to disasters. Twenty of the twenty-eight participants in the study chose to talk about this unique culture in their accounts. They underlined that response to disaster in

Japan is community- or group-based. Room is generally not given for individual response strategies, and Japanese people are socialised from a young age into how to respond as part of a group. Aside from this leading to the efficient rationing of limited resources in a disaster, there was a feeling that responding in this ‘one correct way’ was restrictive, inflexible, and sometimes alienating in their eyes.

The feeling in participants’ accounts was that, even though this was a disaster on an almost unimaginable scale, Japanese people are used to disaster and are used to the idea that they will likely one day have to cope with one. Foreign residents are not always in touch with such feelings and do not necessarily share this Japanese sense of fatalistic stoicism. Some participants highlighted that this national character in response to disaster was conveyed in the Japanese ideas of 我慢 (gaman) and しょうがない (shōganai), which are used to talk about how certain things must be endured or about how certain things cannot be helped.

The participants also made clear that the discourse surrounding Japanese disasters tends to centre on not showing panic and remaining calm. They also suggested that disaster discourse in Japan is not particularly open, and they suspected that elements of this discourse are suppressed if they are deemed likely to induce panic.

In practical terms, participants talked about how they struggled with the standard Japanese instruction to stay inside a building following an earthquake. This seemed counterintuitive to many and was often ignored. Participants also struggled with the typical Japanese response strategy that you should continue with your responsibilities and return to normal operations as soon as possible. This focus on getting back to work seemed callous and pointless to some foreign nationals, but was, on the other hand, admired by some others.

In short, it was determined by foreign nationals who participated in this study that a group-based, well-rehearsed way of responding to disaster was characteristic of Japanese culture and that this led to a fatalistic stoicism and a focus on calm recovery at all costs that created some alienation and suspicion in foreign nationals who were confronted by this disaster culture.

The chapter so far has delimited what this thesis aims to study and demonstrated what it was like to experience the 2011 disaster and how issues of communication and information gathering impacted on these experiences for foreign residents. The next section will build on this contextual information by discussing in detail how the participants in this study communicated and gathered information.



#### ***4.5 Communication and information gathering by foreign residents***

Communicating and gathering information were vital tasks for official responders to the 2011 disaster. The Cabinet Office – the branch of the Japanese government responsible for coordinating the national emergency response – listed the provision of means of communication as third in its list of main activities after the restoration of roads, and the distribution of relief goods (Cabinet Office Government of Japan 2012: 10). Were communicating and gathering information also important tasks for foreign residents? One indication of the significance of these acts to the experiences of some foreign residents can be seen in the milestones chosen by the participants in this study to mark the end to the disaster. From Table 4–2, we can see that 7 of the 23 participants who felt that the disaster had ended defined this end point by a change in their communication and information-gathering activities.

Participant identifier number	Functional definition of ending
<b>Defined end point by a change in their communication and information gathering activities</b>	
6	When information seemed more reliable and Fukushima seemed less of a risk
10	When community bonding (e.g. the positive atmosphere, information sharing, and communication when lining up together for supplies) ended
15	When he could purchase items without lining up for a very long time and when he could meet friends and contact anyone any time (but he does not think that Fukushima has ended and thinks the situation is not under control)
19	When his 'fight or flight' reaction eased and when he was no longer sharing information back and forth with people non-stop
20	When he lost the voracious need to have up-to-date information (e.g. when he was no longer checking Twitter on waking or after leaving a room) (but he still considers that the disaster is not over in terms of Fukushima)
21	When Japan was no longer the top story on CNN
24	When he and his colleagues in local government changed from reacting to the disaster to asking 'how can we use what we have learned to prepare for the next disaster?'
<b>Defined end point by some other milestone</b>	
1	When her non-stop worry and being on edge - especially about a big earthquake coming to Tokyo - had ended
2	When he had a base, a home, a fixed job, and a regular schedule again in his home country
3	When he was transferred by his work out of Japan (but he feels continuing high radiation levels at Fukushima means that aspect of the disaster has not yet ended)
4	When he returned from the west of Japan (where he had temporarily taken refuge)
5	When his parents overseas were less worried about the shortages he was experiencing and when activities stopped being cancelled or rescheduled
7	When streetlights and shops' neon signs were back on
8	When she had returned from her Golden Week holiday
12	When trains had started running normally again, when Disneyland had reopened, and when he had returned from his Golden Week holiday in his home country
13	When stressful daily aftershocks abated
14	When the special feeling of seeing a new type of food in the supermarket wore off and when regular supplies were available again
16	When aftershocks had abated and when camps in the worst-affected areas that he was volunteering at seemed to need less physical support
17	When he returned to Japan from his home country (where he had temporarily taken refuge)
18	When his wife stopped collecting emergency supplies in their home to send to relatives in the worst-affected areas and when he started to relax a bit and feel comfortable
22	When he had returned from his home country (where he had temporarily taken refuge) and was able to start steady work in Japan
23	When her parents agreed for her to return to Japan from overseas (where she had temporarily taken refuge)
28	When the worst of the aftershocks had abated (e.g. he was no longer sleeping in his clothes)
<b>Did not feel the disaster had ended at the time of interview</b>	
9	Not applicable (because there are cracks still in the streets of his hometown and the local community is still divided over the nuclear issue)
11	Not applicable (because he is still constantly worried about the threat to Fukushima from aftershocks, so much so that he has sold business and moved away from disaster zone)
25	Not applicable (because she still thinks about disaster all the time, defines life events as pre-earthquake and post-earthquake, and is still fundraising)
26	Not applicable (because he is still worried about possible radiation poisoning)
27	Not applicable (because he is still running a daily disaster blog - however by August 2011 [5 months] the main issue on the blog had become long-term food safety not disaster response)

**Table 4-2. Milestones chosen by participants to mark the end of the disaster**

Proceeding, then, on the assumption that communicating and gathering information were likely important to foreign residents, why have these activities been examined as separate categories in this research?

#### *4.5.1 Communicating and gathering information as separate categories*

It has been established in the disaster studies literature that gaining 'situation awareness' is a key goal in communicating during a disaster. Situation awareness is a concept used in the study of emergency response to talk about how people individually and collectively gather and analyse information in complex and changing circumstances in order to understand and cope with a situation (Endsley and Garland 2000, Vieweg 2012). In this thesis, this type of communicative act has been termed 'information gathering', while all other communicative acts have been referred to simply as 'communicating'. Another reason behind the functional separation of these two communicative categories came from an

initial intuition in this research; it was assumed that, when foreign nationals were communicating with people they already knew (e.g., making calls to confirm their safety, getting emails from their employers on how to respond, using social media to give moral support to their friends), there was a high chance that these acts would have been carried out in a familiar linguistic and cultural context, whereas when trying to gather information about the disaster, there was more chance of them coming into contact with Japanese – the dominant linguistic and cultural context of the disaster – and that this might not have been as familiar. It will be shown in subsequent sections that interesting differences have been found in the data between these two functionally-separated categories of communicating and gathering information to gain situation awareness.

#### *4.5.2 Methods used to communicate and gather information*

The word cloud at the beginning of the chapter gave some indication of the ways in which participants in the study communicated and gathered information in the 2011 disaster; ‘news’ (21<sup>st</sup>), ‘Facebook’ (41<sup>st</sup>), ‘phone’ (50<sup>th</sup>), ‘TV’ (64<sup>th</sup>), and ‘media’ (90<sup>th</sup>) all appeared in the hundred most frequently occurring words in the set of codes analysed in this chapter. Looking at the number of participants in the study who chose to mention certain methods of communicating or information gathering in their accounts, we see eight broad methods emerge:

- Internet
- Face-to-face
- Telephone
- Television
- Social media
- Specialised disaster communication methods
- Print
- Radio

Of these, only the category of Internet was mentioned by all participants. Face-to-face and telephone were mentioned by all but one, and the remainder – except for radio – were mentioned by more than half of participants. An early pattern, then, is that some methods of communicating and information gathering were more prominent than others in participant accounts. One of the striking features of participant accounts, however, was the diversity of methods that were relevant to their experiences, and the broad categories listed above hide some of this detail. Table 4–3 allows us to see that email on a desktop machine,

online news, word-of-mouth, mobile phones (including calls and SMS but also emails), Japanese TV news, and Facebook dominated participants' accounts of the disaster.

Specific methods of communicating and gathering information mentioned by participants at interview		
Method of communicating or gathering information	No. of sources	Participant identifier number(s)
<b>Internet</b>		
Email (not on mobile)	23	1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 12 13 14 15 16 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 28
Overseas news online	22	2 3 4 6 7 8 10 12 13 14 15 16 17 19 20 21 22 23 25 26 27 28
Website (non-news)	19	2 4 5 6 7 11 12 13 15 17 19 20 21 23 24 25 26 27 28
Japanese news online	13	4 5 6 11 12 13 14 16 19 22 23 27 28
Online forums	3	4 6 20
<b>Face-to-face</b>		
Word-of-mouth	27	1 2 3 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
Public meeting	4	6 20 27 28
Interview	3	1 27 28
<b>Telephone</b>		
Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)	27	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 28
Landline phone	12	1 2 5 9 10 12 13 14 20 21 25 26
Helplines	2	14 24
Satellite phone	2	3 19
What's App	1	8
Public payphone	1	24
Fax	1	3
<b>Television</b>		
Japanese TV news	23	1 2 4 5 6 7 8 9 11 12 13 14 15 16 18 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 28
Overseas TV news	15	1 10 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 20 21 22 23 25 26
Car navigation TV	1	16
<b>Social media</b>		
Facebook	20	2 3 4 5 6 7 9 10 12 14 15 19 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
Skype	8	2 4 7 8 10 13 21 25
Twitter	5	3 6 12 13 19 20 25
Blog	1	13
Mixi	1	12
QQ & WeChat (Chinese only social media)	1	17
<b>Specialised disaster methods</b>		
PA announcement	17	1 2 4 5 7 8 9 10 11 12 14 17 18 19 20 22 23 27
Automated message boards	6	3 5 12 18 19 20
Automated warning	5	2 8 12 18 23
<b>Print</b>		
Letters pamphlets	11	1 3 4 8 9 12 20 21 23 25 26
Japanese news print	3	13 15 27
Noticeboards	2	14 24
<b>Radio</b>		
Japanese radio news	7	2 3 13 14 17 24 28
Overseas radio news	1	2

Table 4-3. Specific methods of communicating and gathering information

Thus, the chapter so far has begun to provide an answer to the first research question in this thesis: how did foreign residents communicate and gather information during the 2011 disaster? However, the chapter has not yet told us anything about the quality of participants' experiences of using these communicative and information gathering methods. Let us look first at communicating.

### *4.5.3 Qualitative assessment of methods of communicating*

Table 4–4 summarises various units of meaning coded in the interview data to give an overview of the quality of participants’ communicative acts. It summarises how participants connected the use of a method of communication (explicitly or implicitly) with a positive, negative, or neutral experience.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Definitions of the codes used in the creation of Table 4–4 (How the communicative act was carried out, Communication positive, Communication negative, and Communication neutral) can be found in Appendix F.

How the communicative act was carried out								
Name	Sources	References	Name	Sources	References	Name	Sources	References
Communicating (NEUTRAL)	28	142	Communicating (POSITIVE)	25	90	Communicating (NEGATIVE)	27	122
	19	35	Word-of-mouth	15	30	Mobile phone (call, text, SMS)	23	40
	17	22	Facebook	12	19	PA announcement	14	16
	15	42	Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)	9	14	Word-of-mouth	13	22
	8	16	Email (not on mobile)	6	12	Email (not on mobile)	9	15
	7	9	Skype	5	5	Facebook	8	12
	7	7	Landline phone	3	4	Landline phone	6	6
	4	4	Automated message boards	2	2	Letters, pamphlets	4	4
	4	4	Twitter	2	2	Automated warning	3	5
	3	5	Satellite phone	2	2	Twitter	3	3
	2	3	Letters pamphlets	2	2	Skype	2	4
	2	3	QQ & WeChat (Chinese only social media)	1	2	Automated message boards	1	2
	2	2	Public pay phone	1	1	Blog	1	2
	1	1	Interview	1	1	Mixi	1	1
	1	1				Interview	1	1
What's App	1	1						
How the communicative act was connected to a positive or negative experience								
Name			Name			References		
POSITIVE association with communicating			NEGATIVE association with communicating					
Allowed a person's safety to be confirmed			Connection			21		
Relieved panic or stress			Language			13		
Reduced feelings of isolation			Induced panic or stress			12		
Access to power where it might not have been expected			Lack of communication where it might be expected			12		
Improved response			Lack of clear instruction			7		
Increased community bonds			Time			6		
Provided useful advice			Emotion			5		
Positive aspects of the method of communication itself			Power			5		
Robust connection where one was might not be expected			Negative aspects of the method of communication itself			4		
Provided useful linguistic mediation			Culture			3		
Facilitated the sharing of gathered information			Increased the danger of the situation			2		
Allowed a person to express their ideas about the disaster			Politics			2		
Chance to contribute to response and recovery			Legal issues			1		
Showered the police of forensic abilities						1		

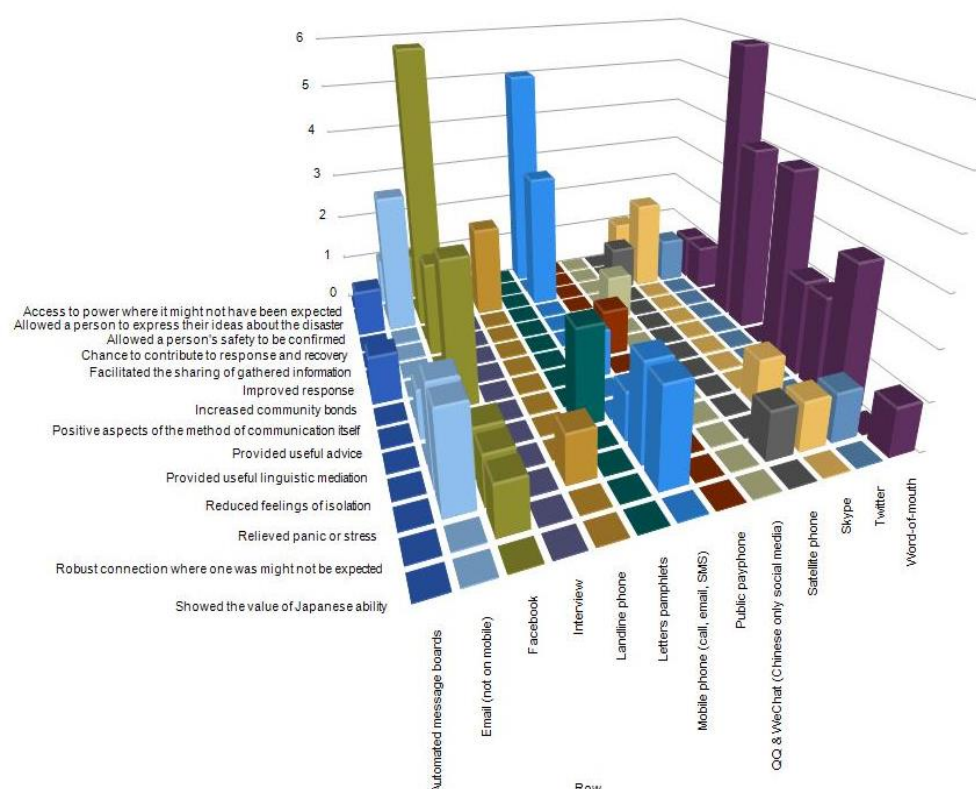
**Table 4-4. Methods of communicating (includes qualitative associations)**

Examining the transcripts in this way reveals the great variety in communicative methods used (participants talked about 19 different methods in total) and indicates that mobile

phones, email, word-of-mouth, and Facebook were mentioned particularly frequently. Table 4–4 also summarises the qualitative associations that participants made with these acts of communication, and variety was once again evident. To explore the connections (either explicit or implicit) that participants made between each communicative method and a positive experience, Table 4–5 and its graphic representation in Figure 4–4 present the numbers of participants who talked positively in their interviews about certain methods of communication cross-referenced with how they connected this method of communication to a positive experience. Some clear patterns emerge:

	A : Automated message boards	B : Email (not on mobile)	C : Facebook	D : Interview	E : Landline phone	F : Letters pamphlets	G : Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)	H : Public payphone	I : QQ & WeChat (Chinese only social media)	J : Satellite phone	K : Skype	L : Twitter	M : Word-of-mouth
1 : Access to power where it might not have been expected		1	1				5				1		
2 : Allowed a person to express their ideas about the disaster				1									
3 : Allowed a person's safety to be confirmed	1	3	6		2		3			1	2	1	1
4 : Chance to contribute to response and recovery													1
5 : Facilitated the sharing of gathered information			2						1				
6 : Improved response													6
7 : Increased community bonds	1							1					4
8 : Positive aspects of the method of communication itself			3				1						
9 : Provided useful advice		1											4
10 : Provided useful linguistic mediation						2							2
11 : Reduced feelings of isolation		2	1				1				1		2
12 : Relieved panic or stress		2	1		1		2						3
13 : Robust connection where one was might not be expected			1				2			1	1	1	
14 : Showed the value of Japanese ability													1

**Table 4-5. Numbers of participants who talked positively about a method of communication cross-referenced with how they made this positive association**



**Figure 4-4. Numbers of participants who talked positively about a method of communication cross-referenced with how they made this positive association**

At a glance, we can see that the participants viewed word-of-mouth, Facebook, and mobile phones positively (the top three methods talked about by the largest number of participants) for slightly different reasons. The big advantage presented by Facebook as a method of communication was the ease with which it allowed someone to confirm another person's safety:

Luckily, {my wife} was able to get on Facebook, and let my family know that I was okay, because obviously they were pretty worried about me. Because everyone here [Note: in Christchurch] just saw Sendai, tsunami, and, you know, put two and two together, I lived in Sendai so I was probably dead, basically [laughter] which is kind of horrible to think about. But yeah, luckily she was able to get on Facebook for me and let people know that I was okay. Facebook was really good for that purpose. It was a really good way to get in touch with people. (Participant 28)

Mobile phones proved to be a good way to communicate because they were portable and battery-operated and could be recharged in ways that might not have been possible for other electronic methods:

So, the battery ran out of the phone that morning, so I had the charger inside in the car, so I went into the car. I was able to charge away, and I rang them on Skype, just told them, "Look, there'd been an earthquake. It was all grand." (Participant 2)

For many participants though, it was clear that word-of-mouth – in other words direct, face-to-face interaction with another human – was the best way to communicate, especially when it came to responding more effectively to the disaster:

I remember one of my colleagues shouting, foreign guy was shouting, "Ah, Japanese, what are we supposed to do?" Anyway, I thought that was good. I just followed. (Participant 8)

In addition, word-of-mouth was valorised by participants for the bonding it allowed them with members of the broader community:

People I didn't really know in my community, I would just have passed, you know, we'd nod or whatever, would say, "Oh, are your parents worried? Are you going to go back home or are you okay? And she was like, "If you ever need rice or dahdahdahdahdah, please let me know." So I felt part of the community. And I really think, having been here and having Japanese language, Japanese language ability really was so helpful, because I can't imagine people living in areas where there's only foreigners who, you know, expat housing and all that kind of thing. (Participant 25)

According to participants, word-of-mouth was also a quick and easy way to get advice in the disaster:

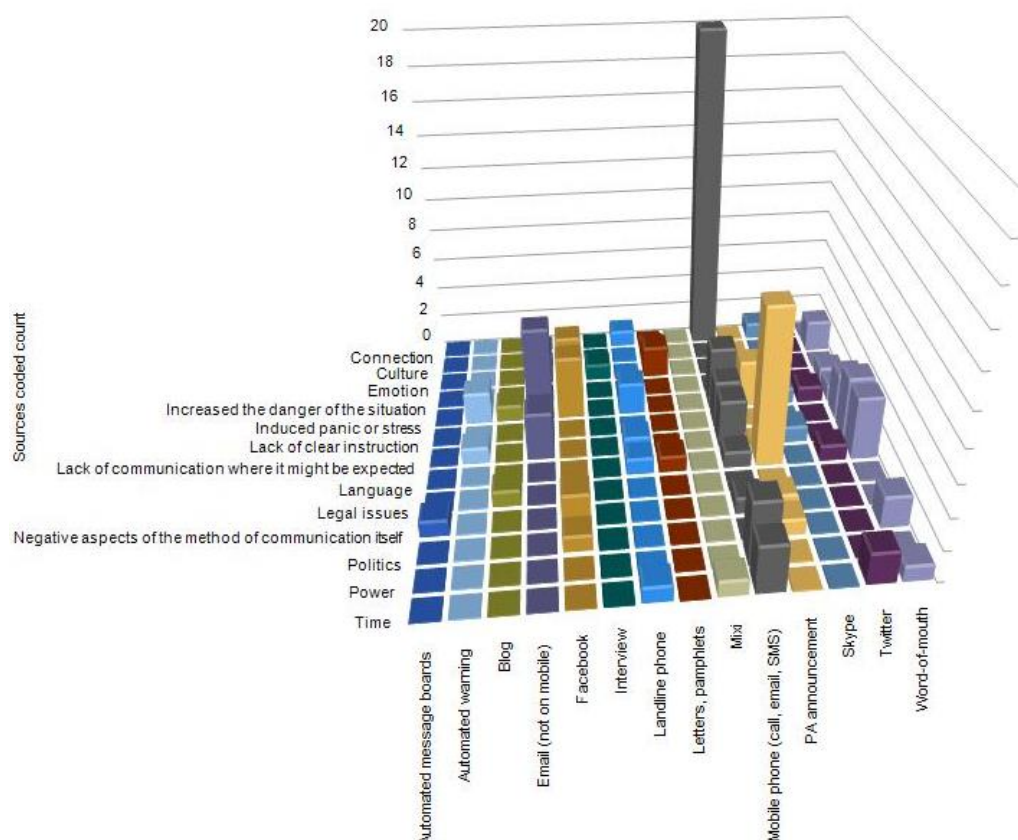


You know, there's a colleague that I work with who has a background – well, while he works in advertising – he has a background in nuclear physics, so his Undergraduate slash PhD/Masters kind of understanding of stuff just became, one of those people that you went to, “So what is a millisievert exactly?” and, “So how am I supposed to interpret this?” (Participant 20)

It should not be taken from the above, however, that the story of communication in the disaster for foreign residents was a purely positive one. More participants spent more time talking about the negative aspects of communication. Table 4–6 and its graphic representation in Figure 4–5 now present the numbers of participants who talked negatively in their interviews about certain methods of communication cross-referenced with how they connected this method of communication to a negative experience.

	A : Automated message boards	B : Automated warning	C : Blog	D : Email (not on mobile)	E : Facebook	F : Interview	G : Landline phone	H : Letters, pamphlets	I : Mail	J : Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)	K : PA announcement	L : Skype	M : Twitter	N : Word-of-mouth
1 : Connection							1			20		1		
2 : Culture								1						2
3 : Emotion				2	3	1		2						
4 : Increased the danger of the situation											1			1
5 : Induced panic or stress		2	1	6	4		2			4	3	1	1	1
6 : Lack of clear instruction				2						3				3
7 : Lack of communication where it might be expected		1		3			1			3		1		4
8 : Language							1	1		1	10		1	4
9 : Legal issues			1											
10 : Negative aspects of the method of communication itself	1				2					1	1			
11 : Politics					1						1			2
12 : Power										4				
13 : Time							1		1	3			2	1

**Table 4-6. Numbers of participants who talked negatively about a method of communication cross-referenced with how they made this negative association**



**Figure 4-5. Numbers of participants who talked negatively about a method of communication cross-referenced with how they made this negative association**

Two things become clear about what led participants to feel negatively about how they and other foreign nationals experienced communication in the 2011 disaster. Firstly, they could not use their mobile phones because of problems with connectivity and power as a direct result of infrastructural damage and overload:

I tried to call my wife to the mobile, but at the time the network was collapsed, there was no network around here. I tried to call my friends or other friends around {the area where the university accommodation was located}, but there was no network. (Participant 16)

Secondly, language now emerged as a factor to be taken into account. When looking at the positive aspects of communicating above, language had not really been part of the story, but now language issues were preventing smooth communication for the foreign residents in this case study, especially when they were trying to receive communication from the PA system or, to a lesser extent, by word-of-mouth:

I remember the tsunami warning, which I didn't understand but was translated for me. I do remember it being broadcast that there was the possible risk of a tsunami up to two-metres coming to Tokyo. That never materialised. It did hit parts of Chiba, but we were in that little inlet, the Tokyo Bay inlet, like, it was, where the earthquake happened, I don't think it could have come in there. I remember that. I remember it being broadcast loud. I think some came in the

coming days, like, maybe once or twice, but, it's possible I'm confusing that with those loud vans going around. I don't know. I can't say. There definitely were some PA announcements, and they were impossible, utterly impossible for me to understand, because it was, kind of, static-y, you know, like, crackly [Note: the participant then covers his mouth with his hand and produces some incomprehensible sounds] over the system so, but the Japanese people around understood. (Participant 12)

When I got to the supermarket, it was, they were, like – yeah, I've forgot even the term, I forgot it already – it was like *kigen* or *ki* [Note: the participant is probably referring to the term *seigen* which is used to talk about restrictions on something], it was, you couldn't get two bottles of this and I didn't know at first what they were saying and then my wife had to tell me or I asked somebody behind us it. (Participant 9)

In summary, this section has illustrated the qualitative detail of how participants communicated in the disaster and shown some of the reasons behind why such communication went on in the way it did. A diverse range of some 19 methods was used to communicate, and mobile phones, word-of-mouth, Facebook, and email were predominant among these. Mobile phones were portable and could be recharged in multiple ways. Word-of-mouth helped foreign nationals to respond more effectively to the disaster, bond with the immediate community, and get advice in the disaster. Facebook provided an easy method to confirm another person's safety, and email seemed to be a method of communication that was certainly used by participants but elicited few qualitative associations. At the same time, two clear problems arose in all this communication; mobile phones could not be used as much as people wanted to as a result of problems with connectivity and power, and language issues prevented smooth communication, especially over the PA system and by word-of-mouth. Let us now move on to show how the way foreign residents gathered information in the 2011 disaster painted a different picture.

#### 4.5.4 Qualitative assessment of methods of gathering information

Table 4–7 summarises various units of meaning coded in the interview data to give an overview of the quality of participants' information gathering acts. It summarises how participants connected the use of a method of information gathering (explicitly or implicitly) with a positive, negative, or neutral experience.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Definitions of the codes used in the creation of Table 4–7 (How the information gathering act was carried out, Information gathering positive, Information gathering negative, and Information gathering neutral) can be found in Appendix F.

[illegible]

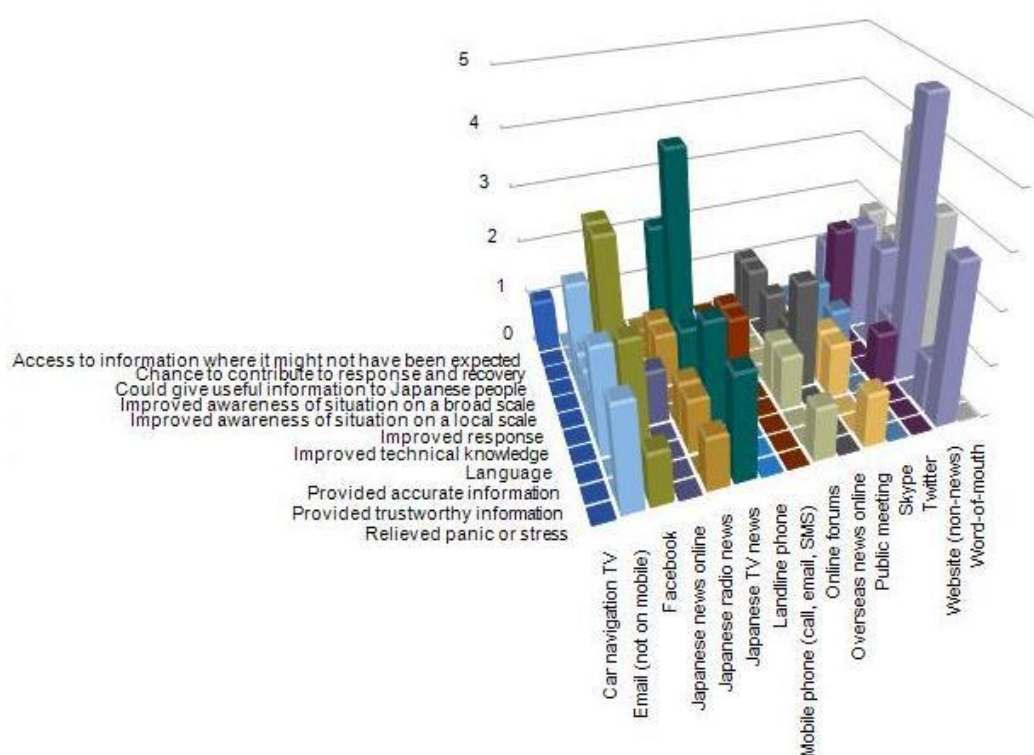
**Table 4-7. Methods of information gathering (includes qualitative associations)**

Once again, great diversity in the methods mentioned is evident (participants mention 23 different methods of information gathering), and word-of-mouth is once more prevalent. However, this time, television news (delivered both traditionally and online) and websites appear as dominant methods. To explore the connections (either explicit or implicit) that participants made between each information gathering method and a positive experience,

Table 4–8 and its graphic representation in Figure 4–6 detail the numbers of participants who talked about various methods of information gathering in a positive light cross referenced with how exactly this information gathering act was related to a positive experience in their minds.

	A : Car navigation TV	B : Email (not on mobile)	C : Facebook	D : Japanese news online	E : Japanese radio news	F : Japanese TV news	G : Landline phone	H : Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)	I : Online forums	J : Overseas news online	K : Public meeting	L : Skype	M : Twitter	N : Website (non-news)	O : Word-of-mouth
1 : Access to information where it might not have been expected	1					2				1				1	0
2 : Chance to contribute to response and recovery			1							1					
3 : Could give useful information to Japanese people			1												2
4 : Improved awareness of situation on a broad scale		2	3		1	4		1		1		1	2	2	1
5 : Improved awareness of situation on a local scale		1	3		1	1	1	1							2
6 : Improved response		1	1							1		1		2	4
7 : Improved technical knowledge		1	1	1					1	2	1			1	
8 : Language		2	2		1	2			1		1		1	5	3
9 : Provided accurate information					1									1	
10 : Provided trustworthy information														1	
11 : Relieved panic or stress		2	1		1	2			1		1			3	

**Table 4-8. Numbers of participants who talked positively about a method of information gathering cross-referenced with how they made this positive association**



**Figure 4-6. Numbers of participants who talked positively about a method of information gathering cross-referenced with how they made this positive association**

It immediately becomes clear that there was less agreement among participants here than when the topic was positive communication. This could simply indicate that a wider variety of information gathering options brought a wider array of benefits to those who made use of them than was the case for other communicative acts. There was some agreement between participants evident in the data. One repeatedly mentioned benefit centred on

being able to gather information in multiple languages. In particular, certain websites and translated Japanese television news broadcasts seemed to be associated with this benefit, and this seemed to help participants become more aware of what was happening on a broader scale:

The information is there, like, even before the earthquake there is always, like, drill, there's always, like, they sending, the website of the city government or the local government, there are all the information necessary in Japanese and English as well. Probably in other language. I'm not sure. Like where to go in case of the earthquake, and what to do. (Participant 7)

NHK English was very important for me, definitely. (Participant 6)

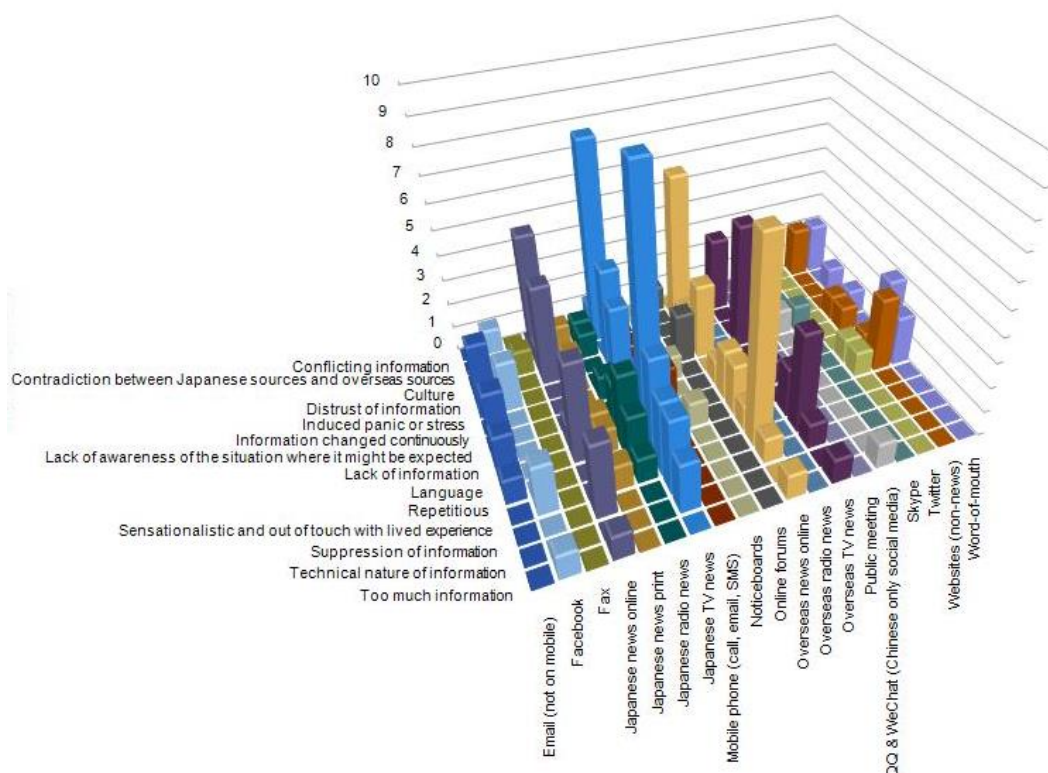
In addition, word-of-mouth was once again seen in a positive light by participants as a way to improve how they responded to the disaster. But this time, instead of communicating to get instructions to follow, they used direct, face-to-face contacts with people to access useful information about the disaster on which they would base their own response decisions. Participant 18 explains how people like himself who were in a theme park when the disaster struck gathered information from theme park staff to decide what to do:

Now, I think a lot of people stayed because they were also telling us that, if you leave, there's no trains, the roads have been shut down, there's no way to basically, unless you walk or were staying in some of the nearby hotels, so they were giving information, which was useful information, especially if you were there with young kids, and there's a lot of people there who said, "Well, if I get out, what am I going to do?" (Participant 18)

When dealing with the negative views on gathering information in the disaster, it is clear that news delivered through television broadcasts and online both in Japan and overseas came in for the most criticism. (See the data represented in Table 4–9 and Figure 4–7.)

	A: Email (not on mobile)	B: Facebook	C: Fax	D: Japanese news online	E: Japanese news print	F: Japanese radio news	G: Japanese TV news	H: Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)	I: Noticeboards	J: Online forums	K: Overseas news online	L: Overseas radio news	M: Overseas TV news	N: Public meeting	O: QQ & WeChat (Chinese only social media)	P: Skype	Q: Twitter	R: Websites (non-news)	S: Word-of-mouth
1: Conflicting information		1					1			1								2	2
2: Contradiction between Japanese sources and overseas sources				5	1	1	6				6		3						
3: Culture			1	1		1					1								1
4: Distrust of information	1	1		4	1		4							1					
5: Induced panic or stress	3	2					3			2	3		5		1	1		1	1
6: Information changed continuously						1	1		1									1	
7: Lack of awareness of the situation where it might be							1	1			1		2						
8: Lack of information	3			1	1	2	1	2			2	1	1				1	1	3
9: Language	2			4	1	3	10		1		2						1	3	2
10: Repetitious	1					2	4				1		2						
11: Sensationalistic and out of touch with lived experience		2			1	1	3				6		4						
12: Suppression of information				3			3				1		1						
13: Technical nature of information							2												
14: Too much information		1		1							1		1		1				

**Table 4-9. Numbers of participants who talked negatively about a method of information gathering cross-referenced with how they made this negative association**



**Figure 4-7. Numbers of participants who talked negatively about a method of information gathering cross-referenced with how they made this negative association**

News media dominated how foreign nationals gathered information to improve their awareness of the disaster situation, so it seems reasonable that the most frequently talked about method of gathering information would also incur the most criticism. It also explains why news and media featured so highly in the word frequency of the units of meaning being considered in this chapter. The big complaints about news were the sensationalism of overseas news reports on the disaster and the contradiction that participants saw between Japanese and overseas news sources:

Here's the thing that was hard for foreigners, because the foreign media, the way that they covered it, and the way that the Japanese covered what was happening were just so completely different, you know, and, it was just hard in a situation where you've, you know, you don't have power, you don't have electricity in your flat, or you don't have food, to be able to look at these two different sources, multiple sources and interpret for yourself what's happening and what's your best bet for behaving, you know, as to what to do, it was pretty stressful for a lot of people, myself included. (Participant 14)

In addition, though, language proved to be a reason why foreign residents viewed their efforts at gathering information from Japanese news broadcasts and from websites in the disaster in a negative light:



So then the reactor exploded [Note: participant sighs deeply] and so that's when, that's when I realised – this is probably where the translation stuff comes in – that's when I realised I was completely alone, and listening to Japanese news and had no idea what was going on, like, none at all. So it was like, “What? The building just exploded?” (Participant 21)

So from my perspective, it wasn't even a question of whether information was available in English or not, what was available where it was directly translated made absolutely no sense. So I think Kyodo and NHK are exceptions to it because they have pretty savvy reporters who understand that you need to take a different approach, I mean, NHK obviously has its international arm which is all foreign, or the majority are foreigners, they take a different approach to reporting which is part of the reason they were particularly valuable. But the Japanese government in particular, they were producing difficult to understand direct translations because they are all focused on approvals and avoiding risk, and “it has to be exactly the same as the Japanese” was the mandate, right. (Participant 6)

To summarise the findings in this section, we can say that foreign residents behaved differently when they were gathering information to improve their awareness of the disaster situation than when they were carrying out other types of communicative act. Television news (delivered both traditionally and online) and websites proved beneficial methods because information could be gathered from them in multiple languages. Word-of-mouth was as useful for information gathering as it had been for communicating, but this time it was because it allowed foreign residents to access useful information on which they could base their own disaster response decisions. One consistently negative aspect to information gathering in the participants' accounts was the contrasting tones of forced calm in Japanese news and of sensational panic in overseas news. Neither of these tones seemed to correspond with participants' lived experiences, and participants were left confused, angry, and hungry for information that they could trust. In addition, though, language proved to be a factor worthy of further analysis, and linguistic barriers caused foreign residents to experience some information gathering acts negatively.

The chapter so far has provided a sense of the environment in which communication and information gathering were being carried out in the 2011 disaster, the types of foreign resident who were involved in these acts, the methods that these people used to communicate and gather information, and some of the reasons behind how they made these choices. All that remains is to provide an illustration of what some of the content of these communicative and information gathering acts looked like.



#### 4.5.5 Illustrative examples of real communication from the 2011 disaster

There were 354 references to instances of communicating and 281 references to gathering information coded in total to the transcripts of the 28 participants who agreed to be interviewed for this case study. Such multiple references, while varied, presented enough common characteristics for the researcher to summarise them into five main types of act:

- Warning about the disaster
- Instructing people how to respond
- Developing situation awareness of the disaster
- Administering the disaster
- Supporting others through the disaster

This section uses a small corpus of real communication from the disaster compiled by the researcher to provide one illustrative example for each of the five communicative acts in the above typology.

##### 4.5.5.1 Warning about the disaster

The following is an English translation created by the researcher of the transcript of a televised early warning that was broadcast about one minute before the first tremors were felt in Tokyo. The original Japanese transcript is available in Appendix J. This warning was made by the Japanese national broadcaster, NHK, and interrupted live proceedings of a parliamentary debate.<sup>14</sup> The warnings were in Japanese only. Some background information and contextual information not provided in the original transcript has been added to the English translation. This extra commentary on the transcript is represented by the italicised, bracketed sections.

*(An alarm sounds and a pre-recorded warning is played)*  
This is an earthquake early warning. Be prepared for strong tremors.  
*(The prefectures thought to be at risk are shown on screen on a map)*  
*(The same alarm and warning are played again)*  
This is an earthquake early warning. Be prepared for strong tremors.

*(A human announcer now speaks over the live broadcast of a parliamentary debate that the warning interrupted)*  
This is an earthquake early warning. Be prepared for strong tremors in the following areas: Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Akita, Yamagata. There is little time before the tremors will start. Protect yourself so as not to get hurt. Stay

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<sup>14</sup> The transcript of the original Japanese broadcast is also available here: <http://sekihi.net/stones/19338> [Accessed 12 June 2015]. The broadcast has been archived here: <http://www.nicovideo.jp/watch/sm13889097> [Accessed 12 June 2015].

clear of furniture or other items that could fall on you. Also, be careful of things falling on you from above. An earthquake early warning has been issued. The warning is for Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Akita, Yamagata. Ensure your personal safety to avoid injury. Stay clear of furniture or other items that could fall on you.

*(It took about one minute from the automatic warning being issued to the tremors being felt in Tokyo)*

The tremors are now also being felt here in the parliament building. Earlier *(the announcer pauses and then changes what he was about to say)* the tremors are still continuing even here in the parliament building. More than 10 seconds have passed since the beginning of the tremors *(most earthquakes in Japan only last a few seconds)*. Gradually...

*(A chime announces the sudden switch to a live broadcast from the NHK news studio in Shibuya in the centre of Tokyo)*

We interrupt this live broadcast of parliamentary proceedings to bring you earthquake and tsunami information. Now, our Tokyo studio is also shaking. Our Tokyo studio is also shaking. An earthquake early warning has been issued. The earthquake early warning is for Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima, Akita, Yamagata. And the tremors are also being felt here in our Shibuya Studio in Tokyo. Our studio in Shibuya, Tokyo is also shaking.

*(From off camera we hear, “[The building is] swaying!”)*

To all those people in areas that have experienced strong tremors: Please keep calm. Once the tremors have subsided, extinguish any open flames. *(Fires can be one of the biggest dangers when an earthquake hits)*

*(From off camera we hear, “[It’s] really swaying!”)*

First, watch out for falling objects.

*(From off camera we hear, “[It’s] really shaking!”)*

Currently, our studio in Shibuya, Tokyo is shaking violently. Our studio in Shibuya, Tokyo is shaking violently.

*(From off camera we hear, “[It’s] really shaking: [this is] crazy!”)*

There is a danger of collapsing buildings and landslides.

*(From off camera we hear, “...because it’s shaking!”)*

Protect yourself from falling objects. Currently, our studio in Shibuya, Tokyo is shaking extremely violently. Our studio in Shibuya, Tokyo is shaking violently.

*(From off camera we hear, “Shoot footage of Tokyo!”)*

Protect yourself from falling objects. *(the sound breaks up slightly during this sentence)* Stay in a safe place until the shaking has subsided.

*(From off camera we hear, “Shoot footage of Tokyo!”)*

Once the tremors have stopped, extinguish any open flames.

*(From off camera we hear, “Tokyo is swaying!”)*

We will pass on any new information as soon as we receive it here at NHK. Please do not switch off your TV or radio. A strong earthquake struck the Tohoku region at about 2:46 this afternoon. The seismic intensity was 7 in

northern Miyagi Prefecture. (*7 is the strongest level on the Japanese seismic intensity scale.*) Northern Miyagi recorded a 7 on the seismic intensity scale.

*(From off camera we hear, “7! It was a 7!”)*

In addition, an intensity of lower-5 was recorded in Yamagata. (*The announcer stutters as if updated information is being given to him.*) An intensity of upper-6 was recorded in central Miyagi, Fukushima Chuodori, Fukushima Hamadori, northern Ibaraki. Lower-6 was recorded in the southern part of the Iwate coast, the northern part of Iwate inland, the southern part of Iwate inland, and the southern part of Miyagi.

*(From off camera we hear, “Change! Change!”)*

*(The screen changes to a fixed camera shot of Sendai Train Station with the sound of car alarms going off in the distance)*

*(The screen changes again to a map of Japan with a flashing tsunami warning graphic)*

This illustrative example of a televised earthquake early warning shows that foreign residents who had access to a television and who could speak Japanese would have had access to detailed information about the disaster and to useful advice on how to respond, with an emphasis on repeating calls to keep calm and on repeating practical advice that can easily be forgotten in the midst of a disaster. However, this information and advice would not have been available to foreign residents who did not speak Japanese and, while some visual clues were given onscreen with maps and live feeds, knowledge of Japanese would have been needed to make sense of them.

#### 4.5.5.2 Instructing people how to respond

The next example from the corpus changes the mode of delivery of information from a television broadcast to a website. The site from which the sample text is taken is the portal site for foreign residents provided by the Japanese Cabinet Office. (As explained in 4.5 above, the Cabinet Office is the branch of the Japanese government responsible for coordinating national emergency response.) The site went live four days after the onset of the disaster. This possibly explains its rushed and amateurish quality.<sup>15</sup> It has a design that is not user-friendly, and presents information in only Japanese, English, Portuguese, and Spanish. (Only the English translation created by the Cabinet Office has been included here, but the Japanese original is available, once again, in Appendix J.) Korean and Chinese versions – the languages of the two largest groups of foreign residents in Japan – are not provided on the website. The purpose of the website is to give initial instructions to foreign nationals in Japan on how to respond to the disaster:

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<sup>15</sup> The website is available here: <http://www8.cao.go.jp/teiju-portal/jpn/etc/disaster/index.html> [Accessed 14 October 2014].

An extremely severe earthquake centered in the Tohoku district struck on Friday, March 11. Official information on the earthquake is available on the following websites. Please stay calm and act on correct and accurate information. (A list of links to seven other websites followed.)

Please be warned about chain emails.

Incorrect information concerning Great East Japan Earthquake in the form of chain emails, electronic bulletin boards and mini blogs is being circulated. Please check to see whether this information is correct by checking reliable sources of information such as the websites of government agencies or of reliable media, and please do not panic through these chain mails, etc. Moreover, forwarding these chain emails results in creating more panic. If you receive one of these chain emails, please delete it immediately and do not forward it to anyone else.

We ask for your cooperation with electric power saving.

Due to the earthquake, severe damage has been caused to the power supply equipment of Tokyo Electric Power Company and Tohoku Electric Power Co., Inc. We ask everybody to cooperate in saving as much electric power as possible when using electrical appliances.

From these instructions, we can see that foreign residents without Japanese ability or with only limited Japanese ability or who could speak English, Portuguese, or Spanish may have been able to access these instructions. However, to have done so, they would have had to have thought to access the Cabinet Office website and then been able to connect to it. We can see that the focus of information provision from official responders in Japan to foreign residents at this stage was to instruct them to keep calm and to save electric power. However, more than anything, the instruction being given was for foreign nationals to avoid spreading misinformation.

#### 4.5.5.3 Developing situation awareness of the disaster

With the passing of a little more time, foreign residents would have been trying hard to understand what was happening in the disaster as a whole and trying to figure out their relation to these events so that they could make decisions on how to respond. To illustrate this type of communicative act, the mode has been changed from a website to an email. The first email to be sent to all Irish citizens in Japan to help them to understand the disaster situation (arriving five days after the onset of the disaster) has been included below:

16 March 2011, 12:30 JST

To all Irish citizens in Japan

The Embassy of Ireland is actively monitoring the aftermath of the recent earthquakes and aftershocks and is paying particular attention to the situation regarding the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. We are liaising closely with the Japanese government and EU/international partners in this regard.

Given the current situation, we are encouraging Irish citizens to consider the necessity for their presence in the north east of Japan and the Tokyo region (this is particularly the case for people with small children or women who are pregnant). Those seeking to leave these areas should make a travel reservation as soon as possible. We are not specifically advising people to leave Japan.

The Embassy's website is updated with the latest information as it becomes available to us as well as appropriate travel advice. This website will remain the primary method of conveying information on the situation to Irish nationals in Japan. The website may be accessed via the following link: [www.irishembassy.jp](http://www.irishembassy.jp).

We are also advising Irish nationals to closely monitor the advice provided by their local authorities.

If you are in an affected area, please contact the Embassy (if you have not already done so) to confirm your status and location or if you require consular assistance.

The Embassy can be reached as follows:

Landline: +81 3 3263 0695

Mobile: +81 80 1076 0103

Fax: +81 3 3265 2275

Email: [tokyoembassy@dfa.ie](mailto:tokyoembassy@dfa.ie)

We can see here that strongly directive information was not being given by this embassy at this time in the disaster. Irish citizens were being encouraged to gather their own information about the disaster where possible and to make themselves aware of the situation. Some advice was given to them by the embassy on how to do this. What is clear from this communication, though, is the central role that the Internet played as a way for some foreign residents to gain situation awareness in the 2011 disaster.

#### 4.5.5.4 Administering the disaster

Once the first month after onset had passed, foreign residents would have started to think about how they were going to recover from the disaster and begin to rebuild their lives. At such a time, communication related to the administrative steps needed to go about this recovery would have started to become important. Dated May 1, 2011, the following is an English translation created by the Sendai International Relations Association of an announcement by the Sendai City Government on the documentation needed to claim disaster-related assistance. The Japanese original of this document is available in Appendix J. These forms and information about them would have been available in hard copy at the offices of the local government and the mode of communication would have been

newsletters and pamphlets circulated to residents of the city.<sup>16</sup>

A Disaster Victim Certificate / Disaster Victim Report will be issued to those with a damaged house or building (apartment/company) resulting from the Tohoku Pacific Ocean Earthquake and the following tsunami. These documents are essential when applying for various disaster assistance services offered by the City of Sendai.

- A Disaster Victim Certificate shows the degree of damage to houses and buildings and will be issued upon assessment.
- A Disaster Victim Report shows that the applicant has filed a claim for damage to their house, building and personal property.
- There are some disaster assistance services that only require a Disaster Victim Report and not a Disaster Victim Certificate. The Disaster Victim Report will be issued on the day of application. Please contact each organization that provides assistance services directly
- Application Hours: 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. on weekdays
- Things to bring when applying: Identification card (resident registration card, driver's license, passport etc), photographs showing the extent of damage
- \*Please contact us when you cannot prepare these.
- A letter of proxy is necessary when you ask someone outside of your family who lives at the same address to apply on your behalf.

What we see here is that the procedures to claim disaster-related assistance from the city government were complex. An English translation of the necessary procedures is, therefore, extremely useful, but what was the situation for foreign residents who had difficulty reading either Japanese or English or who did not receive one of the above pamphlets or newsletters?

#### 4.5.5.5 Supporting others through the disaster

The final mode of communication shown here is social media. It illustrates the way in which, one month after the onset of the disaster, foreign residents were supporting each other and trying to help each other through the disaster. Specifically, this example is of an anonymised Facebook exchange taken from one of the many publicly open groups on Facebook that were created by foreign residents to help each other to get through the disaster. The details of the particular group have not been given here to attempt to protect its members' privacy. In the exchange, the members of the group try to figure out how seriously to take the rumour that a massive earthquake was going to hit Tokyo and try to encourage each other to think positively:

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<sup>16</sup> Soft copies of the original pamphlets and newsletters can be seen here in Japanese [http://www.city.sendai.jp/report/2011/1198131\\_1413.html](http://www.city.sendai.jp/report/2011/1198131_1413.html) and here in English <http://tinyurl.com/oeu5ls4> [Accessed 14 October 2014].

*GROUP MEMBER 1* Tokyo earthquake expert says Tokyo is expected to have a 7+ earthquake to balance out so called tectonic plate forces. Does anyone have more info on this?

12 April 2011 at 00:25 via Mobile

*GROUP MEMBER 2* Do you have the link or article for this expert to share with us, please:

12 April 2011 at 00:26

*GROUP MEMBER 1* No, heard a "rumor" that an expert made this comment on tv so wondered how credible it might be.

12 April 2011 at 00:30

*GROUP MEMBER 3* JMA isn't saying anything...

[http://www.jma.go.jp/en/quake\\_tokai/](http://www.jma.go.jp/en/quake_tokai/)

12 April 2011 at 00:40 • 1

*GROUP MEMBER 2* I heard this rumours too, but hear that the chances was decreasing with the weeks. In NHK TV, they always say that after shocks with 6+ has great probability to occur in the areas affected by the 3/11 earthquake. In the last hours, I heard this many times, after the shakes. I don't forget that Tokyo is waiting for the Big One since the 90s.

12 April 2011 at 00:43

*GROUP MEMBER 2* i wonder how many hours or days it takes to JMA upgrade informations in English.

12 April 2011 at 00:48

*GROUP MEMBER 4* well, they've been waiting for the Big One (Tokai) since the 70s - at least, that's when the theory was proposed. The epicentre is expected to be around Shizuoka city, so of course Tokyo would be affected pretty badly... not as badly as Shizuoka-ken though, I imagine. I'm in Hamamatsu... about 9km from the shore. The bright side is that it's the most earthquake-prepared prefecture in Japan (so I guess that makes it the most earthquake-prepared place in the world)...

12 April 2011 at 01:19

*GROUP MEMBER 3* @*GROUP MEMBER 2*, why? What does it say in Japanese??!

12 April 2011 at 01:42

*GROUP MEMBER 2* @ *GROUP MEMBER 3* I am wondering, because I can't read Japanese and as can see by NHK Japanese TV and NHK World(They are 24h turned on at my home) there is a delay to release English Information. Not always they broadcast JMA or TEPCO's conference with English translation.

12 April 2011 at 01:50

*GROUP MEMBER 3* Oh. Well, the JMA is pretty snappy with the info when an earthquake actually happens. And I think the "Prediction of the Tokai Earthquake" is more a longer-term warning thing anyway, right? I mean, its not gonna be like "run for your life NOW" or anything...at least I hope...

12 April 2011 at 01:55

We can see from this exchange that Japanese television played a central role in the information gathering of foreign residents, even when they could not speak Japanese. We see, too, how other foreign nationals acted as informal translators and mediators of such information. The exchange also alludes to the role that rumour may have played in the experiences of foreign residents when attempting to communicate or gather information in the 2011 disaster.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, what this chapter has attempted to argue is that the context of the 2011 disaster is important to an understanding of the issues dealt with in this case study, but that the scale and complexity of this contextual information could overwhelm the research. For this reason, the boundaries of what is being examined and what is not being examined in this study have been explicitly established. Though the study is an exploration of the phenomena of translation and interpreting, it is exploring these issues by focusing on people, and so ethnographic techniques to incorporate people's lived experiences of the disaster have been employed. The intention of setting up tightly bounded contextual and experiential information in this way has been to enable the reader to better interpret the findings and illustrative examples of real communication described in the second half of the chapter.

The main findings were that a diverse array of methods was used by foreign residents to communicate and gather information in the 2011 disaster and that the methods used, the issues encountered, and the qualitative assessments made by these foreign residents differed depending on whether they were communicating or gathering information (taken to mean only those communicative acts designed to improve a person's awareness of the disaster situation). Mobile phones, Facebook, and word-of-mouth were the predominant methods of communication, while television news (delivered both traditionally and online), websites, and word-of-mouth were the main methods of information gathering. Mobile phones were portable and could be recharged in multiple ways, and Facebook provided an easy method to confirm another person's safety. Television news and websites enabled foreign residents to gather information in multiple languages. At the same time, word-of-mouth helped foreign nationals to respond more effectively to the disaster, bond with the broader community, get advice in the disaster, and access useful information on which they could base their own disaster response decisions. Despite all these positive points, communicating and gathering information in the 2011 disaster proved problematic for the participants in this study. Problems with connectivity and power meant that mobile phones



could not be used as much as people wanted. Also, the conflicting impressions given by an overly calm Japanese news media and an overly sensationalistic overseas news media caused great confusion and stress for foreign residents. In addition, language issues appeared in the data as a barrier to smooth communication, especially over PA systems and by word-of-mouth, and as a barrier to accessing the information that was being distributed through Japanese news media and websites.

Some questions, then, begin to arise from these findings. How, in fact, did translation, interpreting, or any other form of linguistic or cultural mediation fit in to this communicative scene? If we can show that mediation of some sort existed, how can we properly define translation and interpreting in this disaster? Seeing as how language and culture came up as problems more than as solutions in how foreign residents communicated and gathered information, what exactly were the linguistic and cultural barriers that they faced? Aligned to this, what were the topics that required translation or interpreting? Who carried out this translation and interpreting and who were the other parties in such acts? Where were they translating or interpreting, and what supports did they have available? Do we need to look at the influence of Japanese ability on people's experiences of translation and interpreting? Then, what about diversity? Seeing as diverse methods of communication and information gathering were used, were the translation and interpreting solutions offered also diverse? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in the following chapter.

*'It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling obstinately to the notion that something can also be gained.'*

*Salman Rushdie, Writer (1947-Present)*

## Chapter 5 – Translation in the 2011 disaster

### *Interpretive analysis:*

*Beginning to answer the following research question:*

*•How did translation and interpreting form part of foreign residents' communication and information gathering in the 2011 disaster?*

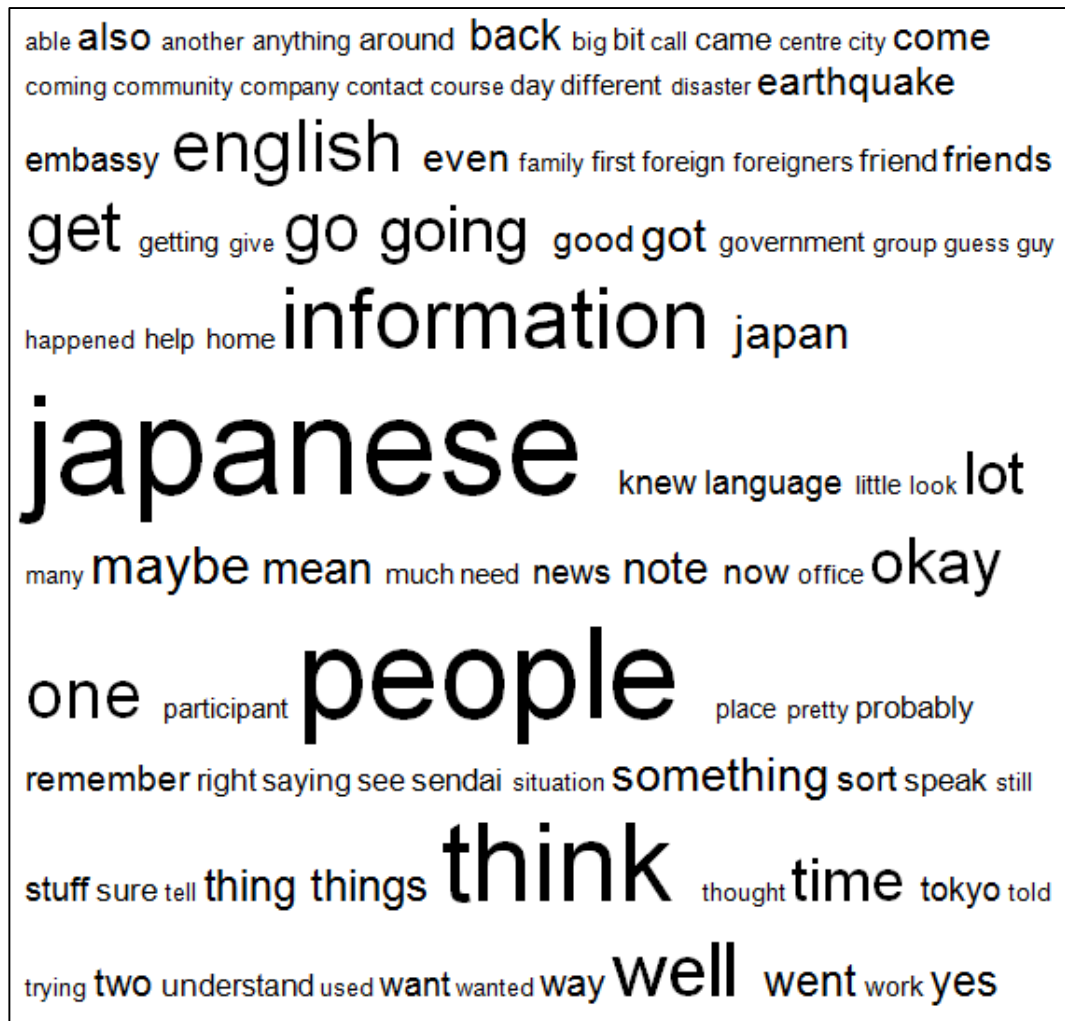


Figure 5-1. Word cloud from coded data used primarily in the creation of Chapter 5<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> This word cloud has been created (using NVivo 10 software) from text contained under the following codes: Culture; Language; Relationship negative; Relationship neutral; Relationship positive; Topics needing cultural mediation; Topics needing linguistic mediation. The word cloud displays the 100 most frequent words with a minimum length of 1 character. Only the default stop words for US English pre-set in NVivo 10 software (generally articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions) have been applied to this list.

## **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter will show how translation and interpreting fitted in to the communicative scene that foreign residents experienced in the 2011 disaster. The main aim of this chapter, therefore, is to explain the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, and ‘how’ of these phenomena in this one disaster context. The ‘why’ of translation and interpreting in this disaster – why translation and interpreting might have been significant or important – will be dealt with separately in Chapter 6.

The content of this chapter moves away from largely participant-led analysis toward interpretive analysis. In the previous chapter, the statements of the participants at interview were analysed. In this chapter, their statements at interview are still analysed, but inferences about translation and interpreting based on what they said are also made, and further systematic interconnectedness between key ideas in the interview data and observations in the secondary data is also shown. This change of focus is in line with the thematic analytical strategy adopted in the methodology for this research (see Section 3.6.7), but the change was also necessitated by the fact that participants mentioned the terms ‘translation’ and ‘interpreting’ relatively infrequently. Notice, for example, how neither term appears in Figure 5-1, the word cloud created from the codes used mainly in the analysis of this chapter. Nevertheless, references to linguistic and cultural barriers and their mediation peppered the accounts of the participants, as will be shown throughout this chapter.

As a result, before positioning translation and interpreting within the 2011 communicative scene, the chapter begins by showing that core ideas related to translation and interpreting were evident in participant accounts. Then, a definition of translation and interpreting for this study is operationalised based on how participants viewed these concepts. The remainder of the chapter discusses in detail who performed translation and interpreting activities in the 2011 disaster, who the other parties to these acts were, the topics that required translating and interpreting in the disaster, when and where this all took place, and how precisely translation and interpreting were carried out.

## **5.2 Evidence for translation and interpreting as categories**

Chapter 2 of this thesis showed that translation and interpreting in disaster settings are relevant categories that are worthy of academic exploration. This section will show that these same categories are relevant objects of enquiry *for this* case study.

Participants referred to the terms ‘translation’ and ‘interpreting’ relatively infrequently. Figures 5–2 and 5–3 display references made by participants to these terms and their derivatives (such as translator, interpretation, etc.) during their interviews:

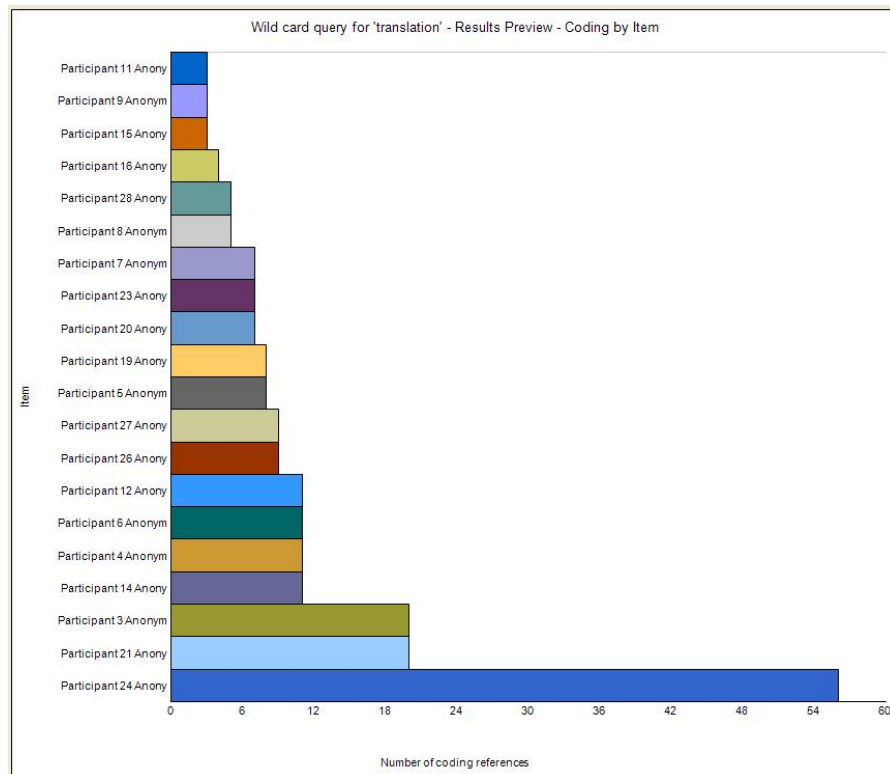


Figure 5-2. References coded to the wildcard term ‘transl\*’ broken down by participant

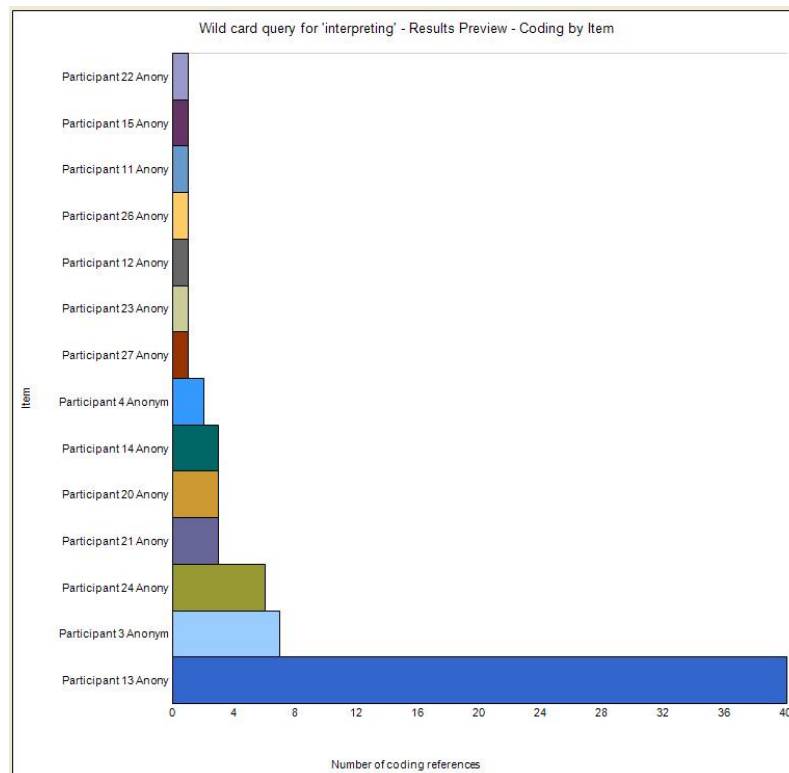


Figure 5-3. References coded to the wildcard term ‘interp\*’ broken down by participant

These figures illustrate that participants spent more time referring to the term ‘translation’ (and its derivatives) than they did to the term ‘interpreting’ (and its derivatives). Additionally, two participants dominated the discussion of these terms; this is understandable in that Participant 24 (see Figure 5–2) worked as a translator in the disaster and Participant 13 (see Figure 5–3) worked as an interpreter in the disaster. From a qualitative perspective, the significance of all these participant references needs to be moderated: many of these references only came about as a result of prompting from the researcher’s line of questioning/commenting; many references were short and lacked detailed content; in several references, the terms were used to denote a process of understanding and not interlingual transfer.<sup>18</sup> On the surface, then, it might seem that translation and interpreting were not relevant objects of enquiry for this case study.

However, a different story emerged by looking at the units of meaning that related to the concepts of translation and interpreting rather than at the specific terms themselves. Four units of meaning – linguistic barriers, cultural barriers, linguistic mediation, and cultural mediation – were thought to be central to conceptualising translation and interpreting, and participant accounts were explored for such meanings. Table 5–1 illustrates the number of participants who made reference to these units and who, therefore, may have been talking about the concepts of translation and interpreting. For instance, there were more than 200 passages in the participants’ transcripts that were identified by the researcher as being related to linguistic barriers and their mediation, and more than 50 passages identified as being related to cultural barriers and their mediation.

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<sup>18</sup> For instance, one participant uses *translate* to refer to how he understood the various foreign communities in Japan: ‘There is, of course, something which *translate* into associations of residents’ (Participant 13, emphasis added). In another example, a participant used *interpret* as a way to describe how the actions of the US government were understood: ‘Had the Americans actually said, “Okay, everybody get out,” then that would have been a sign of, then people would have been *interpreting* that, “Okay, right, got to go.”’ (Participant 20, emphasis added).

Participant number	Self-reported confidence in Japanese	Barriers		Mediation			
		Linguistic barrier present	Cultural barrier present	Participant		Another	
				Linguistic mediation by the participant	Cultural mediation by the participant	Linguistic mediation by another	Cultural mediation by another
1	33	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
13	32	✓	✓	✓	✓		
14	32	✓	✓	✓			
24	32	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
25	32	✓					
11	30	✓				✓	
4	29	✓				✓	
17	28	✓	✓				
19	28	✓		✓		✓	✓
12	27	✓	✓			✓	
18	27	✓	✓	✓			
5	26	✓				✓	
7	25	✓				✓	
6	24	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
2	23	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
9	21	✓				✓	✓
10	20	✓		✓		✓	✓
27	17	✓	✓			✓	
26	16	✓	✓	✓		✓	
28	16	✓	✓			✓	✓
3	15	✓	✓			✓	
21	15	✓	✓			✓	✓
20	14	✓	✓			✓	✓
23	14	✓		✓		✓	
15	12	✓				✓	✓
8	10	✓				✓	✓
22	6	✓	✓			✓	✓
16	3	✓	✓			✓	

**Table 5-1. Participants who talked about linguistic or cultural barriers or their mediation**

In Table 5–1, the participants are ranked in terms of their self-reported confidence in using Japanese, and a tick mark is used to indicate that they mentioned the relevant unit of meaning during their interview.<sup>19</sup> As the table shows, all participants talked about experiences of linguistic barriers in the 2011 disaster, and many talked about experiences of cultural barriers. In this discussion, participants did not restrict themselves to their own personal experiences of barriers and talked, at times, of the experiences of other foreign

<sup>19</sup> Before each interview, participants were asked to give themselves a mark out of a possible total of 40 to represent their confidence in using the Japanese language as a tool for speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Thus, the higher the mark, the greater the overall confidence of the participant. See Section 3.6.5 for further details.

nationals in Japan for the disaster.<sup>20</sup> For instance, to illustrate some discussion of linguistic barriers, one participant spoke of the challenges faced by Assistant English Teachers (AETs) working in the rural Ibaraki school system who could not speak Japanese and who were stranded in their homes in the disaster, unsure of what was going on:

They were just left in their apartments, and if food was out, they were like, “Where do we get food? Where do we get water?” [Laughter] No one came around to help, they said. I mean, they, someone came around and just said something, and that was it. They didn’t really understand what they said...(*Researcher: Because it would have been in Japanese?*)...in Japanese. Because a lot of these schools that have the AETs don’t, you know, you’re lucky to have anybody who speaks English, and if the teacher is commuting from {nearby large cities in Ibaraki}, the one that does speak English, they’re not going to come in. (Participant 11)

Furthermore, it was not just the Japanese language but the Japanese culture that participants felt acted as a barrier or somehow caused complications in how foreign residents experienced the 2011 disaster. One participant highlighted how a reticence about intruding on a stranger in Japanese culture prevented her from calling on the support of Japanese neighbours in Tokyo during the crisis and how she felt that this would not have been the case in her native culture:

Because of the culture, because of the Japanese culture and the way they interact with people, I think there’s this thing where you don’t want to intrude. And then, there’s another thing that’s, kind of, not an embarrassment, but just different from just going to talk to people you don’t know. And therefore when it’s not quite at the point of extreme crisis, everybody just carries on, everybody just tries to carry on as they did before. So people were still trying to go to work and carry on completely normally, but trains were down, and there was no water, and I think, you know, in {the participant’s home country}, it would have just been like, “Look, stay home, look after your families.” Or people would have been knocking on their neighbours’ doors saying, “Look, we’re around here.” (Participant 1)

Table 5–1 further illustrates that the interviews of all participants but two (Participants 17 and 25) contained passages that explicitly mentioned acts of linguistic and cultural mediation. To give an example of one such mention of linguistic mediation, note how one participant who could not speak Japanese explains how her Japanese neighbours used English to help her respond to the disaster:

The chairman of the group who takes care of all the things in the, eh, how would say, call it? Apartment community? He can speak English, so I have in

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<sup>20</sup> The definitions for these codes (available in the codebook in Appendix F) illustrate this point: Linguistic / Cultural barrier present - reference made by the participant to the presence of a linguistic / cultural barrier relating to Japanese in the context of the disaster. This is an *a priori* code.



my building, a few people who lived, maybe abroad, and some retired but, one time, they grabbed me and said, “Oh I need to explain to you all the emergency things.” (Participant 8)

With respect to cultural mediation, note how another participant focused on the work done by the company he worked for to mediate the communication style (not the language) used by Japanese media outlets in the disaster:

Communication in general in Japan, I find, is all about providing all [Note: this last word was said with great emphasis] of the background and detail, you know. It’s context as opposed to content, and that was really clear with the news reporting. They give you all of this information but not explain what it actually means, and people just wanted to know, “Am I safe?” and “Am I not safe?” “Well, becquerels are at this level?” Well, what the hell does that mean?” It was not helpful to be reported in that way. So again at work, a lot of our focus was to try and put things in context. “This is what becquerels are. This is what you are exposed to in daily life. Every time you fly, this is what you are exposed to, and it is perfectly safe.” And explain it in those terms so that people could understand, “Okay, maybe we’re not at risk here.” (Participant 6)

Finally, an idea that Table 5–1 also suggests is that, while both language and culture were being mediated in the disaster, confidence in Japanese did not seem to be a necessary condition for mediating the disaster linguistically; in some interviews, participants with relatively low confidence in their Japanese abilities still talked about how they mediated language aspects of the disaster for another foreign resident. For example:

I had a friend who injured his leg maybe one or two months prior and he was in a hospital in Japan...and well, so he experienced the earthquake in the hospital, but his Japanese is pretty much non-existent, so he didn’t really know what was going on, and he couldn’t really reach anyone to tell him. He was stuck in a hospital bed without really knowing anything so I chatted to him a bit. He was, was a French guy I work with. I don’t really remember exactly what we chatted about, like, I guess, actually I think I chatted to him a bit later about Fukushima and so on. (Participant 26)

In short, this section has shown that, while the terms ‘translation’ and ‘interpreting’ may not have been used frequently by participants, they did discuss linguistic and cultural barriers and their mediation. What is not yet clear, though, is how strongly participants related these ideas to other units of meaning found in standard conceptualisations of translation and interpreting. In other words, by talking about linguistic and cultural barriers and their mediation, how sure can we be that participants were talking about what we in translation studies might recognise as translation or interpreting? To answer this question, the next section will work to operationalise a definition of translation and interpreting for this case study based on how the participants perceived these concepts.

### ***5.3 Defining translation and interpreting in the 2011 disaster***

This is a case study into the phenomena of translation and interpreting, and yet these phenomena have meant different things to different people at different times in different places for different reasons. This section seeks to make clear how the participants in this study perceived and conceptualised translation and interpreting. That is to say that the aim of the section is to operationalise a definition of translation and interpreting for this research based on what was expressed by *these* participants at *this* time in *this* place.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to review the many different definitions of translation or interpreting that have been used over the years. However, it is possible to identify recurrent categories that have featured and continue to feature in how translation scholars conceptualise these phenomena. With these recurrent categories as a background, then, this section will pinpoint the ideas that this case study's participants chose to focus on. To begin, let us establish the categories that have commonly been used to talk about the concepts of translation and interpreting in the domain of translation studies.

#### ***5.3.1 Areas of interest when making a study of translation or interpreting***

Translation and interpreting are studied from linguistic, technological, cognitive, behavioural, social, cultural, and ideological perspectives, among others (adapted from Bartrina 2005: 178), and, as such, '[a]lmost every aspect of life in general and of the interaction between speech communities in particular can be considered relevant to translation' (Baker 1992: 4). Even so, this thesis argues that, whatever the perspective used, the main thrusts of enquiries into translation and interpreting revolve around three major categories: the act of translating or interpreting; the products of translation or interpretation; the roles and profiles of the translator or interpreter. Also, certain key themes appear frequently in relation to these three major categories. These themes include (in no particular order): equivalence; shifts; translatability; technology; ethics; globalisation; power relations; corpora; genres and contexts; reception; professionalism; gender and sexuality; community; hermeneutics; minority; domestication and foreignisation; metaphor; (in)visibility; centre and periphery; different cultural, historical, and geographic traditions of translation (Baker and Saldanha 2009: xiv-xxii). Other major concerns are said to be: fidelity; quality; functionality/Skopos; norms; language interference; tactics/strategies; responsibility (Gile 2010: 256-257). If it can be accepted that the above themes represent some of the major concerns of translation studies with respect to the phenomena of translation and interpreting, can it be shown that the participants in this case

study held similar concerns when discussing their experiences of these phenomena or did they associate translation and interpreting with other significant ideas?

In fact, this section will show that participants in this study did talk in general about the acts and products of translation and interpreting and about the roles and profiles of the translator and interpreter. More specifically, they associated the phenomena of translation and interpreting with ideas of globalisation, power relations, reception, professionalism, community, and quality, all of which were identified above as typical concerns in the domain of translation studies. In addition, though, the participants in this study also focused on the issues of timeliness and of trust.

### *5.3.2 The act of translating or interpreting*

The first point to consider when looking at how participants talked about translation and interpreting in their interviews is to note that they did not make a distinction between translating and interpreting; between written, textually-mediated interlingual transfer and between an oral mode of interlingual transfer. Acts that we in the domain of translation studies would refer to as ‘interpreting’ were routinely termed ‘translation’ by participants.<sup>21</sup> For instance, notice how one participant describes the work of an acquaintance engaged in mediation for a team of foreign reporters in the disaster zone:

Actually, my old boss, he’d resigned maybe like, it turned out to be two or three weeks before the earthquake and, he’s from Israel and he speaks very good Japanese...and so he’d actually gone up with NBC as a translator, and so they were, kind of, going around and he was riding around in a van, so his stories are pretty interesting...And he’s up in Fukushima, he’s up, like, they’re up in Tohoku, they’re up in, like, they were on, like, he was part of the, eh, animal retrieval, and all these different things, going with different news crews, ehm, getting scanned for radiation any time he was allowed in any facility, but I mean the GE guy that helped advise building it was saying ‘Get out.’...so basically, they said to him as well, “Come with us.” And so, he was gathering his stuff, and they were at, they were on their way to the airport and basically two or three of the news people were like, “The story’s here.” And so, like, ninety percent of them went back, but a handful of them stayed on, so he stayed on to translate with them. (Participant 21)

In Participant 21’s account, there was no mention of this Israeli acquaintance mediating any texts for the reporters, and the contexts of the encounters that she goes on to explain in the interview were clearly mediated in an oral mode. While such an act would be classified

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<sup>21</sup> It should be noted here that taking translation to mean the transfer of written texts only is characteristic of the Western or Euro-American tradition of translation scholarship; oral aspects of the transfer process within the translation phenomenon are recognised and examined by scholars working in certain Asian translation traditions (Hung and Wakabayashi 2005: 4).

as ‘interpreting’ in the world of the translation studies scholar, it was clearly defined as translation in the participant’s world view. Passages in the accounts of Participants 1 and 16 illustrate this point in a similar way.<sup>22</sup>

A second point to consider is that, when participants were discussing the act of translating (now and hereafter understood to include *both* translation and interpreting), they associated it clearly with issues of globalisation and the relative power of languages and cultures in different locales. That is to say that there was a clear assumption in the dataset that the target language of translation in this disaster would have been English. Many participants mentioned only Japanese and English as languages of relevance to the 2011 disaster. To quote an illustrative example, one participant said:

I live in {a part of Tokyo known for having a high population of foreign residents}, and I did live there at the time and still do so, and they, whenever they give out documents, I think they always do it in both languages, in English and in Japanese, so, even like for earthquake readiness things, they give it out in English, so that was one good thing. (Participant 26)

This was as true for many of the native speakers of English (for instance, Participants 3, 4, and 24) as for many of the non-native speakers of English in the dataset (for example, Participants 8, 15, 16, and 22).<sup>23</sup>

Having said all this, one participant – a non-native speaker of English and fluent speaker of Japanese – reacted strongly against this assumption:

I don’t think we should blame the Japanese government for not giving information in, because people say English, why English? Why not Swahili, for example? I think it’s translation, okay, it’s not feasible that they can translate it in every language and I don’t think we should prefer some community to others. We are all foreigner here. Of course, there are community or people from certain country that are more, in terms of number, than other communities, but even the community where there is only, like, few dozen people, they have the right also to get information, same as the other people. And again, translating the information in English or in French or the other thing, it will not help the, the, there will be other people that really feel that they are left behind. And we can not also ask every foreign here in Japan to learn Japanese. Of course, if people are thinking to stay for a long time here, they should because it help for everyday life to speak the language. (Participant 7)

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<sup>22</sup> To verify the relevant passages, see Appendix E: Participant 1/Lines 146-149; Participant 16/Lines 561-578.

<sup>23</sup> To verify the relevant passages, see Appendix E: Participant 3/Lines 608-622; Participant 4/Lines 1326-1330; Participant 24/Lines 146-158; Participant 8/Lines 467-475; Participant 15/Lines 364-371; Participant 16/Lines 1020-1039; Participant 22/Lines 275-290.

Indeed, the forcefulness of this participant's reaction goes to show their frustration with the dominant position of the Japanese-English language pair in the discourse on translation in this disaster. Putting aside ethical issues of whether such dominance was right or wrong for the moment, it is clear that many participants associated the Japanese-English language pair (and not other pairs) with translation in their experiences of the 2011 disaster.

A final point to consider in relation to how participants viewed the act of translating is that they did not restrict their conceptualisations to interlingual transfer alone; cultural mediation was associated by several participants with translation in different ways. In Section 5.2, it was shown that cultural barriers existed for participants in the case study, but this section shows how several participants associated interlingual transfer with cultural mediation to overcome these barriers. One participant – a professional interpreter who volunteered his services in the disaster zone immediately after onset – states explicitly that his approach to interpreting was not only about interlingual transfer:

The law tell that the role of the interpreter is just to transfer the meaning back and forth and that's it. The problem is that there are situation where that's, it is an invitation to catastrophe because it's not only a matter of words [laughter]. Words is just a tiny factor in the full relationship, okay? (Participant 13)

Furthermore, a number of participants told of how they relied on native Japanese speakers to use another language to help them navigate the Japanese culture of disaster response. For instance, one participant who could not speak Japanese well explained how he fell back on the assistance of English-speaking Japanese colleagues when the disaster struck:

Luckily there were some of my English teaching colleagues, Japanese teachers, in the staff room, so I asked one of them, "What do we do now?" So we all did the usual disaster routine. (Participant 28)

Participants 1, 8, and 15 made similar comments.<sup>24</sup> Even one participant with advanced Japanese abilities was helped to respond to the disaster via cultural mediation through another language:

And then I looked around and I could see some people were squatting down and, kind of, like, "Uh, uh, uh." [Note: the participant gestures looking worriedly above his head] You know, "*Jishin da!*", like, "it's an earthquake!" And, with that, I thought, "Whoa! I'm in the subway. I want to get out of the subway." So, through the turnstile, I looked around at my boss, I said, you know, "Let's go." And, this older gentleman, my boss, put his hand on my

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<sup>24</sup> To verify the relevant passages, see Appendix E: Participant 1/Lines 144-151; Participant 8/Lines 33-47; Participant 15/Lines 21-24.

shoulder, and he said, “No, let’s wait here. It’s safer to be here.” And just because he was so decisive, I thought that was a good thing. He said that to me in English, by the way. I’m remembering now. (Participant 19)

However, it should be remembered, too, that foreign residents themselves also used a common language to explain and assist other more recently-arrived foreign nationals in how to respond. For example, one participant explains how he invited a recently arrived foreign colleague who did not seem to know what to do to join him and other foreign nationals in a makeshift emergency shelter that they had established in the participant’s car:

Then {another Irish co-worker} was only after coming out, he was only there maybe two months...so he was new, and he was kind of a bit lost and that, so I was like, “{new co-worker’s name}, jump in there as well.” (Participant 2)

In sum, so far we can say that any conceptualisation of translation in this disaster needs to include both written and oral interlingual and intercultural transfer and needs to note the dominance of the Japanese-English language pair in the discourse on translation in the disaster. Still other elements of an operational definition remain to be considered, though.

### 5.3.3 *The products of translation or interpretation*

Participants spent time talking about certain characteristics of the products of translation (once again, from now on understood to include interpreting) in the 2011 disaster. In particular, they associated translation products with ideas of timeliness, quality, trust, and reception. Various participants talked about how translated information became available much more slowly than Japanese information, but also about how volunteer-created, gist translations acted as important stop-gap measures until official translations came to hand. From either perspective, one idea that came across strongly in participants’ accounts was that translated information was needed as fast as possible and that the need for speed may have surpassed the need for quality at times. To illustrate this, one participant who worked in an embassy and whose job it was to ensure that information was available to both that country’s citizens in Japan and to concerned relatives and friends in the home country strongly associated the concept of translation with the idea of timeliness:

Translation issues only really arose in the immediate aftermath of it when we were listening to the Japanese news and trying to pick up what was happening before the ministries had actually activated themselves, so in the immediate aftermath, that’s where translation issues would have kicked in. Our local staff would have been our main conduit, so they looked after that. (*Researcher: And those local staff, would they have been Japanese people?*) Japanese nationals. (*And professionally trained in translation?*) Some, yeah, some

would have had professional translation experience, and others would have been with the embassy for a long time. (Participant 3)

Other participants, such as Participants 9, 14, 20, 24, and 26, also underline a connection in their experiences between translation and timing.<sup>25</sup>

Another important experiential link made by participants was between translation and the idea of the quality of the information provided. In general, participants seemed to hold a fairly low opinion of the quality of the information that they recognised as being the results of acts of translating, and they seemed to blame some of these quality issues on the types of production process that would be characteristic of Japanese institutional translation:

The Japanese government in particular, were producing difficult to understand direct translations because they are all focused on approvals and avoiding risk, and “it has to be exactly the same as the Japanese” was the mandate... “The Japanese has been approved. If we are going to do anything in English, it has to be as close to the Japanese as possible otherwise it is a separate document that has to go through approvals again.” (Participant 6)

Nonetheless, it was clear that participants struggled with the idea of whether receiving high-quality, accurate translated information was as valuable as just having some translated information available, even if that translated information was not as precise as they would have liked. This was a tension that was not resolved at interview, but it might be interpreted that ‘adequate’ rather than ‘high-quality’ translation was what participants valorised:

Because, {my co-worker and I}, we were the only two native speakers that worked at the {redacted} centre, all of the information usually came through us, and so it was easy for us to get that information out. When other people had to take over for us, we would still have to come back and check that English, and then it would have to go up again. So it really depended on what information they want to get out there. If it’s in English and they don’t mind, then that’s perfectly fine, and I guess you can only do so much, so having the information in English is better than not having it in English, but at the same time, if you get something wrong, then that’s when problems start to occur. (Participant 24)

Another significant association with the products of translation made by participants was an association with the idea of trust. Here again there were conflicting tensions in participant accounts around how trust related to the phenomenon of translation. At one point, a participant said that information available in their native language, but that had been provided by Japanese sources, was more trustworthy:

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<sup>25</sup> To verify the relevant passages, see Appendix E: Participant 9/Lines 255-261; Participant 14/Lines 384-395; Participant 20/Lines 583-598; Participant 24/Lines 578-593; Participant 26/Lines 309-313.

What I started doing is reading a lot of, obviously English-only information, because Japanese information, I didn't trust and not only that, I can't read Japanese very well. So I started listening to, you know, NHK [Note: the Japanese national broadcaster] in English, because I think they built a lot of credibility during the crisis, and I knew some of the people who worked there. (Participant 27)

However, later on in the interview, that same participant said that the very recognition that the information had been translated made it somewhat suspect and harder to have complete confidence in:

So I think the, the story for what you are talking about and the fact that I am not doing Japanese media except the English version of it. I'm doing Jiji and Kyodo and NHK, you know, I'm going off the wires every day. But that's just a translation, and I don't know if it's a good translation. (Participant 27)

Another participant displayed a similar uncertainty about whether knowing something was a translation or clearly receiving it as a translation might change the trust that would be put in the information:

There are more and more foreigners living in Japan these days, and a lot of them don't speak Japanese, and emergency announcements, if you don't understand the language of the announcements, you're pretty much, you have to rely on a transla, you have to get the information second-hand. And even if you have someone who is fluent in English translating for you, to get something first-hand immediately gives you a little bit more, I don't want to say comfort, but gives you a little bit more security. (Participant 14)

What consistently came through as a guarantee of trust was less the informational product itself than the *source* of that information. If the source was trusted, the information was more trusted, whether received by the foreign resident as a translation or not:

I think not being a bilingual, fluent Japanese speaker, I think information was still accessible. I think the Internet played a big role. I think Twitter played a big role. Personal connections and connecting with those people through digital technology was important...Maybe because I was discounting the official word, I didn't feel like, "Oh I'm not listening directly to this. That's not a problem." And again, I would get it filtered through people that, whose opinion I trusted, so it was okay. (Participant 20)

Participants 17 and 23 also made sure to highlight the importance of the source of the information in establishing whether a translation could be trusted.<sup>26</sup>

As a final point, despite the fact that participants related translations with important

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<sup>26</sup> To verify the relevant passages, see Appendix E: Participant 17/Lines 423-437; Participant 23/Lines 1016-1018.



categories like timeliness, quality, and trust, it must be remembered that, in many cases, participants did not recognise (nor were they interested in) the fact that important pieces of information in the disaster were likely to have come to them as a result of translation. Therefore, reception is also an important category to consider when defining translation for this research. For instance, many important pieces of information used by participants during the disaster would likely have been pseudo-originals. Pym (2012) defines pseudo-originals as:

...texts that have been produced according to translatative processes but which are not recognized as translations in the space of the receiver – they are not completely translational. Much of the televised information that we see every day has been translated, but is not received as a translation. (Pym 2012: 75)

Thus, in addition to the multiple references to information broadcast on television in all participant accounts that likely came about as a result of translatative processes, the following dialogues between two participants and the researcher highlight the strong possibility that many other products of translation in the disaster were not recognised as such. These dialogues also suggest that whether a piece of information was clearly perceived as a translation or not was not very important to the participants:

There's a fantastic guide for the Japanese shindo [Note: Japan's seismic intensity scale] system on Wikipedia in English which I probably read after the earthquake which explains the shindo 1 through 7...But basically, the Wikipedia article for the Japanese shindo explains it like that and so, em, if you go and read the shindo 5 entry, like, well, pretty much what happened in Tokyo, you know. (*Researcher: Okay, that's really interesting. Well, definitely I'm going to check that out because that's probably a translation.*) It probably is a translation, yes. (Participant 12)

(*Researcher: for me, the interesting point is if you're trusting, let's say, an English-speaking journalist who is getting their information through some form of mediation, how much do you know about the mediation? I'm interested in that whole topic, though, of I guess, if you'd like to call it news translation as well...*) I don't know much about that. (*Researcher:...it's just interesting to me because, as you said, trust was a key word that came up, I think, if you're familiar with the language of the place you're reporting on, that maybe gives you the ability to access certain things.*) Well for me what's more interesting is some of the blogs that were coming out with information. You know, women's groups, mothers' groups, that kind of thing. (Participant 27)

To summarise, if we are to define translation for this research, this section has argued that, in addition to thinking of the concept as written and oral interlingual and intercultural transfer dominated by the Japanese-English language pair, we must also consider ideas of timeliness, quality, trust, and reception in our conceptualisation.

#### 5.3.4 The role and profile of the translator or interpreter

The final two frequently-occurring themes related to the concept of translation that participants touched on in their interviews were the concepts of professionalism and community. In particular, it was clear that participants positioned the people who were translating (again, now understood to include written and oral modes) largely toward the volunteer end of a volunteer-professional cline. Moreover, many of the volunteer translators that they interacted with were tied to them by bonds of community. Participants such as the two quoted below described how it was friends and work colleagues who spontaneously translated for them in the disaster:

I have a good friend, {redacted}, from that group who, she and a couple of her friends threw together a Wikipedia of all the, the information and they did their best to translate it after the earthquake in fact. It's gone now. I was, I was trying to find it for you a couple of days ago, but, eh, obviously, it's come down....*(Researcher: So, like, they were just basically as Japanese people, they were taking?)* Taking, I think, just the Japanese government sources, I suppose. The newspaper headlines, articles, anything I suppose they could get their hands on, just translating it, safety information. And these were just college students. They were just, kind of, doing their best to, because they were part of this international club and because they had a lot of friends. It was really nice. (Participant 23)

I remember the tsunami warning which I didn't understand but was translated for me. I do remember it being broadcast that there was the possible risk of a tsunami up to two-metres coming to Tokyo. That never materialised... There definitely were some PA announcements, and they were impossible, utterly impossible for me to understand, because it was, kind of, static-y, you know, like, crackley, kind of [Note: the participant then covers his mouth with his hand and produces some incomprehensible sounds] over the system, but the Japanese people around understood. *(Researcher: Yeah, this is interesting for me. You said, "It was translated for me." Can you be more specific?)* ...Oh, the company. Again, it was people from the company. I was with, we were standing outside the company for a while. (Participant 12)

Other participants, including Participants 15, 16, 20, 21, and 26, also talked about how they relied on friends, acquaintances, and loved ones to translate for them.<sup>27</sup>

It must be emphasised, though, that placing the people who undertook the role of translator on the volunteer end of a volunteer-professional cline is not to say that they were not language professionals. In support of findings in other research that not all volunteer translators or interpreters are untrained (see, for example, O'Hagan 2011), the data in this case study show that professionals did translate in the 2011 disaster but that they mostly

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<sup>27</sup> To verify the relevant passages, see Appendix E: Participant 15/Lines 131-150; Participant 16/Lines 354-384; Participant 20/Lines 434-460; Participant 21/Lines 2284-2290; Participant 26/Lines 233-237.

did so in a voluntary capacity. One participant – an interpreter by profession – describes a situation where professional experience in interpreting was a feature of the role in the disaster:

I quickly wanted to do something. But what was, I had no, I was not ready to define what would be that something I could do. But just stressing morning till evening was frustrating. Kind of, “Isn’t there something to do?”, but I didn’t know what. And I told my wife that I would ask to do something, you know, a contribution, volunteerism, whatever, but I don’t know what. And then it was the 13th, I think, 12 or 13, not exactly, which was almost next day. All of sudden there came an email from the French Embassy. French Embassy was recruiting interpreters to go – and this was unclear – to go to Sendai, to go North. (Participant 13)

Another participant – whose company began to collect Twitter messages of support from all over the world for the people in Japan suffering from the disaster – tells of how he called on a professional network of translators to help translate these messages:

We had all these amazing messages coming out, but of course they were all in English or Spanish or German, most of them were. And we had thousands of these messages coming through just short little tweets...and I said, “Listen, we’ve got this thing going, would your guys be interested in translating these messages?” And they were so quick to get back on. They asked around and every translator on their books said yes they’d love to do that for free, absolutely. (Participant 19)

In short, the above allows us to argue that the final elements required to operationalise a definition of translation for this disaster are ideas of working in a voluntary capacity and bonds of community.

### *5.3.5 An operational definition of ‘Translation’ for this research*

We can now synthesise the elements outlined above to propose the definition of translation that guided the analysis in this research. Even though it is now not unusual in the language industry to avoid using the term ‘translation’ and to focus instead on alternative terms to describe special issues of concern with relation to the concept (see Koskinen 2010: 15), it seems appropriate that a thesis in the domain of translation studies should use the term. Nonetheless, in the remainder of this analysis, the convention will be adopted to use an upper-case T whenever referring to the definition operationalised here. Additionally, an

upper-case T will be used whenever referring to derivative forms of the noun defined in this section.<sup>28</sup> The definition is as follows:

*Translation* in the 2011 disaster was a process of written and oral interlingual and intercultural transfer, dominated by the Japanese-English language pair, carried out mostly by volunteers known to the user, to create products that were not always received as translations, but that were valorised when seen to produce timely information of adequate quality and when seen to come from trusted sources.

This definition goes some way to illustrating how Translation fit into the communicative scene for foreign residents in the 2011 disaster. However, it also prompts further questions that need to be answered in the rest of this chapter. While it has been shown so far that the providers of Translation were mostly at the volunteer end of a volunteer-professional cline, who precisely were these volunteers? Also, while we now know that timely, adequate, trustworthy Translations were valorised, what exactly were the topics of the information being Translated? Moreover, when and where was all this Translation work being carried out, and how were Translations actually produced? The subsequent sections will propose answers to these questions.

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<sup>28</sup> These conventions have been used in other research into the phenomena of translation and interpreting to denote a special use of the term (e.g., Gile 2010: 251).

### 5.4 *Who Translated for whom?*

The first step in establishing who Translated for whom in this case study is to establish the parties that were involved when foreign residents communicated and gathered information. Participants talked about being involved in relationships with the following parties in the 2011 disaster:

- Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan
- Family or friends overseas
- Japanese national work colleagues
- Embassies
- Foreign national work colleagues
- Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan
- Family or partner in Japan
- Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan
- Disaster responders
- Overseas media
- Unknown foreign nationals in Japan
- Unknown foreign nationals overseas
- University in Japan
- University overseas

#### 5.4.1 *Assessment of participants' relationships*

Tables 5–2 and 5–3 present more detail on these relationships.<sup>29</sup> First, Table 5–2 describes the numbers of participants in the study who talked about communicating with certain parties during the 2011 disaster. Then, Table 5–3 describes the numbers of participants who talked about gathering information from certain parties in the disaster. All these references have then been categorised according to whether the participant viewed the relationship in a positive, negative, or neutral light, and according to whether the participant associated the interaction with something positive, negative, or neutral.

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<sup>29</sup> The definitions of the codes that have been cross-referenced in these two tables (Relationship positive, Relationship negative, Relationship neutral, Communicating positive, Communicating negative, Communicating neutral, Information gathering positive, Information gathering negative, Information gathering neutral) can all be consulted in the codebook in Appendix F.

N.B. Any cell with a count of 4 or greater (indicating that the relevant unit of meaning was referred to by 4 or more participants) has been shaded grey in the table below:

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS:	Communicating NEGATIVE	Communicating NEUTRAL	Communicating POSITIVE
Disaster responders	1	1	3
Embassies	1	1	4
Family or friends overseas		1	3
Family or partner in Japan			
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan		5	5
Foreign national work colleagues		3	5
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan			6
Japanese national work colleagues		3	8
Overseas media			1
University in Japan	1	2	
University overseas			1
Unknown foreign nationals in Japan			
Unknown foreign nationals overseas	1	1	
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan			4
NEUTRAL RELATIONSHIPS:	Communicating NEGATIVE	Communicating NEUTRAL	Communicating POSITIVE
Disaster responders		4	
Embassies	3	4	1
Family or friends overseas	3	7	10
Family or partner in Japan	6	2	2
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan	1	6	2
Foreign national work colleagues	2	8	1
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan	1	3	2
Japanese national work colleagues	1	6	
Overseas media	1	2	
University in Japan		1	
University overseas		1	
Unknown foreign nationals in Japan	1		
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan		1	
NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIPS:	Communicating NEGATIVE	Communicating NEUTRAL	Communicating POSITIVE
Disaster responders	1	1	
Embassies	6	2	
Family or friends overseas	6	2	
Family or partner in Japan	1	2	
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan	2	3	
Foreign national work colleagues	4	2	
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan	1		
Japanese national work colleagues	4		
Overseas media	1		
University in Japan		1	
Unknown foreign nationals overseas			
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan	1		1

**Table 5-2. Parties with whom participants communicated and the qualities associated with these interactions**

*N.B. Any cell with a count of 4 or greater (indicating that the relevant unit of meaning was referred to by 4 or more participants) has been shaded grey in the table below:*

<b>POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS:</b>	Information gathering NEGATIVE	Information gathering NEUTRAL	Information gathering POSITIVE
Disaster responders	1	1	2
Embassies		3	2
Family or friends overseas			1
Family or partner in Japan	1		
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan	2	4	7
Foreign national work colleagues	1		1
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan	1	2	6
Japanese national work colleagues	1	1	
Overseas media			1
University in Japan		2	
University overseas			
Unknown foreign nationals in Japan		1	1
Unknown foreign nationals overseas			2
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan			2
<b>NEUTRAL RELATIONSHIPS:</b>	Information gathering NEGATIVE	Information gathering NEUTRAL	Information gathering POSITIVE
Disaster responders		1	
Embassies		2	
Family or friends overseas		2	
Family or partner in Japan		2	
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan	3	5	2
Foreign national work colleagues	2	2	1
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan	1	2	
Japanese national work colleagues		1	1
Overseas media			
University in Japan			
University overseas			
Unknown foreign nationals in Japan			
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan		1	
<b>NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIPS:</b>	Information gathering NEGATIVE	Information gathering NEUTRAL	Information gathering POSITIVE
Disaster responders	1		
Embassies	5	1	1
Family or friends overseas	5	1	
Family or partner in Japan			
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan	1		
Foreign national work colleagues	1		
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan			1
Japanese national work colleagues	1	1	
Overseas media	1		
University in Japan			
Unknown foreign nationals overseas	1		
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan	1		

**Table 5-3. Parties from whom participants gathered information and the qualities associated with these interactions**

What becomes clear from these two tables is that participants were communicating with a wider variety of parties than they were gathering information from, but that, nonetheless, they were seeking information from a wide array of sources. Additionally, we can see that, while both communicating with and gathering information from these people seemed to be

broadly positive experiences for the participants, there were significant numbers of participants who associated these interactions with something negative. A deeper qualitative exploration of these data reveals further insights.

Looking first at the positive instances of communication and information gathering that took place within the context of a broader positive relationship (indicated by the green rectangles superimposed on Tables 5–2 and 5–3), we can see that several participants in this case study singled out their foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan, their Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan, as well as their Japanese national work colleagues as categories of relationship that held some sort of positive association for them and that involved instances of communicating or gathering information that were in some way positive. For example, one participant talked with great appreciation about the efforts that his company made to communicate with him and to confirm his safety throughout the disaster:

They do check up, like, as you, the *anpikakunin* system [Note: automated system over ICT where employees must confirm their status after an emergency], it checks you. It asks: How are you? How is your family? How is your home? There's a fourth question which I can't remember. Oh, can you come to work?...Like, I felt like part of the work community. People were checking on me, you know. (Participant 12)

Another participant underlined how useful it was to be able to call on specialists in the international community to gather and disseminate understandable information about the nuclear disaster:

I turned to friends in the international community. I worked with an international chamber to help set up a panel discussion with a specialist from a major overseas academic institute. So he had just written a book on radiation, and we invited him in to speak. It got a huge crowd, and it was all, it was the international community, and many of the participants were mothers who were concerned about radiation and, for their children, they didn't really know where else to go for information, so it was very helpful for a lot them. (Participant 6)

Despite such positive experiences, we should not ignore the negative instances of communication and information gathering within the context of a broader relationship that were seen by the participant in a negative light (indicated by the red rectangles superimposed on Tables 5–2 and 5–3). Here several participants in this case study singled out their embassies and their families and friends overseas as categories of relationship that held some sort of negative association for them and that involved instances of communicating or gathering information that were in some way negative. As an illustration, one participant pointed out how repeated communications via social media



from friends and family overseas giving their opinion on the disaster and how the participant should respond to it were not helpful to him:

*(Researcher: you also mentioned about social media being not that useful to you really, in fact it might have been counterproductive.)* Oh, counterproductive because the people on Facebook was kind of going crazy. *(Researcher: And when you say the people on Facebook, were they people that you knew here in Japan?)* No, no, no, mostly friends or not necessarily people very close but rather, well, I mean, it's always like this, "Oh, something happened in Japan. Oh my god. I think my neighbour's daughter-in-law's son is currently there, so we need to check." Fair enough, I mean, so people I have had no contact with for ten years, fifteen years or so, I mean, all of a sudden, they come on, "Oh, are you still in Japan?", and I think that is a positive because it's like, "Oh, right, great. They, they actually do care although you're not best friends or whatever. But because Germans are so paranoid about nuclear things. Nuclear is really, everything goes into irrational mode, really it does go into irrational mode. (Participant 22)

Additionally, while some participants viewed their relationship with their embassy in a positive light, others viewed it more negatively, and a common complaint was that, rather than the embassy providing information to the participant, it seemed to be working the other way around:

*(Researcher: And the information that you received from your embassy, was it useful for you?)* No. It was not. It was not. Because, like, I had more information than them at that time [laughter]. So they were asking, "Are you okay?" and "Is the situation okay now?" or "Will you stay or go back?" "Is the level of radiation is okay now, or not?" So they were just asking, but not providing information. (Participant 15)

Finally, the data indicated by the yellow rectangles superimposed on Tables 5–2 and 5–3 remind us of the complexity of human relationships and highlight that it was possible in the disaster to experience an act of communication or information gathering negatively in the context of a broadly positive relationship and vice versa. To illustrate this point, one participant talked about how he was happy to have his Japanese partner by his side to Translate Japanese TV news about the Fukushima meltdown but, at the same time, how he was frustrated that the message that she Translated was a message not to panic:

I turned around to {my girlfriend} and I go, "{redacted}, did you ever hear of Chernobyl?" And she said, "No." "You never heard of Chernobyl?" She said, "No." I said, "Well, we know about Chernobyl and this is very, very serious. Like, what's the news actually telling you? What are the experts saying?" Because we just couldn't understand, it was all these new words that we were hearing. So we had to get her to try and tell us, and, like, "No, they're just saying you're okay, kind of thing." We were getting all this, sort of, "Don't worry about it. They are going out. It'll be okay," and all that kind of thing. (Participant 2)

In sum, what has been shown in this section is that relationships in the disaster were diverse and complex. Relationships with friends and acquaintances who were either Japanese nationals or other foreign nationals seemed broadly positive, as did relationships between the participants and their Japanese work colleagues. At the same time, the participants' relationships with their embassies and with their family and friends overseas seemed to be more problematic. Some of the data in this section also indicated that Translation was a feature of at least some of these relationships. The next section will make clear the extent to which Translation was involved in participants' relationships with the various parties outlined above.

#### *5.4.2 Assessment of participants' relationships involving Translation*

Table 5–4 cross references the same positive, negative, and neutral relationships detailed in the previous section with any references made by the participants in their interviews to linguistic and cultural mediation in the 2011 disaster; mediation that was carried out either by the participant themselves or by another person.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The definitions of the codes that have been cross-referenced in this table (Relationship positive, Relationship negative, Relationship neutral, Linguistic mediation by another, Linguistic mediation by the participant, Cultural mediation by another, Cultural mediation by the participant) can all be consulted in the codebook in Appendix F.

*N.B. Any cell with a count of 4 or greater (indicating that the relevant unit of meaning was referred to by 4 or more participants) has been shaded grey in the table below:*

<b>POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS:</b>	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant
Disaster responders	2	1		
Embassies		1		
Family or friends overseas	1			
Family or partner in Japan	2			
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan	4			
Foreign national work colleagues	3	1	1	
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan	7		1	
Japanese national work colleagues	7	1	3	
Overseas media				
University in Japan	1		1	
University overseas				
Unknown foreign nationals in Japan	1			
Unknown foreign nationals overseas				
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan	1			
<b>NEUTRAL RELATIONSHIPS:</b>	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant
Disaster responders	1			
Embassies				
Family or friends overseas				
Family or partner in Japan				
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan	1	3		
Foreign national work colleagues	1	2		2
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan		3		
Japanese national work colleagues		1		
Overseas media		2		
University in Japan				
University overseas				
Unknown foreign nationals in Japan		1		
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan				
<b>NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIPS:</b>	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant
Disaster responders		1		
Embassies				1
Family or friends overseas				
Family or partner in Japan				
Foreign national friends or acquaintances in Japan				
Foreign national work colleagues		1		
Japanese national friends or acquaintances in Japan	2		1	
Japanese national work colleagues		1		
Overseas media				
University in Japan				
Unknown foreign nationals overseas				
Unknown Japanese nationals in Japan				

**Table 5-4. Relationships in the disaster that included elements of Translation**

Firstly, what we see from the data is that Translation did indeed involve both interlingual and intercultural transfer for participants when viewed from the perspective of how they related to other categories of people in the disaster. Secondly, it would appear that the

relationships that involved Translation were experienced mostly positively by the participants. Finally, when we are talking about who Translated for whom in the 2011 disaster, Table 5–4 indicates that we are broadly speaking about foreign and Japanese friends, acquaintances, and colleagues on-the-ground in Japan Translating for other foreign and Japanese friends, acquaintances, and colleagues there. Nevertheless, it would appear that the efforts of Japanese national Translators may have been favoured slightly over the efforts of foreign national Translators by participants in this case study. These points can be supported by some illustrations in the participants’ own voices. Here two participants describe how Translation featured positively in their relationships with Japanese acquaintances and colleagues:

I recruit for, mainly find Japanese people. How many people reached out to me and said, “Do you need help with anything?” There’s a woman, I don’t know like, in her forties, that emailed me out-of-the-blue and was like, “Oh do you need help with translation or anything?” Or like, people that I didn’t, weren’t close friends or anything, but reaching out, you know, like, “Okay, I know you’re alone in Tokyo, do you need any help? Do you need translation?” (Participant 21)

We were lucky at {the city government in the disaster zone}. They have two Japanese workers that had studied overseas. So their jobs were to translate into English. So, not only did we have the native speakers, we also had them as well and they would be translating a lot for City Hall, so it was a lot of the technical English, and we would also check their English. But, I guess we were lucky to have that help as well. Because City Hall is completely different, because once the earthquake had been 6 months to 7 months, that’s when the information on how you go about getting, like, subsidies and (*Researcher: Yeah, very technical stuff.*)...that type of stuff. (Participant 24)

Other participants underscore that it was in their relationship with other foreign nationals in the disaster that the benefits of Translation could be felt. The first participant quoted below points to the benefits of having members of his national community who could speak Japanese in the same refuge centre (termed ‘camp’ by the participant) during the disaster. The second participant points to the benefits of being visited by foreign national friends who could speak Japanese at a time when the participant was taking refuge in his apartment:

(*Researcher: And what was the language in the camp?*) Mainly Japanese, but one or two peoples could comment in English, and, to use Japanese, it was not difficult for us, because all peoples were the same place and many of them know Japanese. Because in our community, three or four peoples I said about, all of my friend that know Japanese, because if there is an announcement instantly he translated, “Oh, this like this.” (Participant 16)

We were lucky because two of our American friends who were staying with us had been there for about six years, I think, so they were quite good at speaking Japanese, which was, you know, we’d only been there for a year-and-a-half, so we weren’t the best speakers. We hadn’t studied Japanese

before, or anything like that...because they had a car as well, they were just driving around, they were living in the area, and just to see how we were, and I think we turned on the radio in the car because they were the more fluent Japanese speakers that, sort of, gave us a rundown. (Participant 28)

Secondary sources of data compiled for this case study support the assertions that foreign residents who were affected by the 2011 disaster fell back on local communities of Japanese colleagues or other Japanese-speaking foreign nationals for Translation. For instance, the National Diet Library (the library of the Japanese parliament) has compiled archives of texts, maps, video and audio recordings, photographs, and other mostly Japanese data produced at the time of the 2011 disaster. Twenty minutes of television documentary reports by the national broadcaster, NHK, featuring a Chinese, an American, and two Filipina nationals who experienced the disaster in some of the worst-hit areas have been added to these archives.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to providing further evidence for who was Translating in the disaster, these reports strongly echo other themes identified in this thesis. Specifically, despite the fact that these foreign residents were not all the same – they differed widely in period of residence, linguistic ability, age and other demographic factors – a discourse of community ran through their accounts of the disaster, especially in terms of the strengthened bonds of community that they enjoyed with other Japanese and foreign nationals as a result of experiencing the disaster together. These reports also attested to the significant linguistic barriers that some foreign residents came up against in the disaster, but also pointed to cultural barriers, particularly in terms of the tension between responding more communally or more individually to the disaster. Finally, the reports also underlined the extra support that foreign nationals may need in disaster in Japan, while at the same time showing the asset that foreign residents can be in contributing to disaster response, especially in helping other more vulnerable foreign nationals.

While negative associations between Translation and the relationships that participants were engaged in during the disaster were limited, some examples from the data are indicative of some problem areas in the Translation that took place in the 2011 disaster. In particular, there were not enough Translators to go around, and those that were Translating were being asked to perform outside the scope of their normal capacities:

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<sup>31</sup> Transcripts of these reports translated into English by the researcher are available in Appendix K. View the footage in Japanese for: the Chinese subject here <http://tinyurl.com/nvmjaot>; the American subject here <http://tinyurl.com/naaeo67>; the Filipina subjects here <http://tinyurl.com/pcgn6yb> and here <http://tinyurl.com/qx822uq> [Accessed 5 June 2015].

Some volunteer, English-speaking volunteer, like Japanese people, they tried to translate what, what is going on, but not all time, just, like, sometimes. (*Researcher: And those volunteers, were they other people inside the [refuge] centre or did they come from another place?*) No, no, other people inside the centre, yeah, yes. (Participant 15)

There were times, like, for example, where I had to, on the spur of the moment - I wasn't given any notice - but I had to go and interpret for the mayor that was talking to the US Army, and I don't know, like, words, like the specific words that are going to come up and the vocab that they are going to use, so, I cringe thinking about that now. (Participant 24)

Another area for Translation in the disaster that may have been problematic relates to the fact that Translators were sometimes a bridge between different groups of local and foreign disaster responders in a highly politicised and culturally-bound space of interaction:

But basically, the Japanese police would say something like, "This is the territory that you check." Well, look for survivors, look for cadavers. There were rules. Rules, for people that come far away to help people, which was totally, disturbing, like, "If you see a corpse, contact the police, do not touch it." Basically, it's: do not touch Japanese people. It was not written like that, but it was something like that. And also a lot of frustration because before we went on site in day time, we waited almost a day doing nothing, and the rescuers get frustrated because time is key. (Participant 13)

To conclude this section, what has been shown is that participants in this case study were engaged in a wide variety of complex relationships to communicate and gather information in the 2011 disaster. When focusing in on the relationships that involved Translation, it became clear that the majority of interactions were between foreign and Japanese acquaintances on-the-ground in Japan Translating for other foreign and Japanese acquaintances. These relationships proved to be mostly beneficial for the participants, but they also highlighted some of the problem areas for Translation in the disaster, notably a lack of sufficient resources and a strongly culturally-bound space of interaction. These themes were also shown to interconnect systematically with secondary data.

By now, we are starting to form a more detailed picture of the part that Translation played in foreign residents' communication and information gathering in the 2011 disaster, but there are still aspects that remain to be explored. Having established that acquaintances were often Translating for other acquaintances in a voluntary capacity, what sort of information were they actually Translating?

### ***5.5 What was Translated?***

Table 5–5 collates the references in the participants’ interviews to the different topics that they felt needed Translation.<sup>32</sup> This, of course, is likely an incomplete representation, and other categories of information may have needed Translating in the 2011 disaster. The purpose of this section is not to come up with an exhaustive inventory of topics, but rather to be able to speak with some confidence about patterns that were found in the data.

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<sup>32</sup> The definitions of the codes used to create Table 5–5 (Topics needing linguistic mediation, Topics needing cultural mediation) are available in Appendix F.

Topics discussed at interview in relation to any foreign resident					
Name	Sources	References	Name	Sources	References
<b>Topics requiring LINGUISTIC mediation</b>					
News broadcasts or articles	13	34	<b>Topics requiring CULTURAL mediation</b>		
Explaining response procedures	12	19		The character of typical Japanese disaster response	13
Nuclear technology, radiation, and details of the nuclear disaster	10	27		The lack of locally-specific knowledge	6
Emergency warnings over PA	9	11		The character of Japanese-style communication	3
Disaster preparedness advice	7	15		Cultural differences within foreign populations	1
How to evacuate (transport options, schedules, conditions, controlled evacuations)	7	14		The unusual character of this disaster	1
Where, when, and how to get food, water, power, other essentials	7	13			
Explanation of damage and status of recovery (incl. locations, fatalities, missing, transport, etc.)	6	9			
Official stance on the disaster	6	13			
Confirmation of an individual's safety	5	7			
Food safety (especially places of origin, radiation tests)	4	7			
How to interact with Japanese people as a foreign responder or journalist	4	6			
Emergency radio broadcasts	3	3			
How to interact with Japanese people as a foreign volunteer	3	5			
Links to websites	3	3			
Emergency warnings on TV	2	2			
Instructions on how to be a volunteer	2	4			
Procedures to claim insurance, rebuilding subsidies, etc.	1	3			
Instructions from Japanese authorities to foreign responders	1	4			
How to interact with Japanese people as a fellow victim	1	1			
Messages of support and sympathy	1	1			
Counselling for foreign nationals	1	1			

Table 5-5. General list of topics requiring Translation in the 2011 disaster



Table 5–5 indicates that news, response procedures (especially typical Japanese procedures), nuclear-related information, and warnings over public address systems were topics that large numbers of participants chose independently of each other to talk about. The passages referred to in the table include instances where participants were talking not only about their own experiences but also about the experiences of other foreign nationals that they knew. To focus in more precisely on those topics that were important to the participants in this case study, we can cross-reference the above topics with some other useful units of meaning that were coded separately: ‘Linguistic barrier present for the participant’ and ‘Cultural barrier present for the participant’. Table 5–6 summarises these intersections in the interview data.

	Linguistic barrier present for participant	Participant identifier number(s)
News broadcasts or articles	7	2, 12, 16, 21, 23, 26, 28
Emergency warnings over PA	4	9, 12, 22, 23
Nuclear technology, radiation, and details of the nuclear disaster	3	2, 5, 21
General response procedures	2	15, 26
Food safety (especially places of origin, radiation tests)	2	21, 28
How to interact with Japanese people as a foreign volunteer	2	22, 23
Official stance on the disaster	2	8, 16
Disaster preparedness advice	1	15
Emergency warnings on TV	1	8
How to evacuate (transport options, schedules, conditions, controlled evacuations)	1	2
How to interact with Japanese people as a fellow victim	1	23
Where, when, and how to get food, water, power, other essentials	1	9
Confirmation of an individual's safety	0	
Emergency radio broadcasts	0	
Explanation of damage and status of recovery (incl. locations, fatalities, missing, transport, etc.)	0	
Procedures to claim insurance, rebuilding subsidies, etc.	0	
Instructions from Japanese authorities to foreign responders	0	
Instructions on how to be a volunteer	0	
How to interact with Japanese people as a foreign responder or journalist	0	
Links to websites	0	
Messages of support and sympathy	0	
Counselling for foreign nationals	0	
	Cultural barrier present for participant	Participant identifier number(s)
The character of typical Japanese disaster response	5	2, 3, 6, 16, 22
The character of Japanese-style communication	1	6
Cultural differences within foreign populations	0	
The lack of locally-specific knowledge	0	
The unusual character of this disaster	0	

**Table 5-6. Topics that case study participants felt required Translation in the 2011 disaster**

Here again we can see that the same four topics proved particularly troublesome for participants from a linguistic or cultural perspective in the 2011 disaster:

- News broadcasts or articles
- Emergency warnings over PA
- Nuclear technology, radiation, and details of the nuclear disaster
- The character of typical Japanese disaster response

Once again, further qualitative exploration of these data allows for deeper insights to be gained. Talking about news broadcasts, one participant referenced in Table 5–6 shows how knowledge of Japanese (especially an ability to read the complex Japanese writing system) was required to understand news headlines:

We were walking past, I think, a car dealer's. Every shop on that road had their televisions turned out to face the windows so that people could see what was happening, and that was the first time that we saw anything. But then again, we weren't really getting that much information because all these headlines were in Japanese and *kanji* [Note: the Chinese characters used in the Japanese writing system]. (Participant 23)

With respect to emergency warnings, another participant, who had accepted a new job in Fukushima just before the disaster, partly based his decision not to take up the position on the fact that emergency PA announcements there were unlikely to have been in a language that he would have understood and that this would have left him extremely vulnerable:

Not getting the information there, not being really able to, and that was partly my decision, why I decided not to go up to Fukushima, because I thought, "If something happens, even if they drive with an announcement, those are not going to be in English." And there, language would have been an issue. So I would be totally reliant on others ringing me, thinking of me "Oh, he's ringing, he's ringing because something has happened." And that's, so, I wasn't in a very vulnerable situation, at least not in every respect, but I also chose not to put myself in a situation where I would have been worse, at least that was my reasoning. (Participant 22)

The nuclear disaster created large volumes of highly technical, highly specialised information, and foreign residents needed this information Translated. This was true even for those foreign residents who were confident in their Japanese abilities. Unfortunately, it would seem that the quality of the scientific and technical translations that were on offer may have been lacking:

Yeah, it's funny because there was, experts they have on TV are always certainly, at least, they're fluent in their fields in English, I would imagine, and they would be quite good at explaining what was going on even in English, even on paper. And yet, for the first few days or for the first few weeks, the explanations that I found in English of what was going on were terrible. They were a mess. (Participant 5)

As has been established earlier in this chapter, intercultural transfer was also an aspect of Translation in the 2011 disaster, and some cultural ideas may also have needed to have been Translated for foreign residents. For instance, certain slogans, such as '*Gambare Nippon*' or '*Gambarou Tohoku*' were ubiquitous following the disaster. These slogans might be translated in many ways, ranging from 'Let's get on with it' or 'Let's move

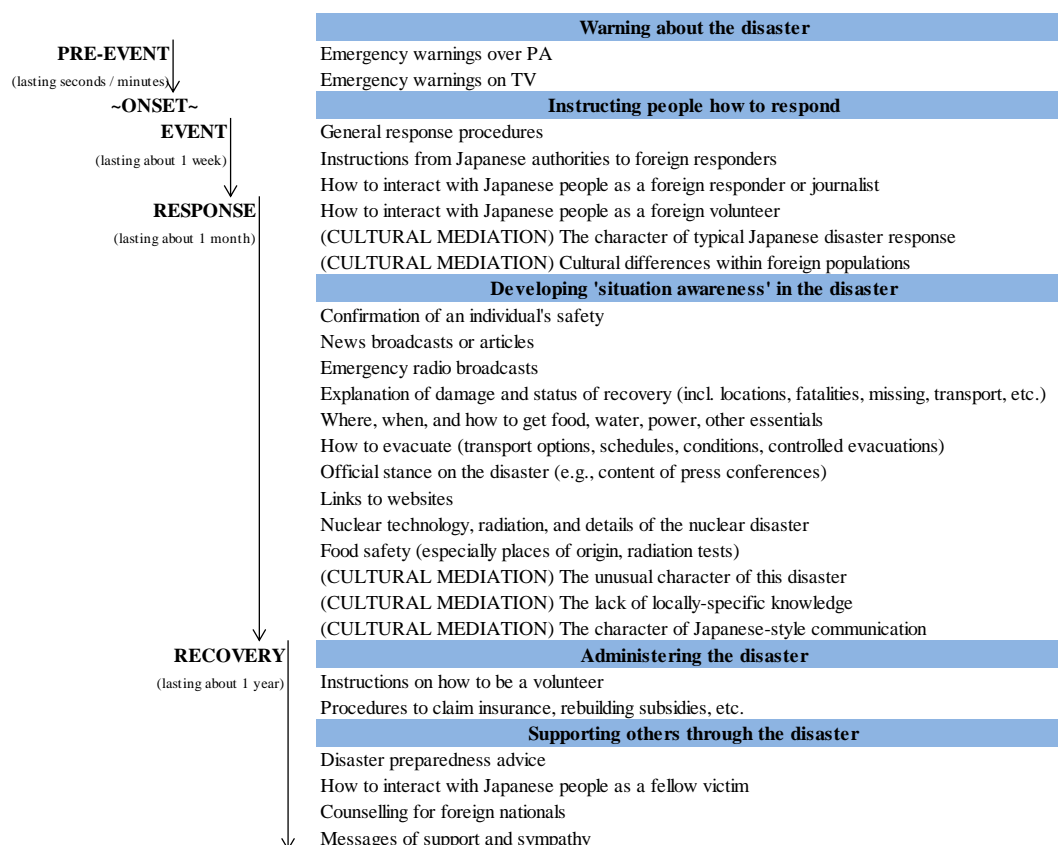
forward’ to ‘We are with you, Tohoku’. The choice of how to translate these slogans would have involved some cultural considerations, as one participant explained, and these considerations indicate that the culture of how Japan responds typically to disaster probably needed to be Translated at times in 2011:

*(Researcher: Would translating those type of slogans into other languages have any effect?)* On the foreign population in Japan? I’m not sure. I think it loses, it doesn’t really translate into our parlance, you know. It’s more of a cultural thing than a language thing, and if you were to tell, if a similar disaster had happened in {my home country}, I’m not sure the population would react to “Okay,” you know, “get on with it!” There would be a period of moping required. But, you know, they’re different mind-sets, so. (Participant 3)

In this chapter so far, we have established that Translation is a worthwhile object of enquiry for this study and have operationalised a definition for Translation in this research. We have shown that participants were engaged in diverse, complex relationships, and that, from a Translation point of view, interactions between foreign and Japanese friends, acquaintances, and colleagues were extremely important and mostly beneficial. At the same time, we have shown that a lack of sufficient resources and a strongly culturally-bound space of interaction also created problems for the relationships that involved Translation. Then, in this section, we have established that news, warnings over public address systems, nuclear-related information, and typical, Japanese disaster response procedures were the types of information that participants in this case study needed to have Translated. It would be useful moving forward to know how elements of this picture fit with some of the other contextual ideas that were established in the previous chapter. Specifically, it would be useful to discuss the temporal and spatial features of this Translational scene.

### ***5.6 When and where did Translation take place?***

We can now use how the disaster was defined in time and space in the previous chapter to interrogate in more detail the topics that needed to be Translated. Table 5–7 aggregates the topics from the previous section into the five main types already categorised in Section 4.5.5 (warning about the disaster, instructing people how to respond, developing situation awareness of the disaster, administering the disaster, and supporting others through the disaster) and follows the same temporal progression mapping onto the recognised phases of a disaster discussed in Section 4.3.3 (pre-event, event, response, and recovery).



**Table 5-7. When Translation was needed in the 2011 disaster**

From Table 5–7, we can now say that, generally speaking, the need to Translate emergency warnings, response procedures, and instructions for how to interact with other parties to the 2011 disaster came in the early phases. The Translation of topics related to the development of situation awareness – such as safety confirmations, news broadcasts, status reports, or evacuation procedures – was intensively required for the first month or so after onset. Then, the need to Translate administrative procedures and messages of advice, support, and counselling became greater once the emergency had moved into the recovery phase. The data in Table 5–7, therefore, underscore that Translation was required at all phases of the 2011 disaster. Additionally, the data seem to suggest that, of these five types of information requiring Translation, the need to Translate information used to develop situation awareness was required most of all. At the earlier phases of the disaster, participants – especially those who had little Japanese ability – spoke of being able to get by using sign language and pictures or by copying the actions of those around them:

*(Researcher: How did you find the evacuation centre? How did you know that information?)* How did I know it? Actually just by, like, seeing most of people were going and, like, carrying their items and so on, and so I followed them [laughter]. (Participant 15)

Thus, it was in trying to find out more complex information about what was going on and

to make decisions on how to respond that the participants seemed to require Translation, and this was true even for those with advanced Japanese ability:

Until, March 11, I had no knowledge about what nuclear was about, you know, the plug, the whole thing about the origin of the juice. As long as you get the juice, so what? You know, unless you are knowledgeable about that, they start using words about stuff you never heard. When something like that happen you have a whole chunk of what used to be technical vocabulary that falls into public speech. Kids started talking about cesium. 24 hours ago, nobody knew what cesium was. Well, when it started I, even me, nobody knew what cesium was except that cesium is bad for you [laughter]. (Participant 13)

Of course, it should be remembered that the various elements of the above typology may not have followed such a smooth progression and may have occurred simultaneously or overlapped. Nevertheless, the point of presenting the typology, even if it is not a perfect map, is to suggest that there seemed to be a relative relationship between the various needs for Translation in the disaster.

The data in Table 5–7 can be elaborated on even further to begin to make some claims about where the work of Translating these various topics was taking place as the disaster progressed in time. In other words, by qualitatively studying the references that participants made to these various topics, it was possible to create Table 5–8 which establishes the loci of Translation for each topic.

TOPIC NEEDING MEDIATION	LOCUS OF MEDIATION
<b>Warning about the disaster</b>	
Emergency warnings over PA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA)</li> <li>• Municipal networks subscribing to JMA's Earthquake Early Warning System</li> </ul>
Emergency warnings on TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TV networks</li> </ul>
<b>Instructing people how to respond</b>	
General response procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal offices</li> <li>• Train stations</li> <li>• Office buildings</li> <li>• Shopping centres</li> <li>• Large public spaces</li> <li>• Embassies</li> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
Instructions from Japanese authorities to foreign responders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation to disaster zone</li> <li>• Disaster zone search and rescue sites</li> </ul>
How to interact with Japanese people as a foreign responder or journalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
How to interact with Japanese people as a foreign volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> <li>• Municipal offices</li> </ul>
(CULTURAL MEDIATION) The character of typical Japanese disaster response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaster zone search and rescue sites</li> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
(CULTURAL MEDIATION) Cultural differences within foreign populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal offices</li> </ul>
<b>Developing 'situation awareness' in the disaster</b>	
Confirmation of an individual's safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaster zone evacuation centres</li> <li>• Disaster zone municipal offices</li> <li>• Embassies</li> </ul>
News broadcasts or articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TV networks</li> <li>• Homes of volunteer interpreters</li> </ul>
Emergency radio broadcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radio networks</li> <li>• Municipal offices</li> </ul>
Explanation of damage and status of recovery (incl. locations, fatalities, missing, transport, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government offices</li> <li>• Offices of non-profit organisations</li> <li>• Embassies</li> </ul>
Where, when, and how to get food, water, power, other essentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> <li>• Offices of non-profit organisations</li> <li>• Embassies</li> </ul>
How to evacuate (transport options, schedules, conditions, controlled evacuations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal offices (helpdesks and helplines)</li> </ul>
Official stance on the disaster (e.g., content of press conferences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government offices</li> <li>• Embassies</li> </ul>
Links to websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government offices</li> <li>• Offices of non-profit organisations</li> <li>• Homes of volunteer translators</li> </ul>
Nuclear technology, radiation, and details of the nuclear disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• TV networks</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> </ul>
Food safety (especially places of origin, radiation tests)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offices of news agencies</li> <li>• Homes of volunteer translators</li> </ul>
(CULTURAL MEDIATION) The unusual character of this disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
(CULTURAL MEDIATION) The lack of locally-specific knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
(CULTURAL MEDIATION) The character of Japanese-style communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaster zone search and rescue sites</li> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
<b>Administering the disaster</b>	
Instructions on how to be a volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal offices</li> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
Procedures to claim insurance, rebuilding subsidies, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipal offices</li> <li>• Municipal offices (helpdesks and helplines)</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting others through the disaster</b>	
Disaster preparedness advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
How to interact with Japanese people as a fellow victim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone</li> </ul>
Counselling for foreign nationals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offices of non-profit organisations</li> </ul>
Messages of support and sympathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homes of volunteer translators</li> </ul>

**Table 5-8. Where the acts of Translation were carried out in the 2011 disaster**

These are just the locations that were mentioned by participants in this case study, and clearly there would have been many other places where Translation was taking place. Nonetheless, Table 5–8 does allow us to claim that Translation probably took place in a wide variety of locations during the 2011 disaster, but that much of the Translation effort was likely to have been concentrated around municipal offices, homes, businesses, and streets in the disaster zone. Of course, it would seem that locations that may have been outside the disaster zone (such as the offices of TV networks, the homes of volunteer interpreters working at a distance, and embassies) were also significant places of Translation, but in terms of where Translation was taking place, it is safe to assert that it was mostly taking place in the disaster zone with all of the hazards and vulnerabilities that such a location entailed; those who were Translating in the disaster zone were also living with the same dangers that the people they were Translating for faced. One participant who was volunteering in a multilingual support centre and translating information to disseminate to other foreign nationals in the disaster zone described his situation in these terms:

I was, sort of, in the position of giving people information to make them feel more comfortable, but the fact is, that was quite stressful at the time. At the time, hearing people ask questions about things that you are concerned about yourself is, that's stressful information, you know. Like, people would ask, "We just saw an explosion on the TV. Is it safe to live here?" And I'm just like, [laughter] That's a really good question." And having to go by the information you have and stand by that, you know, and when you are somewhat dubious of the content or the veracity of that information, then it's a little bit stressful, you know. (Participant 14)

In addition, secondary sources compiled for this case study support the idea that Translators were often found to be working in vulnerable, damaged locations in some of the worst-hit areas of the disaster (see photograph from Government of Japan Public Relations Office [2011] in Figure 5–4).



**Figure 5-4. Foreign volunteer Translators in the disaster zone work in the darkness**

In an interview in a Japanese government publication, one Chinese national who volunteered as a Translator in the disaster zone explains her experience thus:

There was no electricity the night after the earthquake and we had to rely on the light of flashlights. When I received training in disaster preparedness before the quake, I didn't fully understand why they said that radios and flashlights were so important. Because of the blackout I experienced first-hand their necessity because not only did we not have light, there was no way of getting information either. In the days following the quake, I stayed in Sendai for several days to translate information about the disaster, record disaster information in Chinese for broadcast on FM radio, and visited shelters to provide information to foreigners there. (Government of Japan Public Relations Office 2011)

To conclude, this section has shown that Translation was needed throughout all the phases of this long-running disaster and that the relationship between the various types of need was relative across time. (That is to say that the need to Translate warnings probably preceded the need to Translation instructions, which came before the need to translate reports and explanations, which was required in advance of administrative Translation, which was carried out prior to Translating messages of support.) Moreover, of the types of information requiring Translation, the greatest number and variety of needs seemed to come about when foreign residents were trying to develop situation awareness in the 2011 disaster. Furthermore, Translation was shown to have been taking place in a variety of



locations, but that much of the Translation effort was likely to have been concentrated around municipal offices and on-the-ground in the disaster zone with all the attendant risks and stresses that operating in such a location would entail. Again, some of these claims were shown to be supported by data from secondary sources.

### ***5.7 How was Translation carried out?***

In an effort to show how Translation formed part of foreign residents' communication and information gathering during the 2011 disaster, the chapter so far has defined Translation, and discussed the 'who', 'what', 'when', and 'where' of Translation. This section will treat the 'how' of Translation and will look at the communicative and information gathering methods that were used by Translators and the users of Translation products and services. In addition to detailing the methods themselves, the section will try to determine which of these methods worked well and which of these methods did not work well with regard to Translation. These determinations are provided in the hope that they can be informative when preparing Translation services and products for future disasters in Japan.

Table 5–9 cross-references the communicative methods mentioned at interview by participants with mentions of linguistic and cultural barriers and their mediation. Table 5–10 then displays a similar cross-reference, but this time for the information gathering methods that participants mentioned at interview.

N.B. Any cell with a count of 3 or greater (indicating that the relevant unit of meaning was referred to by 3 or more participants) has been shaded grey in the table below:

Communicative method with <b>NEGATIVE</b> association	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant
Automated message boards				
Automated warning				
Blog				1
Email (not on mobile)				
Facebook				
Interview				
Landline phone				
Letters, pamphlets			1	
Mixi				
Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)				1
PA announcement			1	
Skype				
Twitter			1	
Word-of-mouth	1		1	2
Communicative method with <b>NEUTRAL</b> association	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant
Automated message boards				
Automated warning				
Blog				
Email (not on mobile)				1
Facebook				
Fax				
Interview				
Landline phone				1
Letters, pamphlets				
Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)			1	1
PA announcement	1			
QQ & WeChat (Chinese only social media)				
Skype				
Twitter				
What's App				
Word-of-mouth	1	2		3
Communicative method with <b>POSITIVE</b> association	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant
Automated message boards				
Email (not on mobile)	2		2	
Facebook				
Interview				
Landline phone				
Letters pamphlets			2	
Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)				
Public payphone				
QQ & WeChat (Chinese only social media)				
Satellite phone				
Skype				
Twitter				
Word-of-mouth	4		3	

**Table 5-9. Methods of communicating used in Translation**

N.B. Any cell with a count of 3 or greater (indicating that the relevant unit of meaning was referred to by 3 or more participants) has been shaded grey in the table below:

Information gathering method with NEGATIVE association	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant
Email (not on mobile)				1
Facebook				
Fax				
Japanese news online		1		2
Japanese news print				
Japanese radio news				1
Japanese TV news			3	1
Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)				
Noticeboards				1
Online forums				
Overseas news online		2	2	3
Overseas radio news				
Overseas TV news		1		3
Public meeting				
QQ & WeChat (Chinese only social media)				
Skype				
Twitter				1
Websites (non-news)			1	1
Word-of-mouth			1	1
Information gathering method with NEUTRAL association	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant
Email (not on mobile)			1	
Facebook			2	
Helplines				2
Japanese news online			2	
Japanese news print				
Japanese radio news			1	1
Japanese TV news				
Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)		1		
Noticeboards				1
Overseas news online			3	
Overseas TV news				
PA announcement				
Public meeting				
Skype				
Twitter			2	
Website (non-news)		1	2	1
Word-of-mouth			1	1
Information gathering method with POSITIVE association	Cultural mediation by another	Cultural mediation by the participant	Linguistic mediation by another	Linguistic mediation by the participant
Car navigation TV				
Email (not on mobile)			1	1
Facebook			1	1
Japanese news online			1	
Japanese radio news			1	
Japanese TV news			3	1
Landline phone				
Mobile phone (call, email, SMS)				
Online forums			1	
Overseas news online				
Public meeting				
Skype				
Twitter			1	
Website (non-news)			4	
Word-of-mouth	3		3	1

Table 5-10. Methods of information gathering used in Translation

The two tables show that more Translation using a greater diversity of methods was involved in gathering information than in communicating. They also underscore the overall diversity of methods used to communicate and gather information via Translational processes in the 2011 disaster. In terms of making an assessment of these methods, word-of-mouth and non-news websites were broadly associated by several participants with positive experiences. Email, Facebook, and helplines also featured more consistently in the positive parts of participants' accounts of Translation in the disaster. Then, the associations made with Japanese TV news and overseas news viewed online as ways to propagate Translations were more mixed; while some participants associated them with positive or neutral experiences, others saw them in a negative light. Finally, the use of overseas TV news for Translational purposes was broadly viewed in a negative light by participants in this case study. Secondary sources compiled for this case study once again provide some support: a survey of 282 foreign residents in Sendai (including Chinese, Korean, Indonesian, American, Vietnamese, and Malaysian nationals) carried out by Sendai International Relations Association in 2011 found that the most useful methods to gain information among their respondents were the Internet, word-of-mouth from an acquaintance, television, newspapers, and radio, in that order. See Sendai International Relations Association (2011) for the survey.

#### 5.7.1 Word-of-mouth

One notable trend in the data relating to word-of-mouth is that it was used mostly by people in close proximity to and usually known by the user of the Translation. Loved ones, friends, colleagues, and institutional supports on site were providing valuable Translation by word-of-mouth:

I went to University dormitory called {redacted} a big *kaikan* or big dormitory [Note: in this case, *kaikan* would mean 'hall' but the function is probably more like a centre for international exchange.]. So I went there and asked in the office about information and they gave me a lot of information. This was the second day at night. Second day. I went with some of my friend, so we went to ask about, the information about, for example radiation, and this happened before the electricity came. (*Researcher: So, what type of information could they give you?*) The level of radiation, when the electricity will come to Sendai, and gas, when it will come to Sendai, when they will repair it. (*Researcher: And this was all just face-to-face?*) Face-to-face, yes. And they tried to give us as much information as they could at that time. (*Researcher: In Japanese?*) In English. (Participant 15)

I think the general impression was that trains wouldn't start that day, but I'm not sure where, where I got that information. (*Researcher: Yeah, that's what I was about, just about to ask. Did you check websites or did you ask colleagues or?*) Yeah, I think it was more of a word-of-mouth thing. Other

colleagues probably checked somehow, maybe Japanese-speaking colleagues. I guess the conclusion was the trains weren't running and they weren't going to start any time soon. Maybe also people speaking to their relatives over the phones, and so on. (Participant 26)

Word-of-mouth was a fast and flexible method for propagating Translations. It could provide tailor-made context for the user and could allow for the user's understanding to be checked. However, it demanded Translators being on-the-ground. This explains why people physically closest to the participants at the time became word-of-mouth Translators. Additionally, though, 'on-the-ground' often implied being in some of the worst-hit areas, and getting Translators from outside the disaster zone to these areas was highly problematic at first: roads were blocked or unusable for long periods after the onset of the disaster, and motor vehicles in the worst-hit areas were reserved for first responders in the first few days (Machimura 2011, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific 2012). Moreover, some evacuation centres had to refuse offers from volunteer Translators as the centres lacked the resources to support any additional mouths to feed (Kelly 2011). This further goes to explain why those closest to the participants with any sort of language ability were called on to Translate using word-of-mouth and why a common complaint in participant accounts was that there were just not enough Translators nearby to help them when they needed it.

The above is not to say that Translation using word-of-mouth as a communicative method was an entirely untrained phenomenon. As has already been mentioned in this thesis, one participant was a professional interpreter who volunteered his services to Translate for an overseas search-and-rescue team. He used word-of-mouth communication mostly to be a bridge for instructions between the local forces in charge of disaster response and the overseas team:

So, communication was needed in order to get directions, directives from the local authorities, the Japanese police mostly and army. "Okay, tell us what to do, where, what to do and we'll do it." So that was our role as interpreters. (Participant 13)

It should not be assumed, though, that a trained Translator from outside the disaster zone would necessarily have been of more benefit to a foreign resident than an untrained local using word-of-mouth. It is asserted in disaster studies that Translators need significant knowledge of the local area – especially concerning place names and geographic conditions – to be truly useful in an emergency (Valuch 2011). Data from this case study would seem to support this assertion. Though the following quote from a participant is not strictly speaking about Translation using word-of-mouth communicative methods, it does indicate how important it could be for a Translator to understand the local geography and context

of the disaster to be able to explain in useful terms the likelihood that a foreign resident had been exposed to a certain hazard:

The way it was broadcasted abroad was that Sendai was hit by the tsunami and Sendai, there was a nuclear meltdown by Sendai, and that's all the information they had. But it sounded like, that everything had been hit. Well, the earthquake happened everywhere, but the destruction was only, the mass destruction was only on a part of Sendai. It wasn't all of Sendai. But if one of your friends is living in Sendai, even if you don't know that they don't live by the sea, you hear Sendai is hit by an earthquake, you're going to worry. (Participant 14)

Secondary sources of data in this case study also support the strong need for word-of-mouth as a method to facilitate Translation in the 2011 disaster. For instance, the searchable archives of one professional translation forum, Honyaku Mailing List, show that calls for interpreters outweighed calls for other types of Translation in the early stages of the disaster.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, to summarise, word-of-mouth was a fast and efficient method to facilitate Translation, but it called for Translators on-the-ground, meaning that it was used by Translators in close proximity to the users, either nearby locals or specialist Translators who could make it into the disaster zone. The main problem was that there were just not enough Translators available to satisfy demand for the word-of-mouth communication and information gathering that required Translation.

### 5.7.2 *The Internet and translation technologies*

The Internet was also a place where many participants encountered Translation in a broadly positive way in the 2011 disaster. As one participant put it:

Look, if you're going to be looking for information in your native language, you're going to look for information, I suppose, from, in my case, from websites from English-speaking countries, you know? (Participant 4)

While much Translated information in the disaster was provided via the websites of news organisations both in Japan and overseas, the participants often found the information provided by these websites to be untrustworthy or otherwise problematic, as will be explained in more detail later. However, certain non-news websites, such as speciality community forums or video-sharing sites, were singled out by some participants as methods that facilitated valuable Translated communication and information gathering:

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<sup>33</sup> The archives can be consulted here: <http://tinyurl.com/njtljye> [Accessed 5 June 2015].

There's actually a website, forums and things like that. I have an interest in technology, so there's a couple of English-language technology websites that I've subscribed to, or, part of these little communities. And a lot of these guys are people that have been in Japan for a long time and have educational backgrounds – they're professionals but not necessarily, kind of, expats, but people that are all fluent in Japanese, but we have a shared interest in technology. So, on one of those sites, one of the guys was a professional translator and he actually does a lot of technical translations, and a lot of the people did. So it happened that this guy actually had done some of the technical translations for, I believe, G.E. when they were building the reactors. So his background was also in sciences, and there was another guy who was a *Tōdai* guy [Note: this means a graduate of Tokyo University, Japan's most prestigious academic institution]. And there was some very active discussion on the these boards about 'how do you see this?' or 'what do you think about this?' and 'what about this?' or 'I read this thing. What do you think about that?' And, you know, broadly speaking, we are like-minded which is why we are in the group already, but I think there was a steadying influence about that. (Participant 20)

They had some programs where they showed the disaster preparedness resources they had, because apparently this massive underground facility in one central area, it has blankets and clothes and food and water, so it was reassuring to know that's there. If that earthquake had not hit, it wouldn't have been promoted in the way they did. And that, that kind of promotion, was that all through Japanese or was it provided in a variety of languages? That's actually a video I saw on YouTube, but it's one of those things, you know, that came from a news program, it may have been Japanese originally, someone took it on themselves to dub it and then spread it around, so there was so many cases where people just couldn't find the information, so they were doing their own homework and sending it out. (Participant 6)

The Internet was a successful method for facilitating Translation for technical reasons, too. While phone networks were jammed or damaged and while electric power was limited in much of the disaster zone, participants could use battery-operated, mobile devices and wifi networks to access the Internet, even in some of the worst-hit areas. For instance, the following participant was located in a part of Sendai that was very badly damaged by the first earthquake, but he explains how he was able to access the Internet on his mobile phone:

You couldn't get signal where we were. Couldn't get it. It was all over, there was wireless, but that was there was no, let's say, phone lines or maybe the masts were down or the power from Docomo [Note: a Japanese mobile carrier], or whatever. So anytime I would turn on the phone, I used turn on the wifi login and that's how. 3G was working, so that's how. (Participant 2)

Of course, not all non-news websites proved to be such successful methods for propagating Translations. As explained in Section 4.5.5.2, the Japanese government created various multilingual information portals for foreign residents and other interested groups of foreign nationals; in addition to the Cabinet Office website already discussed, the example of

Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be cited.<sup>34</sup> This website (provided in Japanese and English only) was launched on March 28, 2011 (more than two weeks into the disaster) and promoted the multilingual services of the main mobile telephone operator, the national broadcaster, the Red Cross, and the Japanese National Tourist Office. It is worth mentioning here that only 1 participant out of 28 in this case study even thought to try to access Translated disaster information from a Japanese government website. Worse still, that one participant who did check the website did not find it useful:

*(Researcher: did you check any government websites yourself?)* Eh, MOFA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had some stuff in English but it was pretty poor. Not great anyway, from what I can remember. It was all, it was stuff that you could get anywhere else really. It had those emergency pages up with the information and the picture of Japan, like, the little colourful earthquake epicentre and the little rings of earthquakes, but it was all in Japanese, I was like, "I can't do this, I'm, I'm too." I was too stressed, I think to, to, to make sense of it so. (Participant 23)

It should be noted here, too, that mention of translation technology was almost entirely absent from the primary interview data in this case study. One participant briefly mentioned using online translation tools, pop-up dictionaries, and *kanji* readers to supplement his Japanese reading ability online:

So my Japanese wasn't terribly bad. I also used language tools online to understand things better. So, for example, one tool I really like is Jim Breen's Language Tools. There's several mirrors of that website, and, for example, with the text glossing feature, you can just copy and paste a paragraph of text and for the *kanji* [Note: Chinese characters] you don't understand it gives you an explanation of what it is. [So that's something very useful. I still use it today sometimes. I also liked using the Excite's Japanese-to-English translation. You can translate URLs there. And also the Google Translate tools. (Participant 26)

The participant emphasised, though, that these tools were only useful for small pieces of text – e.g., lists of geographic radiation levels – and did not produce good results for larger pieces of text like news reports; as a result, the participant explained how he tended to ignore news not in one of his languages. Most participants were unaware of the existence of translation technology and of its potential benefits. (For more detail on the potential of translation technology in disaster settings, see Cadwell [2015].) For instance, the following participant worked as a translator throughout the disaster without considering even basic technological assistance:

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<sup>34</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs portal for foreign nationals in the 2011 disaster can be viewed here: [http://www.mofa.go.jp/j\\_info/visit/incidents/familylinks.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/incidents/familylinks.html) [Accessed 5 June 2015].



*(Researcher: there's a translation memory software called Omega-t which you can download for free and that will store things for you and help you reuse them...) Oh, I wish we had known that! (Researcher: [Laughter] Similarly, I don't know did you use any machine translation like Google Translate or?) No. We, I don't even know why we didn't even think to use that type of stuff. We were just, yeah. Based off our own knowledge and using a denshi jisho [Note: 'electronic dictionary']. (Participant 24)*

Secondary data support a limited presence of translation technology in the 2011 disaster. Technology companies such as Google and Yahoo! used human-aided MT to make their Japanese crisis information pages available in English, Korean, and Chinese (see Google Crisis Response [2012] for detail).<sup>35</sup> In another effort, volunteers collaborated to create a map called sinsai.info that took social media messages – mostly via Twitter – translated them using the Google Translate API, and displayed them using the GPS information contained in the messages.<sup>36</sup> Translation technologies were also used to enable interpreting at a distance; one online interpretation service called Babelverse provided its platform for free to crisis workers and bilingual volunteers, and more than 100 volunteers provided about 400 hours of interpreting in the first two days of operation.<sup>37</sup>

A possible reason for the limited presence of translation technology in the 2011 disaster was the preponderance of word-of-mouth Translation needs detailed in Section 5.7.1. Word-of-mouth produces no text or recording, is often spontaneous, unplanned, and face-to-face, and, therefore, is not dealt with well by technology. Another reason was that any technology in a disaster setting is dependent on functioning infrastructure and ample power supplies, but these were problematic (see Section 4.5.3). In addition, as several participants pointed out in their accounts, implementing specialised technology requires investments of time, money, and specialised skills that may not be a priority in high-stress disaster situations where resources are already limited and where the needs of foreign residents may be relatively small compared to the needs of the overall affected population.

We can now draw some conclusions about the Internet and translation technology with respect to Translation in the 2011 disaster. Firstly, their usefulness was dependent on access to power and network connections, but creative ways could be found to access power and networks even in the worst-hit areas when the need was strong. Secondly, foreign residents were more likely to turn to Internet sites and technologies that they already used and trusted

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<sup>35</sup> The Google site can still be consulted here <http://www.google.co.jp/intl/ja/crisisresponse/japanquake2011.html> and the Yahoo! site here <http://notice.yahoo.co.jp/emg/en/> [Accessed 20 March 2015].

<sup>36</sup> See <https://www.sinsai.info/> [Accessed 20 March 2015].

<sup>37</sup> See <http://babelverse.com/blog/2011/12/the-babelverse-story-crisis-response/> [Accessed 20 March 2015].

before the disaster to find Translated information than to seek out new sources. Finally, as the Translation of government sites indicated, it was not enough to merely Translate information in the 2011 disaster; it was just as important to let potential users know where that Translated information could be found.

### 5.7.3 E-mail

It was shown in Section 5.7.1 that there were not enough Translators in the direct proximity of participants and other foreign residents to satisfy their needs for Translation at all times. However, e-mail was used to enable Translation at a distance. One participant spoke about how he Translated for an acquaintance by e-mail in the first few hours following the onset of the disaster. Even though he was confident in his Japanese abilities (he scored himself 28 out of 40 in his self-assessment at interview) and had lived in Japan for more than 15 years, Translation under such stressful conditions was a challenge for him:

It was probably about that time I got my first email or Tweet from a friend of mine in Japan, a guy that I knew in Japan that doesn't speak Japanese. And he said, "{Participant's name}, what's going on?" And I told him what I knew, and he was saying, "Okay, this is what we're seeing in the foreign press. What are the Japanese media saying?" And I do read Japanese, but I found myself more often than not, in that panicked time, I was looking at the English, for the context, then going to the Japanese to compare. (Participant 19)

Another participant indicated how e-mails in English from a close Japanese friend helped her to navigate one of the most confusing and stressful incidents that she experienced in the disaster – watching the hydrogen explosion at the Fukushima nuclear power plant live on television alone in her apartment:

Then, I get an email from {my Japanese friend} that's like, "Everything is okay. It exploded, but that was a good thing. Like, it released the pressure." And I was like, "Okay?" [laughter]...So for example, my {Japanese friend}, it's not like I asked her to help me translate, she is just the type of person that would, looks out for people. Like she, it's just that kind of Japanese character. (Participant 21)

Again, the usefulness of e-mail as a method for Translating was dependent on access to power and network connections. Nonetheless, Translation was needed by foreign residents throughout the long-running disaster (see Section 5.6), and needs still existed long after damaged and jammed power and telephone networks had been restored. It should also be noted here that the use of e-mail as a method for facilitating acts of Translating implied an existing relationship between the user and the Translator, showing once again that foreign

residents seemed to fall back on communities of Japanese and foreign friends, acquaintances, and colleagues when they needed Translation.

#### 5.7.4 Facebook

Facebook was mentioned so frequently by participants in this study compared with other online environments that it has been presented here as a separate category for discussing Translation. There was a sense in some participant accounts that they saw Facebook in a new light during the disaster. They prefaced their discussion of the tool by underlining that they had not been frequent users before the disaster, but that they saw how it could be used as a way to effect Translation:

Foreigners then started to come up with things like Facebook. I wasn't a huge Facebook user at the time really, but there's a {a city in Ibaraki's} International Association, they posted quite a lot of things and then, even to this day they still get, do pretty well on informing you what's happening in Ibaraki and the area. (Participant 10)

However, more participants – especially younger participants in the dataset – were frequent Facebook users and fell back on this familiar method of communicating and gathering information when looking for Translated information. One participant who worked in an embassy in Japan during the disaster underlined the importance of demographic factors when discussing Facebook:

There are two different demographics there. So there would have been a portion of our, I suppose, clientele that would have been very social-media orientated and another part which wouldn't really have had a presence... There were definitely people who would have just, a lot of JET students [Note: government-sponsored Japan Exchange and Teaching Program], for example, wouldn't have come near us with an email but would have sent us a message on Facebook. (Participant 3)

One participant spoke of how a network of Japanese Facebook friends kept him informed in English of when power and network supplies would be restored in his hometown:

Even before the electricity came, they uploaded some information that there are some places in Sendai in which there is electricity. So even you can go there and charge your mobile phone. So all this through Facebook. (*Researcher: And these were your friends or?*) Yes. My friends... They were Japanese, but they sent the information in English at that time. They were very kind, at that time [laughter]. (Participant 15)

For another participant, Facebook surpassed other Translated sources of information because of the access it provided to networks of friends who held useful information while also providing useful extra functionalities:

To be honest, I didn't watch too much English news. I didn't really check it. I don't know why when I think back now. It never occurred to me to bother looking at it. I got everything I needed from friends, I suppose. Just asking. Facebook was a big source of news. And shortly after that Facebook introduced some sort of, emergency, what was it, I forget the, you know the *anpi shisutemu*? [Note: automated safety confirmation system] (Participant 12)

Here again, secondary sources compiled for this case study can provide extra insight into how this method of communicating and information gathering was used with respect to Translation. The screenshot in Figure 5–5 shows a scene from the vlog of a native English-speaker who was living just outside the disaster zone but who was in the disaster zone when the earthquake struck.<sup>38</sup> The vlogger has superimposed a still from his Facebook page captured on March 14, 2011 (three days after onset) onto the image. This image shows us that Facebook was providing Translations of important disaster-related information (the scheduling of the rolling blackouts by Tokyo Electric Power Company [TEPCO] and the operation of major train services) much quicker than the official government websites mentioned in Section 5.7.2. Also, Facebook makes clear that the external link to the TEPCO website was still only providing information in Japanese on March 14; official sources, once again, seemed to be slower with multilingual support for foreign residents than Facebook.

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<sup>38</sup> The vlog has not been referenced here and the screenshot has been cropped in an effort to protect the vlogger's anonymity.

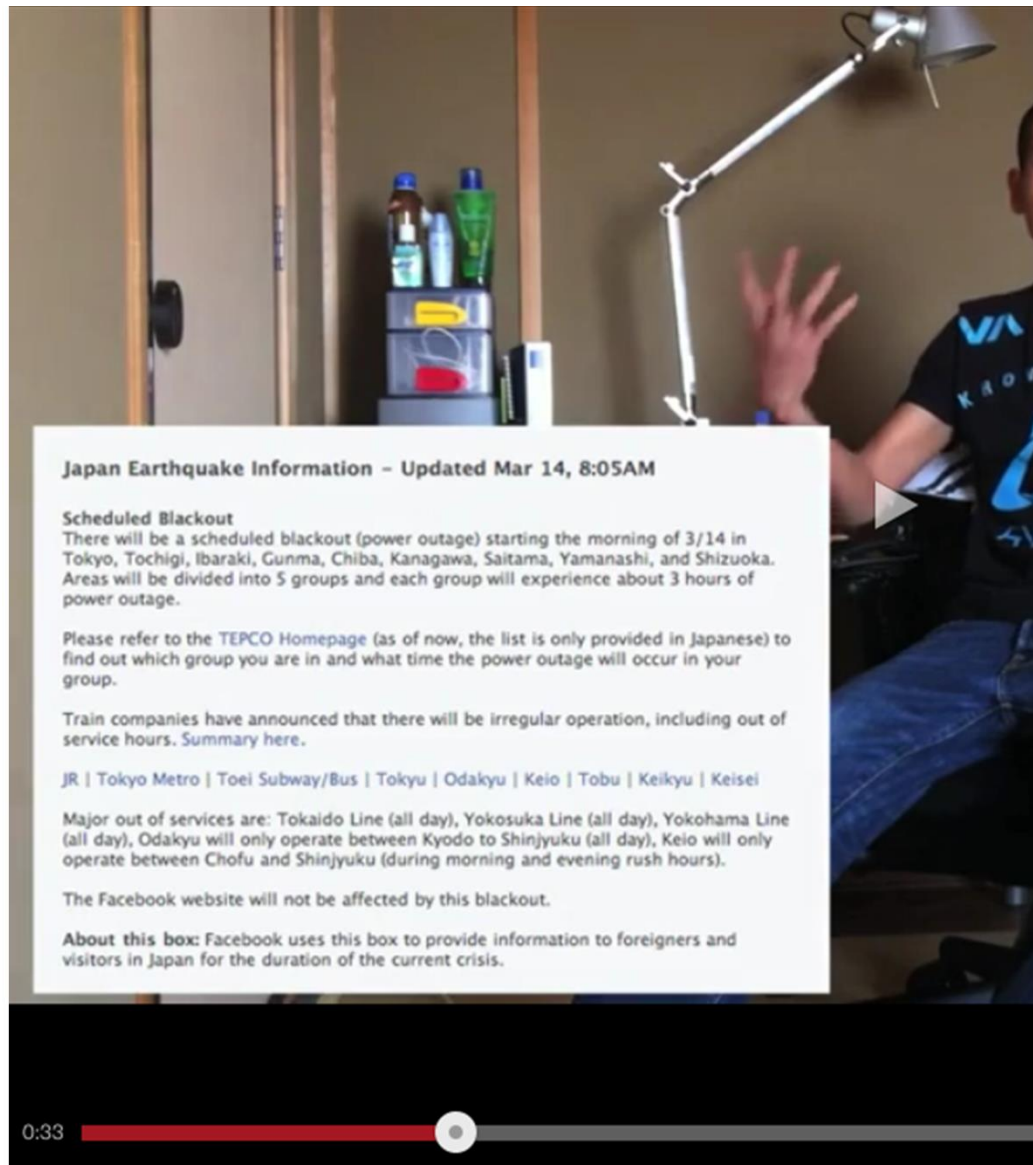


Figure 5-5. Screenshot of the vlog of a native English-speaker living just outside the disaster zone

In sum, not just power and connectivity, but demographics and familiarity with the method of communication had an influence on the use of Facebook for delivering and receiving Translations. Furthermore, it seems that the positive views of Translations communicated and gathered via Facebook resulted from the fact that Facebook allowed access to trusted friends and acquaintances and provided needed information quicker than other communicative methods.

### 5.7.5 Helplines

Local community centres and volunteer-staffed help lines are given a central role as information points for foreign nationals who experience a disaster in Japan. Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency (2007: 49) underlines the importance of a local community remembering its foreign members in a time of emergency and suggests the use

of local radio broadcasts, fliers and DVDs and, especially, multilingual support centres. Many multilingual centres already existed in the disaster zone prior to the 2011 disaster. These associations usually operated at the city or town level and were run by special charitable foundations and cultural exchange associations. Their missions were to increase tourism and promote cultural exchange and education. Almost every centre ran a multilingual helpline staffed by volunteers with foreign-language ability. These multilingual helplines were greatly promoted by the national authorities in the disaster. For example, the Cabinet Office website (see Section 4.5.5.2) directed foreign residents to twenty-one such multilingual support centres and helplines spread throughout all the prefectures in and near the disaster zone. Two participants in this case study worked in such a centre: one as part of his official employment; one as an English-speaking volunteer working the helpline during the first week of the disaster. Their accounts explain much of the Translation work that went on over these helplines:

So, yeah, a lot of the time was translating, we were also getting calls from overseas to see if we knew of people that were okay. A lot of those calls were in English, and then, yeah, just providing information for the consulates, the embassies, and, I think a lot of the foreigners that know of the {multilingual support centre}, they would come for information... We had to have had tourists as well, but I'm assuming with tourists, I think, their first, main important thing is to leave. And I think provide, if we, because we had an English hotline, so I'm hoping that people knew of that hotline and they would ring up, because it was just asking for information: "How do I get out of here?" (Participant 24)

What it was was the official information we had about the buses running and anything that was provided by the city or local information, we would translate it and make it available to the foreigners. We had a bulletin board there, and one of the jobs was to answer the phones which I was doing, so, had all these phone calls coming in. (Participant 14)

Secondary sources of data confirm the participants' assertions. In an interview in a government publication, one Korean national who volunteered as a Translator in the same centre as the participants above explains her experience thus:

Things are expressed differently in the Japanese and Korean languages, so I did my best to translate using words that anyone could understand. Also, when I spoke directly with Koreans on the phone or at the shelters, to people who wanted to check on the safety of others, or to disaster victims, I always tried to do so by empathizing with them. For example, I would listen earnestly to those with questions, and do my utmost to accurately communicate the information I had received at the Center or from the TV news. I would also try to make them not feel isolated by saying, "Whenever you feel anxious, give us a call." (Government of Japan Public Relations Office 2011)

Here we notice that the information to be Translated for delivery through these helplines

was coming not just from official sources, but from TV news as well. This hints at an important emerging feature of all these methods for delivering and receiving Translations – they were rarely used in isolation. Rather, it would seem that Translation took place in the disaster through a complex ecosystem of multiple and diverse methods of communication and information gathering. We can easily imagine now how some information may have originated on a Japanese TV news broadcast or local government bulletin board and then been quickly Translated, passed on, and re-Translated through a network of helplines, word-of-mouth interactions, email, social media, and Internet forums.

Helplines were also important channels to provide mental health and psychosocial counselling in multiple languages to foreign residents in the disaster. Tokyo English Life Line (TELL) is a Japanese NPO that was established over forty years ago and is well known in the foreign community in Japan as a resource for counselling and advice in multiple languages. Tokyo English Life Line (2011: 5) states that hits to the TELL website increased 10-fold after the onset of the 2011 disaster and underlines that ‘...the events of March 11 meant an even greater demand from English speakers across Japan experiencing intense emotional distress, caused partly by a lack of accurate and reliable information.’ One participant in the case study singled out the work of TELL for special mention as a charity that she and her associates are making sure to support:

TELL, Tokyo English Life Line which has, you know, after the earthquake just not only English speakers, but, you know, they need speakers of all sorts of languages now, and they really need help because I’m sure their resources are just overstretched. People are still, I suppose have post-traumatic stress disorder, or something like that, I don’t know. (Participant 25)

Translation offered through these helplines was not without problems. A major challenge was the high turnover of information and the multiplicity of channels through which source text information was coming in:

Getting information out was a key thing but, I don’t know whether it could have been faster. I mean, there was so much information going out, and so making sure that it was always up to date, because it was constant. And we would have to get information from City Hall which would be in Japanese, sent to the {redacted} centre, and then they would have to be like, “Okay, time to translate it all.” And then all of that had to go up on the website. And, so that everyone had that information available, and then to the radio station, and then it would all be printed out and put on boards so that people coming to the information centre had that information. But it would be forever changing, like where to get water from, like what to do if you don’t have gas. That type of stuff. (Participant 24)

In addition, the people staffing the helplines were foreign volunteers. This meant that they could easily empathise and identify with the concerns of other users of the Translations, but it also meant that they were stressed and vulnerable and working under difficult conditions:

As it progressed from the earthquake to the nuclear disaster, we got more and more questions involving transportation and how do I get out of Sendai. “What can I use?” And the fact is that a lot of the transportation systems were down and that was, sort of, stressful, realizing that you were here and, you were, [laughter] kind of, stuck here in some regard if something really bad were to happen. Really bad, I mean, on the scale of, you know, like, a nuclear, not a meltdown, but something even worse like an explosion that put us into immediate danger, you know. That was my main concern at the time. (Participant 14)

In conclusion, we can say that the Translation offered via helplines was an established and well-publicised method in the 2011 disaster. This method showed the complex networks through which Translation was disseminated among foreign residents and highlighted the constant turnover of information and the need to regularly update Translations. Staffed by foreign resident volunteers, the helplines were a source of empathy and counselling, but these volunteers were often as stressed and vulnerable as those they were setting out to help.

#### *5.7.6 Japanese TV news*

In the chapter so far, we have seen that Japanese TV news was at the heart of many Translational interactions in the disaster. Participants who were confident in their Japanese abilities and who were happy to have it as a direct source of information also recognised that many other foreign residents were not in the same position. One participant who gathered around a television with foreign and Japanese colleagues in the first moments after the earthquake hit recognised that the usefulness of Japanese TV news depended on the foreign resident’s Japanese ability and on the presence of Translators:

So I was understanding completely what's happening on the television, but there would have been government staff that didn't speak any Japanese, but there was also Japanese staff, so there was a little bit of translation happening at that time. (Participant 1)

Another participant underlined that English-language simultaneous interpreting offered by the Japanese national broadcaster (NHK) for a selection of its TV news broadcasts was another form of Translation going on around Japanese TV news:



Of course, on the NHK news they have this *fukikaeban* [Note: this means dubbed version] where they do have simultaneous interpretation going on. I'm pretty sure during the disaster time as well there would have been, if you changed that sub-channel, you could hear information in English, translated information. (Participant 4)

In line with the arguments earlier on in this section, even if a foreign resident could not speak any Japanese, they could often benefit from the information on Japanese TV news as a result of friends and colleagues Translating and passing on what they had heard or seen:

And they were telling me things which would be important for me to know because like, for example, the emergency kit, what to have in there and that I would need to have, well, if it was raining, better to really cover myself because Fukushima may be, with all these uncertainties, the things they heard in the news, they would tell me. (Participant 8)

Nevertheless, this broadly positive experience of Translation with respect to Japanese TV news was tinged with negativity for some participants who did not trust the content of what they were hearing:

Frankly speaking, I had no illusion to get the real information from the normal TV channels, for example. I know that's not the truth. I know that every TV channel have its own agenda for whatever. I don't know - it's another topic or not - I don't believe in getting information or the truth or what really happened from listening to the news. (Participant 7)

Another participant expressed similar reservations over the effectiveness of Translating the official line that was being disseminated widely through the Japanese TV media:

Even if the information in Japanese had been translated, I might not have considered it because I had lost trust in the official Japanese line and just did not believe what official sources were saying. (Participant 23)

In short, what we can say about the Translation surrounding Japanese TV news is that it was at the root of many other acts of Translation, that it was clearly recognised and received as Translation, and that, while it seems to have been broadly experienced positively by foreign residents, there is a sense that a lack of trust in the source of the information being broadcast on Japanese TV news meant that Translations, even if they had been made available, would have been disregarded by some foreign residents.

#### *5.7.7 Overseas news viewed online*

In contrast to the Translation surrounding Japanese TV news, the Translation surrounding

overseas news viewed online or on TV sets in Japan was less clearly received as a Translation and fell more clearly into the category of pseudo-originals explained in Section 5.3.3. Williams (2013) illustrates the lack of visibility of Translation in the global mass media's response to the 2011 disaster well:

By receiving global news reports directly in local languages, viewers and readers are persuaded that cultural and linguistic diversity either does not exist or that it is unproblematical. The resulting fabricated transparency is only rarely breached. A recent example of such a breach occurred on Today, one of BBC radio's early morning news and current affairs programmes, shortly after the earthquake and tsunami which struck Japan in March 2011. The BBC correspondent explained that he could not provide much information because there was a major communication problem, namely that no one spoke English. This moment of non-communication revealed that Japan was a foreign country where communication had to be mediated by translation. In the circulation of global news, translation is invisible. (Williams 2013: 102)

What came across strongly in the participant data was that participants seemed to view much of the news online – whether they considered that it came about as the result of Translational processes or not – as being so far removed from their own experience and from the news they were seeing (often via Translation) on Japanese TV that it was better to discount it entirely:

They would fly these reporters in and they would stand on top of buildings and try to say something for five minutes but they didn't know what was going on and so, you know, it wasn't much use to pay attention to CNN or BBC. (Participant 20)

And then you had tabloid papers, like The Sun and that kind of stuff and they were like, "Get out of Tokyo," and all this kind of stuff, and 'Tokyo is starving' was another headline, and I was, "have you ever even been to Japan, like?" And you had that kind of stuff, but I'd take all that with a pinch of salt, to be honest. (Participant 2)

Several participants pointed out how they were left in the disaster in a position where they could not trust either the Translations they were receiving from overseas news sources or from Japanese news sources:

I felt like the foreign media covered it a lot but there was just so much, there was too much information about that, and there was too much opinion. There was a lot of loud opinions going around, like about how bad that was. The Japanese penchant for understatement just left me with, like, where the hell do you draw the middle line. You don't know how far to one side or the other it should have been. I didn't trust it. (Participant 12)

Secondary sources compiled for this case study help us to show that – this time with respect to the Translation acts involved in the dissemination of overseas news online – Japanese

TV news once again played a central role. The following is an extract from the first full article on the disaster available from the archives of the online version of *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK. This article was posted on the day of onset of the disaster and essentially passes on descriptions of images from Japanese TV news reports, showing how central this TV news was in the whole production of Translation. As an aside, the importance of locally-specific knowledge can once again be seen here in that the city in Miyagi prefecture referred to in the extract is misnamed and should read Kesennuma city:

Television footage showed a 4-metre tsunami sweeping over embankments in Sendai city, bearing cars and houses – some on fire – across farmland, before reversing course and carrying them out to sea. Public broadcaster NHK showed images of a large ship ramming into a breakwater in Kennuma city (sic), Miyagi prefecture...Television footage showed a building on fire in the Odaiba district of Tokyo, although it was not immediately clear if the blaze was connected to the earthquake. Another fire was seen burning out of control at the at (sic) Cosmo oil refinery in Ichihara, in Chiba prefecture near Tokyo...TV news presenters repeatedly warned people along the Pacific coast to head for higher ground. (McCurry and Branigan 2011)

To sum up, what we can say about the Translation acts surrounding overseas news online is that they were largely not recognised as Translations, that they were mistrusted and discounted by foreign residents, and that they were dependent on Japanese sources which may not always have been accurately Translated.

#### *5.7.8 Overseas TV news*

The previous section spoke about the negative association surrounding Translation delivered and consumed via overseas newspapers online and via the online services of various television networks. This section shows that participants viewed the Translation via overseas subscription television channels in Japan equally negatively. Here multiple participants point out how viewing only overseas television news without an ability to speak Japanese and in the absence of Translators led some foreign nationals to respond to the disaster in extreme ways:

I mean there was some companies were evacuating the whole, the company and their, I think the French moved their embassy to Osaka temporarily, and none of that helped the foreign community. But, again, they were listening to the CNN news so the foreigners that really couldn't communicate on the Japanese, they were communicating from CNN and BBC, or some of the local embassies who would have got their information probably from, you know, BBC and, CNN then as well, so I felt that, I don't think they had the correct information about, especially about the earthquake. (Participant 18)

Another participant talks about how the foreign clients he was with in Japan on March 11

were much more panicked about Fukushima than he because they had watched overseas TV news while he had not:

They were probably more hooked than I was to news sources, and as they do not rely on Japanese language, they were relying, I assume, on everything which is non, which was non-Japanese: French, they were French, maybe English news sources. And probably they were more aware than I about the matter of Fukushima. So, they were in a total panic and they asked me, they told me that they wanted to go to Osaka and that they would pay any means of transportation because they were in that, they were thinking that everything was stopped. And, I was not in a panic, well, I was not shaking. Worried, but not shaking. (Participant 13)

One other participant, who acted as a Translator for some overseas reporters in the disaster zone, feared that such reporters were actively warping how they presented the information to make it more sensational:

I showed a French reporter around, a French and a Spanish reporter around down at the harbour, but I did see a CNN reporter down there and I actually did catch it on TV, it was laughable...So I mean, they were doing their best to, on the international news, to make it sound like we were falling apart here. (Participant 10)

Thus, we can say that, in the absence of sufficient Japanese ability and in the absence of Translation, watching overseas television news led some foreign nationals to respond in extreme ways to the disaster. Also, it should not be forgotten that these overseas news crews sometimes called on the help of foreign residents to act as Translators in compiling their reports in the disaster zone, but that this still did not prevent some reports becoming warped, sensational, and far-removed from the reality that many foreign residents were living.

Then, to summarise all the conclusions drawn in Section 5.7 with respect to how Translation was carried out in the 2011 disaster, we can say that this section has shown that Translation took place as part of a complex ecosystem of information gathering and communicating in which communicative methods were rarely used in isolation. It found that the methods used were multiple and diverse, but that word-of-mouth, the Internet and translation technology, E-mail, Facebook, helplines, Japanese television news, and overseas news viewed online and on television sets in Japan were worthy of deeper qualitative exploration.

This exploration revealed important insights about each method. Word-of-mouth was fast, and used by Translators in close proximity to the users, but the supply of Translators did not meet the demand for Translation. The Internet and e-mail were useful when access to

power and networks was possible. Tried and trusted websites were favoured over new sites to facilitate Translation, and it was found that advertising Translations to potential users was as important as creating the Translations themselves. Technological uptake varied; for instance, talk of translation technology was largely absent from the disaster discourse, but the use of e-mail was widespread to facilitate Translation and reinforced how foreign residents fell back on existing bonds of community with respect to Translation in the 2011 disaster. The use of Facebook to propagate Translations highlighted the importance of demographic factors when thinking about Translation in this disaster and once again proved that any method that allowed speedy access to Translations by trusted friends and acquaintances was highly valorised. Helplines were an established and recognised method for facilitating Translations in 2011. They underlined the complex networks of communicating and information gathering that Translation was part of in the disaster and the potential vulnerability of the foreign volunteers who staffed them. Finally, the Translation surrounding television news – both Japanese and overseas, seen online and on regular sets – proved to be the most problematic of all the categories. While Japanese TV news was at the root of many acts of Translation in the disaster, news in general – whether originating from Japan or overseas and whether received or not as a Translation – was widely mistrusted by foreign residents and had some negative effects on their experiences of the 2011 disaster.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Having reached the end of this chapter, a clear picture should now have emerged of precisely how Translation fitted in to the communicative scene in the 2011 disaster for foreign residents. By interpreting participant interview data and by linking it to secondary sources compiled for this case study, the chapter established that the phenomenon of Translation was worth the enquiry in this research, and an operationalised definition for the concept of Translation was made possible. The chapter showed how participants were engaged in diverse, complex relationships, and that, from a Translation point of view, interactions between foreign and Japanese friends, acquaintances, and colleagues were extremely important and mostly beneficial. Crucially, too, it showed that participants fell back on bonds of community and trust when seeking Translation in the disaster. At the same time, the chapter showed that a lack of sufficient resources and a strongly culturally-bound space of interaction also created problems for the relationships that involved Translation. Furthermore, it showed that news, warnings over public address systems, nuclear-related information, and typical, Japanese disaster response procedures were the types of information that participants in this case study needed to have Translated. It was

found that the need to Translate these topics was temporally relative and that the Translation of information used to develop situation awareness was required most of all. Moreover, while Translation likely took place in a variety of locations, it was found that municipal offices and areas on-the-ground in the disaster zone were major loci of Translational action, with all the attendant risks and stresses that such an environment entailed. Finally, the chapter found that Translation took place as part of a complex ecosystem of information gathering and communicating in which communicative methods were rarely used in isolation and in which translation technology played only a very limited role. It found that the methods used were multiple and diverse, but that word-of-mouth, the Internet, E-mail, Facebook, helplines, Japanese television news, and overseas news viewed online and on television sets in Japan were particularly significant. Further qualitative exploration of these methods revealed the importance of diverse networks, community, and trust to how participants experienced Translation in the 2011 disaster.

Indeed, it is clear now that throughout the whole chapter and throughout large sections of the previous contextual chapter, the theme of trust has appeared repeatedly when looking at Translation in the disaster from a variety of perspectives. It is this theme that will now be used in the following chapter to answer the final major question in this research: why might Translation be considered important or significant in any way to this disaster or to other disaster contexts?

一寸先は闇 (*issun saki wa yami*)  
*The future is a closed book.*

*Japanese proverb*

*Beginning to answer the following research question:*

ah already **also** anyway asked back **believe** big building  
call channel check COME coming **community** company confident contact day **email**  
embassy **english** every everybody **family** find first friend  
friends get go **going** good got government guess guy  
**information** japan  
**japanese** job knew language leave  
long look lot made mainly make **maybe** mean new news nhk  
note now nuclear **okay** **one** panic parents participant  
**people** peoples probably radiation **reliable** **rely** right  
saying **see** send situation **something** sort started still tell thing **things**  
think three **time** times tokyo **trust** trusted two  
university want **wanted** **water** website well went **whatever** work working  
**yes**

<sup>39</sup> This word cloud has been created (using NVivo 10 software) from text contained under the following codes: 'Believe' type trust; 'Confidence in' type trust; Instances of belief; Instances of confidence; Instances of faith; Instances of reliance; Instances of trust; Instances of trust model; Trustworthy information absent; Trustworthy information present. The word cloud displays the 100 most frequent words with a minimum length of 1 character. Only the default stop words for US English pre-set in NVivo 10 software (generally articles, pronouns, conjunctions, and prepositions) have been applied to this list.



## **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this research was to examine the phenomenon of Translation through the experiences of foreign residents of the 2011 communicative scene. In pursuing this aim, trust, trust-like concepts, and other concepts related to trust appeared repeatedly in the data. This occurred to such an extent that trust was even selected as a component of the definition of Translation operationalised for this research (see Section 5.3.5). Furthermore, trust was also shown to be an important category in the methodology of this case study (see especially Section 3.7). All of this suggested that it would be worthwhile to explore the relationship between Translation and trust in a more systematic way. If it could be shown that trust was important in the 2011 disaster and that Translation was an element of that trust, it would work to answer the first part of the final research question in this project; why are issues of Translation important to the 2011 disaster? Then, if it were possible to abstract and generalise from these data in some way, an answer to the second part of this research question could be proposed; why are issues of Translation important to other disaster contexts? Consequently, this chapter combines participant-led and interpretive data from the 28 participant interviews in this study with abstract analysis to argue that: trust was an important aspect of the 2011 disaster; Translation was a significant to some of that trust; Translation can be shown to be a theoretical component of certain types of trust and is, therefore, theoretically relevant to other contexts.

This argument begins in Section 6.2 with data from the case study illustrating the importance of trust to the experiences of foreign residents of the 2011 disaster. Section 6.3 introduces the socio-cognitive theory of trust chosen over other theories to carry out the chapter's abstract analysis. In Section 6.4, in-depth analysis of observations from the case study data is used to show that this theory of trust provides tools to holistically and systematically describe and explain how trust was experienced by some in the 2011 disaster. With the theory shown to be robust and useful, Section 6.5 posits an important theoretical role for Translation in this theory of trust, supports this theoretical position with observations from the case study data, and argues that viewing Translation through a lens of trust could, indeed, be theoretically useful in other contexts.

## **6.2 The importance of trust in the data from this case study**

Section 2.4.1.2 showed that there is wide consensus in the literature on trust on two ideas: the idea that trust is a vital component of the social world; the idea that trust requires the presence of risk, uncertainty, or vulnerability. It is not hard to imagine that the 2011 disaster was a time of great risk and uncertainty and that trust, therefore, was vital to the people

who experienced the disaster. This section will explicitly illustrate how trust was experienced by the participants in this case study and will argue for its importance to those experiences.

General-purpose definitions of trust conceptualise it in terms of reliance, confidence, belief, and faith. For example, one dictionary defines trust as ‘*reliance* on and *confidence* in the truth, worth, reliability, etc., of a person or thing; *faith*’ (Collins English Dictionary 1994: 1651, emphasis added), while another explains it as a ‘firm *belief* in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something’ (Oxford University Press 2015, emphasis added). Thus, it is reasonable to assert that the terms ‘reliance’, ‘confidence’, ‘belief’, and ‘faith’ can all also be used to talk about the concept of trust. Table 6–1 indicates the terms used by participants to talk about trust, and provides a snapshot of how the concept was discussed during the interviews.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> A tick mark in Table 6–1 indicates that the participant used the respective root term or one of its variants at least once in their interview to talk about trust in the 2011 disaster. For instance, for the root term ‘trust’, instances involving ‘trusted’, ‘trusting’, ‘trusts’, ‘trustworthy’, etc. would all have been coded. However, for the term ‘belief’, any use where the participant was addressing the researcher or expressing some uncertainty about an assertion they were making was not coded. For example, passages like, “I believe that it was ten minutes before the first tsunami hit” or “Believe me, it was difficult” were not coded.

Participant:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Trust:												✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Reliance:			✓	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓	✓				
Confidence:									✓			✓																
Belief:	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		
Faith:																	✓								✓			

**Table 6-1. Use of trust or trust-related terms by participants at interview**

This simple quantitative indication is not intended to be an evaluation of whether or how participants trusted during the disaster. It is merely included to show that trust and trust-like terms were a feature of the talk of all participants except Participants 15 and 26. More detailed qualitative examination of how the participants used these terms would show more convincingly that concepts like trust, failed trust, or insufficient trust were significant

categories in how the participants experienced the 2011 disaster. The next section undertakes this examination.

### 6.2.1 Data relating to trust using the term ‘trust’

Of the 28 participants in this research, 10 chose to talk about their experience of the disaster using the term ‘trust’ or some of its variants. Some participants used the term to talk about when trust failed, was lacking, or was absent, but more used it in a positive sense, with some even indicating that trust was a factor that helped them to make decisions or guided some of their information-gathering activities in the disaster:

Because I never really thought of leaving at all, and I know that there was that information coming from overseas and from Japan. *I trusted in the New Zealand Embassy.* I knew that if they wanted me out of Japan, they would tell me to leave. (Participant 24, emphasis added)

[This participant had been talking about staying in a hotel in Tokyo the night of onset of the disaster] It was a terrible night because every hour there were huge aftershocks, no gas, no water. It was just a place to sleep, and that was fine with me. The first train home in the morning – that was at 6am – as soon as I got home, I turn on the Internet, and started reading the New York Times, *because I trust the New York Times for information.* (Participant 27, emphasis added)

All this sort of misinformation started pouring out, so it was a very strange time. I remember looking at these, *trying to piece it together for yourself and with people that you trusted*, you relied on the judgment of people that kind of knew what they were talking about a little bit. (Participant 20, emphasis added)

Yet when talking about ‘trust’, it was not unusual for participants to highlight that different people held very different levels of trust or to underscore that trust still occurs in an environment of uncertainty and risk. For instance, many foreign residents had concerns about the safety of drinking tap water in the aftermath of the disaster, but some people, like Participant 18, accepted the risk and trusted the authorities:

Sometimes I was going for a run around the palace there, and I’d stop and have water, so I, *maybe I’m just too trusting in nature*, but some people weren’t. (Participant 18, emphasis added)

Moreover, in their talk of ‘trust’, some participants indicated that creating trustworthy information for a foreign resident in the disaster was a more complex task than merely providing information for them in a language that they could understand:

*I wouldn’t have necessarily implicitly trusted Japanese sources even through English*, but the lack of them was ominous and perhaps did impact my feelings

of isolation and danger after my other foreign friends had left Japan.  
(Participant 23, emphasis added)

### 6.2.2 Data relating to trust using the term ‘reliance’

The term ‘trust’ is not the only way to talk about the concept in general-purpose English. 12 out of the 28 participants in this research chose to talk about their experience of the disaster using the term ‘reliance’ or some of its variants. Several participants used these terms to highlight that their ability to trust depended on the context:

Obviously, the media is getting it from different sources as well *unless they have a crew on-the-ground, you can’t really rely on it*. So we took the decision that our information for the most part would have come from official sources.  
(Participant 3, emphasis added)

They also used the term ‘reliance’ to indicate that, not just the presence of trust, but also its absence or its insufficiency sometimes spurred on their decision-making:

[This participant was talking about the decision he and his wife made to temporarily leave Tokyo after the disaster struck] My decision was based on the uncertainty, really. There wasn’t enough solid information coming from Fukushima. I mean the reason that we decided to go there was that, because of concerns of radiation, *and there just wasn’t any reliable information coming through*. (Participant 4, emphasis added)

Participants also used ‘reliance’ to underscore that, while depending on others might have been a feature of the disaster for some foreign residents, depending too much on anyone or anything might not be a good idea:

If you’ve come to live in – this doesn’t apply just for Japan – if you go to live in any country, and because it is Japan, you should know that there is a possibility of an earthquake happening or a typhoon or a tsunami, and you should basically know if that happens where to go and what to do, and you should, it’s up to you, and *you shouldn’t rely on the government to do it*.  
(Participant 18, emphasis added)

### 6.2.3 Data relating to trust using the term ‘confidence’

The term ‘confidence’ and some of its variants were also used by participants to talk about the concept of trust in 3 out of the 28 interviews. Again, the ideas of sufficient thresholds and of using these thresholds to guide decision-making in response to the disaster arose. In addition, though, ‘confidence’ was also used to indicate that trust in the built and natural environments really became a big question for certain foreign residents during the disaster:

The only issue for me was the nuclear fallout, I think, and *I felt confident enough in the information we were getting* that it wasn't a problem where we were in Sendai. (Participant 28, emphasis added)

But as it turns out, Japanese buildings are actually very, very, very good at withstanding earthquakes. Shockingly good at it. So *I have a lot of confidence in that now. Except for the building where I work*, where you worked, because it does feel a little bit old. (Participant 12, emphasis added)

#### 6.2.4 Data relating to trust using the term 'belief'

Of the 28 participants in this research, 15 chose to talk about their experience of the disaster using the term 'belief' or some of its variants. Many participants used these terms to emphasise how they were constantly required to evaluate the sources of the information that they were gathering about the disaster:

And there's two kinds of foreign sources that I read [Note: the past tense of the verb]. One which is experienced experts and one is, let's say, the outrageous, over-the-top, "there's no food in Tokyo", like, do you know that way [laughter]. And *one of the reasonably believable experts abroad* that I did hear said, "There's radiation going as far as California." They had measured it, like. (Participant 5, emphasis added)

Some other participants underlined that, in the end, these evaluations came down to their own individual reasoning or instinct:

Like, there are certain country who just send airplane to, for people to go out from Tokyo, from Japan for free even, where other country were, "Oh, don't worry. It's okay. There is no, the situation is under control," and so on. *Who to believe? Again, you just have to rely on my inner, I don't know, radar* [laughter]. (Participant 7, emphasis added)

It can also be seen by examining the use of the term 'belief' that views on the concept of trust among foreign residents were far from uniform. These views may have depended on the participants' particular situations, their personalities, or other contextual factors. For instance, compare the views of Participant 8 with Participant 2 below with respect to the type of information that was being provided by the Japanese government about the nuclear disaster:

Well, it was difficult, you know, in a way that, "Ah, maybe they are not telling everything." At the same time, *I still believe, it's a democratic and open transparent country*. (Participant 8, emphasis added)

And I was like, "Aw, *I don't believe one word, now, that we're being told by the Japanese government*." (Participant 2, emphasis added)

### 6.2.5 Data relating to trust using the term ‘faith’

Finally, ‘faith’ and some of its variants were also used by participants to talk about the concept of trust in 3 out of the 28 interviews. ‘Faith’ was used by some participants to discuss the idea that other people occasionally take charge in a disaster. It would appear that this attitude of leaving things to someone or something else was not universal; indeed, elements of the concept of trust may be culturally- or at least contextually-bound:

I’m not concerned with radiation levels. I mean, you cannot escape radiation in the world. And it’s Japan. I’m sure if it were China or somewhere like that, I’d be out of there, and maybe this is silly in a way, but I think in Japan – I mean a lot of things have been covered up, and whatever, but – people do their job, except Tepco people, but people, you know, *I have faith in the people trying, doing their best to deal with that situation* and I’m not into sharing horror stories about what’s going on. (Participant 25, emphasis added)

From my point of view, the Japanese have much faith in their government. [Laughter] On the contrary, so, *Chinese, we don’t have much faith in the government. So we have to save ourselves*. That’s also very different thing. From the very, very beginning, our thinking is different. (Participant 17, emphasis added)

In sum, this section has shown that trust was important to the experiences of the foreign residents in this case study and that, therefore, trust merited further abstract analysis. However, it has also shown the terminological and conceptual complexity involved in choosing to use trust as an analytical category. For this reason, before being able to systematically analyse whether Translation was relevant to trust in the data (and, therefore, begin to answer the final research question in this thesis), a robust and well-delimited theory of trust was needed. Such a theory was found in the work of Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010), and this theory will be described in the following section.

### 6.3 A socio-cognitive theory and model of trust

Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) side with the general consensus in the literature about the antecedents of trust in social life already reviewed in Section 2.4.1: the future is difficult to predict, making predictions about the future can carry risks, and, in such an environment of risk and uncertainty, social beings recognise their inability to fulfil all their needs alone and somehow must come to trust. The authors argue that social beings feel the need to accept some of this risk, to reduce this uncertainty, to count on their predictions about the future, to act with more confidence, and – crucially – to cooperate with each other and exploit each other’s abilities and talents in order to achieve their individual desires

(Castelfranchi and Falcone 2010: 265-266). This is what makes trust vital in our social lives.

From these foundational arguments, the authors adopt a socio-cognitive approach to theoretically explain the phenomenon of trust by identifying and formalising the conceptual components and relationships that are necessary and sufficient to this explanation. Their theory categorises trust as a mental state in socially situated agents and is based on social context (ibid.: 147). The objective in their work is to provide ‘an explicit anatomy of trust, an integrated and justified model of its ingredients, of their integration, and of how it works’ (ibid.: 359); essentially, they aim for a universal theory of the concept that could be applied in multiple, diverse contexts.

### *6.3.1 Why Castelfranchi and Falcone’s theory was chosen*

Section 2.4.1 showed that there are a number of influential theories of trust. Many of these theories limit their explanatory power to their domain; Nooteboom (2002), Sztompka (1999), and Hardin (2002, 2006) do not claim that their theories can be usefully applied beyond the realms of organisational studies, sociology, or politics respectively. Other theories – though still domain-specific – are frequently applied more widely. In particular, the work of Deutsch (1958, 1973), Luhmann (1979), and Gambetta (1988) can be seen in a broad range of fields. Even so, the focus of each of these works is still specific: Deutsch mainly discusses calculations of probability; Luhmann emphasises the relation between trust and power; Gambetta mostly investigates the causality of cooperation. Thus, the first reason for choosing Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) was its claim to broad applicability or even to universality. The second reason, though, was that the socio-cognitive disciplinary heritage of this theory is not uncommon in translation studies. While trust is used as a category in some theories of translation (see Section 2.4.2), there was no theory of trust available in translation studies at the time of writing, but applying a theory using a sociological or cognitive approach would not be unusual.<sup>41</sup> The third reason to select Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) was its claim to being holistic and context-based. This suited the ethnographic frame in which this case study was situated better than many of the other influential theories that were already discounted for their domain-specificity; as shown in Section 2.4.1, many of these theories adopt a reductionist and linear approach. Despite the fact that Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) was more appropriate for this research than other theories of trust as a result of its broad applicability, disciplinary

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<sup>41</sup> See, Pym, Shlesinger, and Jettmarová (2006) or Wolf and Fukari (2007) for an overview of sociological approaches and O’Brien (2010) for an overview of cognitive approaches in translation studies.



heritage, and holistic approach, their theory came with several limitations.

### *6.3.2 Limitations of Castelfranchi and Falcone's theory and of its application in this thesis*

The Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory of trust is limited in its scope largely because it adopts a limited viewpoint on the phenomenon of trust and because it describes only a limited range of trust phenomena observed in the world. It almost exclusively explains trust from the point of view of the trustor, and attempts mostly to describe and explain how the trustor comes to trust or not.<sup>42</sup> For instance, in a scenario where a client employs a new translator for the first time, their theory would explain the trust from the perspective of the client (trustor) and not the translator (trustee). The authors admit that it could be equally useful to model trust from the opposing point of view and to theoretically describe and explain being trusted, but they recognise that this is not the focus of their theory (ibid.: 282).<sup>43</sup> In addition, their theory only deals with a limited range of trust phenomena in the world; it models an explicit, reason-based form of social trust. However, some forms of trust can simply be procedural and grounded in perceived regularities in our experience of the world:

Trust in our own natural information sources (our memory, our eyes, our reasoning) and trust in some social information sources that do not need additional justification and meta beliefs are examples of this default-trust...(ibid.: 63)

Other forms of trust can be implicit; '[t]hey can be just presupposed as logical conditions or logical entailment of some (explicit) belief' (ibid.: 63). For instance, if you are told that a potential trustee is a professional translator, you may implicitly trust that she is linguistically competent, knowledgeable in certain domains, technically able, and so on. Still other forms of trust can be irrational or intuitive, and come based in faith (ibid.: 107) or can derive in part from the personality of the trustor or the culture in which they experience trust (ibid.: 174). Finally, of course, the authors recognise that trust need not be social; trust can equally be the trust we hold in artefacts or unanimated processes (ibid.: 84). Take, for example, the trust we place in the ground or gravity. None of these trust phenomena – procedural trust, implicit trust, irrational trust, personality- and culture-based

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<sup>42</sup> Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) use the terms 'trustor' and 'trustee' to describe one social agent (the 'trustor') potentially trusting another social agent (the 'trustee').

<sup>43</sup> The authors propose a model for trust as capital that adopts the point of view of the trustee briefly in Chapter 10, but they recognise that this is not representative of their overall socio-cognitive model (Ibid.: 281).

trust, or trust in inanimate objects – is dealt with in the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory.

There are also limitations to how the theory has been applied in this thesis. The reason for employing this theory was not to provide a complete and adequate account of trust in the 2011 disaster. Rather the purpose was to apply the theory to systematically examine whether Translation was significant to the trust observed among the case study's participants.<sup>44</sup> As a result, there are many topics covered by Castelfranchi and Falcone in their 'explicit anatomy of trust' (2010: 359) that are not dealt with in this thesis. This thesis does not consider: their quantitative evaluations of degrees of trust and trust thresholds (ibid.: Ch. 3); their examinations of negative forms of trust, like mistrust, diffidence, suspicion (ibid.: Ch.4); their attempt to cohere affect-based trust with their model (ibid.: Ch. 5); their explorations of how trust evolves in time or transfers from one agent to another or between similar agents (ibid. Ch. 6 & 9); or their study of how their theory relates to control and monitoring, to social capital, or to technology (ibid. Ch. 7, 10 & 12). These arguments have been omitted from this thesis because they were surplus to the central model and because they involved a level of abstraction that did little to help answer the research questions of this thesis. The conceptual tools that have been taken from the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory for application in this thesis are explained in the following section.

### *6.3.3 Theoretical components and relationships in the model*

This model describes how a trustor moves from an attitude of trusting a potential trustee towards a decision to trust that trustee, and then finally towards the act of trusting that trustee. For the authors, trust as an attitude (an evaluation, a belief, a disposition) is just one part of the picture. The other fundamental interrelated notions are trust as a decision and trust as an act: that is to say, taking the risk to count on somebody (Castelfranchi and Falcone 2010: 250). Formulated within a socio-cognitive frame, as explained above, the model is based on goals, predictions, context, and actions, and is designed to be holistic; i.e., the individual components of the model are all interconnected and can only be fully explained with reference to the whole.

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<sup>44</sup> Such a subjective application of theory is consistent with the constructivist philosophical goal of viable explanation adopted for this research and is a valid strategy in a case study once these subjectivities are made explicit, as is being done in this section. (See Sections 3.3 and 3.5 for further argumentation in this regard.)

#### 6.3.3.1 Goals

The Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory of trust derives its explanatory power initially from a category taken from cognitive psychology – the concept of the ‘goal’. They argue that when a trustor evaluates a potential trustee, the trustor does so in terms of motives, needs, desires, projects, preferences, objectives, and so on. In cognitive psychology, a ‘goal’ is defined as a mental representation against which we evaluate the world, and, thus, subsumes all these evaluative terms (ibid.: 46). The key point about the goal is that, in a situation of trust, the trustor perceives that the potential trustee will adopt the trustor’s goal and that it will prevail over other goals that the potential trustee may have (ibid.: 82-87). In other words, if I trust you, I predict and expect that you will be good for achieving my goal (ibid.: 43). But how can the trustor evaluate the potential trustee to make this prediction or to hold this expectation?

#### 6.3.3.2 Predictions about internal trust

The authors argue that there are three necessary dimensions internal to the potential trustee (dimensions which they categorise as ‘internal trust’) along which the trustor evaluates this potential trustee. Firstly, the potential trustee should be perceived as being sufficiently non-threatening. The trustor evaluates the benevolence, moral reasons, or external sanctions preventing the trustee from causing her/him harm (ibid.: 60-61). With a sufficient evaluation, the trustor may begin to think that the potential trustee could be disposed to adopt and realise the trustor’s goal (ibid.: 61), but will s/he be able to do so? Secondly, then, the potential trustee should be perceived as being sufficiently competent to realise the trustor’s goal. The trustor evaluates the potential trustee’s skills, knowledge, abilities, know-how, techniques, expertise, and so on (ibid.: 48). In this way, the trustor has so far evaluated that the potential trustee is sufficiently free of harmful intent and sufficiently competent to realise the trustor’s goal, but will s/he really have the intention to do so and persist with this intention (ibid.: 48)? Thirdly, therefore, the potential trustee should be perceived as being sufficiently willing to realise the trustor’s goal. The trustor evaluates how the potential trustee is likely to behave, and evaluates how predictable s/he is, as well as the extent to which s/he can be counted on (ibid.: 48). On the basis of these three beliefs that the potential trustee is sufficiently harmless, competent, and willing, the trustor predicts, believes, and wants that the potential trustee will realise the trustor’s goal (ibid.: 43-53). For example, if I hire a professional interpreter to accompany me to a business meeting, I want her/him to help me communicate with my business contacts and to win their business (my goal), and I believe that s/he has no intention to reveal my trade secrets (is harmless), knows how to interpret at a sufficient level (is competent), and will show up

on the appointed day (is willing). In other words, we can say, then, that internal trust is in place. This internal trust is the ‘cognitive kernel’ of trust as a concept (ibid.: 48). However, it is a necessary but not sufficient kernel to fully explain trust because social trust does not exist in a vacuum.

#### 6.3.3.3 Predictions about external trust

The authors argue that the trustor trusts a potential trustee only within a specific context: changing the context may present new opportunities and obstacles that may go on to change the trustor’s evaluations and predictions of the trustee and, by corollary, their final decision to trust or not (ibid.: 84). The authors categorise these opportunities and obstacles as the external conditions favouring, allowing, inhibiting, or impeding the realisation of the trustor’s goal (ibid.: 149), and so the trustor will also evaluate this ‘external trust’ before fully evaluating the potential trustee and deciding whether to trust her/him and to act on this trust. The types of contextual opportunity and obstacle that the trustor may evaluate include the factors directly affecting the possibility to really achieve the goal in a good way, as well as the information and sources available to the trustor, her/his mood and basic social disposition, and her/his risk perception and acceptance, among others (ibid.: 83). In short, trust is context-dependent, and there can be different trusts about a potential trustee in different social contexts (ibid.: 84). For example, a professional interpreter may be trusted by her clients but not by her boss for the same job. Furthermore, the authors assert that a contextual component is vital to any theory or model of trust because trust can migrate from one task to another, from one trustor to another, from one trustee to another, and from one social context to another (ibid.: 84). Similarly, a special event could be considered by the trustor as crucial for trusting (ibid.: 84). For instance, I might not normally trust a trainee translator to translate my company’s report, but I might do so if the document type was one they had translated before and was intended for internal use only.

#### 6.3.3.4 Predictions about dependence and the delegation of an action

Even at this point, we still do not have the full picture. Trust is not just an evaluation or attitude about how good you are for my goal or about how opportune the circumstances for trusting you are. Any act of trusting must imply some risk (ibid.: 74), as has also been supported in Section 2.4.1. In Castelfranchi and Falcone’s model, the trustor makes her/himself vulnerable and open to some risk only when s/he delegates an action; this is an action that s/he cannot or will not fulfil independently in order to realise her/his broader goal, and, thus, s/he becomes in some way dependent on the trustee (ibid.: 53). The reasons why I may predict a situation of dependence on a potential trustee could be that I lack the

skills or resources to achieve the goal by myself, or it could simply be that having someone else help achieve my goal will cost me less effort or produce a higher quality result (ibid.: 79). With a sufficiently trusting attitude and context in place, I now count on the trustee, and make myself dependent on her/him (ibid.: 61), and I, thus, risk that s/he will fail to fulfil the action and bring me to my goal, that s/he will waste my time or other resources, or that in delegating the action to her/him, s/he will bring some unexpected harm on me (ibid.: 76). In sum, the authors argue that it is when a prediction of dependence and the delegation of an action take place that the trustor opens her/himself up to some risk and that trust moves from being an attitude to being a decision and an act.

#### 6.3.3.5 Summary

Figure 6–2 reproduces the model used by Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010: 91) to represent all the conceptual components and relationships outlined above. Figure 6–3, then, presents a simplified version of this model created by the researcher for use in this thesis in which some subcategories have been removed or renamed to improve readability and simplify explanation.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> This adaptation was made on the basis that the authors themselves describe their representation of the model only as a potential frame (Castelfranchi and Falcone 2010: 92). Furthermore, the adaptation in this thesis is entirely consistent with the theory described in their entire 2010 work.

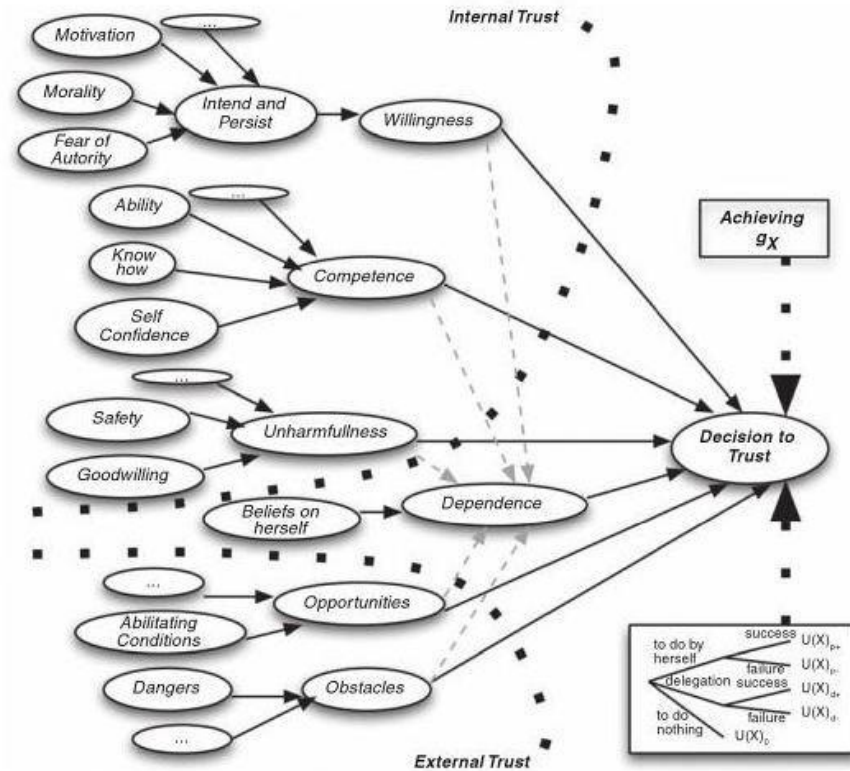


Figure 6-2. Original Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model of trust

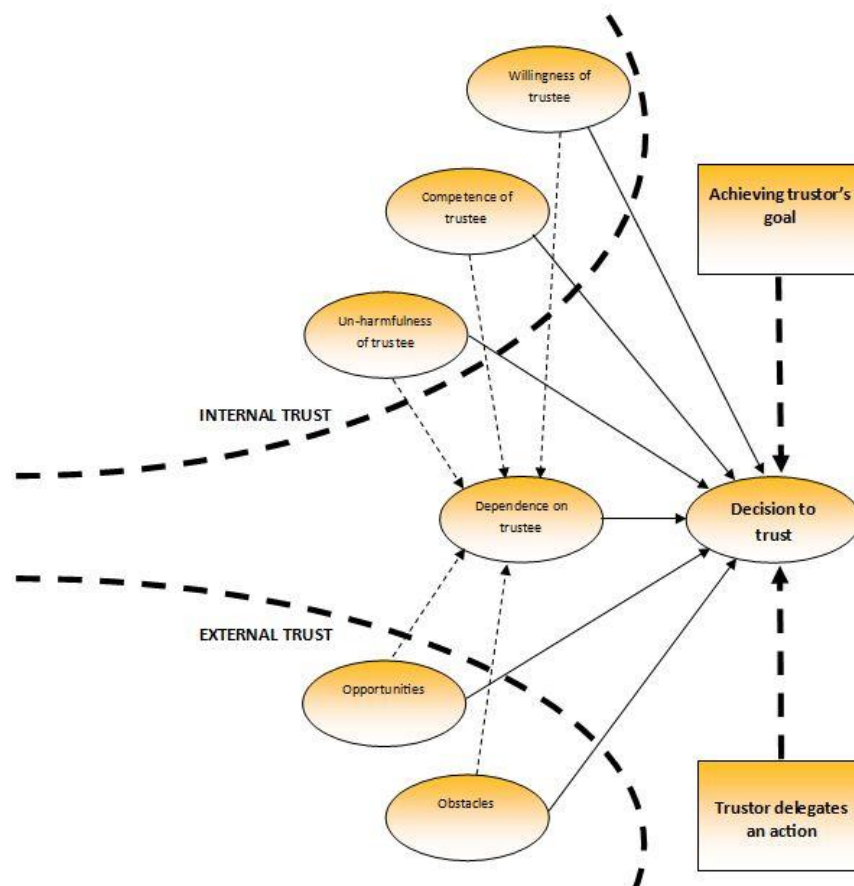


Figure 6-3. Adapted Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model of trust

In these models, trust exists as an attitude, a decision, and an act in a recursive structure. The trustor wants to achieve a goal and is trying to reason whether or not to delegate an action to a potential trustee to work towards the realisation of this goal. If the trustor predicts that the potential trustee is sufficiently willing, competent, and free of harmful intent (internal trust) within a given context of opportunities and obstacles (external trust) to be counted on to accomplish the action, the trustor will expose her/himself to the risk of being dependent on that trustee, and we can say that the trustor trusts the trustee.

#### ***6.4 Observations supporting Castelfranchi and Falcone's model of trust***

This section describes how an in-depth analysis of observations in the participant data for this research supports the usefulness of the theoretical model of trust put forward by Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010). As was shown in Section 6.3.2, their socio-cognitive, reason-based model of trust uses goals, predictions, actions, and context to explain the components and relationships relevant to the theory. It cannot be argued that the methodology used in this thesis (ethnographic interviews supported by secondary data within a case study framework; see Chapter 3) provided access to the goals or the predictions of the participants; it cannot be claimed that this research possesses data relating to their beliefs, their affective states, or their deeper motivations at the time of the disaster, nor to how they might have evaluated potential trustees at this time. However, it can be argued that this methodology provided some access to what the participants in the case study reported to be their actions at the time of the disaster, to their reasoning behind some of these actions, and to the context in which these actions took place. As a result, it is claimed here that direct observations in these interview data were able to be combined with interpretations, inferences, and educated guesses to paint a picture of the trusting attitudes, decisions, and acts of the participants in this case study.

Specifically, with the aforementioned methodological limitations in mind, the interview data were examined to look for passages which corresponded to the model of trust proposed in Section 6.3.3. To do this, any instances where participants spoke of some risk, uncertainty, or vulnerability were first identified; this was done because of the broad consensus in the trust literature that trusting necessarily involves some form of risk (see Section 2.4.1). At this first stage of coding, 149 passages were found across all 28 transcripts that related to some sort of risk, uncertainty, or vulnerability, and it was assumed that these passages might be meaningful to a concept of trust and could potentially fit Castelfranchi and Falcone's (2010) model. To confirm whether or not this was the case, each of the 149 risk-related passages was re-examined to confirm the presence of a clearly

delegated action. At this second stage of coding, it was found that 51 passages could be shown to relate to a clearly delegated action and so might be usefully described and explained by the trust model. It was necessary, though, to delete 2 passages here because they described incidences in which no foreign resident was involved as trustor, as trustee, or within the broader context.<sup>46</sup> As foreign residents are the case being studied in this research, it was felt that only incidences of trust involving a foreign resident should be included in the analysis. At this point, then, there were 49 instances where a delegated action and its context could be found in the participant data, and these 49 instances came from 24 of the 28 interviews.<sup>47</sup> These 49 passages (fully described and categorised in Appendix H) represent the concrete support for the trust model as a way to systematically describe and explain the trust observed in these data. From this action- and context-related information, then, it was possible to infer: the broader goals that the participants might have held with respect to these delegated actions; the predictions that they might have made about the person to whom they were delegating; the predictions about the context in which the delegation was taking place; the predictions about the dependence and vulnerability they were opening themselves up to by delegating in this way. This is more abstract, logic-based support for the trust model, but it is still useful for making the arguments that will follow in the subsequent sections of this chapter. These inferences are also fully described and categorised in Appendix H, but the major patterns in this dataset will be outlined in the next section.

#### *6.4.1 Major patterns in the trust dataset in Appendix H*

Before describing the major patterns present in the dataset, it is worth highlighting that, while this thesis argues that the data show 49 instances in which trust existed in a way corresponding to the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model, it is not arguing that these 49 instances of trust were well placed or that they all ended in success; trust ending in failure was still trust and was included in the dataset. To give an overview of the data in Appendix H, the following elements of the data will be summarised in the subsequent sections: who the trustors and trustees were; what actions were being delegated; what type of context these delegated actions were being performed in; the broader goals of the trustors that can be inferred from what the participants said; the likely predictions that the trustors made.

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<sup>46</sup> Specifically, a passage described by Participant 14 in which Japanese parents were shown to have trusted Japanese teachers and a passage described by Participant 27 in which residents of a Japanese village in Fukushima were shown to have trusted the Japanese authorities were excluded from this analysis.

<sup>47</sup> No passages matching the model were found in the interviews with Participants 4, 7, 23, or 25.



#### 6.4.1.1 The trustors and trustees

Tables 6–2 and 6–3 show the number of incidences of the trust model in which a participant mentioned a particular category of trustor or trustee. From these tables we can see that the incidences of trust that corresponded to the model were largely cases in which a participant or some other foreign national in their acquaintance trusted another foreign national, a Japanese local, or an embassy.

CATEGORY OF TRUSTOR:	Participants in this study	Other foreign acquaintances	Employers in Japan	Embassies	Japanese authorities	Other Japanese
NO. OF INCIDENCES:	36/49	7/49	2/49	1/49	1/49	2/49

Table 6-2. No. of incidences of the trust model in participant data broken down by category of trustor

CATEGORY OF TRUSTEE:	Japanese locals	Other foreign residents	Participants in this study	Embassies	Scientific and technical experts	Japanese authorities	Foreign nationals outside Japan
NO. OF INCIDENCES:	13/49	11/49	6/49	7/49	5/49	4/49	3/49

Table 6-3. No. of incidences of the trust model in participant data broken down by category of trustee

#### 6.4.1.2 The delegated actions

Table 6–4 shows the number of incidences of the trust model in which a participant mentioned a particular category of action to be delegated to the trustee. Essentially, instead of carrying out the actions themselves or instead of doing nothing, the trustors delegated the actions below to a trustee in an effort to realise a particular goal state. The data show that most incidences of the trust model revolved around finding and handling information and making decisions; rather than find or handle the information or make the decision themselves, the trustor delegated this to someone else. This pattern in the data is not surprising considering the focus of the research on how foreign residents communicated and gathered information. It works to further illustrate the importance of trust in the communicative scene during a disaster.

CATEGORY OF DELEGATED ACTION:	Find or spread information on disaster response	Find and interpret nuclear-related information	Arrange an evacuation	Decide whether to stay or evacuate	Lead the initial disaster response	Translate information	Confirm the safety of an individual	Other
NO. OF INCIDENTS:	9/49	8/49	7/49	6/49	6/49	5/49	4/49	4/49

**Table 6-4. No. of incidences of the trust model in participant data broken down by category of action**

#### 6.4.1.3 The contexts

The above actions were, of course, mostly delegated in a context and set of special circumstances broadly relating to the outbreak of a disaster. However, some finer analysis of this broader context was made possible by the interview data. In particular, it was possible to categorise some of this contextual information as either an opportunity for or as an obstacle to the existence of trust. While the disaster sometimes presented great obstacles to trust existing for the trustors – especially as a result of linguistic and cultural barriers, of problems with infrastructure not working as it should, or of disruption to people’s standard routines – overwhelmingly the context in which the trustors came to delegate the above actions in this disaster was one of opportunity: it was sometimes as a result of having friends, acquaintances, or colleagues with certain abilities, contacts, or information that the trustor came to delegate the action; it was also sometimes as a result of the trustor’s own particular status as a citizen of a particular country, as an employee of a particular company, or a result of the trustor’s own particular resources in terms of language ability that it proved opportune to delegate the action. Tables 6–5 and 6–6 summarise how frequently such contextual information was observed in the interview data.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Note that these incidence counts do not total 49 (the number of passages believed to correspond to the trust model in the interview data). This is because not all passages contained an obstacle to the existence of trust and not all passages contained an opportunity for the existence of trust.

<b>CONTEXTUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR TRUST:</b>	<b>Friends etc. with certain abilities, contacts, or information</b>	<b>Trustor's own particular status (citizen, employee, Japanese speaker)</b>	<b>Infrastructure being better than expected</b>
<b>NO. OF INCIDENCES:</b>	27/49	13/49	3/49

**Table 6-5. No. of incidences of the trust model in participant data broken down by contextual opportunity**

<b>CONTEXTUAL OBSTACLE TO TRUST:</b>	<b>Linguistic and cultural barriers</b>	<b>Infrastructural problems</b>	<b>Disrupted routines or habits</b>
<b>NO. OF INCIDENCES:</b>	13/49	7/49	4/49

**Table 6-6. No. of incidences of the trust model in participant data broken down by contextual obstacle**

So far, this section has summarised the relevant data in Appendix H to describe those involved in these instances of trust, the actions involved in the trust, and the type of circumstances in which the trust existed. The next section will now summarise the goals and predictions in Appendix H that could not be observed in the interview data but that could be inferred from what the participants said.

#### 6.4.1.4 The goals

It was inferred from the above actions and contexts that the trustors most likely had the goals of being kept safe from worse harm, of responding in an appropriate manner to the disaster, and of ensuring that communication was possible during the disaster. More detail on the goals inferred from the relevant passages in the interviews can be seen in Table 6–7.

<b>INFERRED GOALS:</b>	<b>Be safe from worse harm</b>	<b>Respond appropriately to the disaster</b>	<b>Ensure communication was possible</b>	<b>Reduce someone's worry/anxiety</b>	<b>Support or instruct others</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>NO. OF INCIDENCES:</b>	21/49	16/49	5/49	3/49	2/49	2/49

**Table 6-7. No. of incidences of the trust model in participant data broken down by inferred goal**

#### 6.4.1.5 The predictions

It was further inferred from what was observed in the interview data that participants were probably making certain predictions about the potential trustee (internal trust), and about the obstacles and opportunities in the environment (external trust), as well as predictions of how dependent they could be on the potential trustee. Summarising all of these predictions is beyond the scope of this section (though all this in-depth analysis is detailed in Appendix H). Instead, only the one prediction that is most relevant to the chapter's subsequent arguments will be summarised here; the prediction of dependence. It is likely that the trustors counted primarily on the ability, contacts, and information that the trustee possessed, as well as on their relationship with the trustee. Furthermore, it is likely that they predicted that they were risking their personal safety, their ability to respond appropriately, and their reputation in counting on the trustee in this way. This meant that participants predicted that they would either strongly or weakly depend on the trustee. A prediction of strong dependence meant that, having made all the above evaluations, the trustor predicted that s/he lacked some essential resources to achieve her/his goal. In contrast, an evaluation of weak dependence meant that, while the trustor predicted that s/he had sufficient resources to achieve the goal, depending on the trustee would cost less effort or assure higher quality. Having satisfied her/himself that these predictions and all others not mentioned here met the threshold for the potential trustee to be depended on, the trustor likely felt satisfied to be open to the risk or bet that delegating to the trustee would entail. Table 6–8 breaks down the strong and weak predictions and shows that more trustors in the dataset predicted weak dependence; i.e., they had sufficient resources to achieve the goal, but chose to depend on the trustee because it cost less effort or assured a higher quality realisation of the goal.

INFERRED DEPENDENCE PREDICTIONS	Strong:	Weak:
	15/49	34/49
NO. OF INCIDENCES		

**Table 6-8. No. of incidences of the trust model in participant data broken down by inferred dependence prediction**

#### 6.4.2 Illustrative examples of the trust model found in the data

While the previous section gave an overview of the dataset on trust in this thesis, this section will provide two concrete illustrations to exemplify how trust in the dataset existed in a way that could usefully be described and explained by the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model. (The detail of all other examples can be consulted in Appendix H.)

As a first example, we can say that Participant 9 trusted his acquaintances in the nearby nuclear power plant in a way that corresponded to the model. Here is what he had to say in his interview:

After three months, I went surfing one time. The people at the power station were testing the water every day. They said it was fine, but on the news they said it wasn't fine. Different information here and there, but those workers at the power station are sending their kids here {to my school} to learn English, I mean. They were saying the water was okay. I mean, it was higher than usual, but not going to grow a third eye [laughter], but I, we won't know, actually, until, in the fu, twenty years or whatever, but. (Participant 9)

Let us first remember that, in this model, trust exists as an attitude, a decision, and an act in a recursive structure. Participant 9 wants to be safe from damage by nuclear radiation when he goes out surfing. This is his goal. To achieve this goal he wants to know the levels of radiation in the water off the local beaches. He does not have the skill or expertise to measure the radiation himself, so he delegates the action of measuring to the workers at the nearby nuclear power plant. He probably predicts that these workers are sufficiently willing, competent, and free of harmful intent (internal trust) because they are nuclear professionals in his acquaintance who send their children to study English at the school run by him. Having people he knows and who know him with this specialised skill presented Participant 9 with a special opportunity to trust (external trust) that someone who did not have this contact might not have enjoyed. But let us not forget that he is still taking a risk in counting on these nuclear workers – the future is still uncertain – and Participant 9 is probably betting his personal health and safety on their ability to measure accurately, communicate the information honestly, and so on. As Participant 9 says, he will not be able

to tell whether trusting these nuclear workers was a success or failure until some twenty years into the future.

In a second illustrative example, we can say that a certain Japanese government office trusted Participant 6 and his colleagues in the PR firm for which he worked to create the government office's English-language Twitter feed during the disaster:

And we were feeding the {Twitter feed of the Japanese government office that was our client} so we were picking up information generally off of NHK and Kyodo in English and feeding that out through {the Japanese government office that was our client} so that foreign nationals could get access to information. (Participant 6)

This particular Japanese government office wants to be able to provide information about the disaster to interested parties inside and outside Japan. One part of achieving this goal is having information available on Twitter in English. The ministry does not have the resources to carry out this action alone, so they delegate it to the PR firm for which Participant 6 works. The government office probably predicts that the staff of this firm, including Participant 6, is sufficiently willing, competent, and free of harmful intent (internal trust) because they have previous experience of their work as existing clients and know that the firm has international staff. Having an existing relationship with a firm with such expertise presented the Japanese government office with a special opportunity to trust (external trust) that other government offices who did not have this contact might not have enjoyed. But let us not forget that the government office is still taking a risk and is probably betting their ability to communicate effectively with interested English-speakers on the PR firm's expertise at gathering and selecting appropriate information to disseminate and its know-how in ensuring that it is linguistically and culturally appropriate.

In sum, it can be shown that, with the dataset in Appendix H, the theory of Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) allowed for the creation of viable, robust, and convincing descriptions and explanations of trust phenomena in the data. Therefore, this theory of trust was a good candidate to use in suggesting a role for Translation. Examining the role of Translation within this theory is the topic of the next section.

### ***6.5 The role of Translation in Castelfranchi and Falcone's theory of trust***

In addition to supporting the usefulness of the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory of trust, in-depth analysis of the dataset in Appendix H showed that Translation was, at times, one or more of the components of how trust was conceptualised in the 2011 disaster. Several clear patterns in the data worked to make this argument.

### 6.5.1 Major patterns in the trust dataset in Appendix H

Of the 49 passages that were identified as corresponding to the trust model put forward by Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010), 25 passages presented no real evidence of a role for Translation in bringing that trust into existence. However, this left 24 passages in the dataset which suggested a possible role for Translation. As Table 6–9 shows, 19 passages indicated that considering Translation as a component in the theoretical model would help better describe and explain the trust phenomena that were being observed. As for the 5 other passages that also pointed to a role for Translation, these passages pointed to a role for ‘news translation’ – a definition of translation that considers its function in the production of global news reports, especially surrounding major international events (see, for instance, Doorslaer [2010] or Schäffner [2010]). ‘News translation’ falls within the scope of the definition of Translation operationalised for this research in Section 5.3.5. However, as there was not enough contextual information in the interviews relating to news translation to make defensible inferences about how exactly it featured in the instance of trust, the passages relating to news translation have not been considered in any subsequent analysis.

Type of evidence	No. of incidences
<b>Evidence for Translation in the incidence of trust:</b>	<b>19/24</b>
Translation by a Japanese resident:	8/19
Translation by a foreign resident:	8/19
Translation, but unclear whether by a Japanese or foreign resident:	3/19
<b>Evidence for ‘news translation’ in the incidence of trust:</b>	<b>5/24</b>

**Table 6-9. Summary of trust incidences suggesting a role for Translation**

The 19 passages containing some clear evidence for Translation were then analysed in more detail and certain significant patterns could be discerned. These patterns suggest a role for Translation in relation to the ‘competence’, ‘context’, ‘dependence’, and ‘delegated action’ components of the trust model described in Section 6.3.3.

It can be inferred from the data that, when evaluating the competence of a potential trustee (a component of internal trust), trustors may have predicted that the trustee in question would have had a sufficient level of Translation skills available to them to fulfil the delegated action before fully moving to a decision to trust. In addition to these specialised skills, though, it can be imagined from the data that the potential trustee’s local, cultural,

and technical know-how may also have been considered when reasoning whether to trust the trustee or not.

Translation seems to have also strongly impacted on trust in these data as an element of the context (external trust). Happening to be around someone in the disaster or having someone in your network who spoke another language or who had Translation skills often presented an opportunity that encouraged the trustor to move towards a decision to trust, once the other components of the trust model met their required thresholds. Translation only seemed to be a contextual obstacle that the trustors likely considered in their evaluations in relation to the cost of resources; it is likely, at times, that the cost of finding another Translator alternative to a Translator who was already available was considered too costly and could have helped move the trustor towards a decision to trust.

Furthermore, these data would suggest that Translation impacted on trust when participants were trying to predict how much they would depend on the trustee. In a large number of instances, the trustor lacked a skill or resource necessary to achieve her/his goal, and it was only with the help of Translation that this lack could be addressed. In such instances where the trustor's options were limited, s/he likely felt strongly dependent on a trustee with the Translation skills, linguistic ability, or cultural know-how s/he lacked. However, in a small number of instances, the trustor likely only predicted her/himself to be weakly dependent on the trustee; s/he may have had alternative channels through which to receive the Translation that would have helped realise the relevant goal, but s/he predicted less effort would be expended or a higher quality result achieved by delegating to the trustee.

Of course, Translation was also, in a few instances, the action that was to be delegated to a potential trustee, and this was another way in which Translation was involved in the trust in the 2011 communicative scene. Here the trustor may have reasoned that delegating the action was preferable to doing nothing or to trying to accomplish the Translation themselves, and so finding a potential trustee who could Translate became a component of their reasoning around the decision to trust. Table 6–10 presents an overview of the instances from Appendix H described in this section.

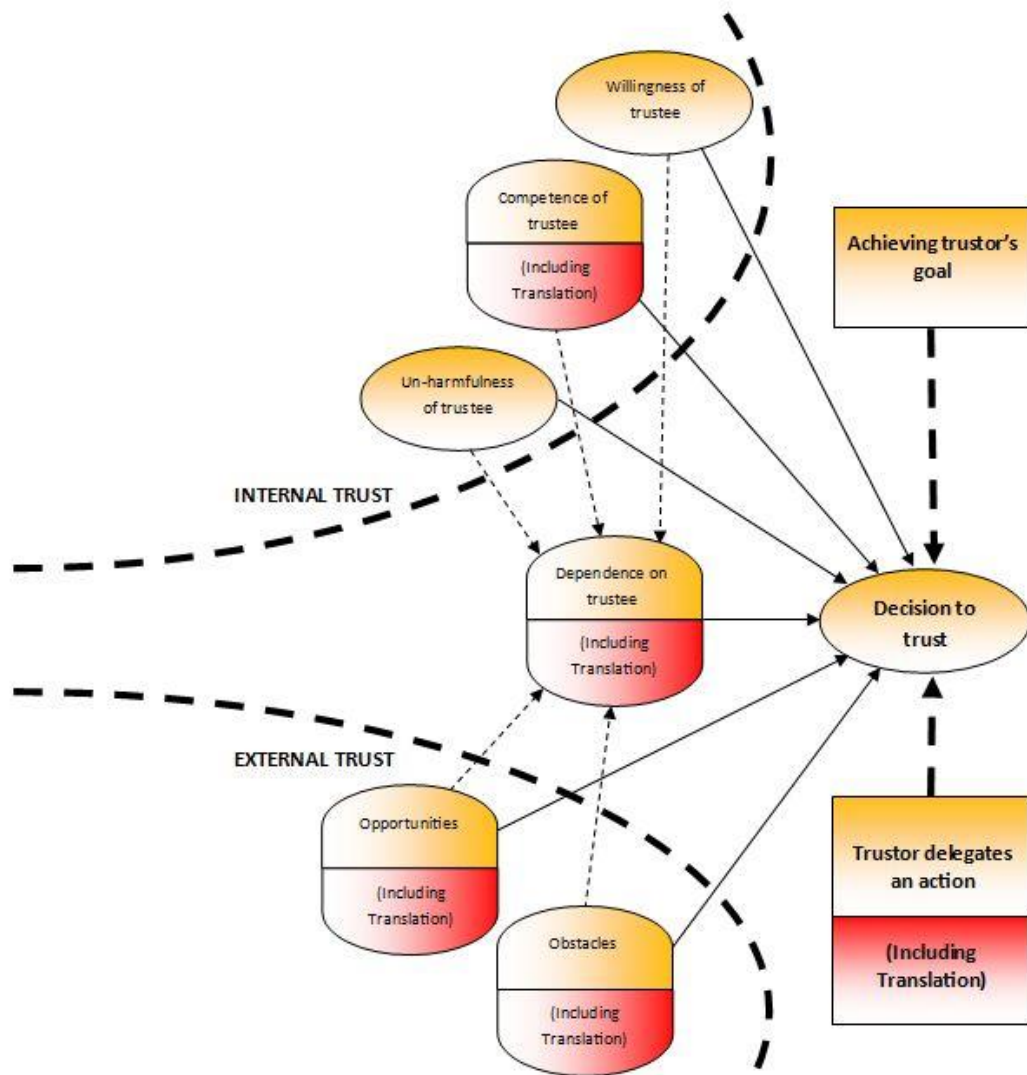


Impact of Translation	No. of incidences
<b>Translation impacted on the trustor's prediction of trustee competence:</b>	<b>18/19</b>
Skills:	15/18
Know-how:	7/18
<b>Translation was a feature of the context:</b>	<b>17/19</b>
Opportunities:	17/17
Obstacles:	2/17
<b>Translation impacted on the trustor's prediction of dependence on the trustee:</b>	<b>11/19</b>
Strong:	8/11
Weak:	3/11
<b>Translation was the delegated action itself:</b>	<b>5/19</b>

**Table 6-10. Summary of evidence for Translation acting as a component of the trust model**

Based on the patterns summarised here, and with the further support of the detailed analysis available in Appendix H, Figure 6–4 represents how considering Translation as components of the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model helps to describe and explain how certain people who experienced the 2011 disaster trusted.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The roles for Translation in the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model of trust are shown in red in Figure 6–4.



**Figure 6-4. The roles of Translation in the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model of trust**

In sum, Figure 6–4 illustrates that Translation was a part of certain people’s reasoning about trust in the 2011 disaster in various ways. Translation sometimes needed to be evaluated as a component of internal trust; specifically, it was one of the competences of a potential trustee for which a certain threshold needed to be met in a given context before sufficient internal trust in the potential trustee could be established. Translation was also a feature of the trust context, especially in presenting opportunities to come to trust potential trustees who might not otherwise have featured in the trustor’s reasoning. Moreover, Translation was sometimes a factor for trustors in evaluating how strongly they would have to depend on the trustee and in evaluating how much they would risk by delegating to them. Finally, Translation was sometimes a component of the trustor’s reasoning in that Translation was the very action s/he wished to delegate, and this influenced the selection of individuals that

s/he could potentially trust with the task. It would be instructive at this point to move from these generalised and abstract assertions to some concrete illustrations from the dataset.

### *6.5.2 Illustrative examples for Translation acting as components of trust*

To cite a first example, we can say, from the data in Appendix H, that certain French business visitors decided to trust and trusted Participant 13 (a foreign resident of Japan employed as a professional business interpreter) in part because of Translation. The following is the passage in Participant 13's interview that suggests that this was the case:

Also, I started being busy with my customers who were in a big hotel in Tokyo. So I got in touch with them, I think we used Skype. Yes, they explained me that, we parted five minutes before, they explained me that it started shaking while they were boarding a taxi and it's shaking like hell in the taxi. And so they were in a panicky mood [...] They, they were probably more hooked than I was to news sources and as they, they do not rely on Japanese language, they were relying, I assume, on everything which is non, which was non-Japanese: French, they were French, maybe English news sources. And probably they were more aware than I about the matter of Fukushima. So, they were in a total panic and they asked me, they told me that they wanted to go to Osaka and that they would pay any means of transportation because they were thinking that everything was stopped. And I was not in a panic, well, I was not shaking. Eh, worried, but not shaking. And they said that the trains are not running. Tokyo-Osaka is something like, let's say, two hours, okay? Bullet train. So, I told them, "Okay. I'm going to check. The Internet is working." (Participant 13)

The goal of the French business people was to be safe from worse danger – particularly, the danger of nuclear radiation – by getting out of Tokyo and Japan as quickly as possible. They needed to arrange an evacuation to achieve this goal, but the context of them being in a foreign country (where a language they did not know was spoken and where they lacked locally-specific knowledge) put obstacles in the way of them arranging the evacuation by themselves. For this reason, they delegated the action. We can imagine that they could have tried to delegate the action to a variety of potential trustees: the staff of their embassy, their hotel, Japanese people nearby. However, it is likely that they already had sufficient internal trust in Participant 13; they likely predicted that he would have the Japanese and French language skills, the local knowledge, and the Translation techniques to be able to plan and explain their evacuation. Furthermore, they probably predicted that he would be concerned to ensure the safety of potential future clients and may have felt morally obliged to help them, seeing as how he had been hired previously as their professional interpreter. Therefore, it is likely that the French business people reasoned that trusting Participant 13 and delegating the evacuation planning to him would risk them less wasted effort or harm than pursuing another potential trustee, than trying to achieve the

goal by themselves, or than simply doing nothing. Here, then, we see how Translation influenced the existence of trust as an attitude, as a decision, and as an act in this instance, and we see how useful the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model is in explaining the role of Translation in the existence of this trust.

In another example, Participant 10 was trusted by other foreign residents in his community to find and communicate to them in English disaster-related information from Japanese sources. Here is what Participant 10 said in his interview:

I've been here a long time. Once I was back, I was inundated with the locals asking me for information and what to do. And luckily for me, I do have a lot of Japanese friends, so I could help most people. If not, they could come here and I could feed them and look after them and whatnot. But, yeah, that would be very helpful, I think, someone knowledgeable in the area, knowledgeable in the language and that interacts with that source of information would definitely help the foreign community. (Participant 10)

Here, having in their acquaintance a long-term foreign resident with Japanese and English ability – that is to say a Translator – presented the foreign residents in this part of the disaster zone with a great opportunity and likely helped to move them towards trusting Participant 10. They may have predicted that Participant 10 would have had access to privileged information about the disaster due to his long time living in the city, his many Japanese friends, and his central position as a well-known pub owner. They also may have predicted that he would try hard to find relevant information for his own safety and that of his family, and that he might be willing to share this information with other foreign residents out of his own benevolence or as a result of sympathy for their shared experience and vulnerability as foreign nationals experiencing a disaster overseas. Delegating at least part of their information gathering to Participant 10 was likely preferable to the effort of seeking out other sources or trying to find and understand Japanese information by themselves. Nevertheless, there was still a risk for these foreign residents in trusting Participant 10. For example, his abilities as a Translator might not have been up to the task of understanding and communicating complex nuclear information or, more cynically, the continued presence of foreign customers for his businesses in the city might have caused him to hide the dangers he was hearing about in Japanese. But, as Participant 10 said, he was inundated with requests for help from foreigners, so all the other elements of their trust calculations likely told them that this was not the case; trusting Participant 10 was worth the bet, and here once again, Translation was a central component in how these foreign residents came to this decision.

At this point, it is worth re-emphasising that the definition of Translation operationalised for this thesis involves not just interlingual but intercultural transfer, too, and that this form of cultural mediation may also have influenced the decisions of foreign residents to trust. Let us take one such example from the dataset in Appendix H.

The data suggest that Participant 8 and her foreign colleagues trusted their Japanese colleagues to lead the disaster response initially and that Translation – particularly in the sense of intercultural transfer – was a factor in their reasoning:

I thought, “Okay, I look at my Japanese, eh, colleagues and see what they are doing and they wait a bit, of, of course everyone was quiet and they waited until the announcement came that we could go out of the building, because apparently after earthquake there will be, eh, eh, aftershocks and then you just have to wait until, em, there is no aftershocks so that it’s okay to go downstairs. So that was maybe five minutes later. I remember one of my colleagues shouting, foreign guy was shouting, “Ah, Japanese, what are we supposed to do?” [laughter] Anyway, I thought that was good. I just followed.  
(Participant 8)

The goal of Participant 8 and her foreign colleagues was to keep themselves safe from worse dangers after the earthquake first struck. To achieve this goal they could have done nothing or they could have led the response themselves, but instead they delegated this action to their Japanese colleagues in the same office. Internal trust in their English-speaking Japanese colleagues may have been sufficiently high that Participant 8 and her foreign colleagues predicted that these potential trustees would know how to respond to a disaster and would be able to instruct them how to do so in English. In addition, they may have predicted that their relationship as co-workers and shared experience of the disaster would make the potential trustees concerned for their welfare and would have prevented them from leading them into greater danger. Having the disaster strike when English-speaking Japanese colleagues were around presented Participant 8 and her foreign colleagues with an opportunity to access greater disaster experience and local knowledge, and this external trust also likely moved them towards a decision to delegate decisions on how best to respond to these others. Nonetheless, trusting does not eliminate risk, and there was still the chance that the Japanese colleagues would not, in fact, know how best to deal with a disaster of this scale and complexity.

In the chapter so far, trust has been shown to be important to how foreign residents communicated and gathered information in the 2011 disaster (see Section 6.2), the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory of trust has been shown to be a useful tool for holistically and systematically providing convincing descriptions and explanations for trust phenomena in this disaster context (see Sections 6.3 and 6.4), and this theory has been

shown to be an appropriate lens through which to view the data to argue that Translation was a part of certain people's reasoning about trust in the 2011 disaster (see this section). Thus, an answer to the first part of the final research question in this thesis has been given: issues of Translation were important to the 2011 disaster because Translation was sometimes a component of trust, and trust influenced some of the decisions and actions made by foreign residents in the disaster and was highly significant to how they experienced communication and information gathering.

Up to now, though, the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory has only been used to describe and explain what has already happened. Can it be used to talk about how trust might change in the future? If it can, and if Translation can be shown to be relevant to this change, an answer can be proposed to the second part of the final research question in this thesis: why are issues of Translation important to other disaster contexts? The next section will show how the theory deals with an element of future trust and how it can be argued that Translation is relevant to the trust dynamics involved.

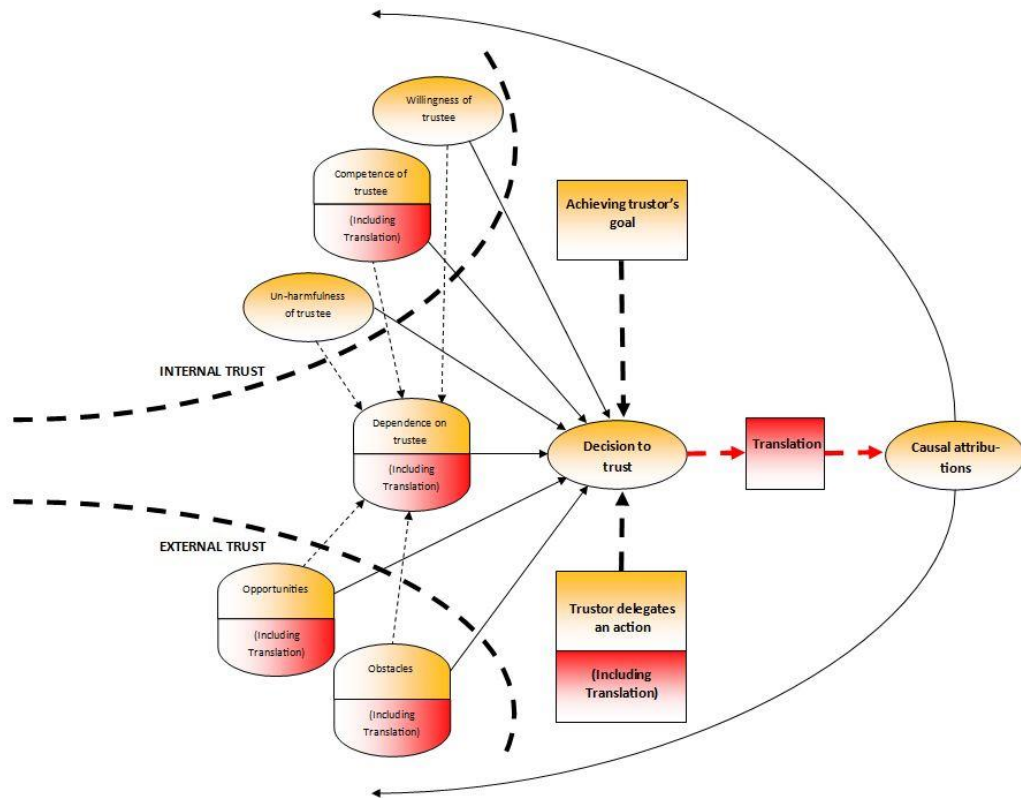
### *6.5.3 Translation and future trust in Castelfranchi and Falcone's theory*

In their theory of trust, Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) argue against the view that there is a confirmation of or increase in the perceived trustworthiness of the trustee involved when trust succeeds or that the trustee's perceived trustworthiness is correspondingly reduced when trust fails (ibid.:150). Because their theory separates the internal and external components of trust, they argue that it is only when the trustor attributes the success or failure to internal trust that the perceived trustworthiness of the trustee is affected. Otherwise, the causes for the success or failure will be attributed to the environment or context of the instance of trust (ibid.: 52). For the authors:

[T]he important thing is not only the final result of the trustee's performance but in particular the trustor's causal attribution to all factors in producing that result. It is on the basis of these causal attributions that the trustor updates her beliefs about the trustworthiness of the trustee, of the environment, and of their reciprocal influences. (ibid.: 154).

To understand and evaluate the individual role of each component involved in the instance of trust and, therefore, to appropriately attribute the causes of success or failure of that trust requires a well-informed trustor (ibid.: 152). In a multilingual and multicultural context, Translation might be expected to be a factor in how or how well the trustor becomes informed. It could be argued, therefore, that Translation is important to some instances of trust in that it can assure that causal attribution is done appropriately and can be used as a tool to foster better trust in the future. With these ideas in mind, Figure 6–5 describes the

way in which the researcher has adapted the Castelfranchi and Falcone model to describe and explain how the Translation of the causal attributions of success or failure affect future trust in a multilingual, multicultural setting.



**Figure 6-5. Adapting the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model for the Translation of causal attributions**

In this model, once a decision to trust has been taken and acted upon (sometimes under the influence of issues related to Translation), Translation once again can feature in how the trustor comes to understand and evaluate the causes for the success or failure of that trust. As a consequence of this, Translation influences whether s/he attributes these causes to things internal or external to the trustee.

Accepting this as a theoretical proposition, then, the question becomes whether or not there is any support for it in the data of this case study. In fact, only one example of a relationship between Translation and causal attributions could be found in the data, but it is a compelling example that supports clearly and directly the influence that Translation had on the attribution of causes in one instance of trust. It involves the example of the French disaster responder team for whom Participant 13 was a volunteer interpreter.

Participant 13 – an interpreter by profession – volunteered through his embassy to Translate on-the-ground for a team of international disaster responders who were flown in to Japan

and transported up to the disaster zone. The team's goal would likely have been to carry out their usual professional mission of saving as many lives as possible as quickly as possible. Politically and legally, responders from overseas had to wait for instruction from Japanese local authorities before doing any rescue work and could not proceed without direct instruction, and initially it would seem that the responder team trusted the Japanese local authorities to assign them useful, life-saving tasks. However, Participant 13 recounts how the team's trust in this instance failed, and they were left without anything to do during a crucial phase of the initial disaster response:

We waited almost a day doing nothing, and the rescuers get frustrated because time is key. But, of course, they know how to behave because they are military people, but while joking, of course, "What are we doing there? People must be dying somewhere and what are we? (Participant 13)

Now that their decision and act of trusting had failed, the team tried to reason out the causes for this failure. It is possible that they could have attributed the causes of this failure to some contextual factors like logistical pressure or poor communication infrastructure and updated their beliefs about the Japanese local authorities accordingly. Alternatively, it is possible that they could have attributed the causes of this failure to some set of factors internal to the local authorities, such as ineptitude or a lack of willingness. However, what is really interesting in this case is how Translation through Participant 13 was used by the team to attempt to appropriately carry out their causal attribution for the failure of their trust:

One of the most disturbing, or if you get cynical, funny, but it was not funny, single situation was, I remember there was a little kind of a, not even a hill, a kind of turfy kind of place, which was probably a holding spot, kind of shrine or something [...] we climbed there and there were Japanese, a group of Japanese rescuers there, and there I seriously interpreted for a brief ten or fifteen minutes. The French felt that they were manipulated, in a sense. They couldn't find a corpse. We couldn't find nothing, so they, they asked me, "Tell them, ask them about this territory. Have they already covered it?" And they genuinely answered, "Yes." So, we were looking, we were searching for casualties on a territory which had already been search. And there were signs, poles and, kind of, things which suggested that people already came here, it was already searched, but anyway, there's, eh, international relations behind that. (Participant 13)

By asking other Japanese rescuers – through Participant 13 – the responder team was able to establish that it was not logistical pressure, poor infrastructure, ineptitude, nor a lack of willingness, but rather politics that caused the failure of their trust; they were unable to achieve their goal of saving as many lives as possible as quickly as possible because of the politically- and diplomatically-charged atmosphere of being international responders in an



already well-resourced disaster zone in a country with a particular culture of disaster response and a wealth of response experience. Thus, when making future calculations about the trustworthiness of Japanese local authorities or other similar classes of potential trustee, it is likely that the contextual factor of international politics would be taken into account by the international responder team in their reasoning. In short, for the purposes of this thesis, it can be seen that Translation worked to help these trustors more appropriately decide trust in future contexts involving the same or similar potential trustees.

This idea of causal attributions and future trust in the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory is significant because it suggests the possibility of interventions to actively and strategically increase the likelihood of trust being established in future contexts (ibid.: 249). As a result of the arguments put forward in this section, it could also be claimed that Translation could be a useful tool in improving the chances of future trust after the failure of an instance of trust in a multilingual and multicultural context. For example, if trust failed not because of internal trust (the trustee's willingness, competence, and freedom from harmful intent) but because of some adverse external trust (some obstacle working against the realisation of the action), the trustee could use Translation to make sure this was understood by the trustor. Similarly, if trust did, in fact, fail because of something internal to the trustee, Translation could be used to highlight to the trustor the other internal components of trust that did not fail or to communicate improvements that the trustee has made. An understanding of these theoretical components and relationships of trust and Translation could potentially be useful to government authorities, disaster responders, or volunteer Translators in future disasters who want to ensure that their trustworthiness among the foreign residents they are helping is not damaged when trust fails or to ensure that the information they create for these foreign residents is trusted and acted upon.

In sum, then, an answer has been proposed to the second part of the final research question in this thesis. Issues of Translation are important to other disaster contexts because the theoretical model described in Figure 6–5 shows that Translation can be a useful tool in a multilingual and multicultural context in improving the chances of future trust after a failure of trust and can be used strategically by government authorities, disaster responders, or volunteer Translators in future disasters to improve their own trustworthiness or to help ensure that the information they create for foreign residents is trusted and acted upon.

As was indicated in Section 3.3.4, generalising from case study data is a contentious issue; see, for example, Gomm, Hammersley, and Foster (2000). However, other authors (e.g., Mitchell, 2000) point out that, if rigour has been demonstrated in the development of a theory from case study data, then it is fair to claim 'theoretical generalisation', and such

theoretical propositions can be tested and expanded on in other contexts. Theoretical generalisation specifies ‘the necessary connections among a set of theoretically significant elements manifested in some body of empirical data’ (Mitchell 2000: 178). This is the type of generalisation being claimed in this thesis. Thus, rather than predictive or causative insight, this case study aims to achieve some normative insight; the highlighting of significant categories in the data and the proposing of relationships between them in order to guide further enquiry. At the very least, it is hoped that other researchers will now have a list of categories to consider when analysing trust and Translation in other contexts and will have a new lens, in Figure 6–5, through which to view their data.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the aim of this chapter was to describe the abstract analysis that was carried out in this research project in order to create a convincing explanation for why issues of Translation were important to the 2011 disaster and why Translation issues could be important to other disaster contexts. As a first step in this abstract analysis, trust phenomena were observed in the case study data, and trust was shown to be important to how foreign residents communicated and gathered information in the 2011 disaster. Then, these phenomena were described and explained using the socio-cognitive lens of Castelfranchi and Falcone’s (2010) theory of trust. To perform this description and explanation, a detailed dataset was created (Appendix H), and analysis of this dataset showed the usefulness of this theoretical tool. Further analysis of this dataset went on to show that Translation, at times, could be considered as one or more components of that model. A further aspect of Castelfranchi and Falcone’s (2010) theory of trust – that of causal attribution and its relationship to future trust – was also introduced in the chapter. Translation was argued to be an important component in how well-informed trustors attribute the causes of success or failure of trust in a multilingual and multicultural context, and that Translation could, therefore, be used as a tool to ensure more appropriate causal attributions and to foster better future trust and trustworthiness.

In short, from all of the above, we can say that issues of Translation were important to the 2011 disaster and could be important in future disaster contexts because trust was highly significant to how foreign residents experienced communication and information-gathering in the 2011 disaster, because Translation was sometimes a component of that trust, and because Translation has been shown to be theoretically important in how reason-based trust is formed and improved on in contexts of communication and information gathering in which more than one language or culture are involved. Furthermore, in addition to

providing an answer to the research question, this chapter has demonstrated a theory that will allow researchers to systematically interrogate how people come to trust and continue to trust translators and interpreters, and the usefulness of this theory can now be tested and empirically verified in other contexts.

*‘There is one language that all languages speak, it is called translation.’*

*Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Writer (1938-Present)*

## Chapter 7 – Conclusions

*Identifying the contribution of this thesis to academic knowledge and the prospects for further research that this contribution has created*

This final chapter begins, in Section 7.1, with an overview of the entire thesis; a summary of everything a reader needs to know to follow the arguments and narrative thrust of this research. This is followed, in Section 7.2, by a presentation of the contributions of this thesis to knowledge in empirical, methodological, and theoretical terms. Section 7.3 underscores that these contributions need to be understood within the context of their limitations, while Section 7.4 discusses the rival explanations to the final research question in this thesis that were at one time considered but then refuted in favour of the more viable explanation presented in the previous chapter. The thesis then finishes in Section 7.5 with some proposals for future research arising out of this thesis and an explanation of what will happen next in this research project.

### ***7.1 An overview of this thesis***

This thesis attempts to describe, understand, and explain the social phenomenon of Translation using the case of the community of foreign nationals resident in East Japan – a social system in which the phenomenon manifested – during the first year of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake (the 2011 disaster).<sup>50</sup> In doing so, the thesis illustrates how foreign residents communicated and gathered information and how Translation formed part of these activities during the disaster and, therefore, answers the first two research questions. It also uses a socio-cognitive theory of trust as a theoretical lens to show that Translation was, at times, relevant to how these foreign residents reasoned about trust in the disaster and could be relevant to how they decide to trust in the future. As trust can be shown to be an important category in the 2011 disaster and in other disaster contexts, this proposes an answer to the final research question in this thesis; the argument advanced is that Translation was important because of its relationship to the concept of trust.

The scope of this thesis is limited largely to the 2011 disaster. This context was chosen because of the researcher's own experience of the contextual setting; he was resident in Tokyo for the disaster. An ethnographically-informed case study, adapted from the work of Kaisa Koskinen (2008) and situated in a constructivist philosophical frame, was designed to explore the objects of enquiry within this context. Face-to-face, individual

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<sup>50</sup> The phenomena of translation and interpreting being examined in this thesis have been operationalised from Section 5.3.5 onward as Translation with an uppercase T.

interviews with 28 participants from 12 nationalities made up the core primary data gathered using this methodology. These data along with other secondary data were analysed using a form of thematic analysis operationalised from Braun and Clarke (2006).

A review of the literature on the topic of Translation in disaster situations indicated that several themes would need to be addressed in this thesis. These themes centred on the profiles of translators and interpreters in disaster settings, the practical and ethical issues that they encounter, the ways to support and improve their work, and the voluntary capacity of much of these efforts. Themes also covered the methods of communication used in disasters – especially information and communication technology (ICT) – and how they correspond to collaborative translation, machine translation (MT), and translator and interpreter training.

The main findings from the thematic analysis of the gathered data addressed these themes and showed that Translator roles and their communicative methods were, indeed, significant to the experiences of foreign residents in the 2011 disaster. Mobile phones, Facebook, and word-of-mouth were the predominant methods of communication, while television news (delivered both traditionally and online), websites, and word-of-mouth were the main methods of information gathering. Mobile phones were portable and could be recharged in multiple ways, and Facebook provided an easy method to confirm another person's safety. Television news and websites enabled foreign residents to gather information in multiple languages. At the same time, word-of-mouth helped foreign nationals to respond more effectively to the disaster, bond with the broader community, get advice in the disaster, and access useful information on which they could base their own disaster response decisions. However, problems with connectivity and power meant that mobile phones and other ICT could not be used as much as people wanted, and the conflicting impressions given by an overly calm Japanese news media and an overly sensationalistic overseas news media caused great confusion and stress for foreign residents. At the same time, language issues appeared in the data as a barrier to smooth communication, especially over public address systems and by word-of-mouth, and as a barrier to accessing the information that was being distributed through Japanese news media and websites.

The thesis also provided empirical evidence to show that Translation was not just present in this communicative scene, but that it was needed and, at times, beneficial. The thesis showed that Translation was a process of interlingual and intercultural transfer, dominated by the Japanese-English language pair, carried out mostly by volunteers known to the user, to create products that were not always received as translations, but that were valorised

when seen to produce timely information of adequate quality and when seen to come from trusted sources. The thesis showed that news, warnings over public address systems, nuclear-related information, and typical, Japanese disaster response procedures were the types of information that participants in this case study needed to have Translated. These topics were temporally relative, and information used to develop awareness of the disaster situation was the type of topic required most of all. These Translation efforts took place as part of a complex ecosystem involving a variety of actors – in particular, foreign and Japanese friends, acquaintances, and colleagues on-the-ground in the disaster zone working in a voluntary capacity – and in which communicative methods were rarely used in isolation. Nevertheless, translation technologies were found to be notable in their absence from this ecosystem.

The final argument of the thesis was to show, through abstract analysis, that Translation was important because of its relationship to the concept of trust. It argued that Translation was a part of certain people’s reasoning about trust in the 2011 disaster. Using Translation as an analytical category helped to better describe and explain how foreign residents came to trust in 19 separate instances observed in the case study data and could be used to help trustors more appropriately attribute the causes of success or failure of trust in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

## ***7.2 The contribution of this thesis to knowledge***

This thesis contributes to knowledge in three ways: empirically, methodologically, and theoretically. Along each dimension, it supports and develops existing knowledge as well as contributing new knowledge to the study of Translation in disaster situations. These contributions are summarised in Table 7–1 and discussed in detail thereafter.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The format of Table 7–1 has been adapted from Farndale (2004).

Domains of contribution	What has been supported?	What has been developed?	What is new?
<b>Empirical evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The diversity and complexity of the methods of communication and information gathering in the 2011 disaster</li> <li>* The usefulness of pre-event, event, response, and recovery as ways to map the 2011 disaster in time</li> <li>* The importance of trust in disaster-related communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The testimony of disaster-affected communities in the 2011 disaster by adding the voices of foreign residents</li> <li>* The academy's understanding of the 2011 communicative scene through a detailed presentation of how participants in this study communicated and gathered information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Evidence that Translation was not only present as a phenomenon in the disaster but, at times, needed and beneficial</li> <li>* Evidence that foreign residents were not just receivers but producers of Translation in the disaster and were involved in these acts through a variety of channels in a largely voluntary, ad-hoc capacity on-the-ground</li> <li>* A 280,000-word corpus of anonymised, member-checked disaster-related interviews and a dataset of 49 passages attesting to the viability of the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model of trust; this corpus and dataset are available for future use once the participants' ethical approval has been received</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The usefulness of the methodology outlined in Koskinen (2008) for applying an ethnographic frame to present a case study of a particular group of people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The application of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, the use of vignettes to present data, and detail on ethnographic interview techniques</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Learning points on the importance of trust and on the value but occasional impracticality of the ethnographic interview method</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The usefulness of the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) socio-cognitive theory of trust to describe and explain the phenomenon of trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The application of the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory to research questions in translation studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The idea that Translation can be proposed as a conceptual tool in the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model to create future trust in multilingual and multicultural contexts</li> <li>* A novel definition of Translation that can be used to interrogate other disaster contexts</li> </ul>

Table 7-1. Contributions to knowledge made by this thesis



### *7.2.1 Empirical contribution*

The thesis provides further empirical evidence to support the findings in other research that the methods of communication used in the 2011 disaster were diverse and interrelated in a complex ecosystem. (See, for instance, Jōhō shien purobono purattofōmu [2012], Sendai International Relations Association [2011].) It also provides empirical support for the usefulness of the way a disaster is mapped in time by WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific (2012: 58). Though the precise temporal cut-offs are arbitrary, the broader categories of pre-event, event, response, and recovery were shown to represent well the experiences of the participants in this research (see Section 4.3.3). It also underlines with its evidence from participant data that trust is an important consideration in disaster-related communication (see Section 2.4.3). By conducting face-to-face, in-depth interviews with 28 foreign residents who experienced the disaster, in addition to the researcher's own autoethnographic account of the disaster, this research documents and gives voice to the experiences of those who were affected by the 2011 disaster. Indeed, this thesis develops the overall body of Japanese disaster testimony because the voices of foreign nationals experiencing disaster in Japan are traditionally under-represented (see Sato, Okamoto, and Miyao [2009] or Takashima [2015]). The thesis also develops the academy's understanding of the 2011 communicative scene by providing detailed empirical evidence for how participants in this research communicated and gathered information and for how they evaluated these methods (see Section 4.5). The contribution of this research is novel in that it is one of the first studies of the 2011 disaster to provide empirical evidence specifically of a role for Translation in the disaster and evidence for the fact that Translation was not only present as a phenomenon in the disaster, but that it was, at times, needed by and beneficial to those who experienced the events (see Sections 5.2 and 5.5). It also provides new evidence not currently available in other literature to show that foreign residents were not just receivers but producers of Translation in the disaster, and that they were involved in Translation through a variety of channels in a largely voluntary, ad-hoc capacity on-the-ground in the disaster zone (see Sections 5.4, 5.6, and 5.7). Finally, this thesis also contributes an anonymised and member-checked corpus of interview data on the 2011 disaster (totalling more than 280,000 words) as well as a new dataset of 49 passages of anonymised interview data that represent new empirical evidence supporting the viability of the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model of trust. This corpus of disaster-related interview data and dataset on trust will be available for use in other research projects once a request for the participants' ethical approval has been made via the researcher.

### *7.2.2 Methodological contribution*

By attempting to replicate the methodology set out in Koskinen (2008), this thesis supports the idea that applying a selection of ethnographic methods and being guided by an overall ethnographic ethos to present a case study of a particular group of people is useful. In particular, the work in this thesis supports the viability of many of the ethnographic methods and practical steps applied by Koskinen, the multiple levels at which she analysed data, as well as her understanding of the roles of the researcher, the contextual dependence of the work, and the final research product (see Section 3.4.1). However, the different context and objects of enquiry in this thesis also led to some developments of Koskinen's method being made here. Specifically, this thesis showed how Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis could be applied as an analytical strategy, how vignettes could be used as a tool to present case study data, and how the ethnographic interview differs from other interview techniques (see Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3). The implementation of Koskinen's (2008) method in this thesis also presented an opportunity for new learning; it showed the importance of trust to the method and to its relationship to the emic and etic tensions inherent in any ethnographically-informed project, and it showed the value but occasional impracticality of the ethnographic interview method (see Section 3.7).

### *7.2.3 Theoretical contribution*

In terms of a contribution to theory, this thesis gives support to the idea that the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) theory of trust is a useful way to describe and explain the phenomenon of trust (see Section 6.4). Furthermore, it develops the application of this theory by demonstrating that its conceptual tools and theoretical model are useful in the domain of translation studies for examining the role of Translation in multilingual and multicultural contexts of trust (see Section 6.5.1). Finally, this thesis proposes a new conceptual tool within the model; specifically it suggests a role for Translation in multilingual and multicultural contexts in creating informed decision-makers capable of accurately attributing the causes of success or failure of instances of trust and, therefore, generating appropriate future trust (see Section 6.5.3). In addition, this thesis creates a new definition of the phenomenon of Translation in the 2011 disaster (see Section 5.3.5) that could be used as a reference for interrogating translation or interpreting in other disaster contexts.

These contributions are significant for academic and practical reasons. Academically, the contributions listed above address many of the dominant themes present in the literature on translation, interpreting, and disaster (see Section 2.3). They centre on the roles of

Translators in a disaster setting, on some of the practical and theoretical issues that were encountered in this Translation work, and on how communicative methods were used to carry out this work. As such, these contributions are likely to be of interest to those academics engaged in ongoing conversations on these topics.

Practically, a thesis which contributes to knowledge by telling us more about the communicative behaviour of a particular group of people in a disaster setting and which suggests ways in which this behaviour might be improved is going to be of value to future disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. A large-scale earthquake disaster is likely to affect Tokyo soon: researchers at Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology estimate a 70% probability of Tokyo being hit by a destructive magnitude-7-plus earthquake in the next 30 years; in contrast, researchers at the University of Tokyo's Earthquake Research Institute estimate a 70% probability for such a disaster hitting Tokyo by 2016 and raise the probability of it happening within 30 years to 98% (Tōkyō Daigaku Jishin Kenkyūsho 2012). Regardless of the accuracy of the calculations themselves, it is clear that the threat to Tokyo in the near future is high. In terms of an impact on foreign nationals, the impact of a large-scale disaster hitting Tokyo is predicted to be much larger than the one described in this research, bearing in mind that the 2011 disaster most strongly affected a less-populated, rural area of Japan. More than 400,000 foreign nationals were recorded as being officially resident in Tokyo during the 2011 disaster (E-Stat 2011), and it is estimated that some 250,000 undocumented foreign residents are not included in these figures (Takashima 2015: 33). Thus, a large-scale disaster in Tokyo will likely impact on well over half-a-million foreign nationals from more than 100 countries of origin. The significance of this issue is further increased by the fact that Tokyo will host the Olympic Games in 2020. Despite all this, a major piece of research on disaster in Japan recently translated into English, *Megaquake: How Japan and the World Should Respond* by Tetsuo Takashima (2015), claims that sufficient preparations for how to deal with these foreign nationals in Tokyo, with their embassies and consulates, and with their families and concerned loved ones during a disaster are lacking. It is hoped that the contributions to knowledge of this thesis will be used by government authorities, disaster responders, or volunteers in Japan in advance of future disasters to better imagine how foreign nationals will communicate and gather information, to envisage a more effective role for Translation in these processes, and to ensure that the information that they provide is understood, trusted, and acted upon. (In an effort to encourage such a use, this thesis will be shared with the researcher's contacts in Japanese government, in embassies in Japan, and in organisations working in the volunteer and humanitarian space; see Section 7.5.)

### ***7.3 Limitations of the thesis***

Of course, these contributions to knowledge need to be understood within the context of their limitations. This thesis is vulnerable to some criticisms. Firstly, this thesis contains no real predictive insight. Secondly, it is a small study that took place more than two years after the onset of the disaster, and the empirical support for the theoretical arguments being advanced in the thesis is even smaller. Thirdly, though ethnographically-informed, it does not include participant observation or the study of a culture. To a certain extent, each of these criticisms is valid, and each limits the significance of the overall contribution to knowledge. However, while the claims being made in the thesis must be moderated, these limitations do not prevent the thesis from advancing knowledge, as will be argued below.

#### ***7.3.1 Predictive insight***

It is true that this thesis does not attempt to predict what may happen in a future disaster in Japan or elsewhere. As was indicated in Sections 3.3.4 and 6.5.3, this research was designed as a case study to increase experiential understanding and not to represent samples or extrapolate probabilities about cause-and-effect relationships. The only generalisation it aims for is the theoretical generalisation in which its theoretical propositions and arguments can be tested in further contexts. Moreover, claims of prediction from large-scale disaster contexts need to be treated with caution. Disasters are typically non-linear, extreme events; they are outliers containing complex causal relations that cannot be understood and represented easily. Looking at just three large-scale disasters in Japanese history – the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake, and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake – we can see the difficulty involved in predicting earthquake outcomes. In the first instance, most people died in fires. In the second, most people were killed by collapsing buildings. In the third, most people were lost by drowning. Lessons were learned after each disaster and preparedness measures were improved, but still each context brought with it new threats. Thus, rather than predictive insight, prescriptive insight may be better suited to the study of disaster. This thesis is philosophically or methodically equipped to try to understand the events and their contexts deeply, to prepare categories for consideration in future disasters, to shed empirical light on important phenomena, to draw conclusions, and to give advice, but, indeed, it does not make any claims to knowing what will happen in the next great Japanese disaster.

### *7.3.2 Study size and timing*

This study is small. This was a function of the time and resources available, as well as of the aims and philosophical underpinnings of the research. It was shown in Section 3.6.5, though, that interviews with 28 research participants were suited to the study's ethnographic aims and that holding these interviews two years after the onset of the disaster was within the bounds established in other disaster studies. Of course, a small study produced small empirical support for the theoretical propositions put forward in this study: only 19 passages of interview data indicated that including Translation as components in the theoretical model would help better describe and explain the trust phenomena that were being observed (see Section 6.5.1), and only 1 passage of interview data indicated a relationship between Translation and causal attributions for trust (see Section 6.5.3). Certainly, then, these theoretical relationships can only be claimed to be tenuously supported in the data. Nevertheless, it is still claimed that the empirical and theoretical findings of this thesis have value. In the common trade-off between broad and deep research, this thesis aimed for depth. Thus, it is not the claim that this thesis represents an understanding of the experiences of all the 670,000 foreign residents who experienced the 2011 disaster. However, this thesis does claim that the one year the researcher spent analysing this small body of data that was then member-checked by the participants led to a detailed and intimate understanding of the experiences of 28 foreign residents (29 including the researcher's experience) and that this intimate understanding allowed the creation of a robust framework of analytical categories and some interesting theoretical propositions that can now be used as a basis for other research.

### *7.3.3 Participant observation and culture*

This case study has been informed by ethnography, but its methodology did not include a period of participant observation in the field and it did not aim for the study of a culture. Do these missing points invalidate its claim to being ethnographically-informed? As was shown in Section 3.2.4, to answer 'yes' to this question would be to take an impoverished view of the possibilities and potential of an ethnographic approach, and Section 3.4 showed the many ways in which this thesis has called on ethnographic methods and an ethnographic ethos. Also, while the thesis did not study a culture, it did study a social group and this was shown to be a valid type of enquiry in ethnography's social tradition. Moreover, in making these methodological explorations, this thesis has contributed to the academic discussion of how case study and ethnographic methodologies can be used to answer research questions in the domain of translation studies.

## **7.4 Rival explanations**

The narrative thrust of this thesis came to be that trust was an important part of the communicative scene in the 2011 disaster for the foreign residents in this study and that, as Translation had a role to play in that trust, the phenomenon of Translation could be said to have been important, too. This explanation has been shown in this thesis to be a viable one but – working in a constructivist paradigm (see Section 3.5) – this should not be seen to be the only possible explanation. Other rival explanations were considered but were deemed to be less viable. These other explanations stemmed from some of the other dominant themes that were developed over the stages of analysis in this research and will be briefly outlined here.

### **7.4.1 News translation**

News appeared regularly as a theme in the interview data. This can be seen especially in the early phases of coding, when units of meaning relating to framing and sensationalism were valued (see the thematic map represented in Figures 3–2 and 3–3.). News media were significant to these meanings, and an idea at these earlier phases could have been to argue for the importance of Translation by showing the role that it played in the news cycle or in how news was received or created during the 2011 disaster. The topic of news translation is relatively developed in translation studies (see, for instance, Davier [2014], Doorslaer [2010], Schäffner [2010], or Van Rooyen [2013]) and it is likely that conceptual tools and theoretical frameworks to perform abstract analysis around this theme would have been available. However, while there were ample data in the interviews concerning the reception of news and some of the issues brought about by the presence, absence, or quality of the Translation of this news, there were no data available to the researcher on the process of creation of news in the disaster. In addition, as the codes around news related to meanings such as sensationalism and framing, it seemed as if the theme of trust overarched news translation and would be a more viable way to answer the final research question.

### **7.4.2 Ethics**

Another strong theme that could have contended to be a rival explanation for the importance of Translation was ethics. Ethics is a lively topic in academic debate in translation studies (see, for example, Pym [2012] or Venuti [1998]) and there would have been theoretical concepts from these debates that could have been drawn on in the abstract analysis in this thesis. With this in mind, then, would it have been viable to make an ethical argument that Translation was important in the 2011 disaster because it is right that all

people affected by a disaster – whatever their linguistic or cultural background – should have equal access to communication and information? Certainly, an ethical question arose from the fact that foreign residents in this study experienced linguistic and cultural barriers (see Section 5.5). If a basic principle of emergency information is that it should be delivered in terms clear to the recipients (Auf Der Heide 1989), then it would seem that this ethical principle was being contravened. Further coding relating to units of meaning such as the relevance of polyglotism or pictorial rather than verbal communication to some of the participants' experiences (see the thematic map represented in Figures 3–2 and 3–3) began to put into question whether Translation was the only means by which to make emergency information clear to the recipients. Would encouraging foreign residents of Japan to learn Japanese or would using pictures, icons, or other non-verbal communication tools be better ethical choices? In this research project, the answer to this question turned out to be 'no'. Firstly, even those who could speak Japanese well still experienced linguistic and cultural barriers (see Tables 5–1 or 5–6 where participants who evaluated their Japanese abilities highly still experienced barriers).<sup>52</sup> Secondly, while pictorial representations of disaster-related information were praised as effective by some (e.g., Participants 2 and 5), they were criticised by others for being unclear (Participant 15), disturbing (Participant 13), or interculturally ineffective (Participant 24). Once again, then, using the concept of trust appeared to be a more viable way to answer the final research question.

### 7.4.3 *Translation ecology*

The final dominant theme whose explanatory power for this thesis came to be refuted revolves around the emerging concept of translation ecology. Proposed by Cronin (2003) as a way for translation to protect the indigenous knowledge and conceptual tools of minority languages, it was taken up as a theoretical construct by scholars mainly in China, and in particular by Xu (2009) in his book of the same name. This Chinese scholarship moved the concept more toward a study of how the mechanisms of translation interact with their surrounding environment and how ecological processes can be used as ways to analyse translation phenomena (see Cao [2011] for more on this). The analogy of an ecosystem appeared in the interview data (see Participant 13) and was taken up again in subsequent analysis, especially in relation to the complex ways in which foreign residents communicated and gathered information in the disaster and the complex ways in which

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<sup>52</sup> Specifically, from Table 5–6 we can see that Participant 12 (whose self-evaluated Japanese skill was 27/40), Participant 5 (whose self-evaluated Japanese skill was 26/40), Participant 6 (whose self-evaluated Japanese skill was 24/40), and Participant 2 (whose self-evaluated Japanese skill was 23/40) all still spoke in their interviews of experiencing linguistic or cultural barriers.

these communicative methods interrelated (see Section 5.7.5). Thus, a potential answer to why Translation was important in the 2011 disaster could have been that it was important because, when it was absent, the communicative ecosystem for foreign residents in the disaster broke down. There were two problems, though, with pursuing this argument. Firstly, the conceptual tools with which to make it were, at the time of writing, largely available only in Chinese, a language the researcher does not speak. Secondly, and more significantly, units of meaning relating to ecosystems or other ecological mechanisms appeared much less frequently and much less compellingly in the data than meanings related to trust. As a result, an answer to the third research question using the concept of translation ecology was refuted in favour of one centring on the phenomenon of trust.

In conclusion, while this section showed that these other major themes in the data were not appropriate ways to answer the research questions at this time in this thesis, they do suggest avenues for future research. Identifying potential trajectories for future work arising out of this research involving these and other themes will be dealt with in the following final section.

### **7.5 Future work**

A first proposal for future work is to test the theoretical relationship between Translation and trust in another context to see if it is a viable way to describe and explain the phenomena observed in another disaster. As was explained in Section 3.6.5, the researcher travelled to New Zealand in the course of this project and, therefore, the 2010/2011 Canterbury Earthquakes would constitute a logical next case and could provide interesting comparative data.

A second proposal arises out of the finding in this study that those people engaged in Translation were often volunteers on-the-ground working in an ad-hoc capacity. This suggests a need for translation scholars to think of ways to better support Translators working in ad-hoc capacities without the usual professional supports. For instance, simple improvements like the greater availability of multilingual disaster-related wordlists, term bases, or translation memory and MT tools at local governments and linked NPOs in Japan would likely be effective. Similarly, a greater awareness of technologies to allow Translators to work and collaborate at a distance might also allow for more Translation on-the-ground in disaster situations in Japan. More importantly, though, there is a need to make disaster response teams and other officials more aware of the importance of Translation to the work that they do and to train them to work more effectively with Translators. This is a contribution that the discipline of translation studies could make in



preparation for a future large-scale disaster in Japan. Indeed, including Translators in the planning of international interventions in Japan and elsewhere could help to mitigate some of the linguistic and cultural barriers that have been highlighted in this research.

A third proposal is to look in more detail at the process of news translation in Japan with respect to disaster. This study has revealed that the reception of television and radio news was problematic in the 2011 disaster. An ethnographically-informed study of a Japanese media outlet's disaster response procedures (or, equally, the response of an overseas outlet based in Japan) could reveal important information about the role Translation plays / could play / should play in disaster situations. Linked to this, the present research has shown that emergency warnings delivered over television and public address systems in Japan were significant but, at times, linguistically or culturally lacking. Studies on the intercultural reception of warnings (especially in relation to culturally-bound features such as the use of sound, colour, and image) could be beneficial. One suggestion is to use eye-tracking technology or human-computer interaction studies to better understand how existing Japanese emergency warnings are received by foreign nationals and to understand whether or not they could be improved.

A final proposal for future research is to attempt to establish on a broader scale whether Translation is, indeed, more ethically appropriate than polyglotism or than pictorial and other non-verbal forms of communication in disaster settings. This study was small and was not philosophically or methodologically equipped to generalise to populations or universes. What it did do was to create frames for questioning and interrogating data. Within this frame, it could be shown that Translation was preferable to learning Japanese or to using non-verbal forms in communicating with the foreign residents in this case study. However, future studies of Translation in disaster settings would hold greater weight if it could be shown on a broader scale that, indeed, Translation is to be preferred to other solutions in multilingual and multicultural disaster communication.

In practical terms, one final step in this research project remains: to distribute the findings of this research outside of the academy. The findings of this research could be used to build on the steps that have already been taken since 2011 to improve the linguistic and cultural support available to foreign residents of Japan during disasters. Such improvements include: the research being undertaken at Hirosaki University into a form of controlled language called 'Easy Japanese' for use in disaster-related communication; the disaster-related information being made available in multiple languages through the collaborative translation facilitated by the 'Minna no Hon'yaku' platform; the free interpreting services over a dedicated helpline targeted at foreign residents in times of disaster being sponsored

by the Japan National Tourism Organization.<sup>53</sup> To add, then, to such efforts, English-language and Japanese-language executive summaries of the present thesis will be prepared and shared with the researcher's contacts in Japanese local government and NPOs (in Tokyo, Sendai, and Nagoya), in embassies in Japan (currently the embassies of the 12 nationalities represented in this study), in the Japanese National Tourist Office, the Japanese National Institute of Information and Communications Technology, and the Japanese Fire and Disaster Management Agency. These documents will briefly present the thesis and its findings in an effort to convince these parties that Translation was needed and beneficial in the 2011 disaster and that it could help better support Japan's growing population of foreign residents in future disasters. More importantly, the summaries will provide practical recommendations on how to better communicate with and provide information to foreign residents in a disaster. The summaries will include the following main recommendations:

- *Use long-term foreign residents as a resource in your strategies for disaster-related communication.* Newly- and recently-arrived foreign nationals looked to long-term foreign residents for support in the 2011 disaster. They did so because these long-term residents were regarded as trustworthy, possessed linguistic, cultural, and locally-specific knowledge, and were on-the-ground in places where other mediators were unavailable. See long-term foreign residents as a network of first contact points; coordinate with embassies or consulates in Japan to provide these long-term residents with disaster-related information that they can distribute in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways to the wider foreign community.
- *Do not focus your communicative strategy on optimising only one or several methods of communication.* Information in the 2011 disaster passed through a complex ecosystem of multiple and diverse communicative methods, and some well-established methods like radio programmes and government websites were not used by participants in this research. Rather than expending resources to optimise one method for communicating information to foreign residents, ensure that messages can be tailored easily to simultaneous distribution through multiple channels and ensure that redundancy is built into the strategy; if one method fails or becomes blocked, another method should be in place to take up the slack.

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<sup>53</sup> The work on 'Easy Japanese' at Hirosaki University is explained here <http://human.cc.hirosaki-u.ac.jp/kokugo/tagengoenglish.html>; the ways in which information can be translated using the resources available at Minna no Hon'yaku is explained here <http://en.trans-aid.jp/index.php/stat/aboutus>; a pamphlet explaining the translation services being sponsored by the Japanese National Tourist Office is available here <http://www.jnto.go.jp/jpn/downloads/FreeTranslation.pdf> [Accessed 15 May 2015].

- *Ensure that embassies in Japan, Japanese local authorities, and local multilingual support centres have necessary disaster-related information.* Publicising and ensuring access to information in a disaster is as important as its production. Many useful Translated resources were not known about by foreign residents in the 2011 disaster. If Translated information is made available to the three parties listed here, and if these parties cooperate and share information with each other, the chance of foreign residents experiencing linguistic and cultural barriers will be reduced.
- *Put measures in place to support the work of volunteer Translators.* Much Translation in the 2011 disaster was carried out by volunteers working in ad-hoc capacities without the usual professional supports. Prepare multilingual disaster-related wordlists and term bases – especially including relevant scientific and nuclear terminology – as well as manuals on how to use free, online translation memory and MT tools. Store these resources at embassies, local authorities, and local multilingual support centres. These resources will then be available to help volunteers work more speedily, consistently, and collaboratively. Furthermore, train disaster response teams and other officials on how to work with volunteer Translators, and prepare mental health care for these volunteers, who will be as stressed and vulnerable as the people they are setting out to help.
- *Focus on adequate rather than high levels of quality in Translation.* The need for speedy Translated information surpassed the need for quality Translated information in the 2011 disaster. Focus on reducing institutional impediments to the fast production of Translated information (e.g., multiple checks before publication) and consider the implementation of the technologies listed in the prior bullet point to increase speed, improve consistency, and facilitate collaboration in Translation.
- *Consider the importance of trust when developing your strategies for disaster-related communication.* Trust was extremely important to how foreign residents experienced the 2011 disaster, especially in guiding their information-gathering activities and their decisions on how to respond to the disaster. Moreover, Translation was found to be an element in their reasoning about whether to trust people and information or not. When developing your disaster-related communication for foreign residents, Translate not only the message but also include the source of the information and why it should be trusted; this will better inform the foreign residents and help move them toward a decision to trust you.
- *Make provision for Translation over all the phases of a disaster from pre-event, to event, to response, and then on to recovery.* Translating emergency warnings and instructions is important and beneficial and receives a relatively large amount of

attention. However, foreign residents continued to experience linguistic and cultural barriers long after the 2011 disaster had moved into the recovery phase, especially in terms of understanding the overall disaster situation, carrying out various important administrative procedures, and accessing support.

- *Include reasons when giving foreign residents instructions about how to respond to a disaster.* It was not only linguistic barriers that impacted on the experiences of foreign residents of the 2011 disaster. Cultural barriers were a significant feature, too, and this was true even for long-term foreign residents. Do not assume that foreign residents will approach disasters with the frames of reference or manners of response that would be characteristic of Japanese nationals. Basic instructions (e.g., to stay indoors during an earthquake) may be culturally unfamiliar or counterintuitive to foreign residents. Including reasons for these actions (e.g., to stay indoors because modern Japanese buildings can withstand shaking up to X threshold and because the risk of injury increases outdoors) may help to convince foreign residents of the appropriateness of the instructions.
- *See any community-building activity as an element of disaster preparation.* Trusted friends and colleagues carried out much of the Translation in the 2011 disaster and supported other foreign residents in their response and recovery. Thus, any efforts made to strengthen the bonds of community or to forge the links between foreign and Japanese residents and among foreign residents themselves will benefit disaster preparation and response.

Distributing these executive summaries outside the academy is important to this research because, to quote Koskinen (2010):

No matter how interesting [the] findings scientific Translation Studies can unearth, no matter how sharply critical Translation Studies reflects on the foundations of TS research programmes and on the state of the art in the professional world, none of this is of much value unless we are able to communicate these beyond our own small cadre of TS scholars. (Koskinen 2010: 23)

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*NOTICE REGARDING ETHICAL APPROVAL*

The interview transcripts and all other datasets in these appendices may only be re-used in further research with the express permission and ethical approval of the relevant research participants.

Please contact the researcher at

[patrick.cadwell2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:patrick.cadwell2@mail.dcu.ie)

to make the necessary arrangements.

Thank you.

***APPENDIX A: Research Ethics Committee letter of approval***

Dr. Sharon O'Brien  
School of Applied Languages & Intercultural Studies

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013

**REC Reference:** DCUREC/2013/146

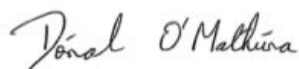
**Proposal Title:** Translation in Crisis: an Ethnographically-Informed Study of the Linguistic Needs of Foreign Nationals in the Great East Japan Earthquake

**Applicants:** Dr. Sharon O'Brien, Mr. Patrick Cadwell

Dear Sharon,

Further to review, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal. Materials used to recruit participants should note that ethical approval for this project has been obtained from the Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee. Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Donal O'Mathuna  
Chairperson  
DCU Research Ethics Committee



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***APPENDIX B: Topics sent to participants prior to interview***



Below are the four main topics that I hope to cover in our talk together. I have included some questions for each topic to illustrate how our conversation might develop.

**A. Your experiences of communication and information gathering:**

1. Tell me about your experience of the 2011 disaster in Japan.
2. How did you communicate with the important people in your life during the disaster?
3. How did you find out information about the things you needed during the disaster?
4. How did power and connectivity affect your ability to communicate?
5. What websites provided information specifically to foreigners in the disaster?
6. What were your thoughts on social media before the disaster? Did that opinion change following the disaster?
7. Were there aspects of the disaster that you feel you did not get enough information about?

**B. Your links to your local community in Japan**

8. Did you feel part of your local community in Japan before the disaster?
9. Were you aware of any slogans designed to build community response after the disaster?
10. Were you aware of any other efforts to build community response after the disaster?
11. Before the events of 2011, how prepared did you feel for a natural disaster?
12. What disaster information had your local authorities (neighbourhood association, ward office, city office, etc.) given you before the disaster?
13. What contact did you receive from your local authorities (neighbourhood association, ward office, city office, etc.) after the onset of the disaster?
14. Is there anything that would have made you feel better-prepared for the disaster in 2011?

**C. General:**

15. Is there anything else you'd like to mention in relation to experiences or needs in 2011 or your feelings of community in Japan?

**D. Your feelings on the research process:**

16. How did talking about your experience of the 2011 disaster today make you feel?
17. What benefits or burdens do you think talking about your experience of the disaster could bring to you, if any?

***APPENDIX C: Anonymised and abridged log of data gathering***

2013/7/1

Made first request for interviews [to pilot participants] today. Was nervous to push the send button. Need to rethink how to say I am only interviewing people over the age of 20. Feel afraid that I will only get participants in Tokyo and tried to send signal to [redacted] that I'm looking to meet people who were farther north. [redacted] I found myself editing the emails I sent - wherever I put 'interview', I changed it to things like 'speak to' or 'talk with'. [redacted] This could be interesting to talk about in terms of methodology.

2013/7/2

I messaged [redacted] (administrator of a Facebook Group) to ask his permission to directly message members of the group to ask for interviews. I have realised that the only way I will have to guess who might still be based in Japan is by the information open on their Facebook pages. I have been quite surprised at how much information people share publicly. I was also struck by how many Japanese names there are on the list of members. I will have to avoid these and possibly use only when another bicultural name appears or by their avatar. This could be an interesting point for my definition of foreignness.

2013/7/3

Received my first pilot interview confirmation today. [redacted] will meet me [redacted]. Her email said, "I was based in Tokyo so won't have been as affected as people in the immediate area (I looked at your questions), but am happy to meet with you." This indicates that she is already making some assumptions about what I am looking for and what will be useful to me, based on how I have phrased my interview topics. I may need to think about what it is in the list of interview topics and questions that is causing this, and prepare to nudge her to consider whether her situation might have been more relevant to my research than she thinks. I told her that I was interested in talking to people based in Tokyo as a comparison with those further north. I also made another request for interview to [redacted]. I found that I wanted to take charge of the location because I was going to another city. I also wanted to try to get somewhere quieter than the cafe suggested by [the first pilot participant].

2013/7/4

Received my second pilot interview confirmation today. [redacted] will meet me in hotel in [redacted]. So happy he has confirmed as he was right in the disaster zone in Furukawa. He happens to be in Japan right now, so I said in my mail about him introducing me to other foreigners in Japan in the hope that he may mention my project while he is over there. I am really nervous each time I ask some sort of favour like this from participants. I feel that the whole project is so fragile at this stage that if I annoy even one person with my demands, the whole thing could fall apart. [redacted] came back to me saying that his contacts would all be Tokyo-based, but he also suggested contacting a former DCU student, [redacted], who is now in Iwate. This could be a really good gatekeeper for me, so I mailed him immediately at his old dcu address. I am concerned he won't get my mail at this address, but I will tweet him if I hear nothing in a few weeks. I am again a bit shocked at how much private information you can quickly find about people online - one google search and I had his whole CV. Again, I was concerned that I might be pushing too hard, but I feel I need to overcome this natural tendency not to want to ask for help. I am going to need lots of help to get these interviews done, so I had better get used to asking. Still no word from [redacted] over Facebook. If I hear nothing from him by mid-July, I will start messaging other members of the group even though he, as administrator, will not have given his permission. I feel this is all a bit ethically grey, but the people I will message all have open facebook profiles and I will not force anyone to answer and they will be able to drop out at any time. I also tried to track down [redacted] in Sendai was at the time. I found him and he still works for [in Japan]. I felt like a real stalker trying to get his contact details. I will write a physical letter to him directly as the email addresses all seemed to be some central destination. I was afraid my contact would not get to him or would be filtered

through institutional rules and regulations. I hope to talk to him in a private capacity. [redacted]

2013/7/5

As I have not received any response from [redacted] (two cold-call contacts), I am considering opening up my Facebook profile more, using my real name and photo and including some DCU-related information as a way of perhaps bartering trust. I am wondering if they are having difficulty establishing any sort of credentials for me because I have such a guarded online presence. I am thinking that I need to give a little more if I am expecting to receive. I am also struggling with writing the physical letter to [redacted] - I want to use DCU official logos etc to make my request for an interview look more formal, but I am afraid that this will misrepresent my intentions or make him more reluctant to commit to talking to me. I cannot yet imagine where on the official-to-personal cline my approaches will turn out to be most effective.

2013/7/8

I posted the letter to [redacted] in Sendai. I am really holding out a lot of hope that he will agree to speak with me. I think he could be a great gatekeeper to other foreigners in Sendai and to the local government and NPOs based there. I think the fact that he has given seminars and done interviews could go either way for me - he may be tired of talking about his experiences. Also, contacting him directly at work could be seen as an intrusion, but I have no other way of contacting him. I hope that the letter will look formal but inviting and that the inclusion of a reference to developing new translation tools as an aim of the project might help it seem that talking to me could be useful and different (even if this aim is really a far off, abstract one at this stage - though I made it sound more concrete purposely). I contacted all my [old work colleagues]. I really didn't want any link between my former life and this project, but I am truly afraid that I will not get any interviewees to speak to. I know that some of the people [redacted] may have appropriate contacts. The cost to me is that they will probably tell others in [redacted] about my trip. [redacted] I'm still struggling to think how I might get access to the US military. Think the American Forces Network might be a better target, but it is hard to find contact information, bearing in mind that the offices and websites are run from government departments in the US - the walls seem pretty high and the likelihood of reaching a Japanese representative pretty low. [redacted] My trip to New Zealand to work with [redacted] was confirmed. [redacted]

2013/7/9

I got two responses to my requests for introductions: [redacted] sound really interesting - in Tokai, Aussie and Hawaiian. They might have really interesting things to say. Both guys are married to Japanese women, live in Japan, and have been there for ~20 years and ~10 years respectively. They are both fluent in Japanese. I really hope these interviews take place. I'm more taken now with the idea of trying to meet people in a variety of locations throughout East Japan to get multiple perspectives. [redacted] Reworked my interview topic and question sheet. Found myself making them much more explicit and full of prompts. I guess that as the time approaches, I'm more afraid that the participants will not talk about what I want them to talk about, so leaving the topics vague and the control of the research setting so much in their hands is becoming more difficult for me. I am trying to compromise by leaving the main topics as is, but adding notes to myself for follow-up questions or prompts. In addition, I added questions more specifically about social media now that a trip to New Zealand has been confirmed. I found myself getting really stressed trying to book flights to Japan and New Zealand. The stress is coming from not wanting to spend too much money, not wanting to be in the field too long, but still trying to keep flexibility so that I can respond to spontaneous chances. [redacted]

2013/7/10

I booked my tickets for Japan and New Zealand today. It was a frustrating experience. I was trying to accommodate so many agendas (the need to have sufficient data before going to New Zealand, the need to be in New Zealand enough working days to make it look like I'm going there to work not holiday, trying to get a ticket that was not outrageously expensive and that I would be able to afford if my funding falls through). [redacted]

2013/7/11

Only word on potential interviewees today was from [redacted]. Though she will try to help me, she feels she does not know many foreigners who were in Japan in 2011. I mentioned how even one extra person could snowball into other introductions in the hope that she will try. [redacted] I made up *meishi* in English and Japanese today. I found myself trying to put the focus on me as an individual researcher and not representing the university officially. I do not want people to think I am employed by the university, though I do want my cards to look professional and somewhat official.

2013/7/12

[redacted] came through and has introduced me to [redacted] in Tokyo and [redacted] (who is Australian[redacted] in Katsuta and Mito. [redacted] I spent almost the whole day trying to word an e-mail to [redacted] in [redacted] University to arrange a meeting and get introductions to more potential participants and to try to get an introduction to Miyagi International Association. I was going to write directly to MIA, but I feel that my contact might have a better chance through some gatekeeper in Sendai as MIA is under a government umbrella. I hope that [redacted] knows someone or can help in some way. I really want to get to talk to MIA now as they have published a detailed report of all their activities in the disaster and it features lots of feedback from foreigners themselves - more so than some of the other reports I have read. But what took all the time in the e-mail was trying to come up with the right wording for the conditions I need the interview participants to meet. I wanted to say 日系人 but I was afraid that it might have a derogatory or negative feeling like 在日. In the end I got [redacted]'s advice and settled on cumbersome but neutral expressions. I did not get a native Japanese speaker to check my final e-mail because I feel if there are mistakes or odd expressions, it will remind them that I am a foreigner trying to speak their language and they might see me more kindly. However, I don't want to risk major miscommunication or offence, so not getting things proof read is a risk.

2013/7/16

[redacted] and [redacted] from [redacted] University came back to me. [redacted] seemed to have no help to offer but still wants to meet with me. [redacted], however, said he should have a few foreigners to introduce to me and asked me to give him some time to sort out a possible introduction to MIA. I am really glad I asked now as I had wondered whether I was being too forward. But I feel he could be a possible entry point to talking to someone in MIA. Still no response from [redacted]. I think I will change my Facebook profile to my real name and photo and try contacting [members of the Facebook group] once my profile is more open. [redacted] I am finding it hard to keep asking for help and favours but it is likely to be through the favours that I get the best / most results.

2013/7/18

[redacted] in Sendai agreed to speak to me and introduced me to his colleague in Sendai with a view to introducing even more potential participants. I feel this is a big win for me and gives me more confidence that I will have data from people who were right in the thick of things, not just in Tokyo. It shows the value of cyber stalking as I found [redacted]'s work address to send him the letter by following down various threads of his online presence. Otherwise, I would have had no way of contacting him directly and would have missed out on this opportunity. I'm meeting with my first pilot interview participant [redacted] today. I'm nervous. I'm particularly worried about running over time as she has scheduled the interview during her working day. If possible, I should try to meet people

outside office hours to feel more relaxed about how long the interview will run. I will have a post-interview evaluation sheet of how I think things went in a separate document.

2013/7/19

I woke to find that [redacted] had mailed me back via Facebook. This again feels like a big win. I am so glad that I waited and didn't contact others in the group without his approval. He said that my mail had gone into Facebook's secret 'other' folder that no-one seems to look at. I was taken aback by his strong caution about contacting people who had experienced the disaster. "As for me, I don't mind. I was here and I also volunteered up north. I'd be glad to talk about anything you're interested in. Mind you, quite a bit of it (for anyone who went through it and saw the worst of it) is extremely emotional, even now, and not easy to talk about. For some people it is inappropriate to ask too many questions. I myself might find it very difficult to talk about certain aspects and might refuse to open up about those things. It was an awful experience, something that a lot of us would prefer to forget. Please do keep that in mind, especially since you won't see any of the damage anymore and it might physically seem as if everything has returned to normal. But the emotional damage is still very much there." Along with the emotional aspect to yesterday's interview with [redacted], it makes me even more grateful to the REC for making me think deeply about the mental health aspects of this research project. I think I may have taken it lightly at first, but now that it has started I am starting to see that it was a damaging experience for many people. It was interesting how being able to then say in a further email to [redacted] that I myself experienced the disaster and was trying to be aware of people's boundaries and emotional health changed the tone of our interaction. "To give you some background, I was living and working in Tokyo at the time of the 2011 disaster, and it had a significant impact on my personal and professional life. Based on this experience, I will do my best to be sensitive to the well-being and conscious of the boundaries of any person who agrees to speak with me. But I am very grateful to you for taking this care and giving this caution to a researcher that contacted you out of the blue. I have tried to put in place a few mechanisms to be respectful of the people who speak with me. The interviews that I have done so far (with people who experienced the earthquake but are now home in Ireland) have been conversations where the interviewee has had a lot of control over the direction of the conversation. I have attached a list of topics that I use as a guideline, but really I usually only manage the first question and then just occasionally follow-up or probe about some of the other topics on this list related to communication, information and community. Also, all participants in the research will be kept anonymous to the best of my ability and can drop out at any time up until I submit my thesis. Finally, all participants will receive a near-to-final version of the document to read before I submit to ensure that they are comfortable with how I have represented their voices." It is very interesting how valuable being able to include my own lived experience has been to breaking down some barriers and building trust with participants has been. I am feeling guilt, however, at how much more my participants have done to volunteer and be part of the response that I did. [redacted]

2013/7/24

I spent the last three days transcribing my interview with [the first pilot participant]. It took much longer than I thought. However, despite being slow going, I felt it was productive because I was already making initial reflections on the data as I went along. I think these first impressions could end up being very useful. I added these first reflections to my interview record sheet. I tried a variety of methods: reading the slowed audio that I listened to over earphones to the Dragon Dictation free voice recognition app and then tidying up; listening to the slowed audio and typing with no stopping; listening to the slowed audio and starting and stopping every few words. Whichever I did, I seemed to take about 1 hour to transcribe 5 minutes of audio to a level of formatting etc that I was happy with. I feel the typing as I listen, stop, start will work best when I'm at my desk, and the voice recognition app will be best in the field - I will be able to do it on my phone and use the down time I

will have waiting for trains, etc. I am getting nervous now that fewer people than I hope will interview with me. After all those big wins where people expressed a willingness to be interviewed, I have since not had any contact from any of them confirmed a day to meet. Maybe it is still too far off. But after the euphoria of last week thinking I'd get 20 or more participants, I'm now downgrading my expectations to 10, if I'm lucky. [redacted]

2013/8/6

The transcription was time-consuming and draining again for the interview I did with [the second pilot participant]. More so because it was nearly double the length of [redacted]'s interview. Still I think I got some interesting data, and listening intently as I typed did help me spot some points I had missed initially. I feel that the ethnographic-interview style of leaving so much control in the participant's hands is a gamble, but it means I have a much richer context to their answers, and they give me data that I wasn't even expecting but that I think will be useful. I put a few more feelers out for potential participants today. I met [redacted] for lunch and he said he might know someone who was in Tokyo for the disaster and who is now back in Ireland who might be interested in speaking to me. Also, [redacted] put a message out on Facebook to former DCU students saying that any appropriate candidates should contact me. Finally, I contacted two people on the [redacted] Facebook Group: [redacted] I contacted only these two because they were the only members of the group for whom I could use their profiles to establish that they were in Japan at the time of the disaster and now appear to be in East Japan (further north than Tokyo as I think I will have enough Tokyo participants).

2013/8/8

[redacted] (formerly of the [redacted] Embassy) got back to me and agreed to meet. I was very surprised at this and feel like it's a big bonus. I'm interested in hearing his more institutional perspective. It was interesting, though, that he said he was happy to meet and talk about his "personal experiences" of the earthquake. Wondering if this was a signal that he could not / would not talk policy, I made sure to highlight in my return mail how much control I want to give participants of the conversation. [redacted] So many of my results so far have come from a mixture of luck, good timing and following up on potential leads quickly.

2013/8/12

Came in today to a surprise reply on Facebook from [redacted] (in Ibaraki). As happened with [redacted], because we aren't friends on Facebook, my message to her went in to her "Other" folder and was not noticed by her for a long time. This is a disadvantage of trying to contact people out-of-the-blue via Facebook and may be a reason why [redacted] never got back to me. [redacted]

2013/8/14

I had a Skype call with [my contact at the University of Auckland] today (9pm my time). It was really useful in the sense that he will organize a seminar for me and introduce me to people in Christchurch who may have interesting views on translation and disaster. However, I definitely felt deflated after. I thought I had my methodology down pretty well, but I did a bad job of explaining it to him. [redacted]

2013/8/19

[redacted] my friend from Japan was in Dublin for one night. We would have had time to record an interview for sure, but I did not want to ask him when he was tired after a day of meetings. I would prefer to talk to him at ease and get as much detail as possible in an unpressured way as I can when in Japan. It was funny, but I told him that I would not speak to him casually about the research as I did not want him to start talking about his experiences while I was not recording. This is a definite issue for ethnography - especially

when you start to know your participants in other ways outside the research setting.  
[redacted]

2013/8/25

[redacted] forwarded me a mail from one of the DCU graduates that she had put the call out to on Facebook. This person, [redacted], seems willing to speak with me. My concern is that I do not know where she was located during the disaster, nor do I know where she is now. I hope that she will have been somewhere that is in my target area and not in the west of Japan. I have contacted her with these questions and will arrange to meet her once she meets the criteria.

2013/8/27

I am starting to feel nervous that the Sendai interviewees will not transpire and that my study will end up being weakened by its bias outside the worst of the disaster zone. [redacted] As it happens, the very day I get nervous about Sendai, I get an e-mail from [redacted] in [redacted] University just asking about the dates of my trip and offering help. I quickly replied that I hope to see him while I am in Sendai and sent out the hint again that I would love introductions to more foreigners.

2013/8/29

[redacted] got back to me and said he could introduce me to 5 foreigners in Miyagi: 3 from Monoglia, 1 from China and 1 from Bangladesh. I am really interested to hear an Asian perspective on the disaster and I think having Asian voices will strengthen my aim of representation. However, it is a sign of my own bias (and perhaps of my view of the demographics of the foreign community in Japan) that I am worried that these people will not be able to speak English. I must prepare questions in Japanese just in case. (However, ideas of accuracy and correspondence with the English versions could be a problem. Perhaps an ethnographic-style interview with the interviewee in control could mitigate this.) [redacted]

2013/8/31

Presenting a poster at EST 2013 in Germersheim turned out to be really useful for my project. I really believe that many of the people who ended up looking at my poster and talking to me would never have come to a full presentation of mine with all the competing parallel sessions going on that would likely be more related to their disciplinary interests. In the end, I think a poster was the best possible form of communication for me and such a wide-ranging conference. As it turned out, too, I was able to get introductions to two new research participants [redacted] in Japan just by having people with no link to Japan or disaster studies, etc. just coming by and saying, "Oh I have a friend who was in Japan at the time - I'll introduce you." And then they did follow through. This experience has made me aware again of the benefit of talking to anyone and everyone about your research - you never know where a potential contact or some inspiration could arise. It has also made me see the great positive effect of follow-through. I have made a vow to send on things or make introductions from now on whenever I promise to.

2013/9/6

I had an interesting experience today while booking hotels for my trip in Japan. Up till now, I have pretty much been booking the cheapest places I could find. But then when I was looking in Sendai, I had found a place that seemed good, but then I noticed from the map that it was near the water. And suddenly, I didn't want to stay there anymore. It really was an almost subconscious process - I saw the blue on the Google map and something said, "Stop! Think!" I then tried to get past this somewhat emotional reaction and thought calmly about the real chance of there being a problem staying near the water when in Sendai. But I guess I have just read so much about how destructive the tsunami was that I just couldn't think calmly and ended up booking a hotel nearer the centre of town.



2013/9/10

[redacted] came back to me with two friends of his who might be willing to answer my questions. I was especially eager to talk to one guy who was in Fukushima at the time with a group of German students. I really think he could have an interesting perspective that could really shed light on translation issues. I also signed up to volunteer for two days in Ishinomaki with the charity [redacted]. I think this will be a real chance for me to make some small contribution to the recovery effort, but it will also allow me to experience one of the worst-affected areas first hand and may even allow me to meet more potential research participants. [redacted] I am starting to wish that I had not told so many people that I may have up to 25 or 30 participants now. I feel I may have created expectations in those around me that such a large number will end up actually talking to me. I think it would be quite natural if not all the people who have expressed in or agreed to an interview turn up on the day. There are just so many other factors to take into account - scheduling problems, their motivation, the weather, etc. Anyway, I am trying to remain positive and will not turn down any possible interview chance, even though I am also starting to wonder how I will fit all these people spread around the country in. [redacted] I decided to contact the AFN as well as the Tokyo Metropolitan and Aichi Prefectural Governments to request a language-provider side viewpoint. I also found out that [redacted] had tried to inform me of a potential interviewee via the [redacted] message board. I hadn't checked the board since early August so I was annoyed with myself for missing this. But it all worked out as she still sent me the person's e-mail address and I apologized for my oversight.

2013/9/17

I arrived in Japan on time. I did think that if I had not had previous experience of travelling a lot in Japan and did not speak Japanese that this data gathering trip would be almost impossible. So much time would be wasted on the practicalities of travelling in Japan that no time would be left for interviews!

2013/9/18

I felt very calm about meeting [redacted] as my first interview in Japan and it was great to have something to aim for the first proper day in Japan. I arranged to meet [redacted] at the Starbucks at the Shinjuku Southern Terrace and used the time waiting to check my e-mails. We went to another indoor Starbucks for our interview in the nearby Meads Building. I noticed in the building that the bousai centre sign was only written in Japanese, so I guess my eyes have switched from sightseeing to researching. [redacted] I made phone calls to the people I was hoping to meet in the coming days. Again, it takes way more contacts to schedule and tie people down than I thought it would and this needs to be put in future methodologies. Be ready for lots of work and lots of trying to just get people to confirm a time and place and try and make it as easy as possible for them while also trying to ensure a good time and location for your interview. I walked to Shibuya to scope out where I was due to meet [redacted]. I prepared the documents for the interview in a nearby Veloce and went to Hachiko in Shibuya to wait for [redacted]. There were many foreigners waiting there too. I had told [redacted] by mail what I was wearing, but I had no idea what he looked like. I thought a few people standing around could have been him and I started to worry that we had missed each other when it got to about 10 minutes past our meeting time. [redacted] I took [redacted] to the same coffee shop I had been in earlier for our interview and it turned out to be a bit of a disaster. I was also starting to feel quite jet-lagged by now. (See Participant 5's interview record sheet for more detail.) After the interview, I felt I had a lot of adrenalin to release. I underestimated how much of a strain it would be meeting a complete stranger, trying to get them to like me quickly, then trying to get them to speak about quite personal things all in just a few minutes. I think I have been very lucky so far, but I can assume that this will not bear fruit on each occasion. I was sleepy on the train getting back to the hotel, but after I shower I tried to sleep and sleep just would not come. For only the second time in my life that I can remember, I did not sleep a wink. Like zero

sleep and this with three interviews scheduled for the next day. It was so, so frustrating, and is an experience I hope will be a one off.

2013/9/19

I felt a bit groggy and had tired eyes over breakfast, but apart from that I was surprisingly alert. I decided to just not think about having not slept and just focus on putting one foot in front of the other and getting through each step of the day without worrying about what was to come next. I relied on little notes to myself to ensure I mailed people when I needed to, checked train schedules when I needed to, and so on. I got to the train station at [redacted] and found there had been an accident which had delayed the service and that the station was thronging with delayed passengers. I was really starting to feel that nothing would go right that day. I decided to walk to another station. [redacted] I got to Tokyo Midtown very early and used the hour or so before my meeting to check emails and plan the next days trains, interview schedules and hotels. I had definitely underestimated how hard this operational stuff would be without 24/7 connectivity. I met [redacted] without difficulty outside the Starbucks. We went to a Thai restaurant. The interview was mostly a disaster because of the noisy location and the fact that it was during his lunchtime when he was restricted for time and needed to eat. [redacted] The next interview with [redacted] was in his office. It was very Japanese going to the meeting room and exchanging business cards but I actively avoided doing the rituals and speaking Japanese. I am not sure whether this is because I was tired, or because I wanted to play the foreigner card. It was probably a bit of both. This interview while friendly and smiling seemed slightly (only very slightly) hostile as if the participant did not agree with the thrust of my thesis or felt I was critical of the Japanese. [redacted] I was feeling really quite tired but I knew I had one more interview that evening and just thought about powering through. The rooftop Starbucks location seemed a pretty good one, and again I was there early to scope things out. We were able to get a seat which was still in the light but not too near other customers. Again, I worried that I did not know what [redacted] looked like, nor she me, but we met easily. I was very nervous getting back to the hotel. I was so afraid I would not sleep again. After a bad first hour or two I finally drifted off. There was a fairly sizeable earthquake at about 2.30am but luckily I was so exhausted that I just opened my eyes briefly to the shaking and then closed them again quickly. I actually slept pretty well and kind of imagined I'd dreamed the earthquake until I checked the newspaper the next morning.

2013/9/20

I felt pretty refreshed, checked out, had a quick breakfast, and headed to Ueno station with plenty of time to spare before my Fresh Hitachi to Mito. I was so early because I was worried there would be another accident or delay of some sort on the trains - not something I ever expected to have to worry about. I felt under great pressure that these Ibaraki interviews needed to go without a hitch because I would have no problem getting more Tokyo participants or rescheduling for Tokyo, but anything in Ibaraki felt like a one-time chance. The location of the first interview was easy to find, and the interview went well. I was concerned about running over time as this was scheduled during a break in lessons and [redacted] had clearly said that he needed to finish by 12:45 but I finished with 5 minutes to spare. I quickly headed back to Mito. I had time for some food and then went to find my next interview destination. I had a lot of mails back and forth with [redacted] trying to settle on a time for the interview in Tokai tomorrow. The next interview with [redacted] went really well. He had some great advice and suggestions and was so open. I was really surprised (as was he) with the emotion of the interview at the start. He was a really big, Aussie bloke bar owner so I was not expecting the tears. Again I am so glad that the REC made me take emotional and mental health considerations seriously and especially taking my own feelings into account too. I felt a bit icky after the interview that I am blasting up, stirring up these emotions and memories in people for an hour or so, and then leaving again as quickly as I came. It goes from stranger to intimacy in such a short time frame that I am afraid I am not doing enough to respect and honour what people are doing for me by sharing

their personal stories. Having said that, everyone so far has been quite direct in saying that they are okay with taking part and I really do give them control of what to talk about as the transcript records will show. I do not think I force any issue. It was a privilege too to have the interview in the location (one of his bars) where so much of his account took place. It gave me a real feel for his experiences, more so than meeting in a neutral location. Perhaps, too, he felt freer to speak and show emotion because he was 'at home' so to speak. Still, I think I would have much more difficulty accessing other people's private spaces and I think on balance a neutral coffee shop is best in terms of my safety, and in terms of not being seen to be too pushy and ask too much of people. I then went and checked into the hotel. I was put on the top floor which made me wonder about safety in a quake - my thoughts are now focused at almost all times on the topic! Then again, a high floor would be better in a tsunami.

2013/9/21

I tried to write up some interview record sheets and catch up a bit on paper work in the hotel after breakfast, but I am finding it so hard to find the energy and power of concentration to work on these desk jobs. I feel like I need to be focusing on arranging more meetings or planning transit and accommodation during this down time between interviews instead. I hope I will have some time to just sit and think about what has happened to me so far and what I have heard in the interviews. At the moment, it is all a bit of a blur - a flurry of activity without any time to process. I reserved my trains to Sendai and Kashiwa and took the train back to Tokai. (I am certainly getting value for money from this JR Rail Pass). I feel like I have been either thinking about train schedules, booking train tickets, waiting on a platform or sitting on a train so far - those are my over-riding memories of the trip up to now. I was a bit anxious about how the meeting with [redacted] would go as he had changed times on me a couple of times and I was starting to wonder if he would show at all. He picked me up at the station in his car. I had not planned on this - I thought we would either meet at his school or find a coffee shop near the station. This was the first time so far I even slightly thought about my own safety - here I was getting in a car with a complete stranger being driven somewhere I did not know with no-one knowing where I was going. But this was just a small concern that momentarily flashed in my mind and I put my worries aside based on the fact that [redacted] had been introduced to me by [my friend] - so I felt [redacted] was not a complete stranger. It did make me think that I must take more control of the interview locations. This interview was also a bit of a procedural disaster because [redacted] wanted to start the interview in the car before I had any chance to go through the informed consent or switch on the Dictaphone. However, to compensate for this, I got the bonus of being driven around the coastline and being shown exactly where and how the tsunami had hit. I had not realized how badly the tsunami had affected this part of the coast. My image was that it was all in Iwate or Miyagi. We did eventually get to a coffee shop and I tried to recap some of the topics he had mentioned in the car so that I could get them on audio. The interview definitely had a theme of conspiracy, mistrust and even perhaps paranoia about the nuclear situation. This is probably understandable based on the fact that it was the second accident he had been through. It did affect me though. Hearing [redacted]'s stories about the seriousness of the nuclear situation definitely changed my behaviour. I became nervous to drink the tap water even though I had not even considered it an issue beforehand. I am now also wondering about the food I am eating. As I am eating out all the time, I have little control over where the food I eat comes from. I can see how an atmosphere of paranoia and fear could easily be fostered while wondering about this long-term invisible threat. I should not be as surprised as I am that the nuclear issue has been such a major focus of so many of the interviews. Even though I think I got some really useful information from [redacted], it was the first time I felt uncomfortable in the interview just because he was a very intense character and I did not know what to make of him. I was very glad to part ways. I got a train back to Tokai from Omika where we had had coffee and seen the coast, and I met up with [a friend]. It was nice to catch up. [redacted] I think I really needed this change of pace as I was starting

to feel a bit blue having listened to the fairly heavy experiences of the people in Ibaraki. There is no way that Ibaraki cannot be considered official disaster zone that is for sure.

2013/9/22

At breakfast this morning, I was wondering now about where the breakfast veggies are coming from. How do they make the price so cheap? Am I eating completely nuked food and drinking nuked water and coffee? To be honest, I thought these things but did not let them stop me from eating and drinking. I feel foolish that I am worrying about these things as a tourist only temporarily here when the people I am talking to will be faced with such considerations for an indefinite period to come. I needed to think happy thoughts as I was getting a bit blue again, so I took a walk around Mito lake in the beautiful sunshine. It was strange to see these kind of blissful scenes of joggers and stroller and kids playing in the lake water and just imagining what would happen if an earthquake or tsunami hit now or whether or not the water was radioactive. I made a conscious effort at this stage to focus on positives and stop worrying as I do not want to let this experience affect me in a negative way mentally. I sat in the Starbucks and booked hotels, checked train times and tried to schedule more meetings by email. This stuff really takes more time and effort than I was expecting. For my next interview, I met [redacted] at the station and we walked back to his apartment. His interview actually went really well and he had one or two excellent ideas and recommendations that I will definitely follow up and think more about. I got a bit of a shock when I got back to the Starbucks in Mito and mailed [redacted] to see if he was still on for meeting. He suggested 8.30am at Sugamo (he did not know I was now in Mito). This meant I would have to leave on the express train at 6.27 the next morning.

2013/9/23

I arrived early at Sugamo and scoped out a coffee shop near the station. Again, I had no idea who to look for when meeting another complete stranger and did total racial profiling expecting to see a white male. That was the case, but [redacted] could just as easily have been a French man of African or Asian heritage. I must not forget my own racial frameworks when being so aware of Japanese ones. This turned out to be a really excellent interview and will probably be one of my key data sources, based on [redacted]'s experience as an interpreter. It was interesting how quickly intimacy built up and how he showed his more cynical and critical side once he knew I had lived in Japan 9 years. He even said 'at least you won't write crap' or something to that effect which shows the value of leveraging my own experience in this process. The interview went way longer than I intended it to, but [redacted] reassured me multiple times that he was happy to keep talking.

2013/9/24

Today I had to get to Sendai. One of the constant reminders of the disaster is the fact that you can no longer go directly as this route used to pass through Fukushima in the exclusion zone. So I had to get a train back to Tokyo and then another super bullet train up to Sendai. Even with all this, I was still in Sendai in just a few hours and without any real trouble. I have been thinking though that if I had not had my prior experience in Japan I would not be able to run so many interviews in such a tight period. I have no time in the schedule for mistakes. Everything has to run smoothly and, if I were less experienced at travel in Japan, I know I would be making a lot more mistakes. This, again, is an advantage I can claim from using my experience: I can see more people in less time. As I had now been a week in Japan, I sent a summary report to [my supervisor] by email. By 3pm I still had had no word from [redacted] even though he had agreed to an interview later today. I was troubled about how hard to push. I had decided that I would just send a text to his phone tonight if I heard no word by evening but that I would emphasize that he should feel absolutely no obligation to talk to me. In the end, he did mail me by late afternoon. The lack of a reliable and constant internet connection is a continuing pain. I feel cut off and unable to act on things as quickly as I would like. As a result, I am continuing writing notes to myself to remind myself to check things or do tasks (like book hotels, etc.) when I am next online. I

feel this could lead to me forgetting to do something really important. I must say it was great to meet [redacted]. We met at a coffee shop near his work, and because he was in Sendai he had a much rougher experience to talk about than the people I have been speaking to in Tokyo. I feel I really need these 'disaster' accounts in my thesis to validate that I am studying an actual disaster experience and not just the threat of disaster which was more the case in Tokyo (even though I think the threat of disaster is still a very important frame to consider). The interview was very productive. [redacted] Again, I felt a bit icky after this interview because it had been traumatic for him and I felt I was flying in and out and kind of using him (which I am). But he even said that he was happy to talk about most things as I am trying to help people. This was one interview, though, where it was very clear (and even [redacted] said so) that he was not talking about everything and he was just allowing me to see a section of his experience. I got a bit lost on the way back to the hotel, but considering how much travelling around I have done in a short space of time, I am pretty proud of myself.

2013/9/25

I finally had no interviews scheduled for today, but it did not become a day off. I tried to get money out of the ATM using my credit card and this turned out to be my biggest problem so far - I had not informed the credit card company before leaving that I was travelling to Japan China and New Zealand. I am so annoyed with myself. I have enough Euro cash to probably cover the rest of the Japan leg but I need to get this sorted before New Zealand. At least I still have time but just trying to call a foreign number is such a pain with time difference and cost. I should not have left the country without checking with my credit card company and this will be a real learning point for me. I also had a lot of work to prepare for the volunteering in Ishinomaki.

2013/9/26

I walked around Sendai a bit after confirming at the bus station how to pay for the bus, how much it would cost and how long it would take. The systems for buses in particular can be so complex in Japan. And there was no information other than Japanese on all the signs, even though Sendai is said to be a pretty international Japanese city with several universities. In fact, I saw two South East Asian people at the bus stop looking very lost and confused. They asked a Japanese person for help to tell them where they needed to be to follow the directions they had on a printed out sheet, but even the Japanese person looked really confused and couldn't seem to help them despite spending some time looking at the posted timetables and maps. I'm not sure I really like it here in Sendai, but that could also just be my tiredness of not having my routines and of living out of a suitcase and the background worry about my credit card. I am probably just in a bit of a negative head space and will be until I have found a solution to my credit card problem. The bus journey was about 25 minutes into the mountains. [redacted] University has several large campuses along the way and there were two or three non-Japanese faces on the bus. [redacted] University is smaller and less prosperous looking than the famous [redacted] University. It is definitely in the mountains surrounded by woods so I can imagine that the tsunami was not even on people's minds here on 3.11. I did not feel too out of place while walking around and saw one other Caucasian face. I met Prof [redacted] in his office. We talked for a few minutes as he made tea. I really wasn't sure what he had planned for the foreigners I was supposed to meet so my strategy was just to go with the flow and not worry about the arrangements. In the end, only one student the Chinese student was from [redacted] University the other two - the Sudanese and the Bangladeshi - were from [redacted] University. The interviews went really well. I feel especially lucky that I got more interviewees right in the disaster zone (I feel this will add weight to my thesis) and that the diversity of my participants has now increased greatly. I owe Prof [redacted] a great debt for this. I am starting to feel that if I can reach 20 participants I can kind of relax a bit and try to enjoy being back in Japan. I cannot say I am really enjoying most of the experience

yet, though I am finding it fascinating. The interviews really took it out of me - one in particular was very emotional at times and so I felt drained.

2013/9/27

I had no interviews scheduled today and I really needed that break after doing three yesterday. I woke early to get breakfast and noticed two other non-Japanese faces. Sendai is definitely more international than I expected. I checked emails and found that plans were coming together for Ishinomaki tomorrow. The credit card business is still weighing far too heavily on my mind. I know it will all be fine after a phone call and if not I still have time to put other measures in place. I took photos of the city to show where the tsunami had hit. The skyline is built up, built up and then flat once you look toward the sea. It was eerie seeing and hearing helicopters over the flattened area after what my participants had talked about in their interviews yesterday. I hope I will make time to let all this stuff just sink in a bit. I am trying to write notes to myself every time I get a thought about the data. I also took some photos of gambarou tohoku and sendai signs still up. I did more mail thank yous and arranging future interviews.

2013/9/28

I was up and out at before 6am to make my train to Ishinomaki. At the station, I was moved by the maps which had whole sections blacked out - these were the stations that were worst hit by the tsunami and the parts of the track that are still not in operation these two years later. In fact, if you want to go to Ishinomaki by train, you have to get on a replacement bus to go through those towns. This is what I did. I was looking out the window and thinking about how beautiful Matsushima Bay is as the sun rose (one of Japan's three great beauty spots) and could understand in some way how families would not want to leave this place or might want to return and build new homes here even though they experienced the tsunami and would have to live with a future threat. I am still not sure I understand their feelings, but the beauty of the location could lead to a strong connection to place, I guess. The most moving thing for me was the sight around Tona 東名 and Rikuzen 陸前 of these huge straight pines completely stripped bare except for some strange leaves and branches at the top that had not been below water level. These trees were huge and thinking about such a wall of water really scared me for a bit. I arrived at Ishinomaki Station and met the volunteer organiser. After a brief word with him, he left and nobody else spoke to me - they all clearly had tasks and were just getting on with things. If anything, I felt I was just in the way. I imagine that this may have been the case for many volunteers (both Japanese and foreign) when they first came up to volunteer in the very bad times. Eventually it became clear that I could just follow some simple tasks but there was never any instruction. You have to be a self-starter. And again (as has come up in interviews) I was hit with the sense that there is just one correct way of putting up a tent that the Japanese seemed to just know! These cultural differences may have been barriers that foreign volunteers had to overcome. I was briefly introduced to [redacted] (US) and [redacted] (Swiss) and had the awkward feeling of explaining that I was in Japan as a researcher, and generally feeling that I was being viewed with some suspicion. Maybe it was good for me to experience and to feel this ethnographic awkwardness. I volunteered to do manual work moving tables and chairs. I had the feeling that from the start I would try to show that I was here to earn my keep. About five Japanese and I went off in a van with the local Ishinomaki organiser to move chairs and tables to be used at the festival tomorrow. It was sweaty work in nearly 30 degree heat. We worked for a while and then were driven back to the community centre. As we were driving, I listened to all the other Japanese who had been here many times talk about the changes they had seen in Ishinomaki, the businesses restarting, the landmark places now torn down to be rebuilt, etc. There was a feeling of closing the circle with this being the last regularly scheduled trip and with [the NPO] closing its books at the end of September. We then worked to carry items from the old volunteer HQ (a dilapidated rental house) to the community centre. The rental house was being cleared and shut up by another team. A notable thing was the smell - it was pungent and fishy. [redacted] attributed it to

the fish processing plant and described it as a healthy sea smell. [redacted] attributed it to the tsunami mud that they spent so much time clearing in the first trips. I do not know which is true but it was not a pleasant smell nor was it awful. [redacted] and [redacted] talked separately about how bad the smell had been in the first trips and how you had to put menthol at your nose to prevent vomiting. One of the most important tasks at the beginning was to clear this dreadful mud from under the houses so that they could become habitable. I found myself getting cagier and cagier about who I was and why I was here. Ethically, I had originally wanted to be completely open. But I still found myself being vaguer and strangely heard myself introducing myself not as a researcher here in Japan to do a study but as a "friend of [redacted]" or "a translator". I was a bit surprised at my own dishonesty and it kind of crept up on me. It was one of those things where I did feel a slight surprise at all the things I talked about in my methodology went a bit out the window once in the field. I volunteered to do more manual labour after lunch. I was paired off with [redacted]. He kind of took me under his wing, though he started speaking to me mostly in English from then on. I feel like he was key in getting me a bit accepted in the group. It was heavy, sweaty work but I was glad to do it because I felt it built my social capital with [redacted] and with the group and helped me out in the end. I also got to be driven to the huge processing centres where all the tsunami and earthquake waste was being processed. It was in the docklands and as we drove they talked about nearby Onagawa and other infamous names that were wiped out. It was very Japanese. There were forms to be filled out and we had to all wear helmets and masks. It smacked of the performance of ritual rather than of a real health or safety benefit. Driving over bridges where people who had decided to go and check on their families and were swept away brought it all home. I should be very thankful for having had the chance to see and hear things like this that I would never have been able to do just travelling by myself. We all regrouped and went to an onsen as one large group of about 40 Japanese and foreign volunteers on a big tour bus. Alcohol came up time and again with my interactions with the [redacted] volunteers. It was about the hard work and then the booze. This I think is a key point though. They needed a way to keep motivation up to be able to travel up to Ishinomaki at least once a month for two-an-a-half years in sometimes very inhospitable weather conditions. This social bonding through booze helped them integrate into a community and helped bond their team identity. I found myself kind of avoiding the foreigners and hanging with the Japanese participants more. I think I did this partly to show the foreigners I was here to volunteer and not get interviews, but also (if I am honest with myself) because I did not want to touch on really interesting topics of conversation without an audio recorder there and the ability to use their 'informed' data in my study.

2013/9/29

I woke up at about 5am when the other teams were heading out. I didn't have to head off until 7.30 but I really couldn't get back to sleep so I just got up and had my breakfast sitting on the swing in the small park outside the minkan. It was actually really nice just to have a bit of time alone. I took a walk around the neighbourhood. What stuck out was the steepness of the cliffs at the back of the houses. I remember seeing videos of people scrambling up on to them, but seeing them for real I realized how this would not have been easy at all. Apparently there are now ladders and steps at various points on the cliffs. I also noticed how the post office in Ishinomaki was still a prefab and that it had been painted with murals as had many shops and business as part of volunteer efforts to show that life was returning to the town. I went and got a coffee at the 711 convenience store. It was really sparkling new and fresh. Apparently for a very long time this was the only shop around and was a really central point for the community. I walked around a bit more and paid special attention to the very tall mansion building that seemed undamaged. Again my thoughts turned dark and I figured I would run up there if a tsunami warning came. We got driven out to Senshu University where we would be helping with the running of a sports day for the various communities still living in temporary accommodation. It was co-sponsored by the Japanese Olympic Committee. We met up with the other teams. They all said that they

need not have come so early as nothing was ready for them - the place was not even open. But this was probably a feature of organizers saying that the 'foreigners' would show up any time and do anything. There was always a need to prove that you could be trusted and that you were there to help. We spent most of the morning just sitting around to be honest. As we were just sitting around, I could have asked for lots of interviews, probably, but I did not ask for any interviews for a few reasons. First, I felt an hour interviewing with me was an hour they were not helping the people of Ishinomaki, which is why they had come here. I also felt that as this was their last scheduled trip I would be taking time away from important memories for them. Also, very practically, the conditions felt all wrong. I couldn't just whip out the plain language statements and naturally turn to a formal recorded conversation - plus there was little privacy and lots and lots of ambient noise and distraction. Furthermore, because I had felt under some suspicion from some of the foreigners about my motivations for being on this trip (whether they really suspected me or whether my insecurities created those feelings, I don't know, but I felt it) I kind of did not want to prove their suspicions right and look like I was only here to get a few interviews out of it. Once the afternoon rolled around and after we had had a bento lunch there were actually lots of tasks to be involved in. The JOC had invited a few Japanese medal winners to come and lead teams of the old folks in games like jump rope, ball push and tug of war. I did have chances to talk informally with many of the foreigners but I pretty much avoided any disaster topics because it just did not feel right to me. I agreed with [redacted] to meet for the interview when we get back to Tokyo. I may also ask [redacted], even though he seems less than interested and was one of the most openly negative and suspicious toward me. I feel though that I should probably try to get such negative views in my data set for balance. I'll see how I feel about it all later on. We got the bus back to Tokyo together. I'm glad I went this way and not by train as it kind of cemented me as one of the team.

2013/9/30

I caught up on some emails for a few hours. I had hoped for a mail from [the Facebook group administrator I had cold called from Ireland] to say he was okay to meet but there was nothing. I also booked my hotels and trains for almost all of the remainder of the trip. This was all quite stressful as I do not want to make huge mistakes like booking trains to the wrong places or hotels for the wrong dates. So far, everything has gone really smoothly though and I need to give myself more credit for that rather than always seeing the down side of things. I finally phoned Bank of Ireland. The attendant was not very helpful but I managed to get out of her that there should be no problem with my card and that the ATM should work once I tried to take out only 100-200 euro per day. I went straight to the nearby post office ATM and was able to successfully get out 20,000 yen. It was such a relief. I really blame this financial worry in the back of my mind as the cause for so much of my negativity on this trip. I intend to take out the maximum every day and ensure I have cash for NZ in NZ dollars before I leave Japan. I feel exhausted a lot of the time here. I am walking a lot, but I think it is also from low-level stress and anxiety about all the arrangements I have to make and hope that people will show, and tiredness and being exposed to so much Japanese again and trying to read and listen and understand things.

2013/10/1

I woke half hoping for a call or text or something from [the Facebook group administrator I had cold called from Ireland] but to no avail. I am disappointed that he was a no show and gave no explanation. I would have really liked to speak to him and I would have liked to be able to show more evidence of me finding participants through my own efforts, not just by introduction. But it wasn't to be and I will just have to get on with it. I knew I would not contact him again. He had my mail address and my rental phone and the last thing I want to do is antagonize someone, especially someone who has signalled to me that the earthquake is a sensitive topic for them. I am really only half way through data gathering here but mentally I feel I am finishing up now that I have a good number of interviews under my belt and the Ishinomaki stuff done.



2013/10/2

I woke early in Kanda to lashing rain. It seems like the days when I have the most scheduled (three interviews in one day again today) seem to be the days when I face the most challenges. As I had not originally been planning to be in Tokyo at this time, I was late making a reservation and was only able to get a place in Akabane. It meant I had to lug my heavy bag in the rain in my suit (I decided to go formal based on the fact that I was visiting an embassy and a swanky advertising agency) to a new hotel in a town I had never been to before and then be back in the centre of town for the first of my three interviews. I was not in a chirpy mood to say the least. My first interview was [redacted] in [a certain embassy building]. The rain actually really helped me out. [redacted] had been trying to arrange an interview over lunch. I knew from my experience with [redacted] that this was not good for my methodology. Luckily I played the card of 'do you mind if we just talk here as it's really coming down outside' when I arrived. It meant I got a good hour with [redacted] in a quiet board room with no distractions. I was most interested in his experience at Disney Sea - a major tourist attraction and the insight he could give me into what it was like to experience a major earthquake in such a place. I was very conscious of the time. I wanted to make sure I wasn't eating into too much of [redacted]'s work day and I knew I had to be in Kachidoki by 2pm. I was glad I had scoped out the office building the day before as I felt much calmer going. [redacted] and [redacted] both came to greet me and then just [redacted] and I both went down to the Italian coffee shop in the lobby where we sat at a small table just outside the door. It was pretty quiet and we felt undisturbed. After [redacted] finished up rather abruptly to go to a conference call (I had been conscious of the time for all the participants today as I had really said to each I would only take thirty minutes of their time but they were the ones who talked on, not me) he called [redacted] to come down and talk to me. I really barely had to say anything to either of these two and I think it shows the advantage of pre-sending an outline of what I want to talk about in that it gives them an opportunity to construct a narrative around what is important to them and around what I have declared an interest in. I think it is a good compromise and gives them the freedom to tell their story while hopefully directing them to highlight or foreground parts that I am interested in. By the time I finished up it was nearly four and I still hadn't had lunch or checked in to the hotel or anything. I was tired but full of adrenaline as usual. I decided to walk to Ginza and get some lunch in Ootoya (for like the fiftieth time). On the way as I was crossing the bridge up to Tsukiji Market I saw lots of people stopped in their tracks with their cameras out. Strangely my first thought was something negative like oh no there has been some sort of disaster. I think this shows that I am now in a bit of a negative head space. They were taking photos of a beautiful rainbow that had appeared in the sky now that the rain and effects of the typhoon had passed. It was beautiful and I joined them in the act. I need to force myself to be more positive. Maybe this research has had a bit of an influence on my mental state contrary to what I reported to Sharon. I don't feel bad, but nor can I say I have felt hugely happy a lot of this trip. I actually feel very spoiled saying that when this is an opportunity many would kill for, but I have found scheduling and running these interviews mostly tiring stressful and overall very hard work, especially as someone who finds meeting new people a challenge! But I think I passed some kind of psychological barrier today. Now that I have interviewed 20 participants I feel I can stop worrying a bit. This has been mentioned so many times in the literature as a kind of benchmark number that now that I have achieved it I feel I have justified my trip to some extent. If no one else shows up, I'll have enough to work with, I think; or at least to move forward with and start analysing.

2013/10/3

I met [the person with whom I had volunteered in Ishinomaki] in an Excelsior café. I was really not sure how her interview would go. I could tell she was really nervous. This is so odd to me as she is such a forthright person. But I guess she might not normally talk about personal matters. It actually ended up being a good interview with some really useful data;

some of the best of which she will not let me use, of course! Another one for the methodology. After we finished the interview, she suggested going for a beer together. I really felt I couldn't say no. One thing that surprised me was her confessed high level of mistrust for me before meeting. She also mentioned how she wanted to know my earthquake story - I had never really thought to tell it, I guess. I also feel conflicted by the idea of being friendly and social with people I am still researching; I find myself not lying but not being as forthcoming as I could. I think she would have kept the night going even later but I really couldn't and used the excuse of going to Nagoya in the morning.

2013/10/4

My first interview was with [redacted]. I walked around the suburban neighbourhood where I was due to meet him and was surprised by the many non-Japanese faces I bumped into in just 30 minutes or so (about 6!). So I guess Nagoya is an international city in Japanese terms. I found [redacted] was quite different in person to the image of his emails - more cynical, less warm. He also talked about a lot of stuff I wasn't interested in. Maybe because I have now done so many interviews and feel I already have some good data I am getting less patient with the ethnographic style and want to just get down to business and confirm or deny the major themes that the other interviewees have presented. I also feel that whether or not you sort of like the person can affect how ethnographic I want to go. I feel when I like the person I want to know more of the context and am happy to listen to the asides. When I do not feel so comfortable in the person's presence I want the interview to be over quicker and am less interested in the asides. This may indicate problems with identification with the participants or blurring lines of researched and friend. Another methodological specificity for this interview is that I knew beforehand that it would be in a restaurant. From my experience with [redacted], I knew some of the pitfalls of this style of interview and tried to counteract them. For example, I made sure the conversation was about stuff I was not very interested in for most of the 'meal' so that he would have time to eat and I could talk and let him do so about other rubbish topics. Then by the time the eating was done, I could go on to the topics I cared more about. Overall, I think the interview went okay, and yet again the most interesting thing he said was probably in the last minutes when I said, 'is there anything else you want to add' kind of thing. This time I had not switched off the tape - I am learning. It was nearly three when we finished. I had to high tail it back to the big Kokusai Center tower in which the NIC offices were located. I met with [redacted] [redacted]. I was there to find out about how they support foreign residents in disaster, but I was shocked at how much information they wanted to know from me (about Ireland, foreigners experiences, foreigners views). I had thought the questioning would be all one way and I really didn't have answers to all their questions.

2013/10/5

Today I moved on to Hiroshima. I am tired of all the travelling and feeling a little over the whole meeting-new-people thing. I think it has been a lot harder work than I thought it would be. But when I get home and stop, I will probably start to appreciate more how good an experience it has been and how well it has gone. Perhaps I am too close to everything right now.

2013/10/6

On the way to my next interview, I dropped by the peace park and genbaku dome. I thought about how it is another representation of the Japanese gaman and gambare spirit and how this could feed in in some way to their response to the 2011 disaster in terms of we will rise again we will not be defeated by the nuclear etc. I took an early train to Kure and arrived feeling sweaty and dishevelled. This would normally bother me, but I have met so many new people in such a short period of time that I think I have become slightly desensitised to what people think of me. [redacted] turned up a little early which was great. We walked about 10 minutes from the station to a cool old fashioned coffee shop. I liked [redacted] instantly and I think this really helps at the start of the interview anyway. She told me some

really good stuff. I got the train back to Tokyo and realised that I may have had some feeling of relaxation at being in west Japan - not thinking anymore about food and water safety and not even really imagining disaster scenarios any more. This is completely irrational as there is just as much chance of a quake happening out this way as anywhere else in Japan really. It goes to show how our fears and senses of threat are often based on emotion and mood and the discourse going on around you. The trains were smooth and on time but it took a long time to get back to Tokyo. My jr pass runs out tomorrow and I am kind of glad because it indicates I will be mostly based in one place for the next while. Still no word from [redacted]. I'm hoping he won't be another no-show. I am trying to think positively - even if he doesn't show (which I still really hope he does) I can put in my methodology quite strongly about the importance of a personal introduction of some sort for this type of research.

2013/10/7

Luckily [redacted] contacted me this morning so I quickly arranged to meet him near his office. Once again there was the problem of neither of us knowing what the other looked like and I ended up approaching the wrong guy who was just sitting down for a coffee. It was a great interview. Definitely another key informant as a result of all the translation work he did in the disaster. I am so happy I got to speak to him. And this was one of the interviews that I managed to create myself – no introduction – just a cold call over the Internet.

2013/10/8

I woke feeling refreshed and really happy. Maybe it was because my interview with [redacted] the day before had gone well, maybe it was because I have completed more interviews than I dared hope, maybe it is because I am settled in one place for a few days and not rushing to make trains, and find hotels and meet strangers. Anyway, I felt happy and spent the day working on my upcoming presentation at the seminar in Toyo University. Kind of unbelievably [redacted] mailed to suggest meeting at 8pm the following day, so after my relaxing day today I will be fairly busy tomorrow preparing for the presentation and now interviewing both [redacted] and [redacted]. I am feeling a bit tired of all the interviewing at this stage. I feel I have reached a critical mass where if the remaining interviews go crap or don't happen at all it's not the end of the world. It's quite a comforting feeling.

2013/10/9

[redacted] had arranged to meet me inside the Metro station at Aoyama, and even though I had gotten back to her asking for more precision about the exit to meet at, I was still nervous we wouldn't find each other or would waste precious time (I knew I had to peg it to get to my next meeting at Daimon). Again, I had made the mistake of not getting any idea of what this participant looked like. This is definitely a learning point - when meeting strangers, have some way of knowing who to look for. We had good interview. Then I high tailed it to the metro to make it in time to meet [redacted]. I had planned the train times precisely but it was going to be tight. I got a bit stressed because I didn't know the station and got a little lost. In the end, I was on time and waiting for [redacted] outside the Denny's when he arrived. We had a better interview than I expected although the location was so noisy. It's really hard to choose between quiet and tucked away versus noisy and easy to find.

2013/10/10

Today was my presentation to the seminar in Toyo. It went better than I could have hoped and was my first time presenting my work only in Japanese. I did make a cultural misstep. I had forgotten to print out copies of the slides as handouts which is standard in Japanese presentations. Oh well.

2013/10/11

Today was just a day spent getting ready for my upcoming trip to New Zealand and making a lot of various arrangements, writing lots of emails, etc.

2013/10/12

Today I first had a meeting with a Korean university professor from Keio whom I had met at a conference earlier in the year. We had a good talk about our research interests. Then I had lunch with friends. I talked non-stop (which is not like me). Maybe I'm tired of listening! Then, I had more preparations to make for getting to New Zealand. I'm starting to feel nervous about that trip now. I guess before now I just haven't been able to think about it. I realised today that, at 1 hour for 5 mins of audio, transcribing is going to take me two months of solid work - crikey! I definitely underestimated how much of a job transcribing was going to be.

2013/10/13

In my abundant time spent on trains and in coffee shops of late, I have started to feel that Japanese people always seem to be looking at their diaries. Does this have some cultural significance? Are they focused on the future? Is it a sign that they are fixated on scheduling and planning and that they may be a bit inflexible and not good at spontaneity? Today was my last interview in Japan. I met [redacted] in Shinjuku pretty easily - he was early and so was I. My own mental state as an interviewer before the interview may have had an impact on the style of interview. Like the literature says, the researcher is the main instrument. I felt that because I was now busy thinking about New Zealand and all that I needed to do to prepare for that trip that I did not want a long interview and was happier to be more direct, cut answers shorter, etc. Also, because I have a feeling that I have reached some sort of critical mass, I have less feeling of the need to capture whatever data I can (even if seemingly irrelevant) in case it turns out that I get no more. I think the interview went well, but he had a very definite agenda for talking to me and so he did not talk in many ways directly about topics that I was interested in. Overall, the interview with him left me feeling more and more convinced that the radiation damage after the disaster was probably more severe than I have considered and that long-term health effects may turn out to be serious. I had an interesting experience when considering what souvenirs to buy for the people I was going to be meeting in New Zealand. I was going to get tea, chocolates or biscuits of some type. But then I got concerned that giving food could be bad if anyone concerns about food safety. This was a pretty big aha moment for me and showed me how much I had been affected by the stories of some of the people I have talked to.

[I then travelled to Auckland and Christchurch in New Zealand. On that trip, I had one interview with a person who had been in Sendai during the disaster. I will only include the log of the days around meeting this participant as the other entries do not relate to this thesis project.]

2013/10/20

I was staying at the Ibis Hotel right in the centre on Hereford Street around the corner from Cathedral Square. I was not prepared for how post-apocalyptic it would feel and the hotel was flanked on either side by half destroyed buildings and face rubbly carparks where tall high-rise buildings would once have stood. This was no Sendai, and I really felt the difference between the effects on an earthquake on a CBD and of a tsunami on a rural area. The two contexts are vastly different and make me wonder if it will ever be possible to generalise anything about the experience of a disaster. I spent the afternoon walking around the centre and taking photos. There was a bit of a commotion at Cathedral Square with a woman shouting at other onlookers about politics or something. It made things a bit uncomfortable and showed how social divisions and problems do not go away just because a disaster befalls you. The war-like feeling – you kind of imagine Srebrenica or somewhere – really took it out of me. Christchurch had been called the England of the Southern

Hemisphere with punting on the Avon river and Agatha Christie like Victorian stone buildings and so on. But now it really feels desolate in parts. [A contact from the University of Auckland] was due to give me a guided tour of Christchurch the following day. She had experienced the disaster and is researching it herself. You couldn't plan better than that.

2013/10/21

[My contact] drove me around the centre and pointed out places like Colombo Street, where her husband had been thrown around in his car and surrounded by ash, or where a young guy on a bus into the CBD saw the city disappear into rubble before him. She showed me the 185 white chairs which are acting as a memorial to all those who died and talked about the great artistic energy and revival and the spirit of creativity, such as gap fillers and the pallet cafe, and so on - that is existing alongside this war-like scenery. I did not feel this youthful creative energy in Tohoku but then nor did I seek it out. [redacted] got emotional talking about all the people who had died and was a bit surprised that it still affected her so strongly – something I have heard again and again in my interviews. She told me about how she had seen the rubble of the building she worked in appear on tv and not being able to believe that she was seeing colleagues being pulled out. She was already traumatised by the experience of the earlier September earthquake which had been centred on her hometown and which had had a great impact on her family (no water and power for ages etc). We parked the car and dropped in at the controversial cardboard cathedral designed by Shigeru Ban. I liked its aesthetic and the idea that it gives people somewhere to worship and have a centre. But it is controversial because it represents the debates about whether to rebuild the original cathedral and who should fund it and whether the money would be put to better use in other ways and whether it is just the church's heritage or the whole communities. Every aspect of disaster seems to come with layers of complexity. We then drove out to the hills where she was working on a project with a school. I got to see views of all Christchurch and to see how close the sea is – it raises the possibility of a future tsunami and the poorer suburbs tend to be out near the shore, unusually. I also got to imagine how traumatic it must have been for the kids on their lunch breaks to see all the high rise buildings just disappear in a cloud of dust. [redacted] made interesting points about how the high-income families seem to be cotton-wooling their kids and not dealing with the trauma whereas the kids in the lower income schools seem to have better tools for dealing with the aftermath. I just felt that this whole day was such a lucky experience for me as it got me to see things I would never have had a chance to see and to hear insight from someone who was deeply implicated in the whole disaster. We drove on then to a school she was working with out in the poorest suburbs. You really noticed the difference here in terms of how poor the conditions of the roads were. There were also lots of open spaces where the homes had been demolished and the land repurchased by the crown. There is anger about how much slower the pace of rebuilding has been for the poorer suburbs, but a lot of that has to do with social capital, the confidence to badger local representatives, the knowledge of who to call and of networks of people in the know. There is a big problem of schools being closed down and merged. Part of this is right-wing government opportunism but also due to the fact that so many people have moved away from the suburbs to other rural towns in Canterbury. This is making ghost towns out of these suburbs and of course this will have strong impacts on the new host towns, with some suddenly doubling in size. It reinforces the idea of the fallout from a disaster being so long term. When is it really post disaster when a community losing its school and heart of its community is happening two to three years after the event? We visited one such school that is being closed. By chance, we got to experience a 'controlled earthquake' being done over the river from this school as part of a liquefaction experiment. There had already been two previously that had really shaken the already damaged school buildings and this would have happened in school hours and re-traumatized the kids had that principle not been there fighting their corner. Again this speaks of social capital and resources and how they impact on recovery and how things which are attempting to do good (like liquefaction experiments) are not without cost (re-traumatizing and further damaging weakened

communities and structures). The experiment itself was like a machine gun firing leading to the rumble of an earthquake. They call it 'a blast' but really it's lots of charges going off in quick succession. It was so weird that even though they had told us exactly when the blast would go off and to be prepared for it, there was still a small part of our brains that thought 'hang on, what if this is a real earthquake'. The windows really shook a lot and [redacted] got a little bit upset. Again, though, I feel I have been having this amazing run of luck to just happen on to this experience – none of this had been planned – [redacted] was just dropping in to this school to give her contact a magazine. This sums up the whole research experience for me. Its success has been based on huge amounts of pure luck, but also on being open to people and accepting any offer from people and on trying to be warm and responsive to any offers of help and information.

2013/10/22

I still had not got a promised text from [redacted] to specify exactly when and where we should meet. It was really weighing on my mind what to do. I did not want to hassle him, but I also felt that this was probably my one time ever being in Christchurch and I would hate to leave without at least pushing a little to meet him. So I rang [redacted] (which I would probably not have done under other circumstances) and he agreed to meet me in a coffee shop about ten minutes from my hotel on foot. I had no idea what [redacted] looked like and did not have the visibly foreigner card to play. So I actually went up to someone who wasn't the participant and asked if he was here to meet me. The setting was not ideal - a little noisy and quite busy with other customers. But they ignored us and it felt like we could talk relatively privately. It was a good interview - better than expected - and I was so happy to have more data from someone up in the disaster zone - especially someone who couldn't speak much Japanese. Initially I was a bit disappointed that I couldn't also speak to his wife to broaden my gender scope a little, but it was better to focus on a quality interaction with one person than a divided interaction with two people. I think 6 weeks was just right in terms of trip length. I have gotten so much done in my time - I think I could have stayed two or three months and probably only achieved the same amount just with more down time.

***APPENDIX D: Anonymised interview record sheets***

## **Interview Record Sheets**

*Adapted from Gibson and Brown (2009: 94-95) and Matthews and Ross (2010: 232)*

### *2013/7/18 Record of interview with Participant 1*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in [a café in central Dublin]. We sat at a small table and drank coffee. The interview lasted about 90 minutes (15 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 75 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

#### Differences with other interviews

#### Problems

- The cafe was quite busy and there was background music.
- I felt too close to neighbouring tables before the interview began, but I forgot about them as soon as we started.
- Explaining the informed consent and filling out the profile information took longer than I expected (about 10 minutes for the explanation and then 5 minutes for filling out the form)

#### Implications

The background music will prevent me from using voice recognition software. I will try to have more control over selection of the interview location in future. (Participant 1 suggested this place.)

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The question in the profile about experience of translating did not work - she said it was too broad and unclear to answer. I am not sure what value the question was adding, anyway. It is also worth noting that this is a question Sharon had pointed out as being problematic - the value of an experienced eye!
- I basically only raised the first topic "Tell me about your experience of the 2011 disaster" and then did not ask a direct question from my pre-prepared list after that. However, I did interject and probe at times based on what I wanted to know from these other questions. I sometimes also asked directly "What language was that in?"
- The idea of asking in the profile where the participant was in the first week, first month, and first year after the disaster worked well.
- I think sending the topics beforehand and giving the participants a chance to think of answers beforehand if they wanted was good and helped them to build a narrative, even though Participant 1 apologised to me before we started recording that she had not looked at the topics again since I had sent them to her.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- She seemed to be at ease for most of the time, but at some points I did notice some reddening (in turns out the disaster has brought on a serious auto immune condition) and her eyes watered a little at recalling the affect the disaster had on her parents. She marked a 6/10 for anxiety at the end of the interview which was much higher than I was expecting. I think, though, that she found it helpful to talk and mentioned that it was good to share with someone who had been through a similar experience and also it was good because she had not had any other opportunity to talk about her experiences so much. This could be shown as a benefit of this research and its



methodology. She also quickly provided me with eight more friends of hers in Tokyo to interview, so she would probably not have done this if it had been a bad experience.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- She seemed open (arms unfolded, forward leaning) and kept eye contact strongly throughout. Occasionally, when telling a funny or embarrassing anecdote, she would look down at the table quickly and then look at me, as if questioning whether to tell me or not.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised at how much the conversation came out as a narrative - as a story with her as the protagonist with humour, emotions, a timeline, episodes, etc. Could narrative analysis be useful for this project?
- I was surprised by how often emotions and stress came up. I guess I imagined someone in Tokyo wouldn't have had such a large impact on their lives (even though it caused me to quit my job and leave Japan!!!).
- I was surprised by how much of Participant 1's experience resonated with my own (the loneliness, the reaction to aftershocks even back in Ireland, the guilt at what the disaster did to family, and guilt at being upset though Tokyo was not hugely directly affected).
- I was a little surprised at how many times she used expressions like "as you know" meaning as someone who lived in Japan or as someone who experienced the quake. I think it shows the value of bringing my own lived experience to this research process.

#### What I'd do differently

- I need to make sure to give the interviewees chances to drink their coffee. Even though I was focusing on trying not to talk, I will need to interject at times to let the interviewee take a break, regroup, relax. I can use these interjections (as I did today) to try and bring up topics I want to cover (e.g. Facebook and social media use in my own experience) that are not being covered in the interviewee's narrative.
- I will take out the translation/interpreting question from the profile and just ask about experience with translating if it comes up in the narrative.
- I will try not have the interviews during the participant's working day, as I felt nervous about how much of her time I was taking (in the end, she gave me 90 minutes - I had said it would only take an hour.)

#### What didn't I find out

- I did not find out about slogans, radio, specific websites, her opinion of social media, or specific needs that were not met (though I can interpret many of these from other answers/dialogue).

#### What do I need to clarify

#### First reflections on data

- Television was the only information source that she mentioned. This supports the findings from my literature review. It reinforces that we could justify a suggestion to translate television content in some way through social media.
- She said outright that Facebook was not any use to her. The phone was her main communication tool. However, e-mail clearly was significant at certain stages (to have others contact her family or to inform people of her location).
- Power and connectivity were significant issues for her even in Tokyo.
- Even though she was more than 10 years in Japan, her ties to Ireland seemed stronger than her ties to the Japanese community. But, it is worth focusing on the fact that she made a contribution to the community by volunteering. The volunteering may have been important for her mental health, too.

- Even though she focused initially on the first few days after onset in her answers, the disaster continued for her in her mind for at least six months and her skin condition means that, in some ways, the disaster still has not stopped affecting her.
- Even when back in Ireland, she still felt very involved in the disaster, which could be linked up with ideas about diaspora in times of disaster.
- Her Japanese language ability facilitated lots of things for her, so we could point out that where she found it easy, others who don't speak Japanese might find it difficult.
- Despite her linguistic fluency, cultural barriers were important in a disaster. No neighbours in Tokyo knocked on her door after the disaster, but neither did she call on neighbours, even though she used Japanese in multiple other ways in the disaster. Especially when you compare this with her experience in Oshika in the disaster zone: "they all talked to me, nobody in Tokyo talked to me". Embarrassment in Japanese interactions also comes up a couple of times.
- There was an interesting contrast between not knowing anyone in apartment block in Dublin or in Tokyo but imagining different feeling of pulling together in times of disaster. Especially the bit about "if I had foreign people living beside me". Does this represent some disappointment in her Tokyo neighbours?
- There was an interesting point about how she felt Tokyo was a semi-crisis. A kind of grey area of crisis that was extreme enough to cause her trauma but not extreme enough to break down the cultural barrier of caring for those directly around you and pulling together.
- She may not have been contacted by her local authority, and if she was, she ignored it, even though she could speak Japanese.
- She received most support through her work. Will this be replicated in other interviews? Will work be shown to be the foreigner's strongest link to community and support?
- The nuclear issue was not a big fear for her, but aftershocks and a fear of water were very traumatic. She said she was most afraid of a big earthquake hitting Tokyo.
- There is an issue to explore about the function of warnings and threat assessments - she found them upsetting not helpful (unusual subway earthquake warning, likelihood of future earthquake in Tokyo).
- She highlights the importance of communication for people in temporary housing after a disaster. She says foreigners were able to play a useful function here as a distraction from the usual. Translators or foreign volunteers could such a contribution in future disasters or if a large number of foreigners were affected by a disaster in Japan.
- A major motif was of loneliness - alone, on my own, lonely.
- Another really interesting motif was of water (felt like I was drowning emotionally, worried about waves coming in, built on reclaimed land, water not fires were now the fear etc.) - maybe making a parallel between her emotions and the effect of the tsunami.
- There is some evidence of increased stress during the interview, but overall the participant said quite clearly that it was good to talk because she had had no other chance to talk about this topic - this could be interesting data for disaster studies literature.

## *2013/7/27 Record of interview with Participant 2*

### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in the lounge of the bar in [a hotel in a city in Ireland]. I picked this location as I knew it was near his work and I wanted to make meeting me as easy as possible. I also thought it would be quieter than a central cafe. We both sat on two sides of a large, low couch, half facing each other. There was a low coffee table in front of us and the couch was in the back corner of the lounge with windows

behind. All other guests were far away. The interview lasted about 125 mins (15 mins on the explanation and paperwork, 110 mins on the interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- There was definitely a narrative in this interview again, which makes me really want to consider getting help with narrative analysis from [my contact in New Zealand where I will be a visiting scholar]. He even said at one stage, "I'm after leaving a bit of the story out." So he saw the interview as a storytelling experience.
- Again a time period of about 6 months (March to September - almost the same as for Participant 1) was mentioned by him as the time it took for him to feel the disaster had passed. This could be interesting data for disaster studies. He talks about need to draw a line in the sand after the 6 months and putting the ordeal to bed mentally.

#### Differences with other interviews

- This was much more of an action-oriented story than an emotional story. This was very different to Participant 1's emotional focus. Participant 2 even said off tape that working and living with only lads in Japan hardened you and there was never much talk of emotion.
- He received no information and little support from his work which contrasts with Participant 1.
- This interview was much less about establishing shared or common experience with me - very few 'as you knows' etc. I was glad of this because my experience was so tame in comparison to his.

#### Problems

- There will be a difficulty anonymising data for people like this participant because there were so few foreign residents of his small town. I stressed this point when reading the Plain Language Statement to him.
- The interview ran double the length I had expected. When the interview hit the one hour mark I did wonder whether I should try to wrap things up but I knew from the timeline he was nowhere finished. I let him talk on to let his story come to a natural conclusion and it reached nearly two hours (I must admit part of me did think, "this is going to take ages to transcribe!") I was worried he might be upset at how much of his time I'd taken. But then when I switched off the tape, he continued to chat for almost another hour, so I don't think he was in any trouble that I took more than the hour mentioned in the plain language statement.
- You can see that my interruptions increase dramatically once he mentioned the ordeal being over at the 90-minute mark. I had been holding questions and clarifications in my mind that I felt were really important and I was starting to worry that I wouldn't get a chance to ask them so I was trying to signal that I wanted to speak. This is going to be one of the risks of the ethnographic-style interview where my role is so much to listen and watch, especially if time is a consideration. But I think this potential cost is balanced out by the surprising answers and data I don't think I would have gotten or gotten as naturally if I asked more structured questions.

#### Implications

- If time is going to be tight in any interview (say meeting someone during their working day) I may have to be more structured in my interview format.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- I am glad I sent the topics beforehand, and I will continue to do so. He mentioned reading them, just as Participant 1 did. I think it helps them to get an idea of how to mould their narratives.

- I'm not sure the stress Likert scale worked well here. I wondered if he was a bit annoyed at me asking him to mark his stress level after the interview. Did he find it insulting, or something? I just left it on the table and was going to leave it unanswered, but at the very end he marked 2/10, jokingly asking me if the scale was for my level of stress.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- His eyes watered only once for about a minute, telling of how he thought he was going to die in the initial violent shaking. Otherwise, I did not notice any signs of elevated stress. He ended up marking only 2 out of 10 on the stress Likert scale.
- He took a long time deciding on and justifying his choices on each Likert scale (about English ability, Japanese ability, earthquake experience). I think this may just have been his character, but he seemed to want to represent himself fairly.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He made little eye contact at the start, staring into the middle distance as he told his story. Eye contact increased as time went on. I tried to face him directly and keep open body language. He had legs crossed at the ankles (as did I) but otherwise seemed open. He used a lot of hand gestures and pointing at things in the room to describe sizes, motions, objects, etc.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised at how much he talked. I met him once in Japan and remember him being kind of quiet. I raised the first topic and then he talked almost uninterrupted for nearly two hours.
- I was surprised at how much Ireland and Irishness came up in this interview, too (I thought I'd never see Ireland again, luck of the Irish, what would you expect of a group of Irish, etc.). Will other nationalities I interview focus on their home countries in this way as has been the case in the first two interviews?
- I was surprised by how tired I was again after the interview. I must remember how tiring the interview is for me. I should not schedule many in one day. Even though I barely talked I was listening intently and trying not to forget points to go back to (I didn't want to make any notes as I am trying to keep eye contact and not distract the speaker and try to keep the feeling of a natural chat).

#### What I'd do differently

- The location wasn't as quiet as I'd hoped, there were some children running around and a tv was switched on quite loudly near the end. I will try to find quieter places (again there was background music). I think these things will make it impossible to ever play the recording directly to voice recognition software. But I think the casual setting with a bit of noise around may help the participants to relax and talk, so I have to find the right balance.

#### What didn't I find out

- I did not find out about slogans or his opinion of social media, (though I can interpret some of these from other answers/dialogue).

#### What do I need to clarify

- I must clarify whether Participant 2's friend (who was also in the same town and is now back in Ireland) might like to participate.

#### First reflections on data

- His main communication tool was Skype phone calls over his 3G mobile phone Internet connection.

- His main information source seems to have been contact with family in Ireland and the news his family was seeing and relaying to him via Skype. Also, he mentioned the usefulness of viewing foreign media outlets over Internet on his mobile. He singled out the BBC for special praise. It was extremely useful. So TV and mass media comes out on top again. He also mentioned watching NHK TV at his girlfriend's family's house and not understanding the all the Japanese news broadcast, especially relating to Fukushima. This might be more proof for the usefulness of trying to translate Japanese media content. However, I will have to think about the issue of translating and information sources. Even if the Japanese news information (especially nuclear-related) had been translated, I am not sure he would have believed it. I suspect he still would have gone looking to an English-speaking source. BUT, the only way the English-speaking media could get information was through translation!!! (See Jenny's quote, UNDAC quote, etc.) So the trust is coming through the medium of translation. I need to think more about this issue. Also, his whole narrative ties in strongly to the general narrative at the time about the trustworthiness of information. Also he says that the foreign radio news is too general - perhaps another argument from translating locally-specific information over radio, as was done by some NPOs.
- He mentioned that the experience made him go back to hunter-gatherer: food, shelter, and fuel were your three priorities. He never mentioned information, even though so much of his story (really a big majority) was about the search for and need for information (by him and others), not the search for food or fuel or shelter. This is a really interesting point to me!
- He only mentioned Facebook and other social media in quite negative terms. He talked about the German passing on rumours from Facebook, how he got annoyed when his phone automatically showed his status when he signed on and he would be flooded with messages that he didn't have the time, inclination or battery power to answer.
- Power and connectivity were huge issues for him, but the power issue was mitigated by his access to fuel and a car where he could charge his mobile. The connectivity was mitigated by the fact that 3G wireless never went down, though phone signals did.
- He made no mention of using radio except when directly questioned by me. It is clear that it did not strike him as a useful communication tool. He said there being nothing worth listening to on the radio and that he didn't know what they were talking about (implied in Japanese). He talked a little about radio over Internet. This may be important data as Japanese authorities put strong emphasis on radio as a communication tool in the worst-affected areas of a disaster.
- He did not get information from any government websites and the only ones he mentioned were foreign news outlets and the Irish embassy website.
- There is evidence of his Japanese not always being sufficient - misunderstanding the airport announcement, not understanding all the Japanese tv news. But he used Japanese more than I was expecting him to. He could speak very little when I first met him when he arrived in Japan.
- He talks about the severe difficulty two Malaysians who could not speak Japanese and were just on a business trip to Furukawa had - this could be used to reinforce how translation is even more important for such short-term visitors rather than foreign residents.
- He stressed that fuel was the most important resource for him (due to the freezing temperatures and it allowing him to charge his phone in his car).
- His biggest fear was by far Fukushima but the initial violent shaking was the most traumatic. He barely mentioned water or the tsunami. He reveals his fears (nuclear explosion, food, water) when his manager is trying to get him back from Ireland. He also says he would probably not have come home if it had been just the earthquake.

- Another piece of support for more translation of mass media content was about the graphs used in a NHK TV news program that he couldn't completely understand ("They're really good at explaining stuff on Japanese TV...")
- It seems to be that he needed information providers who were quick with answers, presented plans, were somewhat directive, and did not sit on the fences (compare his opinion of the manager in Ireland and the British Embassy staff versus management in Japan and the Irish Embassy staff)
- He received no contact from the Japanese local authorities. It was very interesting how he said he wouldn't have wanted it. He didn't want some bureaucrat with a clipboard coming around checking his name off a list when they should be out saving lives. (Where we were was like a war-zone. We were the last of their worries...if we really needed help, they'd have known, they'd have known.) He would see bureaucracy (and possibly nonessential communication) from local government as a misused resource in a huge disaster. I was a bit surprised by this. I thought it would be comforting to know the local authorities were thinking of you.
- He and the other Irish actively avoided the Japanese community response (the standard evacuation response of the community staying in a local school together). He even said "they couldn't hack" the Japanese collective behaviour (sitting neatly tip to toe in allotted spaces in the big shared hall). This is another interesting cultural difference / barrier that may need to be considered in future disaster planning where large numbers of foreigners from more individualistic cultures may be involved. Japanese disaster planners may need to rethink their frames for imaging how foreigners will react. It may be different to how Japanese are socialised of react / respond and could have implications.
- He seemed to have a troubled experience with the Irish Embassy. He saw them as sitting on the fence and wanted to be directed as to what to do. He mentioned that they seemed unprepared but he underlined that he felt they were doing their best.
- He definitely experienced trauma - see his sleeping so much when home in his parents house and his mother's worry that he had been exposed to radiation. The quake also seemed to have a long term effect in defining his career priorities (changing jobs because of the mental line he drew after the ordeal).
- His whole narrative can be linked to the 'fly - jin' narrative in the Japanese media. He even mentions being looked on as a deserter by his company. N.B. A slightly derogatory word for foreigner in Japanese is gaijin (pronounced like 'guy - jing' in English) and 'fly - jin' was used as a very derogatory description of foreigners who left Japan after the earthquake and who were said to have abandoned the country. He uses the term 'jump-ship' a lot in reference to leaving Japan.
- He still has ties to Japan as his Japanese girlfriend of that time is now his fiancé and is living in Ireland.
- There was more poetry in this interview. When talking about deciding on taking a job in Ireland that would give him a stable routine and income he described the decision as "wanting some steady ground". Are the participants intentionally using these evocative images?
- There was a motif of information, chance, luck, destiny, fate, instinct, gut-feeling, odyssey, even adventure (the Top Gear reference) also individual versus collective also being in control.
- This interview presented no evidence of an expat culture. He talked about the yank getting supplies and then not, competition with the yanks for making it out of Japan, he compared the Irish to the Germans and Czechs in slightly favourable terms. I must state clearly in my methodology that my use of ethnography does not include looking at a culture, therefore.
- I am keeping all of the swear words and grammatical inconsistencies in for now to maintain that quality of his dialogue. I will consider whether they are needed when quoting directly or for analysis later on.

- He makes an interesting allusion to how the divide between affected and unaffected areas in East Japan was noticeable (the difference between Miyagi and Yamagata - neighbouring prefectures but on different coasts - one hit by the tsunami and one not).
- My knowledge and experience of Japan was useful in being able to understand references to things like [the apartment building chain he lived in] and not having to interrupt the flow of his questioning with unnecessary clarifications about these Japan-specific references.

### *2013/8/16 Record of interview with Participant 3*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in a meeting room at [a set of offices] where the participant now works. He picked this location based on scheduling convenience for him and, I think, because I had asked him to meet somewhere quiet. The security arrangements in getting to the meeting put me more on edge than for previous interviews. Also, the two seats we took at a large boardroom table in a high-ceilinged, decorative room (without any refreshments) made it feel much more business-like. I tried to make it seem more casual by pulling my seat away from the table to face the participant without any barrier in between us. We were alone with the doors all closed, and no-one disturbed us. The room was perfectly quiet. The interview lasted about 47 mins (3 mins on the explanation and paperwork, 44 mins on the interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- There was a similarity with Participant 1's interview in that Participant 3 felt the disaster had not really finished even now. However, as Participant 3 was routinely transferred (missions are usually 4 years long) to a new posting in July 2011, it was not possible to establish whether he would have felt a similar 6-month duration to the disaster that the other participants had spoken about.
- Again, culture came across in some ways more strongly than language as a barrier to communication in the Japanese context in this interview.
- A lack of connection to the Japanese community (and even a certain cynicism that ex-pats will ever be closely tied to the Japanese community due to the standard length of stay, difficulty of learning Japanese, cultural barriers, etc.) came up again as a feature of this interview.

#### Differences with other interviews

- This could not so easily be described as an ethnographic interview. The interview started with the participant explaining how he could not talk about his professional role (as the consular secretary at an EU embassy responsible for accounting for citizens in the disaster and liaising with the Japanese government, etc.). He further explained that he could only speak on a personal basis, but that in many cases it would be difficult for him to draw a line between personal and professional at times. Therefore, he started the interview extremely closed (see non-verbal communication below) and gave very brief, clipped answers to begin.
- The interview was much closer to a structured interview where I progressed through the topics of interest to me. I felt in complete control of the interview direction unlike in the other interviews.
- His professional role took up most of his time and energy in the disaster, but he could not talk about these elements of the story. Therefore, unlike in the other interviews, there was no clear narrative structure, no real timeline, no actors, no particular role for him as a main protagonist.

- This interview was not at all about establishing shared or common experience with me - it was just about answering questions that I posed and not giving away anything more.
- In this interview, I tried to model more the types of answers that previous participants had given or the type of things previous interviewees had talked about in the set-up to my questions. I was trying to show him the sort of information I was looking for without being directive.

### Problems

- The location was quiet and private but far from ideal. The location really changed the comfort-level and moved the power-balance from a fairly neutral one as in previous interviews to one heavily weighted toward the participant. Also the high ceilings in the spacious meeting room created a bit of an echo which slightly interfered with transcription.

### Implications

- As the interviewee was so closed at the outset, I tried to use open questions, I tried to use silence to encourage longer answers, and I tried to include my own lived experience and more details about the research questions I am trying to explore to try to encourage him to speak more at length.

### What questions worked well or didn't

- The first "Tell me about your experience..." ethnographic-style topic raising did not work at all in this interview as it was the participant's intention not to tell a story and not to reveal anything more than absolutely necessary.
- I do not think he read the topics I sent beforehand, but this was not a problem as he did not take any control of the conversational direction and was not crafting a story for me.
- Because I was trying to make the conversation seem more relaxed and natural than it really was, I did not want to look down at my list of topics during the interview. So I was glad that I had pretty much learned them off beforehand and was able to go through them.
- I'm not sure the question about prior experience of natural disasters worked well in the written profile section. He put 'no experience' - the lowest possible ranking - but had lived in Japan for 3.5 years and talked later about how that made him very used to earthquakes. This is an inconsistency that I must take into account. (Note I realise now that this is the problem with the question - a regular, small earthquake is not a disaster.)
- I think open questions and silence did not work at all to encourage him to speak more - he is a professional diplomat used to countering such conversational strategies. But I think sharing my research questions in more detail and saying what other participants had talked about did work to maybe spur his interest and helped to get him to be a bit more forthcoming and reflective in his answers - based on my constructivist view of the research process, I wasn't worried about this being seen as 'leading' him or 'influencing' his answers. (Also, I definitely exaggerated the amount of data I had gathered in the way that I phrased these interjections - I'm not sure why I did that. Probably to make it seem like a substantial project worthy of his contribution?)

### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed to be extremely closed at the beginning of the interview. Perhaps even slightly defensive.
- He did not exhibit even slight symptoms of stress. He quickly marked a zero on the stress Likert scale at the end of the interview and had mentioned prior to that about



how his job would require him to draw a line under even trying professional experiences once he had been transferred to a new role.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He started the interview with both arms tightly crossed against his chest. He faced me directly and made eye-contact, but after a brief answer, he would nod gently, lips pursed and use silence to indicate that that was all he was willing to say.
- As the interview progressed (and as I tried to continually reinforce that I was only looking for his personal experiences) his body language became more relaxed. He put one arm behind the back of the seat and began to laugh and move about more.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by how little his nationality came up as a theme in the interview. I was thinking that his embassy role would make it even more prominent than for the other interviewees, but it did not come up at all.

#### What I'd do differently

I will try to avoid meeting other participants at their places of work - I think the quiet gained does not outweigh the more relaxed, neutral atmosphere that is lost.

#### What didn't I find out

- I did not find out anything about his personal story or feelings at the time of the earthquake and subsequent disasters because it mapped too closely onto the professional role that he was not willing to talk about. I cannot infer in any way how he may have been experiencing stress or fear or frustration or barriers as I could for the other participants so far.
- I did not find out extra detail about some things that I found interesting (for example, I felt I couldn't ask as many questions as I wanted to about the embassy crisis page on Facebook or about the use of translation in the embassy's work flow) because I was afraid too much questioning would signal that I was straying into the professional experience and would break the trust with the interviewee and cause him to close up and become more guarded.

#### What do I need to clarify

#### First reflections on data

- His main communication tool was the embassy secure line and face-to-face communication for gathering information and a Facebook page and email for disseminating information.
- His main information sources were professional so he was somewhat restricted in how much he could speak about. But his main information came from the Japanese ministries (official sources) and, to a lesser extent, Japanese TV and an NHK emergency channel on the Japanese radio ("that would have been something we would have been tuned in to constantly because that was, you know, giving the most accurate, kind of, as-it-happened, you know, "oh there's an earthquake in X, Y or Z or whatever"").
- He says the diplomatic corps received translated documents from the Japanese ministries (in English) - this speaks of global power relations of languages but also the role of the translators in the ministries - what information was included or left out, what strategies were used, who were the translators, what was their level of expertise, were the original source language documents also included to allow checking independently? Could institutional norms of translation have led to the communicative barriers I have quotes about? Is this something I want to explore more?

- He makes a really interesting point about the importance of translation for translating TV before the Japanese ministries had activated their own translation staff “translation issues only really arose in the immediate aftermath of it when we were listening to the Japanese news and trying to pick up what was happening before the ministries had actually activated themselves” - local staff in the embassy were the main translators at this point.
- For his professional role, social media was a very effective communication tool - one that worked right throughout the crisis. Facebook and Twitter, was how they ended up making contact with a lot of friends and colleagues (as well as citizens of his country, but here is starting to get into his professional role and may need to be redacted). But he did not use it in a personal capacity much.
- Power and connectivity were not huge issues for him because he was in Tokyo and because the embassy was equipped with a special secure telephone line that continued to work.
- He seems to differentiate between tremor and earthquake in terms of severity and this could explain the inconsistency about his rating of prior experience of earthquakes as no experience on the profile sheet while speaking about their frequency during the interview. This terminology difference could be worth exploring, too, in terms of warnings and their usefulness (e.g. if say tremor will people see it as a less urgent warning, etc.).
- He seems to differentiate between Westerners and Asian foreigners in Japan (in their reactions to earthquakes, in their abilities with Japanese).
- He seemed to view media reports in Europe as overly sensational - this may speak to the panicked calls from people in his home country that he had to deal with that did not match the reality of what he was seeing on the ground?
- He and his colleagues found the mobile phone system to be incredibly effective, but that wasn't because of the mobile network, that was because of the data.
- There seemed to be more rephrasing, and stopping and starting to get the right expression with this participant - maybe this comes from professional experience to take care of what he says and how he says it, even though he was only speaking in a personal capacity.
- When talking about the topic of seeking information, the example he gives immediately are of radiation levels, and the risk of further aftershocks and earthquakes. Perhaps I can use this to infer what might have been the main issues of concern for people looking for information in the disaster.
- He points to the importance of having a crew on the ground for reliable media reporting - does this imply translators need to be on the ground too?
- He makes an interesting point about how Japanese rather than expats may have used one-seg more in the disaster - possible back-up for the point that you use the tools you are familiar with in times of disaster (one seg only really broadcasts Japanese language programming, so translating for one-seg may not be useful as expats would be unfamiliar with accessing it in regular times never mind emergencies).
- He makes a similar point about the citizens of his country not using the traditional emergency communication systems (like the automated anpi-kakunin system) designed for Japanese people. He talks about user-unfriendliness and this points to an important cultural difference in communication styles (and especially information density) between Japanese and other cultural contexts that translators may want to consider when developing emergency-communication translation strategies.
- He states that the nuclear disaster directly affected Tokyo and I can use this as support for including Tokyo interviewees in my group of participants.
- He also talks about the difficulty of translating technical nuclear-related information into something that people can use - this is back-up for points I made in my literature review.

- He did not think that the standard crisis emergency message boards (171 and Web 171) worked well in the disaster - he feels Facebook and social media may have superseded it - an argument for preparing as many channels as possible for use for communication in a disaster. The danger is that all these tools seem to have a shelf life (see Myspace, Bebo, etc.) that may be highly unpredictable and what could be highly used now may not be used by the time of the next disaster. He also hints somewhat disparagingly about the complicated steps required for this domestic Japanese message board system - not what you need in a disaster, he said. - but he recognises that this might have been useful if mobile communication had gone down completely.
- He is one of the people who clearly mentions wind-up mobile phone chargers and battery packs. I should collect quotes from all the people who talk about this to show how mobile power plus Internet really affected the communication of the people I spoke to positively. My recommendation would be to have such chargers included on preparedness lists and in emergency packs in addition to radios.
- He hints at the lack of sophistication in how wards communicate with their residents
- He points out that faxes were an important part of ministerial communication to embassies in the disaster - this could be relevant to my idea about information ecosystems
- He points to language being a major barrier to foreigners being made feel part of the local Japanese community "I think, quite frankly, the biggest issue, eh, for expats in Japan in feeling part of the community is language...Because a lot of Japanese people, even though they might have a decent enough level of English, won't necessarily communicate with you in it...and that's a big problem. And a lot of expats don't really take the time. It's a huge commitment..."
- He gives a clear quote about the difficulty for short-term visitors.
- He points to the difference between Western and Eastern foreign nationals in Japan
- He has the prejudice that a lot of Chinese people in Japan would speak Japanese but has this been empirically shown
- He makes an interesting point about cultural differences in response in relation to the gambare nippon slogan
- He makes a very interesting remark about the lack of English proficiency of local government in Japan - and it is always local government that is in charge of and has responsibility for emergency response.

#### *2013/9/18 Record of interview with Participant 4*

##### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in a Starbucks coffee shop in the Shinjuku Maynds Tower Building in Shinjuku, Tokyo. The location was a good one. We were at a small table with no other customers nearby. I was worried that coffee shops in Tokyo would be absolutely elbow-to-elbow and noisy with no chance for private conversation but this allayed my fears. I felt that we could speak freely without anyone overhearing and that the recording quality would be good. The interview lasted about 70 minutes (10 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 60 minutes interview).

##### Similarities with other interviews

- This interview reinforced the theme of the lack of community that stems from being in a big city. However, Participant 4 made the excellent point that this is true of life in many big cities. I must be careful not to interpret lack of community as being caused by foreignness. It is just as likely that the natives feel just the same detachment from their neighbours in big cities.

- Like with Participant 3, Participant 4 seemed to have no feelings of stress in the interview - he showed no emotion and did not describe any long term trauma or effects.

#### Differences with other interviews

- Memory came up as an issue more here than in previous interviewees. The participant expressed his worry about not remembering accurately and about how difficult it was for him to recall events of more than two years ago. I will need to highlight in my thesis that interviewing people such a long time after an event brings problems but that hopefully the event was significant enough for most people that the important stuff is still relatively clear in their minds even if the minutiae have become fuzzy. But this will be a weakness that I will have to be ready to defend.
- I was more relaxed in this interview than with any previously because this participant is a good friend. I was happy to check my notes and do other things which I would have avoided with an unknown participant for fear of breaking the intimacy I was trying to rapidly create.
- Unlike other participants so far, this participant only measured the disaster in terms of a few weeks (compared to others who talked about months. However, he did agree with others that in many ways the disaster is not yet over because of Fukushima (the nuclear reactor has been in the news for the weeks preceding this set of interviews because reports have come to light that contaminated water has been leaking from the plant and is not being adequately dealt with by Tepco).

#### Problems

#### Implications

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The question in the profile about experience of natural disasters did not work great here. He said he had frequent experience of earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, etc. in the places he has lived but he would not consider any of these disasters. Looking back at the question now I think I really meant prior experience of earthquakes, typhoons, etc. but didn't want to list all the possible events. I will try and make clear to future interviewees that I do not mean necessarily large scale events only.
- I think sending the general topics I hope to cover beforehand to participants worked well. He mentioned reading the list briefly and apologized for his rambling answers that seemed off topic. This indicates that he was trying to create a narrative that somehow met my expectations as a researcher. This feeds in to my constructivist epistemology. However, the fact that he rambled also shows the advantage to my mind of giving the participant more control of the actual interview itself (as in the ethnographic interview technique). He pointed out how he needed to ramble to help remember things and put things in order in his mind and that the tangents were probably things that were somehow significant to him at the time. I highlighted that the contextual tangents are useful to me in helping me to try and interpret his story.
- I continued to try to use modelling from my own experience to get the interviewee to talk about things I was interested in without directly asking them. I feel this technique is working well to make the setting seem more conversation-like and to balance the perceived power relationship.
- I have never used the handout question to see if the participant picks radio as an important item because nobody is talking about radio at all. I have now decided on four occasions that it would not work well, would just break the intimacy and would probably not tell me anything useful. So I have decided to abandon it and will not try it in future interviews.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed quite nervous at the start, much more than I expected as we are friends. His hands were trembling slightly as he filled out the profile information sheet. He looked away into the distance a lot and rarely made eye contact at first. But once we got past relaying his experiences to more dialogic conversation, he seemed to relax a lot more. It shows that asking people to participate in research, using a recorder, changing the normal dynamic always changes the conversation, even between friends. I think it is not possible to achieve a completely natural conversation when research is being undertaken unless time is there to break down that researcher-researched dynamic and the trappings of research (dictaphone, informed consent sheets, etc, are lost). The question then becomes do you need a completely natural setting for the information in the persons conversation to be valid. I don't think so.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

##### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by how nervous he was and by how relaxed I was.
- I was surprised by how little jet lag seemed to have affected me - I had only been in the country 24 hours when doing this interview. But I felt fresh, alert and not tired at all.

##### What I'd do differently

- I wish I had clarified why he said 'of course I didn't turn on the radio' - maybe I can follow this up in a Skype interview - instead I went on to change the topic to the PA system, and I don't know why I missed this potentially useful cue.

##### What didn't I find out

- I did not find out about radio. I chose not to ask any questions about its significance because he mentioned himself that he didn't use or think of using.
- I forgot to check if there was anything else the participant wanted to add at the end of the conversation, but I think we had exhausted most of the useful topics.

##### What do I need to clarify

- I could clarify whether the early warning app he mentions (yurekuru call) was available only in Japanese around the time of the disaster. (Note: after checking, it seems that the app was only available in Japanese in March 2011 according to this blog <http://www.calvin-c.com/blog/yurekuru/>)

##### First reflections on data

- This participant's story did not seem to have any narrative structure really, so perhaps narrative analysis will not prove to be a useful analytical tool. Out of four interviews, two have had a clear "story" to tell and two have not. I will see how the others turn out.
- This participant mentioned Fly Jin without my prompting so this suggests that it was part of the discourse after the disaster.
- The importance of TV as a prime information source came through very strongly - he mentioned TV several times without my prompting.
- Facebook and other social media were shown to be poor information sources but good communication tools in this interview again. So translation of social media is unlikely to be necessary as a communication tool in most cases because people have been using it to communicate with people they know and with whom they share a common language of communication. This may end up being an important distinction that I will need to make in my thesis. I.e. social media and translation need will differ depending on whether it is being used as a tool for communication with people you

already know or whether it is being used as an information gathering tool from people you do not know. I have little evidence so far of people successfully using social media as an information gathering tool and therefore little evidence that translation was needed. People didn't trust much of what was coming out over social media, it seems, but benefited from using it as a way to effectively and efficiently communicate with their networks.

- This is another account where the participant mentions the sizeable earthquake that struck a couple of days before March 11, and so this might need to be the point from which I define the start of the disaster.
- This participant mentions the noise when the earthquake struck and the loud rumbling that preceded it and the subsequent large tremor.
- This participant spends a considerable amount of interview time stressing how little damage he incurred in the experience. I think this is an account where the participant wants to help me with my research but really doesn't feel deep down that his experience merits consideration.
- His first communication was email over iPhone with his wife (who was using the office computer).
- His second communication was a Facebook update when he got to the park - he also at this time sent a text to his mother who did not have a social media presence.
- His third communication was a Skype call back in the apartment.
- His first information gathering was to turn on the TV to Japanese channels (broadcasting Japanese). Radio did not seem to come to mind for him as an information source in the immediate aftermath of a quake.
- His second information was checking news sources on his iPhone in the park (mostly Japanese because the information had not yet reached the international media)
- When talking about the details of the TV broadcast, his first statement is related to visuals (the map of Japan) not to audio
- The instinct of this participant seemed to be to get out of the apartment once the shaking had stopped and he had established that his wife was safe. He didn't feel safe in the apartment and wanted to go to somewhere open.
- Some of the elements of the story he pinpoints in the first five or ten minutes after the earthquake are people not being too concerned around him (e.g. the workmen near his house, the cake shop) as if, by contrast, it was somehow odd or strange for him to be shocked by the experience. This may be a recurring feeling for other foreigners who felt their reaction did not match the (surface) reactions of the Japanese around them. (hon'ne/tatema stuff?)
- The participant checked not just his own embassy's website but the websites of other embassies as well.
- His decision to get out of Tokyo and go to Okayama was based on uncertainty - there wasn't enough solid information about Fukushima.
- The comments in online Forums, emails from friends and messages on Facebook (many from abroad - hence an ecosystem idea) really influenced his decision about leaving Tokyo too. But then at the very end of the interview - when I had spoken about my experience with online comment functions - he seemed to contradict this earlier statement and say that he's not sure he really did find forums helpful. This might be more evidence for the benefits of the dialogic ethnographic interview style.
- This is another participant who mentions making your own judgment. Maybe I need to make this a code.
- This participant makes a statement about Tokyo not being a disaster zone, but still he felt like he was living in a disaster the first few days after the earthquake - I could use this as a quote to justify the inclusion of Tokyo participants.
- He really struggled to define the temporal dimension of the disaster. He says in one way life has not gone back to normal (watching what he eats, etc.) but the disaster has

ended for him. Temporally, he mentions a couple of weeks, and functionally he seems to mention going back to work (about 9 or 10 days after onset).

- This is another participant who speaks of running out of the house on hearing the warning of a huge earthquake (that never came in the end) - is this a natural reaction for foreigners, even when the received wisdom in Japan is to stay indoors? - might this account also be used as a way to show that people may not fully read such warnings in real emergencies and may just focus on things like intensity rather than location?
- The participant talks on several occasions about turning on the TV immediately after different tremors to see what information was coming through. For him, TV was the main source of information and again he is slightly disparaging about the radio.
- The participant seems to remember information about the rolling power cuts in his area coming through on the PA system. He is also another participant who questions the sound quality/clarity of the communication coming through this PA system.
- I have an example of using my own experience in the ethnographic interview "I know how difficult these questions are because all the questions I'm asking you, I've asked myself, and I'm trying to remember about the public announcement system where I lived in, in, in downtown Tokyo"
- This is another participant who brings up the problem of what languages to choose to translate into.
- He doesn't remember getting any multilingual information from city hall about the disaster, but there was a regular magazine in Japanese that did have information about the disaster after the fact.
- There was another example here in this interview of the benefits of the dialogical ethnographic format "Now, that does remind me alright..."
- His instinct was to visit embassy websites for information so this is more evidence for the central role that embassies played in the experience of the foreigners I spoke to.
- There was an example of me using modelling from my own experience to elicit information when I said about power and connectivity that I was concerned about water.
- I brought up the point (and the participant agreed) that I will have to deal with in the thesis that you if you've been in Japan some time and can speak the language it can be difficult to think back to parts of the disaster and ask yourself if it was happening in Japanese or another language. This may be something I need to temper long-term fluent residents' accounts with.
- This participant brings up the point of how close PM Kan came at the time of the disaster to ordering the evacuation of Tokyo which the participant used to illustrate the idea that it is hard to know how much information is too much or too little. If we had known that at the time, and by corollary, if that information had been translated, what would have happened?
- The participant had a really nice quote that I might use to lead into one of the themes. "You know, I mean, you can just get information from everywhere now, well, as long as you're able to, to understand it, so."

### *2013/9/18 Record of interview with Participant 5*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in a Veloce coffee shop in Shibuya, Tokyo. The location was not a good one. I had been in this coffee shop earlier on in the day to check it out as a possible location and it had been very quiet. But by the time I met Participant 5 and brought him there, it had gotten very busy. The people at the table were very

noisy and I had forgotten that you can smoke inside in Japan and the air was thick with smoke. Luckily the participant did not mind (I asked him) but the transcription will be difficult with all the background noise. However, as the people around us were so involved in their own animated conversations, I felt that we could speak freely. The interview lasted about 44 minutes (7 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 37 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This interview felt similar to talking to Participant 3 - it was unemotional, focused on short direct answers to my questions, and focused on the events rather than feelings much. He did not seem to see the experience in Tokyo as being very traumatic. His answers focused very much just on the day of March 11th.
- As with Participant 4, Participant 5 mentioned that he had had a brief look at the topics that I sent in advance, but did not read them in detail. He mentioned to at the end of his interview that he did try to think about the topic a bit in advance.

#### Differences with other interviews

- This was the first participant to mention the one-seg television system (TV over mobile phone) without any prompting from me.

#### Problems

- The participant is an extremely softly spoken person. It was quite hard to hear what he was saying face-to-face and now that I have checked the recording, I know that it will be hard to catch all that he is saying first time. Also, he does not appear to be a naturally talkative person, so his answers tended to be shorter than with other people I have interviewed.
- I was starting to feel a bit jet-lagged and tired by the time I met this participant at 5pm, so it is possible that I was not as good at making him feel relaxed and happy to speak as I had been with other participants and I may not have been as on the ball about picking up on things he said or following up for clarification or expansion.

#### Implications

- Because I found it difficult to hear him, because his answers tended to be short, and because his focus on the disaster was just on the very early stages, this was definitely not a narrative-based interview - no real feeling of a story came about and I do not feel I have much contextual information on him to infer much extra about his experiences above and beyond what he answered.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- I tried very hard to leave silences as often as possible, especially at what seemed to be the end of answers or after I made a comment in order to try and encourage greater contribution from the participant but it rarely bore much fruit.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed completely relaxed and not at all troubled by talking about this topic. He was not talkative but nor was he particularly shy. He made regular eye contact but held himself together quite tightly. He did mention briefly that the situation with Fukushima was very scary and that his parents were calling him about it, but he did not dwell on it as a topic.
- Overall, this participant did not seem to remember too much about the events - he openly said he didn't remember certain details and his chronology did not match that of other participants or the general consensus about when events were known about in the disaster - so the overall feeling was that the events did not make much of an impression on him. I need to make sure I point this out to counter any ideas of every



foreigner being panicked and feeling the need for translation, etc. He is a counterpoint that shows that speaking Japanese and being in Tokyo may have left foreigners relatively unscathed.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

##### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by how much I had to talk - I think I had been spoiled by the previous talkative participants. It was a little stressful, especially as I was starting to feel a bit tired.
- I was also really surprised by how little realization the participant had of the seriousness of what had happened on the first day - even though he had seen some one-seg broadcasts.

##### What I'd do differently

- I would avoid this coffee shop chain in the future and certainly not sit in the smoking section.

##### What didn't I find out

- I did not follow up on why he knows his neighbours now but didn't at the time. What changed? I don't know why I didn't ask the question at the time as it seems a very obvious follow up. I think I was just getting tired.

##### What do I need to clarify

##### First reflections on data

- The participant mentioned going drinking after the earthquake. This is now turning into a bit of a theme. Several participants have mentioned this. This may seem cold or odd, but as the participant underlines, this is because people in Tokyo did not at that stage realize the extent of the damage up north and is proof of the time it took for situational awareness to spread. Many of the foreign people I talked to seemed to indicate that they will act as normal (keep plans, go drinking, etc.) and not panic, until they know how bad a situation is. This is more evidence of the panic fallacy in disaster studies. It may also be a way of dealing with stress. Joking aside, it could be an interesting recommendation to make sure that pubs where foreigners congregate are well served with translated disaster information, notice of evacuation centres, etc., especially for the Olympics where many people will be on holidays / celebrating.
- The participant mentioned the people in his office with one-seg on their phones.
- The participant's personal timeline is interesting - he feels the nuclear stuff didn't happen until a week after the quake when in fact it started that evening and certainly that weekend.
- He mentions a couple of times about how there was no realization of how serious the situation was.
- The participant felt that the disaster ended about 4-5 months after onset in July. Functionally he defines the end in terms of parents calming down, activities no longer being cancelled, water and toilet paper no longer in short supply, etc.
- He talks about how his friends around Japan were all using Facebook to communicate in the immediate onset.
- His account speaks of the primacy of the Internet and email as a communication tool in his experience of the disaster.
- The participant mentioned how normally pay online newspaper articles were free during the disaster so you could read what was going on.
- This is an account that mentioned the Japanese skill for presenting information graphically in a skilful way to explain complex topics like the nuclear disaster - could

this be a lesson learned - to focus on my diagrammatic or graphic presentation of information in disasters.

- It was seeing a photo posted by a friend on social media that was the first time he was made to realize how serious the situation was for some.
- I was still interested at the time of this interview in assessing how much foreigners felt part of the response and at the time I was trying to assess how implicated the people I talked to felt in the national response (e.g. slogans, etc.) - this participant seemed fairly implicated and aware - he was one of the few people to mention the Gambare Tohoku campaign slogan, so it could be some evidence that language ability helped feelings of involvement with the national efforts, although he did not go into many specifics.
- His experience resonates with my own in the sense that the only real pulling together was based on the company in terms of response and recovery - perhaps this came from the fact that we were both employed by very traditional Japanese companies with few foreign employees.
- His attitude to Japanese media representation of the nuclear accident is that they only presented the positive, upbeat side.
- Talking about the seeming glossing over by NHK in particular of the seriousness of the nuclear incident was the most animated the participant got in the whole interview. He says that the negative sources on the incident were mostly foreign.
- He says that the explanations he found in English for what was going on in the first few days and weeks were terrible - despite the fact that he imagined experts would be quite fluent in English in their fields. What caused this rupture?
- When asked if there was anything he wanted to add he mentioned the push to save energy after the nuclear disaster. This topic may have been something important in his world, but it also shows that he was thinking about issues of interest to the project - he was engaged with the interview process, perhaps more than I thought.
- The participant considered his experience probably bland compared to other people I had interviewed.
- The participant doesn't feel like a separate part of his community in Japan or, or at work.
- Talking to his boss was a calming influence on him - he is more evidence for the rupture in some foreigners of being influenced by panic from overseas and calm from local.
- His explanation of why fly-jin is not to him a derogatory term is because "nobody had the information they really needed".

### *2013/9/19 Record of interview with Participant 6*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview was held on the outdoor terrace of a small Thai restaurant near the Tokyo Midtown complex in Roppongi. The interview was a disaster location-wise because of the noisy location and the fact that it was during the participant's lunchtime when he was restricted for time and needed to eat. Though operationally the interview did not work well, I still think his perspective on governmental emergency communication (he worked for a PR firm that advised a certain Japanese government Office) could be valuable. Also, I got to raise most of the topics I had planned to raise beforehand. I just didn't get to apply the ethnographic style of interview practice as much or as well as I would have liked. The interview lasted about 35 minutes (2 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 33

minutes interview).

### Similarities with other interviews

### Differences with other interviews

- This was the first interview held over lunch and outdoors and both caused negative implications. I will have to try to control the choice of location better in future interviews and I will try to avoid meeting people during a break from work, if possible.

### Problems

- There was a drunken group and later on young children beside us who made a lot of noise and disruption.
- As the interview was held during the participant's lunchtime at work, he was restricted for time and needed to eat.

### Implications

- The background noise will definitely affect the audio quality for transcribing.
- I spoke a lot more time talking than I normally wanted to as per my ethnographic style - but this was to allow the participant time to eat. Also, I was very conscious of time and not making the participant late back to work. I was not relaxed in this interview at all.

### What questions worked well or didn't

- The question that probably worked best was asking the participant if they knew of any other people who fit the profile who might be interested in talking to me. The participant gave me three people to contact. Two never answered me, but one agreed to participant and became Participant 27.
- The disability status question on the profile data sheet seemed to cause some confusion again. I explained that it was to see if issues like hearing or vision problems, for example, may also have explained why people had difficulty communicating or gathering information. The participant answered minimal (as he used corrective lenses) but my intention was to only mark this status if it was a serious, state-recognized disability (e.g., blindness).
- The Likert scale for stress also needed explanation and the participant at first seemed to think I was asking him for his level of stress during the disaster.

### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed relaxed and very eager to help me. He worked hard to put me at ease and I enjoyed talking to him. Though I could not really carry out the conversation in the ethnographic style I planned to, I feel there will be some useful information in there.

### How they used non-verbal communication

### What I felt surprised by

- I felt surprised by how poorly some embassies in Japan supported its citizens in this disaster.

#### What I'd do differently

- I would not have chosen this location or time if I had the interview to do over. I think interviewing while eating and while someone needs to rush back to work does not create the best conditions. I think I ended up getting good information today despite rather than as a result of the interview conditions. In future, I must make more efforts to control the controllables, as it were.

#### What didn't I find out

#### What do I need to clarify

- I want to follow up with him on differences in information provision styles between Japanese and English that he talked about off mic.

#### First reflections on data

- This participant would have an interesting view on governmental emergency communication because he was working at the time of the disaster for a PR consulting firm that provided services to a certain Japanese government office.
- The idea of providing a twitter feed off of NHK and Kyodo shows how intertwined information sources were. It also shows that they were mediators (maybe not always translating but at least selecting and editing).
- He underlined that in relation to Fukushima, foreigners struggled, but even the Japanese were not clear on what was going on.
- Even though the participant's life was not much affected by the disaster, information gathering was central for him because of his job as a PR consultant to foreign firms.
- His account speaks to the importance of trustworthiness - they used news agencies as sources because they have established standards.
- Facebook was the main source of information for this participant on the day of onset because of the lack of phone service.
- He had not really used Twitter before the earthquake.
- NHK English TV was important for this participant personally.
- His communication with the important people in his life was all done through Facebook or email.
- He made the argument that structural factors in the way news is made in the West and in Japan may have helped to cause to content versus context difference (the West looked to create sensationalist content to generate clicks and form public opinion, the Japanese gave loads of information but didn't explain what it meant). Overall he sees this as a general cultural difference in how you tell stories which I might want to mention as another cultural barrier. This difference impacted on translation "it wasn't even a question of whether information was available in English or not, what was available where it was directly translated made absolutely no sense"
- He criticises the Japanese government for producing useless direct translations because of systemic and structural reasons where it has to be exactly the same between languages to avoid risk (of being sued or being accused of misinformation).
- He does not feel part of his community and is not aware of any disaster preparation measures in the housing complex he lives in (though he has lived there four years).
- It's interesting - the Canadian Embassy already has one of the recommendations I

was thinking of making in place (kind of mentor long-term representatives in various places throughout Japan) and yet though the system was there, they didn't do anything with it. The main reason seems to be because the embassy staff and many of these such contact points left. I could use this in my thesis to underline that it's not just about providing lessons learned but thinking about how we can ensure that lessons learned or good ideas are applied next time around.

- The embassy did not send him any information even though he was registered.
- This is another account where it was work not the local government that had all of the influence in terms of disaster preparedness.
- In terms of looking for help, his criteria were "who I thought could help me most and who would understand my situation the best" - this seems to point to embassies or work being more natural avenues than the local government or NPOs and this is an argument I can make for where I should try to spread my lessons learned.
- He gives an example of volunteer translation in the translating of the Japanese documentary about Tokyo's disaster preparedness that was then posted on to Youtube.
- The participant defines the disaster period functionally as the time the Fukushima 50 were front and centre in the news and when he felt he started to get more reliable information about Fukushima. Temporally, he puts this at about two to three weeks.
- For this participant, though, day-to-day life never changed so he cannot really speak of a return to normal or recovery for himself. (Despite him saying this, he still mentioned the fear of radiation affecting him long term - this is hardly normal.) This is another indication that in the case study part, I perhaps need to deal with the disaster/non-disaster status of Tokyo.
- This participant mentioned some positive aspect to the disaster - he found it exciting and he was being paid to monitor it and respond for high profile clients. This external factor conditioning the participant's response of improved job chances is another one that I need to take into account.
- He links the fly-jin phenomenon to what he calls legitimate reasons of family and inability to access the information needed.
- Apart from Fukushima, there was no element of the disaster where the participant felt he was lacking information (because he wasn't really affected).
- The participant was not watching the media very closely through the weekend. He didn't find out about Fukushima until Sunday.

### *2013/9/19 Record of interview with Participant 7*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in one of the meeting rooms at the participant's office in central Tokyo located in a quiet back street just off the Shinjuku-dori. It was a completely soundproofed room with a fairly large table in between us. There was a window to the room but it had shutters down, so it felt private and I had no worries about the recording quality. But I did feel extremely formal. It was very Japanese going to the meeting room and exchanging business cards, but I actively avoided doing the rituals and speaking Japanese. I am not sure whether this is because I was tired, because I did not want bad memories from my experience of working for a Japanese company, or because I wanted to play the foreigner card. It was probably a bit of all three. A requirement of my research was that interviews would be carried out in English and I had found it useful in the past to be ambiguous about how

familiar I was with the Japanese language and culture. Before we started speaking the participant said he could only give me a maximum of thirty minutes because he was at work - I since learned that he was a very senior executive of the company and would have had a lot of freedom to arrange his own schedule but also a lot of responsibilities in the working day. So unusually, I kept my watch on the table (as there was no clock in the room) as well as the audio recorded and the profile questionnaire sheets. The interview lasted about 29 minutes (2 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 27 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

#### Differences with other interviews

- This was the only participant who identified himself as a foreigner but also pointed out that he holds a Japanese passport for convenience based on his long period of residence in Japan (more than half his life).

#### Problems

- I was really tired in this interview because I had not slept at all the previous night (actually zero hours) due to some delayed reaction jet lag.
- It was quite difficult for me to keep silent when I felt he had not understood the purpose of my research and seemed to be accusing me of research aims I did not have and did not feel I had communicated to him (translate everything into English, criticized Japan for not translating enough) but I knew that I needed to keep silent now more than ever and let him reveal his inner world view more to me. I only fell once where I realized I was about to interrupt him, stopped and apologized.

#### Implications

- This could explain why I felt the participant was a little hostile at times - maybe I was just tired and sensitive.
- Because I was not enjoying the interview, I did not really focus on any of the ethnographic techniques I had been trying to implement in this research - it came out much more like a standard semi-structured interview. (Even transcribing the interview, I did not enjoy listening back to the transcript and found myself again not enjoying the interaction. I must be careful not to let these negative feelings cause me to discount or underestimate the participant's data.)
- Overall, I did not feel particularly comfortable or engaged with this interviewee as a result of him attributing what I held to be false aims to my research project, so it surely had an effect on me not minding about only getting to spend a short time with him.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- His answers seemed so curt to almost all of my questions that I found myself constantly justifying why I was asking him these questions - after many answers, I would say "the reason I'm asking" - maybe not just to justify but also to try and spur on his interest and engagement a little.
- I tried to ask about the slogans again, but I'm not sure if this question is really adding any value and helping me to answer my research questions.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- Overall, the participant was very calm but I got a slightly hostile vibe from when it seemed in his mind that I was being critical of the Japanese response or that he wanted to show that he did not agree with the overall thrust of my thesis. It seemed he mostly got angry about the misunderstanding that I was suggesting everything should be translated into English. He pointed out that there are people who don't

speaking English and this could be useful commentary for my thesis to reinforce the idea that Twitter research, etc, is very one-sided at the moment.

How they used non-verbal communication

- About 10 minutes from the end, before his slightly hostile comments, he started clicking his projector pen repeatedly and this continued until the end of the interview showing, perhaps, his own irritation with my questioning or what he perceived as the thrust of my research.

What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised that he felt the disaster lasted a long time. He seemed to cut himself off from media early on and avoided thoughts of leaving or panic, so I thought he would say it ended very early for him.

What I'd do differently

What didn't I find out

What do I need to clarify

First reflections on data

- This participant's first attempt at contacting important people in his life was mobile phone but the system was not working. But then he soon heard that Skype could be used and he tried it and it worked - so Internet comes across as an important environmental factor in this account.
- I tried to ask about social media and SNS and his answer was that it was not the only way but the easy way to communicate with everybody else. His account points to the benefit of speed and efficiency of SNS in communicating with multiple people rather than sending personal messages to individuals. So Skype and Facebook were the SNS tools he mentioned.
- Television is mentioned as his first information gathering tool.
- He switched off the TV after two or three days of 24-hour coverage. He is particularly critical of the media showing the same footage repeatedly.
- He did not watch overseas TV news because they were just getting the footage from Japanese TV anyway and he wanted the information first hand. This shows (perhaps) a suspicion of translation?
- He did not believe that the nuclear information from the normal TV channels was true (he said he had no illusions about it).
- His account is another strong one for individuality - taking in lots of information from lots of sources, not just Japanese ones, and making his own ideas and not panicking.
- He talks about having a very strong connection to Japan unlike other people. (I think this may have influenced his data - he explicitly stated that it would not have been the right thing for him to leave.) It was really just time that seemed to bond him so strongly to Japan and he had no other advice for how to build community ties.
- He underlines that Japanese were probably just as confused as foreigners in terms of what is true so linguistic mediation may not be a factor in alleviating this.
- He talked about how people from some countries in the foreign community in Japan were more stressed than other people and he indicated again that who to believe was a matter of individual decision making.
- He was very aware of lots of information on disaster available from the city government in Japanese and English, especially via the website.
- He underlines that when we talk about foreigners in Japan, the English-speaking community is not the biggest.

- He did not mention anything about helping his foreign friends who could not speak Japanese so well so I must make sure to take this into account - not all foreigners who could speak Japanese well acted as volunteer intercultural mediators and I should not end up giving this impression.
- This is another participant who clearly says he never uses radio - even though he identified so strongly with Japanese culture in so many other ways. He even says that he doesn't know many people who have radio. Nor does he read newspapers.
- His definition of the end of the disaster was again functional (light back in the street, for example) and temporally he defined it as 3 or 4 months or even longer.
- This participant is another person who talks about finding a new code not based on language for everybody to understand maybe based on pictures. This idea of pictures has come up several times now.
- He very strongly feels it would be wrong to prefer one community over another in terms of information and translation - even where size of community may be noticeably different - in terms of what gets translated but he also recognizes that we cannot expect all foreigners to learn Japanese and that's why he suggests thinking out-of-the-box in terms of a new code.
- As a long-term resident, he is very clear that in Japan it is not a question of if, but when the next disaster will happen.
- He made a good recommendation about handing some kind of leaflet to every foreign person who arrives in Japan.

### *2013/9/19 Record of interview with Participant 8*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in the outdoor roof garden of a Starbucks coffee shop in the Tokyu Plaza building on Omotesando. The interview took place in the evening at 7pm after darkness had fallen. It was a balmy late summer evening and very comfortable sitting outdoors. The participant chose this location as it was just a few minutes by bicycle on her way home from work. This was my third interview of the day on only my second full day in Japan. The interview lasted about 65 minutes (10 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 55 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

#### Differences with other interviews

- It felt different to all prior interviews because of the intimate setting and my extreme tiredness.

#### Problems

- The cafe was outdoors and it was evening time, so there was little light (just small atmospheric lights here and there).
- I was extremely jetlagged - I had not slept the previous night at all and this was my third interview of the day so I was just running on caffeine by the time I met this participant.

#### Implications

- I was afraid the participant would be unable to fill out the various forms so I tried to guide us as near as possible to the windows of the indoor part to get the light from there. This meant that we were nearer to some other people than I wanted to be. But it still felt intimate (because of the dark setting) and I felt we could speak freely. The people beside us were on a date and completely ignored us.



- I may not have focused enough on listening during the interview and there were more interjections by me than I would have liked.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- She seemed to be at ease and relaxed. She was warm and friendly and we had a very pleasant time talking to each other.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- At the initial stages (especially when she was trying to remember details of her experiences) she would often lean back in her chair, cross her arms and put one hand at her chin, staring off in the distance to think. At all other times she leaned in to speak and made good eye contact.
- This may not exactly be non-verbal but the participant had a habit of repeating 'yeah' numerous times in a row when listening and I figured that this might cause trouble when transcribing. I have taken the decision to reduce the number of 'yeahs' in cases where I feel they would hinder understanding of the dialogue, but keep as many as possible in to try to retain the original quality of the interview experience.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised that the participant mentioned hoarding of essential supplies that started in Tokyo - this had not really struck me in other accounts and I need to go back and check for it again - it runs counter to the solidarity and group dynamics characteristic of the discourse on Japanese response to emergency.
- I was a bit surprised about how strongly the feeling of community came across in her account, especially as she marked 2/10 for confidence in speaking and 1/10 for confidence in reading Japanese. This seems to make the argument that language need not be a barrier to community but it may also make the argument that volunteer translation (friends etc who translated for her) were key to this integration into various communities.

#### What I'd do differently

- I would try to just let her speak more - even though my interjections were only really yeahs for the first half of the interview, I am concerned that I was not listening as deeply as I should have. I'm not sure how focused you can really be on listening when your mouth is moving.

#### What didn't I find out

#### What do I need to clarify

#### First reflections on data

- This participant's initial reaction was once again to do the same as the Japanese around them as an initial form of response (getting under desk, changing shoes). This perhaps requires no language and I must think about this but not all foreigners think alike. For example she says, "I remember one of my colleagues shouting, for, foreign guy was shouting, "Ah, Japanese, what are we supposed to do? [laughter] [Laughter] Anyway, I thought that was good. I just followed."
- She highlights different cultural responses right from the beginning of her account - foreigners wanting to get out immediately (which you're not supposed to do) and Japanese waiting quietly for an announcement before taking action. She, however, was a foreigner who copied the Japanese and later on about how prepared and calm (though still scared) her Japanese friends and colleagues were.

- Her first communication was writing a mail to her family while sheltering under a desk in her office. Internet continued to be her main communication (wifi outside pub and news coming in from family in Netherlands) - this could be useful for an information ecosystem idea. She also gives another good ecosystem example (being on the computer and watching TV news, colleague sending link to NHK foreigner news, receiving non-Dutch embassy information from friends of other nationalities )
- A learning point is to have flat shoes in the office.
- There is more evidence here of foreigners creating their own communities “maybe that’s why it was only the four people who were there because we hang on to each other”.
- Alcohol features again as a kind of coping strategy.
- This is another account where foreign TV news was deeply criticised for being disconnected from reality (she stopped watching CNN after first night - but continued to watch NHK in English)
- There was no immediate direction from her company about whether or not to go to work - she also says there was a disaster confirmation system that the company had which didn’t work.
- This is another account indicating some pressure from family and loved ones to leave Japan (arising she thinks from them being exposed to all the extreme unrealistic reporting).
- Radiation seems to be her major concern (she was so relieved to be officially allowed to work from home)
- She talks about the disaster as being a shared experience among people and a way to say “were you there?” - I think this kind of implies bonding among foreigners. Maybe I can use this as a quote to introduce one of the chapters “It was, it was a shared experience, in a way.....even now, eh, now and then, yeah, you check, “Ah, were you there when the earthquake happened?” “Yeah.” “Where were you?” “There and there.” Yeah, so everyone has his or her story...about it and it’s something I will never forget.”
- This is another account that seems to say announcements in any language might not be so effective at the beginning anyway (due to in this case shock or due to noise of the quake as with Participant 17).
- Perhaps I could use this quote to introduce a section on the disconnect between domestic and overseas media “I would see a Dutch journalist come here and make a, em, some reportage and then, “Oh no, this is just sensation... Yeah, so then, I felt like, “Oh, this is, eh, this is how they make news.””
- This is another account mentioning having a backup plan (like Participant 10 for example) which could be used to illustrate the independent and non-group dependent nature of foreigners’ thinking.
- She mentions timeliness as being a big block (how slow information was to come out about Fukushima).
- Despite not speaking much Japanese this participant seems well integrated into the community of residents in her apartment building and into their communal disaster response strategies.
- She is another participant mentioning throwing away or disregarding posted material coming to her in Japanese. My fear, therefore, for the adoption of Easy Japanese communication is that foreigners will still just throw it away based on the fact that they expect not to be able to understand it, even if it has been redesigned so that they might, and this participant actually pre-empted my comment by taking the words out of my mouth.
- This is another participant who did not use radio or did know about translated governmental websites.
- This participant who usually used Facebook a lot did not use it in the disaster much.

## *2013/9/20 Record of interview with Participant 9*

### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in the English language school owned and run by the participant. The school is about a ten-minute walk from the station of a village in Ibaraki prefecture. It is on the first floor (2F) of a small commercial complex including some shops and offices. The school consisted of a large open-plan room with some toys and posters for younger students and a table and chairs for conversation with older students. As I was entering the building, two older Japanese women who had just finished their class were coming down the stairs and said hello to me in English, probably assuming I was another teacher. The participant had stressed several times in our prior communication that the interview needed to be finished within 50 minutes as we were talking during a break in his schedule and he had to get ready for another class. For this reason, I was very concerned about timing. The interview lasted about 50 minutes (8 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 42 minutes interview).

### Similarities with other interviews

- This felt a bit like interviews with Participants 3 and 7 because the interviews were being held at their places of work. This meant I had no concerns about disturbances or recording quality, but I did feel some sort of power imbalance at the outset.
- It also felt a bit like the interview with Participant 6 in that I knew from the outset that time was very limited and was conscious of this in how I carried out the interview.

### Differences with other interviews

- This participant was the first so far to say that he had taken part in another study about the Great East Japan Earthquake. The study was a Japanese linguistic one about Easy Japanese, which is a topic that is slightly related to my study. However, the prior interview was not on translation or foreigners' experiences but was about the type of Japanese language used in disasters.
- I didn't laugh so much in this interview. I think it was because I felt so much on the participant's territory, I'm not sure I was as relaxed as I had been in other interviews. Nonetheless, it was still a pleasant conversation and that participant relaxed and laughed often.

### Problems

- The form filling at the beginning took longer than I'd hoped as I really wanted to focus on maximising speaking time. I was a bit annoyed with myself as I am still not sure how much value these profile questions will add to my study, but I think it is better to have them and then decide not to include them than to stop asking for them and risk losing what could turn out to be useful data.
- I feel like memory may have been an issue for this participant - remarks like "I don't remember" or "I don't know when" and "I don't know if" seemed to come up more frequently in this account than in others.

### Implications

- When I know interview time is limited I will try to explain questions on the profile sheet only when the participant explicitly asks for clarification.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- Again I had to explain the disability status on the profile questionnaire so I think it has not added much value and probably just caused confusion.
- Also the question about where you were one week, month, year after the earthquake seemed to need explaining (though the participant did not ask for help) so it could probably be written more clearly as a few participants have struggled to follow my reasoning. However, for me, rather than an accurate measure it is more a way to judge what type of information I might want to push for if they do not explain by themselves.
- The stress scale question needed explanation - I really thought this question would be clearer and easier to fill in. Plus it feels like such a clumsy measure. I should probably have worded it something like, "Assuming that before the conversation with me started, you were at zero, where do you feel now on the scale?"

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- The participant seemed pretty tired - I had caught him right in the middle of a busy working day and just directly after a lesson had finished. He yawned slightly a couple of times in the first two or three minutes of speaking and I think it took him a while to get focused on the topic. He also had some slips where he said one word but clearly from the context meant another similar word and had to ask me what my question was again as if he'd lost track which made me think he was tired.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He sat at the top of a large table with about 6 chairs around it. He motioned to me to sit on one chair and I moved it out so that we would not really have the table as a barrier between us. He tended to sit mostly with his arms crossed and the ankle of one foot crossed onto the other knee making his body language seem a little closed, certainly at first. He did not lean in or share intimate space in that way, possibly because he was totally in his environment.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised that the participant said the disaster hasn't finished yet. Based on the focus of his talk on the first day, I thought he was going to have a very bounded, short-term view on the disaster. I am very glad I asked the question explicitly about when the disaster ended because I found out the many long-term effects it had on the participant's life (gave him the chance to buy the school he now runs).
- I was also a little surprised when the participant asked me personal questions when I was asking he had any other relevant questions or comments at the end of the interview. I wonder if this indicates that I didn't share enough of my personal experience beforehand. My general rule was to share personal experience only when it would help build intimacy, trust, open people up or model topics of conversation. I guess I hadn't felt any of these had been necessary in this interview but maybe I was wrong. It ended up leading to an interesting bonus conversation more generally on the experience of being a foreigner in Japan which may prove very useful.

### What I'd do differently

### What didn't I find out

- I did not ask if he used radio but I think I can infer from several of his answers and the fact that he did not mention using it when I brought up its importance to older Japanese people in Tohoku.
- I have also just given up on the idea of trying to use the handout.

### What do I need to clarify

- Why exactly did he not go to a centre for refuge (I can infer that he felt confident enough in his car and he had enough supplies but was there anything blocking him?)

### First reflections on data

- This participant seemed to have good experience of disaster preparedness and response (probably as a result of coming from Hawaii) - for example his first action after the earthquake was to try and get gas/petrol - a very wise move, if possible.
- This is another participant who sheltered in his car (he did not go to a communal response centre even though his first action was to go to the preschool to get his son)
- His first communication was a face-to-face (asking the teacher at his son's preschool what to do) and a quick mobile phone call to his wife as well as a mail by mobile phone to his mother-in-law. He also emailed his friends at the nuclear power station where he worked.
- An email from a friend in Hawaii told him about the tsunami and shows the complexity of the information ecosystem for foreigners.
- Word-of-mouth came up in this account really quickly (where to get water) and this was with neighbors who spoke Japanese implying a need for community links and language ability to access word-of-mouth as an information source in this case.
- He was not much interested in information gathering and says so. This is why he did not think to (and had no interest in) checking TV on mobile etc. He knew all he needed to do about what was going on with his family locality and this ties to the "simplicity" of the emergency response life comment he makes at the start of the account.
- This participant's focus is very local. Once his family was okay that was all he needed to know. He refers back regularly to a nearby nuclear power plant (not Fukushima or the tsunami etc.) even though I explicitly ask about the broader disaster in terms of his concerns and explains that he almost had no interest or didn't think to search for information on the wider disaster. This counters one of my main assumptions: that foreign nationals in the disaster wanted more and better information. Participant 9 is a counterexample. He seemed to valorise the simplicity of focusing on the local and immediate. This does also feed into a theme of individualism though.
- This participant's focus is very much on the first day - even the first hours - in terms of how he defines the disaster in his universe. He seems to define the disaster in terms of going back to work (2-3 weeks) and getting back to surfing (2-3 months). But nonetheless, he still says the disaster has not ended for him (it changed his life in giving him a new business but also there are still cracks in his apartment walls and he

has changed some behaviour - everything is ready to run when an earthquake happens in the middle of the night)

- This is an example of one of the positive outcomes for a foreigner in terms of earthquake - he now has his own business. Maybe I should look for other positive outcomes.
- Even though this participant did not focus on communication or information gathering in his account, it was interesting that the first thing he grabbed for in the large earthquake we had had the day before the interview was his cell phone.
- He made a very perceptive comment about how to analyse disaster response. You need to know what is important for a person. For him, it was his family and that dictated how he responded, and how he communicated and gathered information. So perhaps I need to identify what was important for each one of my participants to be able to interpret their response.
- There was a sense that he had no choice but to stay (his wife's family lives in Tokai) and so this also directed or conditioned his response.
- Though information gathering did not seem to be important to this participant, he does make some comments that show that information was in fact important to him. For example, about getting the information from his friend about the US evacuation planes "It wasn't a big worry for me...but just knowing that, I felt safer"
- Japanese communities being divided over the nuclear issue came up here.

#### *2013/9/20 Record of interview with Participant 10*

##### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in a pub owned by the participant. The pub is located in a residential district a short walk away from the centre a city in Ibaraki. We sat at a table in the window. It was extremely hot in the window, so not ideal for a relaxed conversation. Also, there was loud music playing in the background so I was afraid this would interfere with the audio recording. But I felt I could not ask for any change of location as he was taking time out of his work day to help me. It was early afternoon so there were no customers in the bar (I think he opened especially for me) but I think his wife was in the background somewhere working to prepare for the evening's food service. I felt a power imbalance, to a certain extent, being so much on his territory, but he was extremely friendly and welcoming and made me feel at ease. We both had glasses of ice water (because it was so hot) but no other food or drink, so I did not have to worry about that taking away from talking time. The interview lasted about 70 minutes (10 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 60 minutes interview).

##### Similarities with other interviews

- This was similar to my interviews with Participants 3, 7, and 9 in that I was very much on their turf. It was a not a neutral location for the interview. But this participant's warmth and welcome meant that I did not feel ill at ease and perhaps he felt more at ease being there than anywhere else we could have talked.
- This was another interview where the participant showed he was aware that I had experienced the 2011 disaster myself - saying things like, "You know yourself."
- Alcohol and drinking again came up in this interview - fairly reasonably as the participant is a bar owner - but there is definitely evidence for the use of alcohol as a way to deal with the disaster in many of the accounts of my participants.

### Differences with other interviews

#### Problems

- I realized almost as soon as I switched off the audio recorder that I had forgotten to ask the participant about social media. He talked about the topic off mic for a few minutes. So I must add the following to the end of his transcript when I have completed it: He said that social media was very useful for him as a communication tool and as a way to share and spread information with others in his network, especially at times when they were being warned not to leave the house due to the danger of radiation. He mentioned Facebook in particular and said that he felt these tools had gotten better now that you have the ability to manage your connections and rank people you know in different groups, orders of closeness, what content they can see, etc. He did recognize that some people using social media who were panicking did not help, but that these people could be managed as above.
- The loud music playing in the background will possibly make transcription more difficult.
- Overall, I'm not sure this was one of my best interviews - I felt a bit distracted and not on top of the questions in my head (again I think because of the location being so out of my control and inappropriate for my purposes). Also, I know I was tired from a lot of train travel and early mornings and still somewhat jetlagged.)

#### Implications

- In the end, there were some parts of the transcription where I was forced to just write 'Indistinct' because of the interference of the background music.'
- I think the participant gave really good information more in spite of me than because of me!

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- I am not sure that my idea of having participants mark their stress on a Likert scale at the end of the interview is working well. I feel bad asking for it. It seems a very cold way of trying to make people think about their stress levels and perhaps too direct and clumsy a way for me to bring it up. However, I cannot think of another way to show in the record that I have tried to take the participants' stress levels into account. Moreover, I am not yet convinced that the scale is giving me very useful information. For instance, the two people who have cried in the interviews and showed the most emotion (Participants 2 and 10) have given scores of only 2 or 0. In fact, both of these participants seemed to treat the stress marking task as a bit of an annoyance or a laugh. But then one participant who did not seem to show much emotion during the interview (Participant 1) marked a 6. What I can't decide is whether this means the scale is useless (the marks don't correspond with the outward appearance) or useful (the mark might be able to show stress that I as the researcher would otherwise not have noticed). I will keep using the stress marker for consistency and see if I feel differently about it as time goes on. I still want some way to address stress and anxiety in my interviews. I am not a counsellor but I want to take seriously the fact that I am causing some participants to bring up topics and emotions that they have often not told anyone else about (as both Participants 1 and 10 stated) or that they are surprised to still feel so strongly about even two years later (Participants 1, 2, and 10).

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed to be extremely happy and relaxed which is why I was so surprised by him shedding tears almost as soon as we started the interview (as was he). He had not

talked much previously about the difficulty of not being with his family when the disaster first broke.

How they used non-verbal communication

- He spoke confidently and made good eye contact. He used large gestures and sometimes leaned back in his chair or swept his hair back when making a point. He would also point to parts of the building or neighbourhood when illustrating certain points. (His body language was that of someone completely at home.)

What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by the level of emotion expressed in his account - I went into the interview with some prejudice of a closed, tough, Aussie male. This was not the case. He cried for about the first five minutes of his account speaking through tears and sometimes pausing to collect himself or drink a glass of water. I tried not to speak at all at these times and just to show as much sympathy in my facial expression and body language as possible.

What I'd do differently

- In one way, I would have liked to have met in a more neutral location that I could have controlled, but as a matter of fact, the location ended up being so central to parts of his account (for example, that he built it himself or that he needed to walk out to hear the PA system) that I was really glad to have seen it.
- I think I did less well on the listening focus and the ethnographic style of interview on this occasion. I feel I may have spoken and interjected more than I needed to. I believe this is because I was a bit thrown by the fairly sudden outburst of emotion at the very beginning of the interview. If I had to do it again, I think I would try to be braver about using silence with this participant to see how he would have filled those silences, if at all. I feel my regular interjections may have encouraged him toward shorter answers.

What didn't I find out

- I didn't find out about slogans at all, but I am starting to abandon that question as it is not adding much value, I think.

What do I need to clarify

First reflections on data

- This participant makes a really interest contrast to the discourse of the fly-jin. He was in Australia from March 11-14 and arrived back in Japan on March 15 (i.e. the fifth day after the onset of the disaster). His struggle to get back to and fears for his family, friends and businesses in Japan contrast starkly with ideas of foreigners abandoning Japan.
- The participant's wife took in a group of Canadian reporters in the period March 11-15 and the participant helped out other groups of reporters when they came to the disaster zone and wanted to be shown around. This classes him as a volunteer interpreter / mediator / guide in my study.
- His Japanese hometown in Ibaraki was so badly damaged that it featured on the news in Australia - he had seen photos of his home area from abroad - this shows both the spread of information about the disaster and the relative damage that was done to that part of Ibaraki.
- A couple of common motifs in his account are the feeling of not wanting to go outside because of radiation concerns and the impact of the disaster on his business (largely related to people being reluctant to go outside).



- He is another participant that was quite implicated in his community - Japanese and foreign - he liked the spirit of pulling together in the disaster(that may since have gone again) - he even uses the expression “the community bonding together the way they did” - however does his use of ‘they’ and not ‘we’ indicate an underlying sense of separation or is it just because he was talking to me an outsider (perhaps he would have said ‘we’ if he had been talking to someone else in the community and I am reading too much into his words).
- He defines things going back to normal as after about 6 months - functionally he says it was when the community bonding disappeared. The positive image he gives of talking to the locals in this period implies this does not normally happen. However, he is another participant to say it’s not really over and he would still like to get his kids out. He alludes to some disagreements with his wife about the kids staying on and the sense is that this was a big issue for him - he senses more danger than perhaps his wife - this could be used as another example of cultural different cultural perceptions of danger “She’s Japanese - she doesn’t see the same dangers I’m feeling myself”. This is an interesting contrast to the other strong ties to the community he himself displays and his intention not to flee (perhaps the difference where we worry less about ourselves than our loved ones).
- This participant focuses on the aftershocks and the radiation as the threats that were central to his account, but the tsunami was a big fear for him while he was overseas and worrying about his family. So he seems to be a participant who was concerned about all three threats at different stages.
- Here again the issue of dissatisfaction with home media (in this case Australian TV news) and their framing of the disaster came up.
- He highlights how cut off people in his hometown were from other information - like in Sendai - they did not know the tsunami was even happening whereas it was hitting the coast just one town over.
- He was one of the first people to mention the loudspeakers as a possible information source, but he was very critical of their quality and usefulness. It is possible that this is because of the Tokaimura power plant accident in 1999 in the same prefecture which would have made people, perhaps, more aware of the system. There is a negative connotation in the way he describes the communication in 1999 and 2011 as being “pretty much handled the same way”.
- He makes an interesting self-correction when talking about Japanese media not being useful unless you could ‘speak’ which he then immediately changes to ‘read’ Japanese - His self-reported Likert Scale scores for speaking and listening were 6.5/10 but for reading and writing were only 2.5/10.
- It’s interesting that radio comes up slightly negatively here - radios were distributed to many residents in Ibaraki after the 1999 refuelling accident in Tokai and people were supposed to keep the plugged in but most people gave up after a year and radio did not feature at all in his 2011 account and he says even if radio had been used by the local authorities they wouldn’t have broadcasted anything in English (in Mito or Katsuta but there were English announcements in Tokai corroborating the other Tokai participants).
- About the fly jin idea, as a bar owner of many years, he had a good estimate of the size of the foreign community and he feels the report that 70% of foreigners fled Japan might have even been an underestimate, at least in his area.
- His account points to the differences within the foreign community - people that were just on short-term contracts versus those that had been here a long time.
- This is another account where it comes up certain foreigners might have been at some sort of information advantage (he had lots of Japanese friends and could get information for other foreign locals). This is also another example of volunteer translation and the importance of having someone in your network who could speak Japanese. And he makes the suggestion of having long-term foreigners like himself as

being a contact point between the government / official responders and the rest of the (particularly the short-term) foreign community. (Perhaps have a meeting three times a year to confirm evacuation plan, etc. and have some practice drills through the year to check how to get information out to the other foreigners).

- He has concrete experience of complacency and warns against it - he feels two years one most people have gone back to being complacent. Could I use this as justification for publishing research 3-4 years after the disaster - a kind of reminder to be careful?
- He speaks of his pride at being here with the Japanese united in the response illustrating his strong bonds with and identification with the community. The story of how proud he was of the Fukushima worker further emphasises his identification with both the Japanese and foreign communities in Japan.
- The idea of the benefit or bonus accruing to foreigners who did not leave Japan comes up in this account again.
- He alludes to foreigners being much more panicked than the Japanese (which is evidence that foreigners might be more vulnerable in disaster) and how he felt it was part of his job to calm the foreigners down. He also sees the fact that Japanese have to regularly deal with disasters as a factor influencing their calm responses and that many foreigners lack this experience - perhaps I need to contrast this with data on long-term MPSSH ill-effects that Japanese are suffering.
- Here the idea of the uselessness and frustration in a disaster came up again and the benefit of being able to do something with your day seems to be an important element of response. Again, I could make the argument that translation could facilitate here in terms of language and culture.

### *2013/9/20 Record of interview with Participant 11*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in the car and a restaurant near one of the beaches along the coast of Ibaraki. The participant picked me up outside a train station and had the plan (which he had not told me about in advance) to drive along the coast and show me where the tsunami had hit and what had been damaged. He asked me to start interviewing him in the car as we were driving along before I had the chance to switch on the audio recorder, explain the project, or go through the informed consent. After walking around the beach area a bit we drove to a family restaurant and had coffee. It was a big restaurant with lots of windows and individual booths. Even though it was busy and a little noisy, the booth made it feel like we could talk relatively privately. The interview lasted about 67 minutes (5 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 62 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This participant had also been in this location for an earlier serious nuclear accident, just like Participant 10.
- This participant also talked about the severe aftershock that had occurred the previous day and what he said about it has been included in the transcript to show that I was in Japan as a researcher when a significant aftershock hit.

#### Differences with other interviews

- This is the first time I have noticed a participant be really conscious of the

Dictaphone. He kept looking sideways and down at it at several times. He absolutely had no problem being recorded but I felt he wanted to make sure he was leaving a record. I know that his interview also contained significant themes of mistrust, conspiracy and paranoia, so maybe he felt slightly cautious of what he was saying was being recorded. One or two other participants have indicated that they were aware of the recorder by checking whether the environment was too loud, or by leaning in a little once the conversation started, but this time it just felt that he was very aware of the recording device at all times.

- This was the only interview so far where I felt the participant really only wanted to talk about one thing (the nuclear element of the disaster) and I couldn't seem to get him interested in any other topic.

#### Problems

- I was a bit anxious about how the meeting with this participant would go as he had changed times on me a couple of times and I was starting to wonder if he would show at all.

#### Implications

- This was the first time so far I even slightly thought about my own safety - here I was getting in a car with a complete stranger being driven somewhere I did not know with no-one knowing where I was going. But this was just a small concern that momentarily flashed in my mind and I put my worries aside based on the fact that the participant had been introduced to me a friend, so I felt the participant was not a complete stranger.
- I did not have any chance to go through the informed consent or switch on the Dictaphone before the participant started talking. When we did eventually get to a coffee shop, I tried to recap some of the topics he had mentioned in the car so that I could get them on audio.
- An unanticipated bonus of not going straight to a coffee shop was that he drove me around the coastline and showed me exactly where and how the tsunami had hit, and just how badly the tsunami had affected this part of the coast.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The disability status question did not work well - the participant seemed slightly angry that I was asking it, so I did my best to explain that it was just related to the idea of layers of vulnerability. I am not sure I will ever even use this disability data, but I feel having it may come in useful if I have to talk about vulnerability at a conference or my viva or that.
- I did not get to try to follow my ethnographic interview techniques mainly because I was put off by how little control I felt of the whole interview and how it ended up transpiring. I was really caught off guard.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- Even though the participant did seem very aware of the audio recorder, he did occasionally answer with a shaking of the head or some other gesture. In such cases, I

tried to verbalize his response in the dialogue.

What I felt surprised by

- Even though this participant has lived in Japan more than twenty years and owns a business here, the earthquake (and mainly nuclear disaster) have caused him to sell up and he will leave the area and get some place to live in the south of Japan.

What I'd do differently

- I would probably have asked to turn on the audio recorder even in the car and even before explaining the informed consent. I felt ethically I should not switch on any device before the participant had been fully briefed, but now I regret not having the data from the car - even though I tried to note as much down as possible directly after the interview, I know I am missing details from that part of the interview.

What didn't I find out

- I didn't find out exactly how long the participant spent taking refuge in another part of Japan after the disaster.

What do I need to clarify

- I need to follow up on the books that the participant has written on the experience of the disaster - though the books have a sci-fi narrative, the early chapters describe the experience much as it happened to the author.
- Should I ask for the email addresses the Australian Assistant Teacher and the homestay high school student he mentions in his account?

First reflections on data

- This participant left Ibaraki for Shikoku (in the far south-west of Japan) as soon as he could get away (about three days after the disaster) and came back subsequently.
- The interview definitely had a theme of conspiracy, mistrust and even perhaps paranoia about the nuclear situation. This is probably understandable based on the fact that it was the second accident he had been through. I can see how an atmosphere of paranoia and fear could easily be fostered while wondering about this long-term invisible threat. I should not be as surprised as I am that the nuclear issue has been such a major focus of so many of the interviews.
- The participant tends to use 'once' rather than 'if' when talking about the nuclear disaster worsening and has one of the most negative views of all the people I talked to about the future.
- The website referenced by the participant, Fairewinds, has an explicit sentence about translation "The document referenced in this film can be found HERE. If you are interested in assisting in translation please contact us at: [contacts@fairewinds.org](mailto:contacts@fairewinds.org)" <http://fairewinds.org/media/fairewinds-videos/new-tepcos-report-shows-damage-unit-3-fuel-pool-much-worse-unit-4>
- He stressed how he found his information not in conventional media but in alternative media. But are these trustworthy sources?
- He also mentions a proposed law to protect state secrets that could, in theory, be applied to imprisoning journalists who write about Fukushima or to whistleblowers in the nuclear industry

(<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/05/whistleblowers-japan-crackdown-state-secrets>).

- They got power back on the Sunday afternoon (March 13).
- He talked of the importance of having a network - the people without one (the AT the high school exchange) suffered without that network. They didn't understand what they people who came around to help said and often only one teacher in the school may speak English and may commute from far away and so may not come in during a disaster meaning there would be no linguistic mediation available to the AETs.
- He talked about the need for English-language support in evacuation centres and especially mentioned the need for better quality taped announcements over the PA system.
- I think the mistrust caused by the first nuclear accident in Tokai really conditioned the participant's response to the 2011 disaster - especially when he heard in the 3.11 that the authorities were saying Fukushima was safe, he just did not believe it.
- He also reminds me that he knew a lot of Japanese who evacuated and I must be careful not to give the impression that only foreigners were suspicious of the media or evacuated, etc.
- He was personally called a fly-jin by one Japanese woman. But he again used to the idea of turning the tables and asking what the Japanese person would do if a similar accident happened to them or their loved one in a foreign country.
- A major theme for this account is the lack of trustworthiness and the difficulty of knowing who was telling the truth. He turned to his network of contacts in the nuclear industry in America to get information.

### *2013/09/22 Record of interview with Participant 12*

#### *Information about the interview*

- The interview took place in the participant's apartment in a suburb just outside Tokyo. I felt comfortable meeting the participant here because we were friends. It also meant I could be confident that we would have privacy and that the recording quality would be good. We sat on the sofa in the participant's small living room, turned towards each other, with the audio recorder on the coffee table in front of us. The interview lasted about 72 minutes (8 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 64 minutes interview).

#### *Similarities with other interviews*

#### *Differences with other interviews*

- This participant often used Japanese phrases and then re-stated them in English. I am not sure if this was to help me with the audio recording of the interview or because he now thinks of such phrases in Japanese first and then changes them to English in his mind. Also, it's possible he wanted to show me how advanced his language skills had become in the time since we had last met.
- This was the only interview carried out so far in someone's private home - but as we had been work colleagues and friends the power balance did not seem too skewed

against me.

### Problems

- The participant quite regularly talked about not remembering so for him memory seemed to have been an issue.

### Implications

- He is an argument against 2.5 years after a disaster being an okay time to interview - I will have to account for this and perhaps look for extenuating circumstances (e.g. that memory could be linked to how pivotal the experience seemed in the overall scheme of the person's life as I have read in some disaster studies literature)

### What questions worked well or didn't

- The profile sheet question about self-assessing English language ability seemed to cause suspicion - as if I would see it as some sort of problem if they as a native speaker of English marked all 10/10. I cannot think of how to make this any freer than I have but it seems to be the freedom and me not putting what I consider a subjective frame on it (i.e. 10= native speaker - what does that mean?) seems to cause some people to struggle with answering.
- Some of the ethnographic style of interviewing ('I'm interested in...', long pauses, encouraging anecdotes, etc.) did not seem to work well all the time with this participant. On a few occasions, he apologised for having forgotten my question as he told some anecdote and seemed to be looking to me for more boundaries and directed questioning.
- But I think overall my use of silence worked very well in this interview. As I knew the participant, I felt confident using silence quite actively to encourage greater input from him.

### How participants seemed to be feeling

- The participant seemed cautious about how to answer the questions. He always took time choosing his words carefully and seemed to want to make sure I understood quite precisely what he was trying to convey. As I knew the participant beforehand, I knew that this was not especially related to this interview - whenever we had talked about something relatively seriously in the past, he would adopt the same tone and approach. I also think he was expecting a much more structured interview (he comes from a hard sciences background) and he seemed to struggle a bit with the free-form, dialogic nature of my ethnographic interview style.
- He was pretty distracted at times, too, for example, suddenly talking about his different coloured socks or the mosquito in the room.

### How they used non-verbal communication

- The participant regularly put his hands over his face when answering, and sometimes the audio even became slightly muffled because of this. I have tried to note whenever this happened in the transcript in case it might have some interpretive value. This is another thing I can note in my log of transcribing.

### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised that things had been thrown around and broken by the force of the earthquake in his apartment. We only lived a ten-minute walk from each other but my apartment was completely untouched - only one drawer had opened. My building was newer than his, so that may be the explanation.
- I was also surprised at how different our two accounts were of the first few hours. He never even mentioned hanging out in the park, going home to my place with another work colleague, and he went directly from the day of the onset (Friday) to the following Monday without explaining anything in between. His timeline was completely off. This reinforces the need for looking for systemic interconnectedness with other data.
- I was a bit surprised by how often trains came up in his account - this is something that he perhaps saw as symbolic of Japan? of disruption? directly affected his life?

#### What I'd do differently

- I could definitely sense that I was less respectful and a bit more curt in this interview. I think I was less afraid of causing offence. So instead of saying "That's fascinating" or "I absolutely agree with you" I'd often just say "Okay" and move on to another topic that interested me. I didn't really notice it until transcribing, but if I were to do the interview again, I think I'd take more care with the conversation management.
- I would not have made the joke about enjoying a long walk home near the end of the conversation if I had it to do over again. It may have derailed the participant's train of thought and may have caused me to lose useful data about information gathering over Facebook. I think interviewing a friend is harder than interviewing a stranger in some ways.

#### What didn't I find out

- I didn't find out if the reason it would never occur to him to go to Japanese government websites is because he would not expect any language other than Japanese? or he would suspect the quality of trustworthiness of the information? or something else?
- I forgot to ask about changed behaviours or clarify about radio use.

#### What do I need to clarify

- Participant 12 suggested that he may know a Chinese person now living in the Netherlands who was in Tokyo for the disaster and who went home. He sounds like he may have been just a short-term resident and could be interesting to talk to. I will try to confirm his location and willingness and will consider flying to the Netherlands to talk to him. However, this may not end up being appropriate as I am trying to look at the experiences of residents.
- The early warning alarm sound that the participant refers to can be heard here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcUWWGuZ6m0>

#### First reflections on data

- He starts off his story by saying he never once lost electricity, Internet or water (he also later added gas) - this could be an interesting quote for showing what was important to him and showing the centrality of information now as an emergency resource.

- I was relieved to hear that the participant also thought he was going to die when sheltering under the desk. I did too, but up to now I had thought this might have been an overreaction on my part, so it was comforting to hear someone who had gone through the same experience feel the same way.
- The participant checked the routes of rivers to see if they passed anywhere near Fukushima for the water supply - this seems like a pretty clever step.
- This is another interview where the participant talked about feelings of guilt at not being particularly badly affected when others were suffering so much.
- The participant mentions how disturbing the alarm sound was of the early warning system and how this became a source of stress. This tallies with my own experience.
- This is another participant who mentions the quality of construction and their (new) faith in buildings to withstand earthquakes except maybe his current office building - this might be another example of changed behaviours or attitudes. This could also be used to convince foreigners to stay inside in future earthquakes.
- The participant mentions very quickly that there were lots of charts and graphs and pictures in the Japanese TV news broadcast which again speaks to my ethics notion of the transfer of ideas - maybe we should prioritise the use of these images instead of translation as so many people have mentioned graphic stuff.
- He gives quite a good list of the information he felt was sufficient and was accessible for him - even without advanced Japanese skills (but crucially perhaps with good Japanese reading ability): what was destroyed, what was done, who was missing, where the effects were, who had what, what areas were badly affected.
- He seems to point to a cultural barrier of the Japanese idea of saving face may have prevented the authorities from taking more foreign expert assistance on Fukushima which he feels more foreign manpower could only have been a good thing and helped speed up recovery from the nuclear disaster. He also clearly states that Fukushima is not just a Japanese problem - this is an interesting point and may be something I should look for more instances of in other data. Seeing as he went off on a rather long monologue about this, can I assume that that face saving idea really perturbed him?
- This seems to be more evidence that the efforts to translate government websites were somewhat wasted because people were not aware of their existence. Moreover it would seem that it would never even occur to him to go there - perhaps because he wouldn't expect anything but Japanese?
- His suddenly remembering the Irish Embassy emails was another vote for the benefits of the dialogic unstructured interview process, I think.
- This is another account that speaks to the really crucial role of embassies in foreigners' experiences of the disaster.
- The participant suggests a great idea of introducing links to multilingual source so information in the early warning messages - I think this idea is strong because it uses existing technology in a simple way to deliver what seemed to be missing - direction for foreigners (or indeed) Japanese to up-to-date trustworthy information among the mass of information that became available.
- The participant answers the question of when the disaster ended functionally (rather than temporally or psychically as almost all people have done): when the trains started running normally, when Disneyland reopened, when everyone had come back to work, when our company's plants and offices in the disaster zone were operating as normal - temporally he thinks it ended when he came back from the Golden Week



holiday at the start of May or the September or the following June or July (if he takes into account his getting sick and the breakup of his relationship).

- This participant does give evidence of the disaster bringing out some community spirit in the residents of his apartment building with people stopping and talking to him and asking him if he was okay, which they would not have done normally.
- He felt very much part of the company community - this was a major support network for him and he spoke in general about the Japanese sense of community being very different. He saw the company as the main community unit and as he worked for a Japanese company he felt part of the community.
- I think he raises a key theme for me when he says, in relation to disaster information that it's just a matter of knowing where to look.
- There is evidence at the end of the interview that the interview process could be educational for the participants - one of the benefits of the process that I can show - in a future disaster he now would know to go and check government websites.
- The guide for the Japanese Seismic Intensity Scale in English is a really good way to give an idea of what people can expect to experience. This has already been translated (if not, it should be) and could be useful information.
- The anecdote about the shindo scale and construction techniques seem to show the faith he puts in science to build resilience and this confidence may have helped him to adjust to the disaster and recover sooner than others.

### *2013/09/23 Record of interview with Participant 13*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in an Ueshima coffee shop near Sugamo Station facing onto the busy Hakusan Street. We sat at a small table in the window, with me facing out. The other patrons sat near us as there was not much space and the busy counter was just behind us. I drank only a coffee but the participant had to pause the interview to buy a sandwich and cake because he had not yet had breakfast. I felt this may have distracted him a little. It was an extremely enjoyable interview - I felt I had a lot in common with the participant - we happen to share various interests in common (city walking, etc.) and I identified with many of his experiences and ideas. The interview lasted about 100 minutes (6 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 94 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This is another participant (like Participant 1) who made several points off record so I must be careful when anonymizing the transcripts.
- This is another participant (like Participant 1) who used the analogy of the tsunami to describe an abstract experience (swirled by the waves of panic created by the French people around her) - should I look for other examples of using comparisons in this way?

#### Differences with other interviews

#### Problems

- Really terrible location - noisy coffee machine nearby - small tables too close together so other customers felt very close - the participant needed to eat - lots of background noise and distortion - me facing him with a window behind so trying to

focus and not be distracted by my peripheral vision.

- He had not eaten breakfast (it was an early morning meeting) and he paused the interview to buy some food.

#### Implications

- Transcription will likely be difficult of this audio.
- You can tell that after the pause I was actively trying to speak more to allow the participant time to eat.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The question about what he meant by neighbours not coming over in Japan produced an interesting effect - suddenly he wanted to know if it was my first time in Japan. I was very ambiguous about how I answered (I just said I've been here before) but this was a case where I did not yet want to bring in my personal experience because I wanted him to explain the idea in detail rather than use a shorthand of "Oh, well, you know what it's like over here." I then told him at the end of the interview about my long experience in Japan after he had given me really good explanatory, detailed answers. This was an interesting methodological point that I could put in the interview section of my thesis.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He was dressed in a business suit and tie as he was going to another job later in the day. This may have influenced my view of his authority but he certainly seemed confident, sure of his ideas and completely relaxed. He was also in good humour and was an extremely entertaining and engaging conversationalist.
- My time management was terrible in this interview. After about 75 minutes, the participant seemed to change his mind about how long he wanted to spend talking with me (I had really not noticed the time passing as he was such an engaging interviewee) and he said he would have to call his wife to let her know he would be late. This indicates he was enjoying our conversation. He postponed an arrangement to meet his family after meeting me to allow us more time to talk.
- He seemed to have a verbal tick of saying Okay? Did this indicate he wanted to be believed, he assumed I didn't understand, he wanted to be understood in particular at these points? I may need to look in more detail at this.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He often leaned back in his chair and used his arms with big gestures. He also tended to lean in slightly conspiratorially, especially whenever he wanted to say something that might be perceived as slightly negative of Japan or the Japanese.

#### What I felt surprised by

- The effect of accent was noticeable here - I felt no problem with his accent during the interview but listening back later on that same day now through the interfering medium of the audio recorder, I was surprised at how much more of a strain it was to always make out what he was saying.

#### What I'd do differently

- I would not use this location and would try to avoid a breakfast meeting time - I should have cleared up whether he would eat or not before we met.

#### What didn't I find out

- I didn't find out if he actually owns a telly or not (I think most of his answers imply that he doesn't but sometimes I wasn't sure. I never explicitly confirmed the fact.)

### What do I need to clarify

- Can I ask him to see if he still has the email from the embassy about the volunteering?
- Should I ask him for the address of his blogs?
- The participant suggested reading the book below about belonging. I should check it out to see if it is relevant to my thesis:
- <http://www.amazon.com/The-End-Belonging-psychology-relocation/dp/1449534163>

### First reflections on data

- He said 'I remember' a lot at first - was this to convince me?
- His first reaction (and of those around him) at onset is "What am I going to do?" Even long-term, competent foreigners (and Japanese) struggle in a disaster to orient themselves at first despite their experience, training.
- This is another interview where the focus of what he is expecting I want to know about is just the first couple of hours of the disaster - after telling me about the first two hours or so he clearly says "Do you want to know more?" - this could be an informative category I could look into - what did participants expect I wanted to hear?
- This participant and his family do not watch TV and this makes him somewhat of an outlier and would surely have had an impact on the type of information gathering he did in normal circumstances and then in the disaster. He talked about how this made him clueless in terms of visuals about the disaster and could be an argument either for or against visual information in such a situation (panic-inducing? or helping to create better situational awareness?)
- I need to be careful of how closely I identified with the participant and think about confirmation bias - not just weighting his answers strongly because his experiences and ideas were so like mine.
- This is another interview (like in Participant 2's interview) where the plight of short-term visitors, especially those on a business trip can be compared to more long-term residents - he makes an interesting point about how they were more hooked to news than he was, perhaps indicating the importance of overseas news for short-termers.
- He talks interestingly about the pressure he got from his clients to leave Japan and how this was related to their exposure to Western information sources.
- Regarding Fukushima he says for his wife and himself his problem was not the language (he is an interpreter and she is Japanese) but the lack of clarity - this is evidence against confusion being culturally specific as his wife is Japanese and was also confused. Perhaps the difference lies in the reaction to that confusion. "nothing was clear beside message of keep quiet and keep cool and don't over, eh, react, which was, eh, peppered by reading the foreign news, news sources, where basically Japan was over.
- He is an example I could use of how I let people tell their anecdotes without redirecting them too much as per the ethnographic interview technique (he asked me to tell him if he went too off track).
- He talks about the invisibility of radiation and that makes it a more difficult problem to react to - other participants mentioned this too and it may turn out to be a theme.
- He helps to make an argument that having something useful to do in an emergency can be helpful (just stressing all day is not good) and could be used by me to argue for ways to involve foreigners more in response. He says the recruitment mail arriving came almost as a relief - a chance to be part of something.
- He mentions how the details of the interpreter recruitment by the embassy were unclear - and how this conflicted with the other information they were sending out not to leave Japan - it shows that volunteer interpreters were already put in a conflicted mindset right from the recruitment stage. Also, there was little time to think - the mail arrived in the morning and you had to show up at the Embassy in the

evening.

- He fairly regularly contrasts the impact of relying on audio reports versus visual and this may be able to be tied in with ideas of communication systems.
- His interview provided evidence that not all parts of the disaster zone were without mobile reception and that the highways were closed to all but responders.
- As an example of the fact that volunteers can be suffering while also trying to do their work, I could use the anecdote of his wife calling to say that the embassy were giving her a last chance to fly out while he was en route to the disaster area and they had to make this important decision under those circumstances. Also he recounts how the nuclear specialists in the emergency team were so concerned at the geiger readings. Also he says that he was definitely nuked by going into the disaster zone when and where he did.
- A consistent theme in his narrative is his low opinion of the (over)reaction of the French Embassy and media to the disaster.
- He alluded to the politics behind the dispatch of international rescue teams and this would clearly have an impact on the dispatch of language and cultural mediation - and the frustration of some interpreters of being brought up to the camp in the disaster zone only not to move from it.
- He talked about the culture block for response - the rules designed to prevent non-Japanese rescuers from touching Japanese bodies and the fact that the foreign teams were directed to search for casualties in areas that had already been searched by Japanese forces - was it a role of the interpreter to culturally mediate this sort of situation (unwritten rule) for frustrated professional rescuers who had been sent to the disaster zone for, perhaps, political rather than practical reasons.
- He had an interesting shift of narrative voice when talking about interpreting from “they were looking” to “we were looking” when talking about trying to look for corpses with the French rescue team.
- This interview provided some more evidence of the beneficial aspect of just letting the participant talk as a way to jog memory - at one point he says something like “Oh, yeah, now it comes back my mind.”
- He talked of some of the cultural barriers - in particular with respect to human relationships, a lack of deep communication, and the problem of belonging - faced by long-term residents in Japan, even those completely fluent like himself. (Belonging could be a category for me - but he is careful to caution whether this problem is specific to Japan - maybe not.)
- He made some interesting points about the importance of cultural mediation (and more than just linguistic transfer) in his practice of being an interpreter in Japan.

### *2013/09/24 Record of interview with Participant 14*

#### Information about the interview

- The interview took place in a Dotour Coffee shop in downtown Sendai. It was the participant's choice of location and was based on being halfway between his workplace and my hotel. We were in the basement in a small alcove. There were no other people near us, though there were some other customers a few tables away. The participant sat with his back to the wall of the alcove and I sat opposite. The table was very small so we were not far from each other. However, the background music was a little loud and we were near a speaker, and there were some young children nearby who were occasionally pretty noisy, so I was a bit worried that the recorder would have difficulty catching his audio. But I was confident enough of our privacy

and my ability to focus just on him. The participant had just come straight from work (his office was nearby) so I was afraid he would be tired, but he seemed pretty fresh. The interview lasted about 100 minutes (5 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 95 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- Once again in this interview (like with Participant 10) I turned off the microphone too soon and missed recording some useful information that I would have liked to have gotten the exact wording of.

#### Differences with other interviews

- This participant seemed reluctant to talk so it felt at first a little bit like talking to Participants 3 and 5. I think, as with Participant 3, this participant did not want to reveal certain parts of his experiences or thoughts or feelings to me. (Perhaps because of the family he was close to who lost a family member in the tsunami?)
- I did not call on my personal experience of the disaster much at all through the interview and the participant did not refer to it. However, when the participant talked about feeling stress and still not talking about all aspects, I decided to give a fairly long account of my own mental struggles to try and make him feel less alone and perhaps to build more intimacy so that he may want to share more things with me without me asking, if I am honest. This could be used as evidence that I only brought my experience in when I saw a need for it - e.g. to build trust, to model answers, etc.

#### Problems

- I had started to wrap up the interview and switched off the recorder. Almost as soon as I did so, the participant mentioned that reaction to a disaster seems culturally bound to him based on his experience. He said the Japanese colleagues of his went back to work after the disaster. He couldn't go because he couldn't get to his base school. Not going to work would have been considered paid vacation so he contacted the board of education and arranged to work as a volunteer as a way of working. For Japanese people, going to work (almost continuing on as normal, to a certain extent even after a massive disaster) seems to be a way of coping.

#### Implications

- I need to make sure that I put the above off-mic passage in the transcript that will be subsequently approved by the participant so that it can officially enter into my data for analysis.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The first intervention by me ('Tell me about your experience...') did not work so well for this participant as it had for others. His first answer was not so long and it felt like he was constantly editing himself before he spoke and deciding case-by-case what he was happy to reveal to me. As it turned out later, he told me that there were things he did not want to speak about and had not told me and so it explains the slow take-off in the interview compared to most others so far where participants answered for a long time just on my first prompt.
- On a couple of occasions in the interview, I tried to use silence as a way to encourage

the participant to speak without directing what he would talk about. I was concerned that as he was being so guarded that I might bring up a topic that he was not comfortable with, so I tried to use silence to encourage him to talk while at the same time giving him control of the direction of the conversation.

- I noticed I was a bit leading at times in some questions (e.g. saying that defining the end of the disaster is a difficult thing to say - maybe it wouldn't have been so for him.) Such leading is not a problem with my constructivist epistemology but it is not good practice.

#### *How participants seemed to be feeling*

- The participant seemed eager to help me but, nonetheless, cautiously and carefully considering each word. This may have been because of his continuing employment in Japan or because of his unwillingness to talk about certain aspects of his experience.
- Even though the participant was extremely helpful and friendly and did not show emotion, overall this seemed to be one of the most sombre interviews I had and I felt there was a chance that this participant had been traumatised by the experience more than some other people I talked to. He rated himself a 2/10 on my Likert stress scale but this is still more than the 0/10 that most participants gave.

#### *How they used non-verbal communication*

- He seemed to be very aware of the audio recorder and would look down at it on the table between us occasionally. This combined with his careful choice of words and slight guardedness at times made me suspect that there were things he did not want to reveal to me.

#### *What I felt surprised by*

#### *What I'd do differently*

- I made the mistake about fifteen minutes before our recorded interview ended of saying 'not if but when another earthquake comes to Japan' - even though this might be a valid statement, I could see that it somewhat upset the participant and I regretted it as soon as it came out of my mouth. It shows that the researcher has a responsibility to think about her/his words may affect the participant's feelings.

#### *What didn't I find out*

#### *What do I need to clarify*

#### *First reflections on data*

- His account started with the idea of fate - he was at a school two days before that ended up being completely destroyed in the disaster. This probably impacted on his emotional experience of the disaster, but it also indicates that when defining the disaster period, I may need to think about putting the starting date as the 9th because several people have mentioned it.
- He made the point that at one school, they left the tv on all day long. He asked why, they said because of the danger of a tsunami, two days later that school was gone. This speaks of the centrality of TV and also allows us to presume that foreigners in

school teacher's rooms might have been exposed to Japanese TV early on in the disaster.

- He did not initially have any instinct to communicate with anyone because he did not yet realize the scale of what had happened but he had tried to send an email by phone.
- The first contact he made was with one of my friends in Aomori (where the most important people to him in Japan were then located) by cell phone (March 12) to get the friend to post on the participant's facebook account that he was okay. He only got to contact his parents a few days after onset by brief text message.
- The first instinct of this participant was not to go to a communal shelter - he went back to his flat alone where he knew he had a little food and would try to get warm (in his car) and get some sleep and then wake up and start making decisions in the morning.
- Again the image of terrible traffic jams came up in this account.
- This was another account where the participant used a car to charge a mobile phone but not to listen to the radio. And it was another account where it never even seemed to strike the participant to use the radio (even though as an ALT they would have been given one as part of initial emergency preparedness).
- This account is more evidence for foreigners coming together and making their own communal response communities - he said one of the best decisions he made was going and seeking out an acquaintance who lived nearby on March 11 - they stayed the next 4, 5 days together and other ALTs came and they all camped out together in his one bedroom apartment.
- This participant clearly talks about the stress of being a volunteer taking calls about things he was worried about too, but having to give them information to make them feel more comfortable. But he makes an interesting point about life being thrown out of routine by disaster and how this robs us of some security so establishing a new routine based around something to do (e.g. volunteering) can be beneficial mentally. I imagine I could tie this to theories in disaster studies on the benefit of giving people ownership of their response and perhaps translating could be an ideal way to give foreigners that needed sense of mission.
- In addition to the stress, this participant mentioned the feeling of difficulty at having stand by information that he doubted by virtue of being a volunteer. He also illustrated the effect of stress and the difficulty of maintaining volunteer efforts in a disaster by the fact that the team lost members progressively as they decided (being sufferers too) to go home or elsewhere.
- The explosion came up again in this account - can I show this was a pivotal event where better news translation would have been beneficial?
- This is another account portraying a slightly negative image of his embassy.
- He noted the fast-changing nature of the information and the opacity of the language. With each hour the information you had was subject to change. Could this be an argument for translation technology as a way to keep speed and reuse already translated information? But then, MT is not good at opaque language. This would be a strong argument against using some translation technology for some purposes.
- There is more strong evidence in this account for a major disconnect between Japanese and foreign media coverage and how this made things hard for foreigners in Japan. He also says that watching the news too much and having the same stuff repeated too much is bad for mental health. Overall, I was quite struck by the effect

of news in his account.

- This is more evidence for the positive use of social media (though it was not a feature of his life before the disaster) and for the need for power and connectivity and how social media was perhaps somewhat used to spin the disaster by his employers to balance with a more positive view of foreigners experiencing the disaster. This is an example of using social media to re-frame the disaster for a varied audience and could be an interesting thing to talk about. Social media (Facebook) was also used to communicate store openings and new arrivals in stores)
- I need to recognize that he talked of translation in a somewhat negative light ('rely' on a translator, information coming to you second hand, etc.) and doesn't see that the so-called first-hand information would still probably have been mediated by a translator. It's about a feeling of security so perhaps this is a reason to make translators more invisible in disaster?

### *2013/09/26 Record of interview with Participant 15*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview took place in the canteen of a university in Miyagi high in the mountains outside Sendai. This means there was no chance this area could have been affected by the tsunami. It was a big open room with many large tables. We took a seat in the middle of the room near a balcony that looked down onto the first floor of the building where my contact who had introduced the participants and the other two interviewees were waiting, chatting and eating some lunch as we held the first interview. This participant had come from another university especially to do this interview as so he was also unfamiliar with the setting. There were a few students quite near us eating as it was lunch time, but they were not really near enough to hear what we were saying and they left us alone. Though we were in a restaurant, we did not have any food and we had just been given two cold coffee drinks kind of like juice boxes (which neither of us opened) so we didn't have the issue of eating or drinking time taking away from talking time. The fact that the participant did not open or drink his coffee is explained later on in the interview - he worries now about food and drink provenance because of radiation! The interview lasted about 45 mins (7 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 38 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This was another interview where food safety came up as an issue (quite unexpectedly) and this probably helped to contribute to my own unease about food and water contamination as the data-gathering trip went on. I had been very unconcerned about the whole issue at the start of the process.

#### Differences with other interviews

- I had no control of the recruitment or arranging of these interviews – my contact at the university did everything on my behalf without really giving me too many details beforehand. I arrived at the university and had a short meeting with this contact only knowing that I was due to meet three participants - one from Sudan, one from Bangladesh and one from China. While waiting for the first participant to arrive I



found out that only the person from China was a student at my contact's university and that the other two people were coming from another university. My contact had never met them either - he had recruited them through a colleague. It turns out that my contact had told each participant we would take for 30 minutes (though I had informed him that my goal was about sixty) so I did my best to keep the interview brief. I still went over time at about 45 minutes, though.

- This was the first interview where I became slightly concerned that the participant's English ability may be insufficient for the purposes of this research because I had no idea whether this participant would only really speak Arabic and Japanese and some English. But as it turned out, he uses mostly English in his research in Japan and his English was sufficient with no difficulties for communication (e.g. heavy accent, poor comprehension, etc.). However, I do think his English level may have prevented a more ethnographic interview as after his prepared account which was long and detailed his responses did become shorter so it moved more to a traditional semi-structured form.

### Problems

- I had no idea how these participants had been recruited or what they had been told about me and my project. I also wasn't sure what time commitment they were expecting or if they had to get back urgently.
- Time, in general, was an issue for this interview. Participant 15 was not due to be the first interviewee - it was due to be the person from Bangladesh - but he arrived late, so I started the interview with Participant 15 not knowing whether the guy from Bangladesh would show and whether they would hang around long enough for me to interview them.

### Implications

- My contact at the university kindly ended up sitting waiting for the Bangladeshi participant as I began my interview with Participant 15 and kept him and the Chinese participant talking as they waited. I decided to try to keep each interview to 30 minutes in order not to keep either the interviewees or my contact waiting too long. I failed, but Participant 15's interview was so interesting I decided that even if the other two participants got fed up and left, I would prefer to have richer data from one participant.

### What questions worked well or didn't

- The question on the informed consent sheet (about circling 'yes' to having had all your questions answered) rarely works for me because the participants say that they haven't asked any questions so how can they circle it. I would need to change this on informed consent forms for future projects and explain to the REC why I am doing so. I couldn't change this question in the field though as the informed consent form was the one which had been signed off on by the REC and which I would need to be used as evidence that my participants were informed in the manner agreed.
- Participant 15 asked about how to answer the disability status question on the profile data sheet - this was not sufficiently clear probably and may not have added much value in terms of data - I'm not sure.
- The Likert Scale to mark stress after speaking to me again didn't work well. It

seemed to be unclear to him what zero should represent (before the interview? because maybe he already had some stress (related to other things) before the interview so would it be right to start from zero.) I will really need to explain my understanding of this scale clearly if I use it in my thesis.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- Participant 15 seemed really open and relaxed - he was as unfamiliar with and unclear about the whole set-up as I was, but it did not seem to faze him at all. He was offered lunch by my contact but turned it down because he said he needed special food (I interpreted this as perhaps halal food or food following some sort of religiously-informed preparation).

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He leaned in with his hands clasped and elbows on the desk for most of the interview. It seemed to be a pose that he wanted to help me. Also, his repeated use of 'yes, yes, yes' may have indicated a desire to help or please me in some way.
- There was a lot of laughter during this interview. I'm not sure why. Maybe I was in a particularly good mood, but I think it was just that he was a really nice guy and I enjoyed talking to him. Maybe I was also particularly happy getting a participant from Sudan and a potentially new perspective.

#### What I felt surprised by

#### What I'd do differently

- In future, I would be more proactive about finding out the concrete details of who I was interviewing, when, and what they had been told. There is a Japanese tendency to vagueness which I was trying to respect by not asking too many questions, but also I did not want to seem pushy as my contact was being so kind in arranging this for me. I guess I would spell out more how other interviews had gone so that the contact might think to tell me more detail. However, maybe I wouldn't do anything differently at all. Perhaps the lesson to take from this experience is that you need to be flexible and ready to just roll with the punches when carrying out this type of research and this in itself is a skill and trusting friends or colleagues to take care of things and knowing that you cannot control everything is something that maybe needs to be embraced.

#### What didn't I find out

- I did not find out really whether food or dietary requirements impacted on his experience of the disaster response even though I initially thought to when I saw him refusing food of which he did not know the origins before our interview started.
- I did not find out why he did not prepare at all pre-disaster (do I need to know this?).

#### What do I need to clarify

- Participant 15 sent me the link of the website he used during the March 11 disaster. He got the link from a Japanese friend through Facebook.  
[http://eq.wide.ad.jp/index\\_en.html](http://eq.wide.ad.jp/index_en.html)
- Perhaps I should follow up on the two Facebook groups he mentioned 'Foreign

People in Sendai' and 'Really Want to Do Something For Japan' to use as secondary data - examine their interactions, what they talked about.

First reflections on data

- The participant had an interesting point about how to differentiate between earthquake and disaster - the length and the electricity going off.
- There is a potential theme to explore of all the times that the participants point to the stereotypical Japanese gaman attitude or ways to highlight culturally different perceptions of disaster (e.g. the bus came on time) - maybe I could gather all the way the participants talk about Japanese stereotypes and how they reflect on disaster response
- He went to the refuge shelter because he was told to by his professor and colleagues in the laboratory.
- The participant very clearly stated that the main problem for this staying in the shelter was a language one.
- The participant talked about seeing the pictures in the newspapers in the shelter without being able to read any of the Japanese - for him though pictures do not seem enough. In fact I think his account shows the limitations of pictures - he may have known there was a tsunami but he could not know it's location by pictures alone and so he had the difficulty of understanding why his family called asking him about a tsunami.
- This is also another example for my ecosystem idea of a phone call from Sudan told a person in the disaster zone about the tsunami because he could not speak Japanese.
- For him the disaster was not the earthquake or the tsunami really but Fukushima - that's all he really talks about in terms of his personal experience of something disastrous.
- He said clearly that a problem for him was a lack of information. However, when you look deeper into the interview you see that he got lots of information in many different ways, and even though at one point he says he got no information from the university, he ends by saying that he used a university advice centre as a way to get information about radiation before the electricity came back and before he had access to regular internet and that they gave as much information as they could. This disparity in how he answered the question about information first and finally shows the advantage of my questioning methodology in giving people time to strike links and remember things gradually.
- He did really seem to suffer from an information lack though - he only found the evacuation centre by following others and did not have the details of the centre beforehand
- There is evidence in this account for volunteer Japanese people (other evacuees in the centre) acting as English translators but that they did not translate all the time (the implication is not there enough) and that nobody came from outside to translate when he was there. - perhaps this could be evidence of expecting too much of volunteers - they were suffering too much to translate perhaps.
- This participant is evidence for the hypothesis that people turn to the technologies they use in their pre-disaster lives - he didn't know why he used Facebook in the disaster just that he was used to using it.
- He said that he kept on the TV even though he couldn't understand 100% what was

happening.

- This participant placed a lot of importance on the timeliness of information. He mentioned that online news gives information but not in time whereas Facebook is quick (but I would argue it can be shown it may not have been reliable or accurate from other participants and from secondary literature). The importance he placed on the MEXT radiation website also showed the value of on time information to him (he says this).
- His experience with his embassy was another example of not so positive- while they did contact him regularly, he felt he was more of a PR exercise and crucially the information they gave him was not useful - so it is not about frequency of contacts but quality perhaps when talking about embassies as information sources - he reiterated the now common feeling that he had more information than them!
- This participant may be an example of motivation in language learning - he cannot read much Japanese but since the earthquake he tries to read all food labels to know where his food is coming from - this is another example of modified behaviour since the disaster.

### *2013/09/26 Record of interview with Participant 16*

#### Information about the interview

- This participant is a Bangladeshi postdoctoral researcher working in Sendai. This interview took place in the canteen of a university in Miyagi. The university is located high in the mountains outside Sendai. This means there was no chance this area could have been affected by the tsunami. This was my second interview in a row at the university. Again, the canteen was a big open room with many large tables. We took the same seat in the middle of the room near a balcony that looked down onto the first floor of the building where my contact and the other two interviewees were waiting, chatting and eating some lunch. Like Participant 15, this participant had come from another university especially to do this interview as so he was also unfamiliar with the setting. There were still a few students quite near us eating as it was lunch time, but they were not really near enough to hear what we were saying and they left us alone. Though we were in a restaurant, we did not have any food or drink. The interview lasted about 69 mins (6 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 63 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- As this interview was held directly after the one for Participant 15, there were many similarities in terms of my lack of control over arrangements and the fact that the participant had been told to expect a 30-minute interview. I did my best to keep the interview brief, but I still went over time at about 60 minutes because of the long detailed responses the participant wanted to give.
- Again, as with Participant 15, I was a little concerned about English ability. In this case, I was concerned with accent, in particular, but also with some incoherent sentence structures that were difficult to follow. It took me some time to get used to his pronunciation of English, but once I had done so, communication was relatively smooth.

### Differences with other interviews

- This interview was different to the one that directly preceded it because it was much more emotional - the participant had more dramatic experiences in the quake and was very concerned for his wife and family. The memory of this fear caused him to shed tears and be quite emotional at times.
- In general, this interview was a much more sombre than the interview that directly preceded it.
- This interview did not seem to have the structured narrative around the topics that interested me that other participants seemed to have. I suspect this participant did not read the list of topics I sent in advance. A lot of the second half of the interview was me asking for repeated clarification on how exactly he gathered information and communicated. This interview would therefore appear to be evidence against the efficacy of my methodology.

### Problems

- Time, in general, was an issue for this interview. I was very conscious of the fact that my contact and the two other interviewees were waiting downstairs.
- English was a big problem in this interview. Despite the fact that communication was relatively smooth during the interview time (I had facial cues and other information to help my understanding at the time - and my questions were coherent) but listening back to the interview after without these extra cues proved much more challenging. I, therefore, had some concerns about the extra burden I would feel at the transcription stage. The participant's accent was strong and new to me and he had a habit of not finishing sentences which took away from some coherence. I do not want to amend his sentence structures. I want to represent his voice as much as I can. But the participant did not lack communicative fluency as he spoke almost uninterrupted for the first thirty minutes.

### Implications

- I tried to put my worries about timekeeping out of my mind and focus on the fact that this was pretty much a once-in-a-lifetime chance to get these data and so I should not worry too much about politeness.
- In the end, the occasional lack of coherence and strange pronunciations did call for some repeated listening at transcription until I could get used to his unfamiliar pronunciations, intonations, grammatical mistakes, etc. and I did have to include more (Indistincts) than I wanted to in the transcript.

### What questions worked well or didn't

### How participants seemed to be feeling

- Participant 16 seemed a little flustered at the start (he had arrived late) but was very warm and friendly but the account turned very emotional very quickly.

### How they used non-verbal communication

- He would hold his hands over his nose and mouth when shedding tears to show, I think, that he was not ready to talk. I tried to just leave silence unlike with Participant

10 where I feel I did not use silence well during his emotional periods.

- He also used gestures to describe things like cracks in the road that occurred after the earthquake or the tall buildings oscillating like oscillators.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised again by the shedding of tears and the strong emotion that came out in this account but I tried not to let it distract me and put me off my focused listening as I feel it did a little with Participant 10. This emotion was understandable as his wife was about five or six months pregnant at the time of the disaster (and pregnant women are warned more than other members of the population about the effects of radiation).

#### What I'd do differently

#### What didn't I find out

#### What do I need to clarify

#### First reflections on data

- Here again the idea of just copying what the Japanese people were doing came up as a way for a foreigner to formulate a response in an unknown situation (running to where the Japanese were running).
- He clearly stated that no electronic communication was possible for him for the first two or three days because even though they got the mobile network back after about one day they lost their mobile charge quickly by contacting family and friends in their home countries and had no electricity to recharge. This goes somewhat against my claims of ease of mobile recharging. It was hearing about the nuclear explosion that made them alarmed to seek out recharging points at the hospital (school of medicine) - quite ingenious and yet they made sure to share only one point amongst themselves to not take too much electricity from the hospital. This could be used as an example of the foreigners going against communal refuge response and thinking of ways to help themselves.
- His first thought seemed to be about the safety, soundness and quality of buildings - this may have been due to a frame of reference based on earthquakes in Bangladesh where building codes might not be as strict as in Japan. He did actually see part of an eight-story building collapse in front of him, so maybe this concern was very valid. He came back to the point of collapsing buildings again later on in the interview.
- He talks of a feeling making a mistake by using a car to try to get home because he got stuck in heavy traffic and maybe this is possible advice for response in future emergencies (because Participant 10 also mentioned that traffic could be a big problem in disasters).
- The Bangladeshi people all went to the local elementary school's evacuation centre. This is contrary to my idea of individualistic responses for foreigners and may indicate that not all foreigners may be averse to group response. Perhaps it depends just on what you are used to in your home culture. (Even his choice of the word 'camp' to describe the evacuation or refuge centres speaks to a possible discourse of refugee camps that he may have been influenced by). However his account later of

secretly preparing the cars of the Bangladeshi community to escape on hearing of the Fukushima disaster reverts again to the idea of more individualised response and not necessarily heeding the group or government line.

- He offered the most detailed account I have of the experience of an evacuation centre - he focused quite strongly on this aspect. It is clear in his account that Japanese was the main language in the refuge centres and that he did not speak Japanese.
- This was another account where the participant was fairly negative in portraying the embassy response (here seen as delayed compared to other nationalities but finally pretty satisfactory but only after pressure from the Bangladeshi community in Japan).
- This account provided more evidence of foreigners volunteering (he visited Natori with the Bangladeshi community and others).
- Here again we saw the dynamic of a senior member of the community gathering information (the gatekeeper role) and choosing whether or not to share it with the rest of the community (one guy finding the TV report of Fukushima through his mobile or car navi and then secretly telling only three others in the community at first so they could plan what to do).
- This is another account that seems to support the idea of getting by in the camp without Japanese but this is because many of the evacuees came from the same International House and crucially several of these people that already knew each other could speak Japanese. So this reinforces my claim of the importance of volunteer interpreting and translating roles.

#### *2013/09/26 Record of interview with Participant 17*

##### Information about the interview

- This participant is a Chinese PhD researcher working in a university in Miyagi. This interview took place in a meeting room near the office of a contact of mine in a university in Miyagi. This my third interview in a row at that university. The participant had been waiting for almost two hours now to get started - he had let the other two participants who had travelled from another university go first. Again, the organization of the schedule had been out of my hands, but the participant repeatedly stated that it was not problem for him to wait. There was no worry about recording quality or privacy because we were now alone in a meeting room, but there was a tension in me of not wanting to keep the participant much longer (he had already been so patient) but to want to get as much information as possible out of him. The interview lasted about 60 mins (7 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 53 minutes interview).

##### Similarities with other interviews

##### Differences with other interviews

- This is the first interview where I was not sure that his explanation was viable - but nonetheless it was his experience and it is my job to try and interpret it. I don't know whether it was a language issue or a culture issue but I found it difficult to have faith in what this participant was saying to me - I felt there were a few internal inconsistencies (see clarify section below), and I could not figure out if they were

arising due to misunderstandings or due to his poor memory of events or due to some other cause.. I think member checking could be especially useful with this participant and help confirm that this is how he wants to represent his experience. What could also be necessary is for me to think of why he might tell me his account in this way?

#### Problems

- I only did an okay job of using silence or raising topics that I'm interested in (i.e. the ethnographic interview style) because I was conscious of how long the participant had already waited for this interview.

#### Implications

- There was more of a semi-structured question and answer feel to the whole interview, except for some occasions where I did let the ideas develop more dialogically.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The question on the Informed consent sheet (that if part of the DCU template) about 'I have had a chance to ask questions' caused confusion again. I really should emphasize that they have a chance to stop me and ask questions at any time right at the beginning of each interview, but I often forget when I am trying to get through the form filling in a hurry.
- Listening back to this interview was at times hard. It has happened in other interviews that I have felt flashes of embarrassment and anger at the way some participants seemed critical of my questioning or research topic. Of course, I almost never said any such thing and always just bit my lip and tried to maintain silence and listen, but hearing the audio back creates the same desire to defend myself again. But I could feel that I got a bit annoyed by the end of the interview with the sometimes critical posture of the participant and I did spend a little energy defending my line of questioning.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He sometimes tapped on the table with his fingertips (as if playing a piano chord) especially when he was making a point - stressing something he had noticed or believed or thought. A lot of the time, it felt like he was trying to convince me that "This is how something is!" I tried to note whenever he did this, but I do not think I caught them all.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by the fact that he said the disaster never happened for him. I thought I might hear this from someone in Tokyo but not someone in the disaster zone. I need to think about the things that caused him to say this - these aspects might be learning points for resilience. I really have to take into account his view that really the disaster was nothing - this is counter evidence I need to treat and have an explanation for. One thing I could say is that after the first five days he was safely outside of the disaster zone for 40 days - the period many participants are saying was the disaster! In a sense, he could be said to have missed a lot of it, especially the cumulative stress



relating to Fukushima that seemed to affect many.

#### What I'd do differently

- I don't think I did a great job in this interview - I was really tired from doing three interviews back-to-back in this way. I probably should have followed up on more points at the time, but I'm not sure I was catching them. In future, I would avoid running three interviews in only four or five hours.
- I think I might have tried to follow up more and get an interview with the person he knows from Haiti in Sendai. I did not at the time, because I did not want to step on the toes of my main gatekeeper. But now I look back on it, I think attempting to get the input of that person from Haiti could have been really interesting.

#### What didn't I find out

#### What do I need to clarify

- I'm not sure whether it was a language issue or a memory issue or what but I found that there were inconsistencies in his timeline that I never really followed up on properly. He didn't know about the tsunami etc for three days but other Chinese students escaped to Tokyo or Osaka the second day. Did he not ask why? Was he three or two days without electricity?
- How is it possible he only found out about the tsunami and Fukushima when he got back to China? But then again, the other similar participants 15 and 16 only found out by being at the evacuation centre or from others who had access to TV.
- How is it possible that he could help his Japanese friend clean up his company and not know about the broader situation? He clearly says his Japanese friends had their radios on so that means they would have had the information. He seems to sidestep this question when I ask him directly and gives an answer that the Chinese had much more information than the Japanese at first.

#### First reflections on data

- This interview was another possible piece of evidence for the ignorance is bliss scenario - because he had no experience of earthquakes in China up to now, he was not scared at first.
- He mentioned a complete lack of situational awareness and first, and his first act was to try and call his friends, but the main point he noticed was how the traffic continued to move relatively smoothly even without electric signals (an example for him of Japanese group dynamics which impressed him a lot).
- He and his friends didn't know why there were all these helicopters flying above (because he did not yet have situational awareness).
- He again mentions how impressed he was by businesses getting back to some sort of normality after only about three days. He seems to be comparing Japan favourably to other disaster settings in several elements of his narrative.
- This was the first participant to outright say the disaster never happened for him - never mind when it finished. (Even though some others have hinted along these lines.) He goes as far as to say that the earthquake affected the lives of people in Sendai positively because it made them realize that life is short and that money is not the most important thing, etc. It made people start to think what happiness is. (I must

say this was indeed the case for me.)

- He made the point that in a really big earthquake, it makes so much noise that you wouldn't be able to hear any PA announcements, whether they were made or not. He goes on to say that even if there's an announcement, you're not concentrating on the announcement.
- He gave a good learning point to switch off your phone in the immediate aftermath of the disaster when phone lines are clogged anyway because this conserves battery power for a little later when lines may be up again or less clogged.
- He described the general Japanese response to disaster as first just cool down and wait. Just ensure your own safety, because if you are safe you don't make trouble for anyone else. (Again another hint to group dynamics?)
- This interview was more evidence for the formation of ad-hoc response or support communities - the Chinese students in Miyagi all stayed together.
- He seems to have had really low situational awareness. Even when he called his parents, he did not get information from them because it was just a very quick call to say he was okay. Even when he got on the bus to evacuate he still did not know why (I find this difficult to believe but must take him at his word). Taking him at this word, it shows the huge role played by TV and Internet (he did not mention accessing either in the initial stages) in creating situational awareness but possibly also in creating more stress for those who were not materially too badly affected.
- He pointed out how the informal information networks work in the Chinese community in Japan - embassy does not contact you directly but embassy information quickly spreads by word of mouth. He also alluded to the self-sufficiency of the Chinese community in Japan.
- He said that he gave information to his Japanese friends rather than the other way around. He seems to portray the Japanese as having only relatively distant government information waited for passively while the Chinese community actively sought out and therefore knew practical, locally-relevant information through their word-of-mouth network.
- He criticised the radio for broadcasting information that was not locally relevant to Sendai. He saw the radio as being completely different for Japanese and non-Japanese. For Japanese, he thinks the radio means hope. He also strongly ties radio communication to government communication and the Japanese have faith in their governments in times of crisis. Chinese, not so much.
- He went off on an interesting anecdote about the opportunities to make big money in a disaster - is this revealing of some connection I am not seeing?
- He had a very, very short-term view (temporal and functional definition of the boundaries of) the disaster, and I think this is why his ideas are jarring with me so much. They might be true for the first few minutes or hours or perhaps days, but then what about weeks and months - still a valid disaster period, I can show - but he wasn't in Japan for that period.
- He said in China, he didn't care about the information that much. I must account for this counter-evidence of information gathering being central or important. (Though he did call a friend beforehand to see it's okay to come back so he's not being completely upfront I think).
- He pointed out how Chinese (one of the largest foreign communities in Japan) don't use Twitter or Facebook - so tailoring a strategy only to Twitter or Facebook could

really leave a lot of people out of the loop.

- This participant made me realize that in my themes I will have to be really explicit about what period of the disaster I am talking about, otherwise my ideas about communication may be written off straight away just as this participant did.

### *2013/10/2 Record of interview with Participant 18*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview took place in the offices of the place of work of the participant in central Tokyo. The participant had suggested going to lunch and talking over food. Having had the disastrous experience with Participant 6 where trying to run the interview over food did not work, I really wanted to avoid this. Luckily, it was raining torrentially when I arrived so I used this as an excuse to speak in the office instead. We went to a board room, so I was confident that there would be no problems with the audio recording or with privacy. In addition, all other members of the office were away on leave etc. so we had to the whole place to ourselves. The participant had said he could give me about 30 minutes, but in the end we spoke for nearly double that amount of time. I apologised to him on tape and he seemed not to be upset at me running over time like this. The interview lasted about 55 minutes (4 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 51 minutes interview).s

#### Similarities with other interviews

#### Differences with other interviews

- This was an interview where I felt I had some insider knowledge - the participant was acquainted with Participants 1 and 3, and they had told me that his Japanese wife's family had had some terrible experiences in the disaster (loss of loved ones and home), so I knew to be careful about this and not push for detail that he might not be prepared to give. I was prepared for him to be guarded in his answers because of this but also because of his job which involves high level dealings with business and government.

#### Problems

- I feel that the talk of not being able to remember the term 'merry-go-round' threw the participant off and the answer to my first raising of the general topic of the disaster was not as detailed as it could have been so I had to intervene and try and repair this.

#### Implications

- His first answer ended up being unexpectedly short and irrelevant.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- Again, the question of always trying to check with them if there's anything related to language or culture that I haven't covered proved useful - if I hadn't asked this last question, I could have left without hearing how he felt now he may have helped more people with intercultural mediation because he now uses Facebook whereas he didn't have a social media presence or a wide network of foreigners that were calling on

him. So he is basically saying that social media could be a way to encourage more mediation by long-established foreigners in the community.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed to be relaxed overall and gave me his attention for nearly double the time he had offered without showing any real signs of needing to rush. He did seem a little sceptical about the needs or feasibility of the language issues I was dealing with in my project and definitely seemed to identify with Japanese in many areas of the discussion. He even talked about the difficulty of defining the borders of his community with a Japanese family and a job that requires him to represent Ireland.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He used some hand gestures (gently hitting the table etc or using the table in front of him to suggest maps, etc.) I tried to catch and write down as many of these gestures as possible.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by the fact that the participant remembers no tsunami warnings even though Disney is by the coast. Also, I would have thought that after a big earthquake a person who had lived in Japan so long wouldn't approach the water (that's basic safety training) but maybe this speaks to the original lack of situational awareness.

#### What I'd do differently

- Because of having been warned by Participants 1 and 3 to be cautious about the topic of the wife's family, I was a bit annoyed with myself for asking about how she communicated with her brother. I made a decision not to try to find out anything about that part of the story. But because he had brought up the topic unprompted, I guess I felt I could delve a little deeper just about communication. But then he ended up telling me about the relatives who died and I felt like I had pried into too personal a part of the story - even if unintentionally. I'm not sure I would again and I must be careful in future if I have any prior warning to be even more aware during the interview.

#### What didn't I find out

- I forgot to ask this participant the question about whether the interview increased his stress. You can hear from the transcript that I turn off the recorder a little bit more abruptly than usual. I usually turned off at the end of some sort of thank you, but I had realized that I was starting to run late for the next interview that day which would be way over the other side of Tokyo.

#### What do I need to clarify

#### First reflections on data

- This participant began his interview by stating that his is married to a Japanese woman and has three children. He may have seen this as the most important contextual information that he wanted me to know - he is the first participant to have started this way.

- There seems to be more evidence for foreigners following what the Japanese do in the first instances (crouching when they saw the Japanese crouching).
- He was asked not to leave the theme park - general safety advice seems to be stay where you are. And then later they did a controlled evacuation (moving to certain sections first rather than creating bottlenecks) - perhaps important contextual knowledge for translators to have, because some foreigners were getting annoyed that they weren't being let out of the park - this is perhaps an example of a language barrier.
- The theme of "we didn't understand how serious it was" came up again in this interview. Perhaps this is another potential code. Lack of initial situational awareness - can this lack in any way be tied to language or culture?
- The participant stepped in as an ad-hoc interpreter at one point to explain about the controlled evacuation to some Korean or Chinese fellow guests.
- The participant does not remember any tsunami warnings coming, despite the fact that Disney is by the coast. Whether or not the warnings actually came, pragmatically they did not work if they did not make an impression on this person with his young family as he took them walking along the banks looking out to sea to get to their hotel. He even calls this a lesson learned. Perhaps this could be another possible code.
- This participant's account gives us some window into what the experience might have been like for a tourist based on the interactions he had with tourists in the theme park and the fact that his first port of call after onset was a Hilton Hotel.
- The participant talked of pushing the baby car through mud and slush - this is probably evidence of liquefaction.
- The participant made a really relevant statement relating to the idea that in this large complex emergency, different people focused on different elements of the disaster depending on their circumstances. So because of his wife's situation with relatives dying in the tsunami, Fukushima did not affect them.
- In this interview, there was more evidence for the mismatch between domestic and foreign media. (He said he would be more on the side of the Japanese media.)
- He talked of the fact that authorities cannot plan disaster preparation scenarios for all foreigners - not practical and not maybe even feasible in terms of resources - so maybe this suggests an argument that foreigners must help themselves, so maybe any solutions I suggest should be based on facilitating this help themselves idea.
- There was a strong sense from the second half of the interview that the participant does not think providing special language treatment for foreign nationals is realistic nor that it even should be as the Japanese have too many other things to be worrying about in terms of disaster preparation. I need to have a good answer to this type of view in my thesis.

### *2013/10/2 Record of interview with Participant 19*

#### Information about the interview

- I had arranged to visit the participant's office and then go from there to a cafe in the atrium of the office complex. It was a long elevator ride and we had some small talk about myself, my research and the participant's life on the way to get coffee. The

interview itself took place at a small table outside a coffee shop in the atrium of a large complex of office buildings in central Tokyo (three large skyscrapers joined together with a shopping mall and residential complex linked in). The interview took place directly before the interview with Participant 20 - they are both colleagues in the same firm that has offices in one of the mega-skyscrapers. There were people regularly passing by through the massive atrium to get to other offices or shops, but no-one came very near us as the coffee shop was tucked away in a corner. It felt very private (despite the unusual setting) and we could speak freely. I bought us both drinks but he barely drank his. This interview came through a contact that my supervisor had met at a conference – the person at this conference's company had translated messages of hope sent from around the world for Japan to Participant 19's company. The participant thought this incident was the main thing I wanted to talk about, but, in fact, his own experience was more interesting to me because it more directly related to my research questions than messages of hope. So I chose not to pursue the topic directly and he himself only mentioned it just before he had to leave. The participant had to cut his interview off abruptly to go attend a meeting, which meant that we did not get to cover as much as I'd hoped and there was a strong sense of the clock ticking throughout the interview (he kept his phone on the table in front of him as he spoke the interview lasted about 42 minutes (7 minutes explaining informed consent - although there was also considerable small talk at this time about my own experience of the disaster - and filling out profile, 35 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

#### Differences with other interviews

- This was the first interview where the participant directly asked me about my experience of the disaster. Up until now it has been something that I have brought up at times convenient to me, and it was perhaps of note that he seemed interested to know this before sharing his own story. He seemed to be interested in how involved I wanted my voice to be in the process. Perhaps this is because he was a journalist before his current job. I was a little concerned at this mainly because I knew we were under time pressure and I didn't want the whole conversation to be focused on me, so I tried to keep it brief. But, I guess it is human nature to want to talk about yourself, and I felt my story went on longer than it needed to. I will probably be more careful of this in future. (Although maybe it helped build rapport and some trust with the participant?)

#### Problems

- We were under time pressure for this interview - the participant had a conference call he had to get to and kept his phone clock open in front of him.
- I did not have a chance to ask the anxiety assessment Likert Scale question at the end of the interview because the interview ended sort of abruptly to allow the participant to go back up to work.

#### Implications

- Even though I did my best to apply the ethnographic interview techniques that I have been focused on and let the participant speak freely, at around the 25-minute mark I did intervene when he started talking about liquefactions (which is not a major focus

of my research) to pick up explicitly on a language-related issue he had mentioned in an earlier anecdote.

- My anxiety / stress data will not have a full set of participants and I must note this if describing it.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The confidence in using English scale didn't seem to work great here - the participant wondered if it implied something like confidence in public speaking. I think there is no perfect way to present a scale to measure such a thing - other native speaking participants have been a bit confused by having to rate their English abilities - but I think doing it face-to-face is the best solution - at least I can explain what I'm hoping to assess with the question.
- The experience of natural disasters question didn't work well again - I should have probably just phrased it earthquakes or something much more explicit - disaster seems now to be the wrong point and not what I am really asking about.
- The question about when the disaster ended seemed to work well again and each time participants seem to put a lot of thought into answering and seem relatively engaged with the question. His answer again points to the functional rather than the temporal definition being more important (things like alertness, fight or flight criteria, for example).

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed to be relaxed, even though he clearly had an eye on the clock throughout the meeting.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He used quite a lot of hand gestures which I did my best to note and describe but he even apologised for using gestures in this was when he knew I was recording the audio.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by how intimidated I felt being in a very high-powered corporate environment. I was glad I had worn a suit, as I think it helped me feel more confidence. But certainly, I found that I wanted to portray myself in as professional a light as possible in contrast to other interviews where I felt more relaxed. This was really nothing to do with the participant who was completely engaging and friendly and more to do with the environment.

#### What I'd do differently

#### What didn't I find out

- The participant mentioned having done an interview with an overseas radio program during the disaster. I could not find it in the online archives of the radio station, so maybe the participant could direct me to a link.

#### What do I need to clarify

- I did not think to ask him for what Twitter feeds in particular he was following during

the disaster to use for an illustrative corpus.

First reflections on data

- This participant's former career as a journalist likely had a strong impact on his information gathering and communicating and he mentions his background in journalism a few times in his account.
- He started his account with the very interesting anecdote of his older Japanese boss putting his hand on his shoulder and saying "Let's wait here" instead of immediately going outside of the subway station like the participant wanted to do. In fact, staying put is probably the safer thing to do and the anecdote could have been to show the voice of Japanese experience - even though the participant was a long-term foreign resident and had been in Japan for the 1995 Kobe - maybe this is an argument for foreigners missing out on the deeply ingrained emergency response education of the Japanese school system from birth?
- There is another little bit of evidence in this interview for details coming back through anecdote rather than directed question. ("I'm remembering now.")
- He gave another account that emphasizes Japanese stoicism in the face of disaster - his boss continuing the advertising pitch under the meeting table as the shaking continued.
- The participant made a really nice point about the issue of what I'm asking them to remember and said something like "I'm not exactly sure how good my memory is of that incident, but that was the atmosphere." - maybe I could use this quote to talk about the fact that I'm not looking to represent some reality or external truth and for this reason I would prefer to have atmosphere than precise details.
- The image of foreigners drinking alcohol at the outbreak of disaster came up again - this is seriously a recurring theme. I don't know that it's suited to my thesis but it may be interesting for some future work.
- He is a good example of the information-richness of some foreigners with news feeds from all over the world that might fit into the ecosystems idea that is starting to form in my mind.
- In addition, his anecdote about the freelance camerawoman in Japan who was hired by the British TV crew shows the importance of satellite phones and the networks of foreign communities - he got information about evacuating from the disaster zone, which would have spread out through his network and also how he was giving her the situational awareness - this anecdote is an interesting example of the complexity of information sharing among the people I spoke to - embassy to foreigner in zone with satellite phone to foreigner beside zone with Internet and social media.
- He states strongly that the foreign media was better for him than the Japanese - this is the opposite of what many other foreigners said and I must account for this.
- He said that rather than government influence, the caution of creating a panic may have held back the domestic press and this opinion is based on his having worked for a Japanese publication - he thinks that the Japanese press would be much, much more careful about checking - but this opinion fails to recognize the globalization of media and the fact the people in Japan (foreigners and Japanese alike) would have been exposed to non-domestic media who did not feel such caution.
- The participant mentions the spontaneous development of protocols among his contacts in the crowd to try to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness in the information



that they spread about the disaster.

- There was another example in this interview of Japanese people coming to foreigners for information rather than vice versa.
- The people responsible in subways for making announcements in emergencies are the regular station staff who are probably unlikely to have advanced foreign language skills (and who may have delivered messages not just in an unfamiliar language to foreigners but also in a panicked tone of voice). One of my recommendations could be to think of ways to support such people.
- While the concept of translating messages of hope that he talked about was not so relevant to my research questions, the success of the process of using this translation service and his high opinion of it might be relevant to my thesis - especially the speed at which their network of human translators was willing to volunteer their time and services, but also the fact that efforts were stymied by the technical issues of getting the translations up. He also raised the interesting point of the branding and publicity motive than can be behind the private sector being involved in these “humanitarian” services - a point that could be brought to the work done by the likes of Google and Yahoo in the disaster - and the fact that they are under no legal or moral obligation to continue services or to maintain ethical or humanitarian principles in serving.
- This participant volunteered his services as a translator through the Google site.

#### *2013/10/2 Record of interview with Participant 20*

##### *Information about the interview*

- This interview took place at a small table outside a coffee shop in the atrium of a large complex of office buildings in central Tokyo (three large skyscrapers joined together with a shopping mall and residential complex linked in). The interview took place just after the interview with Participant 19 - they are both colleagues in the same firm that has offices in one of the mega-skyscrapers. There were people regularly passing by through the massive atrium to get to other offices or shops, but no-one came very near us as the coffee shop was tucked away in a corner. It felt very private (despite the unusual setting) and we could speak freely. I bought us both drinks but he barely touched his. I was a little concerned about running over time as the participant was taking time out of his working day to come down from his office and speak with me (especially because the previous participant had had to cut his interview off abruptly to go attend a meeting) - but as the interview with this participant is essentially a monologue, I just let him talk. Also, he seemed really unconcerned about the informed consent and other profile data and flew threw them. For these reasons the interview lasted about 65 minutes (2 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 63 minutes interview).

##### *Similarities with other interviews*

- The setting was exactly the same as with Participant 19.
- Again, my interjections increased dramatically (as say with Participant 2) as I realised that time was running out and I had not had the chance to ask many questions (though I was confident on this occasion that the participant’s monologue has spoken of many topics that were of interest to me). I was trying to somewhat break his flow. But the

increase in interjections could also have been just down to tiredness - this was my third interview in a row that day and I may have felt too tired to really do the focused listening (ethnographic interview) that I was trying to practice.

- Participant 20 also mentioned the idea of going into a taxi as a fluent speaker and getting the 'nihongo jozu' thing - this was also mentioned by Participant 13 - this could be used perhaps by me as a sign of the constant foreignising of non-natives living in Japan?

#### Differences with other interviews

##### Problems

- At first, it seemed as if he was also looking for directive, precise questioning from me. (I wonder if he was suspicious or thought that I was somehow unfocused). But once I assured him that I was just looking for his experience in general, he took the ball and ran with it and spoke uninterrupted crafting his story around information gathering and communication as I had requested while at the same time giving lots of context.
- The participant naturally spoke really fast.
- About thirty minutes into the interview some noisy large cleaning machine was cleaning near our table and this, combined with his speed of speech, could make the audio quite hard to catch in places - there may be more points that will have to be marked as 'indistinct' in this interview than in others.
- As with Participant 19, I did not have a chance to ask the anxiety assessment Likert Scale question at the end of the interview because the interview ended sort of abruptly to allow the participant to go back up to work.

##### Implications

- I felt I needed to somehow break down his suspicions and gain his confidence in my credentials and trust in me as a researcher right from the start, so I was rather on edge for a lot of this interview.
- Even as he was speaking, I thought that his interview would be difficult to transcribe
- My anxiety / stress data will not have a full set of participants and I must note this when describing it, if I use it.

##### What questions worked well or didn't

- The previous experience of disasters question on the profile data did not work well as he clearly stated that he didn't know what to make of the context for this scale, so his answer is probably meaningless. This question has not worked well for me and I sometimes forgot to even ask it, so probably those data will not aid my interpretation.

##### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed to be relaxed and confident - not at all rushed. His words were considered but fluent. (I felt a little intimidated by his delivery.)

##### How they used non-verbal communication

- At first, he rarely made eye contact with me and looked off often into the middle distance. This did not give the impression of someone nervous, though, rather it gave

the impression of someone confidently giving information (almost like a lecture). But as the interview went on he laughed more and made more eye contact especially at these points of sort of gallows humour.

#### What I felt surprised by

- I was surprised by how long the participant talked and how infrequently I had to intervene. He spoke for nearly forty minutes without almost any interruption in answer to my first intervention. It shows the value of sending the topics beforehand as it was mostly all on topic.
- This participant seemed to be particularly eloquent (perhaps because of his job) and I was surprised at how often he paraphrased ideas I had been developing independently in nice ways that I can hopefully quote in the thesis.
- I was surprised that again (like with Participant 13) class and socioeconomic distinctions again came up in relation to response to the disaster. This might be an interesting point to pursue (perhaps not for the thesis though).

#### What I'd do differently

#### What didn't I find out

#### What do I need to clarify

- There was one line of dialog that I think was just a mistake - he said "Look, if you don't have, non-essential stuff don't go, but if you have to be there, it's okay". From the context, I think he meant "non-essential stuff go". (NOTE: this sentence was clarified by the participant at the first member checking stage.)
- I could follow up on the historic tweets of the key Tweeters he mentioned (Jean Snow, Jake Adelstein, Hiroko Tabuchi) in my Twitter data set to look at what they were contributing.

#### First reflections on data

- The different cultural responses to earthquakes came up very frequently in this participant's account: filming his Japanese colleague who kept working through all the shaking (the colleague wanted to get the work done so he could get out of there); how the participant did not want to stay in the building (even though he knew this is the recommended safe response in Japanese preparedness training and for example where his wife worked in downtown Tokyo was not letting anyone out of the building)
- The strength of sound (aural) memory of the experience of an earthquake comes up again here - the noises rather than the movement etc seems to stick with people (for this participant the noise of the office cabinets slamming together)
- The centrality of information from his account came when the focus shifted to "What's going on with Fukushima?" - he also felt it was in this shift that the government started kind of doing things in English (implying that they hadn't beforehand for the other elements of the disaster)
- His account fed into the fly-jin narrative and the story of his wife ringing her boss and catching her at the station to Osaka gives a good sense of the strange mood of fleeing from danger in those early stages. There is also some sense of the divisions

within the foreign community (they were french and they just split) - which I could show could be put down to embassy information perhaps.

- He clearly says that the Japanese spirit thing in relation to disaster (being back at desks on Monday morning) was a challenge for him. Especially when especially French friends were leaving and saying he should go too (there was a duty to show up and continue working even though there was nothing to do).
- He talked about a lack of deep contingency planning in his company (slightly contrary to Japan's stereotypical image of preparedness and he felt other firms he knew might have been better prepared).
- He spoke of there being a lot of distrust of official records (and he ties this to systemic issues of Japanese life and society) and, in general, he brings up the idea of trust (the members forum versus Twitter) frequently.
- He explicitly mentioned a small group of foreigners translating stuff through Twitter and how this was useful to him (not speaking Japanese) - he does say, however, that it was not perhaps done for the foreign population of Japan but for the world to know what was going on - which shows the idea of people being 'indirectly involved' throughout the world.
- The nuance here again was that wards and local governments used ineffective channels of communication (letters or forms through the door that participants wouldn't look at, knocks on door when you're at work)
- He makes an interesting point about defining foreignness and diversity in Japan with a third-generation Korean in an advanced bureaucratic position being held up as an example of diversity - he also makes the point that lack of integration does not stop Japan from being a pleasant place where people care for you - but you are always foreign in their eyes.
- He makes an interesting point that discounting the official word may have made him want to access Japanese information less and thus reduced his need for translation - is this something that might be more general?

### *2013/10/3 Record of interview with Participant 21*

#### *Information about the interview*

- This interview took place in an Excelsior Coffee Shop in central Tokyo near where the participant worked. I had been on a volunteer weekend in the disaster zone with the participant a few days prior, so we had already gotten to know each somewhat. I knew that the participant was a big smoker, so we sat in the smoking section of the coffee shop. She went through about 8 cigarettes over the 90 minutes. This made it slightly uncomfortable for me at times, but I wanted to ensure the participant was as relaxed as possible and I did not want to chance that she would seek to end the interview early in order to go and smoke a cigarette. As it was late in the evening, there were only one or two other customers in that section of the coffee shop during our interview, and even they did not sit near us. Also a glass divider separated us from other customers in the non-smoking section, so it felt very private, I felt that we could talk freely, and the background music was not loud. After we finished the interview, she suggested going for a beer together. I really felt I couldn't say no

because she had been so instrumental in getting me a place on the volunteer team and because we had had some nice chats and become a little friendly over the weekend. The interview lasted about 108 minutes (3 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 105 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This coffee shop was near where I had met Participants 7 and 18 (it is one of the main business districts of Tokyo) so I was slightly nervous that we would run into each other and that that would be awkward.
- This interview was a little bit similar to Participant 14's in that I came away with some really useful data that I cannot use. It was too personally sensitive to her, so she told me about it and showed it to me but then said that I could not mention the details of it in my research. This is an interesting point for the methodology chapter about ethics.

#### Differences with other interviews

##### Problems

- Having a beer together after the interview made me feel a bit conflicted. I still haven't resolved the idea of being friendly and social with people I am still researching on. I find myself not lying but not being as forthcoming as I could be.

##### Implications

- I will probably need to write about some of the advantages and disadvantages of being socially involved with some participants outside the research setting.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- I think the whole form of ethnographic, non-directive interviewing worked particularly well here. You can see, for example, in how the story of her former boss going up to the disaster zone with reporters as a translator comes up through the dialogic process. I do not think these data would have been revealed if I had just asked something like, "Tell me about your experience of or thoughts on translation in this disaster." In fact, this participant said in our conversation following the interview that she did not think she would have remembered about Yokosonews, her Israeli boss and her acquaintance offering translation if I had just directly asked 'did you use translation during the disaster'. This was only one participant, but I feel it kind of justified my methodology a little bit.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- She seemed to be really nervous - hands shaking and almost chain smoking - but she laughed a lot especially at the start, so she may have just been feeling the effects of a lot of caffeine and tobacco throughout the day. It seemed odd to me that she would be nervous as she had seemed such a forthright and self-confident person during the weekend of volunteering. But I guess she might not normally talk about personal matters.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- She often gestured generally with her hand that held her cigarette - more waving the hand than making a particular gesture in relation to a particular point of dialogue.
- This participant was very expressive with her voice and often used exaggerated accents, styles of speaking and tones of voice. I tried to capture them whenever I felt they might have an impact on how the dialogue should be interpreted.

#### What I felt surprised by

- Some things that surprised me was her confessed high level of mistrust for me before meeting and how she wanted to know my earthquake story - I had never really thought to tell it I guess. By my not telling it, I thought I was keeping the focus on them, but perhaps I should have started more interviews with it to build up that communal bond. I'm not sure.

#### What I'd do differently

- I would have let the participant speak more uninterrupted at the start. I think I should have used silence a bit more and just let her talk. Maybe because I had gotten to know her a bit, I felt more like I was having a regular conversation and less like I was conducting an ethnographic style interview which was a common point with other participants where the line was a bit blurred between participant/friend. I don't think it had a major negative impact, but I think it would have been more ethnographic if I had kept quieter at the start.

#### What didn't I find out

- I never even thought to ask for the contact details of her former Israeli boss who acted as an interpreter for the US reporters, but I do not think I would have had time to interview him anyway.

#### What do I need to clarify

#### First reflections on data

- There was some sense of a lack of confidence in the physical soundness of her office building (she started the interview by pointing out that she found out later that it had been built after strict codes for building earthquake resistant buildings had come into effect). It is interesting that she found this out after the disaster, so that may be one changed behaviour.
- She pointed out that she works with a lot of international people and highlights the difference in immediate response between foreign and Japanese staff. Many foreigners ran out of the building (which you are not supposed to do) while the Japanese went under their desks.
- Her first information gathering was by Internet, clicking on the CNN news website with her bicultural (JA-US) colleague. She very clearly states that nobody knew what to do in the initial first hour after onset showing that gathering information was important to her early experience. Her first time to see about the tsunami was videos in the bar they went to at about 5.30pm.
- Beers and alcohol come up again very early in this account.
- This participant very quickly mentioned the rumours and misinformation that started spreading (through email messages from friends) in even the first couple of hours of

the disaster and this is a strong theme in her account that she returns to often.

- Her previous experience of having her sister go through 9/11 likely impacted her experience of the disaster, especially in relation to her desire to communicate with loved ones. It seemed to be that the sister's trauma from 9/11 made her react very negatively to Fukushima and this transferred onto the participant.
- Does the relatively calm reaction of the foreigners to the freaked out reaction of the staff at the bar indicate the difference in situational awareness by having access to TV?
- It's interesting how much she talked about images when I asked her about how much she knew in general. Is this another indicator of the important role of pictures, diagrams, etc.?
- There is another example here of a participant counterbalancing their account with something like 'at least from my memory' indicating that they recognize that there may not be a perfect 'truth' to what they say.
- This participant was quite negative towards Facebook in particular and social media in general. The hassle of a kind of social obligation about saying she's okay which she didn't feel like dealing with, especially because the obligation seemed to be to people she did not feel a particularly strong connection with.
- She states that she was already disillusioned with the media in general so I must temper her negative statements about the reporting of the disaster with that knowledge. This distrust of media is another major motif in this participant's account. Because of this distrust her information gathering techniques in the disaster would surely have been affected.
- There is, though, an interesting disconnect in her story about how she's fine and how Tokyo's fine, and getting angry at others for making worse of their situations than they needed to be, and yet she left Japan for Hong Kong because of Fukushima. Did a lack of translation and interpreting lead to this disconnect?
- Her story about finding the plug for her TV as the first thing she did when she got back to her own apartment shows that she did not use it much beforehand but that she saw it as an important information gathering tool in a disaster.
- This is another story featuring centrally the image of the Fukushima reactor exploding - could I use the explosion as a sort of vignette to bring varied participants' experiences together? She very clearly says at this point that this is where the translation stuff probably comes in.
- This seems to be another account showing the advantage of having a wide network of friends and contacts (e.g. the friend who had a reactor in their hometown)
- The participant's account speaks clearly of how she was pulled in two directions - some friends telling her not to worry about radiation and continue as normal and other friends and family telling her to panic and stock up on supplies etc.
- This is another piece of evidence about people who do not speak the language fluently putting stock in the tone of voice of the person delivering the message (you hear the news announcers getting freaked out).
- The participant makes an interesting comment about not expecting translation services simultaneously with the nuclear announcement based on her experience of translation from Japanese TV when she was in Japan for 9/11.
- She made a very interesting point about the foreign nationals being complicit in the sensationalization of the story by what and how they told of the disaster (especially

images that foreigners chose to share through social media).

- This participant had a big impact from the earthquake in that she decided to stay longer and found she liked Japan more based on how they responded to the disaster.
- Her first time going up to Tohoku to volunteer was in May (at that time the roads were still restricted to military vehicles and large trucks)
- She underlined that it is the more leadership roles in volunteering that might need more language and culture mediation.
- The participant seemed a little defensive when I brought up the term fly-jin, even though I never implied she might be seen as one.

### *2013/10/4 Record of interview with Participant 22*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview took place in a Turkish restaurant in a suburb of Nagoya. Though the meeting took place in Nagoya, the participant was living in Tokyo at the time of the disaster. Though the restaurant was small, we were the only customers and the staff stayed behind the counter and left us alone. I felt there would be no problems, therefore, with privacy or background noise. The interview lasted about 75 minutes (5 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 70 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This was a very similar environment to the interview I had with Participant 6 - at a restaurant over lunch - but I had learned from that experience how to get better data.

#### Differences with other interviews

#### Problems

- This participant was a frustrating participant to interview. The ethnographic interview method states that you should encourage participants to go off on tangents and seemingly unrelated anecdotes, if they want to. However, this participant only seemed to go off on tangents and it was difficult to imagine how any of this might relate to his experience of the disaster.
- I did not enjoy my time with this participant as much as I had been expecting to. From his emails, I thought we would have a great time talking.

#### Implications

- I have to be careful not to discount these seemingly unrelated or useless passages, though. As per an ethnographic frame, they are only irrelevant in my world and may tell me a lot about the participant's perspectives.
- I also feel that whether or not I like the participant can affect how ethnographic I want to go. I feel when I like the person I want to know more of the context and am happy to listen to the asides. When I do not feel so comfortable in the person's presence I want the interview to be over quicker and am less interested in the asides. This may indicate problems with identification with the participants or blurring lines of researched and friend.



- NOTE: in the end there were some difficulties with transcription based on the participant's low speaking volume and hybrid German-English accent. There were some passages in the transcript where I could not avoid putting 'indistinct' for the transcription.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- I knew in advance that this interview would be in a restaurant. I had learned from my experience with Participant 6, so I knew some of the pitfalls of interviewing over food and tried to counteract them. For example, I made sure the conversation was about stuff I was not very interested in for most of the 'meal' so that he would have time to eat and I could talk and let him do so about other rubbish topics. Then by the time the eating was done, I could go on to the topics I cared more about.
- Once again, one of the most interesting things in the interview came in the last few minutes when I said, 'is there anything else you want to add' kind of thing. This time I had not switched off the audio recorder - I am learning.
- I definitely did not do a great job of using my ethnographic interview techniques here, mainly because of the interview environment but perhaps also because of the human relations side - I didn't use silence so much, and talked over the participant occasionally and intervened more than I would normally want to.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- Face to face, I found this participant to be less warm and more cynical than he had seemed in his emails arranging the interview. Perhaps this indicated that he was not at ease with me and not so comfortable.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- The participant did use a few gestures and I tried to capture them at the time and will include them in the transcript.

#### What I felt surprised by

- Arriving a bit early, I walked around the neighbourhood a bit to kill some time before the scheduled meeting. I was surprised by the many non-Japanese faces I bumped into in just 30 minutes or so (about 6!). It seems Nagoya is an international city in Japanese terms.

#### What I'd do differently

#### What didn't I find out

- I did not really ask the participant to go into detail about their feelings on the interview process. I just asked him to fill out the Likert scale. This is because I was worried that I was starting to run late for my next appointment. (You can see this by how abruptly I switched off the audio recorder.)

#### What do I need to clarify

#### First reflections on data

- The participant started with how he thinks Japan is moving off in a strange direction

(more right wing, less international) and this links with the idea of closing off from the world that other participants have mentioned. However, he does not see any causal link with the disaster here. But it reinforces this discourse on appearance versus reality in desire to internationalize in Japan that may be relevant to interpret measures for responding to disasters in a more culturally and linguistically diverse way.

- The talk about international experience maybe not being such a work advantage and his feeling that he is seen as a threat to the coherence of the system seems to indicate that he is really not integrated into his work environment and feels he is getting treated very differently on the basis that he is a foreigner and that he works differently. He seems to have quite an antagonistic relationship with some of his Japanese employers and colleagues. (Can I link this to an idea of responding differently in a disaster?)
- The participant talks about having no idea about the magnitude of the disaster initially. The first information gathering device he mentions is TV, but they never watched TV because neither he nor his wife were good enough at Japanese, so they did not use it. Instead they went online first. And then, he did go to NHK's international English channel.
- Bureaucracy, administration and his perception of how these often seem illogical to him came up repeatedly in his account.
- The participant still has a bit of a sense of guilt about not taking up the university position that he had signed for but not yet started near Fukushima before the nuclear disaster happened.
- He had an extremely negative view of how the German Embassy handled the crisis. (His language changed here talking about this topic- more vulgar, perhaps showing real anger).
- He criticizes the wider German community (like Goethe Institut and the German school) citing the cause of the trouble being the fact that they did not communicate - another piece of evidence for the importance of information to response but also to recovery.
- He pointed out the complicated result of having these people coming out of the woodwork over social media to check on you in the disaster - nice in one way that they care, but if it's too much, then you get annoyed.
- This participant spoke of the large hurdle that learning the Japanese language presents (even for a linguist who has learned multiple other languages in his life).
- This participant seemed to go off on several long digressions somehow justifying his level of Japanese ability or integration in to Japanese culture. What does this mean for disaster? Maybe that this feeling of otherness is strong in Japan because of the language and culture and is part of the experience of migrating there.
- This participant mentioned (like Participant 17) mentioned how, where there is disaster for some, there is also opportunity.
- There are really plenty of incidences in this account of the participant pointing to language and culture barriers in his experience of living in Japan. He even says that cultural differences and the desire to be free to make an individual choice would probably put him off spending (or make it difficult for him to spend) an earthquake training with Japanese.
- Another point that is important to my thesis from this participant's account is that he

makes the recommendation that Japanese local authorities should work more closely with the embassies. This is quite significant for me as my empirical data clearly point out an important role for embassies.

- He pointed out that people providing information to foreigners should not assume that all foreigners speak English.
- The participant ended the interview by saying quite strongly that he doesn't think language is such a big issue in disaster. This somewhat goes against parts of the evidence in his account, but it is consistent with the emphasis he put on cultural barriers. I need to make sure I deal with such evidence for lack of significance of language in my themes. But he does put this down to the lack of strong ties he had in his life to Japan and contrasts it with the experiences of others he knew in Japan with family etc but little Japanese ability, and then he, kind of contradicts his earlier statement by saying that a reason he decided not to go to Fukushima was because of the linguistic problems he would have had there with building situation awareness, understanding warnings, etc.!

### *2013/10/6 Record of interview with Participant 23*

#### *Information about the interview*

- This interview took place in a small seaside town outside Nagoya with some ship building and military facilities nearby. The participant had lived in Tokyo at the time of the disaster. I had taken the train about an hour from Nagoya where I had stayed that night and just met the participant at the small local station. There was no problem meeting each other as we were the only two non-Asians in the building. I was a bit uncomfortable because I had my big backpack with me (I was travelling directly on to Tokyo after the interview by bullet train). It was also blisteringly hot. The participant had chosen a coffee shop about 20-minute walk from the station. It was an old Showa-era place. Even though there were only the two staff and one or two other people (unfortunately including a young kid) in the place and we had a table tucked away in the corner, it was pretty noisy with lots of background raised voices, music, plates clanging, etc. But it did feel private at least. The interview lasted about 60 minutes (5 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 55 minutes interview).

#### *Similarities with other interviews*

- This was another native-English speaking participant who seemed concerned about giving herself full marks for English.
- I felt immediately relaxed and comfortable with this participant and I think this type of interpersonal stuff really conditioned how well the interviews started but not necessarily how well they went overall because even with the people I felt uncomfortable with at the beginning I sometimes still ended up having great interviews with them.
- This is another interview where I felt the participant was not really responding to the listening-focused, ethnographic style of interview I was trying to go for (giving very short answers) and so I tried to give more and more of my experience to try and model answers and categories for discussion and to build intimacy.

### Differences with other interviews

#### Problems

- I still haven't learned my lesson - never switch off the microphone. As soon as I had switched off the audio recorder, the participant said that she felt foreigners actually did better in terms of information than the Japanese because they had access to other viewpoints and sources. She had Japanese people coming up and asking her what she knew. Especially when Japanese heard the foreigners were leaving an element of them were like what do you know that we don't. She also said that even if the information in Japanese had been translated for her she might not have considered it because she had lost trust in the official Japanese line and just did not believe what official sources were saying.
- Even though we just had coffee, I still felt the need to let the participant have a chance to stop talking to drink their coffee. It would be better to have interviews without food and drink, I think.
- The participant really tended towards short answers.

#### Implications

- I have added the above information not caught on tape to her transcript and will have her approve at the member checking stage so that it can officially enter the data that I will analyse.
- I tried to leave quite long pauses at the end of each apparent stop (she ended a lot of sentences with "so, yeah" as a signal that she had no more to say), but unless she said that I waited as much as possible.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The disability status question needed to be explained again.
- It worked well to have an idea of where the participant had been before starting the talking section (I knew from the profile data that she had been in a European country after the disaster) so this gave me the confidence and motivation to probe deeper when she was only giving short answers about the day of onset at first.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- The participant seemed a little nervous at first (she spilled some coffee on herself just as we were about to start), but I think this was just at the oddness of meeting a complete stranger more than any sense of unease. She quickly seemed to become relaxed and it was a very convivial chat. There was a lot of me laughing in the interview.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- The participant did seem to look down quite a lot at the start - I think this was just a symptom of general shyness rather than not wanting to reveal information. But as the interview went on and as she used more humour she began to roll her eyes in a self-deprecating way or cover her face with mock embarrassment at the decisions she made in responding or at the lack of clarity in her answers.
- She also used air quotes at one point but made a point of stopping, looking at the

recorder, and saying that she didn't want to use such a gesture.

What I felt surprised by

- She spent a lot of the account making jokes about the silliness of her own response and the choices she made. Overall, she used humour a lot in the account, usually in a self-deprecating way.
- I was surprised by how unafraid she was of any of the dangers (tsunami was not mentioned barely - even the radiation which preoccupied so many people) and on how focused she was on going back to Japan once she had left - she only left because of parental pressure.

What I'd do differently

What didn't I find out

- I didn't even bother to ask about the slogans as I'd given up on that as an avenue of inquiry. Same for the handout emergency list question which I had totally abandoned by now.

What do I need to clarify

- The participant suggested that one of her friends might like to participate. He was a teacher who was in Fukushima at the time of the disaster and stayed there. I knew I would not have time to meet him in Japan, but I thought I might try to follow up with him if he were in Europe over the Christmas holidays, for example.

First reflections on data

- The participant suffered an information lack right at the beginning of her account not knowing what was going on as they waited outside the subway station BUT she was not sure it was because of language - she thought no-one seemed to have information, including Japanese. In this scenario, someone in some sort of official capacity (a station guard) seems to take on the role of someone who should have information. These may be the types of people to focus translation assistance on.
- A feature that seems to come up is how people had no idea about the tsunami but this lasted for different periods depending on what sort of communication was available to them - maybe I could look into this to determine which communication tools worked best for situational awareness in my participants. My sense is TV because this is another account where it was the first information gathering source (the shop TVs turned out to the street to inform passers by).
- While she said language was not an issue with the station guards, she clearly said they were not getting much information from the TVs because all the headlines were in Japanese and kanji. Perhaps this is justification for just translating headlines in a disaster when resources are limited - that plus pictures might be sufficient (this could call on audio visual theory). She also clearly stated that language stopped her from feeling part of the dorm or local communities.
- She talked about dissatisfaction with what she was getting from Japanese source of news mainly because her limited Japanese ability (critically under stress which tallies with my own experience) might have made her miss things and that Japanese information was coming too slowly for her (not timely) - this slowness may be linked

to cultural differences in what information to give out and how much to give out, etc.

- Her dad came up a few times as influencing her way of responding (reliability of news sources, and both her parents seemed to put pressure on her to leave - this pressure from home is an important category to take into account when exploring the fly-jin idea).
- This is another account where the participant talks about feeling more comfortable having information in their native language.
- This participant clearly stated that she left Japan because of not being able to get information (especially not face-to-face information because her friends were leaving).
- She has an interesting anecdote about a Japanese student questioning why she was still here and saying if she could leave she would be her family just wouldn't leave. This could contribute to my discussion of fly-jin that many Japanese might have left if they could have more easily and probably would have left if the situations had been reversed.
- This was the only participant to have checked a Japanese governmental website - so I can use her assessment of the poor quality of the MOFA website as evidence of room for improvement.
- She made a valid point that "if something happened in Ireland, I doubt the government would be, "Let's update our website"" so I must not overstate the likelihood or expectation that governments will provide multilingual, multicultural support and I need to deal with this argument in my thesis.

### *2013/10/7 Record of interview with Participant 24*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview took place in an Excelsior Coffee Shop in central Tokyo near where the participant worked. It was not too noisy and we could get some privacy. The interview lasted about 105 minutes (3 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 102 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- I think this is another interview that shows the benefits of my methodology (sending a framework by mail beforehand and then letting them just speak to get their memories flowing) as he constantly hit topics I'm interested in but in a free-form way that allowed him to structure a story around what is important to him. He spoke for twenty minutes uninterrupted. Maybe it might be interesting for me to measure how long people spoke initially in each interview as a way to illustrate my methodology.
- Also, by saying at the end of the interview "em, I didn't say this at the start" where he went back to a communication topic, it perhaps showed that things come back to people as relevant by not having things to structured (he went directly from translation technology to this communication topic - a bit of a jump).
- This was another interview where when we reached the hour mark I was trying to wrap things up so that I wouldn't break my promise regarding the time the interview would take, but as he seemed still quite eager to talk I took my chance and asked

more focused questions about translating and translation technology which I might not have asked otherwise. Once I had made this decision it became more of a conversation than an ethnographic (largely listening) interview, as can be seen by the increase in exchanges.

#### Differences with other interviews

- This felt different to Participant 14's interview because this participant had a much more official response and coordination role in the disaster whereas Participant 14 was just a temporary volunteer. It came across clearly that this participant was very much part of the official line and that his response was largely dictated by his employment responsibilities.
- Participant 24 seems really socialised into the Japanese way of responding to disaster by virtue of the job he did.

#### Problems

- I had the embarrassment of going up and asking a foreign Caucasian male who was sitting alone if he happened to be the participant because I thought it might have been him waiting for me. It was not. I was embarrassed.

#### Implications

- One of the learning points from the interview process is definitely to let people know what you look like and what you are wearing so that at least one of you should recognize the other. I forgot to do this a couple of times and suffered the embarrassment and stress of not knowing who to expect. This was more of an issue in cities where there were more foreigners likely to be about.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- The question about when the disaster ended seemed to work well as usual and stimulate a good bit of thought, reflection and (hopefully) memories from the participant.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed to be pretty relaxed. He was clearly a bit tired after work though.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He tended to use a lot of aizuchi showing his acclimatisation to Japanese norms of communication (or perhaps interference from Japanese norms).
- He was very open, relaxed and sat forward in the chair showing interest but he did not use many gestures or certainly not large gestures.

#### What I felt surprised by

- He did not mention the tsunami or nuclear issue at all. This seemed to surprise him too when I pointed this out. It shows how different people focus on different aspects of such a huge disaster and, I think, justifies my decision not to do group interviews.

#### What I'd do differently

### What didn't I find out

#### What do I need to clarify

- I need to follow up with Participant 24 on possible interview candidates that he said he could introduce me to in New Zealand in case he does not contact them and let me know as promised (he mentioned one former colleague in Auckland and two in Tokyo).

#### First reflections on data

- He talked about recording the information at the radio stations and how they would just keep playing it, so this fits in with the complaint from some participants of just hearing the same information over and over when listening to the radio.
- He said people were looking on their phones at the Internet and news websites (which is evidence for connectivity in Sendai) when they were standing outside after evacuating and that is how they started hearing about the tsunami that he means via one-seg tv.
- He very clearly mentioned the importance to foreigners who don't speak Japanese of having someone that they knew in their network who does speak Japanese.
- He also talked of Sendai already having the idea of foreign leaders in the neighbourhoods that Participant 10 suggested as a future strategy so clearly it is something that could be developed easily in more places than just Sendai.
- He mentioned reasons for many foreigners not going to the designated refuge centres (that they only found out about later indicating that the local authorities might expect people to go to the centres) - the reasons he states are: easier to stay at home; not speak Japanese; not want to burden anyone. He hinted later at friends of his who just didn't want to go. He also said how the international centre got feedback that culture was a reason for some for not going to the refuge centres, for example about those that don't eat meat or to pray. He spelled out the Japanese cultural response succinctly (for Japanese people, they know that if there's a disaster, you still go to the refuge area).
- Was the fact that he was unaware of the nuclear issue until people were telling him you have to leave an indication of how in line he was (and how implicated he was in) the official Japanese response?
- Being willing to stay and help out came up a lot (possibly in return for the kindness that was shown to him in his friends' and colleagues' reaction to the earlier Christchurch earthquake that affected his family).
- His opinion of the New Zealand embassy was very high. So far, mostly the UK and New Zealand and Irish embassies were positively rated by participants. The others less so. (And even opinion on Ireland was a bit mixed.)
- He made an interesting point about how trust of information from an embassy is built (and perhaps lost) in their first actions in the disaster.
- He emphasised how all foreigners should not be lumped together in the disaster.
- There seemed to be a theme running through his story of showing how nice Japan and the Japanese people are and how good the group dynamic is (e.g., leaving 10-yen coins at phone boxes). Possibly to counteract suspicions he might have that I or my readers might be critical of Japan and its response???
- In terms of difficulties with his work of translating he focused on consistency,



storage, repetition, accuracy which could easily be solved by freely available translation technologies (e.g. translation memories, terminology banks, etc.) - but he also underlined that just having translated information out there whether it is perfectly right or not is also important as well.

- Near the end, he sort of raised the issue of translation quality and perhaps the limitations of volunteer translation - the exchange students could do the information for the radio but not the technical stuff about getting subsidies from the government offices.
- Use of International Englishes and some of the problems and inconsistencies that arise when translators use their own versions of English in translation came up as a bit of a category - especially for more official translations. It also appeared that Japanese higher-ups had input into the translation of terms (noted with some negativity). This really comes into the realm of terminology and term management. There is also the problem / issue of institutional memory and expertise related to terminology and translation in city hall being held by just a few key people.
- He also mentioned how some privacy rules could affect communication between foreigners in disaster in Japan (e.g. some schools don't have access to gmail).
- A change in behaviour was that after the earthquake they started telling JETs to get a smartphone. He spoke of the advantages of this technology even recognising the limitation that you might not have power immediately.
- There did seem to be some support near the end of the interview for the idea that talking to someone like me who had been there was beneficial.
- He did mention long-term effects of the earthquake on his mental state (strange relationship to food).
- He is one of the few people to have mentioned Easy Japanese independently and to have mentioned it in a positive light.

### *2013/10/9 Record of interview with Participant 25*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview took place in a Dean and DeLuca near the participant's workplace in central Tokyo. As it was late in the evening, it was pretty quiet (even though it was late, the participant was going back to the office after our interview so I was conscious of not taking up too much of her time). There were no other patrons at the tables just behind us, so it felt fairly private. Also the BGM was not too loud. The interview lasted about 55 minutes (3 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 52 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This felt a bit similar to Participant 10's interview - I wasn't expecting any emotion, especially because there was a relaxed, jokey atmosphere at the start of the interview, but then she started crying quite early in the account. The participant was surprised, too, at showing emotion, and this is where the two interviews felt similar. It is perhaps worth putting in the methodology that predicting who will react emotionally in this type of interview was impossible for me to predict.

### Differences with other interviews

#### Problems

- I knew I had to get to my next interview over the other side of the city in very short time, so I was conscious of the time passing, especially near the end of the interview.

#### Implications

- I may not always have been as focused as in other interviews because my mind was on getting to the next unfamiliar location on time.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- Yet again, asking a native English speaker to evaluate their own English ability on a Likert scale seemed to cause some amusement/consternation.
- The first general topic raised by me (tell me about your experience of the disaster) did not work very well - it only produced only a short answer related to the first few minutes of the disaster.
- I do think I used silence pretty effectively for most of the interview - mainly because I felt comfortable with her and liked her instantly - these easy initial connections always made the interview process easier and show that there is just an element of luck to how the interview will go based on the chemistry between the researcher and participant.
- And yet again the question about the disaster ending was met with a 'good question'. I think this means I have to deal with this issue in my thesis. Perhaps I could go and look for the responses to each time I ask this question as one code in itself.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- She seemed relaxed and jokey and there was a lot of laughter throughout the interview. (This is why both she and I were surprised when she suddenly became emotional.)
- I feel she also wanted to make a stand that not all foreigners felt their experience was dramatic and terrible (she describes the sensational interviews that some foreign nationals gave to overseas media) and that her story should be counted as one strongly supporting the way the Japanese responded.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- The participant did tend to use hand gestures more often than other participants, especially when talking about the movement of buildings in the earthquake and aftershocks or showing imaginary scales. I tried to note wherever she did this so that it could be included in the transcript.

#### What I felt surprised by

#### What I'd do differently

#### What didn't I find out

- I didn't really ask specifically about social media or radio, but I could infer a lot from

her answers to related questions, I think, so I'm not sure it was much of a loss.

What do I need to clarify

- I may follow up with her offer of introducing me to other Australians in Japan through the various networks she is a member of or runs.

First reflections on data

- She again talked about running outside after the disaster and how she knows you're not supposed to do that.
- She made an interesting point about the 'group' notion in Japan - different groups of office workers sharing the same evacuation site did not communicate with each other - you just stay in your group. This could relate back to the disaster training Japanese people receive all through school.
- There may be something about the idea that people who have no other frame of reference might be calm about the earthquake once not right in the disaster zone (e.g. the visiting foreign winemaker in this account or the Participant 1's recently arrived colleague).
- There was an ecosystem moment where she was talking on the landline to her sister on Australia who turned on the TV and then reported to the participant back in Japan that it had been a big earthquake (but not much more detail than that) - so again this shows how situational awareness sometimes first came from overseas.
- It seems that overall this participant's very early situational awareness was poor. Can we put this down to her being alone, and being focused on the work event she did not want to go to the next day? Or is this some sort of repair she is now doing in hindsight? The first real information gathering act she made was when she turned the television on at home. What stuck with her is the image of the map (she does not remember seeing any tsunami footage at this early stage). This may be another pointer to the power of graphics in times of disaster. We can be sure that this was Japanese language because she only has the domestic channels.
- Again the sudden and unexpected emotional reaction (as with Participant 10) probably relates to not being able to get through to a loved one - in this case the man who would go on to be her husband.
- This participant probably wanted less information than more - especially repeating images over and over. One reason she did not want to go home is that she would have been exposed to more media bombardment.
- Foreign media reports seemed to anger her and caused her to focus on Japanese media.
- She made a good case for linguistic and cultural skills being needed if foreigners want to spread information and help in a disaster.
- She said that after the earthquake Tokyo English Lifeline needs not just English speakers but speakers of all sorts of languages now.
- She did not mention Fukushima and when I questioned her as to why, she said she didn't worry about it. She implied that forwarding information and horror stories on Facebook about Fukushima was not helping.
- Despite her low opinion of Tepco, she shows a high regard for the trustworthiness of Japan in general. She has faith that people will do their job to deal with the situation overall. Moreover, she actively bought Fukushima peaches and is trying to support

their industries (very contrary to some other groups of foreigners) - will information or translation be some part of the explanation for these very different views on the nuclear and food safety issues?

- She gave lots of evidence for how much she felt part of her local community. Can I draw a link between this and the differences in her answers versus those who did not feel such links? But I must note that she did not think Japanese would have been necessary to make the link with the izakaya owner. I must make sure to note this counter-evidence.
- The overall sense of her account is similar to the Japanese idea of one way of responding is everyone (like a cog in a bigger wheel) just getting on with their regular job as quickly as possible after a disaster.

### *2013/10/9 Record of interview with Participant 26*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview took place at a Denny's Family Restaurant just at one of the exits of a major train station in Tokyo. I had to come straight from a previous interview over the other side of the city. I had planned the train times precisely but it was tight and I had to run through the evening commuter crowds of a very busy station to get to the meeting point outside the restaurant. I even got a little lost, so I arrived stressed and flustered. But in the end I was on time, had a chance to cool down, and was happily waiting for the participant when he arrived. The interview lasted about 75 minutes (8 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 67 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This felt very similar to the interview with Participant 5 - a noisy location, and a soft-spoken interviewee who felt he did not have much to tell me. I felt better able to deal with these issues, though, based on having been through so many other interviews at this stage and based on the fact that I now felt I had reached critical mass and have enough other data to work with, even if this one did not go so well.

#### Differences with other interviews

##### Problems

- This was a bit of a disaster location-wise. Lots of background noise in terms of the hustle and bustle of a busy restaurant (we were right by the wait staff area where a bell was constantly going off) and there were customers at tables close to us on either side having their own conversations that, in the end, could to some extent be heard on the audio recording.
- Yet again, I switched off the recorder a little too early. Even 26 interviews later this is still a mistake I am making!

##### Implications

- It's really hard to choose between quiet and tucked away versus noisy and easy to find when selecting locations. However, even though it did not feel particularly private, but virtue of being two foreigners speaking English, and by virtue of the fact

that the other customers were deep in their own conversation, I think nobody else was really paying us any mind.

- I did not capture the audio of the participant's talk as he was filling out the Likert Scale for post-interview stress but I included a memo at the end of the transcript with my recollection of what he said and this will be member-checked.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- I didn't always make clear that the scales I was asking them to rank on in the profile data (levels of English and Japanese in particular) was really relating to their estimated level at the time of the disaster in 2011. Several participants, including this one, asked for clarification, but I didn't always remember to make it explicit.
- This participant may have been uncomfortable with or unused to my unstructured, ethnographic style of interviewing and may have been another participant expecting me to have been more directive. He spoke a lot but then stopped after covering the first day in good detail and then asked me if I had any questions or anything. So I tried to ask a few very precise directive questions before building up the dialogic process again to show that I was heeding what he was saying and responding to it.

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- The participant seemed very at ease (though he did say at the end that he felt a bit strange). He was a very thoughtful informant who seemed to want to answer me in as helpful a way as he could.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- He was not outwardly gregarious and did not use any exaggerated expressions or big gestures. This could just have been due to the fact that we had other patrons of the restaurant near us on either side.

#### What I felt surprised by

#### What I'd do differently

- I laughed at one of his responses about having emergency packs at work. This gave the unwanted impression that I was laughing because he couldn't remember clearly. I tried to explain the real reason I was laughing (that all our emergency packs for the disaster ended up containing out-of-date water and food) but I must remember to be careful of the mistake signals my responses can sometimes give out.

#### What didn't I find out

- The participant offered that as a follow-up he could check his Internet history and emails from the time. I have not yet asked him to do so, but this may be an interesting source of communication that I could use in an illustrative corpus, if necessary.

#### What do I need to clarify

- The participant suggested that two of his friends might like to participate: a guy from Jamaica and a guy from France (who was in a hospital when the disaster struck and could not speak Japanese). Both were contacted, but neither agreed to participate.
- This participant used the phrase foreign community several times. I did not ask him

what he understands by that, how he delimits it, what function does it play in his daily life, is it a good thing or bad thing.

### First reflections on data

- This participant is an example of the many cultural identities that foreign nationals in Japan can negotiate (Irish? German? Spanish? Foreigner?). He holds two passports and seems to apply identities at will.
- This participant started his account by talking about the company he worked for - his company context may be an important feature of his experience.
- There is conflicting evidence about how well this participant was able to use Japanese (checking Japanese Yahoo, speaking to building management on the phone, versus not really understanding the TV news).
- This is another account where the first talk after work was of trying to go for drinks, but that there was no-one out (again evidence for not yet truly understanding the scale or severity?).
- This is another account too where the idea of pictures (on the TV screen) compensated for a lack of Japanese ability.
- This is more evidence again for the idea that the embassies really mediated the experience of some foreigners at key times (e.g. as justification for leaving - the embassy was telling us to go).
- The word traitor came up again - quite a strong way to express this notion. Also this participant is another person who brought up *fly-jin* without my prompting. It was really in the discourse, but I am not sure if it is the sort of concept that will make it into my thesis. I need to think about how it related to my key research questions and my explanatory theory. If not, perhaps I can write a separate paper on the phenomenon.
- This is one of the first people to attribute relatives outside of Japan watching their own news as being an information source and influence on those foreigners in Japan (especially regarding Fukushima) - this feeds into the global news cycle and ecosystem ideas. This also feeds in in another way to the extra emotional pressure that family overseas put on participants.
- This is one of the first participants to independently mention using language tools online to help understand Japanese information in the disaster. (In particular, Jim Breen's Language Tools and Excite Japanese-to-English translation engine to translate URLs, and a popup dictionary [Firefox add-on] called rikaichan.)
- This was another account that featured concerns over food safety - this participant even considered buying a device to measure radiation.
- This seemed to be one of the few participants who was quite interested in and focused on disaster preparedness before the big disaster.
- I think one of my biggest arguments for translation could be about whether there is a need to translate radio information, as here again the participant did not use it (even though he went out and bought these devices one for home and one for office AND wind up radio could be very important in a disaster if internet and power went down because I can show how crucial these influencing factors were to the prevalence of internet and TV in this particular disaster context - but we should not assume that this means the same set of factors will be at play in the future and thus translated radio could end up having a role to play).

## *2013/10/13 Record of interview with Participant 27*

### *Information about the interview*

- The interview took place in an Italian restaurant in Shinjuku. The participant made a point of telling me that he chose this restaurant because he knew that they used imported (non-Japanese) ingredients. It was a quiet restaurant with no background music and only two other customers (at first) so I was happy about privacy and audio quality. It was a little early for lunch (hence few customers), so I did not think he would want to eat, but he did. I really did not want to do this interview. I was going to be travelling to New Zealand the next day, and I felt this interview was taking time away from all that I needed to do to prepare. I think this may have made me happier for more direct, shorter answers and less of a focus on dialogic ethnographic development. This seems to indicate that the interviewer's own state of mind even affects the very methodology of the interview and shows the usefulness of record sheets like this one in helping to explain some of the differences in style etc, across the interviews. The interview lasted about 62 minutes (2 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 60 minutes interview).

### *Similarities with other interviews*

- Like Participant 19, this participant showed no real concern about the informed consent sheet or profile data and flew through both with only a cursory glance at the contents. The only question he took any time on was the Japanese language ability question.
- I also think, like Participant 21, this participant was perhaps expecting a more directed, structured interview rather than my dialogic, ethnographic style, so we spent some time at the start establishing some of the boundaries of what I was hoping to get from the participant in the interview.
- Overall, though, this felt very similar to the interview with Participant 11 - near total focus on the nuclear and constant referral to what he himself had written about the disaster and to his own interest in the political science dimension of the crisis (rather than my interest in the linguistic and cultural dimensions).

### *Differences with other interviews*

#### *Problems*

- This was another lunchtime interview where the participant wanted to eat (I purposely just ordered a drink because I knew that it really didn't work out having two people eat and try to talk)
- On a few occasions in the interview, he said that my research questions were not the real story (or not the real interesting, original questions). He said that the real questions were political ones not a linguistic one and said I'm asking the wrong question - I explained that there are people more qualified than me to write a political thesis and I am trying to get a PhD in translation studies hence the linguistic and cultural focus.

### Implications

- At the start of the interview you can hear me struggling a bit to give long-winded explanations of what I'm doing in the research and more long-winded questions because I am trying to give the participant the chance to eat his food.
- I tried not to really engage with these criticisms or to spend time in the interview defending what I was doing. But there was a slightly hostile atmosphere at times because of his repeated advice to change my research topic. I do not think he intended it to be so hostile or dismissive, and he apologised later, but I could not say it was a pleasant interview.

### What questions worked well or didn't

- The participant seemed slightly suspicious of the language ability question (could this be because he has lived in Japan a long time and can speak and understand it perfectly but cannot read and write?)

### How participants seemed to be feeling

- I think this participant had a very definite agenda for talking to me, and so he did not talk in many ways directly about topics that I was interested in.
- He definitely wanted to talk - it was really more monologue than dialogue. But again, I felt he was taking a very definite 'position' in what he said to me - his survival of the state theory (that in a choice between the state of Japan continuing and the state telling the people the truth about the disaster, they chose the former)

### How they used non-verbal communication

### What I felt surprised by

- His focus is on food safety. I have been surprised by how much the participant's talk of food safety as an issue has affected me personally. Overall, the interview with him left me feeling more and more convinced that the radiation damage after the disaster was probably more severe than I have considered and that long-term health effects may turn out to be serious. This has contributed to me feeling a little blue rather than elated at having come to the end of a successful data gathering trip.
- I was surprised at his support for Tokyo winning the chance to host the Olympics in 2020. It was very interesting that he saw this as a great pressure to push cleaning up and dealing with the nuclear issue as well as possible and leading to greater transparency.

### What I'd do differently

### What didn't I find out

- At multiple points in the interview, I did try to direct the conversation away from the nuclear and food safety issues to see if he would be willing to talk about other elements of his experience, but these efforts mostly still ended up coming back to the same focus on nuclear issues. To be honest, this led to a certain sense of defeat in this interview that the topics were not going to go broader (and not really deeper either as so many responses ended up being restatements of an original position). I found it quite exhausting and I felt that no matter what tack I took, we always ended



back at the same point.

What do I need to clarify

First reflections on data

- This participant used the term 'post-disaster' rather than 'recovery' - I wonder does this indicate the negative view he still holds on events.
- His first information gathering seemed to be to turn on the Internet when he got home the day after onset - and his first desire seemed to be to go to trusted media from his home country (New York Times) and trust is certainly the recurring motif of his account.
- He goes almost straight into talk of the nuclear reactors with hardly any mention of the other elements of the disaster except for the fright of being stuck in the subway and spending the first night experiencing hourly aftershocks.
- His first action based on this information was to buy a ticket to the US (he had already been distrustful of Tepco long before this disaster).
- He was one of the first participants to really lead by with a cultural barrier - the fact that Japanese are not transparent and trustworthy in a crisis - he makes the causal relation that they do not respond quickly enough because they spend time seeking consensus and so information from them cannot be trusted. This is a very interesting point - the relationships between consensus, speed, and trustworthiness - that I need to think about more.
- Lack of trust comes before inability to read Japanese in his reasons for not using Japanese information sources - this a counter-argument against translation and mediation that I need to take account of - even if translated would people trust it? The other side of this, though, is that fact that global news is necessarily mediated through translation but just that it's not as visible or explicit perhaps.
- On several occasions he mentioned knowing the reporters who worked at New York Times and NHK as ways his trust in them was increased. Was this a form of bragging? Or was it just a recognition of his dense networks of high social capital contacts? Is this an argument for translator visibility - if someone in the community knows them they might be more trusted?
- His account provided further evidence for tensions among foreigners about the fly-jin issue. Does this actually work in a way to prove that foreigners were effectively a community? It was tension arising from the fact that they were being tarred with the other's brush which neither side seemed happy about showing that to the Japanese the foreigners were a cohesive whole.
- His account shows some evidence of Japanese people wanting to get information from foreign, non-Japanese sources too, and he makes a very interesting point about how translation INTO Japanese could also be significant.
- He talks of Japan as a place where there is a history of broken trust. Can this interpretation be supported with some evidence? He brings this back to WW2. Is this a typical foreign perspective? What it shows for my research is how preoccupied this participant may have been with thinking about issues of trust and Japan.
- In terms of the role of translators in global news media, this participant (who seems to have contacts in that world) provides evidence that some foreign journalists in Japan do not speak fluent Japanese.

- He holds a very strong view about community in crisis - that the power of the group stifles honesty. I need to account for this radically different opinion to other views I have been given on community.
- Like with participant 13, this participant says you cannot have a deep discussion with Japanese people because of the cultural barrier.
- He had a low opinion of the citizen journalist idea and favoured traditional media over social media because of the professionalism of the journalists. What he felt he was doing with his Facebook blog was just taking traditional media and putting it on social media - just being a vehicle for translating what's already out there.

### *2013/10/22 Record of interview with Participant 28*

#### Information about the interview

- This interview took place in a cafe in Christchurch - about a ten-minute walk from my hotel still in the CBD disaster zone. It was a very funky restored old building with a hipster clientele, so it very poetically summed up the vibe of the city. I had big high ceilings, big windows looking out onto the rubbly surrounds (it is the only business operating on this block and is surrounded mostly by demolished spaces). The participant had picked the location for his convenience and mine, and I was really just glad I'd found it. There was definitely an element of relief for me when the participant showed up as it was a mental milestone that I'd managed to make all my interviews on time. Originally, the participant had proposed meeting me with his wife (who had also been in Japan at the same time) but I asked if I could interview them one after the other, instead of together. In the end, she did not come at all. The interview lasted about 62 minutes (6 minutes explaining informed consent and filling out profile, 56 minutes interview).

#### Similarities with other interviews

- This felt a bit like Participant 4's interview - he seemed eager to help and engaged with the topic, but not sure that what he had to say was of very much relevance (when, in fact, it was).
- This participant also did radio interviews (like Participant 19 did) for his home country at the time of the disaster and with a newspaper - it was noticeable how closely these accounts given during the disaster match what he recounted to me 2.5 years later and can perhaps act to give confidence that the personal face-to-face ethnographic interview is still a useful data gathering tool even 2.5 years after the disaster for such a significant period in people's lives.

#### Differences with other interviews

- This was the only interview to take place in New Zealand and arose from the fact that I got an introduction from Participant 24 when he knew I would be in Christchurch.

#### Problems

- The interview was not an ideal location as there was quite loud BGM, but we were sitting at a small table fairly close together with the recorder on the table between us,

so the audio quality was okay.

- I again forgot to find any way to visually identify this participant or for him to be able to identify me, so I guess I never learned by the end of the process to remember to tell people what I looked like.

#### Implications

- Transcription may be a bit difficult because of the BGM.
- I embarrassed myself again by going up to the wrong person and asking if he was the participant.

#### What questions worked well or didn't

- I think I did a good job of using the ethnographic techniques of letting the participant talk and going off into their own anecdotes etc in this interview - maybe because I had had a break from interviewing and came to this one fresh and maybe also because I knew it was my last and wanted it to go well?

#### How participants seemed to be feeling

- He seemed to be at ease and seemed well accustomed to talking about his experiences.

#### How they used non-verbal communication

- The participant did not use many hand gestures and seemed to be aware of the recorder (i.e. not leaning away from it and speaking clearly). This may have been due to his previous career as a journalist and wanting to help me get a good recording in a noisy environment.

#### What I felt surprised by

#### What I'd do differently

#### What didn't I find out

#### What do I need to clarify

- I need to check up on his radio interview and newspaper interviews he was the subject of at the time of the disaster. (I will not reference them directly in my research, though, as they would identify the participant.)

#### First reflections on data

- The participant spoke like someone who had prior experience of earthquakes (natural as he comes from New Zealand) - he was the only person to mention how the length of the shaking gave people time to think about what to do and to take some measures. This is not always the case (e.g. Kobe in 1995).
- There is evidence for the bonds of community among foreigners in Sendai. After establishing his wife was safe, their next port of call was a nearby New Zealander who was new to Sendai and had just arrived that year (i.e. less than 2.5 months) and more friends came around to their apartment the next day. The all stayed together for about a week gathering food but the other activity he mentions is spending five or six

nervous days watching the BBC TV news on their mobile phones - again showing the central role of information gathering and the complex ecosystem of delivery channels.

- There is evidence here for the beneficial role of friends in the network who could speak Japanese and were familiar with Japanese life - did their presence afford this individualized response?
- They got power back in their apartment the next day showing the great variety of experience in Sendai just depending on what part of the place you were located in.
- Their first action after getting power back was to turn on the TV. It shows again how cut off people could be from broader situational awareness without use of radio in such an individualised response as phones were down, power was off.
- In his first radio interview, he talked of the importance of translation of news media and the importance of embassy communication for foreigners in this disaster. He also talked about his head going back and forth constantly - should I stay should I go. He also talked in the second interview about collecting snow in buckets to melt down to water - this is good concrete advice, but the talk show host mentioned the worry of nuclear fallout in the snow! Maybe I could even just do an appendix of concrete advice from participants even if this does not exactly fit into my thesis.
- The third interview it showed the fast developing nature of the disaster - the couple had originally panicked and wanted to leave, then decided to stay because they felt reassured by expert opinion and embassy that they were safe and also they had nowhere to go and feared getting stranded in worse conditions elsewhere, then changed from deciding to stay to deciding to go on a bus provided by the Embassy based on embassy communication.)
- The participant's radio interviews really highlight how well he remember the key points of his account when he talked to me, so could I use this as a way to justify the interview 2.5 years after the disaster as a data-gathering tool?
- He made a very interesting point about getting sick of people in the NZ media at home taking things out of context - would this have caused him to edit what he told me? He has one anecdote in particular about being hassled by a news crew only looking for emotionally manipulative recorded TV stuff at a particularly stressful time when they had just turned back from trying to escape to Yamagata versus the good experience of talking live on the radio where he felt he couldn't be manipulated. His experience of the TV crew brings up ideas of the ethics of reporting in disasters.
- He talked of the language barrier preventing him from doing volunteering one day in one of the coastal towns.
- He said he got faith in the nuclear response by the fact that it was being monitored by the international scientists and this probably could only have taken place with the help of translation - so it shows another role for translation in the disaster.
- He spoke of feeling quite confident about knowing what to do in the crisis based on the fact that he and his wife had watched Christchurch go through its own disaster only a month previously.
- He thought that the fact that they did not feel in any particular immediate danger conditioned their information gathering. So they weren't looking for evacuation notices or that. This is an interesting point and maybe I could check through my data to see what conditioned people's information gathering and also their need for translation.

- The thing that put them off going to the emergency evacuation point seemed less to be about a cultural barrier and more about the fact that it was a park (while they had a roof over their head at home) and the buddy system with the other ALTs in the area meant that they knew almost everyone they knew in the area was okay.
- Sensationalistic reporting was quite a problem for this participant but also the sensationalism spread by friends on Facebook.
- He said he was definitely not at newspaper reading ability for Japanese which can be used as evidence for why I asked for reading separately from other abilities.
- He said that the Internet was totally invaluable because he imagines that if they hadn't had internet they would have been going from Japanese TV and Japanese radio completely.

***APPENDIX E: Anonymised and member-checked interview transcripts***

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/7/18 Interview with Participant 1*

5 *Researcher: I just wanted to know in general about your experience of the 2011 disaster,*  
6 *so if could tell me a little about what you experienced, that would be great.*

7  
8 Participant: Sure, ehm, that's probably a good way to start, everybody was a different  
9 situation, so I will just explain my situation at the time. So, I was also working in Tokyo  
10 and I was working for {a European country's government} so I was housed in the  
11 {country's embassy building} in Tokyo, {redacted}. Ehm, my, the, I work in a very small  
12 office, so there were only a few employees ehm, my boss is {European}, I'm  
13 {European}, our assistant was Japanese. My boss was on holidays that day, so there was  
14 just two of us in the office. I don't know whether to tell you, I don't know, I never thought  
15 about this before I started, this is very personal, but I was actually in the restroom at the  
16 time the earthquake started, sorry. Very like weird to say, I don't know, I don't know if I  
17 ever had to explain that before. I suppose I have to explain this, I have been, as I have  
18 written down there, I have lived in Japan for over 10 years, which means I experienced  
19 multiple earthquakes every year, loads. I was there during the, I don't know what year it  
20 was but there was quite a large one I think in Niigata several years before that.

21  
22 *Yeah, in 2004, I think that was.*

23  
24 Okay, so in 2004 at the time of the 2004 earthquake I was actually at work even though it  
25 was a Saturday. I was at work. I had a deadline for financial reporting. I was on the 36th  
26 floor of the {Japanese electronics company} headquarters that I worked at, and I was on  
27 my own. I was on my own in that building. That was in 2004. Because I was on the 36th  
28 floor there was the last of, ehm, the building swayed a lot even though that Niigata, I  
29 don't know what it was in Tokyo, but that experience at that time had shaken me at that  
30 time because I was on my own, and it was dark, and it was six or something, and I  
31 remember thinking at that time ' "Oh my god! what's happening? what's happening?"'  
32 then, no, because there was no one around, it was Saturday and I didn't know how to  
33 contact security even, because there wasn't anyone anyone at reception. So being there  
34 over ten years, besides that one in 2004, the other is, you know, you're very first  
35 earthquake that you get in Japan in my first year was always very scary, even though it  
36 was small, but then you get used to them. You know, if you've lived there for a long time,  
37 you get used to earthquakes, and, you know yourself, if it starts shaking, you're used to  
38 being used to them, and you're like this is fine, I'm not worried about this, and as you  
39 know, I don't know, I suppose you, you know, you probably over time get an idea of  
40 what you think might be a dangerous situation for yourself. So anyway, that's the  
41 background because the point there is that I was very used to earthquakes when I  
42 experienced the March 2011 earthquake, and so unfortunately I was in the restroom at the  
43 time, and it and I didn't think anything about it when it started, that it was just, you know,  
44 as it is, eh, you know, you just hope, you would always wait about 10 to 20 seconds  
45 before you make the judgement then as to whether this is a big earthquake or not. But  
46 anyway, I was waiting there and it was going on for ages, and it was starting to get, you  
47 know, it was stronger and longer, and I was waiting there going, Oh my god! Oh my god!  
48 Oh my god! This is not stopping. This is not stopping. This is not stopping. And anyway,  
49 I managed to leave the restroom and I kind of just stood there I guess because it was still  
50 ongoing, and I think it was really long, and I was just thinking I have to get back to my  
51 office, I have to get back to my office, because we have are, you know, our helmets and  
52 an earthquake kit and everything in our office. But my, the assistant's office is on the way  
53 to my office, and her and her office is first, but by the time I got to her office, it was very

54 shaky, and I kind of, and I think I kind of, I think I was scared to actually go back to my  
55 office on my own as sitting in my own office, in your office, no one else is around, and I  
56 was scared to be in my office on my own, and I was kind of, ehm, I was, it was that I  
57 think I wanted to stay with her, I suppose, I just kind of, because it was getting really  
58 strong, so I sat in the door of her office, I just sat down and, ehm, and she was, she was,  
59 you know, she's Japanese and she was starting to panic so I thought, oh my god, she is  
60 starting to panic, so this is bad, and then we ended up in this very comical, when I think  
61 back, because she was under her desk, she was talking to me, and I was in the door, and I  
62 was like, oh my god now I've got no helmet, because it really did start to get much, like,  
63 worse. There was kind of a banging noise in the building, kind of whatever the building  
64 was doing, and she threw me her helmet, so we had this very comical moment where she  
65 was throwing her helmet, and I was trying to throw it back to her. It's part of the Japanese  
66 nature, right, because, and in a situation like that, ehm, where, you know, she might see  
67 me as her superior. So she was she was throwing the helmet at me, and I was like, no!  
68 And I was trying to throw the helmet back to her, and I don't know, I can, I actually  
69 cannot remember now whether I had the helmet or she had the helmet, because it just  
70 kind of turned into this kind of white fuzz, like it was just, I can't remember what  
71 happened at the end. All I knew is that it stopped and {the assistant} says, "Hey, okay, we  
72 have to, let's go, we have to go, we have to get out of the building." So we went to go out  
73 of the building. Of course, I've had numerous amounts of earthquake training, loads, like,  
74 like yourself I'm sure. Every company I've worked in its obligatory, ehm, I had the most  
75 intense one, actually, after I joined the {embassy building}, because they do a pretty,  
76 pretty big one once a year. So I have been well trained from, ehm, but I did grab my, I  
77 grabbed my earthquake bag, because the bag in the office had a load of stuff and is, now,  
78 we really had a good comprehensive pack. Ehm, grabbed our packs, put on helmets then,  
79 and then I went to get in the lift, you know. So {the assistant} is like, "No. We have to go  
80 down the stairs." So everything you learn, kind of, up to that point, any small earthquake  
81 we had, I would have gone down stairs. I would have remembered to do that. But I don't  
82 know what it was at the time, definitely a lot of stuff went out the window, and I actually  
83 was a lot more nervous than she was, than some of the people downstairs. Maybe, you  
84 know, it wasn't on the highest floor, but it was kind of an old building. Now, my  
85 apartment building would be much stronger and sturdier, but it's an old kind of  
86 {redacted}, it's not that big a building, you know, and it's an interesting building. So  
87 downstairs, and went downstairs, down the stairs, I had my stuff and my helmet, and I  
88 was very nervous. I was very nervous because I have, at the time, now it's different, but  
89 at the time I was going out with someone in {my home country}, and he had asked me to  
90 call him at exactly, ehm, he had early plans with his job I think. It was 3 o'clock in the  
91 afternoon.

92  
93 *About that, yeah.*

94  
95 And he had asked me to call him at like 5 or 7 or something. Whatever, I can't remember  
96 the time, time difference, but whatever it was, I was supposed to call him bang on that  
97 time, when this happens. So of course I'm running out onto the street, and the hat went  
98 on, and all these other people come out on the streets, but there are no-one with their  
99 helmets on, and everyone was downstairs, and I am going, all I have to do, you know, in  
100 the middle of this, I've forgotten about calling him, but then I realised I had to call him, I  
101 have to call him, I have to call him. And, of course, the mobile phone is not working. So  
102 I, ehm, actually ran back into the, into the downstairs office of another government  
103 agency, and went into the office, and when I picked up, the phone worked. So it did  
104 actually work initially for a couple of minutes anyway. And I picked up the phone, call  
105 him [laughter]. It was actually worse, because the phone got cut off into the call. So I  
106 called him, and I said, ehm, I needed to call you, but I couldn't call you because we had  
107 this big earthquake, and the phone cuts off. So that probably [laughter].  
108



109 *[Laughter] Oh, good grief.*

110

111 So, as you know, after that, land lines went down, mobile phones went down, ehm. We  
112 stayed outside, outside for maybe another 10 minutes and then came back into the lobby  
113 in the downstairs of the building. Ehm, when we got into the lobby downstairs, we had  
114 another pretty big quake, maybe five minutes later, maybe another 10 minutes later. A big  
115 aftershock. It was, it was almost as strong, actually, as the first one, I think.

116

117 *Yeah, yeah, I think it was. Certainly similarly to you, in my company, we got outside, we*  
118 *were all told to go outside, and I guess it was, and I don't know how long this was, but it*  
119 *was sort of maybe 20 or 30 minutes before the after-shock, and we were all outside, so we*  
120 *saw the buildings swaying from the outside, and that was actually scarier, in some ways.*

121

122 That's actually scarier, yeah. Well, it was when we went outside, there were people, with  
123 people everywhere, and I went, my, my concern was that after having had all this  
124 training, I had seen a, had seen a simulation on what would happen if Tokyo had a big  
125 earthquake before, and I said to {the assistant}, "If another shock happens now, are we  
126 were more dangerous standing outside, and what if something falls on us? We need to go  
127 back inside." So that's why we went back in, because I said, "Look, if something falls,  
128 we're in trouble." So we went back into the lobby of the downstairs, and we were there  
129 for a while. And then after probably two, th, three more aftershocks, people started  
130 moving back together. And there was this television, a television downstairs, and we went  
131 and turned on the television. Then everyone from the building from all three floors were  
132 in the, ehm, went into the room with the television, and we turned it on, and that's when  
133 we started to seeing the warnings for the tsunami coming and fires in Tokyo after  
134 breaking out in Chiba, the oil refineries, and so on. And that's when, actually, I did get  
135 really scared because you don't know what's happening around you and whether there's a  
136 fire somewhere and we don't know where it is. And, you know, we, we didn't want to go  
137 outside, because we thought when you're inside you can, you can't see what's happening  
138 around the rest of the city. So we got, we got really concerned about the fact that you  
139 don't know if a tsunami is going to hit Tokyo or, you know, that there was going to be a  
140 fire.

141

142 *So that TV that you switched on, would that have been the Japanese broadcaster?*

143

144 Yes, it was. It was. So, at that time, and because I was in the {European country embassy  
145 building}, I do speak, I mean, I would have marked an eight, though probably, it is  
146 probably close to a ten, like, there would be very few words that I wouldn't get. So I was  
147 understanding completely what's happening on the television, but there would have been  
148 government staff that didn't speak any Japanese, but there was also Japanese staff, so  
149 there was a little bit of translation happening at that time. And the commercial director,  
150 he had only arrived in Japan maybe a couple of months back. So it was his first ever  
151 earthquake, he was calmer than anybody else.

152

153 *Fascinating.*

154

155 That is fascinating because because I had experienced so many, I knew it was bad, right?  
156 He hadn't, he hadn't really experienced any, and he just thought, "So this is what it's like,  
157 this is what a Japanese earthquake is like." And he was, he was way more calm. And I  
158 was saying to him, "No, {commercial director's name}, this isn't a normal earthquake,  
159 this is a big one, look what's happening on the TV. Aftershocks were continuing. The  
160 ambassador was not in the building. He was off with the guys from the embassy upstairs,  
161 they're always out at something. But he was in the basement of some gallery or museum  
162 or something, and he said he didn't actually feel in it very much. He was in the basement  
163 then, but the minute they came back out, they realised how serious it was, he came back

164 to the embassy, I suppose, a while after that. We all stayed together for a little bit, and  
165 then everyone, everybody kind of separated back. And I went back to my office. The  
166 ambassador had come back, and, ehm, downstairs said basically, "As you know, like,  
167 transport was down, so anyone who had kids that wanted to leave, ehm, to walk home,"  
168 or whatever, ehm, to please to feel free to go. Because there was no, I don't know how  
169 long communication was down for. The phones were down into the middle of the night, I  
170 think.

171  
172 *It was a long time, yeah. Ehm, in in my case, I was, I was able to use Facebook, ehm, so, I*  
173 *like you, we had to go outside, and I didn't really have a partner in Japan, and I had*  
174 *friends, but I didn't have anyone that I really felt the need to call, but I wanted to let my*  
175 *family back in {my home country} know that I was okay, because they were always*  
176 *worried whenever they heard of any sort of earthquake. So I couldn't get any phone*  
177 *reception, unlike you being able to get a little bit of a phone call. I couldn't get anything,*  
178 *so I used Facebook to just update my status to say that there's been a big earthquake but,*  
179 *you know, I'm okay kind of thing. And that, to me, was a big deal because it meant my*  
180 *family all knew I wasn't, you know, dead. Ehm, did you, did you use any of those things,*  
181 *that sort of thing?*

182  
183 Yeah, so I think in the immediate thing, we were all really concerned for about the first  
184 half an hour or an hour about our own safety, and then I think when people separated, I  
185 went back to check the phones again and my mobile wasn't working. I checked my phone  
186 again. We had Internet. Our, ehm, Internet was working, and I sent an email to, ehm, I  
187 sent an e-mail literally to the VP of the {government agency that the participant worked  
188 for} in {the home country of the agency} and to the head of human resources to other  
189 people saying "Yeah, this is our situation, this is what has happened and we are okay. I  
190 haven't had any contact with {redacted}, with my boss, as you know he was on holidays,  
191 and I know I don't know his situation or, you know, where he is. "I just wanted to let you  
192 know we're okay – I'm staying in the office and if the phones come back up I'll try and  
193 ring somebody." I said, "Could you please call my family?" So I asked them to call my  
194 family, and because my parents wouldn't be on email first, first thing in the morning, they  
195 didn't have email on their phones, and I couldn't call. So I thought they're going to wake  
196 up and see the tsunamis coming in, we'd started to see them coming in, and completely  
197 panic. And I, I, I, so I asked. I knew they wouldn't be up at the crack of dawn looking at  
198 the e-mail, so actually so even though I'd sent it to 5 or so people, my parents woke up to  
199 a call at 7:30 at 8 o'clock or whatever it was from like the VP of the {government agency  
200 that the participant worked for}, who was actually really good like, called my parents  
201 straightaway and said, "Listen, I don't want to panic you, but there's been, this is  
202 happening in Japan, {the participant} is fine, I just wanted to know." Ehm, so my parents  
203 knew. And our land lines came back up earlier, because I think two or three hours later, I  
204 was able to call my parents.

205  
206 *Okay, yeah.*

207  
208 Ehm, like it would nearly make me cry now thinking about it, because my father, you  
209 know, the worry that my parents had. Like my dad was like, "I've never prayed for  
210 anything so much in my life." Because I think they didn't even know if a tsunami was  
211 coming or anything, and I said, "What you're seeing on the TV is not what I am  
212 experiencing here." But we were still getting those shocks every 10 minutes. By the time  
213 it was about 5 o'clock in the afternoon at the office I was like, you know when you feel  
214 completely drained of energy. I was almost like white in my head because we'd been  
215 having these shocks every 10 minutes, and I was just sitting in the office, and we had  
216 requests from radio stations wanting to talk to the people, to some of the people in {the  
217 embassy building}. So the embassy were setting up to talk on radio, but I also had some  
218 contact into our office into the assistant, and {the assistant} was forwarding it on to me,

219 and I was like, "I can't talk to anybody. I can't talk to anyone. I didn't want to talk to  
 220 anybody. I wasn't prepared for it. So fair play to the ambassador, like. He, he was like,  
 221 you know, I mean that his job but ehm, I actually just personally wasn't together enough.  
 222 Didn't want to. So I got in touch at my parents by phone, by landline, maybe it was 8  
 223 o'clock in the evening. I can't remember.  
 224  
 225 *Yeah, it's funny isn't it. As bad and all...*  
 226  
 227 It felt like forever sitting in the office.  
 228  
 229 *But what really struck me about what you were saying there is the aftershocks, I found*  
 230 *that exhausting because every time...*  
 231  
 232 I was still shaking after about three or four hours.  
 233  
 234 *And then you didn't sleep that well something the subsequent night, I found. I didn't*  
 235 *anyway, because every time it shook, it felt quite big and, like you, I'd been in Japan, so I*  
 236 *knew this was big, even though they said aftershocks.*  
 237  
 238 I was really worried that something worse was coming, and when even after they cleared  
 239 the tsunami warning, I was worried and thought, "Oh my god, is a big earthquake going  
 240 to happen in Tokyo now?" We actually stayed, so the ambassador, he was amazing. He  
 241 came down, because I was there on my own with our assistant, he came down, you know,  
 242 4 or 5 o'clock, sorry he rarely comes down into our offices [laughter], do you know what  
 243 I mean?  
 244  
 245 *That was a sign, that was a sign.*  
 246  
 247 So he came down to everybody's office, like, came down, and he said, like, you know he  
 248 opened the doors, and we were up, we were up and down into his offices. His television  
 249 broke. It fell over, and he was on the highest floor. Everything in his office was on the  
 250 ground. But, ehm, so he was, there was a lot more, most of, a lot of the Japanese staff  
 251 with children left then and walked home, and I suppose we were left with, the embassy  
 252 had to mind the crisis centre. So there was three or four {of this European country's  
 253 citizens} still missing or that couldn't, what's the word, accounted for, ehm, so I stayed in  
 254 the building as well because, you know, you know, that, you know, phone, landlines. I  
 255 didn't want to, I wouldn't, it didn't occur on me to try and go home, because I live on my  
 256 own. I live on the 17th floor in a building of thirty, forty, stories. I live on reclaimed land.  
 257 I lived in {central Tokyo}, all reclaimed lands are maybe about to sink, ehm, sure the  
 258 elevator is broken, didn't know anyone in the building at all, been there 1 or 2 years - a  
 259 feature of staying in Japan - didn't know anyone. I actually stayed until, ehm, maybe it  
 260 was about 10 or 11. 11, 12. Anyway, we talked about getting everyone who is left out of  
 261 the building, but we went back to the ambassador's residence, and my, I had actually had  
 262 an ankle, really bad ankle injury  
 263  
 264 *God.*  
 265  
 266 Like, that kind of partially severed my tendons, running, like maybe five months before  
 267 that. They still weren't great, so I actually, I was pretty lucky. I got the car with the  
 268 ambassador, and I would have had to walk. So that was about maybe 5, 6 of the staff,  
 269 diplomats, and, ehm, myself and the ambassador went back to the residence at 1:30, 2:00  
 270 in the morning, I would say. And they had had stuff to do up until that. I just felt better. I  
 271 didn't want to be on my own. I felt better with other people being around me in the  
 272 building. I was, there was no way I was going to go home and be, like, in my own house.  
 273 Friends who all had families were just in the immediate, the thing is, people go directly to

274 their own family, so they were looking after their own families. And my best friends that  
275 were there with kids, {various European nationalities}, were saying, you know, “if you,  
276 you are more than welcome now to come over here.” And I'm like, “How would I get  
277 over there on my own all the way across the other side of Tokyo?” So, you know, I stayed  
278 over.

279  
280 *Yeah, ehm, I think that that was a very logical thing to do, because I know that my own,*  
281 *in my own case, I was lucky I lived near to my office, so walking wasn't that much of a*  
282 *problem. But if I had lived over the other side of the city, I'm not sure I would have been*  
283 *able to find my way with those, without trains and buses. You know, there wasn't much*  
284 *information that I could see for how to get home, and, you know like, there's been a lot of*  
285 *talk in other subsequent, ehm, in other studies of this about how how people used Twitter*  
286 *or you know their GPS to try and get home, ehm, but, you know, I didn't have any*  
287 *experience of that, and I saw a lot of people struggling, you know, walking long, long*  
288 *distances to get home, and people looking very lost, massive traffic jams. But like you, I*  
289 *lived alone, so I would be afraid to go home. Actually some of my friends lived nearby, so*  
290 *we all stayed together for, ehm, until approximately the morning. Ehm, I remember that*  
291 *feeling of, kind of, not knowing what was coming next. It was really that I really didn't*  
292 *know what was. Okay, so this has happened, but what's what's coming next.*

293  
294 Yeah, I think, ehm, I was I was more scared the second night because that night I stayed  
295 in the ambassador's house. It's a bit of a funny situation...

296  
297 *[Laughter]*  
298

299 ...anyway. Ehm, diplomats live right beside, they have to live right beside the residence,  
300 so they were there and, ehm, I actually stayed, stayed in the house with the staff, and I  
301 didn't go to bed until two, until my phone, my phone came back up at whatever time 3, 4,  
302 5 AM, whenever. That when that came back up, I actually then made a call to the guy I  
303 was dating.

304  
305 *Okay.*  
306

307 Ehm, I had talked to my parents on the landline and I think, like, I didn't really go near  
308 Facebook or anything like that. I actually continued working a little bit.

309  
310 *Okay.*  
311

312 But I think it was just I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing, and I'll keep going,  
313 and it was only like you, like, we realised we didn't really get food, so myself and {the  
314 assistant} went out to get food at about ehm, at 8 o'clock or something, we said  
315 something like, “Oh my god, like, I just felt weak, let's go and get something to eat.”  
316 And it was then, when I went outside, that I realised the total gridlock, ehm, you know,  
317 totally gridlocked. We went into a deli near us with no food left. So you see, I hadn't even  
318 been thinking about these things, and then when I went, and I was like, “Oh my god, the  
319 food is all gone.” And it was only like, there was, ehm, it was like there was only a tiny  
320 amount of food left, ehm, we went in there and I was amazed when, you know, you'll  
321 know this as well, but I was just amazed because all of the people who were, were buying  
322 the last bit of food were only taking a little bit, and I, like, and I, like, oh my god, I  
323 probably would have taken...

324  
325 *[Laughter]*  
326

327 ...you know, I probably, whatever the last of whatever was left, but you know, that  
328 experience for Japanese people having those kind of disaster situations, they all only

329 took, just took a little bit which was enough for them to, to maybe get themselves  
330 through, to leave enough of whatever for as many people as they could. So, you know, we  
331 just did the same, and took a little bit, so we went back. We, we did eat those horrible  
332 biscuits...

333  
334 *[Laughter]*

335  
336 ...in our earthquake, in our emergency kits. So we were starving by the time we got back,  
337 we ate those horrible biscuits, and so when we got back to the ambassador's residence  
338 with the rest, it was the morning. So he has, he had a personal chef and there is always  
339 food, there's everything. And he had made food for, like, just pasta or whatever, he had  
340 made food for everyone who had come back. So that was like three in the morning. It was  
341 the next day when I woke up and I was on my own because all of the embassy staff, it  
342 was a Saturday, but all of the embassy staff had to go in straight away at 7 o'clock. They  
343 had to man the emergency around the clock. Okay, so I woke up, I woke up and there was  
344 nobody there. I woke up at 10:30. I really, I, I, I really slept, I actually really slept then.  
345 His residence is and, {redacted}, it's in {central Tokyo}, it's a really, really strong  
346 building. Very, you really didn't feel the aftershocks in his building at all. It really, what's  
347 the word, soaked it up. So I actually maybe it was 5:00 before I went to sleep, but then I  
348 did sleep to 10:00 or something, and I woke up, and the ambassador came back, and he  
349 had been relieved so he had come back for lunch, or to change or shower, and I had lunch  
350 with him. My breakfast, his lunch. And he was so good because, I mean, I wouldn't have  
351 that kind of personal relation with him, you know, but he said, ehm, "If you want to stay  
352 here the weekend, if you want to stay here tonight, if you don't want to be on your own."  
353 But I actually probably would have liked to, but I, because I didn't want to be on my own,  
354 but I just, I didn't feel, like, that was appropriate, either. And it was kind of like the panic  
355 has died down, so I went back to my own place at about 1 o'clock that day, and I thought  
356 I'd go and see, I said to him, like, "I'll go to see if my elevator is working okay," you  
357 know, or whatever. So I went back to my own place that day. See this is, this might be  
358 interesting to you because there were all these cracks all around the walls of my house.  
359 Now not the wall. There is all this wood, and I live on the 17th floor, and so the building  
360 must have really gone hammer and whatever it is. There's, like, wood panels in front of  
361 all the concrete, and only when I got back into my apartment. Now nothing had moved.  
362 Things had not fallen over, but there were cracks, like, in several places in between and  
363 all the boards had moved apart, and the wallpaper, wallpaper had moved apart, ehm, and  
364 apparently - because I, I went down to the reception desk and talked to the girls on the  
365 reception, there is a reception desk in the building, right - ehm, the elevator was working,  
366 back up working, but they had been down. But they told me that a lot, a lot of the other  
367 rooms also had these cracks. But, because, I went down to say, "Look, is the structure of  
368 the building okay?" And they said that the structure of the building was sound. It was  
369 only the boarding in front. It's not the actual, there was none on the concrete, or anything,  
370 or that any of the other actual structure had been damaged. And I said, "Okay." But we  
371 continued to get the aftershocks, as you know, all weekend. And I was actually that night  
372 terrified. So I was on my own, I didn't know anyone in my building. Nobody did actually  
373 talk to me from the apartments around me. And, you know, a couple of my, couple of, the  
374 friends from the embassy I would have known or other people in the embassy, they were  
375 all manning the embassy, doing their own thing. And then other friends asked me if I  
376 wanted to try and come over. The trains were still down, I think. I'm sure because on  
377 Monday morning, I was the only person that came to work from our floor. No one else  
378 could get transport. Now I lived, like you, well I don't know where you were, but I lived  
379 in the city centre. Other people were an hour away an hour commute...

380  
381 *That makes a difference.*  
382

383 ...an hour and a half commute, and they couldn't get into work. As, and as I was coming  
384 to work on the Monday morning, ehm, they must have, ehm, introduced a new system,  
385 because the subway - I was on the subway - the subway stopped, right, there was a big  
386 announcement that an earthquake was coming, and I went, "Oh my god." And my heart  
387 nearly stopped, and I thought I was, was going to be, I thought I was going to throw up.  
388 "Oh god, we're in the subway. We're all going to drown."  
389  
390 *[Nervous laughter]*  
391  
392 You know, because the water would flood right in there, and it was, it was only a little  
393 thing. But it must have been that they were like, you know, we need people to know,  
394 and...  
395  
396 *I'm really interested in this point point because, as you know, I'm into the whole*  
397 *translation, language and culture, thing. Would you remember, by any chance, what*  
398 *language that, sort of warning that you heard...*  
399  
400 It was only in Japanese. Yeah, it was definitely only in Japanese. So I'm sure you'll get,  
401 you'll get a very different, you know, ehm, report from people in Tokyo who didn't speak  
402 any Japanese.  
403  
404 *This is what I'm really interested in, because, so, for example, you said about going down*  
405 *to the reception in your building and asking them, and that was all in Japanese.*  
406  
407 Yes, but I could do that.  
408  
409 *You see, that's a huge difference I think, ehm, in terms of, just, so certain things which*  
410 *you wouldn't account for beforehand. I mean, you know, you wouldn't necessarily think,*  
411 *"God, what if I have to talk to somebody about cracks in the wall," or something, you*  
412 *know. If you don't speak the language, that's challenging. And the actual warnings are*  
413 *really fascinating to me.*  
414  
415 I never heard that, I have to say, I never heard that again. I never heard that again, that  
416 warning. I don't know if they continued it, or maybe someone said you're panicking the  
417 whole nation here, because it actually completely scared the life out of me, and then it  
418 was nothing, and it was just a very small aftershock. And I got the office and my nerves  
419 were shot. And my boss - I had gotten in touch with my boss. Now, unfortunately, my  
420 boss's wife, his wife. He's {from a European country}. His wife was from {one of the  
421 three worst-affected prefectures} and they couldn't, couldn't locate whether a certain  
422 number of her family were alive. They hadn't been able to get in touch with them. They  
423 had gotten in touch with them before the tsunami, Before the tsunami, there was contact  
424 to say they were okay, and then there was blank, for like, I don't know how many days.  
425 And they didn't know, they did, there was, I think they did lose some relatives, not sure.  
426 There was, you know, house damage. So he, actually, had a very tough time with his own  
427 wife's family. But, ehm, so then on the Monday when I got in, I think just the thing of  
428 being on your own, just the thing of being on your own and, ehm, the aftershocks  
429 continued like that. And I actually, I think if I had have had any immediate family there  
430 myself, even living with somebody.  
431  
432 *Yeah.*  
433  
434 I think I would have found it, I think I would have said, "This is fine, I can stay in this."  
435 But by Monday afternoon, I had had three days of this, aftershocks every thirty minutes  
436 or twenty minutes, and I was like every time, even sitting at my desk on the Monday  
437 because I didn't know what else to do with myself, I was the only person in the office,

438 like, I could feel every time I would see something start to move I would be, “Okay, like,  
 439 here we go.”  
 440  
 441 *Yeah.*  
 442  
 443 Non stop. And, eh, anyway, that’s when I, ehm, that VP rang me on Monday afternoon to  
 444 see are you there, what’s going on, are you all right. And I said, “Oh my god, my nerves  
 445 are shot.” My nerves were shot. I was like, every ten minutes, “Oh my god, what’s going  
 446 to happen next.”  
 447  
 448 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 449  
 450 So three days of that. It is, as you know, very stressful, and I completely thought, like,  
 451 “Oh my god, what am I going to do? I am going to die here.” And at the same time I felt,  
 452 like, well if I could stay and do something helpful that would be fine. But there wasn’t  
 453 anything particular to do in Tokyo for me, you know. Ehm, and then has said to me  
 454 “Look...” – I was actually due to come back for my mother’s, can’t remember her age,  
 455 sixtieth?  
 456  
 457 *[Laughter] I’ll, I’ll I’ll fudge that bit in the record.*  
 458  
 459 I was actually due to come back for, it was a special occasion, and I was actually due to  
 460 come back. March 10th is that occasion, but they were doing it on like the 27th or  
 461 something, and I was due to come back the next week, so for two weeks for a holiday, so,  
 462 I actually said, “Look, I’m due to come back in two weeks anyway.” {redacted} And it  
 463 was only then that I realised, I hadn’t even realised. I manage to get in, I managed to call  
 464 my friend {redacted}, and I said to her, “Look, I’ve decided to go back a week early. I’m  
 465 going anyway. Ehm, there was no work going on. Everything is shut down. I’ve no-one,  
 466 you know, I’m not with anyone.” And {my friend} said to me, “How are you going to get  
 467 to the airport?” And I went...  
 468  
 469 *[Laughter]*  
 470  
 471 ...“What?” She said, “{participant’s name}, there’s, transport is all down to the airport.”  
 472 So, I don’t know if you were there, or if you left, or if you knew that the transport  
 473 [laughter] was down to the airport [laughter].  
 474  
 475 *[Garbled] Yeah, no [laughter]*  
 476  
 477 Of course not, {redacted}. Did not tell my parents. Did not tell anybody I was leaving  
 478 because I was worried I would not actually get out. So I said, “Look, I’ll wait till I’m  
 479 about to get on the plane,” you know? Don’t want them to be like, “Oh good, she’s  
 480 coming.” And then I don’t arrive.  
 481  
 482 *Kind of false hope, yeah.*  
 483  
 484 So I said, I said, eh, “Oh my god, you’re kidding. There has to be like, are you kidding?”  
 485 And she’s like, “No, {participant’s name}, the trains are down.” And I didn’t realise that  
 486 all the transport was down to the airport. So I’m like, “Oh my god, what am I going to  
 487 do? What am I going to do?” So, I rang a taxi company that I, I used to use all the time,  
 488 and they said to me, “What time do you want the taxi for tomorrow. No. Whole  
 489 company’s booked out.” Because all the transport was down in the city and a lot of  
 490 people were using it just to get to work, or whatever.  
 491  
 492 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

493  
494 All the transport was down, and I thought, “Oh my god.” Anyway, I rang three or four  
495 different companies. I had to call our assistant and say, “Can you help me, like, to find a  
496 company?” They were all booked out. So I rang back the first company and said, “If I go  
497 now, can you take me?” Well, well, they actually said, “If you go right now, we can take  
498 you.” And I went, “Okay, I’ll go now.” So then I was like, “Okay, what do I do now?”  
499 Because people were sleeping at the airport, people were forced to sleep at the airport.  
500 But I said, ehm, there was a friend I knew who, eh, worked in airport-related stuff, and I  
501 just rang her and said, “Is there any cabin crew rooms anywhere?” So she got me a room  
502 somewhere. I can’t even remember the name of it. I was just, like, “Get me there.” Just  
503 went to some random hotel, you know, ten miles from the airport where there was a  
504 shuttle bus operating. And when I got to the hotel, it was, because they drove me, it must  
505 have been near midnight, like, I just went, got to the hotel. When I got to the hotel, you  
506 know, they were having rolling blackouts. So he said to me, ehm, that there’s, there’s, eh,  
507 there’s rolling, there’s rolling blackouts, so we’re going to have no electricity. No, no. It  
508 wasn’t the fact that they were not going to have electricity. They didn’t have any  
509 electricity. So he said to me, “Electricity is down. So you can,” - I had a, had a big, heavy  
510 suitcase - and he’s like - I was on, like, the 6th floor - and he’s like, “There’s no elevator  
511 working. So you’ll either have to...”  
512  
513 *And again, this was speaking in Japanese?*  
514  
515 Yeah, yeah, all my communication was in Japanese. So he’s like, you, you know, “Just  
516 take the stairs or, ehm, eh, leave it here.” And that’s what I did. I actually, I just took  
517 some small bag out of, I left it there and went up and down. I didn’t sleep that night,  
518 because in the middle of the night, we had two or three huge aftershocks. It then dawned  
519 on me, in the middle of the night, right. The phones were down in that hotel as well. It  
520 dawned on me in the middle of the night, nobody knows that I’m here.  
521  
522 *Crikey.*  
523  
524 Nobody knows where I am. I didn’t tell anybody that I was going to this hotel in the  
525 middle of nowhere.  
526  
527 *[Laughter]*  
528  
529 And then I went like, “Oh my god, like, what it, what if something happened and I died  
530 here. Nobody would know, like, where I am.”  
531  
532 *Yeah, yeah.*  
533  
534 But anyway, yeah, so the, basically I left. I didn’t sleep, actually, because I was very  
535 scared. There was a couple of large aftershocks. And I emailed, I actually emailed work  
536 in {the participant’s home country}, {redacted}, and told them, “This is where I am,”  
537 because I was a bit worried, “this is where I am, just in case. My flight’s due to fly out in  
538 the morning.” And then, I, I didn’t, I didn’t text, I didn’t, ehm, text my parents or my  
539 boyfriend at that time until I was getting on the flight.  
540  
541 *Right. You really were waiting until the last minute.*  
542  
543 Yeah, well, I knew that the, I think some of the flights weren’t taking off, and there was  
544 people sleeping at the airport, {redacted}. The one thing I will say is that day when I got  
545 back, ehm, I took the next two days off. It was {the weekend of a national holiday}. And,  
546 eh, my boyfriend said, “Look, we’ll just go away for the weekend somewhere quiet. We  
547 decided to go to {a remote rural location}. The night before, I was in a hotel in {the



548 capital city} - I'm from {a rural area} - so I was in a hotel in {the capital city}, and, ehm,  
549 I was just sitting on the bed, and he, he [Note: the participant makes a clapping sound]  
550 started moving his foot, his legs were crossed, and he started doing this [Note: the  
551 participant makes a kicking motion] and I swear to god, my heart nearly stopped, like I  
552 went, "Oh my god." Like I, I, I thought we were having, like, an aftershock. And that  
553 happened I-don't-know-how-many times for a while. Like, I was completely convinced.  
554 It was still in my head, like, every time I would feel some kind of a shake like that. Even  
555 now, I can be sitting at my desk in {the participant's current workplace}, and I feel a little  
556 bit of a something, probably a truck or the wind, and for one second I think, for one  
557 second I think we're getting an aftershock, we're getting another... I was shot. My nerves  
558 were shot. Came back to Japan three weeks later after the holiday. Even at that point, it  
559 was like, "Do I go back?"

560  
561 *Yeah, yeah.*

562  
563 My boss was, like - really needed me - so he was like, "Everything is fine, {participant's  
564 name}..."

565  
566 *[Laughter]*

567  
568 ...come back. Nothing wrong here." Of course, I got back, realised no water. The whole  
569 issue was going on with the nuclear power plant.

570  
571 *Yeah, yeah. Like, that's really interesting to me as well. Because it's quite difficult to*  
572 *figure out when the disaster stopped for people. Because, you know, everybody had*  
573 *different experiences...*

574  
575 *Yeah.*

576  
577 *...and there were different, sort of, phases - part was the earthquake, part was tsunami,*  
578 *then part was the nuclear accident - so, like, when you got back did that nuclear thing*  
579 *become part of the disaster for you after your time back in {your home country}?*

580  
581 Ehm, when I was back in {my home country}, I couldn't concentrate on my, the holiday I  
582 was supposed to be having because I was watching the news 24 hours a day. Is everybody  
583 I know okay? Is something going to blow up? What's happening there? Ehm, and that,  
584 that, you know, that was, that was still ongoing stress even though I wasn't in the  
585 country.

586  
587 *Yeah.*

588  
589 It certainly was. Ehm, and I would have been in touch with my boss a lot saying. "Is  
590 everything okay? Has your wife's family been found? You know?"

591  
592 *Yeah, of course.*

593  
594 All that kind of thing. Ehm, other friends had also left. Some of them had left. Once the  
595 nuclear thing happened, people with kids left.

596  
597 *Yeah.*

598  
599 Because I think they were worried about the children. But for me, I think, even when I  
600 got back, I was shocked that there were still aftershocks. Three weeks later there were  
601 still big aftershocks coming. Maybe not three times an hour, but I think once every couple  
602 of hours.

603  
604 *Oh yeah.*  
605  
606 Two or three hours, or. It really was that, that part. That they were still there because { my  
607 boss} had said to me, "It's fine. Don't worry." But when I actually got, when I actually  
608 got back I was like, "No!" [laughter] It was still, it was still pretty bad, and, ehm, and for  
609 months because I remember having a visitor in April, I had a visitor, like someone from  
610 overseas, and there was definitely a big one when they were there, and there was another  
611 one two months later.  
612  
613 *Yeah.*  
614  
615 Like it was ongoing for at least 6 months, I would say to some degree.  
616  
617 *Yeah.*  
618  
619 And I, I definitely felt for at least 6 months. And this is awful, but once all that had died  
620 down, I had just, I had none of my own family there, I just wanted to be gone. I was like,  
621 this is, I absolutely hated it, and I didn't want to be there anymore. But my contract for  
622 that particular job, the posting itself was three years, and I kind of felt like, "Uh, I should  
623 do this extra...  
624  
625 *Yeah.*  
626  
627 ...I should just finish it for them and then leave." And that's what I decided to do. So I did  
628 stay on until March 2013. So I stayed on another two years. Actually that was one year  
629 into that.  
630  
631 *Yeah.*  
632  
633 But I did, there were several times when I just thought, "Oh, I think I'll just go." And  
634 then there was a lot of talk, as you know, even 6 months, after 6 months, for another 6  
635 months, for another year about the percentage chance of it happening in Tokyo.  
636  
637 *Yes, yeah.*  
638  
639 This is what was, what, most worrying. So, for people, maybe, after the disaster happened  
640 in other areas of Japan that, like, maybe they thought, "That's it for a while." But in  
641 Tokyo, I was just like, "I do think something is going to come...  
642  
643 *Yeah.*  
644  
645 ...and I do not want to be here for that." That's all I thought.  
646  
647 *Yeah, yeah.*  
648  
649 It's all I thought. And I thought because I'd seen these simulations of, it's just like, it's  
650 water breaking everywhere, it's flooding I was worried about, and drownings and stuff...  
651  
652 *Yeah.*  
653  
654 ...and I thought, you know, not so much fires any more, because they'd controlled a lot of  
655 the...  
656  
657 *Yeah.*

658  
659 ...the, ehm, mechanics. But I really, really thought, like, I just wanted out of here. Second  
660 thing, well, you know, eh, a personal thing which you might be interested in. I got a, eh, I  
661 still have it now. It's a, eh, eh, it's a very funny name, it's urticaria. It's, like, ehm, it's  
662 any, could even show you now. It's like any, any pressure, any, anything on my skin, and  
663 I break out in welts, like hive welts. And I got that in about, April / May it came on. My  
664 whole body was breaking out in these hives and these welts.  
665  
666 *Yeah, yeah.*  
667  
668 And I went to the doc going, "What the hell is going on here?" It completely, it, eh, it's,  
669 eh, a very, like, chronic form of hives, but it's all over your body. And it's all the time.  
670 So, I actually went, and they said it's not food-related because it's constantly, like, it's  
671 constantly there. So they said, "Listen, this is chronic. It's probably brought on from like,  
672 ehm, something would have set it off...  
673  
674 *Yeah.*  
675  
676 ...and once it's set off, it's an autoimmune condition, so it's like, once it's set off within  
677 your system, it's not going to, it's not going to just stop today." But they said for a lot of  
678 people when it's chronic, like, if it's only ongoing for a week or two, it might go away,  
679 but if it lasts for longer than that, it will definitely last a year. 50% of those cases, it will  
680 go away within a year, and unfortunately, mine didn't. And then they say you'll have it  
681 for ten or twenty years. So I, I've to, I'm taking medication every day for that.  
682  
683 *Crikey.*  
684  
685 Now. But I know that that was like, at that time, I think, I just, for about, I'd say for about  
686 two months I was, like, not realising it, but internally was so sick and, like, you know,  
687 internally felt, like, so stressed about the whole thing. Non-stop, on-edge, kind of,  
688 worried, going like, "Uuh", and I think maybe the fact that I was on my own, or no  
689 emotional support. Really, I think, the whole thing anyway just, ehm, I am pretty sure that  
690 that was as a result of that.  
691  
692 *And that's a long-term effect, so in a way it hasn't ended...*  
693  
694 *Yeah, I mean...*  
695  
696 *...even though you're,*  
697  
698 ...no, and I'm hoping, look, I've to take two antihistamines a day, and I, that's actually  
699 just to keep the, the itch factor down, and to keep it down, but if I forget to take that for  
700 one or two days, my whole body breaks out in hives, even now.  
701  
702 *So sorry to hear that.*  
703  
704 No, no, no, but that's, you know, the thing is, I was really for the first year praying,  
705 going, "Oh my god, please let this disappear after twelve months, and then when it wasn't  
706 disappeared, and I was still out in Japan as well, and to be honest, I, I, my, my last few  
707 years there I did not feel, I felt very, I felt a lot [Note: the participant sighs] I felt quite  
708 lonely. Like, a lot of people left, ehm, a couple of the good friends I had left the country  
709 that had kids and went to Singapore or Hong Kong. Ehm, and I really felt like, people  
710 were like, "Why are you hanging on, like, why don't you leave?" You know, but I was,  
711 like, I just felt this commitment to my job...  
712

713 *Yeah, yeah.*  
714  
715 ...for the last two years, so I just stayed and did it. I'm only home three months, and I was  
716 there for over 10 years, so yeah, so it's a long time. And, ehm, it's been a big change for  
717 me.  
718  
719 *Yeah.*  
720  
721 Very hard at the start moving back. But, you know, even now, gradually, I'm just like,  
722 "Why was I there so long?"  
723  
724 *[Laughter]*  
725  
726 I don't, you know, because I know, like, okay, the weather's been super since I came  
727 back but just, it's the, the interaction here between people is different for me and that's  
728 really important, I think.  
729  
730 *Yeah, I'm really interested in that because there is this notion that in a, in a disaster...*  
731  
732 *Yeah.*  
733  
734 *...you know, the first people who help you are people around you, and a lot of*  
735 *recommendations are how can we make foreign people in Japan feel more part of the*  
736 *community, so that when another big one happens, you know, they feel that they can help*  
737 *or that they can be helped. Do you think there's, sort of, any way that they tried to make*  
738 *you feel part of the community?*  
739  
740 I would have to say probably not. I suppose this may be unfair, but I, if this had happened  
741 and I was in {the participant's home country}, ehm, where I'm living now, I'm in an  
742 apartment block, don't know anybody in the apartment block. If that happened, if  
743 something happened in {the capital city of the participant's home country}, I am pretty  
744 sure the next day that I would go and knock on the neighbours' doors. I am pretty sure I  
745 would, and just say, "Look, I'm next door, my name is {redacted}. If, you know, if  
746 anything, if you need anything, or whatever." You know, even if they, I'm sure if I even,  
747 if I even had foreign people living beside me or {fellow nationals} living beside me, I  
748 think I would do that. I, I just think that that's what would have been done here.  
749  
750 *That's fascinating, because...*  
751  
752 Cultural difference.  
753  
754 *Exactly, because you had no problem with the language, you could have...*  
755  
756 I could have gone  
757  
758 *...communicated, or they could have come to you*  
759  
760 But nobody came to me...  
761  
762 *Nobody came to you.*  
763  
764 ...nobody came to me. Nobody. That's the one thing, like, that whole day Saturday and  
765 Sunday, I was in my apartment and nobody knocked on my door. But somebody could  
766 have knocked on my door and said, you know, "Where are you from?" Like, people have  
767 seen each other, like, some people, I'm sure, may have known there was a foreign girl

768 living there. Somebody could have knocked on the door and said, you know, "We, we,"  
 769 you know, "are you okay? Do you have some help. If you need anything, let us know."  
 770 But, ehm, and I, and I, I do think, like, when you are in extreme crisis in Japan...  
 771  
 772 *Yeah.*  
 773  
 774 ...I mean, the people in, ehm, I can't remember the names of places, Oshuto, or whatever,  
 775 you know, right near the epicentre.  
 776  
 777 *Oh yeah, yeah.*  
 778  
 779 I believe that, you know, in extreme times of crisis like that in smaller communities, those  
 780 Japanese people would be all over you, would be all over it...  
 781  
 782 *Yeah.*  
 783  
 784 ...would be all on top of it. But I think when it's kind of a, semi-crisis, semi-crisis, it's  
 785 kind of, like, a halfway point. Because of the culture, because of the Japanese culture and  
 786 the way they interact with people, I think there's this thing where you don't want to  
 787 intrude...  
 788  
 789 *Yeah.*  
 790  
 791 ...and then, there's another thing that's, kind of, not an embarrassment, but just different  
 792 from, kind of, just going to talk to people you don't know. And therefore when it's not  
 793 quite at the point of extreme crisis, ehm, everybody just carries on, everybody just tries to  
 794 carry on as they did before. So people were still trying to go to work and carry on  
 795 completely normally, but trains were down, and there was no water, and I think, you  
 796 know, in {the participant's home country}, it would have just been like, "Look, stay  
 797 home, look after your families." Or people would have been knocking on their  
 798 neighbours' doors saying, "Look, we're around here." Even, I think, in the city in {the  
 799 participant's home country}.  
 800  
 801 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 802  
 803 I feel that that would have been a difference.  
 804  
 805 *I think, I agree with you. I do think there was a huge cultural difference. They, you know,*  
 806 *another thing that they're trying to do is, like, you would have gotten some information*  
 807 *from the embassy or from your work...*  
 808  
 809 My situation was very different from others.  
 810  
 811 *...yeah, did you get any information from the, like, the ward office or city office or*  
 812 *anything like that?*  
 813  
 814 Now, they did, there's two sides to this. One is I probably would have ignored whatever  
 815 because I had the embassy backing, I had the connection to them and, I had, I, I, I  
 816 probably was very fortunate in knowing that if something really awful happened,  
 817 somebody, eh, would look after me...  
 818  
 819 *Yeah.*  
 820  
 821 ...right? Which is different from maybe an average person who didn't have any family in  
 822 Tokyo, So, I, I, that, that would have been something that if it came in the door - I do

823 think there could have been a leaflet or something saying, you know “we’re trying to  
824 organise this community,”...  
825  
826 *Yeah.*  
827  
828 ...they definitely did some kind of, eh, a morning at some point. Now it could have been  
829 quite late, later on, six or nine months later where they wanted people in the community  
830 to come out and do emergency exercises together...  
831  
832 *Yeah, yeah.*  
833  
834 ...and do stuff together. So I think - but that was definitely in Japanese - I think that, ehm,  
835 I think that they were trying, like, in that community, there probably is a community  
836 where I lived, but I wouldn’t have been involved with it or included in it or wouldn’t have  
837 known about it. And I might have felt embarrassed just to turn up...  
838  
839 *Sure.*  
840  
841 ...to this, you know, thing with all, with lots of Japanese people from the community at  
842 it...  
843  
844 *Yeah.*  
845  
846 ...I think. And, my, my situation was definite, definitely different in that, in two ways.  
847 One in that, you know, I was fluent, so I could look after myself. Two, ehm, I knew the, I  
848 had work support in terms of if anything really went wrong...  
849  
850 *Yeah.*  
851  
852 ...that, you know, there would be somebody to call on, or.  
853  
854 *I’m not sure that that’s going to be so unusual, actually, because I suspect that a lot of*  
855 *the people in Japan who, you know, weren’t Japanese got support from their work or*  
856 *from, kind of, colleagues, and stuff like that as well. I’m, I’m not sure, I mean, I won’t*  
857 *know until I speak to more people, but, ehm, I don’t, I didn’t feel part of the community...*  
858  
859 *Yeah, no, no.*  
860  
861 *...at all. I mean, I wasn’t there anywhere near as long as you, but I was there a fairly*  
862 *significant amount of time, and I just felt, again I was in Tokyo, so maybe that’s a big*  
863 *difference, maybe the big city thing is, like, a big difference, but I didn’t receive any e-*  
864 *mails or any, sort of, you know, leaflets or anything like that, and I had never gotten any,*  
865 *you know there’s sometimes training, eh, like local level training, I had never been told*  
866 *about them. I don’t know whether, maybe I ignored the leaflets, I don’t know, but I didn’t*  
867 *feel linked in that way. So I’m interested to see how they might go about getting foreign*  
868 *people to feel more part of it. And maybe, because I will be going up to, like, Miyagi and*  
869 *those places, as you said, maybe there’s something about real huge disaster situations,*  
870 *crisis versus the, sort of, grey area that Tokyo was. It was in crisis but you weren’t...*  
871  
872 *Well...*  
873  
874 *...too sure.*  
875  
876 I went up, eh, there was a volunteer group called {redacted}, I’m not sure if you ever  
877 went up. Did you go up?

878  
879 *Yeah, yeah, I didn't go with that group.*  
880  
881 Okay. I went up, probably, I can't remember the first time I went up, but I went up every  
882 month or every other month right up until two months before I left Japan.  
883  
884 *Wow.*  
885  
886 So like, I did, we, we went to this, eh, ehm, yon-chome was, in Ishinomaki [Note: a town  
887 in Miyagi that was devastated by the tsunami] , was where we went where they had, they  
888 were in a rundown, a completely rundown building, no showers [laughter] nothing in it,  
889 we used to go to the onsen afterwards, but we'd drive over night, but the people in that  
890 area...  
891  
892 *Yeah.*  
893  
894 ...this, that the volunteer group would go up to, I mean everybody there would, you know,  
895 they would - not in English - but they would, they would talk to you when they saw you  
896 doing kind of work, and...  
897  
898 *And how did you find out about that volunteer group, eh?*  
899  
900 ...that was through a friend who was doing it, an American friend who was doing it a  
901 couple of months after I had gotten back...  
902  
903 *Okay.*  
904  
905 ...and she said, "Oh well, you know, if you're interested in doing something?" I think it  
906 makes you feel kind of, ehm, I, I don't know why, I felt, I felt better doing something if I  
907 was going to be in the country...  
908  
909 *Yeah.*  
910  
911 ...ehm. And then when you go up there, if you went up there, you saw it yourself, you  
912 know, driving from Ishinomaki we went for Oshi...it's either Oshika or Oshito, anyway  
913 [Note: the participant is probably talking about Oshika near Ishinomaki] from Ishinomaki  
914 up to, it was about 40 or 50 kilometers along the coastline. It's way, and, like, all the  
915 villages had been completely wiped out, and that particular one, Oshika, is it Oshika? It  
916 was like, you know, half the town is just completely gone, and then half of it's left. And  
917 it's, it's quite small but they were really badly affected.  
918  
919 *Yeah.*  
920  
921 But you see that, and you're just like, I couldn't even look at the people because I, I  
922 couldn't imagine...  
923  
924 *Yeah.*  
925  
926 ...they'd lost their whole families, most, half of their communities, and, ehm, and all of  
927 those people talked to you...  
928  
929 *Yeah.*  
930  
931 ...you know, they all talked to me, you know, they all talked to me. No one in Tokyo  
932 talked to me, but they all talked to me, because they were, everybody was like, "Oh,

933 thank," - if they saw you doing anything - "thank you." Or, you know, they'd be bringing  
 934 out, they were bringing out bottles of water and cans of juice and I, god knows, I'm sure  
 935 they had absolutely nothing...  
 936  
 937 *[Laughter]*  
 938  
 939 ...some of them had nothing left...  
 940  
 941 *Yeah.*  
 942  
 943 ...they were bringing out whatever they had. Do you know what I mean?  
 944  
 945 *But again, you could talk to them because you could speak Japanese....*  
 946  
 947 I could talk to them because I could speak Japanese, yeah.  
 948  
 949 *...which is a great thing. And I think that's also, you know, the community thing goes two*  
 950 *ways. In one way you want to be supported, but you also as a foreigner want to be able to*  
 951 *do something....*  
 952  
 953 *Yeah.*  
 954  
 955 *...so I think, being able to speak Japanese, you were able to contribute in a great way that*  
 956 *maybe some other foreigners felt...*  
 957  
 958 They couldn't do.  
 959  
 960 *...difficulty in doing, or...*  
 961  
 962 *Yeah.*  
 963  
 964 *...you know, there mightn't have been access to volunteering so easily if you didn't speak*  
 965 *Japanese.*  
 966  
 967 Well, see, this is the thing, this communication, one of the things that we did, right, one  
 968 of the things that has, you know, obviously has been identified is after a crisis like that,  
 969 people who are on their own, so, when we went up to Ishinomaki, one of the project, one  
 970 of the activities we got involved in was, as you know, many, many people had been  
 971 moved out into the, ehm, what are they called, those, ehm...  
 972  
 973 *The refugee evacuation centres, yeah.*  
 974  
 975 ...yes, well, no. Those kind of prefab...  
 976  
 977 *Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 978  
 979 ...housing...  
 980  
 981 *The temporary housing.*  
 982  
 983 Yeah. There was, like, rows and rows and rows of these, ehm, and one of the activities for  
 984 that, and so that, some people were on their own, and especially people who were, you  
 985 know, retired age or whatever, they, ehm, if they were living on their own, ehm, they  
 986 might not have lost somebody, they might have lost their house, but they might not have



987 lost somebody, but at times like that, to facilitate communication because maybe they  
 988 were not talking to anybody...  
 989  
 990 *Yeah.*  
 991  
 992 ...you know, and maybe some of them were in there are not even knowing their  
 993 neighbours in this small - that's definitely a cultural difference with {the participant's  
 994 home country} because, if that was the situation, people would all be on top of each other  
 995 - there was a real big drive up there to get them all communicating. There was events  
 996 there every day, they could do karaoke, like, in one room and try and get everybody, you  
 997 know, all the, ehm, older people to come, or whatever. One of the things we got involved  
 998 in was, we, it, it was, eh, I can't remember the name of it, it was, we were to give out  
 999 bags of rice...  
 1000  
 1001 *Yeah.*  
 1002  
 1003 ...but we were only to give them to, eh, people who lived, people who of, who kind of  
 1004 looked like retired age who were on their own. Not couples, or whatever, The purpose  
 1005 was not to give them food. The purpose was to try and go in and have a chat with them  
 1006 for fifteen or twenty minutes because they may not have talked to anybody all day. So the  
 1007 purpose was not to give them rice. The purpose was communication.  
 1008  
 1009 *Yeah.*  
 1010  
 1011 And it, that was just, kind of, the mechanism to try and talk to them. I did that, I did that,  
 1012 I, I did that once and, ehm, oh my god, I was, I was, I was terr, I was a disaster, I was  
 1013 like, "I can't do this again." Because I was just, I was about to burst into tears talking to  
 1014 some of those people. And I was like, "Oh my god, bite your tongue." Because these  
 1015 people had been through something awful and you're, like, it's not for you to be crying.  
 1016 But still it was very hard to listen to it. And there was one particular woman who was on  
 1017 her own and oh I, I, oh my god, the stories like, she brought us in and had tea, because,  
 1018 like, you'd stand, they would never let you in straight away, so you'd stand at the door  
 1019 and give them the rice, and tell them like, "Oh, we're this group, and we'll be coming  
 1020 around every two weeks." It's for them to know, because I think, the, the, I'm sure, like,  
 1021 the suicide rate in Japan is very high, and a lot of people are very lonely, they've lost  
 1022 everything. So the purpose was to come back, for them to know that this organization  
 1023 would be coming back every couple of weeks. Someone was going to be coming to visit  
 1024 them. So, and, you'd stand at the door talking to them first and, you know, like, "How are  
 1025 you? How's everything?" You know, "How is everything for you now?", ehm, "Do you  
 1026 have anyone to talk to here? Do you know your neighbours? Do you," And you start  
 1027 chatting at the door, and it takes a while, but then people start, some people didn't, some  
 1028 people weren't able to, to, to even talk about just daily things. Start to talk a little bit, and  
 1029 then, in most of the cases, they would feel, like, because you had brought them  
 1030 something, "Well, do you want to have a cup of tea?" And then you come in, and some  
 1031 people are really like that, and then you go in and spend maybe twenty minutes with  
 1032 them, and the point was not for us to spend three hours with everybody, so we have to try  
 1033 and excuse ourselves and leave, but just to spend twenty minutes with someone...  
 1034  
 1035 *Yeah.*  
 1036  
 1037 ...having a chat, because, then, you'd be saying, "Look, this group will be coming back in  
 1038 two weeks," you know. And I even felt guilty, like, that particular woman, that particular  
 1039 exercise we only did once...  
 1040  
 1041 *Yeah.*

1042  
 1043 ...and every time, we did different things while we were there.  
 1044  
 1045 *Yeah.*  
 1046  
 1047 I, I already felt this bond to this one woman, like, oh my god, she's going to be expecting  
 1048 me...  
 1049  
 1050 *[Laughter]*  
 1051  
 1052 ...to come back in two weeks. *[Laughter]* Do you know what I mean? It was, like, she was  
 1053 going to be devastated when I don't turn up. It's terrible, you know, so , because, she was  
 1054 all like, "And where are you from?" She was really interested. And I think from that  
 1055 perspective having the foreigners do that when they could speak Japanese was very  
 1056 interesting because they, they wanted to hear something else.  
 1057  
 1058 *Yes, yes.*  
 1059  
 1060 They didn't, they wanted to be taken away from what was going on, in, in, in that awful  
 1061 situation. So just...  
 1062  
 1063 *That is really fascinating to me.*  
 1064  
 1065 ...for them to, for them. But that was a mechanism for communication to facilitate...  
 1066  
 1067 *Absolutely.*  
 1068  
 1069 ...you know, for them, some kind of a, eh, a, an outlet.  
 1070  
 1071 *Yeah, and it's a contribution that foreign people can make. It's, it's...*  
 1072  
 1073 *Yeah.*  
 1074  
 1075 *...it's not only taking stuff from Japan, but you can give stuff in a crisis as well.*  
 1076  
 1077 *Yeah.*  
 1078  
 1079 *That's really fascinating and I'm definitely going to be looking into that, that more. And*  
 1080 *I'm really so thankful for all that you've told me today. It's been absolutely, some of the*  
 1081 *things you said really resonated with me, ehm, like yourself, the aftershocks, the shaking,*  
 1082 *I'm still...*  
 1083  
 1084 Do you still? I still get that. I get that.  
 1085  
 1086 *...if a, if a, if a truck passes by I'll occasionally, not as much now, when I came back,*  
 1087 *ehm, I came back in the April, I think, for two weeks. Like yourself, I had a holiday*  
 1088 *booked so I stayed until the April of 2011 and I came back for two weeks. And honestly, it*  
 1089 *was, the first night, like a bus or something passed and my family were quite shocked at*  
 1090 *how high I jumped, like, thinking that it was an earthquake.*  
 1091  
 1092 No, I definitely got that for a long time, and in Japan, because I was still in Japan,  
 1093 especially...  
 1094  
 1095 *You see, exactly, yeah.*  
 1096

1097 ...even if the wind, if the wind moved, I, I, it was like as if my heart would stop...  
1098  
1099 *Yeah.*  
1100  
1101 ...and I said it to my, my, eh, a best friend who had lived in Japan but wasn't there for the  
1102 earthquake, she was down in Singapore, {redacted}, she, I was, eh, I was talking to her,  
1103 like, every week, and I said to her, "Oh my god, {redacted}, I'm, like, I swear to god, if  
1104 something moves, it's like my heart stops for a second." And I never reacted to  
1105 earthquakes like that before.  
1106  
1107 *Yeah.*  
1108  
1109 But it was like as if, in that second, for one second, somehow I think a big one's going to  
1110 come again, or something, or it's going to be the big one, and I was like, [laughter] "I  
1111 can't live like this."  
1112  
1113 *I know. I know exactly.*  
1114  
1115 So, anyway, yeah, like, and I did, I did get that skin, ehm, allergy that I'm going to have  
1116 to carry for ten or fifteen years.  
1117  
1118 *Yeah, actually, having said that, I want to make sure, there's one question I had just*  
1119 *about...*  
1120  
1121 *Yeah.*  
1122  
1123 *...this talking about this. I hope I haven't made you feel more stressed...*  
1124  
1125 No, no, no, no...  
1126  
1127 *...ehm, I want to.*  
1128  
1129 ...not more stressed, but I did actually once or twice get a little bit emotional thinking  
1130 about, like, now that I'm home, thinking about, you know, oh my god, how worried my  
1131 parents were. Do you know what I mean? At the time. I just remember, when I was  
1132 talking about what my dad said, and now when I think about it, at the time, you know, it,  
1133 I wasn't, it didn't upset me, but now thinking about what my dad said...  
1134  
1135 *Yeah.*  
1136  
1137 ...on the phone, you know.  
1138  
1139 *That's fascinating, because I had a lot of the same feelings as you about, I felt a kind of a*  
1140 *guilt, ehm, for staying over there when my parents were so worried about it, and, ehm,*  
1141 *and I wouldn't...*  
1142  
1143 I'm not anxious. [Note: the participant said this as she was marking on a scale of 0-10  
1144 how anxious she was feeling now after the interview]  
1145  
1146 *...whatever you feel. Thanks a million.*  
1147  
1148 [Laughter]  
1149  
1150 *And if you do in any way feel anxious and if there's anything I can help with, please do*  
1151 *let me know.*

1152  
1153 It's not a bad thing, honestly, you know, what you're doing is great, but it's also not a bad  
1154 thing to sit here and talk about it, like, I, I, I never talked, like, I suppose you feel like  
1155 everybody in Japan was in the same boat, so you don't, kind of, you didn't really talk  
1156 about it ever. And then, I never talked about it to anyone at home because they wouldn't  
1157 really understand, really.  
1158  
1159 *That's the thing...*  
1160  
1161 Yeah.  
1162  
1163 *...I've had no one to talk about it to. Because even, like, obviously, I talk to my supervisor*  
1164 *and that and she's great, but she hasn't experienced that, those feelings, you know, even*  
1165 *about the aftershock thing. People have a certain idea of what and aftershock is and...*  
1166  
1167 I'm like, [laughter] "No. It's the same as the earthquake." [laughter]  
1168  
1169 *[Laughter] It was every few minutes...*  
1170  
1171 Yeah.  
1172  
1173 *...it was every few minutes. Eh, like I completely, that really hit home when you said*  
1174 *about, and I'd kind of forgotten, but when you said about like, even just about the door*  
1175 *jamming or something, I was getting ill, I was getting.*  
1176  
1177 No, well, it was a big thing for me, because I remember that week that I came home after  
1178 it that, honestly, any, any little thing...  
1179  
1180 Yeah.  
1181  
1182 ...any little thing like this, and, it was just, I think I, I, I felt extreme pressure and stress,  
1183 and, ehm, not really to include anything, but I got this, I think it was around the time I  
1184 just had a lot of anxiety for a few different reasons, but, I got, like, this anxiety thing  
1185 where, I can't explain it, it's like, ehm, a lump in my throat, or something, and even now  
1186 just talking about it, like, it's slightly comes back...  
1187  
1188 Gosh, yeah.  
1189  
1190 ...but it was just around that time...  
1191  
1192 Yeah.  
1193  
1194 ...then this skin thing, then everything happened...  
1195  
1196 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1197  
1198 And when I think about it, it's like, eh, something comes up here [Note: motioning to  
1199 upper chest, lower neck area]...  
1200  
1201 Yeah, yeah.  
1202  
1203 ...I can't explain it, like, it's that kind of uhh!  
1204  
1205 *A physical kind of reaction to your feelings of, I suppose, anxiety, or whatever.*  
1206

1207 Yeah. And I think it's time, because that's the difference, I had a semi-, well kind of bad  
 1208 experience when I was in Spain years back when I was a student, ehm, and I thought,  
 1209 "God, this is never going to go away." But, you know, that's, eh, I don't know, 18, 19  
 1210 years ago now...

1211

1212 *Right.*

1213

1214 ...whatever it is, and, you know, now I don't even think about it. But for years that  
 1215 particular thing did, did set off things in me where, like, even years later, do you know,  
 1216 like, three or four years later. But now I don't, and it's, kind of, I think as well it's like a  
 1217 time thing. I, I, yeah, I definitely, I, I, felt like, I have, ehm, I was going to say, if you  
 1218 need more people, an American girl...

1219

1220 *Oh god, that would be great, yeah.*

1221

1222 ...well, she speaks Japanese as well, no, but an American girl...

1223

1224 *That's, that's really interesting to me.*

1225

1226 ...ehm, an American girl, eh, one of my closest friends for, after a lot of my friends  
 1227 moved out, you know the way the turnover there is really big in friends...

1228

1229 *Oh yes, yeah.*

1230

1231 ...so I became close friends over the last year-and-a-half with, eh, an American girl called  
 1232 {redacted}, also been in Japan for close to or more than 10 years, and she really wanted  
 1233 to move on, and I kept saying to her, "Look, it's very hard to make that change when  
 1234 you've been there a long time." Really hard...

1235

1236 *Yeah, yeah.*

1237

1238 ...to move on. Really hard to, to figure out and get a job and get out...

1239

1240 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

1241

1242 ...you know? I was really lucky with this, because they actually approached me. They,  
 1243 they were out in Japan, they met me last year...

1244

1245 *Oh wow.*

1246

1247 ...which was great. Ehm, it's kind of, like, I felt, this is god's thing, okay [laughter].

1248

1249 *It's, yeah, yeah.*

1250

1251 Like, here you go, you know, there's a job for you. Ehm, but she was really struggling as  
 1252 well and I just, I kept saying to her for the last six months, "I think you just need to get,  
 1253 just break the chain to try and get out." "I'll never get a job. How will I get out?"  
 1254 Anyway, she's moving to {the participant's home country} in August.

1255

1256 *Oh my god.*

1257

1258 And, yeah, she came in March, April. Now, she did do some business trips with a  
 1259 company in {the participant's home country}. She's getting a job with a Japanese  
 1260 company {redacted}, and she came and did interviews in March. She's moving over in

1261 August, but she, I was actually on the phone to her earlier this morning. She was calling  
1262 me about, you know, “Do you use gas or electricity?”  
1263  
1264 *[Laughter]*  
1265  
1266 You know, she’s packing stuff.  
1267  
1268 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1269  
1270 I’m delighted she’s coming because I’ve been away so long, I don’t have close friends in  
1271 {the participant’s current city of residence}. So, ehm but I was actually saying to her on  
1272 the phone, I felt like, this is way I explained it, I felt like I was actually drowning,  
1273 seriously, emotionally in Japan for the last two years, found it very, very hard, and I said  
1274 to her like, I’m only home, the first period is tough, I’m only home March, April, May,  
1275 June, four-and-a-half months, but it’s starting to, I’m already starting to feel emotionally  
1276 a little bit better and I think over time that will, that will just grow, and I was just, I was  
1277 convinced for her as well, I said, “I’m convinced you’re doing the right thing.” So I think  
1278 you feel a loneliness in Japan unless you have your own nucleus, you know your own, I  
1279 think you feel a loneliness there that’s very difficult, and it’s within the community very  
1280 hard. So, I do think, I was going to say, like, ehm, I’m sure {the American friend} would  
1281 do this for you as well.  
1282  
1283 *I would love to, if there’s any chance, yeah. If there’s any chance, that would be*  
1284 *absolutely fantastic, and I really, I’m sorry I’ve taken so much of your time.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/7/26 Interview with Participant 2*

5 *Researcher: So then, that's all the, kind of, the paperwork. Sorry about all that. There*  
6 *always seems to be more than you want, but eh, eh, as I said, so the project is about*  
7 *language stuff, communication, also about culture, like, if culture had any sort of an*  
8 *impact, and the way that I'm, sort of, looking at the, you know, the, the people's stories,*  
9 *is I'm just going to basically ask you to, just, tell me your experience of the 2011 disaster,*  
10 *and then work from there, like, eh, there might be times where I'll, kind of, ask for some*  
11 *more detail, or that kind of thing, but, basically, if you just tell me about your experience,*  
12 *that's...*

13  
14 Participant: Okay.

15  
16 ...that's the way we do it.

17  
18 So, going back a week before it. Like, say, everything was completely normal let's say  
19 the weekend before that. We were. Was there even an earthquake? I don't, there was  
20 much, and even going past, before that, like, do you know, my experience of earthquakes  
21 would have been, I'd a good few at work they were kind of just little, nothing on the scale  
22 of what we had, they were just tremors, like, and even, like, in Japan, like, a level 5  
23 [Note: the Japanese seismic intensity scale measures earthquakes from 0 to 7, with 7  
24 having the strongest effect], sure you know yourself, is, people don't bat an eyelid at it,  
25 kind of thing. So I had a couple of those. I had the whole thing, do you know, where  
26 you're in, you have one in the cinema, the whole, the top of it [Note: gesturing to the  
27 ceiling] started shaking, and do you know that was the kind of relative, that was one of  
28 my first, kind of, new ones, and you'd, kind of, be getting a bit, "What's going to happen  
29 now? Where are the exit?". But, you know, really, Japanese people don't bat an eyelid at  
30 it, so, it's just, you know, they didn't [laughter]...

31  
32 [Laughter] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

33  
34 ...[laughter] do you know, so, eh, up until a week before that, we were in Sendai [Note:  
35 Sendai is the nearest major city to the area in Miyagi where the participant lived and  
36 worked], I don't know did we have one of the tremors, I can't remember, but I think  
37 something is telling me that we had tiny, tiny, little tremors, but I can't remember. I had,  
38 eh, we were out in Sendai and, eh, had the weekend over, but then Monday, Tuesday.  
39 Monday, straight into work, like, just like normal.

40  
41 Yeah.

42  
43 Tuesday was normal. I think, the, it was Tuesday, the other one, the big one, it was like a  
44 7 or something like that, and that was the first time, apart from the, they do the [clears  
45 throat] earthquake and fire drill.

46  
47 Yeah.

48  
49 I heard the [cough] the only time I heard, the, the, the fire alarm go off, for the, or the  
50 alarm go off. That was the only time. And, eh, it went off. It went off for a couple of  
51 seconds, and I remember I was in the, the I was in the computer lab.

52  
53 Yeah.

54  
55 [Clears throat] Looked around. There was another fella next to me. His name was  
56 {redacted}. He was from {Europe too} but he was, eh, actually my manager [laughter]...  
57  
58 *[Laughter]*  
59  
60 ...so he was sitting next to me. The two of us kind of looked around, looked around at  
61 everyone else and, eh, lots of other people just kind of looking around, eh, "What's this  
62 alarm all about?" kind of thing, and, do you know, eh, and then there was a fairly violent  
63 shake. But nothing, kind of, broke and nothing fell off the tables. It was, eh, it was kind  
64 of an up-and-downy [Note: the participant gestures an up and down motion of the ground  
65 with hands] kind of a one, so it was, kind of, a lot more violent than the ones we'd  
66 experienced before that, do you know. But like that, it only lasted a short little bit. Ehm, a  
67 small bit of confusion afterwards, though, there was. But there was no evacuation. There  
68 was nothing like that.  
69  
70 *Yeah, yeah.*  
71  
72 There was, everyone just went back to work. But, eh, afterwards then, I got home that  
73 night, and obviously my parents had heard about it, and they, they rang me on Skype  
74 [coughs] so, I was able to tell them, "Ah yeah, it was grand. Back to work. Don't worry  
75 about it," kind of thing.  
76  
77 *Yeah, yeah.*  
78  
79 Like, do you know what I mean...  
80  
81 *Yeah.*  
82  
83 ...thought no more of it, like. Ehm, I don't know was there other small ones in the middle  
84 of the night, but, I think there might have been one in the middle of the night. I remember  
85 that was, it was after lunch, kind of, it could be before lunch. Around lunchtime. But there  
86 was another one night time. They weren't too bad. They were just shake and back to  
87 sleep, kind of thing. But I didn't sleep too well that night or the Wednesday night.  
88 Thursday, I was back to normal again, and work went on normal, like, do you know?  
89  
90 *Yeah.*  
91  
92 Ehm, at the same time we were over there, there was two lads from Malaysia, they were  
93 on a business trip, they were over, they were, they were setting up some sort of  
94 engineering support for the sales office in Malaysia, and so they were over learning the  
95 products, and all that kind of stuff, learning the, how, the design, and all that - I was  
96 designing products, car products over there. Oh wait.  
97  
98 *Work away.*  
99  
100 Just two seconds. [Note: His cell phone rings. He answers. It's his Japanese fiancée now  
101 living in Ireland. They speak for about 30 seconds.] I have a feckin'. That was {my  
102 fiancée} there. I got a fridge freezer delivered this morning.  
103  
104 *Oh right.*  
105  
106 But it don't fit in the front door.  
107  
108 *[Laughter]*



109  
 110 [Laughter] So I'll have to go and sort that out.  
 111  
 112 *Oh, you're going to have to deal with that now.*  
 113  
 114 Yeah, yeah, but sure we'll get over that.  
 115  
 116 [Laughter]  
 117  
 118 *[Laughter] You wouldn't have that problem in Japan, would you? They're usually those*  
 119 *micro things [laughter]*  
 120  
 121 [Laughter] Feck's sake, front fuckin' door, like.  
 122  
 123 *You'll have to be taking things off hinges and what not.*  
 124  
 125 I don't know what I'm going to do. Yera, I'll get it in. I'll squeeze it in somehow.  
 126  
 127 *Good man.*  
 128  
 129 Eh, what was I saying there?  
 130  
 131 *So, Malaysian guys were over, like...*  
 132  
 133 Oh yeah  
 134  
 135 *...setting up.*  
 136  
 137 They were over there, so we were actually staying in {a chain of small, basic, monthly  
 138 rental apartments in Japan popular with students, temporarily transferred workers, foreign  
 139 nationals, etc.}, that was the apartment we were staying in, they were, they were in the  
 140 same apartment block, let's say. They had, first of all, they were frozen because it was  
 141 still snowing, and all that, where we were. And, eh, I think on the Thursday night, we  
 142 had, ehm, there was some work night out or some celebration, or something...  
 143  
 144 *Yeah.*  
 145  
 146 ...I can't remember now what it was, but they were, the two of us were together now and  
 147 the whole lot, and, ehm, that was the Wednesday night, the work night out, the  
 148 celebration. The Thursday night, they were, they were at a loose end in the evenings, so  
 149 that Thursday night, like, I was still doing overtime, so it would have been about 8 or 9  
 150 o'clock, I got finished and I called in to the lads and I said, "Do you want to go to the  
 151 gym or do something like that?"...  
 152  
 153 *Yeah.*  
 154  
 155 ...so, we went away off to the gym and I remember looking at the car - I had the car over  
 156 there - and, ehm, the petrol tank was nearly empty, and I said to myself, "Fuck it. It will  
 157 be grand till Saturday. I'll sort that out Saturday. So the light was just coming on, do you  
 158 know, like, "It will be grand. Don't worry about it. I'll get that sorted Saturday. Too tired  
 159 now." So I went back and went to work then Friday, everything was going normal, no  
 160 problems. There were, we were busy now with, with, ehm, with getting ready for a launch  
 161 for {a motor company} in America and they were looking for samples to be sent, so I, I  
 162 had all the samples ready. They were all, they were at my desk. There must have been  
 163 about 200 of them [laughter]...

164  
165 [Laughter]  
166  
167 ...all stacked in little trays and perfect. And, ehm, after lunch I went away up and I was up  
168 in the computer lab, and I was, I was clicking away at something, I don't know what I  
169 was doing, and, eh, out of the blue, the, the alarm went off, the same one that I heard on  
170 Tuesday, and I literally just looked up. We had no time, now, there was no, the warning  
171 was 2,3 seconds, and, eh, and, then earthquake hit, and it was [Note: the participants says  
172 "oh jesus" to himself] it was strong. It was, eh. First of all, the, the whole, I was at a wall  
173 of computers. Big heavy table, heavier than that [Note: pointing to the 1.5mx1m low,  
174 heavy, wooden coffee table in front of us], and there was desktops, and there was the  
175 towers, and the whole lot were on the table and all that, and there was a divider, and the  
176 same thing, they were big heavy tables. The whole thing, just shook up and violently  
177 back, violently back, and eh, just, only thing that was, there was windows breaking, there  
178 was pictures and all that falling off the walls, there was computers flying everywhere.  
179 The only thing we did was, I dived underneath, same as the fella next to me, dived  
180 underneath the table, and we were sliding, sliding with the table, we were going to get  
181 thrown over or crushed, like, so the, the power cables coming from the monitor - the  
182 power went then. The whole place just went black, died. All you had was the natural light  
183 coming in. The windows were kind of tinted windows so it was kind of dark - But the, all  
184 you could hold on to was the power cables from the, on the desktops, and just hold on to  
185 them. We were sliding all over the place, and. But the scariest thing I thought was the  
186 whip. The, the, the whole building - now I was on the fifth, fourth floor - the whole  
187 building, there was pillars that size [Note: pointing to a nearby concrete pillar about 60cm  
188 in diameter]. The whole thing just used flex, whip, and used go so far, and it just used to  
189 swing back, and you, like, if you were ever in a ferry or a, or a boat on, in the bad  
190 weather, and you, you kind of expect it, you know, you go up, and all of a sudden, you're  
191 like, "oh the sky" and then down on the ground. It was that much. And I reckon the  
192 building tipped, definitely a metre if not more, over, like, do you know? There wasn't a  
193 very tall building. It was only six stories. But it definitely, it, it, it tipped over, you could  
194 look out and you were looking at, ehm, out over the side, like, ah it was [Note: at this  
195 point the participant's eyes reddened and teared up slightly] and I thought, I, I said my  
196 goodbyes then. I thought that was it. Swear to god now, like, I, I thought to myself, "I'll  
197 never see Ireland again." I swear, like, and, eh, the earthquake stopped then. Kind of,  
198 well, it calmed down, I don't know, it lasted for 2, 3 minutes. It seemed like ages. And,  
199 eh, we were trying to get out of the building then, but there was, the whip off the, it  
200 started up again, and the whip off the, the violence of it was outrageous, so I got from the  
201 fourth floor down to the third floor, and there was tables up in a heap, there was vending -  
202 the smoking room there with vending machines - the vending machines were all thrown  
203 against the wall. There was huge damage. It was, there, there were products all over the  
204 place, there was tables, books, shelves, everything destroyed. And there was just people,  
205 kind of, just picking themselves up and the whole lot, like. And, eh. So I got down to the  
206 third floor and then it started up again, and you couldn't stand, so, I kind of just went over  
207 the, the, there was a doorway to, a fire door - there was fire alarms going off - to a  
208 stairway, and I just stood underneath that, and I just waited for a couple of minutes, and I  
209 was holding myself trying to stay standing. And then kind of, after a while then, it kind of  
210 died down again, and got, I was able to stand up, and the whole lot, and then everyone  
211 just, kind of, there was a break for about 5 or 10 minutes of earthquakes, so we were able  
212 to get all the way out and downstairs, and we got to, there was a, there was a field, like,  
213 for the, the emergency, like a baseball field, so we all went in there. After that, then, once  
214 we were out, I was happy, like, but, ehm, do you remember actually I was telling you  
215 there that there was the, I was sending products to America? There was a, next to the  
216 office, let's say the office building, there was a building for the, did all the assembly and  
217 that had collapsed. And I was in that before lunch. It was gone, like, it was, and inside

218 there, I kind of had to walk through it a little bit. Did you ever see a hundred-tonne  
 219 moulding machine turned over?  
 220  
 221 *God.*  
 222  
 223 The thing is like a train engine. Just tipped over, and that's what it was like, fuck that big  
 224 like, do you know?  
 225  
 226 *Yeah.*  
 227  
 228 And even when we were out in the, out in the baseball field, they have floodlights. They  
 229 were swaying like mad. No-one would go near them, like, we were all in the centre, like,  
 230 do you know? But eh, after a while then we all kind of, I think it started snowing as well  
 231 then, they kind of just said, everyone was like eh, just, "Go home, I suppose," like, do  
 232 you know? The, you were, your name was ticked off, you were fine, I suppose, that way,  
 233 do you know? So me and all the lads, we all headed back to the apartments, and eh, I  
 234 opened up the door like [laughter]...  
 235  
 236 *[Laughter]*  
 237  
 238 ...and it was fuckin' destroyed, like. There was, I, do you know the way, like, you'd,  
 239 you'd go to a houseparty and the place would be wrecked the next morning, like, do you  
 240 know...  
 241  
 242 *[Laughter]*  
 243  
 244 ...this was nothing on the scale, like, there was, I had a, a little press where I used keep  
 245 the, the plates and all that, and that kind of stuff, just in the door, it was only small, but it  
 246 wasn't bolted to the wall, I bought it myself, just put it up there...  
 247  
 248 *[Laughter]*  
 249  
 250 ...because I had no space for anything. That had tipped over, and inside in it, I had a deep-  
 251 fat fryer, so there was fuckin' oil everywhere, right [laughter]...  
 252  
 253 *[Laughter]*  
 254  
 255 ...that was greeting me when I went in, and I stood in it, and the shelves had come out and  
 256 there was broken glass everywhere, and broken plates all over the place, and cups, and  
 257 everything, and that had fallen that way, the fridge freezer had fallen that way [Note:  
 258 gesturing in opposite directions] and of course the doors opened, and there was food and  
 259 milk and everything all over the place. It was destroyed. Disgusting. Of course, the night  
 260 before, because I went out with the lads on training, I didn't tidy up [laughter]...  
 261  
 262 *[Laughter]*  
 263  
 264 ...so everything that was in the sink was now all over the place, do you know, dirty,  
 265 everything, this is, I just opened the door, and it was getting dark now, it was nearly half  
 266 four, four o'clock by the time we got back. And, eh, the place was fuckin' destroyed, like.  
 267 And eh, opened up the, the bedroom door, well the sitting room, you know {the chain of  
 268 apartments he lived in are generally pretty small and often have a combined  
 269 sitting/bedroom}. There was, the wardrobe doors had fallen off, the, the table was bolted  
 270 to the wall so that was all right, but the chairs were gone, like, in the hall, all over the  
 271 place. The TV was broken, the back door was broken, and, eh, we'd no electricity,

272 nothing like that, and all the stuff for the toilet, there was a shelf over the toilet, of course  
 273 I didn't close the lid [laughter]...  
 274  
 275 *[Laughter]*  
 276  
 277 ...all that was inside in the toilet, you know. Oh, the place was disgusting, do you know?  
 278 [laughter]...  
 279  
 280 *[Laughter]*  
 281  
 282 ...absolutely horrible. And, eh, I had a little jar where I used keep my 5 yen coins, and of  
 283 course there was fuckin' five yen coins all over the place, do you know, you couldn't  
 284 walk without hearing something break. There was clothes, there was the TV, there was  
 285 coins, there was bottles of whisky [laughter]...  
 286  
 287 *[Laughter]*  
 288  
 289 ...all over the place. The place was an absolute wreck. Absolutely destroyed, now. And  
 290 then there was, walking on it, there was just grease from the deep-fat fryer, there was  
 291 milk, there was everything. The place was a wreck. So I literally just went in, walked  
 292 over everything, opened the back door and kept going, and I didn't really want to deal  
 293 with that, like, do you know? And eh, I said then I better, they're going, if they heard  
 294 about the one on Tuesday now, they're going to hear about this now, so, I, the battery ran  
 295 out of the phone that morning, so I had the charger inside in the car, so I went into the  
 296 car. I was able to charge away, and, eh, I, eh, I rang them on Skype, just told them,  
 297 "Look, there'd been an earthquake. It was all grand." Of course, my mother knew - this  
 298 was about maybe two hours after the earthquake - of course my mother had probably  
 299 known and like so I think they were delighted to hear from me and that everything was  
 300 grand, and I said, "Look, the battery is low," and all that kind of stuff so we just, "I'm  
 301 fine anyway. I'm with the lads, and we'll be okay, I'll keep in contact." So that was that.  
 302 And, eh, we had a meeting, kind of, with the lads, do you know, just to say like, "What  
 303 the fuck will we do now?" There was, ehm, do you remember {a mutual acquaintance}?  
 304 [Note: I had met the participant and a big group of other Irish people living in Japan once  
 305 about two years prior to the earthquake.]  
 306  
 307 *Yeah.*  
 308  
 309 {That mutual acquaintance} had moved to Sendai. Two, only about two weeks previous.  
 310 Bigger apartment, and all that. And, eh, so he had no place to stay. There was no trains.  
 311 There was no buses. There were no roads. So, we kind of said, "Look, what do we need?"  
 312 I had all my passport and all that kind of stuff, and eh, I had the gaijin card [Note: 'gaijin  
 313 card' is a registration card that all foreign residents of Japan must carry at all times], and,  
 314 but I'd no money, I'd, kind of only three *sen* [Note: 'sen' means thousand in Japanese - it  
 315 is not unusual for foreign residents to mix English and Japanese when talking with each  
 316 other about money in this way] and all that kind of stuff. So I had only bits of change,  
 317 about three *sen*, but that was grand. And, eh, no food of course [laughter]...  
 318  
 319 *[Laughter]*  
 320  
 321 ...and, eh, so, like, then got kind of, I was like, "Right, I can get what I need anyway,"  
 322 like, do you know, so I had the passport on me, I got a warm jacket, and, eh, hat, scarf. I  
 323 had a little cycle bike, so I got the light off of that. So I kind of had everything kind of  
 324 okay, do you know? You know, everything was kind of okay that way. And then, like,  
 325 "What will we do?" like. There was another fella came down, there was the two  
 326 Malaysian fellas, there was another fella came down to actually check up on them, and he

327 said, "Look, there's a, there's a shelter up the road." It was like a big secondary school  
328 hall, a high school hall, so we went up there and said, "Look, we'll just go up and suss it  
329 out and if there's information," or something like that. This was now maybe 7 o'clock. It  
330 was, it was black dark at this stage, so we drove up in the car and, ehm, and the place  
331 was just thronging with people. And we were, kind of, like, "We'll be better off where we  
332 were." You know, just, just, if they need to know who we are, where we are, we'll just let  
333 them know, give them our address, and we'll be gone again. So we went up there and  
334 there was just, there was just people just all over the floor, and they'd be all like, like  
335 Japanese people share their nice little space, nice neat, and we were like, "We can't hack  
336 this. Not at all." [laughter]  
337  
338 [Laughter]  
339  
340 "This is just way too neat for what's just happened." Do you know what I mean? Too  
341 much, now, so we all [laughter], we used the lavatory, used the facilities and we hit the  
342 road again. So we were in the car and I knew the car was kind of running low on petrol so  
343 I said, "We'll go for a quick drive just to see what the damage was." So we drove just  
344 literally, ehm, you could drive along the *shinkansen* [Note: Japanese bullet train] line and  
345 it was just now a road that is used for the farmers going out to the rice fields, and, eh, we  
346 were driving along, the road is kind of icy now, and, eh, all of a sudden, a massive  
347 fuckin' hole in the road. So we just barely missed that, got around it [laughter]...  
348  
349 [Laughter]  
350  
351 ...skidded and just missed it, like. Imagine that like [laughter]. So we kept going anyway,  
352 got around that, and were like, "This is fairly fucked now, so!" There's a road actually, it  
353 is called {redacted}, that goes through {the area of Miyagi where the participant lived},  
354 from {that area} to Sendai. It actually goes all the way down to Tokyo, but it is one with  
355 traffic lights and it would take you a week to drive it. So we went up onto {that road},  
356 and {our mutual acquaintance} was kind of hinting like, "Would you drop me to  
357 Sendai?" And I was like, "I don't know would we have enough petrol to get there and  
358 back." It was about 30 or 40 kilometres there and back, like. So I said, "Look, we'll go up  
359 to the road and just have a look." It was chock-a-block, chock-a-block, now. There was  
360 nothing moving. So like everyone had the same idea, or something, do you know? So we  
361 just went up, turned the car and then came back down again, and said, "Look, fuck this.  
362 We'll just go back to the apartments and just see what we can do, " like, do you know?  
363 We went away back there, parked up the car, and, eh, I tried park up the car, turned on the  
364 lights, and see if I could throw a bit of light into the apartment - I had the ground floor so  
365 - try and throw a bit of light into the apartment, see if I could sort it out and went in, and  
366 there was just fuckin' stuff everywhere. So I decided, "Fuck it. I'll sleep in the back of  
367 the car. " And, eh, {our mutual acquaintance} was there, and I said, "{redacted}, you just,  
368 look, you could stay there now as well," and then {another Irish co-worker} was only -  
369 {redacted} - he was only after coming out, he was only there maybe two months, do you  
370 know the way he did the same kind of thing we had [Note: both the participant and I had  
371 been placed in our respective Japanese employers by the same employment program] so  
372 he was new, and he was kind of a bit lost and that, so I was like, "{new co-worker's  
373 name}, jump in there as well. So the three of us were there and never met this fella now  
374 in my life...  
375  
376 [Laughter]  
377  
378 There was a yank, and he was a teacher, and, eh, [laughter] he was, do you know Mr  
379 Bean, like, he looked the exact same way. We seen this fella, the only experience we had  
380 of him before was, he was talking to himself. We didn't know what was wrong with him,  
381 [laughter] do you know? He was there, kind of, like, there was two teachers staying at

382 {that group of apartments}, one of them was from Mississippi or somewhere like that,  
383 and he was a sound fella, the whole lot. And this other fella, he used to hang around with,  
384 teach with, he used never say hello to anyone, and the whole lot, and just do his own  
385 thing. He was just one of those fellas who did his own thing. Seen your man coming  
386 down to the car park and he was doing all this kind of thing [Note: gestures rubbing his  
387 head and shaking his head from side to side] panicking, lost the fuckin' plot altogether.  
388 And he came over talking to us, and so we were there, "What the fuck is this fella going  
389 to do?" [laughter]...

390  
391 *[Laughter]*  
392

393 ... "What?" And it was such a serious situation. It was, kind of, half laughable as well,  
394 like, do you know? And we were like, "What the fuck is wrong with your man?" kind of  
395 thing. And he came over to the car and, eh, and it kind of dawned on me as he was  
396 coming over the car like, "He hasn't fuckin' said a word to any one of us in so long. He's  
397 coming over now." And the poor fella is in an awful state, like, do you know I was just  
398 like, do you know, "If you're stuck," I said, we, look, we told him, "everyone is gone up  
399 to that, that hall, if you want to go up there," like, do you know what I mean, "there's a  
400 roof over your head and you'll be with people," and all that kind of stuff. And I said, "It's  
401 fuckin' chaotic up there," like, do you know, "we're not going to go up there." And he  
402 was, kind of, humming and hawing and he was doing all this kind of pacing, and all this  
403 kind, he didn't know what to do, panicking, like. And I said, "Look, jump into the car  
404 there, you'll be alright." We didn't know him really because, you know, so we did all the  
405 introductions and all that. He was, eh [laughter], he was something else, now. What was  
406 his fuckin' name again? It was, eh, I don't know what. I can't remember his name now.  
407 He, he, I became Facebook friends with me after but that was all. Accept and just do  
408 nothing else [laughter]...

409  
410 *[Laughter]*  
411

412 ...do you know? It was, eh, he used talk to himself in the third person. Do you know? And  
413 he was like, [Note: putting on an American accent] "Oh my god, momma's going to be  
414 asking," - I'll just call him John - "Oh my god, and momma's going to be like, 'What's  
415 happened to John?' John, and John doesn't know what has happened to John." And we  
416 were getting all this, he was panicking, losing the fuckin' plot. So, we were like, this was  
417 getting late now and, eh, the parents rang then and, eh, they were saying, "What are ye  
418 doing for the night?" and it was like, "We don't know. We're here for the moment. But,  
419 eh, {our mutual acquaintance} is going to Sendai," and all this kind of stuff, and it was  
420 like, "Keep away from Sendai, there's a tsunami coming." And we were like, "What? A  
421 tsunami?" We were, we were just about to go, like, do you know what I mean, a couple of  
422 minutes ago [laughter], we'd just come back. Only for the fact of the traffic, we'd have  
423 gone there, like, do you know? So then we were like, "What? A tsunami" And she was  
424 like, "Yeah, yeah, a tsunami. Don't go near, don't go anywhere near Sendai." And I was  
425 like, "Right, right, right, don't, we won't go to Sendai so, " like, do you know? And, then,  
426 eh, that was grand. Quick phone call come up again, and, eh, it started snowing then  
427 outside, and, eh, they were like, another phone call back, and it was like, "Did you hear  
428 about the, the nuclear power plants?" And I was like, "No." "The tsunami had hit them,  
429 and now they were worried about the nuclear power plant." But there was another place,  
430 then, Ishinomaki, which was near enough to us on the coast, just say north of Sendai, a  
431 little town, where they had a power plant, and that was after going on fire, and they had  
432 this already, Sky News had it, like, do you know? And, eh, they were saying, "Is this  
433 place near enough to ye?" And we were like, "Yeah. It's only over the road." [laughter]  
434 Thinking that, oh, well, we were kind of telling that, oh, the earthquake had stopped, but  
435 as a matter of fact, it was like being out at sea. They were constant. The whole time, they

436 hadn't let up, and even, like, you were getting to level sixes, level sevens, "Fuck that.  
 437 They're grand, like." [laughter]  
 438  
 439 *[Laughter]*  
 440  
 441 Do you know what I mean, like? Walk around, and we had our sea legs at that stage...  
 442  
 443 *[Laughter]*  
 444  
 445 ...we were grand, do you know? But, eh, we didn't know anything about the tsunami that  
 446 was coming, we didn't know anything about the, about the power plants blowing up. And  
 447 this one was on fire and there was, there was another fella then from, he'd done an  
 448 internship, he was from Germany. Of course, he fuckin' got on Facebook. Do you know  
 449 the way you can look at Facebook on the phones, and the whole lot. And he was like,  
 450 yerra, he was panicking us a small bit, like, and he was saying, "This place here, you'd  
 451 want to drive away, get as far away, it's going to blow," and all this kind of stuff. And we  
 452 were there, "What the fuck will we do?" like, do you know what I mean like.  
 453  
 454 *Yeah.*  
 455  
 456 And so we were like, "Look, fuck it, we'll tough it out." Of course it started snowing,  
 457 now it started snowing this really weird snow. It was really dry, white powdery stuff, and  
 458 we were like, "Oh that's the fuckin' fallout, now." [Laughter]...  
 459  
 460 *[Laughter]*  
 461  
 462 ...do you know what I mean, like, we were having a laugh. So, and we had this fella, this  
 463 yank in the car, and he kept talking about, "Oh granny is going to be asking about how's  
 464 John, and John's not going to know." He kept repeating this, and we were like, "This fella  
 465 is off his fuckin' game!" Do you remember them bottles of whisky? [Laughter]...  
 466  
 467 *[Laughter]*  
 468  
 469 We went in and we found one of them. There was only a drop left in it. We brought it out  
 470 to the car. And we were asking this fella, "Do you, do you ever take a drink, or anything  
 471 like that?" And he was all like, "No, no, I can't drink." He was on these meds [laughter].  
 472 And we were like, "Oh god, we should have just left him go to the fuckin' that hall, like.  
 473 And we were like, "It will be grand. Have a drop of this now."  
 474  
 475 *[Laughter]*  
 476  
 477 This was going on now about midnight now. No comfort at all, like. "Have a drop of that  
 478 and you'll be fine, you'll be fine." So your man took a swig off it, we all took a swig off  
 479 it. And, eh, without saying anything, your man just got up and left. [Laughter]...  
 480  
 481 *[Laughter]*  
 482  
 483 ...he went up and we didn't hear anything for, ehm, about, ehm, twenty minutes and we  
 484 were like, "Should we go looking for him?" And we were like, "Nah, really not he's  
 485 fuckin' grand, like." [Laughter]...  
 486  
 487 *[Laughter]*  
 488  
 489 He went up, and, we think he went up and went looking for his medication or something,  
 490 because he came back down and he was a different man. Do you know what I mean? He

491 was completely calm and the whole lot, and, eh, and, what, what rest we got, we got that  
492 night. It got kind of bright early the next morning, and, ehm, I'd been in contact with the  
493 girlfriend {redacted} and, eh, she was saying, "What are you doing?" Just like, her house  
494 was okay, it was in a town called {redacted} which was about a half-an-hour I'd say  
495 inland from {where the participant lived}. So, their house was okay. There was, they had,  
496 they'd no electricity or nothing like that but, she said, eh, she'd be out like, do you know,  
497 she'd come out and that, because we had no real petrol and that. That night, fuck it, we  
498 nearly froze inside in the car, like. We were running out of petrol, and the only way we  
499 had was ehm, to, to, like, ehm, turn on the engine and get a bit of heat out of it that way.  
500 It was like absolutely freezing. We got through it anyway. The next, next day, then, we  
501 said we'd go cycling, go down looking for a bit of food, like, do you know, and, ehm, we  
502 hadn't heard nothing from work, we heard nothing from anyone. There was no food in  
503 the, in the apartments, like, or anything. No one had really anything. Biscuits and stuff  
504 like that and they were pretty much gone. So we went outside, we went up to {a Japanese  
505 supermarket / shopping centre chain}, and in {the supermarket} there was a McDonalds,  
506 and McDonalds were giving out, like, getting rid of all the food that they had, like, you  
507 know, all the lettuce and the buns and all that kind of stuff. They kind of fed us there. Do  
508 you know what I mean? [Laughter]...

509  
510 [Laughter]

511  
512 And there was a {small convenience store / grocers} down the road from us, and we went  
513 there and, eh, they actually had, their shop was completely destroyed, there were actually,  
514 people were going in and getting stuff off the shelves and bringing it out and selling it  
515 and all that kind of stuff, so. A huge carpark, now, and there was a queue going all the  
516 way around, and we joined the back of it and queued up, and the whole lot. It was, we  
517 were laughing about it afterwards, like, there was people going in and they were getting,  
518 like, pot noodles and that kind of stuff, and stuff that they could, nutritious stuff. A group  
519 of Irish lads go up, and order, first of all ordered, they order forty fags [laughter]...

520  
521 [Laughter]

522  
523 ...that was {the participant's new Irish co-worker}. [Laughter] And I was like, there was,  
524 like, another order, so your man had to go in and get like big boxes of fags, do you know  
525 what I mean? And we sent him back in and said, "Beejaysus, you couldn't go in and get  
526 us some Asahi [Note: Japanese beer brand] would you? And Kirin Ichiban [Note:  
527 Japanese beer brand]." He went in and he got about twenty cans of that, like. And then,  
528 the only nutritious thing we got was the tins of tuna [laughter] and sliced pan. That was  
529 the only food we had. The lettuce from fuckin' McDonalds. There was people looking at  
530 us and they were like, "Do you not need water, or? [laughter]..."

531  
532 [Laughter]

533  
534 ...the water was running inside in the apartments, so we were like, "No, no, we're grand  
535 for water." "Do you not need water? Do you not need like bandages or towels or anything  
536 other than fags and tins of tuna?" [laughter]...

537  
538 [Laughter]

539  
540 That was the food we had, so we went back and we started, and there was nothing to do,  
541 we had nothing to do only start, kind of, drinking, I suppose. So before we went, I'd a  
542 couple of cans and myself and {the new co-worker} headed off and we said, "Look, we'll  
543 just try and get petrol." And, ehm, this was now getting towards the evening, let's say, 3,  
544 4 o'clock. And {the participant's girlfriend} wasn't able to come because she, her house  
545 was just too bad, do you know what I mean? It was just all, I said, "Look, I'm okay here



546 with the lads. I'll tough it out another for another night and I'll see you Sunday." So,  
547 eh, then on, we went away and we were looking for petrol and it was the longest queue.  
548 It was, like, do you know, do you know, 5 o'clock going through the tunnel here.  
549  
550 *Yeah.*  
551  
552 It was, it was absolutely mayhem. There was people, people even standing and walking,  
553 they had their cans, and the whole lot, so we said, "Fuck it. We'll join it, " you know,  
554 and, eh, by the time we got to the end of the queue, they were rationalizing, rationing the  
555 petrol, by the time we got to the end of the queue, there was, you only could get two *sen*  
556 worth of petrol, which is actually, kind of, half fill the car. But, eh, the boys that were  
557 leading us in, and that, I first of all went up to them, and I was like, "Ah we'll just sneak  
558 in there like." And, "No-one will know, just let us in, let us in, like." And they was like,  
559 "No, you have to join the back of the queue." So we sort of said, "Fuck it, grand" So we  
560 drove around, all the way around about 2, 3 hours later, we got in and, eh, we were kind  
561 of pushing the car, like, and it would still start, she'd catch and she'd still start on you, but  
562 your man must have recognized me, and I tried to start it and she wouldn't start and there,  
563 I was like, "You should have let me in first, now."  
564  
565 *[Laughter]*  
566  
567 "You'll have to push it now. And they were giving out, is all I'll say, and they were  
568 coming over to push it and then, I, she started and so I was like, I gave her a bit of juice,  
569 like, and was like, "She's alright, boys. No problem." Had a bit of a laugh with the boys  
570 and we got our petrol and it was like, "Sure if we go up to the next one, they'll give us  
571 another two *sen*, she'd be nearly full then, boss," you know like. And just saying all this  
572 stuff to them.  
573  
574 *[Laughter]*  
575  
576 And, eh, I was just having a laugh with them, and, eh, they said, "No, no, it's only two  
577 *sen*, but if you come back tomorrow, do you know, we might give you, get some more."  
578 So we'd enough petrol and there was a half a tank in it then, so we toughed it out that  
579 night. Or did we? No, fuck it, myself and {the new co-worker}, we went to {the  
580 participant's girlfriend's} house, her parents' house, because they had a generator and  
581 they had electricity. We went that, back to the apartments. I'd been home that Christmas,  
582 I'd managed to get, when I was going back, {redacted} I managed to get about like 6  
583 pounds of sausages...  
584  
585 *[Laughter]*  
586  
587 ...I had 5 or 6 black puddings, and there was packets of rashers and the whole lot, like,  
588 and it can't go to waste like...  
589  
590 *Yeah.*  
591  
592 ...do you know what I mean, like? So loaded them all up and they were, they were all  
593 thawing out so we had to eat them. We'd no way of eating them there, and it was like, it'd  
594 be an awful shame, like, they came this far, and we got them through customs and the  
595 whole lot [laughter]...  
596  
597 *[Laughter]*  
598  
599 ...there was no problem, we've, all this far, like all the way from {Ireland} to {Miyagi}.  
600

601 *Yeah, yeah, yeah [laughter].*

602

603 Ispíní! [laughter] [Note: ispiní is the word for sausages in the Irish language]. So we  
604 brought them to {the participant's girlfriend's} house and, ehm, all her family, like, her,  
605 she has two older sisters and they're, they have a big enough family house and, eh, and  
606 they said, "No problem. Please stay here," like, and all that. They had electricity, they had  
607 a generator out the back. And they'd, her father does, is a farmer, like, and he has his own  
608 plumbing business, so he had a diesel generator and diesel tanks, so he'd ehm, he's  
609 enough, so there was power going to the house, you know, and there was, and they had a  
610 gas cooker, kind of for camping, and all that. So that night we had the sausages and the  
611 whole lot.

612

613 *[Laughter]*

614

615 So we actually done alright for ourselves, like, and eh, let us sleep there, but like, all that  
616 Saturday, we had only, do you know, quick contact with the parents on Skype, quick  
617 updates from the news, ehm, we knew that Fukushima was in big trouble, and we  
618 weren't, we knew that the one next to us was in trouble, but we didn't know how much.  
619 Because they had, eh, electricity, let's say, they were able to turn on the TV. And, ehm,  
620 NHK were broadcasting, and eh, that's when the first images - probably the same as you  
621 saw - of the power plant, and they were from this lens miles away. But we could see the,  
622 the helicopters coming in and dropping water. Myself and {the new co-worker} goes,  
623 "What the fuck is going on here! We've heard nothing from no-one." The embassy had,  
624 rang us. No, actually. I rang the embassy, because they just didn't know who was there. I  
625 rang them and I goes, "Look, there's this fella, this fella, this fella, this fella. We're all  
626 okay. We have no information. But this is your contact numbers. I goes this, this, and  
627 this. I had all that." And, eh, they were happy enough. It was like, but they, heard nothing  
628 from them, they were not giving us any advice. We heard, eh, nothing from work. Far as  
629 we were concerned, they were probably thinking we should turn up Monday.

630

631 *[Laughter]*

632

633 [Laughter] Do you, do you know, I'm serious like. And, eh, [laughter] and, eh, and  
634 nobody really knew what to do. So we were like, the two of us were kind of like, a bit, I  
635 turned around to {my girlfriend} and I go, "{redacted}, did you ever hear of Chernobyl?  
636 " And she said, "No." "You never heard of Chernobyl?" She said, "No." I said, "Well, we  
637 know about Chernobyl and, eh, this is very, very serious. Like, what, what's the news  
638 actually telling you?", like, do you know, "What are they, what are the experts saying?"  
639 Because we just couldn't understand, it was all these new words that we were hearing, do  
640 you know, all this. So we had to get her to try and tell us, and, like, "No, they're just  
641 saying, like, you're okay, kind of thing." We were getting all this, sort of, "Don't worry  
642 about it. They are going out." And this, and, "It'll be okay," and all that kind of thing.  
643 Then, we were able to get on to the, the news on the phones and check BBC, and all that,  
644 and BBC was, ehm, the, what was it, the milli, what's that, the metre level of,  
645 millisieverts [Note: millisievert is a unit used to measure radiation]...

646

647 *Yeah.*

648

649 ...and they were saying they had raised the level or doubled the level from 10 to 20 or  
650 something like that for the amount of millisieverts you are allowed in a year, and, eh, oh,  
651 we were like, "Why are they after doing that?" and all this, and "What is the actual  
652 level?" and, obviously, it broke the first day and they don't want to panic people, and  
653 they were saying "Aw, it is still within the level." And I was like, "Aw, I don't believe  
654 one word, now, that we're being told by the Japanese government." And, eh, the, the  
655 word from home was that the Americans had evacuated their naval bases and their ships

656 were going out to sea. So we were getting all this, and we were like, “The Americans are  
657 jumping ship. The, not hearing anything here, and the Irish don’t seem to have a fucking  
658 clue what to do,” the, the embassy, like, do you know? And, ehm, we were like, “Fuck,  
659 what will we do? What will we do?” So, we, we went to bed that night, and then there  
660 was one night we woke up. I think it was either the Sunday morning or the Monday  
661 morning. I think it was the Sunday morning, that there was, ehm, the alarm went off  
662 again, but, do you know, I was in her house, so it wasn’t, they didn’t have the earthquake  
663 alarm, but everyone’s phone rang at the same time. Everyone. And, eh, her mother got up  
664 and, eh, and was saying, “Run downstairs! Run downstairs! There’s a *jishin*, *jishin*,” and  
665 all that. [Note: jishin is the Japanese word for earthquake.] So myself and {the new co-  
666 worker} were up and out, the first out, do you know? [laughter]...

667  
668 [Laughter]  
669

670 And, ehm, and nothing. Absolutely nothing came, and it was like, “Jesus, they were  
671 hardly just testing the fuckin’ things, like.” And we thought, we thought nothing of it, and  
672 it was like, “Fuck it. It was probably miles away now or something like that.” And we  
673 turned on the news then that day, and do you know that, that image where you see the, the  
674 actual top being blown off of the thing, and I was like, that was on the news now, and I  
675 was like, “I guarantee you now that was at that time. “I guarantee you.” I was like,  
676 “That’s after blowing up now and we’re fucked,” like, do you know what I mean? And  
677 we were, the two of us were kind of like, “What the fuck will we do?” We were on the  
678 phone to the embassy and they were “Oh, we, we’re not saying,” I don’t know, but they  
679 were kind of sitting on the fence, and it was like, they were saying like, “We’re not telling  
680 you what to do, but you are in a very serious situation.” I was like, “Well what, come on,  
681 you’re the fellas with the information. You should have more information,” and all this, I  
682 was like, “Tell us what, tell us, are we in a safe area?” And it was like, “We’re not telling  
683 you what to do.” And I was thinking, “For fuck’s sake.” They were, they were helpful to  
684 a certain point, but they were sitting on the fence also. It would have been better if they  
685 just jumped in and goes, “Look, the area you are in is, there’s fuckin’ a load of radiation  
686 heading your way. You should. Move.” That would have been better. So, that night we  
687 went back to {the participant’s residence} because we thought we had work the next  
688 morning, so let’s, we were kind of, “What the fuck will we do? Or that, “We’ll go into  
689 work. Maybe they’ll tell us something.” But go to work, and we were just turned away at  
690 the gate. It was like, “Work is, come back tomorrow.” And it was like, “Come back  
691 tomorrow? You’re having a fuckin’ laugh, do you know what I mean? This is stupid. Do  
692 you actually think we’re going to work? That building is gone!” [laughter]...

693  
694 [Laughter]  
695

696 So I said to {the new co-worker}, like, do you know, “They’re only going to fuckin’  
697 make us cook and, or clean for, and tidy up, so there, we’re all, no panic. There would be  
698 no work done anyway for a while.” We had seen that the moulding machines were gone,  
699 like, do you know, and there was computers smashed all over the place, we knew all that,  
700 so I was like, “They’re only going to be cleaning up anyway. We’re in no rush to go back  
701 to work. We won’t be actually, meeting work deadlines, that’s the kind of the...

702  
703 Yeah.  
704

705 ...just, it’d be just helping-out work. So I said, “Look, we’re in no panic anyway to go and  
706 work.” [laughter] So, do you remember that American fella that I was telling you about  
707 on the Friday night? We went back to the apartments, right, and there was two Czech lads  
708 there, they were, they were there, and they were kind of, “What the hell will we do? What  
709 will we do?” And, eh, there was, {our mutual acquaintance} at this stage had gone back  
710 to Sendai. There was a bus he got on Saturday. So myself and {the new co-worker}, eh,

711 {another Irish co-worker} was there and he was the kind of fella who would do his own  
 712 kind of thing anyway, and he'd, he'd all, like, eh, he was kind of hanging around with the  
 713 Czechs but he was kind of, he was leaving anyway. He'd done his, his going-away party  
 714 the week before and he was only, because he was waiting around for his last paycheck...  
 715  
 716 *Yeah.*  
 717  
 718 ...do you know what I mean, like? [Laughter] He wasn't, that's why he was, so he was  
 719 kind of holding on, he wanted to work and he was going to get money, like, do you know,  
 720 after that he was gone anyway, he was finishing the Wednesday, the Wednesday, I think  
 721 it was. Whatever, the earthquake was on the 11th, he was waiting for the 15th, the pay  
 722 day and then he was gone anyway, that was his last day. So, ehm, he was kind of hanging  
 723 around doing the whole thing, but he was, he said he was going to tough it out, stay on.  
 724 At this stage, myself and {the new co-worker} were like, "What the fuck, what'll we  
 725 fuckin' do, like? Will we just jump ship?" and all that, like. It was like, "I don't know, I  
 726 don't know. What'll we do with work," and all this kind of stuff. And there was no  
 727 direction from anyone. So we, we, ehm, we were around the apartments anyway, and the  
 728 yank was there, the Malaysian fellas were there. I felt sorry for them, because they were,  
 729 didn't know what to do, like, because they just wanted to go, getting, they had no  
 730 affiliation to the place, they were only on a business trip. They just wanted to jump on the  
 731 first plane and get out of there. And they were waiting on work, do you know? They had  
 732 no way of, they had no Japanese, do you know what I mean, they were just, they had  
 733 English, and they had Mandarin, whatever they speak in, ehm, Malaysia, and, ehm,  
 734 they'd, they'd no way how to, no way how to, they, they didn't know how to get to  
 735 Tokyo, they didn't know anything, there was no direction there. I felt kind of sorry for  
 736 them, but like what could you do? Just kind of chatting away to them, and, eh, all of a  
 737 sudden this big, ehm, hi-ace van came. Blacked out windows, the whole lot. Military  
 738 fellas jumped out and goes - I can't fuckin' think of his name now - "Do you, have you  
 739 seen this fella?" And eh, the American fella, your man - I can't fuckin' think of his name.  
 740 John, let's say - "Have you seen John?" And we were going like, at this stage now we  
 741 were fuckin' hungry [laughter]...  
 742  
 743 *[Laughter]*  
 744  
 745 ...do you know what I mean? There was no food, do you know, and, and all the food had  
 746 gone, and we were like, [laughter] do you know, "If you want information, we want  
 747 food," kind of thing [laughter]...  
 748  
 749 *[Laughter]*  
 750  
 751 ... "You must have water, or something like that, or something we could fuckin' get off of  
 752 ye."  
 753  
 754 *[Laughter]*  
 755  
 756 And they were very, very serious, very strict military, like, do you know?  
 757  
 758 *US military or Japanese military?*  
 759  
 760 US military. And, ehm, and we were like, "Ah yeah, he's over there now, but come on,  
 761 give us something. You have all this water." So he gave the fuckin' American some  
 762 fuckin' water and everything. "Fuck you, anyway, like, do you know, driving around in  
 763 your big fuckin' car with your air conditioning. We're fuckin' starving here." [laughter]  
 764  
 765 *[Laughter]*

766  
767 And that kind of thing, but they were having none of it. They were on business, kind of.  
768 They were serious types. And, ehm, apparently, the, your man, this fella, his parents had  
769 panicked and rang the embassy, and the embassy got on the nearest, eh, American base,  
770 or something, and sent the, the crew of the people to come and find this fella and get  
771 information on him, and that's how they ended up there, so we were like, "Yeah, you  
772 man's over there. You can have him!" [laughter]...  
773  
774 *[Laughter]*  
775  
776 ...kind of thing. Sour bastards wouldn't give us anything, like, do you know? So, eh, the,  
777 so, we knew like when that was happening, and they obviously got information, and, eh,  
778 from them, and we were like, "What are the Americans telling ye there?" They were  
779 saying, "Yeah, I think we should leave, like." And, on to the embassy again in Tokyo, the  
780 Irish Embassy. I was like, "Well, what are ye fuckin' doing now?" like, do you know  
781 what I mean. I was like. "You are in a very serious situation, but, ehm, it's up to you  
782 basically." And I was just like, "Fuck's sake," do you know? So that evening, the  
783 Monday, we went back to {my girlfriend's} house. It was like, no point in staying where  
784 we were. So we drove way back, and, eh, and, eh, fuckin' Monday then, stayed there and  
785 then on Tuesday [Note: rubs face with hands as if trying to remember] Monday, there,  
786 we, we, we got a phone call from {our mutual acquaintance who had gone back to  
787 Sendai}, and {where my girlfriend's} house was, we had no reception for whatever  
788 reason, so we had to go out the road a small, little bit, the phone was kind of turned on,  
789 and the amount of messages that came through in one go, it was like, "Oh no,  
790 something's after happening." So {our mutual acquaintance} had sent me a message and  
791 it was then we rang {him}, and he said, "Have you not heard? Have you not heard?  
792 They're telling us to get out now. They're, they're sending a car to Sendai." The, and the,  
793 eh, he was getting on it, and he was like, "You've an hour to get to this place." And I was  
794 like, "You'd think they'd have fuckin' told us," like, do you know what I mean, like? All,  
795 "We're here, we're sitting around twiddling our thumbs." And, myself, rang your man,  
796 and was like, "What are we to do?" And he was like, "Yeah, you should get out of the  
797 area." And I was like, "I fuckin' rang you there the other day and just this morning and  
798 you gave no fuckin' information on this. What do you mean get out of the area now?  
799 Like, how serious is this?" "You should, you should move now," like, do you know? And  
800 I was like, "Move where." And he was like, "Where are you?" like. "I'm in {an inland  
801 area of Miyagi}, it's a little," - I had to tell him on the map where it was, and he was like,  
802 "Can ye get a, can ye get away from Fukushima?" "What do you mean get away from  
803 Fukushima?" "I said. "We can go west, but all those mountains are frozen." He was like,  
804 "Go west, go as far west as you can. Just get petrol and keep going," and all this, and I  
805 was like - this fella now - I was like, "No, no, that's not the right plan at all, " like, do you  
806 know? "have you ever been to the mountains in Japan? Have you ever been to them in  
807 winter?" [laughter]...  
808  
809 *[Laughter]*  
810  
811 ...do you know? "If we go that way, you can, we're going, we're going to run out of  
812 petrol and freeze." I was like, "No, no, no, that's not the right plan at all." So myself and  
813 {the new co-worker} were going, "What the fuck will we do?" Went back to {my  
814 girlfriend's} place, and we said, "Look, they're telling us go, and we think you should,"  
815 We said to {my girlfriend}, "Do you want to? I know you want to be with your family,  
816 and all that. You know, you should consider going." And they said, no, they were going  
817 to stay, and all this. And I said, myself and {the new co-worker}, they were like, "You  
818 should, look ye, kind of, go." And, "Fuck it. We'll go to Osaka." Because we were on to  
819 the lads in Tokyo, do you remember the lads from (indistinct)? And they said they were  
820 going to Osaka. So I said, "Look, we'll try and go to get as far to Osaka as we can."

821 [Note: the participant started playing briefly with a pen in his hand]. So back up to {the  
822 participant's residence} that night. And, eh, we got a, actually there was no buses to  
823 Sendai, but there was a taxi, so between the two of us we got a taxi to Sendai. We  
824 actually bartered with your man [laughter]...

825  
826 [Laughter]  
827

828 ...35 euros each brought us all the way to the bus station. Some bus station. It wasn't the  
829 main one in Sendai. And from that then we got the last bus from there to Yamagata. And  
830 we, and there, we booked into a hotel and would you believe that was the hotel, whatever  
831 hotel we booked into, we met the yanks. [Laughter] And there was three of them. And  
832 they were there, "What are ye doing?" And it was like, yeah they were, they had made up  
833 their mind, they were going back. San Francisco and all this kind of stuff, and California  
834 and all. And we were like, "Yeah, we're going to Osaka. But we haven't, I haven't made  
835 up my mind yet." And then, ehm, that, kind of, turned into a kind of competition then,  
836 where we were going to, the idea was - we had no flights or nothing - we would go to  
837 Tokyo, sort it from Tokyo, try and get flights from either Tokyo or Osaka, so. The idea  
838 was go from, eh, Yamagata, to Tokyo, to Narita [Note: location of main airport in Japan],  
839 try and do something from there, or go to Osaka. and go to Osaka, and/or so. We, ehm,  
840 we were able to get food, and all that. Went to would you believe a restaurant, an  
841 izakaya, that night. Yamagata was open to business, like, do you know, they had  
842 electricity, they had power, they had the whole lot. They were getting earthquakes and all  
843 that, but, eh, they seemed to be, they seemed to be fairly normal, like, but fierce kind of,  
844 a weird kind of air of something happening in the background. And we just didn't know  
845 what it was, and we were like, "That definitely has blown up. We saw it." And we heard  
846 nothing. There was nothing coming through and everyone was saying, "Oh, it's all within  
847 the levels," and all this kind of stuff, and all this was all the information. And it was like,  
848 "No. They're lying. That, that, stonewall lying." And, eh, so we went from, the plan there  
849 was the Americans said they were going from there, getting a bus the next morning to  
850 some train, some station that had on the other coast that had the *shinkansen* [Note:  
851 Japanese bullet train] going down to Tokyo, so they were going. So that's what we did.  
852 We went, we got on the same bus. Woke up the next morning and the, of course the  
853 yanks beat us to the bus, like, and [laughter]...

854  
855 [Laughter]  
856

857 ...and, eh, we were there going, "Fuck them anyway," do you know? They weren't  
858 helping us at all, like, do you know? And we were kind of pissed off with the fellas that  
859 came in the truck and the whole lot, and they were going, doing their own thing, and they  
860 weren't giving us any information. We helped them out a small, little bit, like, so fuck  
861 them anyway. So we got to this, the *shinkansen*, and it was like, myself and {the new co-  
862 worker} turned around and says, "We'll beat them to fuckin' Tokyo." [laughter]

863  
864 [Laughter]  
865

866 It was like Top Gear, so. The, the, the, the queue at the train station was absolutely huge.  
867 There was fuckin' hundreds, hundreds of people at this tiny little train station, like, do  
868 you know, and, eh, it was a local train station, actually, to the next train station that had  
869 the *shinkansen*. That's how it was. And at this local train station, there was, like, queues  
870 and queues of people. So we were just like, "There has to be a better way." So we went  
871 into, ehm, a H.I.S., do you know, the tourist information place, the travel agent, and we  
872 were like, "Where is the nearest airport?" And they said, eh, "Oh there's one actually just  
873 7 kilometers away." And we were like, "What is the chances of getting a flight from here  
874 to Osaka?" And, eh, and she said, "Oh yeah, you've to go from here to Haneda [Note:  
875 biggest airport directly in Tokyo] and change, and, eh, or get from here to Haneda and

876 then from Haneda to, no, it was booked out, but you'd have to spend the night, and we  
877 were like, "No, no, no. We said, we'll go, we'll get, we'll go to Haneda, anyway."  
878  
879 *And were you speaking to her in Japanese?*  
880  
881 Yeah, we booked the whole lot. She got the, she told us that we'd have to go on standby,  
882 so it was like, "Grand. Where is this?" And she gave us the address and the whole lot. Oh  
883 sure, this was in the countryside, in the middle of the west coast of Japan, right on the  
884 coast now, do you know, and it was deep, deep winter, now, the, there was lots and lots of  
885 snow there. So, we went from there to the airport, and, ehm, went up to the ticket office  
886 and your man was like, "You can go on standby. It costs this much." And we were like,  
887 "Yeah, yeah, grand." So we got numbers, 13 and 14. It was either 12 and 13 or 13 and  
888 14. We were well down the list. And we were like, "Yeah but you'll give us a shout  
889 won't you when the, the flight is leaving," and all this. "Oh yeah, you'll be called," and  
890 all this, and all that kind of stuff. And, eh, we went in to this little cafe, and, eh, we had  
891 just sat down, like, we were just eating and the, having a sandwich, and, ehm, and, eh, I  
892 heard this announcement, and, eh, it was all in Japanese now, but I was like, "They are  
893 after calling our flight and they haven't told us." [laughter]  
894  
895 *[Laughter]*  
896  
897 So, eh, the two of us like dropped everything and ran out in panic, and went up and said,  
898 "You forgot to call us. Weren't you, you were going to call us." And, eh, it was like,  
899 "Why didn't you call us? Are we on this flight? Are we on the flight? Where are we  
900 going to be boarding? You must give us the boarding pass?" And he was like, "No, no,  
901 no, no. We're very sorry. The flight, that was a different one," do you know.  
902  
903 *[Laughter]*  
904  
905 "Your flight isn't for another hour, or another two hours, and you won't be called for at  
906 least another hour." And the two of us were like, "Oh yeah, sorry about that."  
907  
908 *[Laughter]*  
909  
910 So we sat down, we didn't actually budge from the thing, and we were like, kind of  
911 panicked. And we didn't go back into the canteen at all, because it was getting kind of  
912 serious. We realized we won't make the *shinkansen* [Note: bullet train], any *shinkansen*  
913 to Tokyo if we miss this flight. And, we were in the middle of fuckin' nowhere, do you  
914 know? If we were to stay here the night we were fucked, like we were fucked, do you  
915 know? What the hell would we do? All right, we could get money out and all that but we  
916 were like, "What the hell are we going, we'd have been better off in {the town in Miyagi  
917 where we lived}." So I don't know, the, the lady issuing the tickets, the last few tickets  
918 for the, ehm, for the, the plane. You see, it was fully booked, there was only really like 4  
919 seats left. And she said, she goes, "Now please come together everyone that is standby for  
920 this flight," and all this. I understood that. Then, we were the first there, and the whole  
921 lot. Then all of a sudden there was about 20 people and we were 13 and 14. And I don't  
922 know what she said now, did she say it was a lotto or what. I don't know, to be honest.  
923 And she said, "People number 1, number 2, number 12, number 13, please come  
924 forward." And that was us, and we were like, we just came forward and kept the heads  
925 down, gave us the, we got the boarding pass, the whole lot, straight through security, onto  
926 the plane, last two seats, in the back. God! And we were like, "How did that just happen?  
927 How did that happen?" [laughter] There was no-one else called, she definitely called  
928 number 1, number 2, number 12, and 13. And it was like, "What happened to the people  
929 in between?" like, do you know? [laughter]  
930

931 *[Laughter]*  
932  
933 I reckon that, eh, she must have felt sorry for us, or something, like, because we were the  
934 only foreigners. I'd say we were the only foreigners she might have seen in a long time,  
935 that way, do you know? And, eh, we got on the plane and we flew all day to Haneda. And  
936 in Haneda, then, eh, we were in the airport and we went up, there was no sign of  
937 anything for the Irish. There was lots of like embassies had set up, because there was  
938 people coming through and all that. We went over to the British Embassy and they were  
939 very, very helpful. Really, really informative and didn't mind that, do you know, we  
940 weren't English and we weren't, we were, we were just looking for information, and, eh,  
941 and they were asking, "Well, what did ye, what has your embassy told you?" like. "They  
942 haven't told us anything really as such as what's going on, but just the area that we were  
943 in we shouldn't be there," and all this kind of stuff, and, eh, and there was a, we were  
944 asking, "What's the story with the English?" They were kind of the same, but were, eh,  
945 they had all the information set up, people at the airport waiting to meet English people,  
946 and all that, give information and help them get the tickets, the whole lot. If they wanted  
947 any assistance, all that kind of stuff, they were providing for all those things, like.  
948 "Fuck's sake, guys." So we went up to the ticket office, and Air France was the first one.  
949 And your one was looking for 5,000 Euros...  
950  
951 *[Sharp intake of breath]*  
952  
953 ...to get as far as, to get as far as, eh, Paris. And we were like, "You're having an absolute  
954 laugh. There's no way we're doing that." So, got on to the embassy again and we were  
955 like, "What are ye, we're in Tokyo now, like, is Tokyo okay, like?" And it was like, "Eh,  
956 yeah, yeah, yeah..." And it was like, "Look," - they were kind of humming and hawing -  
957 it was, "Look, we're going to Osaka because that's where all the lads are, we'll be there  
958 for the night, and we'll be with a load of Irish people, it'll be grand. We'll tough it out  
959 there, and we'll have a place to stay, and the whole lot." And, eh, they were like,  
960 "Yeah, yeah, that's a good idea, that's a good idea." And I was like, "You're telling me  
961 it's a good idea? You should be telling me this kind of thing!" *[laughter]*...  
962  
963 *[Laughter]*  
964  
965 ... "You should be making the plan for me," do you know what I mean, like? "Just  
966 talking to the English embassy people representatives, they had plans laid out all over the  
967 place, they were set up," like, do you know what I mean? *[laughter]*  
968  
969 *[Laughter]*  
970  
971 But sure, they were grand, anyway, like. But they, we must have been the, the, the  
972 benchmark, do you know what I mean? Whatever we were doing, I reckon they were  
973 telling other people, because your man was taking information from us and going, he was  
974 getting the weather, and the whole lot, and how to do it and how to book it, and how to do  
975 this, and all this kind of stuff, and, eh, how to, to get the money out of the bank, and all  
976 this, because the ATMs were gone and you had to go to the, when we were up in {the  
977 town in Miyagi where we lived} and all that and, the ATMs were gone, so we had to go  
978 into the bank and bring this book, and all this, and it was like, "You have to bring your  
979 bank book and you have to bring your hanko [Note: a hanko is a personal seal that is used  
980 instead of a signature on official documents in Japan] and you have to bring this, and you,  
981 it's the only way you can get the money out," and all...  
982  
983 *[Laughter]*  
984



985 ...all this information, we were giving him, do you know what I mean? We were telling  
 986 him about the mountains being frozen, and the whole lot, and, eh, and that, ehm, we were  
 987 going to Osaka. And, and, "Why are you going to Osaka?" And it was like, "Because it's  
 988 about 2,000 kilometres away from Fukushima," do you know like, and, "Oh yeah, that's  
 989 a good idea," and all this kind of stuff. I say, "I don't want to be hearing this. [Laughter]  
 990  
 991 *[Laughter]*  
 992  
 993 So they knew anyway we were on the way to Osaka, and they were happy enough with  
 994 that, and we were happy enough with it. So we went from Haneda, we got the, the  
 995 *shinkansen* [Note: bullet train], and we rang, it was the couple of lads, {redacted}, and we  
 996 were like, "We'll meet ye in," - in either Osaka or Kobe. Which one do you pass through?  
 997  
 998 *Eh, Kobe, you pass through to get to Osaka usually. [I was confusing Kobe and Kyoto*  
 999 *here - Kyoto is the city you pass through to get to Osaka from Tokyo.]*  
 1000  
 1001 There was one of them we passed through.  
 1002  
 1003 *Or Nagoya, no?*  
 1004  
 1005 No, Nagoya, it wasn't. It was further on. It was definitely, because we were very close to  
 1006 the airport. Do you know the one out in...  
 1007  
 1008 *Kyoto maybe, then.*  
 1009  
 1010 ...maybe be passed Kyoto and stayed somewhere else. And, eh, it was my first time down  
 1011 that far, and, eh, as we just got on to the *shinkansen*, ehm, obviously, there, do you know,  
 1012 mother was panicking at home, do you know, worried, and they didn't know what to do,  
 1013 and I was like telling them, "Look the flight's are, forget it, we're not coming home, the  
 1014 flight's are five grand. Forget it." And they were like, "Ah, well, we'll just pay for it," do  
 1015 you know, like, and all this kind of stuff. "You will not. They're robbing, they're just  
 1016 robbing people there now," do you know, and all that. And mother was like kind of half-  
 1017 panicking and she obviously had rang, she rang the local TD [Note: TD is a member of  
 1018 the Irish parliament] who was actually very, very good. And he had, he was in, ehm,  
 1019 Leinster House [Note: the seat of the Irish national parliament] and he had his secretary  
 1020 ring us directly, and we were on the *shinkansen* and, eh, - his name was {redacted} -  
 1021 absolutely, very, very helpful, great now, and, eh, he was like, "You should stay in Tokyo  
 1022 tonight." And I was like, "Look, we're just after getting on the *shinkansen*. We have our  
 1023 plan. This is our plan. We're going to Osaka and we're going to join the, look, we know  
 1024 them, and we have the Irish lads in Osaka, we're going to try and head away home, I  
 1025 think, and go back to Ireland, because there's nothing happening where we are, and the  
 1026 place is a wreck, and I, there was no food, there was no running, water had stopped at this  
 1027 stage, and there's no electricity and all. It is freezing up there. We're going to go back to  
 1028 Ireland. And if we've to, just, we'll play it by ear, then. We don't know what we're  
 1029 doing, but that's the plan." And he was like, "Shouldn't you stay in Tokyo." And it was  
 1030 like, "No, no, no, this is what we're doing now. We'll be okay." And, ehm, so in the  
 1031 meantime I rang, the parents had been on to my sister about the whole thing, about the,  
 1032 the flights, and all that kind of stuff, and my sister lives in Italy, and she had, ehm, the  
 1033 place where she works, she has contracts to a, they go on business trips, like and all that,  
 1034 so she was able to get on to her travel agent or whatever they are called, and, eh, and they  
 1035 were telling her, that the Italian government had sent out a chartered 747, it was leaving  
 1036 from Osaka, and, eh, there was a ticket as well, like, so, eh, {my sister} booked them, my  
 1037 sister, straight away, two tickets from Osaka leaving the next day, and to Milan, so, we,  
 1038 ehm, we'd no plans at this stage...  
 1039

1040 *Yeah.*  
1041  
1042 ...and it was like, we had told {my girlfriend} that we were just going to Osaka tough it  
1043 out for like ...  
1044  
1045 *Yeah.*  
1046  
1047 ...a week or so, or something like that, so, "We just, we just, don't want to stay here," do  
1048 you know, and all that kind of stuff. So we had, eh, went to Osaka and met up with the  
1049 lads, and the next morning then we went to, we flew out, we flew to, to, ehm, Milan, and  
1050 that's, that was, it was midnight, it was close enough midnight on Patrick's Day, so we'd  
1051 one hour of Patrick's Day in Italy and we woke up the next day, and, eh, like, do you  
1052 know, as regards, we were, we were saying it, do you know - we stayed in Italy for two  
1053 days. It was, it is, two or three days we stayed in Italy before we flew back with Ryanair -  
1054 and we were saying to ourselves in Italy - we kind of enjoyed, it was the first time we  
1055 were able to let the hair down and have the couple of drinks, and all that kind of stuff -  
1056 and, eh, we said like, "Everything that we did went perfect. The taxi, to getting the,  
1057 getting set up in, ehm, to getting the bus in Sendai to Yamagata, getting a hotel, getting  
1058 the tickets, we got on the plane." We were, we said, "The luck of the Irish. This has to be  
1059 something. There's someone looking over us," do you know? And, eh, getting on the  
1060 *shinkansen*, finding it, finding the hotel in Osaka or whatever, wherever, I can't  
1061 remember the name of the city now [laughter] finding all that, finding the lads, and the  
1062 whole lot. It was like, and getting the flights then to Milan, it was like, "We were so, so  
1063 lucky," like, do you know? And, ehm, in Milan, we stayed there for two or three days and  
1064 it was, do you know like, going from that air of panicking and all that kind of stuff to  
1065 Italy was just another world where people weren't really thinking about it, but it was then  
1066 we really kind of got information about the scale of the damage, the scale of the tsunami -  
1067 we were seeing the videos - and the scale of the, the radiation, and all that...  
1068  
1069 *Yeah.*  
1070  
1071 ...and all this kind of stuff, exclusion zones and 10 kilometres around it, and all this, and  
1072 20 kilometres being set up and all, and it was like, "We made the right decision. Thank,  
1073 thank god, like, you know." We went back, flew back then to Ireland, and, eh, my parents  
1074 they live in {the south of Ireland}, so flew into Dublin, it was like, maybe it took us,  
1075 {redacted}, it took me a day or so to get down, all the way down, and then, the next, one  
1076 morning I woke up, I was only after sleeping one night in {my parents' home} and I  
1077 checked my emails and it was my manager in Japan. Like, I'd, I'd tried ringing him but  
1078 couldn't get through. So I sent him a text message and goes, "Look, I'm going to Ireland,"  
1079 and that was it, like, do you know, I wasn't asking for permission or anything kind of like  
1080 that...  
1081  
1082 *Yeah.*  
1083  
1084 ...I had an email and it was like - this was a week afterwards now, so the place, kind of,  
1085 maybe opened or they'd got it...  
1086  
1087 *Yeah.*  
1088  
1089 ...tidied. Or, or actually, it wasn't that, it was maybe ten days or two weeks. And, eh, he  
1090 was like, "We need you back straight away," kind of stuff, and there was, all this kind  
1091 of, he was just, I was just, just, "No way can I do it." So that was another stress, like, do  
1092 you know, because they were just getting back into work and the only one thing they  
1093 could think about was work and I was like thinking to myself, "Do you read the news?"  
1094 Do you not realize, like, that there's a nuclear power plant after blowing up just down the

1095 road? And, if you're not worried about that, do you not know what's going to happen,  
 1096 like? What about food, water, do you know? Is that all safe? Can you tell me that?" So  
 1097 this was all going through my head. And, eh, I rang the, the manager in the, let's say, in  
 1098 {the Irish branch}, because I knew he was going to go out on a business trip out there, do  
 1099 you know?  
 1100  
 1101 *Yeah.*  
 1102  
 1103 And, eh, I was like, "Do you have any information?" and all that, and I said, "Look, I  
 1104 need some fuckin' help," like, do you know what I mean, because your man is fuckin'  
 1105 telling me to go back to work, and all this shit, and he'd be kind of a good fella, he'd be  
 1106 quick, do you know what I mean, very switched, good with answers, good with all this  
 1107 kind of stuff, and he says, "You go back to him now and you tell him that the Irish  
 1108 government won't let you." So, and, eh, so I went on the website and all this, and they  
 1109 had all this kind of information stuff set up at this stage, do you know. They said, "We do  
 1110 not advise Irish citizens to travel to this part of Japan," and all this kind of thing. And I  
 1111 said, "That's my fuckin' ticket now!" So I was able to go back to him and I was just able  
 1112 to just go, "Sorry, but I'm in Ireland now. There's, they're being told, directed by the  
 1113 government not to go back to this area of Japan. So I just, I just can't." "If I go back,  
 1114 after, they can't, they won't help me in the future," I said and all this kind of stuff. And I  
 1115 said, "Look, we'll have to wait until that gets sorted out." So that kind of quietened him  
 1116 for a while, and, eh, but to be honest, like, it was only hit me then, the str, the stress of it  
 1117 and all that kind of stuff. It was like when I got back the first week or so, I was, met up  
 1118 with friends in {the city near where my parents live} and I met up and we went out, like  
 1119 and all that kind of stuff, and eh, I remember I went down to the, one weekend, I went  
 1120 back down to the visit the parents in {their home}. And, like, my old fella would be 60  
 1121 years old and he was out the, in the garden working, he was putting down steps, and I  
 1122 went got down and I went out the back, it was a lovely day, and I went to try and help  
 1123 him and I was just lay down on the grass and I was just like, "If I could go to sleep here  
 1124 now, I would." I was just beat. And I stayed down there for about two weeks. It just hit  
 1125 me then. And every, my mother was like, he is still sleeping, do you know, and I was,  
 1126 like, I used go to bed early at night and sleep all through till about 12, 1 o'clock in the  
 1127 day, like, and this was going on for about two weeks, and, eh, mother was getting  
 1128 worried, talking about, I was just like all of that was just stress like, do you know, and it  
 1129 was just the whole thing like and, eh, had to go to the doctor's, and the whole lot. My  
 1130 mother was like, "You were exposed to radiation. You have to get your blood test." So  
 1131 there was all that kind of stuff as well, like, and, eh, all that kind of died down and, eh, I  
 1132 took about a month off work and, eh, then, like, I was just, like, it still said on the  
 1133 website, do you know, that you can't go back to Japan, and all this kind of stuff, so I was  
 1134 playing that card away. And, eh, but they were kind of like, "You're going to have to  
 1135 do something else." So I said, "Look, I'd work in {an Irish branch of the company}. They  
 1136 have the software there. Maybe I could help you from there. So, eh, we did that and we  
 1137 were, myself and {our mutual acquaintance} did that for about a, about a month, and, to  
 1138 be honest, it was the most enjoyable, it was just, like even though we were going to work,  
 1139 it was fuckin' really, really enjoyable, do you know what I mean, like, we had, the  
 1140 weather was good, the craic [Note: craic an Irish word for fun] was mighty like off the  
 1141 lads, it was just something we missed, do you know what I mean, like, and, eh, and then  
 1142 we were told, obviously they weren't fuckin' happy about this in Japan because they  
 1143 knew we were doing fuck all, kind of all like, do you know? [laughter]  
 1144  
 1145 *[Laughter]*  
 1146  
 1147 And, eh, and they said, eh, they sent us out, our contracts were up anyway in October,  
 1148 and they sent us out this thing kind of, "What are you going to do, do you know, after

1149 your contract?" Do you know, and they were, "Apply for a new extension?" And I was  
 1150 like, "No, no, transfer," like.

1151

1152 *Yeah.*

1153

1154 And there was two choices, basically, of, you know, Ireland or the sales office in  
 1155 Germany. So I put down both, kind of thinking, I didn't really know what the story in  
 1156 Ireland was, if they really had work or anything like that, so I, eh, so from, I filled it in,  
 1157 they were like, "Germany is probably the best option for you, now," and all this kind of  
 1158 stuff. And I was like, "Ah, fuck it, grand kind of thing, do you know?" I wasn't too, I  
 1159 didn't really want to go because the way they, I didn't think they handled that too well  
 1160 because the whole thing was the, eh, we thought, like, do you know, we should have  
 1161 had more preparation, or something like that, it wasn't just, "You're going to Germany  
 1162 and that's it." You're going to Germany or quit, basically. HR came on and we were like,  
 1163 "Alright, so, we're going to Germany. That's fair enough, we don't mind that, but, eh,  
 1164 you're going to have to set up somewhere for us to stay," and all this kind of stuff, do you  
 1165 know what I mean, "You can't just expect us to go and turn up." They wanted us to just  
 1166 drop everything, go, turn up Monday morning, and we were like, - this is, I was going to  
 1167 {Germany} - "All right so, go, where am I to stay? What about, eh," - it was, they were  
 1168 classifying - this was a fuckin' disaster - they were classifying it as a business trip. So we  
 1169 were still getting paid in Japan, we were, like, couldn't access the money, because, do  
 1170 you know, you can't access from over here. We were paid in Japanese yen, just  
 1171 borrowing money off the parents...

1172

1173 *Yeah.*

1174

1175 ...ehm, they wanted us to go to {Germany}. They had no plan, they had no nothing. And  
 1176 we were like, "It's a business trip," so we were, like, we were just telling them, like,  
 1177 putting them, and it was like, "Right, where will I stay for the business trip?" And, and  
 1178 their first idea was, "Right you get an apartment." And it was like, "Did you ever try and  
 1179 get an apartment in Germany, like, there's, they do interviews and all that kind of stuff?  
 1180 And did you ever move into an apartment, and did you ever, sort of, see, they take  
 1181 everything out of the houses, do you know, there's no furniture left in them?" I knew this  
 1182 from my sister, like, do you know, and she was in Italy and they were the same there, but,  
 1183 like, clean it out. Do you know the way we might leave a sofa or something like that. I  
 1184 said, "The whole place is going to be empty. What am I going to just sleep on? Am I  
 1185 going to do this? Is there going to be a, am I going to get a fridge, or am I, what am I  
 1186 going to do for food? What am I going to do for transport? How am I going to do all  
 1187 this?" And all, and eh, (indistinct) and if it's like on a business trip get like, eh, like, eh,  
 1188 health insurance because our health insurance was in Japan. Do you know?

1189

1190 *Of course, yeah.*

1191

1192 We were just thinking of stuff. Are you doing this? Are you doing that? Are you doing  
 1193 this? And, eh, they were like, they were getting, eh, as much as we were getting annoyed  
 1194 with them, because they had no plan either, it was just, be done with them kind of them,  
 1195 like. And it was like, "Yeah, you want us to go to Germany. It's no problem, no problem  
 1196 going to Germany and working for you. And if it was on a business trip, one, the money's  
 1197 in Japan and you're paying me Japanese yen, so you'd want to set me up here." So  
 1198 eventually they got, eh, a hotel, and the whole lot, like, eh, and it was just, kind of, set  
 1199 up. We were basically told go Germany or that's it, like, do you know what I mean, like,  
 1200 (indistinct) like, do you know what I mean? And this was all over a couple of days, like,  
 1201 do you know. And, eh, and then, to fuckin' make things worse, like there's a flight from  
 1202 {Ireland to Germany}, direct flight, on, I think it's a Friday, I'm not too sure, I think it's a  
 1203 Friday. But that meant that I wouldn't get in till Friday night. Or is it Saturday? And,

1204 ehm, and their thing was like, “Oh no, you must travel on the Friday.” They wanted me to  
1205 travel a day earlier. It was actually the flight {redacted} is on a Saturday. They wanted  
1206 me to travel on the Friday to, {Germany} and to, ehm, and to meet someone that was  
1207 finishing up on Friday, so they could show me the apartment. And I was like, “No, no.  
1208 I’m not interested. {redacted} It is a waste of a day,” I said, “So, I’ll just go direct from  
1209 {here}, like, just give me the address, I’ll check in, I’ll do everything, and I’ll find the  
1210 place Monday.” I said, “I’ve travelled the world. I know all this. I’ll be grand. It’s  
1211 Germany, like, they were organized. I’ll,” They wouldn’t have it at all. [Note: suddenly  
1212 the participant looks directly at the researcher and says] I’m after leaving a bit of the story  
1213 out. I had to go back to Japan in the meantime.

1214  
1215 *Ah [surprised laughter]*

1216  
1217 Before Germany, they were pressurizing us, right, to move to, I went to Germany, {our  
1218 mutual acquaintance} went to Sweden. And we were like, “What about our clothes, and  
1219 all that kind of stuff, we brought nothing with us? And what about our apartments? What  
1220 about our money? What about this?” and all that kind of thing. So it all had to be done  
1221 fairly quick. So they, we had to go back to Japan to, ehm, I, we were like, “What about  
1222 our banks? What about this? What about, fuckin’, what about our apartments? What  
1223 about, that has to be all tidied up, and that? And, ehm, so, we had to go back to Japan, and  
1224 do all that, go back, send all our stuff to Ireland. First of all, we didn’t know, the, the trip,  
1225 the trip to Germany was, was, eh, a business trip, right?

1226  
1227 *Yeah.*

1228  
1229 Until the end of the contract in Japan. And we were told nothing from the end of, there  
1230 was nothing, it was like, “What’s your plan after, we’re going to Germany, what’s the  
1231 plan after September?” This was the whole thing about getting an apartment, and all that.  
1232 “Do you think I’m going to rent an apartment three months in Germany, which is going  
1233 to cost me a fortune between the deposit, rent, the whole lot, to have to give it up in three  
1234 month’s time. My money’s in Japan. I have no, no way of setting up, if I’m not going to  
1235 be working there after September with the company, if you’re not going to offer me a  
1236 contract.” They wouldn’t offer contracts, they wouldn’t do that, but they were like, “If  
1237 you don’t go now, that’s it, you’re gone.” And like, “Fuck it, we better go so.” They all  
1238 wanted this done quickly, and we were like, “We have to go back to Japan, get our  
1239 clothes, all this kind of stuff.”

1240  
1241 *Yeah.*

1242  
1243 {redacted} so then it was, they were like, “You go from Ireland to Japan and Japan to  
1244 {Germany}.” And I was like, “Hold on a second now. I’ve all this stuff from Japan. All  
1245 my belongings. Am I getting a, if I’m getting a contract for {Germany}, that’s grand, I’ll  
1246 se, I’ll ship it there, and I’ll hold on to it, and when I get a contract, I’ll have the  
1247 apartment set up, and all that. I’ll have all my stuff there. But until then, I’m shipping all  
1248 this stuff back to Ireland.

1249  
1250 *Yeah.*

1251  
1252 It meant going back to Ireland with it, and I’ll start up from there, and go from there to  
1253 {Germany}. So I went back and, to Japan, back up to {the town in Miyagi where I lived}.  
1254 This was maybe about 6 weeks afterwards, after the earthquake. And, eh, they weren’t a  
1255 bit happy with us, like, do you know, and all this kind of thing. Half-treated as deserters,  
1256 and all this kind of stuff, and - that was by the company now, like, do you know?

1257  
1258 *Yeah.*

1259  
 1260 And, ehm, and we went from there, we did, we went, we did all the tidying up. There was  
 1261 all this shipping stuff here, there, getting it all boxed up, and bringing it to, bringing it to  
 1262 the post office. All that kind of stuff all took time. There for about two weeks, and there  
 1263 was a reason why we, it took two weeks? Eh, I think it was just the whole, we gave  
 1264 ourselves time to, eh, set up and the whole lot, like, get everything sorted and get back. I  
 1265 think that was the only reason. But work, they wanted meetings with work. And it was  
 1266 like, "We were after paying for the flights, so as far as I was concerned, I'm still on  
 1267 holiday." [laughter]  
 1268  
 1269 *[Laughter]*  
 1270  
 1271 "There'd be no fuckin' meetings or turning up for anything. I'll go in and I'll, ten-minute  
 1272 fuckin' job." Went in, met everyone, all the colleagues, friends, and all that, and said, you  
 1273 know, "I'm going to Germany," and all that. So they were all grand. So, went from there  
 1274 back to Ireland, got everything ready, and then they were like, they were, they were like,  
 1275 "You have to get this flight from London," and all this sort of stuff. And I was like, "You  
 1276 want me to travel on a Friday, spend, leave here first thing in the morning, be in London,  
 1277 to make it to {Germany} for 8 o'clock that day, where I could travel on the Saturday, I'll  
 1278 be there in three hours. I'll find out everything. I'll check in to the apartment. I'll do  
 1279 everything." And they were like, "No, if you don't do," - they got really angry later - "no,  
 1280 if you don't go now, you, you won't be able to do it. You have to meet this person. He's  
 1281 expecting to meet you." I did it anyway.  
 1282  
 1283 *[Laughter]*  
 1284  
 1285 I went to London spent half the fuckin' day there, and went from London to, to  
 1286 {Germany}. And your man met me at the airport. But like, he was like, as far as he was  
 1287 concerned it was 5 o'clock on a Friday. He wanted, he dropped me there and he goes,  
 1288 "This is where you work," in the car. Dropped me, goes, "This is the bank, this is this,  
 1289 this is this, this is where you work." Drove me, did a big loop and goes, "And you're  
 1290 staying in here." Half an hour, out the gaff. And I was like, "I came all the way for  
 1291 fuckin' this." I had no idea where anything was, like, do you know what I mean?  
 1292 [laughter]  
 1293  
 1294 *[Laughter]*  
 1295  
 1296 I could have just got the train and just been grand. And, eh, so I knew one fella who I was  
 1297 working with in Germany, {redacted}, salt of the earth, nicest fella you'll ever meet.  
 1298  
 1299 *Yeah.*  
 1300  
 1301 I got on to him before I was going and he met me that Friday night. Brought me to his  
 1302 house. Had pizza, and all that, and he sorted me out, set up in the, showed me like, this is  
 1303 the shop, this is the...  
 1304  
 1305 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1306  
 1307 ...I'd no word of German, like, do you know what I mean?  
 1308  
 1309 *Oh god!*  
 1310  
 1311 And, eh, but sure it was grand. And on the Monday morning - he used live fairly close -  
 1312 he actually cycled from his place to the hotel, picked me up and the two of us went - it

1313 was only about twenty minutes - to the office. So he brought me the first day. And that  
 1314 was grand, sort of thing, do you know what I mean, like?  
 1315  
 1316 *Smoothed the way, kind of thing.*  
 1317  
 1318 Yeah, yeah, it was grand. I had an idea anyway. It wasn't, it was just outside {a major  
 1319 German city}, and all that kind of stuff, like, That was grand. No word, contract at all  
 1320 there then. There was, they, they played their cards very close to their chest. I did the  
 1321 same. As much as they played me, I played them. And, eh, about a week before the  
 1322 contract was up, I had already organized, I had got a job back in Ireland, in, eh, in  
 1323 {redacted}. They offered me something, and I said, "You had fuckin' time enough. I  
 1324 requested from ye all along. I heard nothing from you." The HR fella was done there, so  
 1325 like, "You were down in the office came. You said you would talk to me that day and you  
 1326 never came near me once. Fuck off." I didn't say that to him, I said, "Look, I've had  
 1327 enough. I'll go back to Ireland and it will be grand. So I came back to Ireland and once I  
 1328 came back then, that was in September or October time, and, eh, once I came back then,  
 1329 that was, kind of, for me, that was the whole ordeal of the earthquake was finished. I had  
 1330 a base, I had somewhere to stay, all that kind of thing. I was in a house, not a hotel  
 1331 /apartment, I had normality around me again, such thing. I knew I was going to work the  
 1332 next Monday morning, and the whole lot. I knew all that. That's, and for me then it was,  
 1333 it was grand.  
 1334  
 1335 *But March to September...*  
 1336  
 1337 March to September was the whole ordeal, like, yeah...  
 1338  
 1339 *Jeez.*  
 1340  
 1341 ...so like the actual from the earthquake to getting out, let's say, getting home initially, or  
 1342 even getting to Osaka was, was one week, and then there was the other maybe three  
 1343 weeks kind of just lazing about at home and just getting over it like, do you know? And  
 1344 then there was about a month of working in {Ireland}, and then there was the three  
 1345 months in {Germany}, which like, work over there, I had a great experience over there,  
 1346 do you know what I mean?  
 1347  
 1348 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1349  
 1350 I really got stuck in, like and I really like, and I reckon, and they did offer me a contract  
 1351 in the end at the last fuckin' minute like. And I was like, "Sorry lads, it's too late." And I  
 1352 mean they offered it, but it was kind of a one-year contract and I was like, "No, no, you'll  
 1353 have to do better than that," like, do you know what I mean, like?  
 1354  
 1355 *After all you'd been through.*  
 1356  
 1357 Surely, I said to myself, surely I've proved in the last three months I'm worthy of more  
 1358 than a three-month fuckin' contract and they were, they were like, there was the budget  
 1359 for, and all this kind stuff, and I was like, "Yeah, yeah, that doesn't matter, just put two  
 1360 years, three years down. Not one year, because," Have you ever been to Germany?  
 1361  
 1362 *I have yeah, yeah.*  
 1363  
 1364 Did you ever try and rent?  
 1365  
 1366 *Aw!*  
 1367

1368 It's a, you have to do interviews and fuckin', they want a deposit, they want this key  
 1369 money, up front, and it's really expensive, and one year renting a place is feckin' no good  
 1370 because you're going to have to put down three, three, four months, and like come over  
 1371 there, you're going to have to spend like 6 fuckin' grand to get the apartment.  
 1372  
 1373 *Yeah.*  
 1374  
 1375 Just rent and deposit, and that's including the key money. I said, "I'm not doing that for  
 1376 fuckin' one year to have to just turn around and leave. I'll go back home and I'll earn  
 1377 proper fuckin', I'll earn, I said to myself, I'll know exactly what's coming in and going  
 1378 out, do you what i mean?"  
 1379  
 1380 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1381  
 1382 And that's what I wanted, eh, a bit of solid ground...  
 1383  
 1384 *Yeah.*  
 1385  
 1386 ...a bit of steadiness. So, I left {Germany}, then, whilst I really enjoyed it, but I had to  
 1387 draw a line in the sand and put September to Ja, March to September to bed up here like  
 1388 [Note: the participant points to his head]. Just finish it. And, eh, I came back and that was  
 1389 it. It was grand then. I was normal, and all.  
 1390  
 1391 *And you, when you did that, sort of, mental line in the sand, then things started to just fall*  
 1392 *back into place for you?*  
 1393  
 1394 Fall back into place. Yeah. No problem. Everything was grand. I went to, like, I only  
 1395 stayed six months in, in {redacted}...  
 1396  
 1397 *Yeah.*  
 1398  
 1399 ...ehm, actually, because they, one, it was a long old trek. two, because I couldn't see  
 1400 myself, do you when I drew that line in the sand, I was like, I wanted to really do  
 1401 something, do you know? The old job that I was doing wasn't the path that I wanted to go  
 1402 down, after all that I'd done the previous three years. I said, "It was too different," and I  
 1403 thought my, my, do you know the way, like, I was only after coming out of college three  
 1404 years...  
 1405  
 1406 *Yeah.*  
 1407  
 1408 ...still studying, still learning, I was like, "I need experience." And I thought, like, fairly  
 1409 soon after starting, let's say, three after beginning, I was like, "When I was in Japan my  
 1410 experience and knowledge as an engineer was going like that [Note: gesturing diagonally  
 1411 upward]...  
 1412  
 1413 *Yeah.*  
 1414  
 1415 ...I felt after Ireland, it was after going like that [Note: making a leveling out, flat-line  
 1416 gesture]...  
 1417  
 1418 *Yeah.*  
 1419  
 1420 ...and I knew that if this was going to go on, it was going to start going down, because I  
 1421 was going to start getting slack.  
 1422



1423 *Yeah.*  
1424  
1425 So at that point, I decided I needed to change job, and that's when I got the job here in  
1426 {redacted}, and that, that, that's the reason for that one. So I kind of knew straight away,  
1427 like, that, that, that's why I changed that, like, do you know?  
1428  
1429 *Yeah*  
1430  
1431 That was for that reason.  
1432  
1433 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1434  
1435 It was nothing really to do with the company or the people or the earthquake or anything,  
1436 so.  
1437  
1438 *And now, there's just one or two things that, ehm, that you were talking about that I just -*  
1439 *maybe I didn't understand or I didn't catch right - so, do you remember you were saying*  
1440 *way back at the start that your folks rang you first...*  
1441  
1442 No, I rang them.  
1443  
1444 *Oh, you rang them. You rang them on Skype. Do you remember that they were telling you*  
1445 *about the tsunami?*  
1446  
1447 Oh, they did ring me that time. Oh yeah, I rang them the first time.  
1448  
1449 *Yeah. That was on Skype so you couldn't get...*  
1450  
1451 Everything was...  
1452  
1453 *So it was always on Skype.*  
1454  
1455 Yeah, you couldn't get signal...  
1456  
1457 *Right.*  
1458  
1459 ...where we were. Couldn't get it. It was all over, there was wireless, but that was there  
1460 was no, let's say, phone lines...  
1461  
1462 *The phone signal was gone. Gotcha, gotcha.*  
1463  
1464 ...or maybe the masts were down....  
1465  
1466 Yeah.  
1467  
1468 ...or the power from Docomo [Note: a Japanese mobile carrier], or whatever.  
1469  
1470 *Yeah. Gotcha, I gotcha.*  
1471  
1472 So anytime I would turn on the phone I used turn on the wifi login and that's how, 3G  
1473 was working, so that's how I, ehm...  
1474  
1475 *I gotcha. Yeah, no, because it was just I'd read about the phones being difficult to use,*  
1476 *but if you were doing it always through Skype, that makes sense.*  
1477

1478 Yeah.  
1479  
1480 *And then, do you know the way you were, like, able to look at the BBC website?*  
1481  
1482 Yeah  
1483  
1484 *That again was using your phone through the?*  
1485  
1486 Yeah, yeah. The way that we kept the phones charged was charge inside in the car, I'd  
1487 turn on the engine, which is why the petrol was very, very important to us.  
1488  
1489 *Yeah.*  
1490  
1491 We used it for our electricity and heat. Heating was the first couple of nights. That was  
1492 the main thing, because it was snowing, actually.  
1493  
1494 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1495  
1496 Freezing cold. Really, really cold. And, ehm, so yeah, that was really, really important,  
1497 fuel. So, we was like, do you know the way you kind of go back to being hunter-  
1498 gatherers, kind of thing. What do we need? We need food, shelter and fuel.  
1499  
1500 *Yeah.*  
1501  
1502 And it was, it was. Food was McDonalds and {a local convenience store} [laughter] the  
1503 fuckin' cans of beer.  
1504  
1505 *[Laughter] yeah.*  
1506  
1507 Ehm, the shelter was the car.  
1508  
1509 *Yeah.*  
1510  
1511 The apartment, like, could have got into it, but, eh, there was, it was glass all over the  
1512 place, the TV was smashed, it was just destroyed, like, do you know? It was only in the  
1513 daytime you could do a bit of cleaning up.  
1514  
1515 *Yeah.*  
1516  
1517 Ehm, and the way it was done, like, my, I had a back door, so that was grand, the light  
1518 used to go in there. But then there was, like, a little narrow thing where the kitchen, come,  
1519 hallway was, and that usen't get any natural light at all...  
1520  
1521 *Yeah.*  
1522  
1523 ...because, on the other side, if you opened the front door, there was kind of a little  
1524 balcony overhead which was sheltered by a, there was kind of these little garage things,  
1525 and that, that people can rent as well, and there was no real light coming in there. It was  
1526 very dull and dark, and, like, even during the daytime, it was just too hard. That was  
1527 summertime as well. It was just too hard to make out. You needed a light on, especially,  
1528 there was a toilet, shower-room off of that, like, and there was still stuff all over the  
1529 place. The only thing you could do was push everything back into, do you know, an easy  
1530 position and pick stuff up.  
1531  
1532 *Yeah.*

1533  
 1534 There was bits of glass...  
 1535  
 1536 *Yeah.*  
 1537  
 1538 ..the was broken plates all over the place, do you know, and, eh, so I was, just said, “No,  
 1539 leave the apartment.”  
 1540  
 1541 *Yeah. And, as well, would you have had, like, a car radio, or that, ehm, in, in the car?*  
 1542  
 1543 Ehm, yeah. I did. Ehm, did that work? I think I did but there was fuck all on it, like. And  
 1544 there was no - Japanese radio is terrible, like [laughter]...  
 1545  
 1546 *[Laughter]*  
 1547  
 1548 ...and we only had, like, in {the area of Miyagi the participant lived in}, you only had  
 1549 about three or four stations but I’m nearly sure, the AM stations were working, but I can’t  
 1550 remember the FM - they were all useless, anyway, there was no real, no...  
 1551  
 1552 *Yeah.*  
 1553  
 1554 ...there was no, there was no, we didn’t know what they were talking about, like,  
 1555 anyway, do you know what I mean?  
 1556  
 1557 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1558  
 1559 Didn’t know what they were saying. Ehm, the radio that we did have was, on the phone,  
 1560 you can listen to Internet radio, so we were like tuning into RTE news and all that kind of  
 1561 stuff, and we’d a little, we’d a little jack from the, the end of the phone into speakers in  
 1562 the car, and playing the, that through, the, through that, but like that was, that news was,  
 1563 just, that bit too far away, it was just, like, general, there’s been an earthquake...  
 1564  
 1565 *Exactly.*  
 1566  
 1567 ...but we knew, like, we knew that the place was in big trouble. BBC, do you ever go on  
 1568 to BBC News on the Asia section? That was all about it, and that was a really, really good  
 1569 source of information. It told us, we knew that there was big trouble, like, with the, with  
 1570 the, ehm, the power plants and it was more that reason, like if it was just the earthquake,  
 1571 would I have come home? Probably not.  
 1572  
 1573 *Yeah.*  
 1574  
 1575 If it was, the tsunami was another thing, but in {the area of Miyagi I lived in} we, it  
 1576 didn’t hit us. But, ehm, we were just that bit too far in...  
 1577  
 1578 *Yeah.*  
 1579  
 1580 ..but, ehm, like, ehm, if it was just the earthquake and tsunami, would I have come home?  
 1581 Good question. Ehm, I don’t know. I don’t think so. It was the main thing that we were  
 1582 worried about was the power plant...  
 1583  
 1584 *Yeah.*  
 1585

1586 ...that was the main thing. And we had the information from the BBC, Sky News, to an  
 1587 extent, the BBC was really a very, very good website. Eh, you had the other tabloids then  
 1588 you could log on to...

1589

1590 *Yeah, yeah.*

1591

1592 ...and all that, but we had all our information from that, and the morning that we were in  
 1593 {my girlfriend's} place and, the alarm, everyone's phone went off and there was nothing,  
 1594 and we were, turned on the TV that, later, and we knew they were on about something,  
 1595 like, do you know the way they do all these graphs? They're really good at explaining  
 1596 stuff on Japanese TV...

1597

1598 *Yeah, yeah.*

1599

1600 ...I would still watch that.

1601

1602 *That's gas.*

1603

1604 And it was really, and, the, I think they're really good at explaining. They were  
 1605 explaining it and, eh, like, I wouldn't be an expert on anything, like I know as much  
 1606 about nuclear power [laughter]...

1607

1608 *[Laughter]*

1609

1610 ...I knew that flying a helicopter over it and dumping salt water on it was not fuckin'  
 1611 good, and I knew that that was the last resort.

1612

1613 *Yeah.*

1614

1615 And I knew, like, from reading these articles from these experts on, eh, from, on the  
 1616 Internet, putting up columns, and all that, that like, I knew then that what they did at  
 1617 Chernobyl was just pour concrete on it. I mean there were like people like, "Right how do  
 1618 you pour concrete on it, what do you do?" And listening to this, there were obviously  
 1619 people panicking and all this kind of stuff...

1620

1621 *Yeah.*

1622

1623 ...like, it seemed to be the outside community that was panicking. The Japanese  
 1624 government, there was no information. That's what I found, well, that was my experience  
 1625 of it anyway. There was very little forward, truthful information coming forward, they  
 1626 were giving bits, dribs and drabs, I think they were putting a nice picture on it, and I still  
 1627 think that's they way it is. It's far more serious than what they were, they let on.

1628

1629 *Yeah, because you were staying with {your girlfriend's} family, so they were Japanese*  
 1630 *people...*

1631

1632 *Yeah, yeah.*

1633

1634 *...obviously, and they would have been getting...*

1635

1636 *Yeah, yeah.*

1637

1638 *...the Japanese side of information, so you felt...*

1639

1640 *I, ehm.*

1641  
 1642 *...you felt there was a difference?*  
 1643  
 1644 Yeah, I was like, I said to {my girlfriend}, "Did you ever hear of Chernobyl?" And, eh,  
 1645 no, not a word of it. And, my god, like, you know, we all know Chernobyl.  
 1646  
 1647 *Yeah.*  
 1648  
 1649 And then there was nothing, no mention of it, and on the, in the news, or anything like  
 1650 that and, do you know the way you'd think there'd be somebody go on about it.  
 1651  
 1652 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1653  
 1654 What's that island in America?  
 1655  
 1656 *Oh, eh, Three Mile Island.*  
 1657  
 1658 Three Mile, nothing about it, anything like that, but maybe that was, maybe it could have  
 1659 been, like, I don't know, maybe it could have been foreign newspapers, the BBC and all  
 1660 that looking for news, but I reckon it was as serious as it was...  
 1661  
 1662 *Yeah.*  
 1663  
 1664 ...because they changed the levels of, eh, of the, the, the whatever you were meant to be  
 1665 exposed to, to the double that, not even double, I think they put it up ten times in some  
 1666 places, like...  
 1667  
 1668 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1669  
 1670 ...and they kept putting it up a bit, and they reset it again, and I was like, do you know,  
 1671 I'm an engineer, like, and you set levels for reasons and you don't change them just  
 1672 [laughter] you know...  
 1673  
 1674 *Yeah.*  
 1675  
 1676 ...like that, you know. You go like, "Right, why did they change them? You know, there  
 1677 has to be a fuckin' reason? And the reason is it's pissing fuckin' radiation!" [laughter]...  
 1678  
 1679  
 1680 *Yeah.*  
 1681  
 1682 ...and that, you know?  
 1683  
 1684 *And did you, so, did you ever get any contact from, like, the city office or the ward office*  
 1685 *or any of the, sort of, local government?*  
 1686  
 1687 No, no, nothing.  
 1688  
 1689 *Because you would have registered, like, you had a gaijin card.*  
 1690  
 1691 I, no. And I'll tell you the reason why. Where we were was like a war-zone. We were the  
 1692 last of their worries. And there was people, there was ambulances going up and down,  
 1693 there was people who really needed help. Like, they, if we really needed help, they'd  
 1694 have found, they'd have known, they'd have known. We didn't, they didn't need to be

1695 worrying about us. We weren't injured, we had a place to stay, and we weren't going to  
 1696 go hungry. We were going to find something...  
 1697  
 1698 *Yeah, gotcha.*  
 1699  
 1700 ...we were going to eat, we were going to survive...  
 1701  
 1702 *Gotcha.*  
 1703  
 1704 ...they didn't need to be coming out and looking for us. That kind of stuff,  
 1705  
 1706 *With priorities...*  
 1707  
 1708 And, and I knew, like, there, where we were, there was helicopters flying overhead and  
 1709 there was fire brigade and there was ambulances and police, like, and we knew that there  
 1710 was buildings collapsing, we knew there was, probably even in {the area of Miyagi where  
 1711 the participant lived} there was people after getting killed...  
 1712  
 1713 *Yeah.*  
 1714  
 1715 ...and we knew, like, the tsunami, and the whole lot, like, and it was, I wouldn't, if I saw a  
 1716 Japanese person coming out to us with a little clipboard and going, "Is this you, is this  
 1717 you, like?" I was like, "Come on, man get your priorities in order," like, do you know  
 1718 what I mean, "You're a wasted resource." And that's why they didn't come to us. It was a  
 1719 war-zone, like.  
 1720  
 1721 *Understood, understood. And, like, as well, do you know the way, it was clear, it seems*  
 1722 *that your work, like, didn't give you much information directly after, and the embassy,*  
 1723 *you were giving them information...*  
 1724  
 1725 I was giving them information, but they were very nice, like, I mean, they were, I was  
 1726 giving them information but they were, like, I knew that it was a tough situation for them.  
 1727 There was never any like, even though I was giving them information - I was like "You  
 1728 should have told me that." - there was never any arguments...  
 1729  
 1730 *Right.*  
 1731  
 1732 ..there was never anything. It was always very, very good, very, I knew the fella I was  
 1733 talking to, I didn't know him, I knew, the fella that I was talking to was doing his best...  
 1734  
 1735 *Yeah.*  
 1736  
 1737 ...and I knew that he was fishing for as much information as he wanted as well. And  
 1738 obviously, I don't know, maybe we were the, the people where we were were probably  
 1739 the closest...  
 1740  
 1741 *Yeah.*  
 1742  
 1743 ...and the best source of information for him. But, ehm, they were very, they were good,  
 1744 like, because, like, they were good, like, as in they kept in contact with us, but they kept,  
 1745 they kept on the sequence of events.  
 1746  
 1747 *Yeah, and that was always by phone? Like, the phones were back up?*  
 1748

1749 No, was that, how did I ring them? Was it through Skype? I rang them on Skype. I put  
1750 credit on Skype.  
1751  
1752 *Ah, I got it. Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
1753  
1754 Yeah.  
1755  
1756 *You can do that, can't you?*  
1757  
1758 I was able to do that. I was able to ring them. The phones were working in Tokyo, but, so  
1759 , you were able to ring a landline and all this.  
1760  
1761 *Gotcha. Gotcha, gotcha.*  
1762  
1763 And, ehm, so like I mean, it worked okay but they kind of sat on the fence, but I reckon  
1764 they must have been told, like, when we were there, we wanted information now, now,  
1765 now, now...  
1766  
1767 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
1768  
1769 ...kind of stuff, and that's obviously not possible, to an extent. And they were obviously  
1770 getting their information from, maybe from the Japanese, they would have been told, and  
1771 all this kind of stuff and eh, and they were obviously going, been told maybe, "Just tough  
1772 it out. It'll be okay," kind of thing, and that's what they were kind of telling, do you  
1773 know, like, the way, I mean, we were asking them for should we stay, should we go, and  
1774 they weren't, they probably didn't have that information to give us, or the, until maybe  
1775 everyone was kind of leaving, like, do you know...  
1776  
1777 *Yeah.*  
1778  
1779 ...and all that kind of stuff, and they were like, "Better do that." like. Do you know?  
1780  
1781 *Yeah, yeah. It's, like, it was such a huge thing. It's amazing to think, like, so how long,*  
1782 *it's two, two-and-a-half, no, not quite two-and-a-half years ago now is it?*  
1783  
1784 It is, oh, it is just over two-and-a-quarter years, yeah  
1785  
1786 *Two-and-a-quarter years. In a way it feels...*  
1787  
1788 Longer.  
1789  
1790 *...longer, and in another way, like...*  
1791  
1792 Yeah, yeah, like, so much has happened, like, I changed job, kind of, the whole lot, like,  
1793 do you know, and it's kind of just, like, you move on at the same time, do you know what  
1794 I mean? I don't know whether that's just the way I think, like, or what like, but move on  
1795 and, eh, that's it.  
1796  
1797 *And you still have a link to Japan obviously...*  
1798  
1799 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1800  
1801 *...like, so...*  
1802  
1803 The main link now is through {the participant's girlfriend and now fiancée}.

1804  
1805 *Yeah.*  
1806  
1807 Yeah, I was back there, I went to {the area of Miyagi where the participant lived} last,  
1808 two weeks ago, and to be honest with you, you'd never know that there was a disaster. I  
1809 drove from {there} to Matsushima [Note: a famous tourist spot on the Miyagi coast] and,  
1810 eh, along the way you could see like, I would say to {my girlfriend}, "What are those?"  
1811 And, ehm, the prefabs, do you know the way like prefabs for an office, stacked on top of  
1812 each other, and I was like, "What are those?" and she was like, "Oh, they're the houses  
1813 for the people who been in the tsunami." And they're still, like, they're still in prefab  
1814 accommodation, like, they probably had nice places, living and livelihoods, do you know,  
1815 and all that. But we went to Matsushima and there was the tourist boats going way out  
1816 and no problem and all the shop fronts were open and clean even though they would have  
1817 been definitely hit by the wave. The pier was, I walked along the pier, and there was  
1818 some parts of it were damaged and not fixed, the concrete was torn, like, other than that,  
1819 it was up and running, like, you'd never know. Maybe there was other parts, if you go up  
1820 by Iwate, they got hit bad, maybe there's, they're not as tidied up like. But, ehm,  
1821 Matsushima was grand.  
1822  
1823 *It's great to hear, like, that...*  
1824  
1825 Yeah, you'd never even, you'd never know, you'd never know because, yeah you'd never  
1826 know. I'm thinking back, now, because the piers and all that of course had been hit bad,  
1827 to be honest, you'd often seen a pier here that was [laughter]....  
1828  
1829 *[Laughter] in worse condition!*  
1830  
1831 ...[Laughter] and they'd still be using it.  
1832  
1833 *Yeah, exactly.*  
1834  
1835 Yerra, it was grand.  
1836  
1837 *And do you find yourself thinking back about that time much, or?*  
1838  
1839 Not really. Ehm, I suppose at the beginning alright like you'd be kind of thinking away  
1840 about it, like, but, to be honest, like, everything happened so fast afterwards, it was like,  
1841 back to Ireland, Ireland back to Japan, Japan to Germany, Germany back to Ireland then,  
1842 and I was looking for a job, and then I got the job, and then I moved, and then I started,  
1843 and it was all, do you know, you'd only think about it every so often.  
1844  
1845 *It was just non-stop really.*  
1846  
1847 Yeah, yeah. So, ehm, Not a whole lot, no. Not a whole lot. I wouldn't really stop and  
1848 think about it, anyway, do you know.  
1849  
1850 *Yeah. The main thing I want to check as well is that I hope by talking today, you're, you*  
1851 *feel okay, like?*  
1852  
1853 Oh yeah, yeah.  
1854  
1855 *The main thing, this is just [Note: I pass the participant the Stress Likert Scale to mark]*  
1856 *if, if you can or if you want to after having spoken about it today, do you feel anxiety or?*  
1857  
1858 Ehm.



1859  
1860 *Is it a bad thing to talk about it? Is it a good thing to talk about it? What would you say*  
1861 *your feelings were at this point?*  
1862  
1863 No, I wouldn't be any bit, [Note: at this point the participant did not mark the scale but  
1864 just put the paper back down on the table] talking about it would be grand now. I suppose  
1865 now the only time I'd, always, just, do you know when you talk about the initial shake,  
1866 it's like, "Fuck, I can remember that, like." And I did say my goodbyes then, and I'll  
1867 never forget it. Because I thought the building was coming down. And that's the only  
1868 time I'd ever stop and kind of think like, "I was fuckin' lucky," like, do you know, but,  
1869 other than talking about what happened afterwards, and, ehm, all that kind of stuff that  
1870 happened afterwards I never felt in danger for my life like I did that day. So like, ehm,  
1871 that, it was that initial part is the only, only time that I ever think, like, but, ehm, as  
1872 regards once we got out it was grand. I mean, never, ever afterwards, I felt more in  
1873 control once we got out.  
1874  
1875 *I got you.*  
1876  
1877 Because I suppose, like, there was, I was in control, in a way. I could, like, we were, I  
1878 was in control because we heard the news about Fukushima and we got on a plane and  
1879 left, do you know, we had that decision to make. But the, that was the only time I felt  
1880 unsafe in the area or felt that I wasn't in control of what could happen next.  
1881  
1882 *Yeah.*  
1883  
1884 Do you know what I mean?  
1885  
1886 *So, giving people a feeling of control is maybe, kind of, an important thing in ?*  
1887  
1888 I like to be in control, like, even in the job, like, do you know?  
1889  
1890 *Yeah, yeah, for you then.*  
1891  
1892 That's, some people don't mind, like, tipping away and just doing, following the other,  
1893 kind of stuff, I'm the kind of a person, I need the information. I don't let people make  
1894 decisions for me, I'll put it that way. I'm kind of stubborn. I don't know is it good or  
1895 bad, but I like to make my own decision and right or wrong I'll always stand over it.  
1896  
1897 *Yeah.*  
1898  
1899 And I'm stubborn that way. I could make the worst decision, but I'll fuckin' stand over it,  
1900 like.  
1901  
1902 *I got you.*  
1903  
1904 Do you know what I mean, like? I'd even do that, eh, if you want me to make a decision  
1905 at work or anything, if you want me to make a decision, I'll make a decision for you  
1906 based on the information that I have at the time. No matter what, I won't sit on the fence.  
1907  
1908 *Yeah.*  
1909  
1910 As much as possible, I won't sit on the fence unless I'm sussing the situation out.  
1911  
1912 *I see.*  
1913

1914 I'll have a, I'll try and make a plan and I'll try and do something.  
 1915  
 1916 *I see.*  
 1917  
 1918 And, eh, half that, once we got out, we were able to gather ourselves, get, eh, gather,  
 1919 information was coming in about the tsunami, the, Fukushima, the pla, Ishinomaki over  
 1920 the road, we'd all this coming in and for the first couple of days we were looking for  
 1921 other information, and afterwards we'd got like this decision. Went to work on the  
 1922 Monday and there was no information, it was like, "Come back tomorrow," or something  
 1923 like that, and it was like, "I dare not make any decisions," - do you know the way you'd  
 1924 be looking for people in authority, like, work, you'd look for the embassy, after a while it  
 1925 was like, "Right, we'll make this decision ourselves." {our mutual acquaintance} was  
 1926 heading away and it was just like, work, the decision was made then, we made up our  
 1927 minds, "We're leaving as well," like. We didn't wait for work to come and tell us  
 1928 anything. Couldn't contact my manager. I just sent him a message and didn't bother  
 1929 contacting anyone until we got to Ireland, and, ehm, once we were, once we had that  
 1930 decision made and told them at home, like, that the decision was made that we were  
 1931 leaving the area, that we were going to Osaka first, and that if we could get home, we  
 1932 would get home, and all that kind of stuff. Once that decision was made, I know my  
 1933 mother was a lot happier. Because she knows me as well, like, she knows I'd be stubborn,  
 1934 like...  
 1935  
 1936 *[Laughter]*  
 1937  
 1938 ...but she knows, like, I could kind of make decisions and, I'd make gut feeling  
 1939 decisions...  
 1940  
 1941 *Yeah.*  
 1942  
 1943 ...and, eh, they'd be okay, and no matter what, it'd be nearly alright, do you know what I  
 1944 mean?  
 1945  
 1946 *I understand.*  
 1947  
 1948 It was even like, do you know the way, what made us go to the airport? We could have  
 1949 just queued up. We beat them to feckin' Tokyo, like, do you know? And, ehm, we got  
 1950 there in such a time, like, that it all led on, that we met the English Embassy, like, and we  
 1951 got the quote for the flights, and we knew what that was, and, eh, we ended up in Haneda,  
 1952 and I think the *shinkansen* [Note: bullet train] goes through Haneda, there's something, it  
 1953 was very close together, we only had to hop on the train, I think, and we [laughter]...  
 1954  
 1955 *[Laughter]*  
 1956  
 1957 ...do you know there was, or did we even go to? I don't know did we go from there? I  
 1958 can't remember now, did we go from there to Tokyo, I don't know what we did, but it  
 1959 was very simple, anyway. It was...  
 1960  
 1961 *It all, kind of, eh, it all fell into, into...*  
 1962  
 1963 ..but we had a plan, we knew what we were doing, we were going sightseeing, we were  
 1964 going from here, we were going here to get the tickets to the train, and we were going to  
 1965 the train, and we were meeting the lads, and we knew what hotel...  
 1966  
 1967 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1968

1969 ...we had to book in, we knew this was the plan, we had to get there, we had to book in,  
 1970 there was no going for pints first, and there was no, it was go to the airport, get booked in,  
 1971 get the room, drop the gear, and then we can worry about food...  
 1972  
 1973 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1974  
 1975 ...with that, with the, with our accommodation sorted for the night, we can worry about  
 1976 food afterwards, and all that kind of stuff. It was like, it was like going back to the  
 1977 caveman.  
 1978  
 1979 *Yeah, hunter-gather, just like you said the fuel and the shelter and the food, and all those*  
 1980 *things.*  
 1981  
 1982 Yeah, yeah, all this kind of stuff, like, do you know what I mean? We went back to that  
 1983 kind of basis, and it worked, do you know what I mean, it worked in the, and to be  
 1984 honest, I think, we dealt with it, Irish, we dealt with it an awful lot better than the yanks  
 1985 and an awful lot better than the Czechs. They were kind of humming and hawing. I don't  
 1986 know what it was, we did it an awful lot better.  
 1987  
 1988 *Yeah.*  
 1989  
 1990 I don't know whether it's just we're used to dealing with fuckin' [laughter]...  
 1991  
 1992 *[Laughter]*  
 1993  
 1994 ...getting the shit end of the stick, like, fuck it, we beat them to Tokyo, I'm fairly sure  
 1995 we, while they were in Tokyo waiting in the queue for flights to America, we were in  
 1996 Osaka and we were on a plane, like, do you know the way?  
 1997  
 1998 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1999  
 2000 I don't know. We just had it done, like.  
 2001  
 2002 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2003  
 2004 And, eh, well, we were just lucky. Just lucky, do you know?  
 2005  
 2006 *But, as you said, you made decisions as well, though.*  
 2007  
 2008 We like, there was no information coming forward because, I suppose, they didn't have  
 2009 it, and they didn't know the extent and they didn't want to be giving out scaremongering  
 2010 information, so we made the decisions ourselves, based on what we had, and I think to  
 2011 this day, they were the correct decisions anyway. I'll stand over them, anyway.  
 2012  
 2013 *Yeah, on the topic of the scaremongering as well, you know, there's been a lot of talk,*  
 2014 *like, about how people were saying things over Twitter or other social media, or that...*  
 2015  
 2016 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2017  
 2018 *...like about rumours, did you use any social media...*  
 2019  
 2020 *Ehm...*  
 2021  
 2022 *...during the, the, the process?*  
 2023

2024 ...the only thing was, logged on, do you know when you turn on the phone, the wifi  
 2025 logged on to Facebook automatically...

2026

2027 *Yeah.*

2028

2029 ...and, ehm, so people could see that you were online. It was a balls, like, because, it was,  
 2030 every fuckin' person was just, "Are you okay? Are you okay?" And it's like [Note:  
 2031 making exasperated face]...

2032

2033 *[Laughter]*

2034

2035 ...I'll just put up 'I'm okay' on the thing and it will be grand, get them off, like, but do  
 2036 you know what I mean and, ehm, ehm, yeah, you do have that scaremongering, ehm, you  
 2037 did have people, that German fella, he was a bit much, he was kind of going on about,  
 2038 "Oh there's, the place is gone on fire,"...

2039

2040 *Yeah.*

2041

2042 ...and all this kind of stuff. And then, like, you had tabloid papers, like *The Sun* and that  
 2043 kind of stuff and they were like, "Get out of Tokyo," and all this kind of stuff.

2044

2045 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

2046

2047 Ehm, and 'Tokyo is starving' was another headline, and I was, "have you ever even been  
 2048 to Japan, like?" And you had that kind of stuff, but, ehm, I'd take all that with a pinch of  
 2049 salt, to be honest. The, I read more into the fact that they changed the levels, and I knew  
 2050 that there was something up then, like.

2051

2052 *Yeah.*

2053

2054 Do you know, whereas someone might say, "Oh, they changed the levels, so it's still  
 2055 within spec. and it's all okay." And I was like, "They changed them for a reason, like, if  
 2056 they changed them, controlled them, it's for a reason..."

2057

2058 *I got it.*

2059

2060 ...because it's spiralling out of control."

2061

2062 *Yeah.*

2063

2064 And sure it blew up then a day later, something like that

2065

2066 *Yeah, yeah.*

2067

2068 We knew then, like, we were gone. We made the decision, "Let's go."

2069

2070 *Yeah, yeah, it's absolutely fascinating how, like, you know, in one way, you're trying to*  
 2071 *help people get information...*

2072

2073 *Yeah, yeah.*

2074

2075 ... but then it's like where do you start?

2076

2077 Yeah, yeah. It's like, getting information was the hard part. We went to work on the  
 2078 Monday morning for work, like, but there was no information there and kind of all that  
 2079 turned up and they were just like, "Come back another day."  
 2080  
 2081 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2082  
 2083 It was like, "Well, what the fuck are we meant to do?" It's all well and good if you've a  
 2084 house and family and all that kind of stuff. But when you don't, there's that, eh, there's  
 2085 that, like, what do you do? Just sit around all day, like? Wait for the cloud to arrive?  
 2086  
 2087 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2088  
 2089 Or make our move now, do you know, we were playing poker, like.  
 2090  
 2091 *Well, I think you played your hand very well, it would seem, for what you were dealt with.*  
 2092  
 2093 But sure, like, I reckon if it was anyone else, they'd have done the s, they'd have done  
 2094 something similar anyway. Whether we were very, very lucky with how things panned  
 2095 out, like, getting trains, buses, airplanes, hotels, we ate in a restaurant in Yamagata, like.  
 2096  
 2097 *You did alright, in that sense, yeah, yeah.*  
 2098  
 2099 So we done alright, like. I mean, we were very lucky. Got the job done at the end of the  
 2100 day.  
 2101  
 2102 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, thanks a million for telling me, I'm sorry, Jesus, I've taken so*  
 2103 *much of your time. I hope you're alright. I really appreciate all that you told me. It was*  
 2104 *amazing to hear your story.*  
 2105  
 2106 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2107  
 2108 *It's fascinating how you dealt with everything. I hope, like, like, if you do feel, you know*  
 2109 *in any way stressed or anything, please, if there's anything I can do to help, or...*  
 2110  
 2111 No, no. I'm grand now, talking about it now. It is a story, like, do you know, it's a story  
 2112 that will fuckin' entertain people.  
 2113  
 2114 *Yeah. well this is the thing. I'm going to meet a bunch of people as you can imagine, and*  
 2115 *I'm a bit afraid that if I get them to tell their stories, it might bring up bad memories, or*  
 2116 *something, or...*  
 2117  
 2118 Like, I know that there was loads of people died, and all that, I never saw any of that.  
 2119 Maybe if you do see someone who might have seen bodies or something like that, maybe  
 2120 they might, but like, I only had to deal with the earthquake and the fallout of that and  
 2121 from that then was the Fukushima, which I had some bit of control over, my part.  
 2122  
 2123 *I understand.*  
 2124  
 2125 I didn't see the wave. I didn't run from a wave. I didn't, do you know, I didn't have  
 2126 anything like that.  
 2127  
 2128 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2129  
 2130 So, like, maybe there's people who did  
 2131

2132 *Yeah.*  
2133  
2134 Do you know, like, maybe that might be a different story, a different thing, whereas were,  
2135 just went into survival mode for a couple of days and from there then to leave. But other  
2136 people might have, have far worse.  
2137  
2138 *Yeah, well, yeah, I suppose it's just different as well you know, it's not necessarily in*  
2139 *terms of worse or better, you know, everyone has a different kind of experience.*  
2140  
2141 Experience, yeah.  
2142  
2143 *Well, thanks a million. I really, really appreciate it.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.  
4

5 Note: the participant had mentioned before recording started that due to the nature of his  
6 professional role at the time of the disaster, his professional and private experiences often  
7 overlapped and that he would be speaking only to personal experiences. In cases where it  
8 would be difficult to untangle the professional and the personal, he would not speak about  
9 the experience.

#### 10 *2013/8/16 Interview with Participant 3*

11 *Researcher: So then, as to the actual questions, if you'd just like to start by telling me a*  
12 *little about your experience of the 2011 Disaster.*  
13

14 Participant: Ehm, okay, well I suppose the first thing to mention is that, ehm, I was the  
15 consular official in the embassy {of an EU country} at the time of the disaster, so, ehm, I  
16 was in work at the time, it was a Friday afternoon, I think, eh, so the ambassador was off  
17 site and the deputy head of mission were off site at meetings, so it was myself and the  
18 other staff in the embassy at the time, eh, so in terms of experiences, we just had to  
19 implement our emergency plan at that point.  
20

21 *And had you had many similar experiences of, you know, dealing with earthquakes or*  
22 *other forms of disaster while you'd been in Japan or...?*  
23

24 Well...

25  
26 *...perhaps previously in your life?*  
27

28 ...Japan is a very well-prepared society for natural disasters, particularly earthquakes, so  
29 earthquake drills and earthquake preparation planning happens very frequently and, ehm,  
30 you know as part of our preparations within the embassy, we would have conducted  
31 emergency drills and emergency plans ourselves, but we wouldn't have had any prior  
32 experience of an earthquake or disaster of this nature.  
33

34 *Yeah. And in your own personal experience, you know, as someone who had lived in*  
35 *Japan had you many experiences before the 2011 Disaster?*  
36

37 No, and like, tremors, ehm, are very frequent in Japan, and, eh, it's just a normal,  
38 accepted part of living in, you know, in Tokyo. Ehm, so you kind of desensitize yourself  
39 to it very lively. I remember I arrived in Japan, I was in temporary accommodation in a  
40 skyscraper building for my first couple of weeks and the first time I experienced, eh, a  
41 tremor, it was quite a large tremor, but in retrospect, you know, it became a, you know,  
42 those (indistinct) were actually very frequent and, you know, the bed shook and  
43 obviously the ensuing feeling of panic and what-do-I-do-now and having to, you know,  
44 try and exit the building and, but obviously you had no need to, everyone else was just  
45 going about their business, but, you know, you got, you get used to that.  
46

47 *Yeah. I think a lot of people that I speak to talk about how they really were, kind of,*  
48 *familiar with earthquakes to a certain extent because most of the people had been there a*  
49 *couple of years.*  
50

51 Yeah, you just become very accustomed to it, and, ehm, large tremors that would, eh, you  
52 know, frighten a lot of Westerners as you know, ehm, it, they just become normal part of  
53 the life in Japan, ehm, so when the earthquake struck, ehm, the first couple of minutes

54 people were kind of going, oh well, this is just a very large tremor and continued about  
 55 their business.  
 56  
 57 *Yeah. And I'm interested to talk about the idea of defining the disaster in terms of time,*  
 58 *eh, when do you feel the disaster began and ended, or has it ended?*  
 59  
 60 Eh, well, for us, I suppose it began when we realized that this was not just a tremor, it  
 61 was actually an earthquake, and that happened in the, you know, a couple of minutes,  
 62 ehm, after the first aftershock hit Tokyo, ehm, and, you know, it became, the strength of  
 63 the aftershocks, ehm, you know, increased, and so that was the start point for us, I  
 64 wouldn't consider the disaster to have ended because, you know, in my own opinion, I  
 65 don't think it has ended yet. And like, recent news reports from, you know, radiation  
 66 levels from Fukushima have indicated that, you know, it's far from over. But from an  
 67 earthquake perspective, I mean like obviously, the earthquake didn't really last too long  
 68 at all...  
 69  
 70 *Yeah.*  
 71  
 72 ...but the after-effects have...  
 73  
 74 *Yeah.*  
 75  
 76 ...so from that perspective, yeah, it's a continuing disaster.  
 77  
 78 *Yeah. And again, if this is on the borderline of the, the personal and professional, please*  
 79 *let me know...*  
 80  
 81 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 82  
 83 *...but, ehm, I'm interested in how you communicated with the important people in your*  
 84 *life at the outbreak of the disaster. If you feel you can speak about that, can I ask how*  
 85 *you, you did, went about that or?*  
 86  
 87 *Yeah, ehm, well, the first thing, obviously we had to implement our emergency plan in*  
 88 *the embassy, and I'll kind of leave that to the side...*  
 89  
 90 *Yeah.*  
 91  
 92 ...eh, from my perspective, I mean like, eh, I made contact with my mother as soon as I  
 93 could. Now, slightly different from a te, from a communications perspective for us  
 94 because we had a secure, eh, la, all embassies, ehm, in Japan have secure lines, which op,  
 95 which is designed to operate in case, in cases of emergency, so I, you know, once I had  
 96 made other calls, I made a call home, ehm, and spoke to my mother, but, you know, that  
 97 was, ehm, just to assure her that, you know, we were okay and alive and, eh you know,  
 98 try and put her fears at rest because, ehm, you know, media reports in Europe, so a  
 99 consistent feature of the, of the climate, ehm, kind of sensationalized it. Obviously it was  
 100 a terrible disaster, but they focused on the worst possible aspects and, you know, you  
 101 know, the tsunami and the fire and just the worst images, and then, obviously, everyone  
 102 thought that this was engulfing the eastern seaboard of Japan when in fact it wasn't, so  
 103 but anyway.  
 104  
 105 *Yeah. And were you able, I mean, I know you were able to contact {your home country}*  
 106 *through that secure line, were there people in Japan that you tried to contact? Or you*  
 107 *know, for example, a lot of people have talked about how the mobile phone system was*  
 108 *troublesome.*



109  
110 Yeah, actually we found the mobile phone system to be incredibly effective, but that  
111 wasn't because of the mobile network, that was because of the data. Eh, so we could  
112 access social, eh, media. Ehm, it was one thing that continued to work right throughout  
113 the crisis. Ehm, so everything else went down, but people could still access Facebook and  
114 Twitter, and that's how most, that's how we ended up making contact with a lot of  
115 people. You know, friends and colleagues.  
116  
117 *Yeah, actually, I had the same experience. I was, I was there at the time and, eh, when the*  
118 *earthquake hit, ehm, you know, I was working in a company, so we all, kind of, just went*  
119 *under our desks...*  
120  
121 Yeah.  
122  
123 *...and then after, I can't remember how long, but maybe 15 or 20 minutes, we all went*  
124 *outside the building and I was able to go on Facebook and just update a status, and...*  
125  
126 Yeah, yeah. It was fine.  
127  
128 *...yeah, and, like, did you continue to use those, sort of, communication tools as the days*  
129 *went on and as the weeks went on?*  
130  
131 Eh...  
132  
133 *...in your personal?*  
134  
135 ...Personally, no. I didn't, eh, I didn't use Facebook or Twitter. Ehm, I mean like I  
136 wouldn't necessarily be a prolific Facebook user anyway, so its relevance to me wouldn't  
137 have really mattered. The people I would have needed to contact, I would have been able  
138 to contact anyway. Ehm, so, but that's just personal.  
139  
140 *Yeah, yeah, oh no, I understand. The reason I ask is because there's a lot of research*  
141 *about using social media, ehm...*  
142  
143 Yeah...  
144  
145 *...but I'm just interested to know...*  
146  
147 ...well, I would say professionally, eh, if we didn't have the, if we didn't have access, if  
148 social media wasn't as, if its usage wasn't as widespread as it was at the time, it would  
149 have caused a lot of difficulty and, like, we were able to set up a crisis page on Facebook  
150 and were able to make contact with people we hadn't been able to establish contact with  
151 through traditional means. It was really vital and we got a lot of, we had, you know,  
152 regular Facebook updates and, ehm, how to contact the embassy and we were able to  
153 trace people who otherwise hadn't been contactable and we were very worried about  
154 through social, obviously it ended up being six degrees of separation, but eventually we  
155 got in contact with people who knew them or knew where they were. So that was really  
156 vital.  
157  
158 *And did you find it reliable?*  
159  
160 Ehm, from a technical perspective?  
161  
162 *Whatever perspective. I mean, the information content.*  
163

164 Yeah, yeah, it was. I don't think we had any situations where we were, like, chasing leads  
 165 that didn't exist, so.  
 166  
 167 *Yeah. That's great to hear because obviously what you want in a disaster is, kind of, you*  
 168 *know, accurate, ehm, reliable information in, you know, when you need it...*  
 169  
 170 Yeah.  
 171  
 172 *...in good time, so it's great to hear that those, those tools did work well for you.*  
 173  
 174 Uhm. They did, yeah.  
 175  
 176 *Again, in terms of the personal now, ehm, it might be a different situation for you now*  
 177 *because of your professional experience, but about finding information, how did you go*  
 178 *about it or did you have to?*  
 179  
 180 Ehm, I don't really have any personal experiences of that because...  
 181  
 182 *Okay.*  
 183  
 184 ...in seeking information for me, I was the person who was going to the Japanese  
 185 ministries, and I was attending the briefings, and I was, ehm, I was liaising with various  
 186 other embassies and coordinating information, so I was in a totally different situation to  
 187 people who would have been outside of that sphere. We were genuinely trying to find out  
 188 where things stood in terms of radiation or the risk of further aftershocks and  
 189 earthquakes, so it was, I, I don't actually have any personal experiences. At that point  
 190 then I was completely occupied with, you know, we were running 24-hour shifts, so...  
 191  
 192 *Yeah.*  
 193  
 194 ...my personal experiences were completely my professional experiences.  
 195  
 196 *I see. This is where, yeah, and again because of that situation, I, I, I don't know if you'll*  
 197 *be able to, be able to answer this, but, as someone who is interested in translation*  
 198 *studies, I am interested to know if translation was used or how translation was used in*  
 199 *that workflow. If you feel you can't speak about that, I completely understand.*  
 200  
 201 No, that's okay. In terms of translation, {we communicated with our citizens in our native  
 202 tongue}...  
 203  
 204 *Yeah.*  
 205  
 206 ...ehm, obviously the Japanese ministries translated all the information for the benefit of  
 207 the diplomatic, you know, corps that was in Tokyo...  
 208  
 209 *Yeah.*  
 210  
 211 ...so they, all the official data, all the official documents was translated by the ministry  
 212 {into English} and was given to us that way...  
 213  
 214 *I see.*  
 215  
 216 ...and translation issues only really arose in the immediate aftermath of it when we were  
 217 listening to the Japanese news and trying to pick up what was happening before the  
 218 ministries had actually activated themselves, ehm, so in the immediate afterward,

219 aftermath, that's where translation issues would have kicked in. Ehm, but we, you know  
 220 our local staff would have been our main conduit so they looked after that.  
 221  
 222 *And those local staff, would they have been Japanese people?*  
 223  
 224 Japanese nationals.  
 225  
 226 {redacted}  
 227  
 228 *And professionally trained in translation? Or just working to...*  
 229  
 230 Some, yeah, some would have had professional translation experience, ehm, and others  
 231 would have been with the embassy for a long time, yeah.  
 232  
 233 *Yeah. One thing that's come up, actually, quite a lot with the people that I've been*  
 234 *speaking to is the importance of television and various news media...*  
 235  
 236 Yeah.  
 237  
 238 *...again personal, personally or professionally, what did you think about that?*  
 239  
 240 Ehm, it wouldn't have been the source we would have relied on the most because it was  
 241 very difficult to, like obviously, the media is getting it from different sources as well  
 242 unless they have a crew on the ground, you can't really rely on it. So we took the decision  
 243 that our information for the most part would have come from official sources, ehm, and,  
 244 eh, in terms of, in terms of media, ehm, like, there was an emergency channel on the radio  
 245 and that would have been something we would have been tuned in to constantly because  
 246 that was, you know, giving the most accurate, kind of, as-it-happened, you know, "oh  
 247 there's an earthquake in X, Y or Z or whatever", so.  
 248  
 249 *And that would have been the NHK [Note: Japanese national broadcast company]?*  
 250  
 251 It was the NHK, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 252  
 253 *Yeah. Ehm, like, eh, a lot of the people that I've been talking to have talked about*  
 254 *television or radio actually kind of...*  
 255  
 256 Uhm.  
 257  
 258 *...depending on where they were...*  
 259  
 260 Yeah.  
 261  
 262 *...located. The people who were sort of in big cities or in Tokyo tend to talk about more*  
 263 *about television...*  
 264  
 265 Uhm.  
 266  
 267 *...but the people who were in say more...*  
 268  
 269 Yeah.  
 270  
 271 *...disaster-hit zones tended to talk about radio.*  
 272  
 273 Yeah, radio, I think, was a big medium for a lot of people in the countryside.

274  
 275 *Yeah. Ehm, and obviously in Japan they have things like the one-seg (a special digital TV*  
 276 *signal designed to be broadcast over mobile phones) TV and one-seg radio...*  
 277  
 278 *Yeah.*  
 279  
 280 *...you know the mobile, did that, was that ever mentioned, or?*  
 281  
 282 *No, not really, ehm, no I don't really recall. A lot of, a lot of {our citizens} in my*  
 283 *experience tended to shy away from the traditional models of mobile communication and*  
 284 *would rely on, I suppose, more Western brands like iPhones and Samsung and what-not,*  
 285 *ehm, rather than going where the Docomo handsets [Note: biggest mobile carrier in*  
 286 *Japan] which are ferociously user-unfriendly...*  
 287  
 288 *[Laughter]*  
 289  
 290 *..so, you know...*  
 291  
 292 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 293  
 294 *...that's, that's why I think in terms of, I suppose, a cultural difference there that would*  
 295 *have been, whereas I know an awful lot of the, the, the local staff in our embassy would*  
 296 *have been using, one of them in particular was tuned in to, like, her Docomo handset and,*  
 297 *eh, you know, it had all these different features and functionality, but we, ehm, like the*  
 298 *little television and stuff, but.*  
 299  
 300 *That's really, really interesting to me because obviously coming from a translation*  
 301 *perspective...*  
 302  
 303 *Yeah.*  
 304  
 305 *...I'm interested in is the ways we could, sort of, I guess, overcome that barrier so that*  
 306 *people would feel, maybe, that they could use these type of technologies, but, as you say,*  
 307 *you mentioned 'user-unfriendliness'.*  
 308  
 309 *Yeah, it's very, it's, even if you are very proficient in Japanese using these phones is, you*  
 310 *know, it's a nightmare...*  
 311  
 312 *[Laughter]*  
 313  
 314 *...it's just a cultural thing in the sense that it's much in the same way as you looking at a*  
 315 *Japanese website and it's, kind of just, they, like, completely bomb you with information*  
 316 *and it's very, you know, they haven't really moved over to, I suppose, a more graphic*  
 317 *interface and, eh, they just throw, like, reams and reams and reams of text at you, similar*  
 318 *to the mobile phones, like and, it's, they don't, you know, it just hasn't really shifted, and*  
 319 *that's a cultural thing, I think. Ehm, though, with the increasing popularity of, like,*  
 320 *iPhones and similar, ehm, interfaces, that might change. But traditional mobile phones*  
 321 *which are very advanced, eh, are just very user-unfriendly for anyone that's not in the*  
 322 *mindset.*  
 323  
 324 *Yeah. And actually, just as you mentioned there about cultural differences, that happened*  
 325 *to be another thing that tends to come up when I, when I speak to people that, even*  
 326 *people who are proficient...*  
 327  
 328 *Uhm.*

329  
330 *...in, you know, not just Japanese, but let's say several languages, found that there were*  
331 *sometimes some cultural barriers that prevented, kind of, communication during the*  
332 *disaster. Did you personally, sort of, come across any cultural issues?*  
333  
334 Ehm, no, not really. I don't recall coming across anything that I could describe as a  
335 cultural barrier, ehm, you know, in terms of the way they processed information and, you  
336 know, I can't, if you look at the response to the tsunami in, ehm, just there at the turn of  
337 the century, you know, it's similar.  
338  
339 *Yeah, absolutely, yeah. Ehm, I think, ehm, one thing that I have noticed is that you talk*  
340 *about, when I talk about say the 2011 Disaster, it's almost like talking about several*  
341 *disasters because...*  
342  
343 Yeah, yeah. Definitely. I wouldn't identify it as one particular disaster. It was a multitude  
344 of things and, ehm, you know obviously, the earthquake, the tsunami, and the nuclear  
345 element, and a lot of that was all bundled into one.  
346  
347 *Yeah. For you personally, were there any elements of the disaster that were more difficult*  
348 *to deal with or?*  
349  
350 The nuclear disaster would have been the most difficult thing to deal with and that was,  
351 that was primarily because it had the closest proximity to Tokyo. Obviously, the tsunami  
352 and the earthquake, well, the earthquake itself actually, you know, because it was  
353 offshore, you know, it didn't have an immediate, it was the tsunami that did the damage,  
354 ehm, and that was very, you know, focused on a specific region, eh, whereas the nuclear  
355 disaster directly affected Tokyo and that caused then, obviously, the downstream  
356 difficulties it did. And the information then became a huge issue...  
357  
358 *Oh.*  
359  
360 ...because, it's a very technical issue, trying to translate that into something people can  
361 understand, ehm, but also trying to allay fears, and like, you were in a situation whereby a  
362 lot of people were very distrustful of the information that was coming from official  
363 sources and were looking, then, to other people who, with an 'in', and, you know, who  
364 has an 'in' in these situations? Ehm, so you know, that was a difficulty. Ehm, you know,  
365 what can you do?  
366  
367 *Yeah. And again I know you mentioned personally you weren't a big user of social media*  
368 *but that was one thing social media was, kind of, criticised for, especially say Twitter for*  
369 *example...*  
370  
371 Yeah.  
372  
373 *...about the, sort of, what was termed scare-mongering.*  
374  
375 Yeah, I think there's a real risk and you see this across many, many different areas with  
376 social media, there's a real risk that in situations like that where it's incredibly important  
377 to manage the situation and to not scare-monger, because, you know, if panic were to  
378 break out in Tokyo, ehm, you know, for example, if there's something said on Facebook  
379 or Twitter and all of a sudden, there's mass panic, I mean that would do far more damage  
380 than whatever the situation was that was occurring. So, you know, thankfully, that didn't  
381 happen, but had it, it would have been phenomenal.  
382

383 *And, in terms of like, not, not necessarily social media but did you find other more*  
384 *traditional forms of communication to be useful, em, in terms of your personal*  
385 *communication or in terms of managing the disaster, like email or.*  
386  
387 Emails became, once the networks started to come back online the Japanese having  
388 prepared for this for a long time had, you know, back-ups all over the place, you know,  
389 so, ehm, online communication came onstream fairly fast and email then became our  
390 primary mode of communication. Ehm, in the sense, well, that and Facebook, but there  
391 are two different demographics there, so there would have been a portion of our, I  
392 suppose, clientele that would have been very social-media orientated and another part  
393 who, which wouldn't really have had a presence. And trying to communicate then with  
394 both and make sure you capture both was, but also there was obviously the family  
395 contingent then back in {the participant's home country}, and telephone was actually the  
396 main, the main method of communication. They wanted to, they wanted to speak to  
397 people and have that one-to-one contact rather than email.  
398  
399 *That's really fascinating about the idea of different, sort of, profiles of people using or*  
400 *maybe being comfortable with different types of...*  
401  
402 Yeah, yeah...  
403  
404 ...ehm.  
405  
406 ...yeah, there were definitely people who would have just, a lot of JET students [Note:  
407 government-sponsored Japan Exchange and Teaching Program], for example, wouldn't  
408 have come near us with an email but would have sent us a message on Facebook.  
409  
410 Yeah.  
411  
412 Whereas the business community would be more email orientated.  
413  
414 *That's fascinating. That's really, really fascinating. But I guess it makes sense...*  
415  
416 Yeah.  
417  
418 *...one thing I've read about is that when a disaster happens you use what you're familiar*  
419 *with, so...*  
420  
421 Yeah.  
422  
423 *...you know, say for example as a, as a researcher in translation studies, I might want to*  
424 *develop some great new tool but...*  
425  
426 Uhm.  
427  
428 *...if it's something that people aren't familiar with, will they, will they use it? Ehm, did*  
429 *you notice the development of any new forms of communication or any new tools as - as*  
430 *you said, the disaster maybe hasn't even finished - so as time wore on, did you notice any*  
431 *changes or differences?*  
432  
433 Ehm, I think traditionally, eh, public diplomacy has been an area where, that hadn't  
434 received an awful lot of attention, and I think the disaster, {redacted} in general, in public  
435 diplomacy social media to communicate hasn't been to the fore of thinking, and I think  
436 the disaster really brought that, really highlighted that for a lot of foreign services in the

437 sense that this is a real, valuable asset that had, that should be brought within our other  
 438 fields of communication. So I think that was something that developed out of it. Ehm, so.  
 439  
 440 *That's interesting. You haven't become a more active user since the disaster?*  
 441  
 442 Not, not really, no. I, Facebook for me is a particularly useful tool for keeping in touch  
 443 with friends who are across the world...  
 444  
 445 *Right.*  
 446  
 447 ...but you know I don't say what I had for breakfast...  
 448  
 449 *[Laughter]*  
 450  
 451 ...take pictures of my food and what not.  
 452  
 453 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Em, the reason I ask is just because personally I thought, as I*  
 454 *said, the fi, five, what, maybe fifteen minutes after the disaster Facebook was like a*  
 455 *lifesaver to me...*  
 456  
 457 Yeah.  
 458  
 459 *...in the sense that I could do that one status. I don't think I used it once after that...*  
 460  
 461 Yeah.  
 462  
 463 *...just like what you said, I, I used Skype calls...*  
 464  
 465 Yeah.  
 466  
 467 *...or I wanted the face-to-face, well, voice-to-voice contact.*  
 468  
 469 Yeah, I think a lot of people feel more comfortable with that. The one thing I probably  
 470 think didn't work was the traditional, eh, crisis management tool of, em, and it was, it  
 471 was deployed right across Japan where you leave a voicemail and - I can't remember the  
 472 name of the system [Note: it is known by its NTT dial-up number '171' and there is an  
 473 online version called 'Web171'] - but you leave a voicemail and that relative and friends  
 474 can check in and see if you've checked in as well. I think Facebook and Twitter  
 475 completely supplanted that. I don't know anyone who used it.  
 476  
 477 *That's fascinating. Yeah, I know that a lot of those phone companies had this registering*  
 478 *system and special numbers but...*  
 479  
 480 No, I don't know, I don't know anyone who used it.  
 481  
 482 *...personally, yeah. On and off I lived in Japan for nine years...*  
 483  
 484 Yeah.  
 485  
 486 *...so I mean I would have been familiar with all of the systems but I didn't.*  
 487  
 488 No. And I think it's, I think a lot of people were just like, that's just incredibly  
 489 complicated...  
 490  
 491 *[Laughter]*

492  
 493 ...and in a disaster situation the last thing you need is to be going through fifteen different  
 494 steps...  
 495  
 496 *[Laughter]*  
 497  
 498 ...whereas you could just log on. Like, it might have been a different situation if mobile  
 499 communication had gone down completely. Ehm, in which case then people would be  
 500 forced to rely on these, but that wasn't the case.  
 501  
 502 *Uhm. This, now, you kind of touched on an issue which I would like to ask you about. In*  
 503 *terms of power and connectivity, again maybe because of your professional experience it*  
 504 *wasn't an issue, but did you feel that was something which prevented communication?*  
 505  
 506 How do you mean?  
 507  
 508 *Uhm, for example, battery, batteries running out, running out of power, or...*  
 509  
 510 Yeah...  
 511  
 512 ...ehm...  
 513  
 514 ...yeah.  
 515  
 516 ...or, you know, phones didn't, obviously you mentioned that the data worked but the, the.  
 517  
 518 Yeah, a lot of, we couldn't really rely on, ehm, and I think it was just because of the sheer  
 519 demands that was being placed on the system rather than any technical issue...  
 520  
 521 *Yeah*  
 522  
 523 ...but, em, mobile, like, voice and text were very unreliable...  
 524  
 525 *Yeah.*  
 526  
 527 ...eh, the data was fine. Ehm, we, certainly I, used a lot of little wind-up mobile  
 528 chargers...  
 529  
 530 *Oh.*  
 531  
 532 ...and, you know, Japan is great - you can go into a *conbini* [Note: abbreviation of the  
 533 Japanese for convenience store] and buy, like, two AA batteries in a little mobile phone -  
 534 I don't know why they don't do it here, but anyway...  
 535  
 536 *They're a great idea [laughter].*  
 537  
 538 ...fantastic, you know, a couple of Euro and really saves you. You can buy them  
 539 anywhere. Ehm, and, you know, but obviously the *conbini* sold out of absolutely  
 540 everything in the days afterwards, ehm, but that kind of stuff was really handy.  
 541  
 542 *Yeah, absolutely. Ehm, I think those, I, I, I asked the same question - why don't they have*  
 543 *those little battery packs [laughter]?*  
 544  
 545 I don't know. I don't know. I've oft, I've asked myself many times to save myself the  
 546 hassle...



547  
548 *Yeah...*  
549  
550 ...but, eh, I don't know.  
551  
552 *...and the wind-up thing, I, that's a really good idea.*  
553  
554 The wind-up is good, yeah, yeah. Ehm, solar chargers for batteries as well, you know,  
555 that's, that was all useful, but, yeah.  
556  
557 *Yeah. It, based on the people I've spoken to, it hugely depended on the area you were in.*  
558  
559 Yeah, yeah. I could imagine, like, we had JET students [Note: JET is program to employ  
560 foreign workers (mainly teachers) run by the Japanese government. JET is short for the  
561 Japan Exchange and Teaching Program] who were, ehm, you know, in very remote areas  
562 who would have had big issues with connectivity and power and what not, ehm, so.  
563  
564 *Yeah, ehm, I know some people used things like, em, maybe if they had a car...*  
565  
566 Yeah, plug it into the car, yeah.  
567  
568 *...they were able to just plug it into the car, you know switch the car engine on or*  
569 *whatever...*  
570  
571 Yeah.  
572  
573 *...but then you run out of the fuel so, like...*  
574  
575 Yeah.  
576  
577 *...it's, I think, in, if people are going to develop these communication tools, they also*  
578 *need to have the other sort of infrastructural things working as well.*  
579  
580 Yeah, yeah, no, absolutely. Ehm, so, but, the availability of those little *conbini* chargers is  
581 something that's, you know, would be very, they, I can't imagine they cost very much to  
582 produce, so.  
583  
584 *Yeah, maybe that could be a recommendation for this project [laughter].*  
585  
586 Yeah, set up a startup company...  
587  
588 *Yeah, you never know [laughter] I'll get on to.*  
589  
590 Oh, it's recorded [laughter]...  
591  
592 *Yeah, [laughter] I think it'll be another Facebook or something...*  
593  
594 ...yeah.  
595  
596 *...we'll have a fight. No, but, eh, I'll leave it to you, you're the man with the [laughter]*  
597 *contacts. Ehm, now this is slightly a, a different view on the topic but, ehm, just in terms*  
598 *of you as a person who was a foreign national living in Japan, again, your professional*  
599 *experience may have affected this in some way, did you feel that, say, your local*  
600 *authorities where you would have lived like the Ward Office or the Government Office,*  
601 *did they communicate with you after the disaster?*

602  
603 Ehm, again, and I think I was aware of this but it probably wasn't really too, you know, in  
604 my conscious too much...  
605  
606 *Sure.*  
607  
608 ...em, they did send around information all right, ehm, you know, in relation to where  
609 your emergency centre might be and, you know, the provision of supplies for people that,  
610 you know, maybe their building had been damaged or, you know, whatever, ehm, ehm, I  
611 think it was relatively well organised. Now, having said that, I lived in Minato-ku [Note:  
612 a part of central Tokyo with a large number of high-status foreign residences] so high  
613 percentage of the population would have been foreigners anyway...  
614  
615 *Yeah.*  
616  
617 ...but I think they were definitely, probably taking that into consideration, you know, I got  
618 bilingual material, you know, so...  
619  
620 *Oh that's, bilingual you mean Japanese and...*  
621  
622 ...and English, yeah so...  
623  
624 *That's interesting.*  
625  
626 ...I'm not sure other *kus* did that [laughter] [Note: a ku is a ward of Tokyo - essentially  
627 wards are independently incorporated cities of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area]  
628  
629 *Yeah, I lived in Chuo-ku and ...*  
630  
631 *Yeah.*  
632  
633 *...received nothing, so.*  
634  
635 Yeah, also, I think, you know, Minato-ku was probably very aware of the fact that a lot  
636 of, the, you know, a lot of embassies would have been in Minato-ku so they were  
637 hopefully increasing their visibility.  
638  
639 *And when you say you would have received the information, would that have been, like, a*  
640 *flyer through your door?*  
641  
642 Yeah, they were mad into flyers...  
643  
644 *[Laughter]*  
645  
646 ...you know, for everything, so, yeah, you get the flyer in under your door or into your  
647 postbox.  
648  
649 *But not necessarily an email or some other.*  
650  
651 No, no.  
652  
653 *It was more.*  
654  
655 Do people get emails in Japan?  
656

657 *Exactly [laughter].*  
 658  
 659 If it's not on paper, it doesn't count.  
 660  
 661 *Right, and stamped.*  
 662  
 663 Stamped, yeah. And faxes.  
 664  
 665 *Yeah. They still use faxes?*  
 666  
 667 Yeah, we used to get a daily fax in the aftermath of the earthquake from the Japanese  
 668 ministries...  
 669  
 670 *Wow.*  
 671  
 672 ...reams of paper would come in on fax.  
 673  
 674 *Wow.*  
 675  
 676 Yeah.  
 677  
 678 *I wonder, yeah, I guess that means that if you work in an embassy over there, that*  
 679 *technology can't become obsolete for you because they are going to...*  
 680  
 681 No...  
 682  
 683 ...you have to,  
 684  
 685 ... we would be completely reliant, like they rely on fax for everything.  
 686  
 687 *That's fascinating.*  
 688  
 689 Yeah.  
 690  
 691 *But again, one thing I would say is when I came in to propose this project, I was very*  
 692 *focused on technology...*  
 693  
 694 Uhm.  
 695  
 696 *...I had ideas of new media and all this kind of thing. But, you know, traditional things*  
 697 *like radio...*  
 698  
 699 Yeah.  
 700  
 701 *...which I might have said was obsolete before I looked into it, that turned out to be*  
 702 *incredibly useful.*  
 703  
 704 Yeah, no, it's, em, I think, obviously, like any portfolio, diversity is the key, so, ehm, you  
 705 can't really turn your back on outdated or outmoded methods of communication because  
 706 often the technology they rely on is so simple, they tend not to fail. Like, if radio  
 707 communications go down, it's probably, you know, definitely verging on, you know...  
 708  
 709 *[Laughter]*  
 710  
 711 ...catastrophic...

712  
713 *Just...*  
714  
715 *...yeah...*  
716  
717 *...Japan will sink.*  
718  
719 *...it will just implode whereas, you know, data and mobile technology is quite fickle,*  
720 *relies on a lot of infrastructure and, you know, things can happen.*  
721  
722 *That's a really nice way to put it - diversity is key. I think I'll probably...*  
723  
724 [Laughter]  
725  
726 *...be using that, if you don't mind, but, em, going back a little bit to the idea of where you*  
727 *lived in, in the centre of Tokyo and that, em, one of the recommendations that, em, var,*  
728 *various local authorities and NPOs have made is about the idea of making, I guess,*  
729 *foreign nationals feel more part of their communities...*  
730  
731 *Uhm.*  
732  
733 *...in Japan. Ehm, because in a big disaster, like, say if the earthquake had been centred*  
734 *on Tokyo, the theory is the first people who'll help you are actually your neighbours...*  
735  
736 *Yeah.*  
737  
738 *...the people around you. Ehm, so first of all, can I ask, again in a personal capacity, did*  
739 *you feel part of your local community?*  
740  
741 *Ehm, no. Ehm, rarely. Every now and again I would bump into, you know, people who*  
742 *would live in my building and there would be the usual courtesies, but, you know, I can't*  
743 *say that I would have ident, I'm not sure they would have been my first port of call in a*  
744 *disaster...*  
745  
746 *Right.*  
747  
748 *....you know, my network of friends would have provided that. I think that's similar for*  
749 *most expats. Ehm, I think, quite frankly, the biggest issue, eh, for expats in Japan in*  
750 *feeling part of the community is language. And if you don't have the language. I assume*  
751 *you didn't, are not proficient enough anyway, em, that's a huge, huge barrier. Because a*  
752 *lot of Japanese people, even though they might have a decent enough level of English,*  
753 *won't necessarily communicate with you in it...*  
754  
755 *Yeah.*  
756  
757 *...and that's a big problem. And a lot of expats don't really take the time. It's a huge*  
758 *commitment...*  
759  
760 *Yeah.*  
761  
762 *...to learn Japanese to that level, and a lot of them don't need to as well, you know, with,*  
763 *you know, a cursory knowledge of the language can be quite sufficient sometimes but...*  
764  
765 *Yeah.*  
766

767 ...it's not, it goes be, beyond I think the language as well, I have friends who do speak  
768 Japanese quite well and who, for a more authentic Japanese experience, moved from  
769 Tokyo out the country and, em, you know, they found it quite difficult as foreigners being  
770 isolated from, I suppose, the safety of the metropolis that's Tokyo, trying to integrate into  
771 the local community and, you know, and they were quite active and, you know, would  
772 have been quite friendly and still found that barrier and it's, you know, it's, eh, it's, it is a  
773 cultural thing, and, you know.

774

775 *What do you think that barrier is or how, how does it come about? Do you have any*  
776 *idea?*

777

778 Ehm, I'm not really sure wh, how it comes about, but I mean, like, Japanese society is  
779 drastically different to, I suppose, our concept of Western society, and I don't think  
780 Westerners or expats give due allowance to that whilst living in Japan. You know, in a lot  
781 of ways they probably go, "That's very backwards," in the sense of doing things by fax or  
782 the over-reliance on huge wads of cash, or having to spend two hours at the bank to do  
783 some transaction, whereas this is part of daily life for Japanese people, and you, kind of,  
784 have to, if you live in a foreign country, you have to accept the norms and values of the  
785 society you're living in, if you want to integrate...

786

787 *Right.*

788

789 ...if you don't, that's fine. Eh, you know, live within the expat community, and go about  
790 your business. But if you do want to integrate then you, kind of, have to, it's you that has  
791 to change...

792

793 *Yeah.*

794

795 ...it's not the society...

796

797 *Yeah.*

798

799 ...em, there's a little bit of meeting half way, but, em, or even meeting a quarter of the  
800 way, but, you know, in a sense, you know, living in the countryside in Japan is a different  
801 ballgame to living in the city where Japanese people who are familiar with foreigners,  
802 like, whereas in the country you would be stared at.

803

804 *Yeah [laughter]. Right, yeah. Routinely.*

805

806 Routinely.

807

808 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. And just to get back, you mentioned a, kind of, a circle of friends would*  
809 *have been your first...*

810

811 Uhm.

812

813 *...point of contact if there had been, say, if the earthquake had been centred on Tokyo.*  
814 *Would those people be from the expat community?*

815

816 They were, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Ehm, one particular friend of mine, ehm, I actually went to  
817 college with her, she lived, em, about an hour or so away, eh, from Tokyo, but she was in  
818 Tokyo when the earthquake, and obviously all the trains went down so, you know, she  
819 came over to me, stayed in the embassy and then, you know, we went back to my place  
820 when it had been cleared for structural damage. Ehm, and she stayed with me, then for,  
821 like, a week or two afterwards so...

822  
823 *Oh, wow.*  
824  
825 ...yeah. It was just the trains were so unreliable that had she gone back out to where she  
826 lived, she might not have been able to get back in and then would have been stranded on  
827 her own so, you know, that wasn't a good situation, so.  
828  
829 *Yeah, so again, like, your, it is true that your first port, you know, the people who help*  
830 *you in a disaster are your, sort of, friends or close ones but not necessarily...*  
831  
832 *Yeah.*  
833  
834 *...like, your neighbours or that. It doesn't have to be that sense of community., it just*  
835 *means the people you feel.*  
836  
837 *Yeah, whichever community you have, like, you know, integrated yourself into, so be*  
838 *that the expat community, which, I know, they all helped each other...*  
839  
840 *Yeah.*  
841  
842 *...irrespective of whether that be the {expat community of my particular country} or, you*  
843 *know, the wider sense of the word...*  
844  
845 *Yeah.*  
846  
847 *...or then your own circle.*  
848  
849 *Yeah. That's really interesting because this is one, as I said, one of the, kind of,*  
850 *recommendations that these NPOs and, em, local authorities are coming up with, but just*  
851 *as a person who lived in Japan as a foreign national, a little bit of a warning light went*  
852 *off in my head and I went, "Hmm, I don't know it's, it's that easy to, to break down*  
853 *those."*  
854  
855 *No, I don't think it is. I think it varies widely where you are. I mean, like, if you take the*  
856 *example of Minato-ku in comparison with, just pick another ward in Tokyo, they are*  
857 *vastly different, eh, in their approaches and, you know, different wards are more open to*  
858 *that type of an approach than others...*  
859  
860 *Yeah.*  
861  
862 *...you know, Japan isn't exactly the most open of societies...*  
863  
864 *Yeah, yeah.*  
865  
866 *...to begin with, in my experience, so there is, but also, the expat community tends not to*  
867 *want to integrate. You know, a lot of expats in Japan are there for a short time...*  
868  
869 *Yeah.*  
870  
871 *...they're there to fulfill a contract or to gain experience in the market and then would be*  
872 *moved elsewhere or will move elsewhere, and that's always there. Ehm, which is a*  
873 *barrier to integration, obviously, you know, if you are only going to be there a short time,*  
874 *the investment isn't worth the, the, the payback.*  
875

876 *Absolutely. I think as the project progresses, one of the things I am going to have to be*  
877 *quite clear about is maybe the difference in terms of when I say foreign nationals in*  
878 *Japan, I mean, if you were just a business person who just happened to be in Japan on a*  
879 *business trip...*  
880  
881 Yeah.  
882  
883 *...when the disaster happened, or if you were somebody who lived there a long time and*  
884 *had maybe family or something, your experience would likely be very, very different, I*  
885 *guess.*  
886  
887 Yeah, I mean, like, massively different. I mean, like, you would come across situations  
888 whereby you would have businessmen who might be in Japan only a short time, be it just  
889 a couple of days, or a week, or a couple of months, or whatever. Or even people who  
890 might have just been there a year who had an immediate panic reaction and sought to get  
891 out of the country immediately with their families...  
892  
893 Yeah.  
894  
895 ...saw that quite a lot, as opposed to people, Westerners, who would have been, em, in the  
896 country a little bit longer and who were a lot less panic-orientated. Eh, you know,  
897 obviously, then, I think there's a big difference between the Western foreigner and the  
898 Eastern foreigner...  
899  
900 Oh.  
901  
902 ...because there are so many Chinese...  
903  
904 Yeah.  
905  
906 ...and Asians in Japan that, I, certainly, my experience was their reaction was maybe less,  
907 was more of a measured.  
908  
909 *That's really fascinating. And in terms of translation studies that's really fascinating, too.*  
910 *You mentioned getting, you know, bilingual literature from your ward...*  
911  
912 Yeah.  
913  
914 *...but that would have been Japanese and English. Perhaps they also provided other*  
915 *languages, but.*  
916  
917 I'm not sure, ehm, I don't know if that applied. There wouldn't have been a big  
918 demographic of other nationalities in my area that I could have seen. Ehm, and the cynic  
919 in me thinks that they're obviously creating a, a, you know, a visibility amongst, you  
920 know, that, that area. Ehm, a lot of the Chinese people would speak Japanese...  
921  
922 Right.  
923  
924 ...so...  
925  
926 Right, right.  
927  
928 ...at least would understand...  
929  
930 Yeah.

931  
 932 ...yeah, which makes a big difference.  
 933  
 934 *Yeah, that makes, that does absolutely makes a big difference. In terms of, sort of, moving*  
 935 *from, I guess, the - I know you said that the disaster hasn't necessarily finished and I*  
 936 *absolutely agree with you there, but - there was a move from, sort of, the response*  
 937 *phase...*  
 938  
 939 Uhm.  
 940  
 941 *...to the recovery phase. Ehm, were you aware of any efforts, sort of, national efforts to*  
 942 *move towards recovery, ehm, like to get the country facing towards a recovery direction?*  
 943  
 944 Ehm, you see, I left Japan in July.  
 945  
 946 Okay.  
 947  
 948 So that window between March and July was still very much a response phase...  
 949  
 950 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 951  
 952 ...because Fukushima was still rumbling on...  
 953  
 954 Crikey.  
 955  
 956 ...and, so from my perspective it hadn't really switched, though I do recall, like, watching  
 957 the media in the months after I'd returned to {my home country}, and, you know, it had,  
 958 kind of, you know, kind of, sort of, moved itself slightly towards recovery at that point  
 959  
 960 *Yeah, because, ehm, this is just another, kind of, element of research going on, ehm, there*  
 961 *were lots of slogans, ehm, that were used in Japan to kind of, I guess, get the country*  
 962 *together and get the country moving. I'm just interested to, to see if any foreign nationals*  
 963 *were aware of these, kind of, campaigns that were going on. They were part of, sort of,*  
 964 *the Japanese discourse at the time. It was in the media or, you wouldn't, you didn't?*  
 965  
 966 None that sticks in my head, no, but I think it's an interesting comparison from a  
 967 sociological perspective as to the Japanese mentality. You look at their war, post-war  
 968 mentality and how they reacted to the aftermath of the earthquake, I think there would be  
 969 striking similarities, mobilising the national rhetoric, ehm, which is something they're  
 970 very good at.  
 971  
 972 *Yeah, eh, one, one of the big, sort of, slogans was this Gambare Nippon...*  
 973  
 974 Uhm.  
 975  
 976 *...and you'd just see gambare, gambare everywhere, and you know that is, kind of, that*  
 977 *notion of, eh, slightly, slightly hardline but, you know, ...*  
 978  
 979 Uhm.  
 980  
 981 *...kind of, get on with it or let's move forward and...*  
 982  
 983 Yeah  
 984



985 *...all of that kind of thing, so, that's a really interesting parallel that, but again because*  
 986 *I'm coming from a translation perspective, I'm interested in the, would translating those*  
 987 *type of slogans into other languages have any effect?*  
 988  
 989 Ehm, on the foreign population in Japan, I'm not sure. Ehm, I think it loses, it doesn't  
 990 really translate into our parlance, you know, ehm, it's more of a cultural thing than a  
 991 language thing, and, eh, you know, if you were to tell, if a similar disaster had, you know,  
 992 happened in {my home country, I'm not sure the population} would react to "Okay," you  
 993 know, "get on with it!"  
 994  
 995 *[Laughter]*  
 996  
 997 Ehm, there would be a period of moping required...  
 998  
 999 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1000  
 1001 ...so, ehm, but, you know, that's, they're different mindsets, so.  
 1002  
 1003 *That's really interesting because again this is a theme that's come up with all of the*  
 1004 *people that I've talked to that whenever I talk about language, that's one thing, but*  
 1005 *culture comes up time and again as something that you can't, kind of, ignore, so, you*  
 1006 *know.*  
 1007  
 1008 Yeah, developing responses to, you know, how people communicate in Japan, I think the  
 1009 culture is such a huge part of it, and the language itself is completely haunted by cultural  
 1010 norms and values...  
 1011  
 1012 Yeah.  
 1013  
 1014 ...and there's just no escaping that. Even Japanese people themselves are, you know,  
 1015 sometimes terrified of using the language because, you know, it has so many nuances and  
 1016 interpretations and status and hierarchies and if they are put into situations whereby a  
 1017 level of interpretation or translation is required at say ministerial or prime-ministerial  
 1018 level, that can become very intimidating...  
 1019  
 1020 *Yeah.*  
 1021  
 1022 ... ehm, and, whereas we wouldn't have that in English, for example, so.  
 1023  
 1024 *Yeah. And again this is not necessarily in terms of the disaster, so in terms of your*  
 1025 *personal, professional, did you have to use translators or interpreters a lot as part of*  
 1026 *your general work? Would that have been something that you were, kind of, regularly*  
 1027 *interacting with?*  
 1028  
 1029 Ehm...  
 1030  
 1031 *Again, if you don't want to.*  
 1032  
 1033 ...yeah, we would have had to use, just by virtue of doing business in Japan...  
 1034  
 1035 *Yeah.*  
 1036  
 1037 ...or in any country, no matter which country you're in, ehm, you know, the, if the, if  
 1038 {your native language} isn't the operational language, you have to work through a  
 1039 translator or an interpreter...

1040  
 1041 *Yeah.*  
 1042  
 1043 ...and that's just, that's just part of it. Ehm, at official level, in terms of, you know,  
 1044 ministries and certain wards like Minato-ku, you would have had officials there who  
 1045 would have been completely proficient and very comfortable...  
 1046  
 1047 *Right.*  
 1048  
 1049 ...and would communicate with you in English and that wouldn't be a problem. But at  
 1050 other times, especially if you were dealing with local government, ehm, local government  
 1051 services, you would have to go through an interpreter.  
 1052  
 1053 *I see, I see, so it, kind of, again depends on the, where you're talking or who you're*  
 1054 *talking to.*  
 1055  
 1056 Yeah, absolutely. I mean, like, personally, you know, when I went to set up my bank  
 1057 account and set up my, you know, utilities and my mobile phone and all the palaver that  
 1058 goes along with that...  
 1059  
 1060 *[Laughter]*  
 1061  
 1062 ...eh, you know, I would have brought someone with me who spoke Japanese because  
 1063 there was no way that that, that I was going to manage that on my own, so.  
 1064  
 1065 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Ehm and then just, kind of, as a general, final question, is there*  
 1066 *anything that you would like to add or anything that you, kind of, has struck you since*  
 1067 *we've been talking that you might think would be relevant or?*  
 1068  
 1069 No, I think we've had quite a wide-ranging discussion there. I think the one thing I would  
 1070 say is, you know, language on the face of it is one thing but it can't be held in isolation to  
 1071 the cultural, the culture that informs the language...  
 1072  
 1073 *Uhm.*  
 1074  
 1075 ...because that's how you interpret, that's the medium through which it's interpreted and  
 1076 Japan which has such a vastly different culture to Western society that can be a barrier  
 1077 even if you are very proficient in a language...  
 1078  
 1079 *Yeah.*  
 1080  
 1081 ...eh, the two go hand-in-hand...  
 1082  
 1083 *Yeah.*  
 1084  
 1085 ...and that was a big factor during the disaster without a doubt.  
 1086  
 1087 *Yeah, oh I'm really thankful, so very thankful to you for em, talking...*  
 1088  
 1089 No problem.  
 1090  
 1091 *... to me today. There's only just one other element to the interview. This may not apply*  
 1092 *to you at all, but I'm asking everybody, em, because sometimes talking about a disaster is*  
 1093 *bringing up feelings or, you know, reliving experiences or whatever, I just want to make*  
 1094 *sure that I haven't increased anybody's anxiety, so if I could just ask you to [Note: I pass*

1095 *the participant the Likert scale about stress to mark and he marks 0/10 without any*  
1096 *hesitation] okay that's fine [laughter].*  
1097  
1098 Yeah, no, no problem. And, then like, I was, I was very lucky, eh, no-one I knew had  
1099 been directly impacted by the disaster and no-one in the {community of nationals I was  
1100 supporting} had, thankfully, you know either. So from both a professional and a personal  
1101 perspective, you know, I did and - yes, okay so it was deeply unpleasant - but it wasn't  
1102 from my perspective traumatic or and, you know, I don't have, well, having said that, I  
1103 mean, like, in the aftermath of, for, you know, a good, definitely, couple of months  
1104 anyway, you'd have phantom tremors, eh [laughter]...  
1105  
1106 *Yeah!*  
1107  
1108 ...but I don't think I lost any sleep over them.  
1109  
1110 *That's fascinating. That was one of the things that I really struggled with, ehm, so I was*  
1111 *in Japan for the disaster and then I had a holiday already booked in the Golden Week*  
1112 *[Note: a period of several public holidays that fall around the same time in April, May*  
1113 *when many Japanese people take a vacation] of that year, so that was like the end of*  
1114 *April, beginning of May...*  
1115  
1116 Yeah.  
1117  
1118 *...I came back to Ireland, and every time a bus went by or...*  
1119  
1120 Yeah, phantom tremors.  
1121  
1122 *...I was like, "Oh my goodness"...*  
1123  
1124 Yeah.  
1125  
1126 *...even though I knew I was in Ireland it really, that stayed with me for quite a long time.*  
1127  
1128 It stays for quite a while. I think you are just hypersensitive to it...  
1129  
1130 *Yeah.*  
1131  
1132 ...and, em. knowing so soon after the earthquake that tremors or very large tremor which  
1133 could be just as devastating if they were on the mainland, ehm, you know, so, I think...  
1134  
1135 *Yeah.*  
1136  
1137 ...you were very aware of it.  
1138  
1139 *And you {returned to your home country} in July, did you find that you still, kind of, kept*  
1140 *one eye on what was going on or did, you know, did you just have to, I mean, as part of*  
1141 *your job obviously you have to get used to a new environment?*  
1142  
1143 Ehm, I definitely, kind of, drew a line under it and moved on, ehm, but I think that would  
1144 probably be part of my personality any way in any case. We move around so much that  
1145 you, kind of, can't really hold on to what you've just come from. Especially if you're,  
1146 you're in a situation where you have to adapt to a new role...  
1147  
1148 *Yeah.*  
1149

1150 ...ehm, also {returning to your home country}, you're kind of reigniting your life {there}  
1151 and, you know, it takes time, so I tended not to focus too much on it. Obviously I keep in  
1152 touch with people in Japan...  
1153  
1154 *Sure, sure, sure, yeah.*  
1155  
1156 ...I didn't really concern myself...  
1157  
1158 *Yeah*  
1159  
1160 ...too much with what was happening...  
1161  
1162 *Yeah*  
1163  
1164 ...because, just, there was enough {in my home country} to keep me occupied  
1165  
1166 *Oh, absolutely, I can imagine. Well, once again, just thank you so much.*  
1167  
1168 *Yeah, no problem.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/18 Interview with Participant 4*

5 *Researcher: Okay. I think that's it for all of the paperwork.*

6  
7 Participant: Cool.

8  
9 *So, then, ehm, basically, if [Note: the researcher stops mid-statement and hands one of*  
10 *the signed copies of the informed consent sheet to the participant] I will give you that*  
11 *one...*

12  
13 Okay, yeah.

14  
15 *...so basically, if, I, I sent you the questions, if you had a chance to look at them...*

16  
17 Had a little look through...

18  
19 *...okay, so basically...*

20  
21 *...yeah, yeah, very brief look through, to be honest with you.*

22  
23 *No, no worries, ehm, if you just start by just telling me...*

24  
25 Uhum.

26  
27 *...about your experience, and we'll go from there.*

28  
29 Okay, so it was, eh, March 11th [laughter]...

30  
31 *[Laughter]*

32  
33 *...2011, I believe [laughter] ehm, so I was at home, eh, when the earthquake struck. So,*  
34 *eh, it was a Friday, and, ehm, it was getting towards the end of the time for filing tax*  
35 *returns, and I, I'd filed my taxes that morning, and then I was at home, and, eh, I think at*  
36 *the time when the, eh, apartment started shaking, and where I live, as, as you've seen,*  
37 *it's, ehm, a two-storey wooden, ehm, apartment building, quite small. Ehm, so I was at*  
38 *home sitting on the sofa, and, eh, I was watching, eh, a program on my, on my laptop. I*  
39 *was watching Peepshow [laughter] [Note: this is a UK comedy series]...*

40  
41 *[Laughter]*

42  
43 *...and, ehm, so anyway [Note: the participant briefly covers his face with his hands] the,*  
44 *eh, the, eh, place obviously started shaking and at first, I think just, eh, maybe two days*  
45 *or three days before, eh, this earthquake, of course, there, there had been another*  
46 *earthquake and {I was in my workplace in the centre of Tokyo} and that, that one a*  
47 *couple of days before, ehm, it was certainly big enough to, to feel, and, eh, you know, a*  
48 *bit of a warning maybe, but because that had happened a couple of days before, anyway, I*  
49 *thought, "Ach, this is the same again. Nothing to worry about." Ehm, but, eh, yeah, the*  
50 *earthquake, of course, it, eh, it kept on going, it, it didn't stop, so, ehm, and it kept on*  
51 *getting stronger, and, eh, so, eh, yes, I remember closing my laptop and, eh, then, eh,*  
52 *taking refuge, eh, under the, under the desk in my living room. So I had been in the living*  
53 *room all the time, and, you know, I just, eh, went under the desk in the living room. And,*

54 ehm, so, eh, yeah, the, the apartment was shaking quite a lot, em, you know, it was very  
55 noisy as well, and, em, there were, eh, eh, things falling off the bookshelf, ehm, the TV  
56 was shaking very vigorously as well. I thought it would, I thought it would come, come  
57 off its, eh, eh, the table, ehm, but, eh, that was okay. Eh, also the bookshelf it moved, I  
58 don't know, maybe it moved about, eh, five inches, you know, from where it had been as  
59 well. So yeah, a lot of things, em, fell off the bookshelf, and so on. Ehm, so yeah, the  
60 experience itself, it was, it was very scary, ehm, and I don't, I can't remember how long  
61 the earthquake lasted. Was it, was it nearly two minutes or something?  
62

63 *Yeah, they say somewhere between two and three.*  
64

65 Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, anyway, it, it felt like an eternity. It was very, very long. Eh, so,  
66 you know, when, when the shaking stopped anyway, you know, I just, you know, just  
67 walked around the apartment and, eh, just to see what kind of damage was done. I think  
68 the, the worst damage was the bowl, the bowl had fallen off the, eh, the, the kitchen sink  
69 and it was, it was broken. That was about the extent of the damage. But yeah, I mean, eh,  
70 a few things had fallen, em, just, oh I can't remember, ehm, eh, books and so on, em, but  
71 no damage really. Ehm, so immediately anyway, you know, after it had stopped, eh, so I  
72 sent an email to {my wife}, eh, just to see if she was okay, and she got back to me very  
73 quickly anyway. Em, you know, she was, eh, over, oh actually in the building right next  
74 to here [Note: this interview took place in the Shinjuku Southern Terrace area], ehm, she  
75 was {redacted} on the, on the, I think on the 24th floor at work, and, ehm, eh, at that  
76 point, eh, you know, obviously the shaking had already stopped, but her building was still  
77 swaying. She felt like she was on a ship or something, you know [laughter] so it was, eh,  
78 you know, quite, I suppose, a different experience for her. Ehm, so, yeah, anyway, we  
79 were able to communicate by email, ehm, I think, eh, I think I probably used my iPhone,  
80 eh, to send her an email and she was using the office computer, eh, to, to get in touch  
81 with me. And, ehm, yeah, so, quite soon after that anyway, you know, after, I, you know,  
82 we had [laughter] established that we were both safe, ehm, and she was staying put where  
83 she was for the moment, you know, anyway, she was, she was, you know, seeing what  
84 her colleagues were doing, and they all decided to stay put and so she, she did likewise.  
85 Em, but I decided to get out of the apartment, anyway, and I decided to head towards the,  
86 eh, towards the park, eh, {redacted} which is about, I suppose, about a ten-minute walk  
87 from my apartment. Ehm, I think I went there by bike. I can't [laughter] remember  
88 exactly. Eh, and on the way, ehm, I remember, ehm, on the road, just, eh, just, eh, you  
89 know, two-hundred metres from, from where I lived there was some workmen doing  
90 some work on the road there, and, you know, they were just all sitting on the ground, and,  
91 you know, laughing and joking. I don't know if they, well, of course they noticed the  
92 earthquake but [laughter]...

93  
94 *[Laughter]*  
95

96 ...but they, eh, didn't seem too concerned anyway. And, eh, then, ehm, I walked past,  
97 there's this, this, eh, cake shop which is on the, on the corner of the top of the road, eh,  
98 and there were, as always there were people queueing up to buy cakes there. Eh, so just, I,  
99 I felt like, "Oh, am I the only one who noticed that?" You know, it really was, it really  
100 seemed that, eh, for me it seemed a very shocking experience, but life seemed to be going  
101 on. I mean, obviously, this is, you know, within a couple of minutes from my apartment,  
102 ehm, and, and, you know, maybe within five minutes of the earthquake or ten minutes of  
103 the earthquake having struck. Eh, but, eh, yeah, it seemed, "Uh, okay. Nobody's  
104 panicking anyway." Ehm, so, yeah, then I got to the park and I sat on the bench for a  
105 while and, em, eh, well, people were there walking their dogs, and so on. Ehm, I think, I,  
106 I noticed that, you know, maybe a few more people than usual were coming to the park,  
107 maybe for the same reason as, as, as I did, you know, they didn't feel safe in their  
108 apartments, and, eh, they wanted to, to get somewhere which was open. Ehm, so, eh, let

109 me think, so I think about thirty-minutes after that initial earthquake struck, eh, there was  
 110 another very big tremor. Ehm, so, eh, yeah, about half-an-hour after. And, eh, so I was  
 111 sitting on a bench in the park anyway, and, eh, be, be, before it started shaking you could  
 112 hear rumbling a, as you could actually with the, you know, before the first earthquake as  
 113 well. Ehm, and, eh, the water in the, in the lake or the pond in the park started swaying,  
 114 ehm [laughter] it was, yeah, it was a very strange sensation to see, you know, this, this,  
 115 eh, water swooshing about. You know, I mean, it's, it's a reasonably big pond, so, eh,  
 116 quite unexpected. And all the, eh, the birds, the ducks, and so on, took flight as well, eh,  
 117 at that time. And the trees were shaking, so a very strange sensation. So, you know, I  
 118 mean, I experienced, like, the main earthquake indoors and then the second, eh, big  
 119 tremor outdoors...  
 120  
 121 *Yeah.*  
 122  
 123 ...so it was an interesting contrast [laughter] but also very scary as well actually...  
 124  
 125 *Yeah.*  
 126  
 127 ...the second one because I, I mean, it was, when, when you're outdoors, it's hard to  
 128 gauge just how big it is and, you know, I, I couldn't tell at that time whether this was, was  
 129 bigger than the first one or, or whether it was, it was smaller, you know?  
 130  
 131 *God, yeah.*  
 132  
 133 [Laughter]  
 134  
 135 *And so obviously, what I'm really interested in are things, like...*  
 136  
 137 *Uhum.*  
 138  
 139 *...anything to do with communication or...*  
 140  
 141 *Yeah.*  
 142  
 143 *...information or that. When the first earthquake happened...*  
 144  
 145 *Uh.*  
 146  
 147 *...and you were in the apartment.*  
 148  
 149 [Note: interrupting the question before it could be formed] Oh, I turned on the TV  
 150 actually! I did, yeah, yeah. Ehm, yeah, there wasn't much information coming through  
 151 yet at that stage, you know, about the size of the earthquake and so on, but I did turn on  
 152 the TV. Yeah, obviously, every programme was, ev, every channel was focused on this  
 153 and, em, you had the map of Japan, you know, of course, with all of these areas, all, I  
 154 think, lit up, you know, warning about tsunamis, and so on, you know. But I can't  
 155 remember very well about that now.  
 156  
 157 *Do you remember whether you looked at a Japanese TV channel or another?*  
 158  
 159 *Oh it would have been Japanese, yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm pretty sure. I clicked through*  
 160 *various Japanese channels, yeah.*  
 161  
 162 *And did you have any other instinct to try any other type of information source? Like TV*  
 163 *was the first thing that came to your mind was it?*

164  
 165 Eh, TV was the first thing that came to mind, yeah, yeah.  
 166  
 167 *Yeah.*  
 168  
 169 Ehm, yeah, that was, that was all, yeah.  
 170  
 171 *Because the reason I'm asking is obviously one of the big things...*  
 172  
 173 Uhm.  
 174  
 175 *...in the disaster literature...*  
 176  
 177 *Yeah.*  
 178  
 179 *...after this earthquake, a lot of talk has been going on about social media.*  
 180  
 181 Of course, yeah, yeah. And yes, I mean, when I got to the park, eh, I put on Facebook that  
 182 I, eh, had just experienced an earthquake, I, I can't remember exactly what I wrote, just,  
 183 em, you know, something maybe, "We just had a very big earthquake in Tokyo but I am  
 184 okay," or whatever, eh, so, and, and, a lot of people responded to that as well, just, em,  
 185 you know, saying or asking, "Are, are you okay?" Ehm, or, "I'm glad you're okay," and  
 186 so on, you know?  
 187  
 188 *Yeah.*  
 189  
 190 It was obviously in the, you know, this was very soon after the earthquake, so, you know,  
 191 it hadn't, eh, really got to the international media yet.  
 192  
 193 *Yeah. And then, so, for example, you said that in the park, it was difficult to judge...*  
 194  
 195 *Yeah.*  
 196  
 197 *...how big the earthquake was...*  
 198  
 199 That's right.  
 200  
 201 *...how did you start to find out about?*  
 202  
 203 Well, yeah, I was there with my iPhone and I was checking, eh, all the news sources,  
 204 mostly Japanese, ehm, because as I say, it hadn't really, ehm, become a big story in the  
 205 international media yet...  
 206  
 207 *Yeah.*  
 208  
 209 ...ehm, so, yeah, I, I think, you know, I got to the park let's say around 3pm, something  
 210 like that, and, ehm, eh, I stayed there for two hours or two-and-a-half hours. It got too  
 211 cold, eh, eventually, so I decided I had to go back to the apartment. It was getting dark  
 212 anyway. Ehm, but, eh, yeah, I was there constantly on the iPhone, eh, just checking, ehm,  
 213 eh, you know, the latest details on this. Ehm, and I think, eh, you know, what I, what I  
 214 read was, like, you know, there had been an earthquake which had its epicentre near, eh,  
 215 Sendai, ehm, I think I remember reading early on that the, em, the, that it was a  
 216 magnitude 7.5 or something, but as we all know now it was a much bigger earthquake  
 217 than that, you know. Yeah, and as well, in the park, I sent my mother a text, ehm, eh, you  
 218 know, just reassuring her that I was okay and that {my wife} was okay as well. Em, and I



219 didn't receive, em, a reply straight away, but it was quite early in the morning there. It  
 220 might have been 7 or 8 in the morning time. Ehm, and, eh, yeah, there was no immediate  
 221 reply but also I kind of suspected that maybe it was a problem with the, em, text service  
 222 as well, you know, SMS service. Ehm, but, eh, later on anyway, when I got back to the  
 223 apartment, em, using Skype I, eh, I phoned my, well I, I used Skype to phone my  
 224 mother's, eh, phone...  
 225  
 226 *Yeah.*  
 227  
 228 ...and, eh, ye, ye, yeah, she, I mean, I think, eh, she still wasn't aware of the earthquake at  
 229 this, at this stage. I mean, she had seen my text, actually, but she, she, she hadn't made it  
 230 to, to the, I guess she hadn't turned on the TV [laughter]...  
 231  
 232 *[Laughter] Yeah. And then, ehm, so, one of the issues, like, is, what I'm trying to do is to*  
 233 *see what information was available to people...*  
 234  
 235 *Yup.*  
 236  
 237 *...in the disaster...*  
 238  
 239 *Uhum.*  
 240  
 241 *...what information maybe was not available...*  
 242  
 243 *Yeah.*  
 244  
 245 *...to people in the disaster, so just more generally...*  
 246  
 247 *Uhum.*  
 248  
 249 *...in terms about the information that you could find...*  
 250  
 251 *Right.*  
 252  
 253 *...or the information that, that you couldn't find but wanted, could you speak a bit about*  
 254 *that?*  
 255  
 256 Okay, so, so, I mean basically, you know, when I got back home, eh, around 5.30 in the  
 257 evening, eh, so I turned on the TV and this was very shocking, you know, there was, there  
 258 were pictures coming in of the tsunami, eh, hitting, em, Tohoku and, you know, I just, I  
 259 was very shocked at seeing this. Ehm, but, you know, I was able to get this information  
 260 about what was happening and, em, you know, of course, the information was in  
 261 Japanese, but I could understand it, so that, that was okay for me. Ehm, later on, of  
 262 course, em, there was information coming in about, eh, Fukushima, and so on, about the  
 263 nuclear plant and, eh, you know, I wanted to get as much information about this as  
 264 possible, I mean, I was very concerned about it. Ehm, but, eh, of course, you know, I  
 265 wasn't familiar with all the Japanese vocabulary, eh, associated with that. But I think  
 266 even if it was all, eh, relayed in English, I don't think it would have been very, eh,  
 267 [laughter] helpful either, actually [laughter].  
 268  
 269 *That's the thing, isn't it...*  
 270  
 271 *Yeah.*  
 272

273 *...I mean, it was a learning experience for me. I heard words that I'd never heard before*  
 274 *in English.*  
 275  
 276 Exactly, exactly, yeah, I mean, it was just very unfamiliar territory.  
 277  
 278 *Yeah, yeah. In general, were you aware of any websites or any other sources of*  
 279 *information at the time?*  
 280  
 281 Ehm...  
 282  
 283 *Or subsequently?*  
 284  
 285 ...let me think, em, obviously I was using, ehm, Twitter, or sorry not Twitter, I wasn't  
 286 using Twitter at all [laughter]...  
 287  
 288 [Laughter]  
 289  
 290 ...I was using, I was using Facebook...  
 291  
 292 Yeah.  
 293  
 294 ...eh, to, eh, see other people's experience of the earthquake. Ehm, to see, you know, eh,  
 295 how other friends, you know, to see, to see if they were okay and to see what they had  
 296 written about their experiences, and so on. Eh, in terms of websites, ehm, I mean,  
 297 obviously, I looked at the international websites such as BBC, and so on, but also Japan  
 298 Today, the English language Ja, Japanese, eh, news website, eh, also, Japanese news  
 299 sources such as the Yomiuri, eh, website, and so on. Ehm, I think that was about it really.  
 300  
 301 *How about from the Embassy?*  
 302  
 303 Ah, okay, ehm, yeah, I can't remember. Em, I'm sure in the days after the earthquake,  
 304 em, the Embassy contacted all the Irish citizens in Japan, but I can't remember about that.  
 305 Can you yourself?  
 306  
 307 *Yeah, I can. Em, so, I, I didn't find any information outside through...*  
 308  
 309 Yeah.  
 310  
 311 *...I, I looked at Japanese TV like you...*  
 312  
 313 Yeah.  
 314  
 315 *...but a lot of my information came through work.*  
 316  
 317 Ah, okay.  
 318  
 319 *So, em, most of my decisions based on the disaster were based through work because that*  
 320 *was the way things were done in a Japanese company...*  
 321  
 322 I see.  
 323  
 324 *...whether to come into work...*  
 325  
 326 Yeah.  
 327

328 *...what, what, you know, was happening, because our company was based throughout the*  
 329 *Tohoku Region...*  
 330  
 331 Right.  
 332  
 333 *...it obviously had a huge impact on our company...*  
 334  
 335 Yeah.  
 336  
 337 *...operationally, and because I worked in the Human Resources Division, I was involved*  
 338 *in...*  
 339  
 340 Yeah.  
 341  
 342 *...the response, so everything information-related came either, for me, from TV news...*  
 343  
 344 Yeah.  
 345  
 346 *...or from, eh, work.*  
 347  
 348 Right. I, I, I, from my own work, em, now, let me see, so, perhaps a day or two after the  
 349 earthquake, I don't remember exactly, ehm, one of the directors of the {place where I  
 350 worked}, eh, he, he did send an email, you know, em, eh, just checking if I was okay, you  
 351 know, ehm, but, I mean, yeah, there was no information as such coming from work. Now,  
 352 like, regarding, like, the, the one thing obviously in the days after the earthquake that I  
 353 was constantly checking up on was, was Fukushima, you know, eh, NHK [Note: the  
 354 Japanese national broadcaster] and the other Japanese news sources, other Japanese TV  
 355 channels, constantly checking those, and, eh, also, eh, eh, checking the, em, I, I'm pretty  
 356 sure the Irish Embassy, eh, I don't know how long it took them, but they, they did, eh, eh,  
 357 put, put up some information eventually, you know, about whether the situation was safe  
 358 or not, whether to stay in Tokyo or to leave. And, you know, I chec, I checked, like, the  
 359 British Embassy website, the French Embassy website, and so on as well, I'm pretty sure,  
 360 yeah.  
 361  
 362 *Uhum.*  
 363  
 364 Yeah, but anyway, so, the earthquake happened on the, the Friday, and eh, so the next  
 365 morning, so, {my wife} decided to stay in her office that night, and, eh, so we remained  
 366 in touch the whole time by email, and, em, eh, she decided, oh yeah, so, she got home, eh,  
 367 using the first subway the next morning {redacted} but I, I walked there to meet her, em,  
 368 you know, we talked about the situation about, eh, especially about Fukushima and, eh,  
 369 you know, I was very concerned about this, you know, obviously with the, em, having  
 370 grown up in the time of Chernobyl, and so on [laughter] you know, eh, I'd, yeah, I don't  
 371 think {my wife} was as concerned about that as I was at that stage. But anyway, em, eh,  
 372 so we got home early Saturday morning and from that stage on until Monday, eh, I don't  
 373 think I left the house once, you know, I was very concerned about the radiation...  
 374  
 375 *Uhm.*  
 376  
 377 *...ehm, I think, eh, then on the following Monday, no, it might have been Tuesday*  
 378 *actually, then, eh, we made the decision to get out of Tokyo, and we, we headed to, to*  
 379 *{my wife's} parents' place in {redacted} Okayama [Note: located about 600 km west of*  
 380 *Tokyo]*  
 381  
 382 *And in terms of making that decision...*

383  
384 Yeah.  
385  
386 *...your information was based, your decision was based on information that you got*  
387 *from?*  
388  
389 My decision was based on the uncertainty, really, there wasn't enough solid information  
390 coming from Fukushima. Ehm, I mean the reason that we decided to go there was that,  
391 because of concerns of radiation...  
392  
393 Yeah.  
394  
395 ...eh, and there just wasn't any reliable information coming through. I suppose as well,  
396 you, you know, ehm, there was a lot of, especially I suppose on Ja, Japan Today [Note:  
397 the participant is referring to the online comment section of one of Japan's main English-  
398 language dailies], and so on, there were a lot of comments coming through, you know,  
399 em, "Ignore the government advice. Get the hell out of there," and so on, you know, ehm,  
400 I think there was, eh, especially coming from abroad, a lot of people just saying, "You,  
401 you should leave." Saying it was a very dangerous situation. Ehm, yeah, especially on,  
402 you know, forums, and so on.  
403  
404 *Yeah. That's a really interesting topic for me...*  
405  
406 Yeah.  
407  
408 *...in terms of just this whole issue of information and communication...*  
409  
410 Yeah.  
411  
412 *...because what you are saying there is say in these forums...*  
413  
414 Yeah.  
415  
416 *...information can come from all over the world...*  
417  
418 Exactly.  
419  
420 *...so people outside of Japan could be, in some ways, getting information or...*  
421  
422 Yeah.  
423  
424 *...getting a different perspective, but that's now being fed back into people in Japan...*  
425  
426 Well, exactly.  
427  
428 *...through English, right?*  
429  
430 Yeah.  
431  
432 *Presumably. Japan Today is an English-speaking...*  
433  
434 Well, exactly...  
435  
436 *...forum.*  
437

438 ...ehm, I think, you know, from the Japanese media sources, ehm, it was a case of, "Don't  
 439 worry. Everything is okay in Tokyo. Once you are," em, whatever it was, "more than  
 440 30km away from Fukushima, you're fine. Nothing to worry about." Ehm, so, but, you  
 441 know, I was very, you know, suspicious about this information, especially, you know,  
 442 when there was conflicting information, especially, coming from abroad, and it wasn't  
 443 just forums but also, let's say as well, I mean, I was getting phone calls from, and, and,  
 444 eh, and emails from friends abroad, and also messages on Facebook, ehm, eh, you know  
 445 saying, "You should leave," you know, "Come home." You know, I'd no intention of  
 446 leaving Japan, eh, I knew that Okayama was far enough away, you know, but I, you  
 447 know, ehm, yeah, several friends said, you know, "You should get out of there," eh,  
 448 "this situation is dangerous." Especially I had one friend, eh, friend, friend from France,  
 449 eh, the French seemed especially, ehm, worried about it, and I think they moved their  
 450 embassy staff out of Tokyo as well, em, if I remember correctly, and maybe moved them  
 451 to Osaka or something, em, em, a few days after the earthquake. Ehm, so yeah, my, my,  
 452 my French friend, you know, he was especially adamant, "You should get out of there."  
 453 Yeah.  
 454  
 455 *Uhm. That's fascinating for me because that is an issue...*  
 456  
 457 Uhm.  
 458  
 459 *...in a disaster. What, what the disaster literature talks about...*  
 460  
 461 Yeah.  
 462  
 463 *...is in a disaster what you need is accurate, reliable, timely information...*  
 464  
 465 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 466  
 467 *...and so, you know, one issue say with Fukushima...*  
 468  
 469 Uhum.  
 470  
 471 *...is, say, reliability.*  
 472  
 473 Yeah, I mean, who, who, who could tell what was reliable, you know, it was just, em, a  
 474 case of having to make your own judgement really...  
 475  
 476 Yeah.  
 477  
 478 ...so, you know, o, o, obviously most people decided to stay in Tokyo, but, you know, not  
 479 only foreigners but a lot of Japanese people as well were getting out of the capital so,  
 480 ehm, yeah, I think, eh, at the time anyway, for my mental health, it was the right thing to  
 481 do [laughter].  
 482  
 483 *Absolutely, yeah.*  
 484  
 485 Yeah.  
 486  
 487 *How did you decide to come back?*  
 488  
 489 Eh, actually, again this was, eh, you know, from watching TV and seeing how the  
 490 situation in Fukushima was developing, and, so, they seemed, eh, I think, we, we came  
 491 back, ehm, on the, so, yeah, when you think, so, we might have left, so the earthquake  
 492 was on the Friday, and we went to Okayama either on the Monday or Tuesday, and then

493 we came back to Tokyo on the Monday again. And, eh, we made that decision because,  
 494 em, according to what we were seeing on the news, things were under control, eh,  
 495 things weren't going to get any worse anyway, it seemed, eh, according to, you know, eh,  
 496 like, the government, according to, you know, the news which you could see on, on  
 497 NHK, and so on.  
 498  
 499 *Okay. And did you look at, say, other news sources outside of the Japanese media to*  
 500 *make that decision?*  
 501  
 502 I, I'm sure I did. I'm sure I did, of course, yeah, yeah. Ehm, and, eh, it, it, obviously, you  
 503 know, there, there were still huge concerns at the time, eh, but, eh, you know, they  
 504 were, eh, in the media at the time they were saying, you know, there was no risk of a  
 505 meltdown, that the explosions that happened were just the, well, outer buildings not the  
 506 containment vessels themselves...  
 507  
 508 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 509  
 510 ...and so on, so, em, although it looked dramatic, eh, you know, the media at the time  
 511 were giving the information which they had received from Tepco [Note: Tepco is the  
 512 power company that ran the Fukushima plant] and from the government...  
 513  
 514 *Yeah.*  
 515  
 516 ...that, eh, the situation was under control and, and there wasn't any huge danger, which I  
 517 think, eh, it wasn't quite true!  
 518  
 519 *[Laughter]*  
 520  
 521 *[Laughter]*  
 522  
 523 *Well, now, you've actually touched on an issue that I do want to talk about, about a little*  
 524 *bit...*  
 525  
 526 *Yeah.*  
 527  
 528 *...ehm, so if you remember, the first question I asked you was "Tell me about the 2011*  
 529 *Disaster"...*  
 530  
 531 *Yeah.*  
 532  
 533 *...I very cautiously and, sort of, specifically didn't say earthquake, tsunami, whatever...*  
 534  
 535 *Sure.*  
 536  
 537 *...I try to always just say the 2011 Disaster...*  
 538  
 539 *Ah, okay.*  
 540  
 541 *...because I'm really interested to see how people define the disaster, especially in terms*  
 542 *of time...*  
 543  
 544 *Right.*  
 545  
 546 *...so different people are talking about different periods...*  
 547

548 Yeah.  
 549  
 550 *...because it's such a huge and complex disaster...*  
 551  
 552 Such a complex one, yeah.  
 553  
 554 *...that, for you, obviously, you talked about the day, like, March 11th...*  
 555  
 556 Yeah.  
 557  
 558 *...right?...*  
 559  
 560 Ah, okay.  
 561  
 562 *...ehm, some people barely mention March 11 and talk about, well, different things*  
 563 *because they had a, a, a very different...*  
 564  
 565 Yeah.  
 566  
 567 *...experience. For you, when did the disaster end? If it has?*  
 568  
 569 Oh, that's eh, I suppose, that's a pretty difficult question to answer really, I mean, em, as  
 570 we know the situation in Fukushima is ongoing, ehm, there's constantly radioactive water  
 571 being released [nervous laughter] into the ocean, so, I, I, you know, in some senses I  
 572 don't think we've returned to the life that we had before, eh, in, in quite minor ways, you  
 573 know, and just more cautious about the food that I buy and where I eat, and so on. But,  
 574 yeah, I mean for me, the disaster is over, em, but when, when did it end, ehm, yeah, it's,  
 575 ehm, during, yeah, I mean, very much in the first few days after the earthquake, I really  
 576 felt like I was living in a disaster. I mean, Tokyo wasn't a disaster zone but, you know, it  
 577 really felt like, oh, you know, "These are very worrying times." Ehm, "We may have  
 578 more earthquakes," eh, which we did. None, none as, but as the, eh, as the, eh [laughter]  
 579 as March 11th, of course, but, em, eh, but the main concern, of course, was radiation.  
 580 Ehm, eh, and as I say, then we went to Okayama. Yeah, I suppose when we came back,  
 581 let's say nine or ten days after the, eh, after the disaster, after the earthquake, ehm, you  
 582 know, I went back into work, back into, you know, living my life as normally as I could,  
 583 ehm, but yeah, it's very difficult to say when for me the disaster actually ended. Maybe a  
 584 couple of weeks after.  
 585  
 586 *Yeah. Oh, it's an extremely difficult question to ask...*  
 587  
 588 Yeah, yeah.  
 589  
 590 *...and I also think for a lot of people, it's, it's different, just it depends on your*  
 591 *experiences.*  
 592  
 593 Yeah.  
 594  
 595 *For me, I mean, as you know, I didn't do very well after the disaster, I got, you know, a*  
 596 *definite depression...*  
 597  
 598 Yeah, yeah.  
 599  
 600 *...and a lot of issues, I don't know that I can blame it fully on the disaster...*  
 601  
 602 Uhm.

603  
604 *...there was a lot of stuff, maybe, that the disaster brought to, to...*  
605  
606 Yeah.  
607  
608 *...to the front. So when I try to answer this question just for myself, it's actually months.*  
609  
610 Months, really?  
611  
612 *Months...*  
613  
614 Yeah, yeah.  
615  
616 *...months, definitely. Eh, I would even talk as far as, kind of, six months.*  
617  
618 Uhm.  
619  
620 *I had a lot of problems...*  
621  
622 Yeah.  
623  
624 *...with the warning system [laughter]...*  
625  
626 Ah, okay. Yeah, yeah.  
627  
628 *...eh, so remember I was talking about, like, the accurate, timely, reliable information*  
629 *thing...*  
630  
631 Yeah.  
632  
633 *...do you remember all of those mobile phone warnings, like the sokuho [Note: this is the*  
634 *Japanese word for early warning] ...*  
635  
636 [Laughter] Not very accurate [laughter].  
637  
638 *Not very accurate...*  
639  
640 Yeah.  
641  
642 *...but they came, I don't know, do you get them on your phone?*  
643  
644 Yeah, I do. Ehm, now...  
645  
646 *Do you remember, did they, did they come in the disaster for you?*  
647  
648 *...I don't think so. I, I, I, I don't think, ehm, I had that, so I was using an iPhone at the*  
649 *time, and now I think the, the latest iPhones, it comes as standard that, eh, if there is a, the*  
650 *early warning system does go off, em, but at that time, you had to download, eh, a special*  
651 *app for that, eh, which I downloaded after the earthquake [laughter] yeah...*  
652  
653 *So you mean after 3.11, like, you didn't.*  
654  
655 *...yes, yes, yeah, look, I mean, before, before that I didn't have, eh, that kind of...*  
656  
657 Yeah.



658  
659 ...thing installed so, em, no, I don't think I, I got any sort of warning [laughter] like that,  
660 no, no.  
661  
662 *Can you remember is that app available only in Japanese?*  
663  
664 Eh, oh [Note: the participant checks his current iPhone] so let's see, ehm, I think it's only  
665 in Japanese. The name is in Japanese.  
666  
667 *Okay.*  
668  
669 Ah, actually, no, it gives information in English.  
670  
671 *Okay.*  
672  
673 Yeah, yeah. So I don't know about at the time whether.  
674  
675 *No, but, eh, that's really interesting...*  
676  
677 Uhm.  
678  
679 *...that, eh, like, that they are providing, sort of, multilingual...*  
680  
681 Yeah...  
682  
683 *...warnings.*  
684  
685 ...I, I, I think, now I don't check this very often [laughter] ehm...  
686  
687 *That's probably a good sign [laughter].*  
688  
689 ...yeah, it is at this stage, yeah. Ehm, I think in the past, yeah, well, it certainly used to  
690 display it in Japanese...  
691  
692 *Yeah.*  
693  
694 ...whether there was the option to display it in English, now, I don't know but, now, em,  
695 maybe.  
696  
697 *Do, do you know which company makes that app? Like, so is it a government thing or?*  
698  
699 So this is 'yurekuru call'. No, it's not a government one, I don't think. Now, I mean, it, it,  
700 there's ads here, and so on...  
701  
702 *Okay, so it's like a...*  
703  
704 ...it's a commercial...  
705  
706 *...it's a commercial app.*  
707  
708 ...one, yeah. But also on the iPhone now as standard, ehm, if I can find it here somewhere  
709 [Note: the participant checks through the settings on his iPhone] dah,dah, dah, dah,  
710 there's a, a, an inbuilt thing, it's not an app as such, ehm, where would it be?  
711  
712 *General, maybe?*

713  
 714 Yeah, where's general? Eh, I don't see it here. Eh, notifications.  
 715  
 716 *Ah, there you go. That's probably it, is it?*  
 717  
 718 So, we have, em, emergency alerts...  
 719  
 720 *Ah.*  
 721  
 722 ...yes, which I have on [laughter].  
 723  
 724 *And that's in English?*  
 725  
 726 That is in English.  
 727  
 728 *That would probably be supported then in any language that you have your phone set to.*  
 729  
 730 I, I, I guess so, yeah, yeah.  
 731  
 732 *Because the reason I ask you about this is because I also had an iPhone, and I also had a*  
 733 *work phone, which was a KD, KD, AU KDDI, em...*  
 734  
 735 Yeah, yeah.  
 736  
 737 *...clam shell. You know the flip phone?*  
 738  
 739 Right, right, yeah.  
 740  
 741 *The iPhone never sent me anything...*  
 742  
 743 Ah okay.  
 744  
 745 *...but the Japanese phone in Japanese...*  
 746  
 747 Yeah.  
 748  
 749 *...sent me these early warnings, and if you remember, there was an alarm...*  
 750  
 751 Yeah...  
 752  
 753 *...it goes boo-uh, boo-uh, boo-uh...*  
 754  
 755 ...oh, yeah, I'm quite used to hearing those at this stage, yeah [laughter].  
 756  
 757 *...they traumatized me more than [laughter].*  
 758  
 759 [Laughter] Pretty traumatizing alright.  
 760  
 761 *Honestly, I think I actually have [laughter] PTSD about that sound...*  
 762  
 763 [Laughter]  
 764  
 765 *...because if we were in a big room like this...*  
 766  
 767 Yeah.

768  
 769 *...all of the phones, not all, many of the phones would go off at the same time...*  
 770  
 771 They would, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 772  
 773 *...and if you remember, it's, it wasn't hugely accurate...*  
 774  
 775 Uhm.  
 776  
 777 *...sometimes it would warn for an earthquake that didn't happen...*  
 778  
 779 That's right. Actually...  
 780  
 781 *...sometimes it wouldn't warn for a big earthquake that did happen.*  
 782  
 783 ...very, yeah, very, em, I don't know unreliable system really...  
 784  
 785 *Yeah.*  
 786  
 787 ...but, I mean, for example, I'm sure you've heard it already, but about two months ago,  
 788 maybe, probably in July of this year, ehm [laughter] there was, eh, an alert sent to  
 789 everybody's mobile phone, whoever had the thing, you know, working, installed or  
 790 whatever, ehm, apparently it was a big earthquake about to strike Nara [Note: a prefecture  
 791 in the west of Japan far from Tokyo], eh, which in the end turned out to be magnitude 1  
 792 or 2 or something tiny anyway, nobody felt anything, but, eh, yeah, even in Tokyo, we  
 793 were all getting these alerts and I actually ran out of the house at that time because, you  
 794 know, I just, I just looked at the phone and it said, eh, I think it, probably, yeah, it was in  
 795 Japanese, and it said, eh, "*shindo 7*" [Note: this means seismic intensity 7 which is the  
 796 strongest possible intensity on the Japanese scale for measuring the shaking of  
 797 earthquakes] so eh [laughter] on the Japanese scale, and I just saw that and I decided to  
 798 get the, get the hell out of the apartment, and, eh, then, you know, once I was outside, I  
 799 just saw, "Aw, Nara! Ah, okay." I waited a minute or so and realized there's no shaking,  
 800 it's okay. I turned on the TV and then I saw, you know, they, they had a camera, live  
 801 pictures from Nara, and I expected to see violent shaking, but nothing happened. It was  
 802 just a big false alarm.  
 803  
 804 *It's a really interesting system...*  
 805  
 806 *Yeah.*  
 807  
 808 *...I think it's amazing what they're trying to do...*  
 809  
 810 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 811  
 812 *...but it clearly needs a lot of work.*  
 813  
 814 It needs a bit of work alright, yeah [laughter].  
 815  
 816 *I think, in, in, in terms of the potential for lifesaving...*  
 817  
 818 *Yeah.*  
 819  
 820 *...it, it could be huge, but it just is so, such a difficult thing...*  
 821  
 822 Uhm.

823  
824 *...apparently, there's two different types of waves...*  
825  
826 Right.  
827  
828 *...right? I, I can't remember exactly, but, like, the P-wave and the blah-blah-blah-wave*  
829 *[Note: P waves are followed by Shear waves (or S waves), which are followed by Love*  
830 *waves and then Rayleigh waves, and these do most of the damage in an earthquake]*  
831 *and...*  
832  
833 That's right, yeah.  
834  
835 *...so they detect this first wave...*  
836  
837 Yeah.  
838  
839 *...which triggers the system based on the assumption that more waves of a different*  
840 *nature will follow...*  
841  
842 Yeah.  
843  
844 *...and they're the waves which cause the earthquake, but they don't always follow, just in*  
845 *nature, they don't always follow...*  
846  
847 Yeah, yeah.  
848  
849 *...so it's really, it's tough.*  
850  
851 It's very tough, and I mean, okay, for me it was just, "Oh!" I don't think I'm so  
852 traumatized that I [laughter] that, that I was getting a heart attack or anything, but it did, it  
853 did certainly scare me, but, you know, it, it shut down the *shinkansen* [Note: Japanese  
854 bullet train]...  
855  
856 Yeah.  
857  
858 ...ehm, for a while as well, so it had implications, you know...  
859  
860 Yeah.  
861  
862 ...and people could have been injured, I think, you know, em, from traffic accidents, and  
863 so on, because of this.  
864  
865 *For me, you see, the reason I'm traumatized is I very clearly remember the, let's say, first*  
866 *two to three nights you got...*  
867  
868 Yeah, many aftershocks.  
869  
870 *....and that alarm was going off fairly regularly...*  
871  
872 Oh yeah.  
873  
874 *...so I couldn't sleep...*  
875  
876 That's right.  
877

878 ...and I think, I've often said, like, if anyone wants to ever torture me or anything...

879

880 [Laughter] Oh god.

881

882 ...just deprive me of sleep and I'll answer any questions you have. I think that's it, I have

883 this association...

884

885 Yeah.

886

887 ...with being jerked out of, sort of, half sleep...

888

889 Yeah.

890

891 ...by this alarm. Do you remember the aftershocks in?

892

893 Oh very much, yeah, yeah, there was so many, yeah, it was, eh, very frightening, yeah.

894 Ehm, they were non-stop for a few days, really.

895

896 Yeah, apparently, I can't remember the figures, I have it all written somewhere...

897

898 Yeah.

899

900 ...we got like four-hundred-and-something aftershocks of a significant size in...

901

902 Something crazy, yeah, yeah, yeah.

903

904 ...it was something ridiculous. I definitely was jarred, em, and I've talked to other

905 participants about how...

906

907 Yeah.

908

909 ...when a bus or something would pass...

910

911 [Laughter]

912

913 ...and the doors would shake, I would be...

914

915 Yeah.

916

917 ...in alert mode.

918

919 Really? Really? Yeah, I'm interested, em, on Monday this week there was a very small

920 tremor, and so it was the typhoon at the same time. I thought there was going to be a

921 double disaster, but, eh, I was at home and, eh, yeah, I think it was around midday or

922 something and, yeah, my, my compu, my computer, you know, on the desk just started

923 shaking and I realized, "Oh, we've got an earthquake here." And, now it seemed like a

924 small one, but immediately I turned on the TV to see what information was coming

925 through, you know?

926

927 Yeah. It's fascinating that, like, one thing that I think may be one of my findings is the

928 importance of TV...

929

930 Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

931

932 ...you've mentioned just in that conversation, I think you've mentioned three or four times  
 933 that "I immediately turned on the TV."  
 934  
 935 It was the main source of information, yeah. I mean I'm not going to turn on the radio  
 936 [laughter], it was, it was the TV, of course.  
 937  
 938 *Em, I think so, also, like, in terms of, do you remember we were talking about that*  
 939 *warning system?*  
 940  
 941 Uhm.  
 942  
 943 *Apparently, you know, it is linked also to all the public announcement systems...*  
 944  
 945 Oh yeah.  
 946  
 947 *...throughout Japan...*  
 948  
 949 That's right, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 950  
 951 *...when you were, on 3.11...*  
 952  
 953 Yeah.  
 954  
 955 *...do you remember any sort of PA announcements? You said you were in a park.*  
 956  
 957 Eh, that's right. Ehm, um, so of course, there's the public wireless communication  
 958 system, and I, eh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, I think after the earthquake, ehm, there was talk  
 959 about power cuts, and so on, and I think information regarding that was coming through  
 960 on the public wireless system. I think, but I'm not sure, but there were never any power  
 961 cuts anyway where I lived, ehm, I really can't remember very clearly. And, you know,  
 962 even just a couple of days ago when we had that typhoon, there, eh, there was, you know,  
 963 this public wireless communication system, public announcements, you know, they were  
 964 coming through, warning about, eh, flooding, and so on, so I'm sure, I've no doubt there  
 965 were, you know, announcements being made, but I just can't remember...  
 966  
 967 *And...*  
 968  
 969 They would have, they would have been in Japanese.  
 970  
 971 *...that's, that's, kind of, what I was just about to ask...*  
 972  
 973 Yeah.  
 974  
 975 *...because, I mean, obviously two years ago, it's difficult to remember...*  
 976  
 977 Yeah.  
 978  
 979 *...but seeing as it's the same system...*  
 980  
 981 Yeah.  
 982  
 983 *...those typhoon messages, you're confident were only in Japanese?*  
 984  
 985 Absolutely, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 986

987 *Yeah. This is an issue because in, so say if you're in the rural area...*  
 988  
 989 *Yeah.*  
 990  
 991 *...fair enough. But you live in Tokyo.*  
 992  
 993 *I live in Tokyo, yeah, eh, within, eh, three or four minutes of where I live, I can think*  
 994 *of, you know, about ten other foreigners living, you know, eh, in a suburban area. So*  
 995 *yeah, I'm sure in the city where I live, there, there must be, you know, at least five- to*  
 996 *ten-thousand foreigners living there, and yeah [laughter].*  
 997  
 998 *And, I mean, you're in the position of speaking Japanese fluently...*  
 999  
 1000 *Yeah, uhm.*  
 1001  
 1002 *...eh, would you say other foreigners are also in that position?*  
 1003  
 1004 *Of course, many aren't, yeah. Ehm, we both know many foreigners who've lived here*  
 1005 *even for a very long time who don't speak or understand the language very well, so, yeah,*  
 1006 *I'm sure that many people would really struggle to understand those announcements,*  
 1007 *yeah.*  
 1008  
 1009 *Yeah. Ehm, I know how difficult these questions are because all the questions I'm asking*  
 1010 *you, I've asked myself...*  
 1011  
 1012 *Yeah.*  
 1013  
 1014 *...and I'm trying to remember...*  
 1015  
 1016 *Yeah, uhm, uhm.*  
 1017  
 1018 *...about the public announcement system where I lived in, in, in downtown Tokyo...*  
 1019  
 1020 *Yeah.*  
 1021  
 1022 *...I definitely remember announcements going off...*  
 1023  
 1024 *Yeah.*  
 1025  
 1026 *...they were only in Japanese. I couldn't hear them right.*  
 1027  
 1028 *Look, I mean, this is one thing. Eh, you know, as I say, we had this announcement a*  
 1029 *couple of days ago during the typh, or just before the typhoon, and, eh, what, what I heard*  
 1030 *is omekaido, which is a road not far from where I live, but {my wife who is Japanese}*  
 1031 *heard it at the same time and she thought, eh, what was it, eh, oamekeiho [laughter]*  
 1032 *[Note: this means heavy rain warning]...*  
 1033  
 1034 *[Laughter]*  
 1035  
 1036 *...but she said yeah it really did sound like omekaido [laughter].*  
 1037  
 1038 *You see? Yeah, so, you know, even though...*  
 1039  
 1040 *Garbled.*  
 1041

1042 ...you know, we both, but also we both speak Japanese...  
 1043  
 1044 Yeah.  
 1045  
 1046 ...maybe under pressure...  
 1047  
 1048 Uhum.  
 1049  
 1050 ...or in stress of an emergency or disaster, it's more difficult to understand...  
 1051  
 1052 [Laughter] I think so.  
 1053  
 1054 ...a, a, a second language or a third language or a non-native language...  
 1055  
 1056 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1057  
 1058 ...there's something about receiving information in your own language...  
 1059  
 1060 Uhm.  
 1061  
 1062 ...that, you know, I, I think there's something to be said for it...  
 1063  
 1064 Yeah.  
 1065  
 1066 ...I mean, I don't know if one of my findings is going to be that we should be translating, I  
 1067 don't know if that's the case...  
 1068  
 1069 Yeah.  
 1070  
 1071 ...but I know as somebody who speaks and reads Japanese...  
 1072  
 1073 Uhum.  
 1074  
 1075 ...I didn't trust myself.  
 1076  
 1077 Oh yeah, yeah, no, I understand that. Ehm, I think, even if it was in your native language  
 1078 anyway you just, you're in a state of panic. I don't think you catch everything. "Is that?  
 1079 What was that?" You know? So yeah, when it's your non, when it's a non-native  
 1080 language, even if you [laughter] do understand it very well, yeah, it, it, it's particularly  
 1081 hard.  
 1082  
 1083 Yeah, so, like, I mean, in that sense, I think there is something to be said for providing  
 1084 information maybe over different sources in different languages...  
 1085  
 1086 Yeah.  
 1087  
 1088 ...there's no one-size fits all.  
 1089  
 1090 There's not, there's not. And which languages do you choose as well, you see?  
 1091  
 1092 That's interesting. Why did you say that?  
 1093  
 1094 Well, look, in, in the city where I live, right, em, there's, eh, a, as in most, eh, reasonable-  
 1095 sized cities in Japan, there's, eh, I suppose, what do they call it? *Kokusaisenta* or  
 1096 something [Note: it means international centre] and, eh, so they provide some, some help



1097 for foreigners, they, they, they provide basic language, Japanese language classes, ehm,  
 1098 they have helplines, and they have, em, I guess, they have this, they have this, em,  
 1099 newsletter which comes out maybe once every two or three months, I'm not sure. Ehm,  
 1100 but, eh, in, in this, eh, newsletter anyway they give information about, eh, you know,  
 1101 over-the-phone counselling available. Eh, of course, they have English available, they  
 1102 have Chinese, ehm, a, a, and several other languages, eh, but for some strange reason,  
 1103 they also provide counselling in Norwegian [laughter]...  
 1104  
 1105 *[Laughter]*  
 1106  
 1107 ...I haven't got the faintest idea why. Who are all these Norwegian speakers? [Laughter]  
 1108 There's maybe one guy in the city, one Norwegian in the city, maybe, you know, he  
 1109 needs a little counselling now and then, I don't know [laughter].  
 1110  
 1111 *Or else there's that one Norwegian who works in the counselling centre [laughter].*  
 1112  
 1113 Maybe he's talking to himself. I don't know [laughter].  
 1114  
 1115 *That's fascinating.*  
 1116  
 1117 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1118  
 1119 *The reason I, kind of, pounced on that...*  
 1120  
 1121 Uhm.  
 1122  
 1123 *...as an interesting topic is because, eh, there's a question about whether using English is*  
 1124 *the best second language to be using in Japan.*  
 1125  
 1126 Yeah, yeah. Well, I mean, well, obviously a lot of the, em, a lot of the, eh, foreign  
 1127 residents in Japan, you know, they're from countries like Korea and China and Brazil,  
 1128 and so on, and many of the wouldn't, em, wouldn't speak English, I'm sure, so, yeah,  
 1129 which language do you choose?  
 1130  
 1131 *Yeah, it's a tough, it's a very, very tough one.*  
 1132  
 1133 Uhm.  
 1134  
 1135 *I'm really glad that you mentioned that kind of kokusaisenta, like, the international*  
 1136 *centre...*  
 1137  
 1138 Uhm.  
 1139  
 1140 *...tho, those sort of NPO or...*  
 1141  
 1142 Yeah.  
 1143  
 1144 *...semi-governmental bodies are all throughout Japan. Do you remember getting any*  
 1145 *information from your city office or from any other NPOs or support groups or*  
 1146 *something after 3.11?*  
 1147  
 1148 Eh, no I don't. No. I don't remember receiving any information. Ehm, I mean, there's,  
 1149 there's, like, from the City Hall, there's also a magazine in Japanese, I think that's, it may  
 1150 be weekly or it may be monthly, I'm not sure, it seems to come fairly regularly anyway,  
 1151 eh, and that would have had information, you know, about the disaster after the fact, but

1152 of course, all in Japanese. Ehm, yeah, I don't remember getting, I don't remember getting  
 1153 any information from the city.  
 1154  
 1155 *So you weren't emailed or telephone or called on or?*  
 1156  
 1157 No, no.  
 1158  
 1159 *Yep. That's consistent with...*  
 1160  
 1161 Yeah.  
 1162  
 1163 *...my other participants, so I'm not sure whether that's a good thing or a bad thing...*  
 1164  
 1165 Yeeeaahhh.  
 1166  
 1167 *...em, as you know, as foreigners living in Japan we're obliged to register...*  
 1168  
 1169 Of course, yeah.  
 1170  
 1171 *...with the city office...*  
 1172  
 1173 And pay our taxes, and stuff [laughter].  
 1174  
 1175 *...yeah, so there is, there is a database of information there.*  
 1176  
 1177 Yeah, certainly, yeah, yeah.  
 1178  
 1179 *But similarly, you know, I talked about disability earlier on, there's a database of people*  
 1180 *living with disabilities...*  
 1181  
 1182 Yeah.  
 1183  
 1184 *...they also weren't called on.*  
 1185  
 1186 Really?  
 1187  
 1188 *There's legal, there were, they, this may have been sorted out now...*  
 1189  
 1190 Yeah.  
 1191  
 1192 *...but, as you can imagine, between city offices...*  
 1193  
 1194 Yeah.  
 1195  
 1196 *...there's very strict laws ab, about privacy...*  
 1197  
 1198 Very strict, very strict, uhm.  
 1199  
 1200 *...so there was difficulty for different offices to know whether they were legally allowed to*  
 1201 *give out...*  
 1202  
 1203 Are you serious?  
 1204  
 1205 *...information. Yeah.*  
 1206

1207 No, I just, I mean, privacy is important, of course, but look, I mean, let's say, you know,  
 1208 when I was, em, when I was teaching in {a university in Ireland}, of course, I could  
 1209 obtain any student's, eh, email address and contact them, but, eh, in the Japanese  
 1210 universities where I work, I don't have that [laughter], you know. So, okay most of the  
 1211 universities, they have a {online portal} system, or something similar, you know, where I  
 1212 can send information to the class as a whole...  
 1213  
 1214 *Yeah.*  
 1215  
 1216 ...but generally the students don't check that anyway so.  
 1217  
 1218 *Yeah. It's, it's, it's tricky, it's tricky, I know they have to find a balance...*  
 1219  
 1220 *Yeah.*  
 1221  
 1222 *...but for sure I know that if you are talking about layers of vulnerability...*  
 1223  
 1224 *Uhm.*  
 1225  
 1226 *...that having a database...*  
 1227  
 1228 *Yeah.*  
 1229  
 1230 *...of, say, people living with disabilities or who maybe don't speak the language...*  
 1231  
 1232 *Yeah.*  
 1233  
 1234 *...that could be a useful resource for helping people after a disaster.*  
 1235  
 1236 *Definitely, yeah.*  
 1237  
 1238 *Another thing that I, I know exists now, because I've been studying them...*  
 1239  
 1240 *Yeah.*  
 1241  
 1242 *...say governmental websites...*  
 1243  
 1244 *Ah, okay, yeah.*  
 1245  
 1246 *...do you remember anything about that?*  
 1247  
 1248 *Governmental websites? No [laughter] not at all.*  
 1249  
 1250 *So it didn't cross your mind to check...*  
 1251  
 1252 *No, I don't think so.*  
 1253  
 1254 *...the ministry of? Yeah. No. Again this is consistent with a lot of other people. As it turns*  
 1255 *out, most governmental websites did provide some information...*  
 1256  
 1257 *Ah, okay.*  
 1258  
 1259 *...but not necessarily in a timely manner.*  
 1260  
 1261 *Uhm, right.*

1262  
1263 *But it's just interesting that, so far...*  
1264  
1265 Yeah.  
1266  
1267 *...just in the people I've people I've spoken to so far, it hasn't even come across...*  
1268  
1269 Right, yeah.  
1270  
1271 *...their minds to, to, so, I mean, this is an example of translation being done...*  
1272  
1273 Yeah.  
1274  
1275 *...but for what end? Could those resources be used in another way?*  
1276  
1277 Oh, some of this government in, information on government websites was actually  
1278 available in English, in English was it?  
1279  
1280 *Exactly.*  
1281  
1282 Oh, okay. Never saw that [laughter].  
1283  
1284 *Yeah. It was available in English, Korean, Chinese...*  
1285  
1286 Right.  
1287  
1288 *...Portuguese, but it, the point being that you didn't, it didn't cross your mind as a*  
1289 *foreigner living here...*  
1290  
1291 No.  
1292  
1293 *...to check.*  
1294  
1295 Checking the, eh, the embassy websites was, eh, yeah, that, that's, eh, I suppose, eh, I  
1296 suppose, coming from the Japanese side, I, I, I guess I thought I was getting whatever  
1297 information was available from NHK anyway, and, eh, then for, you know, other  
1298 opinions, and so on, I was looking at foreign media and, eh, and embassy websites, and  
1299 so on.  
1300  
1301 *That's really interesting. I'm very fascinated by how you said that in your information*  
1302 *from the Japanese side, NHK, the TV broadcasting, national broadcasting.*  
1303  
1304 Yeah, it was the national broadcaster, yeah, yeah. And it just seemed anyway that, em,  
1305 you know, whether it was NHK or Fuji Terebi [Note: a major private broadcasting  
1306 company in Japan] or whatever, they were all providing the same information anyway,  
1307 and it was, it was kind of a, it seemed, it was, eh, you know, it was no, there were no  
1308 dissenting voices. It was all, "Don't panic."  
1309  
1310 *Okay, okay.*  
1311  
1312 That was my feeling, anyway.  
1313  
1314 *No, no, that's really, really interesting...*  
1315  
1316 [Laughter]

1317  
 1318 *...to me, because, you know, I am trying to think about how translation services could*  
 1319 *contribute...*  
 1320  
 1321 Yeah.  
 1322  
 1323 *...so, maybe a focus on making TV resources, Japanese TV resources available in*  
 1324 *languages is...*  
 1325  
 1326 Now, that does remind me, alright, I mean, em, of course on the NHK news they have  
 1327 this *fukikaeban* [Note: this means dubbed version] where they do have simultaneous  
 1328 interpretation going on, ehm, eh, and I, I, I, you know, I'm pretty sure during the disaster  
 1329 time as well there would have been, if you changed that sub-channel, you could hear  
 1330 information in English, translated information.  
 1331  
 1332 *Yeah. This is, this is something that I'm thinking about anyway...*  
 1333  
 1334 Uhm.  
 1335  
 1336 *...could be a, sort of, a focus [Note: the researcher covers his face with this hands briefly]*  
 1337 *for the study just because...*  
 1338  
 1339 Yeah.  
 1340  
 1341 *...as I said, in terms of translation that people might have been exposed to...*  
 1342  
 1343 Yeah.  
 1344  
 1345 *...of the people I've spoken to so far, TV is probably the only, like...*  
 1346  
 1347 Ah.  
 1348  
 1349 *...maybe that's the only source where they've actually...*  
 1350  
 1351 Yeah.  
 1352  
 1353 *...had any sort of contact with translation.*  
 1354  
 1355 Uhm. Yeah, I suppose, look, I mean, if you're going to be looking for information in  
 1356 your, in your native language, you're going to look for information, I suppose, from,  
 1357 from, you know, in my case, from websites from English-speaking countries, you know,  
 1358 so.  
 1359  
 1360 *Yeah. Ehm, another thing that's kind of linked to what we were talking just a little bit*  
 1361 *earlier about is the fact that from, you know, your instinct was to go to, say, embassy...*  
 1362  
 1363 Yep.  
 1364  
 1365 *...websites or embassy information. One thing that a lot of recommendations are being*  
 1366 *built upon is the idea of building stronger links in the community...*  
 1367  
 1368 Right, yeah.  
 1369  
 1370 *...between foreigners and their local...*  
 1371

1372 Yes, yeah.  
 1373  
 1374 ...*Japanese communities. Did you feel or do you feel part of, no, let me ask you one*  
 1375 *question...*  
 1376  
 1377 Sure.  
 1378  
 1379 ...*at the time of the disaster, did you feel part of your local community?*  
 1380  
 1381 Certainly not, no [laughter]. Not at all, not at all. Ehm, for example, eh, so in my  
 1382 apartment block, there were just four apartments, and so a, across the hallway from me,  
 1383 there's a, a middle-aged family and their, their daughter who, I guess, at the time of the  
 1384 disaster might have been, she might have been around 10 years old or something. And,  
 1385 you know, they're friendly, you know. We'll say *kon'nichiwa* [Note: means hello] to each  
 1386 other, and *atsui desu ne* [Note: means isn't it hot!] and, and, and what have you, you  
 1387 know. Em, and same if {my wife} meets them, it's just small talk, eh, but, you know,  
 1388 they're pleasant and they're friendly, ehm, but, you know, we really don't know that  
 1389 much about them, you know [laughter]. For example, I don't know the, the, eh, the  
 1390 husband's job or, or where they're from originally or whatever. No idea. Ehm, and then,  
 1391 eh, downstairs, so immediately downstairs from me, there's a woman or possibly two  
 1392 women, eh, maybe sisters, you know, I've been living there for, how long? About three-  
 1393 and-a-half years, and I'm still not sure whether it's one woman or two wom, women who  
 1394 live there, you know. I have no idea what they're called. Ehm, you know, if I pass them,  
 1395 I'd say *kon'nichiwa* but they're not partic, they're not particularly friendly. Not at all,  
 1396 actually. Ehm, and, eh, at the time then, in the fourth apartment, I'm not sure if, eh, yeah,  
 1397 I don't think anybody was actually living there at the time...  
 1398  
 1399 *Yeah.*  
 1400  
 1401 ...and then outside of the apartment block, ehm, it's a suburban area. Mostly, eh, eh, you  
 1402 know, families living in houses along the road and, ah, I don't know any of them.  
 1403 [Laughter] Not at all.  
 1404  
 1405 *If you were to try, if, if, if the government as a recommendation wanted you to be more*  
 1406 *part of the community...*  
 1407  
 1408 *Yeah.*  
 1409  
 1410 ...*how would you go about it? What would work with you and {your wife}?*  
 1411  
 1412 What would work? Ehm, I don't know. I mean there are local community centres, so, em,  
 1413 I don't know who visits these community centres, you know, maybe it's mostly the  
 1414 elderly, for example, I'm not sure. But if, if there were, em, yeah, if there were events  
 1415 going on in the community centre, em, you know, I suppose, to engage the community,  
 1416 you know, kind of a get-to-know-you session even, you know. Ehm, yeah, I'm not sure if  
 1417 we would participate, but, eh, but, you know, that would be a start, anyway, if, if such a  
 1418 thing existed.  
 1419  
 1420 *It's, it's, I'm asking you incredibly difficult questions here...*  
 1421  
 1422 Uhm, uhm.  
 1423  
 1424 ...*because first of all, there's the big city element...*  
 1425  
 1426 *Yeah, exactly, yeah.*

1427  
 1428 *...so in any big city it can be difficult to, to know your neighbours...*  
 1429  
 1430 Yeah.  
 1431  
 1432 *...but I'm trying to see if I can unpick the 'big city' element from the 'being a foreigner'*  
 1433 *element.*  
 1434  
 1435 Yeah, yeah, it's a really, it's a good question. I mean, em, I really, I think, you, in Tokyo,  
 1436 yeah, it can be very difficult to get to know your neighbours. People don't necessarily  
 1437 want to know each other. They want to, you know, maintain a certain distance, keep their  
 1438 own space, and so on. You know, for example, eh, the woman downstairs or the women  
 1439 downstairs, ehm, they're not avoiding me because I'm a foreigner [laughter], it's just they  
 1440 don't, eh, they don't interact with any of their neighbours, you know, this is quite  
 1441 obvious. Now, em, in my neighbourhood, em, eh, there's, eh, you know, a lot of people  
 1442 who've been living there, eh, for many years. And I, I, I'm, you know, I'm sure they will  
 1443 know their immediate neighbours and they, they have a sense of community much more  
 1444 than we do, eh, but for, you know, for people who are, especially just living in an  
 1445 apartment, em, you know, I suppose not really putting down roots or, you know, people  
 1446 didn't really see you as putting down roots when you're just renting for a few years, or  
 1447 whatever. Now, if you were to build a house in the neighbourhood, I think, eh, you know,  
 1448 people would, em, make more of an effort to get to know you...  
 1449  
 1450 Yeah.  
 1451  
 1452 *...and I guess if you were to build a house, anyway, you would make more of an effort to*  
 1453 *get to know the neighbours as well...*  
 1454  
 1455 Yeah.  
 1456  
 1457 *...I mean, for example, ehm, eh, a, a few days ago, our neighbours, eh, ehm, from one of*  
 1458 *the, from one of the neighbouring houses, they called around, ehm, to say that they were*  
 1459 *going to be knocking down the house and rebuilding, and they came around with a gift,*  
 1460 *eh, as is the Japanese custom, you know, just to apologize for the, for the noise and*  
 1461 *intrusion over the next few months while that goes on. Ehm, which was nice, you know,*  
 1462 *but, eh, now that we've seen these people, that they've called around, I'm sure when I*  
 1463 *pass them on the street, I'll say kon'nichiwa, but, you know, will, will the relationship go*  
 1464 *any further than that? I doubt it [laughter].*  
 1465  
 1466 *No, I, I'm really glad you explained it in the way you did because what I have to be*  
 1467 *careful of...*  
 1468  
 1469 Uhm, uhm.  
 1470  
 1471 *...is that I don't interpret, sort of, 'big city' lack of community for 'you being a*  
 1472 *foreigner'...*  
 1473  
 1474 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1475  
 1476 *...lack of community. But, I am conscious of the fact that one of the recommendations*  
 1477 *coming out of this is that, "Oh, we have to make foreigners a part of the community."*  
 1478  
 1479 Yeah.  
 1480  
 1481 *I want to think about is that realistic.*

1482  
 1483 Is there a community? [laughter]  
 1484  
 1485 *Yeah. Yeah.*  
 1486  
 1487 Uhm.  
 1488  
 1489 *And, you know, that's the sort of thing that sounds nice...*  
 1490  
 1491 Yeah.  
 1492  
 1493 *...but, okay, how do you make that happen?*  
 1494  
 1495 Yeah, it's pretty difficult.  
 1496  
 1497 *Yeah. The other thing, em, which I did want to, sort of, ask you about, it's more general*  
 1498 *now, this is not...*  
 1499  
 1500 Yeah.  
 1501  
 1502 *...your local community, but just in general were you aware of any kind of community-*  
 1503 *building or nation-building sort of slogans or campaigns or anything after 3.11?*  
 1504  
 1505 No. No, I wasn't. Not at all.  
 1506  
 1507 *You don't remember 'Gambarou Nippon' [Note: one of the slogans widely used after the*  
 1508 *disaster meaning 'Let's hang in there, Japan' - other versions included 'gambare*  
 1509 *nippon/nihon' and 'gambare tohoku'.]*  
 1510  
 1511 Ah, okay. Yes, on a national level, yes. Yeah, that existed, yeah. 'Gambare Nihon' and,  
 1512 eh, there was a slogan as well for Tohoku, 'Gambare Tohoku' or whatever it was, yeah,  
 1513 yeah, that's true. That did exist, yeah [laughter].  
 1514  
 1515 *Yeah. But you didn't feel connected with it or?*  
 1516  
 1517 [Laughter] Not really, no.  
 1518  
 1519 *No, no, no, no. I'm, ju, the, again, I'm just trying to, there's, you know, been research*  
 1520 *done about...*  
 1521  
 1522 Yeah.  
 1523  
 1524 *...kind of, how this was a, a game-changer for, sort of, nation-building...*  
 1525  
 1526 Right, yeah.  
 1527  
 1528 *...community-building in Japan. Maybe, maybe not...*  
 1529  
 1530 Uhm.  
 1531  
 1532 *...but, you know, long-term residents, are they part of that or not?*  
 1533  
 1534 Yeah, yeah.  
 1535  
 1536 *I'm not so sure.*



1537  
1538 [Laughter] I wonder, I wonder, yeah. I mean, em, like, that was, that's my own  
1539 experience, you know, I don't have, I've been living in this neighbourhood for three-and-  
1540 a-half years and, eh, I don't really feel part of the community. But then, you know, eh,  
1541 ehm, a five-minute walk away from me, there's another Irish person and he's been living  
1542 there, eh, I think, I don't know if he owns the house or whether he rents it, but, you know,  
1543 he lives in a house as opposed to an apartment, ehm, and, eh, he speaks Japanese very  
1544 well, ehm, I, I, he seems to very much belong to the community, you know. Ehm, you  
1545 know, if he has a party, he will invite his neighbours, and so on, around, so, yeah, it really  
1546 depends.  
1547  
1548 *Oh yeah, like, I think, you know, it's your experience...*  
1549  
1550 Yeah.  
1551  
1552 *...there may be other experiences out there...*  
1553  
1554 Exactly.  
1555  
1556 *...it's just interesting to, to try and figure some of these things out...*  
1557  
1558 Definitely.  
1559  
1560 *...em, the other issue we haven't really talked about...*  
1561  
1562 Yeah.  
1563  
1564 *...like, don't, I don't know your experience...*  
1565  
1566 Uhum.  
1567  
1568 *...but power and connectivity in terms of information and communication, was that an*  
1569 *issue for you?*  
1570  
1571 No, not really. Ehm, now, I, I, yeah, we didn't have any power outages, you know, there  
1572 was talk of that at the time, ehm, but it, you know, never affected us, actually.  
1573  
1574 *Yeah. I think this, like, it's, it's down on my list of questions, but I think it's really more*  
1575 *for people who, maybe, were more directly in the disaster zone.*  
1576  
1577 Yeah, yeah. Ah well, I think, like, outside of Tokyo alright, there may have been power  
1578 cuts, let's say, em, towards Yamanashi, and so on. I'm not sure, but I, I think there may  
1579 have been at the time alright.  
1580  
1581 *Yeah, yeah. I think, like, for most people, it wasn't a big issue certainly...*  
1582  
1583 Uhm.  
1584  
1585 *...ehm, it wasn't an issue for me...*  
1586  
1587 Yeah.  
1588  
1589 *...I was concerned a little bit about water, but that was for other reasons, that was*  
1590 *Fukushima [laughter].*  
1591

1592 Yeah, yeah, me too. And it was all bottled water for me, actually [laughter].  
 1593  
 1594 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I think that's pretty much all the things I wanted to ask you...*  
 1595  
 1596 Okay, right.  
 1597  
 1598 *...today. Eh, yeah, that seems to be it. [Note: here the researcher glanced through his list*  
 1599 *of interview topics - as this was still only Participant 4, the researcher was not so*  
 1600 *confident about remembering all the topics he wanted to cover, and as this participant*  
 1601 *was a personal friend of the researcher, he felt comfortable openly doing this check.]*  
 1602 *Just, there's one, kind of, final question...*  
 1603  
 1604 Yep.  
 1605  
 1606 *...this is more again, eh, to do with part of the research process...*  
 1607  
 1608 Yeah.  
 1609  
 1610 *...because we've been talking about disasters...*  
 1611  
 1612 Uhum.  
 1613  
 1614 *...I just wanted to make sure you feel okay about it, you don't feel any extra stress or*  
 1615 *anything [laughter].*  
 1616  
 1617 I think I'll be okay [laughter].  
 1618  
 1619 *So, like, could you, sort of, rate your feeling of, kind of, anxiety [Note: the researcher*  
 1620 *passes the participant the Anxiety Likert Scale sheet] just after talking.*  
 1621  
 1622 [Laughter] Eh...  
 1623  
 1624 [Laughter]  
 1625  
 1626 ...I didn't feel anxious at all.  
 1627  
 1628 *No, ehm, the reason I wanted to ask this is because, li, like...*  
 1629  
 1630 Yeah.  
 1631  
 1632 *...some people have answered differently [laughter] to you, put it that way.*  
 1633  
 1634 Well, I mean, the only anx, anxiety I felt, because I mean I didn't, I was, I was anxious in  
 1635 terms of, like, trying to remember, ehm, I mean, like, the, I'm fine with the disaster, you  
 1636 know, but trying to remember, oh, the communications, you know, and so on, but it's all,  
 1637 yeah.  
 1638  
 1639 *Yeah, trying to remember what happened yesterday is difficult enough...*  
 1640  
 1641 [Laughter]  
 1642  
 1643 *...never mind what happened two years ago. And as I said, like, any of the questions I've,*  
 1644 *kind of, been asking you, at first, I've asked myself, and I find them difficult to answer, so*  
 1645 *I understand.*  
 1646

1647 Yeah, yeah, they're pretty tough actually. Surprisingly, yeah.  
 1648  
 1649 *Like, just in terms of, also, we're, we have quite similar experiences...*  
 1650  
 1651 Uhm.  
 1652  
 1653 *...in that we'd lived in Japan for a fairly long period of time on and off...*  
 1654  
 1655 Yeah, yeah.  
 1656  
 1657 *...and we both are able to speak Japanese...*  
 1658  
 1659 Uhm.  
 1660  
 1661 *...sometimes it's been difficult for me to remember, "Was this happening in Japanese or*  
 1662 *was this happening in another language?"*  
 1663  
 1664 Yeah, you don't really differentiate when you're remembering things...  
 1665  
 1666 *Yeah...*  
 1667  
 1668 you know?  
 1669  
 1670 *...yeah. There are some things...*  
 1671  
 1672 Uhm.  
 1673  
 1674 *...that were clear enough, I know for sure, like, I remember for me a really useful thing*  
 1675 *was watching the streamed NHK broadcasts...*  
 1676  
 1677 Aw, right? Yeah, yeah.  
 1678  
 1679 *...because they had, you know, the commenting function on the side...*  
 1680  
 1681 Uhuh.  
 1682  
 1683 *...and, like, it was all in Japanese...*  
 1684  
 1685 Yeah.  
 1686  
 1687 *...but I really used that as a main information source...*  
 1688  
 1689 Oh, you did?  
 1690  
 1691 *...remember how you were talking about...*  
 1692  
 1693 Yeah.  
 1694  
 1695 *...how forums, kind of, helped you...*  
 1696  
 1697 Yeah.  
 1698  
 1699 *...get ideas. I remember reading, like, I mean, I was, while I was watching the news...*  
 1700  
 1701 Uhm.

1702  
 1703 *...I was reading all of these comments that are, you know, it's, it's that, like a YouTube*  
 1704 *comment function, it's constantly, kind of, updating...*  
 1705  
 1706 Aw, right, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1707  
 1708 *...and so I was, like, basing a lot of what I was feeling...*  
 1709  
 1710 Uhm.  
 1711  
 1712 *...on those things.*  
 1713  
 1714 But you know, like, em, you mention, eh, how, you know, I found forums helpful. But I  
 1715 don't know if I really did. You know, there was a lot of conflicting information and a lot  
 1716 of people giving the worst case scenario, eh, which, you know, I think caused a lot of  
 1717 people anxiety. Em, now, obv, obviously, you want to know the truth, you want to know  
 1718 the real situation of what is going on, and as it turns out, I don't really think we got that  
 1719 from the government at the time, but, you know, they were really giving, there were some  
 1720 people, really uninformed people, really giving, eh, Armageddon-type scenarios  
 1721 [laughter] which, you know, that, that just caused anxiety.  
 1722  
 1723 *That's very, I'm very glad you said that so explicitly because I think that's important to*  
 1724 *say that, in terms of, like, forums or social media, if we're going to make a case for*  
 1725 *translating them...*  
 1726  
 1727 Yeah, you, you, you see the thing is...  
 1728  
 1729 *...like, to be careful.*  
 1730  
 1731 ...you even had people in California who were really, really concerned about the radiation  
 1732 coming over to them, I, I don't know how far California is, but [laughter] I mean, it's a  
 1733 long, long way away, you know, and, like, "Oh my god, he's in California and he's  
 1734 worried. I'm just a few, hundred-and-forty kilom, kilometres away in, in Tokyo," you  
 1735 know, so.  
 1736  
 1737 *That's very interesting.*  
 1738  
 1739 Yeah [laughter].  
 1740  
 1741 *Yeah. It's, this is what I've been finding [laughter] all the time is, like, it's so difficult to*  
 1742 *think of what, you know, in terms of information, what's the right level. When is it too*  
 1743 *much? When is it too little?*  
 1744  
 1745 Well, I mean, you know, Kan [Note: the prime minister of Japan at the time of the  
 1746 disaster] after he, after he was, eh, well, he didn't quit, did he? [Laughter]...  
 1747  
 1748 *Right.*  
 1749  
 1750 ...after he lost his position as, as PM, ehm, he, eh, I think he admitted it, didn't he, that,  
 1751 eh, you know, he was very close to, eh, ordering the evacuation order for Tokyo, wasn't  
 1752 it?  
 1753  
 1754 *Oh yeah, yeah, that was, that was on the cards.*  
 1755  
 1756 Yeah, yeah, that was really on the cards [laughter].

1757  
 1758 *So if we [laughter], yeah, you see, eh, like, as I, as I said, I'm kind of trying to bring*  
 1759 *everything I think about back to...*  
 1760  
 1761 Yeah.  
 1762  
 1763 *... "Okay, so where does translation fit into this."*  
 1764  
 1765 Exactly.  
 1766  
 1767 *But that's, there are some deeper problems that are, just in terms of a disaster and*  
 1768 *information...*  
 1769  
 1770 Yeah.  
 1771  
 1772 *...that have, how, kind of, translation is like another thing on top of that then...*  
 1773  
 1774 Uhm.  
 1775  
 1776 *...just, in terms of giving information in a disaster...*  
 1777  
 1778 Yeah.  
 1779  
 1780 *...it's difficult to know what to give and what not to give, so never mind what to translate*  
 1781 *and what not to translate.*  
 1782  
 1783 Exactly, exactly. I mean, obviously, you have to give the same information to the  
 1784 Japanese citizens as you do to the foreign...  
 1785  
 1786 Yeah.  
 1787  
 1788 *...eh, residents here, you know?*  
 1789  
 1790 *Yeah. Ehm, like one part of me would love to go and talk to Japanese people...*  
 1791  
 1792 Uhm.  
 1793  
 1794 *...about their experiences...*  
 1795  
 1796 Yeah, yeah.  
 1797  
 1798 *...because I'd love to find out how many of them who could speak English...*  
 1799  
 1800 Yeah.  
 1801  
 1802 *...or another language were using foreign...*  
 1803  
 1804 Aw, many, I'm sure...  
 1805  
 1806 *...sources for information.*  
 1807  
 1808 *...many, many, many, yeah.*  
 1809  
 1810 *Unfortunately, that can't be part of this project, because it's just muddying the waters...*  
 1811

1812 [Laughter] It would be, yeah.  
 1813  
 1814 *...but I'm really interested, because I think that's where technology has changed the game*  
 1815 *a little bit now.*  
 1816  
 1817 That's right, yeah, yeah. You know, I mean, you can just get information from  
 1818 everywhere now, well, as long as you're able to, to understand it, so.  
 1819  
 1820 *Yeah. And also as long as you have power and...*  
 1821  
 1822 Oh, yeah, yeah, exactly...  
 1823  
 1824 *...connectivity [laughter].*  
 1825  
 1826 *...so, many people didn't, yeah.*  
 1827  
 1828 *Yeah, yeah. Those, those are the things, like, this is, one of the reasons why I wanted to*  
 1829 *talk to people from, from fairly broad geographical areas...*  
 1830  
 1831 Yeah.  
 1832  
 1833 *...is I want to see how those differences impacted on their experiences...*  
 1834  
 1835 Yeah.  
 1836  
 1837 *...so certainly, the people I've spoken to in Tokyo, power and connectivity wasn't a big*  
 1838 *issue...*  
 1839  
 1840 It wasn't.  
 1841  
 1842 *...but the people in the disaster zone, it was.*  
 1843  
 1844 In Tokyo, the biggest issue really was getting toilet paper...  
 1845  
 1846 [Laughter]  
 1847  
 1848 *...and batteries [laughter].*  
 1849  
 1850 *Ah yeah, batteries. That's another key point. Let me just do a real quick check [Note:*  
 1851 *here again the researcher glanced through his list of interview topics]...*  
 1852  
 1853 Sure, sure.  
 1854  
 1855 *...to make sure I've, kind of, covered everything. Yeah, I think that's pretty much it. Cool.*  
 1856  
 1857 Alright.  
 1858  
 1859 *Well, listen, thanks again.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/18 Interview with Participant 5*

5 *Researcher: So, then, it's actually down to the [laughter] interview part. Ehm, I, I sent*  
6 *you the list of questions if you had a chance to look at it?*

7  
8 Participant: I just had a quick look over it, and I didn't have too much time to look at it in  
9 detail.

10  
11 *Okay, so the first question I ask everybody is just to tell me a little bit about their*  
12 *experience of the 2011 disaster.*

13  
14 So, em, yeah, that day, we were in work and there was an earthquake. The first thing I  
15 remember, it's, it was six point something in Ibaraki and that area, in Tokyo, it wasn't  
16 actually that strong. I mean it was a big earthquake but, yeah, the office was shaking and  
17 there were some people who had the, the one-seg on their phones [Note: this is a special  
18 digital TV signal designed to broadcast TV over mobile phones in Japan], so you could  
19 actually see the pictures that came up on the TV later of cars, like, smashing into  
20 buildings, and stuff. Yeah, there was, kind of, a bit of panic, but here was no realization  
21 of just how big it was. Like the whole nuclear stuff didn't happen until a week later or  
22 maybe a little after. So the work stopped there and then, like, lots of trains were stopped  
23 so a lot of people were planning to stay there that night. I actually heard some of the  
24 trains were still running, so I decided to, I was actually heading already out toward the  
25 Chuo Line and I thought, "If there's not trains, I can't go home."

26  
27 *Uhum.*

28  
29 So I decided to stay at a friend's house. They were staying in a dor, dormitory, and, ehm,  
30 we just decided to go drinking, because, you know, that, there was no realization of just  
31 how serious it was on so many levels, like, that so many people had died, you know? All  
32 we knew is there was a massive earthquake. And there wasn't, there wasn't anything  
33 more serious. But, you know, we had no idea, like. The numbers and stuff didn't come  
34 out till later. So we went drinking and I saw up, up on the top of the screen it was like,  
35 "some train services have begun". So I said, I've got to run. So I just ran to Shibuya and  
36 got the train home. And that was that day.

37  
38 *Yeah. So, obviously, what I'm interested in are issues about information and*  
39 *communication. You said you found out that the trains had stopped or were running, can*  
40 *you remember what language that was in, where you found that information?*

41  
42 Eh, at the time, {redacted} so at that time, work and home, the language was Japanese.  
43 Here you can see the JR status [Note: JR is Japan Rail] on the Internet and you can also,  
44 yeah, check your phone, and that's all through Japanese.

45  
46 *Okay, and similarly then with, you know, you said about the TV?*

47  
48 The TV, yes, you know they have the, the, some sort of new information, they always  
49 scroll at the...

50  
51 *Yeah.*

52  
53 ...that's Japanese.

54  
55 *Yeah, yeah. And did you yourself have a one-seg?*  
56  
57 No.  
58  
59 *No. I didn't even know what one-seg was until that day.*  
60  
61 Ah, okay, okay.  
62  
63 *Ehm, so also what I'm interested in is the idea of when the disaster and when the disaster*  
64 *stopped for people. So I noticed that you mentioned 3.11 - that day - so for you, when the*  
65 *disaster then end?*  
66  
67 As I said, like, that day, it didn't really hit in so hard that, that was the start and then as  
68 for the end, things got relatively back to normal - you know, there were days and days of  
69 updates about the nuclear plant, and that was very scary stuff, and, like, obviously my  
70 parents were worried - but it probably took about, that happened in March, I think the  
71 situation had calmed down July, as in my parents had, kind of, gone like, "Okay." You  
72 can get toilet paper, you can get water - because, you know, there had been shortages up  
73 to that time. You know, whatever activities you might be involved in get cancelled, your  
74 work can't go on for the moment because we have factories in Ibaraki. There was a lot of,  
75 yeah, just stuff, like, that all propagated. So it was probably a few months, yeah.  
76  
77 *So several, several months, in other words. Ehm, obviously I'm interested in how you got*  
78 *information, that's one, one area that I'm interested in, but I'm also interested in how*  
79 *you communicated with the important people in your life at the time of the disaster. Can*  
80 *you speak a little about that?*  
81  
82 Yeah, eh, I, at the time, I was living with my to-be wife. So I couldn't talk to her because  
83 the phones were all not working. Eh, so, I didn't talk to her until that, she walked home  
84 from Shinjuku which is about a four, five hour walk. So I, eh, talked to her and she was  
85 able to talk to her parents on the mobile phone. I was able to talk to my friends around  
86 Japan, actually, for some reason, everybody was using Facebook. Yeah, I managed to get  
87 in contact with people through Facebook. And, em, family, I wasn't able to use the  
88 Internet, so I think I emailed, I was emailing my family in Ireland. I was just emailing.  
89  
90 *Did you have any trouble with the communication in terms of, sort of, power or*  
91 *connectivity or anything like that?*  
92  
93 Inside Japan, yes. So everybody was basically communicating through the Internet, which  
94 was working at the time.  
95  
96 *And power?*  
97  
98 Power, yeah, there was some trouble, but not that much trouble because the company  
99 actually had a power backup generator...  
100  
101 *Aahh.*  
102  
103 ...and, yeah, we had to use that a few times. But I don't, yeah, things weren't normal, but  
104 I don't remember having a massive issue.  
105  
106 *Yeah, I think really it depends on where you were located, ehm, so, you know, you*  
107 *mentioned that your company had, maybe, some plants or production facilities in Ibaraki.*  
108 *That might have been more troublesome...*



109  
110 Oh yeah.  
111  
112 *...depending on where. But Tokyo, maybe, was relatively unscathed.*  
113  
114 Yeah, I don't remember, I don't remember it being able to use the Internet at home and I  
115 don't know how long I was on holiday off work, actually, I think it was only a few days,  
116 but. Sorry I don't remember more.  
117  
118 *Ah no, but, eh, like, I, I think this is one of the issues, you know, it's two years, two years*  
119 *have passed now so asking anybody about their experience two days ago [laughter]*  
120 *never mind two years ago, memory is always going to be an issue, right? Ehm, so just to*  
121 *get back to, kind of, the idea of information rather than communication. So I know you*  
122 *were getting most of your information in Japanese but what were the main sources of that*  
123 *information?*  
124  
125 At the time it was television.  
126  
127 *Television?*  
128  
129 I'd say 90% was television and 10% was Internet.  
130  
131 *Can you be a bit more specific, like, about channels or websites?*  
132  
133 Eh, channels, probably NHK [Note: Japanese national broadcaster], but I can't be sure,  
134 but it was NHK, I think. It was always the same channel.  
135  
136 *Yeah.*  
137  
138 Websites. There's a paper available online in English, but I can't remember what it's  
139 called.  
140  
141 *Would that be the Yomiuri, maybe or the Asahi Shimbun?*  
142  
143 No.  
144  
145 *The Japanese Times or Japan Today, I know, are, like, more designed for foreign*  
146 *nationals.*  
147  
148 I'm not sure which one it was. There was only, I think it was the Yomiuri, you normally  
149 pay, pay for articles, but they were actually free for that period so you could read all the  
150 information that was going on.  
151  
152 *Oh I see.*  
153  
154 So that was actually pretty good. They, they had a lot of detail, but that was the one that I  
155 went to for the nuclear updates, and stuff.  
156  
157 *Uhm, uhm.*  
158  
159 And I can't remember if that was Japanese or English.  
160  
161 *[Laughter] That's what I was just about to ask! [laughter]*  
162  
163 I imagine, a lot of technical stuff, it must have been in English.

164  
165 *It's funny that you should mention that. I know that, for myself, I'm able to speak*  
166 *Japanese okay but when, in terms of the nuclear, sort of, technology or some of the issues*  
167 *that were talked about in Japanese, I didn't even understand it when it was translated*  
168 *into English [laughter] to be honest with you.*  
169  
170 Like, there was one thing, the, eh, you know Japanese people are really good at  
171 explaining stuff with diagrams. Well, they did that on TV, obviously. Regular people now  
172 have a detailed, intimate knowledge of what the inside of a nuclear core looks like.  
173  
174 *Absolutely.*  
175  
176 You know what I mean, like, this, inside this part is this whole, is cooling what's there,  
177 and you have to have water here at all times and like, just, just, this kind of information,  
178 the words, you find they're using the same words, so then in that way I might probably be  
179 able to read articles on my own where people are talking about, about the, "the nuclear  
180 core and this it the, the rod, this is the," and all this kind of stuff.  
181  
182 *That's absolutely fascinating that you should mention that because you're not the only*  
183 *person who I've talked to who has spoken about how good Japanese people are at*  
184 *communicating complex information through diagrams.*  
185  
186 It's genius. It really is.  
187  
188 *Yeah, and, also, it's something that I'd never really thought about, but in terms of, like,*  
189 *helping people to understand about, you know, I'm interested in disasters, obviously, that*  
190 *means that maybe some sort of diagrammatic representation could be really useful as a*  
191 *way for.*  
192  
193 It's very, yeah, I think it's, like, most Japanese people would have been watching the  
194 whole thing, and I think everybody at the time was understanding which part is now in  
195 danger, which part is...  
196  
197 *Yeah.*  
198  
199 ...that, that is a really good thing.  
200  
201 *And did you, so, I, I know you said about 90% was TV, which again that tallies with*  
202 *everybody I've spoken to, they're all mentioned the importance of TV to them as an*  
203 *information source, and you mentioned then about maybe 10% websites, or whatever. In*  
204 *terms of the websites, were you aware of any websites designed specially for earthquake*  
205 *information or disaster information?*  
206  
207 Ehm, I only know one that it actually updates, like, all the time with all the, you know  
208 the, there's, like, frequent earthquakes in Japan all time...  
209  
210 *Yeah.*  
211  
212 ...so they actually have the one website that just always updates with the latest  
213 information.  
214  
215 *And is that Ja, in Japanese?*  
216  
217 Yes.  
218

219 *Okay. Ehm, so, for example, did you think of going to any government ministry websites*  
 220 *or Irish embassy?*  
 221  
 222 *I think that the Irish Embassy updates didn't happen for a fair bit of time. I do remember*  
 223 *they sent an email about it later saying, "We recommend that people may want to leave*  
 224 *Japan," or "we're already in Hawaii and you guys should think about getting out!"*  
 225 *[laughter].*  
 226  
 227 *[Laughter] Yeah, I know that some people have talked about, you know, embassies - not,*  
 228 *not just the Irish Embassy - but embassies in general struggling with providing*  
 229 *information.*  
 230  
 231 *Are you serious? Yeah, I, I think I remember my parents tried to get in contact through*  
 232 *the embassy. Yeah, I, I'd imagine they were very busy.*  
 233  
 234 *Yeah, I, I think not just that I think the difficulty was the embassies didn't have any*  
 235 *information sources themselves that they could rely on, so, or maybe they had them but*  
 236 *there was difficulty in assessing how reliable the information was. You also mentioned a*  
 237 *bit earlier about Facebook and I'm interested in the topic of social media just in general.*  
 238 *For you, was social media useful in the disaster?*  
 239  
 240 *Yeah. Eh, a lot of people are looking at it so, in the most, I don't really use Facebook*  
 241 *regularly, like, to, posting what I'm doing, but I often use it to communicate, especially at*  
 242 *that time, I think I posted, like, that, you know, "That was crazy and I'm still alive*  
 243 *everybody." That information actually got through my sister's boyfriend to my parents.*  
 244 *That was the first link between me and my parents, so, obviously my parents - they do*  
 245 *use Facebook now but - at the time they were not on, it wasn't the type of thing that my*  
 246 *parents would use. I mean, it was this sister's boyfriend that told them.*  
 247  
 248 *That's fascinating. Then, in terms of social media not for communicating with people but*  
 249 *for getting information, was it useful?*  
 250  
 251 *Uhm, it was. I don't remember the details. Yeah, yeah, because it was a year I had friends*  
 252 *around the place...*  
 253  
 254 *Yeah.*  
 255  
 256 *...Tokyo was, Tokyo was not so serious but there were guys who had to go up to Sendai*  
 257 *{redacted} but one of the guys was still up there at the time, and, eh, he posted a picture*  
 258 *of a car over, what do you call it, over, like overhanging a bridge through the, the, and it*  
 259 *was, like, across the road from him.*  
 260  
 261 *[Laughter]*  
 262  
 263 *That was the first time I, kind of, realized this is more serious in that area.*  
 264  
 265 *Yeah, yeah. Ehm, also, just in terms of, for this, ehm, disaster, what a lot of people, you*  
 266 *know, a lot of people are now making recommendations for what to do in the next*  
 267 *disaster, or before the next disaster and some of them, the Japanese government or*  
 268 *Japanese NPOs are saying that we need to make foreign people feel more part of the*  
 269 *community because, you know, a community pulls together in a disaster so, the Japanese*  
 270 *people, the, the, these NPOs and governmental authorities think that foreigners need to*  
 271 *be part of the community. Can I ask, did you feel part of your community before the*  
 272 *disaster or after it happened?*  
 273

274 By community, do you mean where I live, like?  
 275  
 276 *I guess, or however you want to define it. Like, what would you, how would you define it?*  
 277  
 278 Ehm, ehm, I think they're quite good at, you know, letting everybody know what's going  
 279 on, what we're going to do next, how that's going to, like, work is very good at that. I, I  
 280 think I did feel part of that work community. In terms of where I live, ehm, not, yeah,  
 281 ehm, I mean, I think I know where the emergency centres are but I don't think I'd feel a  
 282 part of, I don't know if anybody feels a part of that community.  
 283  
 284 *That's interesting that you should say that, wha, why do you say that that I don't think*  
 285 *anybody?*  
 286  
 287 Ehm, is there a community spirit in Ireland? I mean, not, not much, and especially in  
 288 Dublin. You know, in, in my area anyway, I'd say, there's nothing, there's no, there's no  
 289 reason for it to be otherwise.  
 290  
 291 *Yeah, I, I think that's a very valid point, you know, is it just big city living, maybe it's*  
 292 *difficult to form, kind of, community bonds. Perhaps if you were living in a small town or*  
 293 *small village, you might have a different experience in general.*  
 294  
 295 Yeah.  
 296  
 297 *Yeah. And similarly, maybe, that's true of Japan, that's also probably true of Ireland as*  
 298 *well. I know in Dublin, I don't know any of my neighbours.*  
 299  
 300 For some reason, I do actually know my neighbours now. I didn't at the time.  
 301  
 302 *Yeah. The reason is, I guess the reason that these, ehm, NPOs and so on are trying to*  
 303 *make this a recommendation is because especially in the Kobe earthquake, but also to a*  
 304 *certain extent in the 2011 earthquake, the first responders are usually neighbours or*  
 305 *passers by. So, the emergency responders will get there as soon as they can, but often a*  
 306 *lot of lives are saved just by the person living beside you, so, they're hoping that by, I*  
 307 *guess, fostering these community links beforehand foreign people won't be abandoned or*  
 308 *foreign people will be able to contribute.*  
 309  
 310 That makes sense.  
 311  
 312 *Yeah, but it's difficult. Like, how do you build...*  
 313  
 314 Yeah...  
 315  
 316 *...community bonds.*  
 317  
 318 *...in Tokyo that's not, you know, most people are out early, home really late at nights.*  
 319  
 320 *Yeah. Just similarly about the, kind of, community idea, do you remember being*  
 321 *contacted by your local government or city office?*  
 322  
 323 No, no.  
 324  
 325 *No contact? Yeah, yeah. Would you want to have been contacted?*  
 326  
 327 Eh, would I have wanted to? Mmm, I think they knew what the scale of the damage was  
 328 in my area, so I wouldn't really expect it, in that sense. If there was, if they knew there

329 was going to be, you know, there was actually damage, there was a possibility of damage,  
 330 I would have expected it then...  
 331  
 332 *Yeah.*  
 333  
 334 ...especially for old people, it would probably make sense.  
 335  
 336 *Yeah, yeah. And in terms of, I suppose, again still on this idea of community to a certain*  
 337 *extent, were you aware of any campaigns in general throughout the country to build, like,*  
 338 *a kind of a spirit of response?*  
 339  
 340 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 341  
 342 *Can you tell me a bit more about that?*  
 343  
 344 *Ehm, yeah, there was a big, what do you call it, swelling of support for those people*  
 345 *affected for about six months. I suppose everybody, I mean, for a good few months*  
 346 *around that time people were going to Tohoku to, to, you know...*  
 347  
 348 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 349  
 350 ...help out.  
 351  
 352 *Do you, were you aware of any of the slogans or that that were used in those campaigns?*  
 353  
 354 *'Gam, gambare Tohoku! Gambare Nihon!'* [Note: this was a slogan that means  
 355 something like 'Hang in there, Tohoku! Hang in there, Japan!']  
 356  
 357 *Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly, exactly. The reason I'm just asking about that is*  
 358 *because there has been some research done into the effectiveness of slogans in terms of*  
 359 *disaster response and especially disaster recovery, so I just wanted to see if any of the*  
 360 *foreign nationals that I get to speak, if they've been aware. And you're absolutely right,*  
 361 *there was 'Gambare Nihon, gambare Tohoku!' kind of almost as a brand, eh, which was*  
 362 *used a lot, ehm, after the disaster as a way of, kind of, getting, pulling people together, I*  
 363 *suppose.*  
 364  
 365 *There, there was actually a massive response. I mean the TV said there was a massive*  
 366 *response, anyway! [laughter]*  
 367  
 368 *[Laughter] And how about in terms of your work? Eh, was there much, eh, I guess, you*  
 369 *mentioned how they're good at telling you what's going to happen, what's going to*  
 370 *happen next. Was there any, kind of, pulling together from them?*  
 371  
 372 *Uhm, not as such. There was one, eh, like I said, one of our plants was in Ibaraki, so that*  
 373 *one was damaged, and, eh, yeah, there was maybe some pulling together because, we*  
 374 *helped, like, obviously, those guys.*  
 375  
 376 *Yeah, yeah. Ehm, the other thing, just again it's, kind of, going back a little bit on what*  
 377 *we've already talked about, just talking again about information in general, it seems like*  
 378 *you were able to access a lot of information, certainly through, through Japanese, were*  
 379 *there any topics that you felt you didn't get enough information about?*  
 380  
 381 *There were some things I was annoyed about at the time, but I can't quite remember now.*  
 382 *But I think a lot of information about the nuclear incident, that's the one I was, I was*

383 concerned about. They only talk about the *maemuki* stuff on TV [Note: *maemuki* means  
 384 positive or upbeat] they don't talk about, "Okay, sound, we're pounding water in there."  
 385  
 386 *Yeah.*  
 387  
 388 They don't mention the obvious effect of that which is you're going to have a tonne of  
 389 toxic water. You know I mean?  
 390  
 391 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 392  
 393 That kind of stuff. And they, I'm not, I'm not sure if they were just ignoring - that's just  
 394 one example - there's actually lots of stuff where I think they were, sort of, glossing over  
 395 or not really considering the, eh, the long term effect and the immediate effect, too. You  
 396 know, what I'm trying to say is they are really determined to say that it's, it's, one: that  
 397 it's under control, and two: that the, the radiation getting as far, getting this far, this far is  
 398 not serious. But, myself, I think through what I know, I do, I do hear things from other  
 399 sources.  
 400  
 401 *So, can I just ask you to confirm who you mean by 'they'?*  
 402  
 403 Well, I'm talking about NHK. They, they, they have experts, they had experts from, you  
 404 know, Tokyo University and, I think, Kyoto University [Note: the two top-ranking  
 405 universities in Japan] you know, nuclear experts and engineers and stuff...  
 406  
 407 *Yeah.*  
 408  
 409 ...and, like, I'm looking to that analysis.  
 410  
 411 *And then you said you heard from other sources...*  
 412  
 413 *Yeah.*  
 414  
 415 *...information that made you doubt that. Who or where?*  
 416  
 417 Yeah, the negative sources were mostly foreign. And there's two kinds of foreign sources  
 418 that I read [Note: the tense of the verb is past tense]. One which is, you know,  
 419 experienced experts and one is, em, let's say, the outrageous, over-the-top, eh, "there's no  
 420 food in Tokyo", like, do you know that way [laughter] it's kind of...  
 421  
 422 *[Laughter] Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 423  
 424 ...and one of the reasonably believable experts abroad that I did hear said, "There's  
 425 radiation going as far as California."  
 426  
 427 *Yeah.*  
 428  
 429 They had measured it, like.  
 430  
 431 *Yeah.*  
 432  
 433 That part of it was a lot slower than anything, I expected more. You know, obviously, as  
 434 the thing died off, that's when the actual, all the other data actually arises, but the news  
 435 has died off at that point.  
 436  
 437 *Yeah.*

438  
 439 And that's hard, like, because you're missing.  
 440  
 441 *Yeah, I mean, you're talking about some issues there which are, in, very interesting to me*  
 442 *in terms of translation as well. Ehm, a, a, as you said, for you 90% of your information*  
 443 *came from TV, in particular Japanese TV, and what I'm interested in is can translation*  
 444 *be used to help get, maybe, more TV news available to people who don't speak Japanese*  
 445 *so well. Eh.*  
 446  
 447 I, I think, news is, does, English translation, it does have English, I'm not sure.  
 448  
 449 *It does, eh, but would you be aware of how much?*  
 450  
 451 No, I wouldn't.  
 452  
 453 *It's very, it's extremely limited. But, I, I mean, it's great that they, they do provide*  
 454 *simultaneous translation, but it is very, very limited, so I'd be interested in, maybe,*  
 455 *looking at ways to help supplement that. Eh, but, you know, that would be, that would be*  
 456 *difficult. But I think it's clear from talking to the people I've talked to that TV was an*  
 457 *important.*  
 458  
 459 Yeah, it's funny because there was, experts they have on TV are always certainly, at  
 460 least, they're fluent in their fields in English, I would imagine, and they would be quite  
 461 good at explaining what was going on even in English...  
 462  
 463 *Yeah.*  
 464  
 465 ...even on paper, and yet for the first few days, or for the first few weeks, the explanations  
 466 that I found in English of what was going on were terrible...  
 467  
 468 *[Laughter]*  
 469  
 470 ...they were a mess.  
 471  
 472 *So there's an issue there, in other words.*  
 473  
 474 Yeah, there must have been.  
 475  
 476 *Wha, what do you think might have caused that?*  
 477  
 478 They were focused on the management of the disaster, I suppose, in Japanese.  
 479  
 480 *Also, another issue which, ehm, comes up from what we've talked about is is English the*  
 481 *best language to be translating to for non-Japanese people in Japan? What, what would*  
 482 *you feel about that? If you want to communicate with foreigners in Japan, do you think*  
 483 *English is the most effective language?*  
 484  
 485 Ye, yes.  
 486  
 487 *Why?*  
 488  
 489 Ehm, people would say otherwise but generally, even people who say they don't speak  
 490 too good English, would speak better English than, say they speak, say they only speak,  
 491 you know, French and Japanese...  
 492

493 Yeah.  
 494  
 495 ...that would be the biggest example I could think of, these are people that would speak  
 496 decent English, because Japanese people may not, like, be perfect at English but, actually,  
 497 if you slow things right down, people generally still understand. And I think generally  
 498 people who travel, in general...  
 499  
 500 Yeah.  
 501  
 502 ...have, eh, they have some base level of English. I mean another better, I mean, Chinese  
 503 or Korean, I don't think that they are as high as being the minimum level of English.  
 504  
 505 *I see, I see. Yeah. I think that's a very interesting point, and that's also one of the*  
 506 *recommendations that is, kind of, being discussed now is, rather than translating*  
 507 *information, they want, these, sort of, government sources want to supply, eh, supply*  
 508 *information in Easy Japanese. Have you ever heard of Easy Japanese?*  
 509  
 510 I heard of it for the first time last week...  
 511  
 512 Oh.  
 513  
 514 ... {redacted} my company hired some people independently and those guys are now at,  
 515 at the first stages of learning and they see a lot of stuff in Easy Japanese, but they said it's  
 516 not that easy, like, it has, it has *hiragana* and, what do you call it, *furigana* [Note: these  
 517 are relatively basic Japanese scripts to help read the complex Chinese characters used in  
 518 Japanese writing].  
 519  
 520 Yeah. Would you think that's a good idea?  
 521  
 522 For emergency situations, I wonder are there? I don't know, yeah, I mean, you're in  
 523 Japan, you should know, like, a minimum of Japanese, but they could also use English.  
 524  
 525 Yeah, I think it important to consider a variety of options. When you're talking about  
 526 disasters, I don't think it's a good idea to focus too much on one thing, because if you  
 527 focus on only one thing, it's kind of like putting all your eggs in one basket. Eh, for a  
 528 disaster, they often talk in the disaster literature about how multiple information sources  
 529 over multiple platforms are probably the best way to go. Just there are a couple of other,  
 530 just, things I want to check and see if you remember about. These are quite specific. Ehm,  
 531 on your mobile phone, did you get any early warning in the disaster?  
 532  
 533 My company actually registered that system after the, eh, after that.  
 534  
 535 Oh, I see.  
 536  
 537 Yeah, send us an email and then we write back, you know, saying we're safe.  
 538  
 539 Yeah.  
 540  
 541 There's a system and the system has you registered.  
 542  
 543 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I think a lot of companies went ahead and, and did that. Also,  
 544 again this is quite specific but, you know the way there's the PA system, the wireless  
 545 communication system all throughout Japan, eh, it does public announcements if there is  
 546 an emergency, do you remember hearing any of those?  
 547



548 Ehm, yeah, I think I do remember hearing them.  
 549  
 550 *Do you remember what language?*  
 551  
 552 Probably Japanese.  
 553  
 554 *I think so. I think you're absolutely right about the idea of Japanese being, sort of, useful*  
 555 *for people who've lived here for a certain amount of time. There's going to be a, sort of,*  
 556 *minimum level of Japanese. I'm also, obviously, in a place like Tokyo, I'm interested in*  
 557 *short-term residents like business travellers or tourists who don't have any Japanese and*  
 558 *who have no interest in learning Japanese and can't read simple Japanese even if it's*  
 559 *given to them, ehm, especially with, you know, the 2020 Olympics [laughter] coming to*  
 560 *Tokyo, in terms of translating and disasters it's something that needs to be thought about.*  
 561 *Maybe I need to divide between residents and visitors. So...*  
 562  
 563 Yeah, it's a very good idea.  
 564  
 565 *Yeah, just because it's difficult, maybe, I can't include foreign nationals all in one big*  
 566 *group. There's different types of foreign nationals, if you know what I mean. Ehm, that's*  
 567 *pretty much all the questions I have. Just, in general, is there anything else in particular*  
 568 *you'd like to mention or anything else that comes to mind that I haven't talked about?*  
 569  
 570 Ehm, there was a major push, you know, to save, energy after the nuclear thing, and I  
 571 don't know if that has any effect on?  
 572  
 573 *Yeah, go ahead, if, if you want to, eh, talk about, if you want to talk about the energy*  
 574 *saving or?*  
 575  
 576 Oh no, I, I don't, yeah, there would never have been major issues. I suppose, like, I  
 577 wondered if anybody would have a problem at the time if they just came into the country.  
 578 I imagine they were wondering why the escalators didn't work and stuff. It didn't actually  
 579 have a major impact. Yeah.  
 580  
 581 *Or why there was no airconditioning [laughter]...*  
 582  
 583 Yeah, airconditioning in the stores.  
 584  
 585 *...in the 35-degree heat.*  
 586  
 587 I wouldn't really be able to think of anything else.  
 588  
 589 *Yeah, I know that the, for people again who were resident here, ehm, it, depending on*  
 590 *what area you lived in, there could have been power cuts rolling through the year. I was*  
 591 *lucky, I lived in the centre. You live in the centre as well, so we probably didn't*  
 592 *experience the power cuts that people living, say, in Kanagawa or, you know, parts of*  
 593 *Chiba might have, might have experienced.*  
 594  
 595 I imagine my experience was fairly bland compared to, to the guys you talked to in  
 596 Sendai and, eh...  
 597  
 598 *Yeah, but, yeah, but, also, what you have to remember is that I'm interested in a variety*  
 599 *of experiences, so if all I was talking to were people who'd had, I don't know, some sort*  
 600 *of movie-like stories, or something, that wouldn't be representative really of, eh, kind of,*  
 601 *the overall type of experience that people had, you know?*  
 602

603 Yeah, that's true.  
604  
605 *So, like, I certainly wouldn't call your experience bland. I think it's informative, it*  
606 *informs, your, informative of one type of foreign national who was living here. Ehm,*  
607 *again, this is kind of linked to what you just said, but, because I'm talking to a variety of*  
608 *different people, I do want to make sure that, like, by talking about your experiences, I*  
609 *haven't made you feel any extra stress, so if you wouldn't mind, could you mark, kind of,*  
610 *here on this scale wh, eh, how you're feeling?*  
611  
612 I'm not feeling any stress...  
613  
614 Okay.  
615  
616 ...so I'll put down a zero.  
617  
618 *Perfect. Ehm, the reason I've asked this question is because, as you yourself pointed out,*  
619 *some of the people I am speaking to have had very different experiences, eh, some of the*  
620 *are, kind of, like a movie, and I just want to make sure that by, you know, remembering*  
621 *their experiences, I haven't caused them any extra [laughter] problems. Because that's*  
622 *something I don't want to do, you know?*  
623  
624 I'm sure they have to, whatever they did, they would want to process it.  
625  
626 *Oh, hopefully, hopefully. I have gotten some marks which have been considerably higher*  
627 *than I thought. In those cases, the university has put in place some measures like*  
628 *counselling and so on that I can offer or whatever, but, eh, luckily with you at a zero, I*  
629 *don't need to [laughter], I don't need to worry about that.*  
630  
631 I did try to think about it a bit in advance to see if I could remember anything, con,  
632 considering about, you know, language issues, but they got mostly covered, like.  
633  
634 *Yeah, I'm really glad to hear that and, you know, you're representative of a type of*  
635 *person who is using Japanese every day, and I think it's important in my*  
636 *recommendations that I do underline that, just by being a foreigner, doesn't necessarily*  
637 *mean you can't speak Japanese and Japanese isn't a useful tool, because some, I guess,*  
638 *some work, some research in the area does portray foreigners as extremely vulnerable*  
639 *but, you know, foreigners who are here a long time and speak Japanese may, in fact, not*  
640 *be vulnerable, they may be able to make a big contribution in future disasters.*  
641  
642 Yeah, I think, well, I'm not sure if it's related, I don't, I don't feel, like, being a part of  
643 the community means I need to personally participate. I've been here a long time and  
644 maybe I'm just blind to it but [laughter] yeah I don't feel like a separate part of my  
645 community in Japan or, or at work, as such, yeah.  
646  
647 *I think that's a great thing to hear. I'm, there's a lot of, do you remember hearing about*  
648 *the fly-jin [Note: a derogatory term for foreigners who left Japan during the disaster]?*  
649  
650 Yeah, I know immediately after they said that everybody went. My parents were telling  
651 me to do it...  
652  
653 [Laughter] Was, was that difficult for you to make that decision to stay?  
654  
655 Uhm, ehm, there's a lot of stuff. One is that, ehm, I, I've been working in the same job so,  
656 like I said, I don't feel separate from everyone else, and everybody else was just going to  
657 work normal, like, so I'd go to work in a panic after talking to my parents, and I'd go talk

658 to my boss, "I'm thinking I might go home for a while." And he was like, "What? Do  
659 what you want, but it's not such a big deal." And I was like, [laughter] "Not big deal?"  
660 He was, kind of, un, un-emphasizing it. And, like, my wife would have gone to her home  
661 town, which would have been another option, because that's relatively safe. It's on a  
662 separate island...

663

664 *Yeah, yeah.*

665

666 ...eh, I had thought about that.

667

668 *Yeah. And in terms of, just, the fly-jin kind of concept or story in general, what, what's*  
669 *your opinion on it?*

670

671 Just a lot of people panicked, like, I don't know, that's not, like, I'm not sure if I'm right  
672 or not, but it's kind of a derogatory term, but I think there's absolutely nothing wrong  
673 with it. Nobody had the information they really needed. It doesn't matter if it's in English  
674 or Japanese. In those situations, it does look pretty grim, so I think going home was  
675 actually a really, really logical option, except for the fact that it probably cost [laughter]...

676

677 *[Laughter]*

678

679 ...I don't know, a small fortune.

680

681 *The airlines were charging, like, five-thousand, six-thousand Euro just for economy class*  
682 *seats.*

683

684 They were just money making.

685

686 *Yeah, well [laughter] the poor old airlines have had a tough time of it since 9/11 so*  
687 *[laughter] maybe, maybe it was their time to make, make some of it back. Well, anyway,*  
688 *that's pretty much it, unless there's anything else.*

689

690 I can't think of anything.

691

692 *Okay, well listen, thanks a million.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.  
4

5 **Note:** As this interview was held during the participant's lunch break from work, it  
6 followed a slightly different format to others in this project.

7 *2013/9/19 Interview with Participant 6*

8 *Researcher: So there's not much literature that has asked foreigners themselves...*  
9

10 Participant: What they need.  
11

12 *...what they need.*  
13

14 Yeah, right.  
15

16 *So that's, kind of the sort of gap I am hoping to fill, but, ehm, whether or not...*  
17

18 Okay.  
19

20 *...[laughter] that works out is a, another question.*  
21

22 But interesting, you know, what you say with the, eh, Olympics coming up, and just  
23 looking at the tourism numbers, so July and August both hit all time record highs for the  
24 number of inbound tourists...  
25

26 *Really.*  
27

28 *...to Japan. So the interest is there...*  
29

30 *Yeah.*  
31

32 *...eh, whether the resources and the infrastructure specifically designed for foreigners...*  
33

34 *Yeah.*  
35

36 *...is there or not is another question.*  
37

38 *Yeah.*  
39

40 Ehm, so yeah, I was working for a PR consulting company at the time of the  
41 earthquake...  
42

43 *Yeah.*  
44

45 *...and, eh, {a Japanese government office} was one of our clients. Ehm, we had quite a  
46 few Japanese clients...*  
47

48 *Yeah.*  
49

50 *...we had real issues with, eh, particularly Fukushima because they were getting questions  
51 from abroad on what was going on and they just didn't have any information...*  
52

53 *Yeah.*

54  
55 ...so I think foreigners struggled but even the Japanese were not clear on what was going  
56 on. No-one understood the nuclear issue [laughter] so...  
57  
58 *This, absolutely, this is, kind of, one of the things that is, that is interesting to me, ehm,*  
59 *because it was such a big, kind of, complex disaster, it is difficult to even talk about it as*  
60 *one event, ehm, because there was the earthquake, there was the tsunami, and then there*  
61 *was the nuclear issue...*  
62  
63 Yeah.  
64  
65 *...eh, for lots of different people, depending on where you were, your concern was very*  
66 *different...*  
67  
68 Uhum, uhum.  
69  
70 *...you know, some people were very concerned about Fukushima, some people were*  
71 *concerned about the tsunami. It's, it's not like it is one kind of disaster.*  
72  
73 No, and I think I was pretty lucky because, em, it was only about an hour walk home  
74 from work for me. I didn't miss any work. I had electricity the entire time...  
75  
76 Yeah.  
77  
78 ...ehm, shops around me didn't run out of anything, so.  
79  
80 Oh really?  
81  
82 No.  
83  
84 Wow, you were lucky.  
85  
86 Very lucky.  
87  
88 *Even, even, eh, sliced bread and [laughter].*  
89  
90 Not that I noticed.  
91  
92 *Yeah. If you didn't notice it then, yeah.*  
93  
94 I never felt I can't buy what I need, so.  
95  
96 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. I guess, were, were you living? So, if you were an hour, you were*  
97 *probably somewhere pretty central, ehm.*  
98  
99 {A major city in Tokyo}.  
100  
101 Ah, okay {a major city in Tokyo}, yeah, so.  
102  
103 Yeah, so I think central Tokyo...  
104  
105 *Sort of, 23 wards or whatever [Note: the subdivisions of Tokyo that do not include its*  
106 *most suburban areas]*  
107

108 ...yeah, yeah, the earthquake, tsunami were not really concerns. Fukushima absolutely  
 109 was.  
 110  
 111 *Ehm, I know that, em, like myself living in Chuo-ku in Nihonbashi...*  
 112  
 113 Uhum.  
 114  
 115 *...and I was really lucky as well. I actually lived a ten-minute walk from my office. So I*  
 116 *didn't have an issue with, eh, that at all. Like, with the earthquake or the tsunami...*  
 117  
 118 Yeah.  
 119  
 120 *...more than, eh, anything, but it was the, sort of, the weekend following. So it happened*  
 121 *on the Friday...*  
 122  
 123 Uhum.  
 124  
 125 *...and the, sort of, the Saturday and the Sunday were very odd because I was afraid to go*  
 126 *outside and I mean I wasn't working, like Saturday and Sunday was a day off, so I just*  
 127 *stayed at home...*  
 128  
 129 Uhm, uhm, uhm, uhm.  
 130  
 131 *...kind of, was following the news as best I could. And just trying to figure out...*  
 132  
 133 Uhm, uhm.  
 134  
 135 *...what was, what was going to happen on Monday, kind of thing...*  
 136  
 137 Right.  
 138  
 139 *...yeah, eh, it definitely took some, some time for it all to sink in as well.*  
 140  
 141 Well, because my day-to-day life wasn't affected, ehm, it felt surreal watching the  
 142 news...  
 143  
 144 Yeah.  
 145  
 146 *...it felt like something taking place on another planet. It felt so far away. Ehm, so I didn't*  
 147 *feel that nervous...*  
 148  
 149 Yeah.  
 150  
 151 *...when it comes down to it. However, because I was working in PR consulting and a lot*  
 152 *of our clients were foreign, they wanted information...*  
 153  
 154 Yeah.  
 155  
 156 *...they wanted to know what was going on. So I was watching the news very closely, and*  
 157 *providing the most relevant information to clients. And we were feeding the {Twitter*  
 158 *feed of the Japanese government office that was our client} ...*  
 159  
 160 Wow.  
 161  
 162 *...so we were picking up information generally off of NHK and Kyodo in English...*

163  
 164 *Uhum.*  
 165  
 166 ...and feeding that out through {the Japanese government office that was our client} ...  
 167  
 168 *Yeah.*  
 169  
 170 ...so that foreign nationals could get access to information. So we were trying to bridge  
 171 that gap when it comes to, eh, eh, the lack of resources to get English out.  
 172  
 173 *Yeah, you were at the coalface then because I know in, in all of the literature that I have*  
 174 *looked at so far and, certainly, with the, the few people that I have spoken to so far, TV*  
 175 *has come out to be such an important source. And it is interesting that you mentioned*  
 176 *Twitter, but the Twitter feed was based on information coming from NHK.*  
 177  
 178 Oh, for sure. I think that was the whole attitude at work - social media is important as one  
 179 channel, as is TV, as is the newspaper, ehm, but to channel this kind of information, it's  
 180 not a medium, it, it, it's not a source in itself...  
 181  
 182 *Yeah.*  
 183  
 184 ...if you know what I mean...  
 185  
 186 *Yeah.*  
 187  
 188 ...because those established news agencies are established for a reason...  
 189  
 190 *Yeah.*  
 191  
 192 ...and they have very strict standards when it comes to the information that they send out,  
 193 and the last thing we wanted to do was drive fear and panic, so we were going to very  
 194 established sources...  
 195  
 196 *Yeah.*  
 197  
 198 ...and spreading them as widely as we could.  
 199  
 200 *Yeah, and I know as well, like, when, I've spoken to some people who were in, ehm, parts*  
 201 *of Miyagi, so near Sendai or in other parts of that prefecture which were very badly*  
 202 *damaged...*  
 203  
 204 *Uhm.*  
 205  
 206 ...and they had no power, and they had little connectivity, so for them, as you said, you  
 207 know, things like social media were one channel...  
 208  
 209 *Yeah.*  
 210  
 211 ...but just very temporarily...  
 212  
 213 *Yeah.*  
 214  
 215 ...as long as their phone battery was alive, it was a channel...  
 216  
 217 *Yeah.*

218  
 219 *...ehm, which, you know, what was interesting to me was, eh, a lot of the literature talked*  
 220 *about the importance of radio...*  
 221  
 222 Uhm.  
 223  
 224 *...a very old-fashioned channel...*  
 225  
 226 Yes, yes.  
 227  
 228 *...ehm, but in the very worst-affected areas, it was actually vital...*  
 229  
 230 It was the only source of information.  
 231  
 232 *...eh for Japanese, for Japanese language. Ehm, I'm not sure it was so good for other*  
 233 *languages, but for Japanese, certainly, it turned out to be really important.*  
 234  
 235 Well, the day of, of course, there was no phone service so, ehm, Facebook was the main  
 236 source of information for me. Ehm, I hadn't really used Twitter before the, eh, the  
 237 earthquake, but through the process of it, I realized it was the easiest way to get live  
 238 information. Ehm, and to be shared...  
 239  
 240 Uhm.  
 241  
 242 *...as appropriate. So, eh, I started following all the international news outlets...*  
 243  
 244 Yeah.  
 245  
 246 *...em, English and Japanese, directly followed a lot of reporters who were on the*  
 247 *ground...*  
 248  
 249 Yeah.  
 250  
 251 *...em, and I got a lot of good information from that...*  
 252  
 253 Yeah.  
 254  
 255 *...so often it was a question of picking up the information from Twitter and then sharing it*  
 256 *via Facebook.*  
 257  
 258 *Yeah, yeah. I think that's one thing that I'm, em, starting to think about now, just, eh,*  
 259 *when you are talking about, say, whatever communication tool, you know, there's an*  
 260 *element of information gathering and there is an element of just communicating with*  
 261 *people, like, important people to you, or that...*  
 262  
 263 Yeah.  
 264  
 265 *...I think I am going to have to try and differentiate the two a little bit because for some*  
 266 *people, for information gathering, let, let's say TV...*  
 267  
 268 Uhuh.  
 269  
 270 *...seemed to be really important.*  
 271  
 272 NHK English was very important for me, definitely.



273  
 274 *Yeah, but then in terms of just say, communicating with the, you know, important people*  
 275 *in your life, maybe things like social media did prove very useful, you know, whereas*  
 276 *something like TV, that's, that's obviously, it doesn't have that function, you know.*  
 277  
 278 Right, right.  
 279  
 280 *Did, did you find, like, when the actual disaster happened, were you able to communicate*  
 281 *with people that you wanted to easily enough?*  
 282  
 283 Ehm, well, it was all through Facebook because, well, Facebook or email, but mainly  
 284 Facebook, em, so messaging back and forth...  
 285  
 286 *Yeah.*  
 287  
 288 ...or sending out messages saying, "I'm okay. Don't worry about me."  
 289  
 290 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 291  
 292 Eh, so yeah, it was, generally, you'd pick up the phone, but that option wasn't there...  
 293  
 294 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 295  
 296 ...so it was the easiest alternative in the smartphone age, right?  
 297  
 298 *Yeah, I, I had exactly the same experience, ehm, I wasn't, I wouldn't say I was a*  
 299 *particularly large Facebook user before the disaster...*  
 300  
 301 Uhm.  
 302  
 303 *...but certainly that day and, you know, the, the moments after the, the first earthquake*  
 304 *happened, it proved really useful...*  
 305  
 306 *Yeah.*  
 307  
 308 *...because I could just let everybody...*  
 309  
 310 Uhm, uhm.  
 311  
 312 *...pretty much, that I knew know I was okay...*  
 313  
 314 Absolutely.  
 315  
 316 *...in a very short space of time, so I saw the value of it then. But I'm not sure how much*  
 317 *value I found in using it for getting, kind of, accurate or reliable information. I found,*  
 318 *found that there was a lot of stuff that I questioned.*  
 319  
 320 Yeah, well this is the problem we had at work as well...  
 321  
 322 Uhm.  
 323  
 324 ...because a lot of people were reacting to pretty speculative stories from non-established  
 325 news sources...  
 326  
 327 *Yeah.*

328  
 329 ...and it just drives fear, panic...  
 330  
 331 *Yeah.*  
 332  
 333 ...which was why we were trying to pick out pieces from established news outlets, right?  
 334  
 335 *Yeah.*  
 336  
 337 Eh, but there was also a massive difference between the Japanese approach to telling a  
 338 story and the Western approach. The Western approach, if you look at somewhere like  
 339 Bloomberg, the reporters are assessed based on the number of clicks they get on the  
 340 headlines that run on the website. So if you get five-hundred clicks, you get a gold star, if  
 341 you get a thousand, you get two gold stars, and it goes up and up and up and up and up.  
 342 So they are motivated to write sensationalistic headlines that will get clicks on their story.  
 343 In the Financial Times, the reporters will tell you outright, "As an organization, our  
 344 mandate is to set public opinion, to influence public opinion." In order to do that, you  
 345 have to, to have something no-one else has, and tell it in a pretty sensational way...  
 346  
 347 *Yeah.*  
 348  
 349 ...to get attention whereas communication in gen, in general in Japan, I find, is all about  
 350 providing all [Note: this last word was said with great emphasis] of the background and  
 351 detail, you know, it's, it's context as opposed to content...  
 352  
 353 *Yeah.*  
 354  
 355 ...and that was really clear with the news reporting...  
 356  
 357 *Yeah.*  
 358  
 359 ...they give you all of this information but not explain what it actually means, and people  
 360 just wanted to know, "Am I safe?" and "Am I not safe?" "Well, becquerels are at this  
 361 level?"...  
 362  
 363 *[Laughter]*  
 364  
 365 ..."Well, what the hell does that mean?" It was not helpful...  
 366  
 367 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 368  
 369 ...to be reported in that way. Ehm, so again at work, a lot of our focus was to try and put  
 370 things in context. "This is what becquerels are. This is what you are exposed to in daily  
 371 life. Every time you fly, this is what you are exposed to, and it is perfectly safe." And  
 372 explain it in those terms so that people could understand, "Okay, maybe we're not at risk  
 373 here."  
 374  
 375 *Okay, yeah, yeah. That's, that's an absolutely interesting, and I think probably that I*  
 376 *need to talk about that point that there are cultural differences as well just in how you tell*  
 377 *stories...*  
 378  
 379 *Uhum.*  
 380  
 381 ...and how information is processed, and that can have an impact on how it is, how it is  
 382 received by, you know, people who aren't used to that.

383  
 384 Yeah, yeah. So from my perspective, it wasn't even a question of whether information  
 385 was available in English or not, what was available where it was directly translated made  
 386 absolutely no sense...  
 387  
 388 *Right.*  
 389  
 390 ...so I think Kyodo and NHK are exceptions to it because they have pretty savvy, ehm,  
 391 reporters who understand that you need to take a different approach, I mean, NHK  
 392 obviously has its international arm...  
 393  
 394 *Yeah.*  
 395  
 396 ...which is all foreign, or the majority are foreigners...  
 397  
 398 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 399  
 400 ...they take a different approach to reporting which is part of the reason they were  
 401 particularly valuable, ehm, but the Japanese government in particular, they were  
 402 producing difficult to understand direct translations because they are all focused on  
 403 approvals and avoiding risk, and 'it has to be exactly the same as the Japanese' was the  
 404 mandate, right.  
 405  
 406 *That's, I, yeah, I mean, that is certainly an issue that comes up time and again in, just,*  
 407 *translation studies...*  
 408  
 409 *Yes.*  
 410  
 411 *...the idea of, you know, how do you define translation...*  
 412  
 413 *Yes.*  
 414  
 415 *...eh, so I mean, you know maybe the Japanese government were looking at it as this kind*  
 416 *of direct equivalence or, you know, some sort of transfer that maps on to another*  
 417 *language...*  
 418  
 419 Well, I mean, "The Japanese has been approved. If we are going to do anything in  
 420 English, it has to be as close to the Japanese as possible otherwise it is a separate  
 421 document that has to go through approvals again."  
 422  
 423 *Yeah, whereas, em, you know, in the news translating that you are talking about, you*  
 424 *know, say Kyodo's or NHK International arm's, they are, kind of, doing this cultural*  
 425 *mediation as well so, kind of, thinking about how their...*  
 426  
 427 *Localization.*  
 428  
 429 *...yeah, yeah, yeah. That's, that's a really, that's a big issue [laughter]. That's a big*  
 430 *question to, to touch on.*  
 431  
 432 I find it at work as well. All the time. Ehm, you know, it, it's, eh, 'you can say that but we  
 433 don't' argument so [laughter].  
 434  
 435 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, you know, I think what, what I am already starting, what*  
 436 *I am already starting to notice about this, you know, just looking into this disaster is that*  
 437 *it is kind of like peeling an onion...*

438  
 439 Uhm.  
 440  
 441 *...in that, you know, I peel away one thing and then find that there's all these other layers*  
 442 *of stuff beneath, so, you know, even though I am talking about or trying to talk about*  
 443 *translation, I am finding that there are these other issues that are, are coming up, eh, you*  
 444 *know, just about, like, life for foreign nationals in general...*  
 445  
 446 Uhm, absolutely.  
 447  
 448 *...never mind in particular in, in the disaster, you know, so it's, it's, kind of, turning into a*  
 449 *bit of a huge [laughter] huge area. I am going to have to focus in.*  
 450  
 451 Well, eh, in terms of our work with {the Japanese government office that was our client},  
 452 it developed into a strong relationship.  
 453  
 454 *Yeah. I certainly have noticed that since the disaster, like, the, the, certainly the, eh,*  
 455 *{certain offices of the Japanese government} are much more active...*  
 456  
 457 Uhm, uhm.  
 458  
 459 *...so that's coming down to, to these relationships. That's fascinating.*  
 460  
 461 Invested a lot in training them [laughter]...  
 462  
 463 *Yeah, it's...*  
 464  
 465 *...in developing an understanding of.*  
 466  
 467 *...yeah, yeah, I mean, I know that obviously, you know, in terms of what I'm talking*  
 468 *about, I'm talking about one particular context, one disaster, but from that I would like to*  
 469 *be able to, sort of, say, "Well, perhaps in the future, this might work and this might not*  
 470 *work." And I know that, em, as, as I mentioned a bit earlier on, a lot of NPOs and local*  
 471 *government authorities are making recommendations, and one of the big things they are*  
 472 *talking about is this idea of making foreigners feel more part of their local communities...*  
 473  
 474 Yes.  
 475  
 476 *...eh, this is tricky for me, I'm, I'm not sure, I'm not sure how it will, I'm not sure how it*  
 477 *will work as a, as a recommendation because, well, just to ask you yourself, do you feel*  
 478 *part of your community? Did you feel part of your community?*  
 479  
 480 Absolutely not. Ehm, I live in a *danchi* complex [Note: means a housing estate or  
 481 apartment complex] {redacted}. It's reclaimed land. The buildings are old, they are from  
 482 the seventies. It's not safe if a big earthquake hits. But I am not aware of any disaster  
 483 preparation measures they have in place in the community. I have lived there, I guess,  
 484 four years now. I don't know any of my neighbours. I know some people, I'll, I'll nod at  
 485 them when I walk down the street. But at the same time, I'm not really interested in  
 486 taking part in community activities, and I don't want to start, start talking to the old ladies  
 487 who hang out by the garbage...  
 488  
 489 [Laughter]  
 490

491 ...and feed the homeless cats every morning because I know they are going to start  
 492 picking on me for the way I throw away my trash, you know, I just don't need that  
 493 stress...

494

495 *[Laughter] Yeah.*

496

497 ...maybe it is unfriendly on my part, but we come from different worlds, right? A lot of  
 498 them are retirees, sixty, seventy to eighties. Very Japanese domestic culture. They are  
 499 nice people, but we have nothing in common, right?...

500

501 *Uhum.*

502

503 ...and I think when it comes to community, it's about having that sense of common  
 504 values, ehm, and goals, right?

505

506 *Uhm, ehm, I guess, that's a really important point that it is about what you have in*  
 507 *common, so maybe your community might not be the local people in your neighbourhood,*  
 508 *it could end up being the people you work with or your friends who you, kind of, make*  
 509 *your community.*

510

511 Yes, that I think is absolutely true. So, ehm, I have been here, well as I said, for eight  
 512 years, and I have got a lot of foreign friends in Tokyo, and that really was the community,  
 513 ehm, in the aftermath of the earthquake for me...

514

515 *Yeah.*

516

517 ...eh, we, we were sharing information with each other, eh, a lot of people left and, you  
 518 know, in some cases, needed help getting out of the country...

519

520 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

521

522 ...so, em, those are the people that you look to for help. Not the people living in the  
 523 community next to you.

524

525 *I can understand why the government and so on are trying to make this recommendation*  
 526 *because one of the things that they often talk about in, in disaster studies, and, you know,*  
 527 *say for example, back in the Kobe earthquake, the first people who actually respond and*  
 528 *help in an emergency are likely to be the people who are near you...*

529

530 Yes.

531

532 *...so it could be your neighbours, it could be the person walking by, it could be your*  
 533 *office co-workers. They are probably going to be the actual first responders because the*  
 534 *official emergency services are going to take time...*

535

536 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*

537

538 *...time to get there, so there is this notion that you need to have relationships existing with*  
 539 *the people around you, not, not necessarily the people you live beside...*

540

541 *Yeah.*

542

543 *...but the people who you interact with...*

544

545 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*

546  
547 *...because that is who you are probably going to call on.*  
548  
549 The {Embassy for my home country} has these types of measures in place where they ask  
550 someone, they'll divide up the city into sections, and where they have someone within  
551 any given section, they'll say "Can you be a contact point if a disaster hits?"...  
552  
553 *Oh, ah!*  
554  
555 ...and we can gather up the others in the area. They have the system, but didn't do  
556 anything during the earthquake, and everyone, all the embassy staff left. They locked  
557 down the embassy, they wouldn't let people in [laughter]...  
558  
559 *What?*  
560  
561 ...yeah. So, they were not exactly supportive.  
562  
563 *That's, that's crazy.*  
564  
565 But they had these measures in place and when, you know, the shit hit the fan, they just  
566 took off. And it happened with a lot of...  
567  
568 *That's crazy.*  
569  
570 ... it happened with a lot of embassies. The French left, the Germans left, ehm, the  
571 immediate reaction was, "Get the fuck out of here." [laughter]...  
572  
573 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
574  
575 ...you know, every man for himself, right?  
576  
577 *That's really, that's quite scary actually, ehm, because I was just about to say, "What a*  
578 *good idea," you know, to have, kind of, these local contact-points...*  
579  
580 It was (indistinct).  
581  
582 *...but it wasn't.*  
583  
584 I didn't, you have to register with the embassy...  
585  
586 *Yeah.*  
587  
588 ...I, I didn't get information from the embassy.  
589  
590 *You didn't receive anything.*  
591  
592 I didn't get any useful information from the embassy in the immediate aftermath of the  
593 disaster.  
594  
595 *Wow, that's crazy. So the system might be in place but if there is people not there to*  
596 *execute them.*  
597  
598 I think that is a big part of it because so many people got out...  
599  
600 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

601  
602 ...so what do you do when the people you'd assigned are not there to help.  
603  
604 *That is, that is very worrying. Ehm, obviously from a translation point of view, for me*  
605 *something like the Embassy would be a very interesting case ...*  
606  
607 Yeah.  
608  
609 ...you know. But obviously, you know, it didn't happen in that way. Did, did you get  
610 contacted by, say, like your cit, city office or ward office or anything like that? Do you  
611 remember any Japanese contact?  
612  
613 I really don't remember...  
614  
615 Yeah.  
616  
617 ...ehm, I definitely don't remember any effort in the aftermath to help with, kind of,  
618 preparedness. There was nothing that I was involved with through local government. It  
619 was all through work. If I had proactively looked into it, I'm sure there were options  
620 there...  
621  
622 Yeah.  
623  
624 ...our office was in central Tokyo, not far from Ward Offices...  
625  
626 Right.  
627  
628 ...with information available in English...  
629  
630 Yeah.  
631  
632 ...it is not fair for me to say maybe it wasn't there...  
633  
634 Yeah.  
635  
636 ...it was just a question of who I thought could help me most and who would understand  
637 my situation the best. That is not the Japanese government or the local ward office, right?  
638 So, I turned to friends in the international community...  
639  
640 Yeah, yeah.  
641  
642 ...I worked with an international chamber to help set up a panel discussion with a  
643 specialist from a major overseas academic institute, ehm, so he had just written a book on  
644 radiation, eh, and we invited him in to speak. It got a huge crowd, and it was all, it was  
645 the international community, ehm, and many of the participants were mothers who were  
646 concerned about radiation and, for their children...  
647  
648 I understand.  
649  
650 ...ehm, they didn't really know where else to go for information, so it was very helpful for  
651 a lot them...  
652  
653 Yeah.  
654  
655 ...you know, we recorded it and broadcast it on youtube.

656  
657 *Yeah, those kind of, em, I guess, self-organized efforts are really valuable and I, I think it*  
658 *shows the, exactly what, what we were just talking about that community is what you*  
659 *make of it...*  
660  
661 Uhm.  
662  
663 *...so your community may not have been the people living in your, your danchi [Note:*  
664 *means housing estate or apartment complex] but it was...*  
665  
666 Yeah.  
667  
668 *...let's say, I guess an international community or an expat community.*  
669  
670 Most of it was tied to work as well...  
671  
672 Yeah.  
673  
674 *...it was a lot of people I had met through work-related networking...*  
675  
676 Yeah.  
677  
678 *...and in terms of follow-up training, you know, on this event, ehm, we did our own*  
679 *internal earthquake preparedness training at work and we hadn't any earthquake*  
680 *preparedness [laughter] you know, eh, resources. We didn't have any water or food*  
681 *stored...*  
682  
683 Really?  
684  
685 *...we didn't have helmets, so the company invested in that after the disaster...*  
686  
687 Yeah, yeah.  
688  
689 *...so then everyone had a helmet and a backpack at their, eh, desk...*  
690  
691 Yeah.  
692  
693 *...and we went through the dos and don'ts, you know, things like, if an earthquake hits,*  
694 *you are probably better off staying in the building and getting under a desk if it's a newer*  
695 *development...*  
696  
697 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
698  
699 *...rather than running out on the street because, you know, if a pane of glass gets shaken*  
700 *off, ehm, a building in the area, it can fly a long way and you can totally find yourself in*  
701 *trouble...*  
702  
703 Oh, right. Yeah.  
704  
705 *...so it was those types of things because on the day of the earthquake, I remember I was*  
706 *sitting at my desk working and, right, it hits and earthquakes are not all that uncommon,*  
707 *and first I was like, "Oh, another earthquake." And then, it was getting so intense, it felt*  
708 *like the windows might actually shatter, and people were shrieking and jumping under*  
709 *their desks...*  
710



711 [Laughter]  
 712  
 713 ...and then I looked downstairs and people had run out and were outside on the streets...  
 714  
 715 Oh.  
 716  
 717 ...whereas we were all still inside...  
 718  
 719 Yeah, yeah.  
 720  
 721 [Laughter]  
 722  
 723 ...no-one knew what to do, right? So.  
 724  
 725 *Wow. That's, but, yeah, I guess, those are the good things that hopefully from the*  
 726 *experience, the fact that maybe Tokyo is better prepared now, because I mean, there is*  
 727 *going to be a big earthquake here, you know, I don't think it's a question of 'if', I, I, I*  
 728 *think one will hit...*  
 729  
 730 Yeah.  
 731  
 732 ...a significant one will hit.  
 733  
 734 Well, I remember some of the programs that I heard about on the news in the aftermath,  
 735 like, they did some evacuation scenario in one ward, where, eh, entire office buildings  
 736 were picked and they explained to people what they had to do if there was a need to  
 737 evacuate, and in another area they had a program where you could go in and they would  
 738 explain to you exactly how to walk home from your workplace...  
 739  
 740 Yeah.  
 741  
 742 ...and they had some, eh, programs where they showed the disaster preparedness  
 743 resources they had because apparently this massive, ehm, underground facility in one  
 744 central area, it has blankets and clothes...  
 745  
 746 Yeah.  
 747  
 748 ...and food and water, so it was reassuring to know that's there. If that earthquake had not  
 749 hit, it wouldn't have been promoted in the way they did.  
 750  
 751 *And that, that kind of promotion, was that all through Japanese or was it provided in a*  
 752 *variety of languages?*  
 753  
 754 That's actually a video I saw on youtube...  
 755  
 756 Oh okay.  
 757  
 758 ...but it's one of those things, you know, that came from a news program, it may have  
 759 been Japanese originally, someone took it on themselves to dub it and then spread it  
 760 around, so there was so many cases where people just couldn't find the information...  
 761  
 762 Yeah.  
 763  
 764 ...so they were doing their own homework and sending it out.  
 765

766 *Yeah, yeah. Again, it's coming back to, like, the original source. If it's, kind of, a reliable,*  
767 *trustworthy source, people are going to try and spread as best they can.*  
768  
769 Uhm.  
770  
771 *In, in your actual, in your, your work, did you have your own translators who were*  
772 *working or was it just internal staff who were translating or were you taking already*  
773 *translated information?*  
774  
775 Mostly we were taking already translated, eh, material. So, as I said, it was, kind of,  
776 Kyodo, NHK, ehm, no, we tried to avoid foreign in a way, we didn't deliberately try to  
777 avoid foreign media, but foreign media was much more sensationalistic about it for the  
778 reasons I mentioned earlier...  
779  
780 *Yeah.*  
781  
782 ...and one of the big goals was, just, to keep people calm and understand things were not  
783 as bad as they seemed.  
784  
785 *Yeah, yeah.*  
786  
787 Ehm, to be honest, at the time, for the first two weeks, no-one had any idea what the risks  
788 actually were...  
789  
790 *Yeah.*  
791  
792 ...you know, three years on, two years on, we know that we were relatively okay...  
793  
794 *Yeah, yeah.*  
795  
796 One of my {acquaintances} created a Facebook page {redacted}, ehm, and he was  
797 digging around for whatever information that he could find on radiation and health  
798 risks...  
799  
800 *Yeah.*  
801  
802 ...I can introduce you to him, if you would like me to. He was deeply, deeply involved in  
803 digging up information and spreading it as widely as possible...  
804  
805 *Yeah.*  
806  
807 ...and, eh, the website is still up and running, but he was so tr, emotionally invested in it  
808 that he couldn't run it himself any more, so he just handed it over to someone else to  
809 manage.  
810  
811 *Oh I can, I can understand how that, ehm, sort of, emotional difficulties or the stress*  
812 *arising from, from that could be significant, you know.*  
813  
814 Oh, and he is still stressed. He is very worried about the food supply...  
815  
816 *Yeah, yeah.*  
817  
818 ...and it is not a question of immediate, external exposure to radiation, it is long-term, in  
819 the food supply, the, the groundwater is, eh, what's the word, not infected...  
820

821 *Yeah.*  
822  
823 ...but irradiated, ehm, and it is getting into the food supply with cows and fish and  
824 everything else. If you are exposed to those levels of radiation over a fifteen, twenty year  
825 period, what does it do to your health?  
826  
827 *Yeah.*  
828  
829 These are the issues that he is still looking for information on and the Japanese  
830 government is still trying to address.  
831  
832 *Yeah, you, you, kind of, touched on a point that I am trying to, to figure out with each*  
833 *participant that I talk to, em, kind of, the idea of, you know, this big disaster, when did it*  
834 *start and when did it end, if it has ended?*  
835  
836 Uuuuhhhmmmm, yeah.  
837  
838 *So just for you personally, how would you define the disaster in, kind of, time,*  
839 *temporally?*  
840  
841 Ehm, I think post-Fukushima 50 [Note: a media pseudonym for the 50 power plant  
842 workers who did not evacuate and worked to directly respond to the nuclear disaster on  
843 site], we were probably over the worst of it and got a sense that things were settling  
844 down...  
845  
846 *Okay.*  
847  
848 ...ehm, I don't even remember what the timeframe was...  
849  
850 *Yeah.*  
851  
852 ...it felt like two, three weeks, maybe...  
853  
854 *Yeah.*  
855  
856 ...after that, it seemed like we were going more reliable information...  
857  
858 *Yeah.*  
859  
860 ... and Fukushima was not as, ehm, much of a risk as it had been.  
861  
862 *So, kind of, for you, it was after that period that life sort of went back to normal to a*  
863 *certain extent?*  
864  
865 Life, day-to-day life never changed, so I could take the train to work, I had electricity at  
866 home, I could shop as I normally did, at work I was doing the same kinds of things but  
867 with more of a focus on spreading information...  
868  
869 *Okay.*  
870  
871 ...on the disaster. Ehm, it was just the fear of 'Is this going to affect me long-term?'...  
872  
873 *Yeah.*  
874  
875 ...and the, the, the, the lack of information on nuclear industry for people.

876  
 877 *And did you consider leaving at any point?*  
 878  
 879 No, I didn't. Ehm, don't ask me why. I don't know. Ehm, it is a horrible thing to say, but  
 880 it was exciting [laughter].  
 881  
 882 *[Laughter] Well you were, as I said, you were right at the coalface, right?*  
 883  
 884 Yeah, maybe that's part of the reason it felt pretty [laughter] exciting.  
 885  
 886 *Well, yeah.*  
 887  
 888 So we had big clients...  
 889  
 890 ...that were getting questions from overseas, "Where do you do your manufacturing in  
 891 Japan? Are there risks with your products?" Em, we had to produce, you know, fifty-page  
 892 q & a documents that were going to all customer-facing staff worldwide...  
 893  
 894 *Yeah.*  
 895  
 896 ...pretty high profile work...  
 897  
 898 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 899  
 900 ...so you don't get to do that every day [laughter].  
 901  
 902 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's, that's very, very true, I mean, for, you know, just in terms of*  
 903 *what you were doing day-to-day, I mean, not only that it was interesting, but you were*  
 904 *making a contribution.*  
 905  
 906 Well, and because I was so close to the source of information and because I was being  
 907 paid to monitor the thing...  
 908  
 909 *Yeah.*  
 910  
 911 ...as closely as possible, I was better off doing what I was doing than running off,  
 912 especially if I intended to come back again...  
 913  
 914 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 915  
 916 ...my, em, girlfriend at the time was Japanese and she wasn't going anywhere...  
 917  
 918 *Yeah.*  
 919  
 920 ...because her family was all here...  
 921  
 922 *Yeah.*  
 923  
 924 ...so I wasn't going to dump her...  
 925  
 926 *Yeah.*  
 927  
 928 ...and run off...  
 929  
 930 *Yeah.*

931  
 932 ...and just a lot of workplaces, this {acquaintance} that I mentioned, ehm, he left the  
 933 country immediately, he, he has lived here twenty-five or thirty years now, ehm, he was  
 934 reprimanded by his employer.  
 935  
 936 *Yeah, yeah, but that kind of feeds in, I mean, one of the, I guess, themes which has come*  
 937 *up about this disaster is the fly-jin [Note: a derogatory term for foreigners who left*  
 938 *Japan during the disaster] kind of, idea, do, do you have any feel, do you have any*  
 939 *feeling about that kind of story?*  
 940  
 941 The majority of people I know who left, left with their families, or because they just felt  
 942 they didn't have access to the information they needed. Ehm, but those reasons are  
 943 entirely legitimate. I don't judge anyone...  
 944  
 945 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 946  
 947 ...and it's not like foreigners had the opportunity to leave and Japanese didn't. Anyone  
 948 who felt at risk was free to relocate...  
 949  
 950 *Yeah.*  
 951  
 952 ...a lot of people went to Okinawa, so.  
 953  
 954 *A lot of people did, yeah, yeah, a lot of Japanese people did. I think there is an element,*  
 955 *you know, there is an element of, I guess, kind of, scapegoating to a certain extent,*  
 956 *maybe, that it was something that, again I suppose it was a sensational story that got*  
 957 *picked up, but it was certainly, you know, if you look at the, the stories in the Japanese*  
 958 *media after the disaster, it came up quite a lot, so...*  
 959  
 960 *Yeah.*  
 961  
 962 *...feeds into the, kind of, the whole, I guess, discourse...*  
 963  
 964 Uhm, uhm, uhm.  
 965  
 966 *...around the.*  
 967  
 968 Well, I think there is an aspect of occidentalism there...  
 969  
 970 *[Laughter]*  
 971  
 972 ..."Lazy foreigners" ...  
 973  
 974 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 975  
 976 ...you know, "They are not as committed as I am. I am willing to sacrifice everything...  
 977  
 978 *Yeah.*  
 979  
 980 ...for my family and my, eh, company." Em, whereas I think people were a bit more  
 981 pragmatic, a lot of foreigners were more pragmatic...  
 982  
 983 *Yeah.*  
 984

985 ...and it's not that you are not committed, it is personal safety comes first, regardless of  
 986 whether you are Japanese or foreign. Eh, this whole *shoganai, gaman* attitude, right?  
 987 [Note: these expressions are used to convey ideas like, 'well, it can't be helped' and  
 988 'things must just be endured' and are used to indicate certain stereotypical elements of  
 989 Japanese culture]  
 990  
 991 *Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah, I mean, I didn't connect with that at all. I mean, I stayed on a year,*  
 992 *I guess it was a year-and-a-, a year-and-a-half after the disaster, and at first, you know,*  
 993 *initially at the disaster, I thought I was going to stay here forever, but things got more*  
 994 *and more difficult for me at work, my boss had a bad time after the disaster and our*  
 995 *relationship got worse and worse, and so I ended up deciding to leave, and I did feel that,*  
 996 *I mean, I wasn't reprimanded, but I definitely felt I was being disloyal because I worked*  
 997 *for a very traditional Japanese company and I was one of the few non-Japanese staff,*  
 998 *yeah, but, in the end, it came down to me making a decision on what was important for*  
 999 *me, not what was important for, for the company.*  
 1000  
 1001 Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's fair and the company should be prioritizing what is important  
 1002 for you as well...  
 1003  
 1004 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1005  
 1006 ...you shouldn't have to make that decision yourself...  
 1007  
 1008 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1009  
 1010 ...if they value you, they will value your personal safety above everything else and no-one  
 1011 can claim they had enough information to make that judgment call.  
 1012  
 1013 *And like, on the, on the idea of information, I mean, obviously, you were getting access to*  
 1014 *a lot of information, you know, sources, apart from the Fukushima element, was there*  
 1015 *any other information that you felt was lacking for you?*  
 1016  
 1017 Yeah, apart from Fukushima?  
 1018  
 1019 *Yeah.*  
 1020  
 1021 Ehm, apart from Fukushima, no. Because, again, I wasn't really affected. Eh, hardly  
 1022 anywhere in Tokyo was damaged, a lot of people went without power, but I was living  
 1023 comfortably, you know?  
 1024  
 1025 *Yeah, yeah. And how did you find out about the details of the disaster, like, on that*  
 1026 *Friday, Saturday, Sunday?*  
 1027  
 1028 Uhuh.  
 1029  
 1030 *Was it all TV or how, how did you know what was going on?*  
 1031  
 1032 Ehm, well obviously I felt the earthquake on the Friday. Immediately, kind of jump onto  
 1033 eh, Facebook, whatever and see...  
 1034  
 1035 *Yeah.*  
 1036  
 1037 ...the, eh, tsunami pictures, but it is not like I was watching the media very closely  
 1038 through the weekend. I didn't find out about Fukushima until Sunday...  
 1039

1040 Yeah.

1041

1042 ...and then it was someone had posted an article on Facebook, eh, with these staring eyes

1043 and radiation symbols...

1044

1045 Yeah.

1046

1047 ...and, eh, that is when I got a bit nervous.

1048

1049 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So I think I, in, in, in many ways my experience would have been*

1050 *similar that, eh, I, kind of, well I found out most of my things through work, I guess, like,*

1051 *or through my own, I used, I used to follow the streaming of the Japanese TV, eh, you*

1052 *know they started showing it on, eh...*

1053

1054 U-stream.

1055

1056 *...U-stream, yes, eh, I liked watching that because it had the, sort of, comment function*

1057 *on the side so I was, kind of, following people as they were commenting...*

1058

1059 Ah, right, right, right, right.

1060

1061 *...but then there was also that sensationalism and the fear and stuff, so I don't know*

1062 *whether it was good for me to [laughter] follow that or not.*

1063

1064 I tend to ignore the comments because you don't know who the people are you don't

1065 know, so many people were just scared out of their minds.

1066

1067 Yeah.

1068

1069 Do you want to move on somewhere a bit quieter?

1070

1071 *Yeah, sure. [Note: after this we moved to a nearby park. On the way, we talked more in*

1072 *general about our experiences of living in Japan. At the park, we filled out the various*

1073 *pieces of profile data that we did not have time to fill out before the interview at the*

1074 *restaurant and briefly talked about the research process as below.] And then the final*

1075 *thing, again it is just another scale, eh, you, you know, you talked about how in total*

1076 *your life was pretty much unaffected...*

1077

1078 Uhm.

1079

1080 *...but some of the people I am speaking to, their lives were very deeply affected, so I just*

1081 *want to make sure that anyone I speak to hasn't been, kind of, stressed out by, by talking*

1082 *to me...*

1083

1084 Oh.

1085

1086 *...it, it is not about asking your stress during the earthquake, it is just what stress you feel*

1087 *by taking part in this research.*

1088

1089 Yeah, no problem [Note: the participant marked 1/10 on the scale]

1090

1091 *Ehm, some people I have spoken to have given much higher than you...*

1092

1093 Uhm.

1094

1095 *...but that is just because they were reliving some very traumatic experiences...*  
 1096  
 1097 Yeah.  
 1098  
 1099 *...especially the people I have spoken to in Miyagi...*  
 1100  
 1101 Oh yeah, I can imagine.  
 1102  
 1103 *...and one of the things that I, I did with the university was if anybody answered over a*  
 1104 *certain figure, we had some counselling services that we put in place.*  
 1105  
 1106 Oh right, right.  
 1107  
 1108 *I'm not a counsellor, absolutely no, I can't do anything, but we wanted to make sure that*  
 1109 *there was something in place, you know, just, just in case.*  
 1110  
 1111 I did go up to Miyagi after the disaster, somewhere on the coast, it was near Iwate, and it  
 1112 was amazing to see because people were just going about their lives, living in shelters,  
 1113 doing the clean up where it needed to be done. It was business as usual mostly. The thing  
 1114 that I found amazing was doing this work in Tokyo, the eye of the entire world was on  
 1115 Japan in the disaster, and in this little town that was recovering, they had no awareness of  
 1116 this whatsoever, they had their own local newspaper, their own local television, and that  
 1117 is all the locals watched. It was probably just what happened, what was happening down  
 1118 the street. Not what the Japanese government is, is doing to support them. Very much a  
 1119 sense that we need to take care of this ourselves, our, our community, going to help each  
 1120 other in the same way we always have.  
 1121  
 1122 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1123  
 1124 It was wonderful, right? So the rest of the world was saying, "What is the Japanese  
 1125 government doing? You have to give us information. What are the levels of  
 1126 destruction?" The people who were actually involved in this were not looking to Tokyo at  
 1127 all. Tokyo could be New York in terms of the Japanese disaster. So that I found very  
 1128 interesting.  
 1129  
 1130 *Yeah, really, really interesting. Well, listen, I have taken up so much of your time already.*  
 1131 *Thank you very much.*  
 1132  
 1133 Oh you are very welcome.



1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/19 Interview with Participant 7*

5 *Researcher: So the first question I always ask is can you just tell me about your*  
6 *experience in the 2011 disaster?*

7  
8 Participant: Eh, well, it was a normal working day as usual and then I had lunch, come  
9 back to the office, I had some meeting to take care of, and I was on the phone. Suddenly  
10 it started to shake and we understood, I understood that it's not a usual, like, earthquake,  
11 because we have experience, or I have experience, like, feeling earthquake in the past. It's  
12 something very normal in Japan. But, eh, because of everybody panicking around,  
13 understood that we have to run, and we did run outside of the building, and, yeah, so.

14  
15 *And when you ran outside the building, could you hear any, eh, warning signs or any*  
16 *sirens or any announcements?*

17  
18 No announcement in here, but I'm not sure, maybe there was an announcement but there  
19 was a big confusion...

20  
21 *Uhuh.*

22  
23 ...and even if there was announcement, I was not aware of. But I'm sure there was  
24 announcement because I sometimes hear announcement for other things that happen, but  
25 that day I was not aware of announcement, but was aware of, like, people around,  
26 everybody, people were not sure if we should stay in the building...

27  
28 *Yeah.*

29  
30 ...or go out, and there were lot of noise, like the traffic light, like...

31  
32 *Yeah.*

33  
34 ...shaking and, and, yeah, so, but I can, I don't remember if there was announcement now  
35 or not, but I'm sure there was...

36  
37 *Yeah.*

38  
39 ...announcement, because usually there is announcement even for smaller things than that  
40 time.

41  
42 *Yeah, exactly, and obviously because I'm interested in translation and information and so*  
43 *on, one of the most interesting things for me is how you communicated with important*  
44 *people in your life. What did you do?*

45  
46 Eh, well, you know, because I'm, I think, I'm fully bilingual, at least in terms of  
47 speaking, I can understand Japanese as much as I can understand English, so, eh, yeah, I  
48 mean, I tried to call my partner, I tried to call my family in the beginning. Of course, the  
49 phone was not working. And, until I realized that we could use Skype, for example, or, at  
50 that time, I was able to talk with people I wanted to talk to.

51  
52 *And was that process, eh, easy, you know, was the connection a good connection for the*  
53 *Internet?*

54  
55 Yeah, it was normal connection, eh, like...  
56  
57 *Yeah.*  
58  
59 ...unlike the phone where it was not working at all, and, eh, everybody's trying to call  
60 until somebody said, "Actually, I was able to use Skype." And I tried it, and it worked.  
61  
62 *Yeah. That was, I think, a big relief for a lot of people. For me too, eh...*  
63  
64 Uhm [laughter].  
65  
66 ...I, I couldn't connect with anyone using the phone, but I could use, you know,  
67 Facebook...  
68  
69 Yeah.  
70  
71 ...or some other Internet...  
72  
73 Net, yeah.  
74  
75 ...did you use any social media or SNS tools?  
76  
77 Eh, yes, I did. Not, I mean, you mean that, when it happened?  
78  
79 *Or, or, or, aft...*  
80  
81 After that was the only way, not the only way but the easy to communicate with  
82 everybody else instead of saying a personal message to every friend, all the people who  
83 are asking what happened and if I'm alright. I couldn't reply to each one but using  
84 Facebook, eh, like, eh, group message to all my friend and to all the people who are  
85 asking, eh, was the easy way to do it, actually, rather than send many messages  
86 [laughter].  
87  
88  
89 *Absolutely, yeah, for, for, me too, I used the, the same system...*  
90  
91 So [Note: this is a Japanese way of showing agreement meaning "That's right!"]...  
92  
93 ...like, kind of, a blanket...  
94  
95 ...so, so, so. [Note: this is a Japanese way of showing agreement meaning "That's right!"]  
96  
97 ...eh, message.  
98  
99 Yeah.  
100  
101 *Eh, then obviously, so, that's communicating, but also I'm interested in how you gathered*  
102 *information. So how did you find out more detail about the events?*  
103  
104 Like, wha, what kind of detail? What happened?  
105  
106 *Eh, what happened, yeah.*  
107

108 Well, the television where there were like 24-hours for about a week, the only thing they  
 109 were showing on TV. There were no other program except information about the tsunami  
 110 and earthquake. So that's the only way. Of course, Internet and so on, but, yeah, after,  
 111 actually, after two, three days, I, we, we stopped, like, we switch off the television. Was  
 112 not a good idea, yeah, to.

113

114 *Oh really, why, why?*

115

116 Why? Because it's just, you know, we tried to get just, like, somehow of a normal life,  
 117 rather than yeah, so, to, to get a bit distracted with other things, rather than watch, like,  
 118 the same thing, and the same, because after three days, you realize that they were  
 119 showing again and again and again the same scene, the same thing. So it was just like,  
 120 "Agh, it's enough. We've already seen it. We understand what happened. That's okay." It  
 121 was something, it was too much, actually.

122

123 *I understand. And during that, you know, two or three day period when you were*  
 124 *checking TV news, what channels were you checking?*

125

126 I'm not sure. There are many channels.

127

128 *Japanese?*

129

130 Yeah, yeah, in Japanese, ehm, for, for sure.

131

132 *You didn't check any overseas?*

133

134 Eh, not, no. No, because, like, the overseas channels, they are getting their information  
 135 also from Japan, maybe copying from or getting the footage from, like, Japanese TV, so I  
 136 rather got the information first hand.

137

138 *Absolutely, yeah, I think you make a very good point there. Eh, some people have talked*  
 139 *about accessing...*

140

141 Uhm.

142

143 *...overseas TV channels or overseas Internet...*

144

145 Uhuh.

146

147 *...but, of course, those journalists got their information from...*

148

149 Yeah, yeah.

150

151 *...the same Japanese sources.*

152

153 Yeah.

154

155 *Ehm, one thing I am interested in is whether you felt you had enough information about*  
 156 *important topics for you.*

157

158 Like what, for example?

159

160 *Well, for example, did you have enough information about where to go for help or did*  
 161 *you have enough information about nuclear issues or?*

162

163 At that time, we were not sure what's happening. I mean, you just like, yeah, there were  
 164 contradictory information, there are sources that say, "No problem. Don't worry about  
 165 nuclear." Other one who are too much alarming. And, frankly speaking, I had no illusion  
 166 about infor, to get the real information from the, from the normal TV, eh, channels, for  
 167 example. I know that the, it's not, that's not the truth.  
 168  
 169 *Yeah.*  
 170  
 171 I know that every TV channel have it's own agenda for whatever, I don't know - it's  
 172 another topic or not...  
 173  
 174 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 175  
 176 ...however, I don't, I, I don't believe in getting information or the truth or what really  
 177 happened from listening to the news, for example. It never. Now, I know they never say  
 178 the truth, anyway...  
 179  
 180 *I see.*  
 181  
 182 ...they say what they want to say.  
 183  
 184 *Yeah, yeah. This, this is a big issue in, eh, disaster studies, the fact that after a disaster,*  
 185 *the, the sort of, the three things which are very key for people are accurate information,*  
 186 *reliable information and information in good time...*  
 187  
 188 Uhm, uhm.  
 189  
 190 *...so if you can get these three points, it's a, the best situation.*  
 191  
 192 Yeah, but, you know, you don't, I just have, have to have my own idea about what  
 193 happened, but of course I get information from everywhere. I read a lot. I, I watch TV  
 194 also. I check the Internet. I, not only just Japanese news, but you know, and I was able to  
 195 make my own idea. Eh, I didn't panic. Of course [laughter] I panicked a little bit. Not  
 196 same as many other people who left everything behind...  
 197  
 198 *Yeah.*  
 199  
 200 ...ran, like, the first day. I couldn't do that and because, like, I didn't, I was not sure about  
 201 the information. Until I was, until I, yeah.  
 202  
 203 *And for you, to make your decisions, what sources of information were the best sources*  
 204 *for you?*  
 205  
 206 Yeah, it's to, to look at different sources - not just one sources - then try to process it  
 207 inside of myself and then come right to my own conclusion. It might, I might be wrong or  
 208 I might, might be right but the conclusion that make me think, "Okay, this is, now I'm  
 209 satisfied."  
 210  
 211 *I got it. I got it. Eh, another one of the reasons that I'm doing this project is the Japanese*  
 212 *government, like local government, and Japanese NPOs are trying to make some*  
 213 *recommendations about how to help foreigners in the future. And one of the*  
 214 *recommendations that they're talking about is, they think it's very important for foreign*  
 215 *people to be a part of their local community because in a disaster, maybe, your local*  
 216 *community can come together and help. Did you feel part of your local community?*  
 217

218 Yes, I, I felt part of my local community. Local in terms, yeah, I think I feel a part of my  
 219 local community and I think I feel they, the, the, I have a very strong connection to  
 220 Japan...  
 221  
 222 *Uhm.*  
 223  
 224 ...unlike many other people who. I, like, basically, half of my life I spent here which I  
 225 consider as my country. And I was, I felt like it's not the right, it's not the right thing to  
 226 just escape and run away...  
 227  
 228 *Yeah.*  
 229  
 230 ...when there is some disaster like that...  
 231  
 232 *Yeah.*  
 233  
 234 ...I mean, things could happen anywhere. And I have friend and I have, like, people I  
 235 know for many years like my family. I just couldn't run away...  
 236  
 237 *Yeah.*  
 238  
 239 ...I have, like, yeah. So.  
 240  
 241 *Uhm, can you think of any ways that you could help other foreigners to feel the same*  
 242 *way? What should foreign people do to become more part of Japanese communities?*  
 243  
 244 I'm not sure what made me react and what made me react, and, and, what made me, yeah,  
 245 like, feel that way. It's maybe because I've been in Japan for a long time and my, I have  
 246 roots here...  
 247  
 248 *I see.*  
 249  
 250 ...if, for example, if I just arrived to Tokyo and I have no connection in terms of, like, I  
 251 don't know, like, friendship...  
 252  
 253 *Yeah.*  
 254  
 255 ...or, I don't know, much people...  
 256  
 257 *Yeah.*  
 258  
 259 ...or, it would have been much easier for me to pack my thing and leave...  
 260  
 261 *I got it.*  
 262  
 263 ...but after many years I was, I couldn't do that...  
 264  
 265 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 266  
 267 ...because of, because of the people I know, because of my friend, because of, yeah,  
 268 Japanese people I know. I just felt it's not the right thing to do [laughter]...  
 269  
 270 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 271

272 ...especially those people like my Japanese friend, they were, they were there, of course,  
 273 there is a disaster, and they know that, and they are aware of that, and they probably  
 274 more, as confused as foreigner about...  
 275  
 276 *Yeah.*  
 277  
 278 ...what is true in terms of information, eh, they are getting, which is not true, but they  
 279 stayed anyway [laughter].  
 280  
 281 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 282  
 283 Like, other, like, people from, yeah, and so it depends. I don't know. As I told you, it's  
 284 very confusing because the news, for example, even in the foreign community in Japan,  
 285 there are people from certain country who are more stressed than other people. Like, there  
 286 are certain country who just, like, send airplane to, like, eh, for people to go out from  
 287 Tokyo, from Japan for free even...  
 288  
 289 *Right.*  
 290  
 291 ...where other country were, "Oh, don't worry. It's okay. There is no, the situation is  
 292 under control," and so on. Who to believe? That's, again, you just have to rely on, on my  
 293 inner, I don't know, radar [laughter].  
 294  
 295 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I understand. Ehm, did you feel that you got information from*  
 296 *your local authorities, like, I don't know, city office or ward office? Did they give you any*  
 297 *information?*  
 298  
 299 About, eh, about?  
 300  
 301 *About disaster response or how to prepare or what to do?*  
 302  
 303 Uh, yeah, that's, the information is there, like, even before the earthquake there, there is  
 304 always, like, drill, there's always, like, eh, yeah, they, they sending, we, the website of  
 305 the, of the city government or the local government, there are all the information  
 306 necessary in Japanese and English as well. Probably in other language. I'm not sure. Like  
 307 where to go...  
 308  
 309 *Uhuh.*  
 310  
 311 ...in case of the earthquake, and what to do, and, yeah, I mean for me, because Japan, like,  
 312 it's the, it's the biggest thing that happened. Like March 11. Having earthquake, like,  
 313 quite big is something very [laughter] very normal here and they were expecting  
 314 something big to happen. That's, I think they were prepared in terms of what to do, where  
 315 to go...  
 316  
 317 *Yeah.*  
 318  
 319 ...and, yeah.  
 320  
 321 *Ehm, obviously, I'm interested in ideas of language in particular...*  
 322  
 323 *Uhuh.*  
 324

325 ...eh, eh, because I'm interested in language and culture, and I know that some of those  
 326 websites that you're talking about, they provide information in Japanese, in English, and  
 327 other languages...  
 328  
 329 Korean, maybe Chinese, yeah.  
 330  
 331 ...they also provide information in Easy Japanese. Have you ever come across Easy  
 332 Japanese?  
 333  
 334 What's Easy Japanese?  
 335  
 336 So, Easy Japanese is a simplified version of Japanese where, for example, if there's a  
 337 kanji [Note: Chinese character used in the Japanese writing system] character, they  
 338 write the hiragana, the furigana [Note: these are relatively basic Japanese scripts to help  
 339 read the complex Chinese characters]....  
 340  
 341 On top.  
 342  
 343 ...on top...  
 344  
 345 I see.  
 346  
 347 ...or they use, ehm, they don't use very complicated verbs or very complicated nouns.  
 348 They try to make things simplified...  
 349  
 350 Uh, uh.  
 351  
 352 ...ehm, ehm, you, you haven't come across them?  
 353  
 354 Yeah, yeah, I, I haven't, I mean, probably, there but I, frankly speaking, I just, I know  
 355 that the information is there. It's not like I'm checking the website every day [laughter]...  
 356  
 357 Yeah.  
 358  
 359 ...I just know the information is there and, and I know, for example, in my  
 360 neighbourhood, if something happen, where to go...  
 361  
 362 Yeah.  
 363  
 364 ...I know that but I'm not aware of everything.  
 365  
 366 Okay. I understand.  
 367  
 368 So, it's just I think when things happen I will, yeah.  
 369  
 370 Yeah. I, I, I completely understand. Eh, the reason I was just asking about the simplified  
 371 Japanese, the Easy Japanese is because some, eh, local governments are pushing this  
 372 very strongly...  
 373  
 374 I see.  
 375  
 376 ...because there is a fear that providing information in English maybe is not the most  
 377 useful. Eh, for example, many foreigners in Japan do speak English, but many foreigners  
 378 in Japan don't speak English...  
 379

380 Uh, uh, uh, uh.  
 381  
 382 *...so they're trying to find a balance between.*  
 383  
 384 Yeah, they are right, yeah. But I think there is information not only in Japanese and  
 385 English but in other language because when we talk about foreigner in Japan, it's not, the  
 386 English-speaking community is not the biggest community. So the Chinese, the Korean  
 387 are maybe ten times as much as, so there are, and, I know that there is information in  
 388 Chinese and in Korean, yeah.  
 389  
 390 *And, of course, in Tohoku, the biggest groups were not English-speaking groups of*  
 391 *foreigners. It was, as you said, Chinese, Brazilian, eh, also, Peruvian and, eh,*  
 392 *Filipina/Filipino, so, eh, that's why I'm interested, as I said, in these ideas of, of*  
 393 *language and communication. Eh, in your circle of friends, did you have some foreign*  
 394 *nationals who couldn't speak Japanese very well.*  
 395  
 396 Yes.  
 397  
 398 *Do you know what they did to get information or to communicate? How, how did they*  
 399 *manage?*  
 400  
 401 Not sure how did they manage. But, yeah, probably most of them, they were looking at  
 402 foreign TV channel, which is, yeah, which is very alarming [laughter].  
 403  
 404 *Oh right, yeah. There was quite a difference...*  
 405  
 406 Yeah.  
 407  
 408 *...between the Japanese TV and, eh, the, ehm, I, I guess, overseas, foreign, foreign media.*  
 409 *Eh, for you, was, eh, radio, was it a useful, eh.*  
 410  
 411 I never, I don't, I never use radio. I look at the Internet, I watch TV...  
 412  
 413 *Uhuh.*  
 414  
 415 *...that's it. And I don't even read the newspaper.*  
 416  
 417 *Ah, I see, I see. Yeah, ehm, the reason I mention radio is because in Tohoku radio was*  
 418 *very important for Japanese people because they didn't have enough power...*  
 419  
 420 Uhm, uhm, uhm.  
 421  
 422 *...ehm, and enough conn, connectivity for, you know, TV or...*  
 423  
 424 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 425  
 426 *...social media. So radio was very important, eh, in that part of Japan...*  
 427  
 428 Yeah, yeah.  
 429  
 430 *...but here in Tokyo, I, I...*  
 431  
 432 I don't know many people who have radio.  
 433



434 *[Laughter] Really? Yeah, eh, I know that one of the recommendations that you'll see after*  
 435 *the disaster is that people should have a radio, em, just in case in the future it could be, it*  
 436 *could be, eh, a useful way of contacting. Ehm, I think, you mentioned earlier on about it's*  
 437 *important to go to many different sources...*  
 438  
 439 Uhuh.  
 440  
 441 *...so for, eh, information, it should be given through many different sources. So just*  
 442 *because radio is a bit old-fashioned...*  
 443  
 444 Uh, uh, uh.  
 445  
 446 *...it still can be very...*  
 447  
 448 Sure.  
 449  
 450 *...it still can be very, very, eh, useful.*  
 451  
 452 Yeah.  
 453  
 454 *Eh, after the disaster there were some efforts in Japan to, I guess, use slogans and*  
 455 *campaigns to move towards, eh, recovery. Do you remember any of the slogans or any of*  
 456 *the campaigns to encourage people.*  
 457  
 458 Not sure, I don't. No.  
 459  
 460 *Ehm, the reason I ask is there were some famous slogans like, eh, 'Gambare / Gamabou*  
 461 *Nippon!' [Note: these were slogans that meant something like 'Hang in there, Japan!*  
 462 *Hang in there, Tohoku!']...*  
 463  
 464 Ah yes, yeah, yeah.  
 465  
 466 *...or 'Gambare Tohoku!' Di, did you notice?*  
 467  
 468 Yeah, yeah. On TV, the shop.  
 469  
 470 *Yeah, the reason I ask that question is simply because, eh, some research, interesting*  
 471 *research has been done on these slogans...*  
 472  
 473 I see.  
 474  
 475 *...and I wanted to know if foreign people had, eh, paid attention...*  
 476  
 477 Uh, uh.  
 478  
 479 *...or not really, eh, paid attention. It seems from most of the people I speak to, they don't*  
 480 *remember immediately, but after a few seconds they remember. So I guess somewhere*  
 481 *inside [laughter] the information, the information passed on. For you, when did the*  
 482 *disaster end?*  
 483  
 484 So, this, this, is like?  
 485  
 486 *For you, when did you feel like, "Okay, the disaster is finished." Or if, if the disaster is*  
 487 *finished.*  
 488

489 For me, I, I, I think it lasted for a long time. And I felt that, the, it's finished and  
 490 everything went back to normal when light is back in the street, for example. And on, on,  
 491 yeah, like, for, for about more than three or maybe four month, or even longer than that,  
 492 the light were dim from, I go back to home by bicycle on {a major road in central  
 493 Tokyo}. It's not a long ride but anyway, it's quite bright street, even in the middle of the  
 494 night but all the light were, eh, dim for a long time and I felt everything went back to  
 495 normal when the light is back again.  
 496  
 497 *I see, I see. Yeah, I think a lot of people who I've spoken to talk about, maybe, somewhere*  
 498 *between two months and six months, depending on their situation.*  
 499  
 500 I think even the first, yeah, eh, yes, like, I think just before Christmas light is back but not  
 501 as much as it used to be but normal, like, all the, the shop, they have their light up again,  
 502 on again, and the sign are lighted and, but, that situation dragged for a long time...  
 503  
 504 *Uhum.*  
 505  
 506 ...I'm not sure how many month, but I remember for me I thought that everything is back  
 507 to normal when the light was back in the streets.  
 508  
 509 *Yeah, I got it. I understand. Ehm, kind of, really my last question, eh, for you, it seems*  
 510 *that you were pretty happy with the level of information and pretty happy with the*  
 511 *communication...*  
 512  
 513 Yes, I think so. Yes, I am.  
 514  
 515 *...is there anything you think could be improved?*  
 516  
 517 Of course, there is, like, I understand your study and I understand the subject of your  
 518 thesis, this language and translation, but I don't think, like, Japan can translate and give  
 519 information in every language in the, in the world. Like, why do we say it has to be in  
 520 English? There are people who don't speak English. Why do we have to say that? It's in  
 521 Japanese. There are people, I think the best way is to find a new code for everybody to  
 522 understand, regardless of what people, what language people speak, like, in terms of this,  
 523 or, like, even, sign, or like, like, like, I don't know, blind sign, for example...  
 524  
 525 *Uhum.*  
 526  
 527 ...for people who don't, who cannot speak and cannot hear, they have sign for, for  
 528 everybody to understand. I think, like, we should come up with things like that because  
 529 still Japan is, for sure, is a place where disaster happen...  
 530  
 531 *Uhum.*  
 532  
 533 ...earthquake or tsunami and we know that it's going to happen again. It's, it's not, like, if  
 534 it's going to happen again, it's when it's going to happen, and we need to be prepared and  
 535 I don't think we should blame the Japanese government for not giving information in,  
 536 because people say English, why English? Why not Swahili, for example?  
 537  
 538 *Oh, I think, sorry [Note: the participant still clearly wanted to speak]...*  
 539  
 540 And, em, yeah, I think it's translation, okay, it's not feasible that they can translate it in  
 541 every language and I don't think we, we should, like, like prefer some community to  
 542 others. We are all foreigner here. Of course, there are community or people from certain  
 543 country that are more, in terms of number, than other communities, but even the, the

544 community where there is only, like, few dozen people, they have the right also to get  
 545 information, same as the other people, and again translating the information in English or  
 546 in French or the other thing, it will not help the, the, there are, there will be other people  
 547 that really feel that they are left, eh, behind. Eh, and we can not also ask every foreign  
 548 here in Japan to learn Japanese. Of course, it is, if people are thinking to stay for a long  
 549 time here, they should because it help for everyday life to speak the language. But again,  
 550 I think we have to think out-of-the-box and we have to find the solution that is not  
 551 connected to language. Like, for example, sign...  
 552  
 553 *Uhum.*  
 554  
 555 ...that everybody understand.  
 556  
 557 *I think you make some really excellent points there and I agree with many of the, the*  
 558 *things you say. I know that, eh, the United Nations and the WHO have developed some*  
 559 *symbols and signs and they are trying to introduce these as a kind of standard in the*  
 560 *world, especially in, sort of, say, the Pacific Rim of Fire where, as you say, it's not a*  
 561 *question of if there'll be another disaster but when...*  
 562  
 563 Yeah, yeah.  
 564  
 565 *...there'll be another disaster. And I strongly agree with you that, eh, favoring, for*  
 566 *example, English or favouring French or favouring Chinese is not a good idea. Eh, I*  
 567 *don't know that favouring one language over another is the right way to proceed. Eh,*  
 568 *some of the people I have spoken to have talked about how useful diagrams were for them*  
 569 *in understanding issues with communication...*  
 570  
 571 Yeah. So.  
 572  
 573 *...so I think the idea of symbols and diagrams is a very, very interesting one. And just*  
 574 *also, to, to let you know, em, my, the purpose of my study is to explore this issue...*  
 575  
 576 I see [laughter].  
 577  
 578 *...so I'm not trying to, eh, say we should translate in every language. I'm simply trying to*  
 579 *find out what the foreigners I speak to really want or really need...*  
 580  
 581 So.  
 582  
 583 *...eh, also, I hope you don't think that I'm blaming the Japanese government...*  
 584  
 585 [Laughter]  
 586  
 587 *...yeah, eh, I, I really, I don't have a strong position either way. I think it was an*  
 588 *extremely large disaster, a very complex disaster, and I think any government would have*  
 589 *difficulty, eh, I'm just trying to, to see if the recommendations that the government are*  
 590 *making now seem useful...*  
 591  
 592 I see.  
 593  
 594 *...based on what, eh, some foreigners, some foreigners said. But my study will only be*  
 595 *very small, small money [laughter]...*  
 596  
 597 [Laughter] Sure.  
 598

599 *...but I'm, I'm just trying to see. Ehm, basically that's it, unless you have any other*  
600 *comment or any other point you want to make.*  
601  
602 Eh, not at the moment. But again, I think the, the best way is to make sign and diagram  
603 and probably hand, like, some kind of leaflet to every person who arrive to airport...  
604  
605 *Uhum.*  
606  
607 *...or port in Japan to be prepared, or even for people who are here visiting because it*  
608 *could happen, you know, when they are, when they are here, like, as tourists or business*  
609 *trip or, or that. Yeah.*  
610  
611 *That's a very interesting idea. I think that could be a very useful, eh, type of information*  
612 *source for people. And, as you said, one big concern is short-term residents...*  
613  
614 Yes.  
615  
616 *...people who are only here, say, for example, for business...*  
617  
618 Yeah.  
619  
620 *...or tourism. And with the 2020 Olympics now being planned, it's another reason to also*  
621 *focus on people who are only for a short time...*  
622  
623 [Laughter] for a short time, uh.  
624  
625 *...so I think that, of course, we have to talk about foreigners in Japan, but already it is*  
626 *difficult to define what is a foreigner...*  
627  
628 Ah, sure.  
629  
630 *...that's already a big issue. And then, once you've even made some sort of a definition of*  
631 *what's a foreigner, then maybe you also have to look at who's, maybe, a longer-term and*  
632 *who's a shorter-term, because they might have very different needs.*  
633  
634 Sure, yeah. Uhuh.  
635  
636 *Yeah, but thank you so much for your time and your very interesting opinions.*  
637  
638 Sure, you're welcome.

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/19 Interview with Participant 8*

5 *Researcher: So then, basically, to start very, kind of, generally, could you just tell me a*  
6 *little bit about what happened to you in the disaster?*

7  
8 Participant: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I was at the time in office, ehm, yeah, I know exactly  
9 the time, somehow...

10  
11 *Yeah.*

12  
13 ...every second or minute, I remember. I was with my colleague and I had had a few  
14 experience of earthquake, but they caused just some little movement, but this time it was,  
15 it, it kept on going, it kept on going, and then I saw, I worked in a, on a floor in a office,  
16 open space, but a little area, and area where I'm working was only Japanese, and I saw  
17 them also getting scared so I was, they were getting under their, em, so I was doing the  
18 same for the first time actually, I never went under my desk for earthquake, now I did it  
19 and I was writing a mail to eh, my family [laughter] to say, like, eh, "I'm, I think there's  
20 big earthquake."...

21  
22 *Yeah.*

23  
24 ...then, I remembered that I saw my colleague on the other side, she was changing shoes,  
25 em, we were on the 27th floor and one of the things I learnt from this experience is to  
26 have, eh, shoes with flat heels in the office. We had to, eh, so after this what happened,  
27 it's, I didn't, I don't remember it, but afterwards I heard many stories, so some of the  
28 foreigners immediately want to get out of the building...

29  
30 *Yeah.*

31  
32 ...so they started going down, but I was maybe in shock, I think, kind of, although I didn't  
33 think I was in shock, but I think, I, I thought, "Okay, I look at my Japanese, eh,  
34 colleagues and see what they are doing and they wait a bit, of, of course everyone was  
35 quiet and they waited until the announcement came that we could go out of the building,  
36 because apparently after earthquake there will be, eh, eh, aftershocks and then you just  
37 have to wait until, em, there is no aftershocks...

38  
39 *Yeah.*

40  
41 ...so that it's okay...

42  
43 *Yeah.*

44  
45 ...to go downstairs. So that was maybe five minutes later. I remember one of my  
46 colleagues shouting, for, foreign guy was shouting, "Ah, Japanese, what are we supposed  
47 to do?" [laughter]

48  
49 *[Laughter]*

50  
51 Anyway, I thought that was good. I just followed. So then, we walked, eh, down the stairs  
52 very calmly and no, well, we, we heard stories afterwards that some foreign people were  
53 running and, eh, running to get fur, just being in panic...

54  
55 *Yeah.*  
56  
57 ...so, but, yeah, I was with my colleagues just running, and we were somehow, yeah, now  
58 I'm talking about taking care of each other in a way that we know our team was six, and,  
59 eh, we were checking if everyone would be going downstairs with each other, and we  
60 know one girl, she was with others so that was okay so we went downstairs and then we  
61 have this evacuation area close to the office and every year we have the practice  
62 [laughter] when we have to go, walk down the stairs but no-one does it ...  
63  
64 *[Laughter]*  
65  
66 ...because it's announced, this was actually first time walking down the stairs...  
67  
68 *Wow.*  
69  
70 ...and then being downstairs we, we checked if everyone was, eh, there of our team and I  
71 think we had to, because there are some coordinator on each floor or in each division, so  
72 we had to say that we were all there...  
73  
74 *Yeah.*  
75  
76 ...and then they, we, we had to wait on what to do next but maybe after half an hour they  
77 said if you don't need to be back in the office, you can go home. And then some people  
78 had to be back in the office for really some urgent task, but when we were waiting  
79 downstairs, we could see the building moving. And I work in, eh, {redacted} which is a  
80 building of the seventies...  
81  
82 *Wow.*  
83  
84 ...em, you have, next to it, you have the hotel {a famous hotel in central Tokyo}.  
85 Afterwards I saw movies of the buildings moving towards each other...  
86  
87 *Wow.*  
88  
89 Yeah, yeah, yeah. And, ehm, yeah, well that's more for after the, how, how...  
90  
91 *Yeah.*  
92  
93 ...on the day itself then when they said you can go home, ehm, I think, well, it was four  
94 o'clock and the weather was nice and because of we were just talking about, we went to  
95 the local pub {redacted}. But there was no-one there, eh, they, they, eh, left but, eh, there  
96 was a heater outside, eh, and we just turned it on and we sat, sat there, went to  
97 convenience store and get some beers, and started, eh, drinking beers and, em, at that time  
98 already it was difficult to make phone calls but, em, I [laughter] knew the password for  
99 the wifi for {the local pub} so we could have Internet connection and because of that  
100 some news started getting in and, eh, of course, em, I think it was by then maybe daytime  
101 in the Netherlands and my sister, I, I had written my family and my boyfriend at that time  
102 who was not in Japan, eh, so, em, they started mailing me back, "Are you okay?" and  
103 then maybe after one hour, em, yeah, that was when the tsunami happened so at that time,  
104 they were asking, "Oh, the tsunami," and, are, "Are you okay?" I was just, "I'm okay,  
105 I'm okay." Ehm, then, ehm, yeah, we were then mainly with the foreign colleagues and a  
106 few Japanese were, we had some plans for that night, two birthdays, and, em, so one guy,  
107 em, I remember they bought a cake and put it there so we ate it in the bar and then the  
108 other birthday was later that night which I didn't go anymore because it was karaoke but,

109 em, I stayed in the bar quite a while, even the people came back who worked there, so  
 110 they might be back two hours later so opened up everything, so we had to buy the beer,  
 111 not bring our own cans [laughter]...

112  
 113 *[Laughter]*  
 114

115 ...ehm, yeah, I, I said to my colleagues because there were no taxis and public transport  
 116 was difficult, I, I, I, I go to work by bicycle because it's not so far. I said to my Japanese  
 117 colleagues, em, em, "Yeah, you can stay, you can stay at my place if you would like to."  
 118 But they said, eh, they would prefer to go home to see their family if they were okay  
 119 because they couldn't call them so actually they didn't even drink the beers, they were  
 120 already, like, worried...

121  
 122 *Of course, yeah.*  
 123

124 ...and they wanted to go home as soon as possible.

125  
 126 *Of course.*  
 127

128 ...so maybe that's why it was only the four people who were there because we hang on to  
 129 each other...

130  
 131 *Right.*  
 132

133 ...at that time. So then at certain point I said, "Oh, now I want to go home." And then  
 134 when I went home by bicycle I was so surprised about how many people were walking on  
 135 the streets. Usually I can just, I, I just ride on the sidewalk but the streets were full with,  
 136 with cars, cabs, everyone who could, em, drive or, well, everyone was on the street going  
 137 home. And the, the, eh, sidewalks were also completely packed, so it took a while for me  
 138 to get home, but, eh, usually we take 15 minutes and now half an hour. But that's  
 139 nothing compared with other people who walked to Yokohama or whatever, wherever  
 140 [Note: Yokohama is about 30km from the centre of Tokyo]...

141  
 142 *Right.*  
 143

144 ...so for me, it was not that troublesome but by the time I got home then I started  
 145 watching the news, em, eh, could see, the, the, the things, eh, the movies of the tsu, so I  
 146 started watching news, em, without eh, stopping. Of course, many mails. It was, it was,  
 147 eh [laughter] I was on my computer all the time because everyone from the Netherlands,  
 148 ehm, started mailing me. Ehm, but, em, [laughter] what I remember from that night  
 149 specifically that I watched CNN and then I thought I don't want to watch CNN, I didn't  
 150 watch CNN ever after that because I felt how they brought the news was so far off reality  
 151 or...

152  
 153 *Yeah.*  
 154

155 ...I was really annoyed by the. I'm not going to watch that news any more [laughter].

156  
 157 *That's very interesting.*  
 158

159 So, I, I, I, I, I think I, the news I kept on watching was NHK and, em, I think, at a certain  
 160 point, one of my colleagues sent me a link, maybe, that was on Sunday with NHK  
 161 foreigner news.

162  
 163 *Uhuh.*

164  
165 Yeah, yeah, but anyway, at that time, that was Friday night, I, I decide, okay, I was just  
166 behind the computer, watching news, watching everything I, I could, and, em, then I felt,  
167 “Oh, I don’t want to go out anymore,” eh, because, yeah, it’s not a good night with the  
168 tsunami and go sing karaoke...  
169  
170 *Yeah.*  
171  
172 I didn’t, and I didn’t want to go on the streets anymore by that, by that time. Then on  
173 Saturday, that was the day after, I think I was still following news, and some, I don’t  
174 remember exactly because I didn’t feel like going out because there were still many  
175 shocks and, yeah, there was a lot to, to see and a lot to mail. People I haven’t from for  
176 years...  
177  
178 *[Laughter]*  
179  
180 ...started mailing...  
181  
182 *Yeah.*  
183  
184 ...em, I think by the time it was Saturday night, people started, maybe, I’m not sure when  
185 Fukushima happened, that news came, I think, during that day, but, I think, from that  
186 evening, Saturday evening, people started, I, I got a mail from, em, Japanese friend, he,  
187 she said to me, em, I’m not sure if she first asked, “Ah, you are by yourself? Do you want  
188 to come and stay with us?” I said, “No, I prefer to stay at home.” I think in the next few  
189 day, days, in total, three Japanese friends, colleagues asked me, eh, if I want to stay with  
190 them, so that was, eh, really, I felt touched by that.  
191  
192 *Yeah.*  
193  
194 Yeah, yeah, yeah. Eh, but, yeah, that same friend, she also said, like, “Oh, I hear many  
195 foreign colleague are, are leaving.” I said, “What?” I didn’t, eh, think about that. But I  
196 think, maybe, from Saturday night also the mails from the Nether were, “You need to  
197 leave,” or bah, bah, bah...  
198  
199 *Yeah.*  
200  
201 ...those messages came. And I was thinking, “Eh, what shall I do?” Em, well, I had at that  
202 time a boyfriend. He was not in Japan, but his brother lives in Tokyo, too, so he was  
203 going to go to Osaka with a few people so they said, basically, also said, “Why don’t you  
204 go with us?” Then I was thinking, “Ah, but all the Japanese people are going to?” Or I  
205 don’t know, I, somehow I decided to stay, ehm, yeah, I, I cannot exactly remember what,  
206 when I thought what, but I guess it had something to do with all the Japanese people  
207 stayed. If I would be in the Netherlands and the dykes would [laughter]...  
208  
209 *[Laughter]*  
210  
211 ...then, when, what would I do. I thought, “Okay, if, if it’s safe enough I would stay.”  
212 And maybe I’m not sure if at that day I received, it, it was maybe in the first few days it  
213 was also like, “Oh, people are not here. They do not know how it is. So why are they  
214 telling that I should leave..”  
215  
216 *Uhum.*  
217  
218 ...or em, so that was over the weekend...



219  
 220 *Yeah.*  
 221  
 222 ...kind of confusing and, eh, yeah, knowing , “Ah maybe after this weekend I am the only  
 223 foreigner left here.”...  
 224  
 225 *Yeah.*  
 226  
 227 ...that feeling...  
 228  
 229 *Yeah.*  
 230  
 231 ...I, I had, em, em, so then I was still here Sunday night, yeah, but I had contact with, eh,  
 232 yeah, Japanese friends and colleagues and, yeah, with the Netherlands somehow...  
 233  
 234 *Yeah.*  
 235  
 236 ...and with my boyfriend. So that was, so then the thing with Monday morning, em, we  
 237 didn't hear anything from our company and I felt like, “Ah, should I go to work?” And  
 238 we have a whole disaster, eh, em, system that, em, if something happens they should call  
 239 you but, em, we didn't hear anything and I was thinking, “Is it safe to go out?” Maybe I  
 240 didn't go out because of Fukushima.  
 241  
 242 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 243  
 244 I didn't go out, didn't want to go out. Then I went to the office on Monday because I  
 245 looked outside and I saw some people...  
 246  
 247 *[Laughter]*  
 248  
 249 ...on the street and then I came in the office and basically my Japanese colleagues had the  
 250 same uncertainties...  
 251  
 252 *Yeah.*  
 253  
 254 ...compared with, eh, just like me. Some colleagues, so there were not many foreign  
 255 colleagues left but also few Japanese people they didn't come, but mostly, there were few  
 256 foreigners also just like me...  
 257  
 258 *Yeah.*  
 259  
 260 ...yeah, som, some of them were really scared for, for the building and, eh, because of the  
 261 experience, and some had left the country, ehm, yeah, my colleagues and I, we still there  
 262 but also, kind of, puzzled. Do we have to work? Why don't we hear anything that they  
 263 tell us? Eh, and, in the company ourselves, we, we realized, “Ah, with such a disaster,  
 264 yeah, you have to still keep working business as usual but actually our backup facilities  
 265 are not, eh, prepared for this, or the backup plan or the disaster plan...  
 266  
 267 *Yeah.*  
 268  
 269 ...so, in that week, many people were suddenly busy with disaster plan, setting up a  
 270 backup site in, eh, Kita Kyu, or the west Japan...  
 271  
 272 *Yeah.*  
 273

274 ...so a lot of work was needed for that. Ehm, then, ehm basically people were in the office  
 275 just not really, eh, working but, yeah, we were talking a lot with each other, talking about  
 276 news and what everyone did at home and how the families were and, em, yeah, we had,  
 277 we have some offices, branch offices in, in the north so...

278  
 279 *Oh.*  
 280

281 ...yeah, the, yeah. So making sure that they were okay. Ehm, so, yeah, so still I thought,  
 282 okay the Japanese are still here, I am also staying. I think by that time, maybe, I received  
 283 a mail from the Dutch Embassy...

284  
 285 *Ah.*  
 286

287 ...yeah, compared with other, eh, countries, the, the Dutch were not so panic, panicking  
 288 or, because we heard, "Oh, the French, they want everyone to leave the country." I  
 289 received a message more about, ehm, that, eh, it would be, eh, if you do not, if you did,  
 290 did, wouldn't have a, a urgent reason, or, to stay in Tokyo, it would be recommended to  
 291 leave Tokyo and maybe go to west Japan...

292  
 293 *Uhuh.*  
 294

295 ...something like that, they said...

296  
 297 *Yeah.*  
 298

299 ...and I thought, "Okay, I have urgent reason because my work is here so [laughter]..."

300  
 301 *[Laughter] Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah.*  
 302

303 ...Yeah, yeah, and maybe one month later they sent another mail and it was also similar,  
 304 reassuring and, eh, eh, both of the mails I forwarded to my family and my, my boyfriend  
 305 eh, to, em, yeah, make them feel reassured because they, they saw all the news which I  
 306 knew was exag, not exaggerated but, ehm, yeah, it was, the, outside of Tokyo, well, if  
 307 you don't know Japan and you have never been there, then you would not know where  
 308 Fukushima is...

309  
 310 *Of course.*  
 311

312 ...you would not know, so, I think at home I spent most of the time behind the computer,  
 313 discussing with friends and they were, the people were starting to have, I became  
 314 specialist or suddenly specialist in radiation and just, also, because I, I wanted to  
 315 understand...

316  
 317 *Uhum.*  
 318

319 ...but it didn't help that my friends and [laughter] relatives were sending me all these  
 320 alarming, eh, things and, yeah, it, that was maybe the most, well, I, I think by the time it  
 321 was Wednesday that the company said, "Oh, you can work from home now."...

322  
 323 *Yeah.*  
 324

325 ...I felt so relieved and I said to my colleague, because some colleagues had to stay  
 326 because of making the backup plan...

327  
 328 *Yeah.*

329  
330 ...so working from home was really for them working from, I said, "Is it okay if I travel to  
331 west Japan?" And they said, "No, no. It's okay." I brought my laptop...  
332  
333 *Yeah.*  
334  
335 ...I basically didn't do anything...  
336  
337 *Yeah.*  
338  
339 ...and, ehm, I think that is, yeah, things are coming, it's, it's two years ago...  
340  
341 *Right, yeah.*  
342  
343 ...things are coming back and maybe I will remember more but it was just, if, if I would  
344 listen and think again, then I would remember more details...  
345  
346 *Right.*  
347  
348 ...I would know so many details about that time. Ehm, after I, well, I, I went to west Japan  
349 so relieved that everything was normal...  
350  
351 *Yeah.*  
352  
353 ...and, and the weird, weird thing about Japan which I, about Tokyo which I didn't know,  
354 the, the hoarding which started. I was not prepared for that, but somehow I had enough  
355 toilet paper [laughter]...  
356  
357 *[Laughter]*  
358  
359 ...tho, those things, but, yeah, the stores completely empty...  
360  
361 *Yeah, yeah.*  
362  
363 ...everything dark. It was strange experience, but it, yeah, we had to live like that for, for  
364 a while...  
365  
366 *Uhm.*  
367  
368 ...before everything was normal, but looking back it was maybe normal quite soon  
369 again...  
370  
371 *Yeah, yeah.*  
372  
373 ...but still, maybe, the first year everything was, the light darker, so the feeling was so  
374 different and you didn't want to go sing karaoke. Just, your normal life was, eh, different.  
375  
376 *Yeah.*  
377  
378 I don't know what I did those days, but probably more with friends or more staying at  
379 home. Ah, what happened, for example, was that my parents were, eh, visiting or  
380 planning to visit me for the first time in Japan end of March, but they could postpone, so  
381 they came, eh, they could postpone maybe six weeks, so they came just when cherry  
382 blossom was here. The cherry blossom was different but it was for me special with my,  
383 my parents. And my parents, like, also, were, even their family and friends, brothers and

384 sis, they were saying to them, "Aw, don't go to Japan. Everything is dangerous and  
 385 scary." Still they came because I sent them the mail from the [laughter] Dutch  
 386 Embassy...  
 387  
 388 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 389  
 390 ...and also I was okay. And they came and they were so relieved to see that everything  
 391 was still standing here...  
 392  
 393 *Yeah.*  
 394  
 395 ...and, eh, eh, yeah. So that was good.  
 396  
 397 *It's, yeah.*  
 398  
 399 And I think by the end of the month, at that time, also, my boyfriend came back to do job  
 400 interviews so then I felt less alone, and I, I booked a holiday Golden Week, came back  
 401 maybe after that. I did volunteering one time...  
 402  
 403 *Uhuh.*  
 404  
 405 ...up in the north. Maybe the first half year was really different and I think we still kept on  
 406 talking about it for the rest of the year.  
 407  
 408 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was a big part of your life...*  
 409  
 410 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...*  
 411  
 412 *...your everyday life.*  
 413  
 414 ...yeah, yeah, yeah. It was, it was a shared experience, in a way...  
 415  
 416 *Yeah.*  
 417  
 418 ...even now, eh, now and then, yeah, you check, "Ah, were you there when the earthquake  
 419 happened?" "Yeah." "Where were you?" "There and there." Yeah, so everyone has his  
 420 or her story...  
 421  
 422 *Yeah.*  
 423  
 424 ...about it and it's something I will never forget.  
 425  
 426 *Ah.*  
 427  
 428 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 429  
 430 *It's extremely interesting to me...*  
 431  
 432 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 433  
 434 *...what, the, you know...*  
 435  
 436 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 437  
 438 *...the details of your story, they are very similar...*

439  
 440 Um, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 441  
 442 *...to some of my own experiences and similar to some...*  
 443  
 444 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 445  
 446 *...of the experiences of the other people I've spoken to...*  
 447  
 448 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 449  
 450 *...em, because I'm interested in the ideas of, particularly of things like language...*  
 451  
 452 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 453  
 454 *...translation and barriers, I'd just like to, kind of, check up on a few details...*  
 455  
 456 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 457  
 458 *...em, for example, do you remember, at the beginning, you said there was an*  
 459 *announcement in your company...*  
 460  
 461 Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 462  
 463 *...to say it was okay to leave the building...*  
 464  
 465 Yeah, yeah.  
 466  
 467 *...can you remember what language that announcement was in?*  
 468  
 469 Eh, I think it was in two languages or maybe they changed it afterwards...  
 470  
 471 *[Laughter]*  
 472  
 473 *...yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So, but, probably if it was in two languages, first it would be*  
 474 *Japanese and then English. But I, I think, I, it, I was maybe so much in a shock that I even*  
 475 *didn't hear it or paid attention to it, so it could have been only in Japanese, yeah.*  
 476  
 477 *I understand, I understand. Ehm, then also similarly you talked about how, you know, you*  
 478 *started watching CNN but then decided to stop...*  
 479  
 480 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 481  
 482 *...and when you stopped watching CNN, you probably watched NHK...*  
 483  
 484 NHK, yeah.  
 485  
 486 *...do, do you remember, were you watching that it Japanese or were you watching...*  
 487  
 488 In English...  
 489  
 490 *...in English?*  
 491

492 ...in English, yeah, yeah. Because you have the, eh, NHK World [Note: this is the  
 493 Japanese national broadcasters subscription, multilingual (predominantly English)  
 494 television channel]...  
 495  
 496 *Yeah.*  
 497  
 498 ...I watched that one.  
 499  
 500 *Right.*  
 501  
 502 Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I, I watched everything which was, was in English so, ehm, what  
 503 do you have? Japan Times [Note: one of the main English-language dailies] all, all the  
 504 news...  
 505  
 506 *Yeah.*  
 507  
 508 ...which [laughter] all news, the Japanese source which I could find. Yeah, yeah. And, of  
 509 course, I read Dutch news but I was, I was all the time annoyed by it [laughter]...  
 510  
 511 *Yeah.*  
 512  
 513 ...I would think, "You don't know." Even, yeah, I had some experiences and also about  
 514 foreigners, tha, that they did some interviews, people, eh, from your home country or  
 515 people from the Netherlands would interview people who were here or I would see a  
 516 Dutch journalist come here and make a, em, some reportage and then, "Oh no, this is just  
 517 sensation."  
 518  
 519 *Yeah.*  
 520  
 521 Yeah, so then, I felt like, "Oh, this is, eh, this is how they make news." I didn't want to  
 522 listen to all of that, yeah.  
 523  
 524 *So it's very interesting...*  
 525  
 526 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 527  
 528 *...that for you how the, the foreign sources...*  
 529  
 530 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 531  
 532 *...and the Japanese domestic sources...*  
 533  
 534 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 535  
 536 *...had a very different kind of value or...*  
 537  
 538 Yeah, yeah.  
 539  
 540 *...it seems like you trusted the Japanese sources more.*  
 541  
 542 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because, well, it was difficult, you know, in a way that, "Ah,  
 543 maybe they are not telling everything." At the same time, yeah, I still believe, oh it's a, a  
 544 democratic and open transparent country. I don't live in China or Russia so maybe they  
 545 also don't know or you, you can think even more, "Oh, they say this but it's not certain  
 546 that they will do things." And I had, kind of [laughter]...

547  
548 *[Laughter]*  
549  
550 ...well, I thought, "Okay, maybe now it's okay but there, it can still be possible that, eh,  
551 another shock comes and then that really disaster happens in Fukushima, eh, or even  
552 more...  
553  
554 *Yeah, yeah.*  
555  
556 ... then [laughter] maybe I made a bit a joke of it but I, I do the cycling, then I said,  
557 "Okay, I go with my bicycle to, eh, eh, Hamamatsucho and take the boat to, eh  
558 [laughter]...  
559  
560 *Ah, it's not a bad plan, not a bad plan, yeah, not a bad plan.*  
561  
562 ...yeah, because I thought, "Okay, the planes are full...  
563  
564 *Right.*  
565  
566 ...and maybe they are not there." Yeah, but, yeah, it was maybe my new, more, more also  
567 talking with my colleagues. I went to the office every day, so I got, in that sense, the  
568 same, and they would tell me things. For example, I didn't have the, eh, the flat shoes in  
569 the office, but, eh, since then I, I have [laughter]  
570  
571 *[Laughter]*  
572  
573 ...because I didn't have to walk but still had pain in my, eh, well, muscle pain after taking  
574 stairs...  
575  
576 *Of course, with twen, twenty-, twenty-something floors.*  
577  
578 ...with high heels. And, em, the emergency kit. So in the office, we didn't, well now, only  
579 this year, we got a new emergency kit. But officially we are, are supposed to have one,  
580 but, eh, yeah, at that point it was a kind of mess: "Where are these things?" But now they  
581 are really tied to our, eh, chair and everyone has one but it's only since two months.  
582  
583 *Yeah, I think a lot of the procedures have, em, kind of been improved and...*  
584  
585 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
586  
587 *...a lot of the, you mentioned about the disaster plans or backup plans...*  
588  
589 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
590  
591 *I think a lot of companies and organisations have done their best to implement more*  
592 *procedures.*  
593  
594 So at that time, I didn't have anything, by my Japanese colleagues, they are so, eh, yeah,  
595 colleagues, friends [laughter]...  
596  
597 *Yeah.*  
598  
599 ...they are so, they are so, like, prepared, in a way. They are also scared but they stay calm  
600 and they don't, I could have, no, I have so much respect for how they deal with it. Not,  
601 the prices stayed the same, you know?

602  
603 *Yeah.*  
604  
605 There were not people who were trying to sell things, eh, for, eh, two-hundred times the,  
606 the price. The, they, they checked up with me if I was okay and if I needed help, even  
607 although for them it's difficult but also ...  
608  
609 *Sure*  
610  
611 ...they, they were checking with me. And they were telling me things which would be  
612 important for me to know because [laughter] like, for example, the emergency kit, what  
613 to have in there and that I would need to have, well, if it was raining, better to really  
614 cover myself because Fukushima may be...  
615  
616 *Yeah, yeah.*  
617  
618 ...with all these uncertainties, the things they heard in the news, they would tell me so I  
619 had this, also, this emergency bag with all the things I needed, em, in the office  
620 [laughter].  
621  
622 *Yeah.*  
623  
624 Yeah, now I have it at home and I didn't look at it...  
625  
626 *[Laughter]*  
627  
628 ...anymore for years. Maybe I should.  
629  
630 *Yeah, keep it, eh, up to date.*  
631  
632 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
633  
634 *That point about, you know, how your colleagues and your friends...*  
635  
636 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
637  
638 *...can become, kind of, like a volunteer translator or a volunteer helper for, eh, foreign*  
639 *people...*  
640  
641 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
642  
643 *...to me, that's a really interesting aspect of translation, I guess. As you said...*  
644  
645 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
646  
647 *... they were getting information in Japanese and they were passing it on to you, to you in*  
648 *English, so that's some sort of, I guess...*  
649  
650 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
651  
652 *...there was information you needed that you couldn't access by yourself, so it was your*  
653 *friends or...*  
654  
655 Colleagues.  
656



657 ...your colleagues who help, who help, who helped you...  
658  
659 Yeah.  
660  
661 ...em, overall, in terms of the information that you needed...  
662  
663 Yeah, yeah.  
664  
665 ...what information did you feel was most, kind of, lacking?  
666  
667 Eh, like, well, in, in general there was uncertainty about Fukushima. I think what, what  
668 we felt was lacking is the, how, maybe, how slow the reactions were to come with  
669 information, like, we, we experience in our own company, but it was not only in our  
670 company because they wait for information from the government or from Tepco [Note:  
671 the electric power company that runs the Fukushima plant]...  
672  
673 Yeah...  
674  
675 ...yeah, yeah, so maybe they...  
676  
677 ...it was a domino effect.  
678  
679 ...everyone learned [laughter] fr, from this, but it, that was what you, feel that you, you,  
680 you cannot really decide what is best for you...  
681  
682 Yeah.  
683  
684 ...so, in a way, you choose what you want to listen to, and now I remember because I was  
685 thinking, "Ah, if it is really bad, eh, what, what happened in Fukushima," - that's why I  
686 maybe decided to stay, I remember so now - "that I don't have any children." So I could  
687 imagine if you had children then you want to bring them to a safe place...  
688  
689 Yeah.  
690  
691 ...drink bottled water and only, those things. Em, so I thought, oh and looking at my age  
692 because I had read something if you are above forty, then, eh, it takes some time for  
693 radiation if it's really bad to have effect on you. And I thought, "Okay, by that time, I  
694 would be 80 or something, yeah, yeah, I think it was that I read something that if you are  
695 a little child then, yeah, it's more severe than if you are older. And if you are older and  
696 you get exposed then it will also take some time. So I thought, "Okay, I, I'll take that  
697 chance."  
698  
699 Yeah, yeah.  
700  
701 Yeah, yeah. And that's how I decided, I think. But it's, I don't know, I got so much  
702 information and you pick something which suits you and I did, and I didn't get, I didn't  
703 feel panic because my, I saw the Japanese people being calm...  
704  
705 Yeah.  
706  
707 ... I think that's what.  
708  
709 That's, that's a really interesting point. I know, also, that you mentioned that your  
710 embassy, the Dutch Embassy...  
711

712 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
713  
714 *...sent you maybe a couple of emails. Do you remember, did you receive any, eh, contact*  
715 *from, like, the city office or the ward office or some, some Japanese kind of government*  
716 *organization? Did, did they contact you?*  
717  
718 Not sure, because, that I would not be able to read or, I know in our home, eh, in the  
719 apartment building where I live, I think after the earthquake they also started having more  
720 procedures and they have the meetings with, eh, eh, with, eh, community, and, and, with,  
721 eh, people who live in the apartment building, so I got many explanations later that I  
722 should fill my bath, eh, keep my bath water in case of earthquake then I could use it to,  
723 for the toilet...  
724  
725 *Ah, uhuh, uhuh.*  
726  
727 *...all this, they have many buildings, eh, things in my building but before that I didn't*  
728 *know. So basically, when I stayed in my apartment, when there was, eh, a big shock, eh,*  
729 *aftershock...*  
730  
731 *Yeah.*  
732  
733 *...I think a few times I checked outside what my neighbours were doing, or I saw them*  
734 *also, but, ehm, I didn't really have contact with my, I don't remember exactly. I, I, I just*  
735 *remember that I stayed inside.*  
736  
737 *Yeah, yeah.*  
738  
739 Yeah, maybe also, in my building, it became quiet, I, I, I get the feeling that maybe people  
740 really, these were also Japanese, who didn't really need to be here, they left, met families,  
741 children to family...  
742  
743 *Yeah.*  
744  
745 *...in the rest of Japan, so it was just quiet, yeah, yeah. So maybe, yeah, what did I miss?*  
746 *Hmm, hmm. I, I think, I thought - okay I don't remember [laughter] what I said anymore.*  
747  
748 *No, you, you got, you, you got information from various sources...*  
749  
750 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
751  
752 *...and then, kind of, made up your own mind about what was important and what wasn't*  
753 *important. Eh, just to check, what's the profile of people in your building, is it mostly?*  
754  
755 *Ah, Japanese.*  
756  
757 *Japanese.*  
758  
759 Mostly Japanese. Now and then, I see, eh, a foreign person but I don't remember if that  
760 was at that time, if there were other foreigners but mainly Japanese, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
761  
762 *Yeah. It's very interesting that you talked about how you would, you know, during the*  
763 *aftershock you would look and see what your, your neighbours were doing and, kind of,*  
764 *be checking on...*  
765  
766 Yeah, yeah, yeah.

767  
 768 *...your neighbours, because one of the...*  
 769  
 770 Yeah.  
 771  
 772 *...recommendations that the Japanese government is making is that foreigners need to be*  
 773 *more part of their local...*  
 774  
 775 Ah, okay.  
 776  
 777 *...community...*  
 778  
 779 Yeah yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 780  
 781 *...ehm, what do you feel about that?*  
 782  
 783 Yeah, that's, I can see that's, well, eh, I think the, the chairman of the, the, the group who  
 784 takes care of all the things in the, eh, how would say, call it? Apartment community?  
 785  
 786 *Yeah, uhuh.*  
 787  
 788 He, eh, he can speak English, so I, I, I have in my building, a few people who are, who  
 789 lived, maybe abroad, and some retired but, they, they, ehm, I had one time, they, they  
 790 grabbed me and said, "Oh I need to explain to you all the emergency things." One thing  
 791 what happened, eh, I realize now, on our floor we have the, the fire emergency, or the  
 792 emergency exit on the balcony and on every floor there are three balconies where there  
 793 are, ehm, eh, ladders down, eh, you can roll them out for this. And I'm one of them...  
 794  
 795 Ah.  
 796  
 797 ...so I need to keep my door open in case there's an emergency. Everyone basically  
 798 understood. But it's good to learn it because I didn't.  
 799  
 800 *Absolutely, yeah.*  
 801  
 802 Eh, also, I learned that the, the, eh, how would you say? Dividers between the balconies,  
 803 you can kick them in. So if I would go, because I was, "Oh, if I'm in the office, what  
 804 then?" And, of course, they had thought about, yeah, then they would kick from the  
 805 neighbour's door...  
 806  
 807 *Yeah.*  
 808  
 809 ...and then they could come at my balcony...  
 810  
 811 *Yeah.*  
 812  
 813 ...so those things, and I have now a, kind of, magnet.  
 814  
 815 *Yeah.*  
 816  
 817 ...so if I am safe, if somethings happens and I am safe, I am supposed to open my door  
 818 and put it outside so that they can see.  
 819  
 820 *Oh, there's a lot of good community procedures...*  
 821

822 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, so.  
 823  
 824 ...in your, your apartment building. That's great to hear. Ehm, I wonder, just, if - this is  
 825 not really that.  
 826  
 827 Because I didn't know before. Maybe they were there already, because I always throw it  
 828 away because it's in Japanese.  
 829  
 830 That's what I was just about to ask you because, eh, it's not really too important, but I  
 831 know from my apartment building...  
 832  
 833 Uhm, yeah, yeah.  
 834  
 835 ...that in, eh, you talked about the dividers in the balcony...  
 836  
 837 Yeah, yeah.  
 838  
 839 ...I remember in my apartment building there was a sign in Japanese...  
 840  
 841 Oh, probably it is, yeah, yeah, yeah...  
 842  
 843 ...and it said, you could, eh, in Japanese it said you can kick this, this through...  
 844  
 845 ...yeah, yeah, I think it is....  
 846  
 847 I wonder, maybe?  
 848  
 849 ...there is something written there.  
 850  
 851 Yeah.  
 852  
 853 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 854  
 855 So it's interesting how those small points can just, you know, like you said, if you receive  
 856 something Japanese, maybe you throw it away.  
 857  
 858 I would throw it away, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 859  
 860 Yeah. You, you, many people have said, eh, many people have said that. Em, this is a little  
 861 bit linked to another recommendation - ah, sorry, no I was [Note: I pointed my finger in a  
 862 way that looked like I was gesturing to a sheet of paper on the table between us, but I was  
 863 simply moving my hand] - the idea of Japanese language being used, ehm, so, the, the  
 864 Japanese government are trying to use more Easy Japanese...  
 865  
 866 Ah, yes.  
 867  
 868 ...have you heard about Easy Japanese?  
 869  
 870 No.  
 871  
 872 No. So what they are trying to do is they are trying to come up with a more simple  
 873 version...  
 874  
 875 Uhm.  
 876

877 ...of standard Japanese...  
 878  
 879 Ah.  
 880  
 881 ...you know, for example, if there was a Chinese character, they would put the hiragana  
 882 [Note: a less complex writing system in Japanese than that of Chinese characters in  
 883 which all Japanese words can be expressed] on top...  
 884  
 885 Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...  
 886  
 887 ...so that...  
 888  
 889 ...that, that.  
 890  
 891 ...would help you read it. But my fear about that is that if some foreigners see Japanese...  
 892  
 893 Yeah, yeah, throw it away.  
 894  
 895 ...even if, they still, they still throw it away.  
 896  
 897 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So, because, eh, for example, the thing which I, I received many,  
 898 eh, pamphlets in my, eh, building, ehm, from, eh, the com, the apartment community,  
 899 maybe every month which they have a meeting, but, ehm, well, I can already recognize  
 900 it's from them because I can read the apartment building name in *katakana* [Note: one of  
 901 the writing systems of the Japanese language] ehm, I think one time the, the receptionist  
 902 who could speak, who can speak English, she walked me through it, because it was all the  
 903 emergency procedures, so I could recognize that or I can check with them, but now lately  
 904 she, eh, resigned [laughter]...  
 905  
 906 [Laughter]  
 907  
 908 ...so there is no English speaker anymore there...  
 909  
 910 Ahhhh.  
 911  
 912 ...so that's, eh, yeah, that's, yeah. I think for now I'm okay because I know the  
 913 procedures, yeah, yeah.  
 914  
 915 Yeah, I think, and it sounds like the procedures that they have in place are very, kind of,  
 916 sensible procedures...  
 917  
 918 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 919  
 920 ...they're not asking you to do too many difficult things...  
 921  
 922 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 923  
 924 ...but simple points like a magnet on your door or something is a very is a good.  
 925  
 926 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And if there is a fire, then these, they would explain these doors  
 927 close, ehm, where, which map do I have? I have to, I need to have the, let me check.  
 928 [Note: the participant begins to check for a map on her phone]  
 929  
 930 Some sort of special, special map or something?  
 931

932 Yeah, because maybe one hour, after one hour everything gets all so dark, and those  
 933 things.  
 934  
 935 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 936  
 937 And how I can open the windows, I even had to practice and they pointed me where all  
 938 the, eh, fire extinguishers are.  
 939  
 940 *Well, you know, I mean, of course it was terrible that it was such a disaster...*  
 941  
 942 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 943  
 944 *...but maybe from this some good things have, have developed in that, you know, people*  
 945 *are being more careful or planning a little bit more, more in advance.*  
 946  
 947 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 948  
 949 *Ehm, the, just another couple of points. Did you get any early warning about the*  
 950 *earthquake on your mobile phone?*  
 951  
 952 I don't remember any more because afterwards I, I downloaded the programs so I didn't  
 953 have it at that time. But also it, it drives you crazy everything goes all the time...  
 954  
 955 *Oh yes.*  
 956  
 957 ...so I think I didn't want to use it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Afterwards, I think also that I only  
 958 realized afterwards that I actually was in a shock. At that time, I, I, I just didn't think or I  
 959 just followed but then later I thought, "Oh, this was a shocking experience." Yeah, and  
 960 then, eh, look, more then looking back and seeing, you have those little movies on  
 961 Youtube that it's every day, or when there is a earthquake, you see, you hear, kind of,  
 962 fireworks...  
 963  
 964 *Yeah, yeah, yeah...*  
 965  
 966 ...have you seen that one? [Note: the participant is referring to the many animations on  
 967 the Internet that simulate the number and size of earthquakes that occurred in the disaster  
 968 e.g. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpOI8vkJ-G4>]  
 969  
 970 ...yes, yes, yes, yes.  
 971  
 972 Yeah, yeah. And then I realized it was really...  
 973  
 974 *Huge...*  
 975  
 976 ...unbelievable.  
 977  
 978 *...right? The number of, sort of, shocks...*  
 979  
 980 Shocks.  
 981  
 982 *...that followed...*  
 983  
 984 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 985

986 ...hundreds and hundreds. And, I, I agree with what you said about the, the alarm on the,  
 987 the early warning system...  
 988  
 989 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 990  
 991 ...it was very traumatic...  
 992  
 993 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 994  
 995 ...to be honest, in some ways, I think I'm more, I'm more afraid of the alarm than of the  
 996 actual earthquake now...  
 997  
 998 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 999  
 1000 ...because every time, I just remember being woken up...  
 1001  
 1002 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1003  
 1004 ...or out of, you know, unable to relax because, because the alarm was going off.  
 1005  
 1006 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think also we were talking a lot like if there was a bigger  
 1007 aftershock, then we were talking with each other, "Ah, did you feel it?" You know, we  
 1008 always checking did [laughter] like, every time, yeah, in the office, like, "Did you feel the  
 1009 one yesterday? Were, were you okay?" Or the, if there was a bigger one, then I would get  
 1010 messages from my friends, colleagues, saying, "Are you okay?"  
 1011  
 1012 Yeah, yeah. Because it did continue for several months afterward.  
 1013  
 1014 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And if there was really a big one, it was in the Dutch news, then I  
 1015 would get mails from them, the Dutch.  
 1016  
 1017 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. It seems to me that email was an extremely convenient...  
 1018  
 1019 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1020  
 1021 ...kind of communication tool for you. Did you use any other sort of communication tools  
 1022 with eh?  
 1023  
 1024 No I think, yeah, with my family and boyfriend, Skype. Did I use the phone? Some  
 1025 people started calling me. It was, I think because of the time difference with Netherlands  
 1026 and also to, at, I think at certain points, I didn't want to reply or, or it, eh, well, no, I was  
 1027 also, no, I think I replied because I thought, "Oh, people care for me." So it's nice and if  
 1028 they ask me, "Are you okay?" then I replied but some, sometimes it was just the tone of a  
 1029 mail which [laughter]...  
 1030  
 1031 [Laughter]  
 1032  
 1033 ..."How do you know? You cannot know!"...  
 1034  
 1035 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1036  
 1037 ...that was mostly the Fukushima thing.  
 1038  
 1039 Right? Yeah, if people aren't here...  
 1040

1041 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...  
 1042  
 1043 ...it's, it's, it's very difficult...  
 1044  
 1045 ...yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1046  
 1047 ... "Why are you telling me what to do when you are not, you're not even here?" yeah.  
 1048  
 1049 Then I just wouldn't reply, yeah.  
 1050  
 1051 Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I know that you said, em, in the, sort of, early days that you spent a  
 1052 lot of time just at the, at the computer...  
 1053  
 1054 Yeah, yeah, yeah. Checking the news, I think and.  
 1055  
 1056 ...mainly was it news websites you were checking or did you check any other website?  
 1057  
 1058 Ah, I think also because people were sending me mails with links, eh, mainly my friends  
 1059 in the Netherlands. So some of them, I checked. That would be on, eh, radiation...  
 1060  
 1061 Right.  
 1062  
 1063 ...mostly. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't remember exactly any more.  
 1064  
 1065 Yeah, I know it's a very difficult question to answer because two years have passed...  
 1066  
 1067 Yeah, yeah.  
 1068  
 1069 ...the reason I ask is that I know that, em, the Japanese government translated a lot of  
 1070 their ministry websites...  
 1071  
 1072 Ah.  
 1073  
 1074 ...or, you know, they created special information websites.  
 1075  
 1076 Um. I didn't know.  
 1077  
 1078 Most of the people I've spoken to didn't know they existed...  
 1079  
 1080 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1081  
 1082 ...so it seems like there was some effort to translate...  
 1083  
 1084 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1085  
 1086 ...but there was no communication that this information is here...  
 1087  
 1088 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1089  
 1090 ...for you, so that seems to be a little bit of a problem that they did work but...  
 1091  
 1092 Ah, unknown...  
 1093  
 1094 ...people didn't know about it.  
 1095



1096 ...but how would they find the foreigners to? Yeah, maybe they have these bulletin boards  
 1097 or.  
 1098  
 1099 *Well, also, I know that, em, all foreign residents, we have to register, right...*  
 1100  
 1101 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1102  
 1103 *...as living here but there are...*  
 1104  
 1105 Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1106  
 1107 *...difficult legal issues about accessing people's, sort of, private information. So Japan, as*  
 1108 *you know, can be, it can be difficult to access that so maybe that was a reason why they*  
 1109 *didn't share it. Em, I know there was a lot of talk in the weeks and months after...*  
 1110  
 1111 Uhuh.  
 1112  
 1113 *...about social media. Wa, was social media useful for you?*  
 1114  
 1115 I, yeah, I always put a lot, what did I put on Facebook at that time? What did I read? I  
 1116 don't, specifically, I think, probably I didn't feel like using it for while [laughter]. Ehm,  
 1117 did I make pictures of empty supermarkets?  
 1118  
 1119 *Yeah.*  
 1120  
 1121 I think, as opposed to usual [laughter] I didn't use Facebook a lot or, I think I, I went to  
 1122 west Japan, maybe I made some pictures there. Because I went to Miyajima [laughter]...  
 1123  
 1124 *Ah, kind of, sightseeing.*  
 1125  
 1126 *...yeah, sightseeing pictures. That's what I remember I made at that time, but I was, yeah,*  
 1127 *it was more mail maybe only I think now I use Facebook also a lot for chatting...*  
 1128  
 1129 *Uhum.*  
 1130  
 1131 ...but at that time maybe What's App or...  
 1132  
 1133 *Yeah.*  
 1134  
 1135 ...those things or with my friends from Japan...  
 1136  
 1137 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1138  
 1139 ...who left Japan and they were checking...  
 1140  
 1141 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1142  
 1143 ...not so much.  
 1144  
 1145 *The reason I ask about it is just because, as I said, there was a lot of talk about social*  
 1146 *media but there's not so much evidence of...*  
 1147  
 1148 Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1149

1150 *...that social media was used. So I'm interested in trying to get, even though my project is*  
 1151 *very small...*  
 1152  
 1153 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1154  
 1155 *...I'm trying to get some evidence. Did people really use it or did they not? And to be*  
 1156 *honest, so far...*  
 1157  
 1158 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1159  
 1160 *...I think not so much, not so much. But it, that may change...*  
 1161  
 1162 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1163  
 1164 *...maybe I'll talk to more people and they'll have different experiences.*  
 1165  
 1166 I will check, I can check my history. [Note: the participant looks down at her mobile  
 1167 phone]  
 1168  
 1169 *Yeah. The other issue, I think I probably already know the answer but, for you was power*  
 1170 *or electricity or c, connectivity, was that a problem for you?*  
 1171  
 1172 Eh, no.  
 1173  
 1174 No.  
 1175  
 1176 No, no. It was working all the time and then we got the instructions to save energy during  
 1177 the summer so there were no issues for electricity, water. No, everything, all the  
 1178 utilities...  
 1179  
 1180 *Yeah, to be honest, I, I, but, because I knew where you lived, I, kind of, knew...*  
 1181  
 1182 Yeah, Tokyo, it's okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1183  
 1184 *...that it, it was, you probably didn't have. I'm speaking to people, you know, who were in*  
 1185 *different parts of Japan...*  
 1186  
 1187 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1188  
 1189 *...some of them had, had big, big problems, eh, with, with power and so on. Ehm, I know*  
 1190 *that in, say for example in the, the northern parts...*  
 1191  
 1192 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1193  
 1194 *...that for them, mobile phones or TV wasn't so useful because they, they had no power*  
 1195 *and didn't, couldn't connect to, to the Internet easily, so for them, they used radio, for*  
 1196 *example...*  
 1197  
 1198 Ah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1199  
 1200 *...Japanese people used a lot of radio communication as a way of getting information but,*  
 1201 *em, I think in Tokyo, did you use radio?*  
 1202  
 1203 No.  
 1204

1205 *No, no. But one thing I would suggest is it might be a good idea to have a radio...*  
 1206  
 1207 Ah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1208  
 1209 *...just because if there is a big earthquake centred more near here, em...*  
 1210  
 1211 Yeah, yeah, yeah. Needs a radio, yeah, yeah.  
 1212  
 1213 *...it's one of the, sort of, early findings, em, of this project, is that the best plan is to have*  
 1214 *lots of channels...*  
 1215  
 1216 Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1217  
 1218 *...so, if you only use social media, it's not a good idea...*  
 1219  
 1220 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1221  
 1222 *...if you only use television, it's not a good idea. If you have a lot of channels available...*  
 1223  
 1224 Yeah, yeah, yeah, you can.  
 1225  
 1226 *...there's a chance that one of them will work. Yeah, yeah.*  
 1227  
 1228 It's good, yeah, yeah, the radio.  
 1229  
 1230 *And, you know, going back to your story, face-to-face communication was also extremely*  
 1231 *important...*  
 1232  
 1233 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1234  
 1235 *...eh, talking to your colleagues...*  
 1236  
 1237 Talk to the neighbours, maybe.  
 1238  
 1239 *...talking to your friends, the neighbours. These, these things are also vital, like giving*  
 1240 *you advice about do this, don't do this...*  
 1241  
 1242 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1243  
 1244 *...yeah, so it's something that's worth, em, worth, worth remembering.*  
 1245  
 1246 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1247  
 1248 *Em, just, kind of, as a final question, em, overall did you feel that language was a barrier*  
 1249 *for you in, in the disaster in your experience?*  
 1250  
 1251 Eh, ehm, well, I, I think because I was already here for long time and I, working, had  
 1252 friends, it was okay, but if I would, it would have been in my first year, with never  
 1253 experience, eh, little earthquakes, em, then it would have been different story...  
 1254  
 1255 *Yeah, yeah, em.*  
 1256  
 1257 *...because I know also people who left who were just two months in Japan and then this*  
 1258 *happens. They, they left.*  
 1259

1260 *I can completely understand.*  
1261  
1262 Me too, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1263  
1264 *You had some support networks...*  
1265  
1266 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...  
1267  
1268 *...already, already in place.*  
1269  
1270 *...I think that made big difference.*  
1271  
1272 *Yeah, and of course, you know, in terms of my project, I'm also interested in what*  
1273 *happens to business travellers or tourists. That's very difficult. They have no Japanese...*  
1274  
1275 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1276  
1277 *...they have no friends. How can we help them?*  
1278  
1279 Yeah, I, I don't know what happened because I didn't hear about any tourists, well, I  
1280 didn't know any tourists or friends visiting at that time in Japan. The, the, the most  
1281 intriguing story I heard was, it was a Japanese, but living in Niigata and on the day of the  
1282 earthquake, she's, she's a schoolteacher so they had a trip to Tokyo with a...  
1283  
1284 *Oh dear.*  
1285  
1286 *...yeah, and they couldn't go back, eh, and then you have to calm all the children and you*  
1287 *have the parents who keep...*  
1288  
1289 *Of course.*  
1290  
1291 *...yeah, yeah, that was, well, yeah, that's a Japanese story that.*  
1292  
1293 *Yeah, but, I'm actually hoping to speak to somebody who is also a teacher but not*  
1294 *Japanese but a foreigner, he had a school tour in Fukushima...*  
1295  
1296 Ah, on that day?  
1297  
1298 *...yeah, I'm hoping to speak to him but I don't know if it will be possible...*  
1299  
1300 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1301  
1302 *...but that could be very similar type of, eh, experience. [Note: as it turns out, this*  
1303 *potential participant did not agree to an interview in the end]*  
1304  
1305 Oh.  
1306  
1307 *Yeah, I'm very interested also in what you said about how at the time maybe you were in*  
1308 *shock...*  
1309  
1310 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1311  
1312 *...but you didn't realize it until after. I think the same is true for me. It was only after a*  
1313 *few months that I looked back and thought...*  
1314

1315 Whoa. The, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1316  
 1317 ... *"That really affected me badly."* [laughter]  
 1318  
 1319 Yeah, because talking with colleagues then we realized, "Ah, we keep on talking about  
 1320 it." Yeah, we said, like, "I'm a, this is really shock." [laughter] yeah, yeah. Because also,  
 1321 maybe in the company, there were, there were some pamphlets about how you can  
 1322 recognize that you are in a shock maybe that made us realize, you know, things like, oh,  
 1323 don't sleep very well. I, I don't even, don't remember the points, but maybe we, from the  
 1324 ten, we could say six or seven...  
 1325  
 1326 Yeah.  
 1327  
 1328 ...then I thought, "Oh!"  
 1329  
 1330 Yeah, yeah.  
 1331  
 1332 Keep on talking about it [laughter] yeah. Probably, it was, yeah, yeah...  
 1333  
 1334 *Absolutely, absolutely. We did similar tests in my company and I was very surprised at*  
 1335 *my own answers...*  
 1336  
 1337 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1338  
 1339 ...yeah. And that actually links to the, this final point [Note: I hand the participant the  
 1340 stress Likert Scale to mark] here. Ehm, I just want to sure that by talking today...  
 1341  
 1342 Uhuh.  
 1343  
 1344 ...I haven't given you more...  
 1345  
 1346 Ah.  
 1347  
 1348 ...[laughter] stress.  
 1349  
 1350 No, no, no, no [laughter].  
 1351  
 1352 So I'm just asking everybody...  
 1353  
 1354 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1355  
 1356 ...after the interview to, to rank how you feel now.  
 1357  
 1358 Okay.  
 1359  
 1360 After talking about it today...  
 1361  
 1362 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1363  
 1364 ...what number would you choose?  
 1365  
 1366 Well, it's already a long time ago and the experience was shocking but also, yeah, the  
 1367 feeling of community was good, so it's, in a way, nice to talk about it [laughter] although,  
 1368 eh, yeah, the, the earthquake itself and all the, well, the tsunami and the Fukushima, yeah,  
 1369 that was. So then, the anxiety level is low isn't it?

1370  
 1371 *Yeah, yeah, if you're not feeling.*  
 1372  
 1373 *Yeah, it's, it's, yeah, it's maybe, okay, now I talk about, uh, some... [Note: the participant*  
 1374 *seems to be thinking aloud as she hovers the pen over where to mark on the scale]*  
 1375  
 1376 *Yeah.*  
 1377  
 1378 *...maybe it's the one [Note: she marks 1/10 on the stress scale]*  
 1379  
 1380 *Okay.*  
 1381  
 1382 *Yeah.*  
 1383  
 1384 *Certainly one of the key feelings I have from listening to your story is the idea of*  
 1385 *community...*  
 1386  
 1387 *Um, yeah, yeah, yeah. I think so.*  
 1388  
 1389 *...em, like, of course, there's many negative things to talk about but from your story it*  
 1390 *seems that, you know, you had community with your colleagues...*  
 1391  
 1392 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1393  
 1394 *...you had community with, you know, the foreign and the Japanese colleagues...*  
 1395  
 1396 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1397  
 1398 *you had community building with your neighbours, a sense of community with Japan.*  
 1399  
 1400 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, doing the volunteering and those, yeah, yeah..*  
 1401  
 1402 *In a way, it helped to build...*  
 1403  
 1404 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, in a way.*  
 1405  
 1406 *...maybe, that feeling for you, yeah. And I think, you know, I, I, I try to be a, sort of,*  
 1407 *optimistic person...*  
 1408  
 1409 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1410  
 1411 *...and I'm trying to look for what are the positive points to take from this and, if, if, if*  
 1412 *something like making people who live in Japan for a long time feel more part of the*  
 1413 *community, then I think that's, that's a good thing, I hope, anyway. Well, I just want to*  
 1414 *say thank you so much...*  
 1415  
 1416 *Okay, you're welcome [laughter] yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1417  
 1418 *...it was fascinating, it was really interesting listening to your story and, em, I, I, it's been*  
 1419 *a pleasure to meet you.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/20 Interview with Participant 9*

5 *Researcher: Lovely, so that's pretty much all of paperwork. Then, just, this one is for*  
6 *after, eh, after we've had a talk.*

7  
8 Participant: Okay.

9  
10 *So then, just as a general kind of question, can you tell me what happened to you on the*  
11 *2011 disaster?*

12  
13 On March 11th, I was at home in my apartment preparing dinner for my family.  
14 {redacted} So I was preparing dinner and after the earthquake, I just went straight to pick  
15 up my son. Actually, I went to the gas station first, but it was shut down. It wasn't  
16 working. The gas pumps weren't working, so I went to the *hoikuen*, preschool, picked up  
17 my son. They were nicely lined up under blue tarps. Some parents got there before me,  
18 two mothers, "Ahhh, waaa!" [Note: here the participant was mimicking the panicked  
19 cries of the two mothers] So got my son, then, I asked the teacher, "What should I do? Is  
20 it safer if he stays here or go back to my apartment?" [laughter] and she couldn't give me  
21 a straight answer. It was just basically my choice. So I had to come back to the apartment  
22 but I couldn't, we couldn't go into the apartment because, aw, everything fell down, it  
23 was all messy, everything was scattered all over the place. So we stayed outside in my  
24 car. Between that time, I had contacted my wife for maybe, like, a couple of seconds and  
25 it cut off, on the cell phone. And I emailed my mother-in-law who lives in Japan who is  
26 Japanese. And my wife couldn't speak, she was just, like, yelling, "Rahrahra." So I was, I  
27 basically just told her, I, kind of, knew it was going to cut off any second so I told her I  
28 got, I'm going to get {son's name} in, my son. Don't worry. Stay in {a city in Ibaraki}."  
29 She has to cross over a bridge to get over to {our town of residence} and that's the last  
30 time I talked her and my mother-in-law. I think the earthquake was around 3, so we spent  
31 the whole night and day together in my car. I went, I managed to go in by myself to the, I  
32 mean, to my apartment, I told the neighbours to watch my son for, like, a couple of  
33 minutes and grabbed some food in the icebox which I was preparing. In the earthquake, I  
34 put the food back into the icebox and still, even though we had no electricity, it was still  
35 cold, it was March and it was cold, so we got to eat food in my car. Dinner. Eh, my wife  
36 ended up walking home at 11. We were sleeping in the car and there was a knock on the  
37 window. She evidently walked home from {the city in Ibaraki she had been in}. It took  
38 her, like, over 3 hours, in her high heels...

39  
40 *Wow.*

41  
42 ...And, yeah, we slept in our car and from then, yeah, getting, I had to wait in line three  
43 hours for gas, eh, waiting everyday for water in line, to get food, just basically surviving,  
44 which I felt was a simple lifestyle.

45  
46 *Yeah, yeah.*

47  
48 My day was just getting water, getting food, making sure, I mean, I had, when I got gas I  
49 was safe, I felt like, in my car...

50  
51 *Yeah.*

52  
53 ...and, yeah, just basically what I did every day...

54  
55 *Yeah.*  
56  
57 ...for a couple of weeks.  
58  
59 *Ehm, for, for, for instance, you said that the first thing you wanted to do was to get gas,*  
60 *even before you went to get your son.*  
61  
62 *Yeah.*  
63  
64 *How did?*  
65  
66 Because my car was, was running on fumes [laughter]. It was bad luck. So the first thing I  
67 thought about was gas...  
68  
69 *Yeah.*  
70  
71 ...I had water and can, because I'm from Hawaii, I had water and canned goods, but I just  
72 didn't have gas.  
73  
74 *Yeah. So obviously coming from Hawaii...*  
75  
76 *Yeah.*  
77  
78 ...you had experience of what to...  
79  
80 *Yeah.*  
81  
82 ...to prepare and so on.  
83  
84 I surf, em, so, yeah, I'm always prepared.  
85  
86 *I see, I see. That must have been, that must have been a help.*  
87  
88 *Yeah.*  
89  
90 *Ehm, what I'm also interested in is you said your day was going getting water and so on.*  
91 *How did you know where to go?*  
92  
93 Water, there was, word-of-mouth, yeah? I mean, in our community there was, like, three  
94 places where they had water pumps or wells or other. So just, basically, word-of-mouth  
95 and, eh, gas? Word-of-mouth [laughter]. Some gas stations were closed down. I mean,  
96 one day I went and then it just so happened I saw the long line, it was like, "Okay I have  
97 to wait three hours." So the next day I knew. I only could get half a, half a tank's worth of  
98 gas that one day...  
99  
100 *Wow.*  
101  
102 ...2,000 yen or 1,500....  
103  
104 *Yeah.*  
105  
106 ...so I had to come again the next day, but I knew beforehand that, "Okay, I have to go  
107 early this time."  
108



109 *Yeah.*  
 110  
 111 So I got there maybe 7 o'clock and I was maybe, like, the thir, thirtieth person in the  
 112 line...  
 113  
 114 *Wow.*  
 115  
 116 ...which was way better than the previous day.  
 117  
 118 *Yeah.*  
 119  
 120 And food? Yeah, word-of-mouth. Which supermarkets were open, what time. Basically,  
 121 trial and error. I mean, I went there, there was just long lines here. I went to one  
 122 supermarket and it was, like, limited, kind of, food and water there. This one had more  
 123 variety. This store you could get two bottles of water, this one just one. It was just trial  
 124 and error...  
 125  
 126 *I got it.*  
 127  
 128 ...and word-of-mouth.  
 129  
 130 *I got it. And that word-of-mouth was mostly with your neighbours or?*  
 131  
 132 With my neighbours who spoke Japanese, yeah.  
 133  
 134 *Yeah, you see, obviously I'm interested in things like language and communication...*  
 135  
 136 *Yeah.*  
 137  
 138 ...and translation, so those are the topics I'm, kind of, focusing on. Ehm, I don't know if  
 139 you remember, but at the time of the earthquake, were there any announcements over the  
 140 PA system {in your hometown}?  
 141  
 142 Before the earthquake?  
 143  
 144 *Eh, once, once the earthquake happened...*  
 145  
 146 *Yeah.*  
 147  
 148 ...you know, the City Office might have.  
 149  
 150 Probably, but I don't remember, but what you are saying would probably...  
 151  
 152 *Yeah.*  
 153  
 154 ...probably had something going on.  
 155  
 156 *Yeah. It's fairly standard, I know, in, in Japan but...*  
 157  
 158 *Yeah.*  
 159  
 160 ...I was just wondering if the technology worked.  
 161  
 162 But, really, what they were saying, maybe I could comprehend 50% only.  
 163

164 *Okay, because it was only in Japanese.*  
 165  
 166 Even when I got to the supermarket, it was, like, they were, like - yeah, I've forgot even  
 167 the term, I forgot it already - it was like *kigen* or *ki* [Note: the participant is probably  
 168 referring to the term *seigen* which is used to talk about restrictions on something], it was,  
 169 like, you couldn't get two bottles of this and I, I didn't know at first what they were  
 170 saying and then my wife had to tell me or I asked somebody behind us it.  
 171  
 172 *I got it. I got it. So there was, you know, for you, there was some new vocabulary...*  
 173  
 174 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 175  
 176 *...and stuff that you have to learn related to, to disasters. Em, also, you talked about*  
 177 *asking the teacher in the hoikuen [Note: preschool] for advice.*  
 178  
 179 Yeah.  
 180  
 181 *Was, was that in, in Japanese?*  
 182  
 183 In Japanese, yes.  
 184  
 185 *So, like, obviously, in, in, in {this village}, it seems that its mostly Japanese*  
 186 *communication...*  
 187  
 188 Yeah.  
 189  
 190 *...that you, you, you were involved in.*  
 191  
 192 Correct, yeah.  
 193  
 194 *Em, what I'm also interested in is how did you find out about the general disaster? Ehm,*  
 195 *how did you find out more information, what was happening all over Japan not just what*  
 196 *was happening in your local area?*  
 197  
 198 At the time, I was working, em, part-time, my main job was at {a nuclear power station in  
 199 Ibaraki} teaching English. And then my part-time job was at the cram-school and at the  
 200 community centre teaching private. So, first thing on my mind was about the nuclear  
 201 power station. So I emailed my friends, "How's everything going?" I forgot clearly if I  
 202 got an answer, reply quickly or not but, that was on my mind. I was worried about the  
 203 nuclear power station. Eh, {redacted} a lot of people, my father-in-law used to work at  
 204 the research centre, their research centre so. And then, actually, one of my friends from  
 205 Hawaii emailed me because he was watching the news, and he said, "[redacted], get out  
 206 of there." He knew I lived near the ocean. "There's a tsunami coming." And I told him,  
 207 "Well, my apartment is kind of far from the ocean and the tsunami, I don't know when I  
 208 found out but it was in Miyagi." But I know, I felt the magnitude of the earthquake, so I  
 209 knew if, the tsunami could, and the tsunami did come to {this town}, and it went on to,  
 210 generate, some generators and shacks, some tool shacks at {the nearby nuclear plant}.  
 211  
 212 Yeah.  
 213  
 214 Ehm, I might, I may have asked some students working at the power plant. Ehm, I didn't  
 215 know the condition of the power plant until maybe a couple of days later because my, I  
 216 don't know when I contacted my boss in Tokyo and she said that, "{redacted} you have  
 217 to take off a couple of days at the power station." But maybe, like, until, like, one month  
 218 later, or when, I, I came back to work at the power station maybe after the third week...

219  
 220 *Uhuh.*  
 221  
 222 ...and that's when I knew that the typhoon destructed [Note: we can assume that the  
 223 participant means 'tsunami' not 'typhoon' here] I mean took out the tool shack and.  
 224  
 225 *Yeah.*  
 226  
 227 So, what was your question again? [laughter]  
 228  
 229 *Yeah, no, just basically about how you found out about not just what was happening here*  
 230 *in {this town} but what was happening all through, through Japan...*  
 231  
 232 *Yeah.*  
 233  
 234 *...I mean, you've mentioned emails...*  
 235  
 236 My friend watching the news.  
 237  
 238 *Ah, so you did have a, you were able to watch?*  
 239  
 240 No, I wasn't able to, but my friend was explaining to me what he was watching, my  
 241 friend in Hawaii.  
 242  
 243 *Ahhh.*  
 244  
 245 "The tsunami is coming."  
 246  
 247 *Yeah, the reason I am asking is because some people have talked about using their*  
 248 *mobile phones to, you, to watch the one-seg TV...*  
 249  
 250 Oh.  
 251  
 252 *...or check websites or anything. Were you able to do any of those?*  
 253  
 254 I didn't even think about doing it. I didn't even have a interest. Basically, I knew {the  
 255 towns where I live and work and} my boy was safe, I knew my mother-in-law, her  
 256 husband is retired, he has contact with many researchers and we were, we were  
 257 contacting through emails, so if something happened I, I would, I have friends who live in  
 258 {this town} so I wasn't really, I was worried, but at the same time, I knew that I could get  
 259 information quickly. You know, if we had to evacuate or. I knew my wife was in {the  
 260 nearest major city} and she was probably not trying to [laughter] come, walk over - I told  
 261 her to just stay there...  
 262  
 263 *Yeah.*  
 264  
 265 ...basically, I was just trying to keep my, my son was in front of me, I had my son in the  
 266 car, you know, just keep us safe. I knew I didn't have gas. I knew the food was okay in  
 267 the icebox. I had water. I had to get blankets for the night.  
 268  
 269 *I understand.*  
 270  
 271 *Yeah.*  
 272

273 *Em, so, you had, you said that you had this fairly, sort of, simple daily life of getting food*  
 274 *and water and so on...*  
 275  
 276 *Yeah.*  
 277  
 278 *...and how, how long did that continue?*  
 279  
 280 *I think it was around, maybe, two weeks...*  
 281  
 282 *Okay.*  
 283  
 284 *...and then I got back to working after the third week at the power station. My private*  
 285 *lessons took a little longer...*  
 286  
 287 *Uhuh.*  
 288  
 289 *...because there was some damage in the community centre where I teach. And then, I'm*  
 290 *a surfer so I hadn't surfed for maybe three, two months after earthquake, and then, by that*  
 291 *time, I knew that the milli, micro, and everything, stay out of the water. [Note: here the*  
 292 *participant is probably referring to the millisievert, microsievert measures of radiation*  
 293 *that entered the discourse on the disaster] I went out running and then one day I said,*  
 294 *"Screw this. I'm going to just chill out and surf." And I surfed and people were, I mean,*  
 295 *I'm teaching the kids in this city, I mean. We're still here [laughter].*  
 296  
 297 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 298  
 299 *I mean, of course, I took precautions but, I mean, I still had to, I put, I wasn't afraid to go*  
 300 *out running...*  
 301  
 302 *Uhuh.*  
 303  
 304 *...and, I mean, which you did, after three months, I went surfing one time...*  
 305  
 306 *Yeah.*  
 307  
 308 *...the people at the power station were testing the water every day...*  
 309  
 310 *Yeah.*  
 311  
 312 *...they said it was fine, but on the news they said it wasn't fine. Different information here*  
 313 *and there, but those workers at the power station are sending their kids here to learn*  
 314 *English, I mean. They were saying the water was okay. I mean, it was higher than usual,*  
 315 *but not going to grow a third eye [laughter]...*  
 316  
 317 *[Laughter]*  
 318  
 319 *...but I, we, we won't know, actually, until, in the fu, twenty years or whatever, but.*  
 320  
 321 *I understand...*  
 322  
 323 *Yeah.*  
 324  
 325 *...yeah, that's, I mean, the, that's, you, you said you're still here you're part of this...*  
 326  
 327 *Yeah.*

328  
 329 *...community, so, em, the, I, I'm actually interested in the idea of community because, em,*  
 330 *the Japanese government and various, kind of, NPOs and associations are trying to make*  
 331 *recommendations for how to help foreign people in the next disaster...*  
 332  
 333 Yeah.  
 334  
 335 *...and one of the things they talk about is making sure that foreign nationals who live in*  
 336 *Japan are part of the community. Do you, it seems you feel part of the community here.*  
 337 *Do you?*  
 338  
 339 In a way, yeah, because, I mean, I'm not in a community group or association, but I'm  
 340 acquainted with people in those associations and I teach them...  
 341  
 342 Yeah.  
 343  
 344 ...and I work at the community centre...  
 345  
 346 Yeah.  
 347  
 348 ...at the power station, but I heard some, eh, foreign nationals from England, at the  
 349 research, they went to the community centre, and they didn't really know where to go or  
 350 what to do...  
 351  
 352 Yeah.  
 353  
 354 ...for me. I didn't even worry about going to the community centre. I just was in my car  
 355 and my apartment...  
 356  
 357 Yeah.  
 358  
 359 ...trying to clean up my apartment, just like, "Uh." I, I had enough confidence to be able  
 360 to survive and get information here and there with my Japanese and...  
 361  
 362 Yeah.  
 363  
 364 ...but if I didn't know any Japanese, if I didn't have a wife, if it, wasn't, yeah, definitely  
 365 would have been harder.  
 366  
 367 *Yeah, so, for example, those English people that you mentioned, do you think would they*  
 368 *have been able to speak Japanese?*  
 369  
 370 No, they were, they were, yeah, they weren't capable. These weren't, it wasn't so good.  
 371 So luckily some people knew English and the Japanese community centre, over here, it  
 372 stayed, but I heard it was difficult for them.  
 373  
 374 *I can imagine, I can imagine. Em, I know from talking to some other people that*  
 375 *community centres did offer some support but it was a bit limited...*  
 376  
 377 Oh.  
 378  
 379 *...and I think, you know, they're trying their best to improve it...*  
 380  
 381 Yeah.  
 382

383 ...improve it now. Ehm, I, I mean, obviously, for you, things like having a wife and family  
 384 here helped...

385

386 Yeah.

387

388 ...make bonds with the community. Can you imagine any other ways that foreigners could  
 389 become more attached to their local communities? What, what can the government do, do  
 390 you think? It's difficult, very difficult question.

391

392 Oh, yeah, well, it's like for my, say {in this town}, like, they have Japanese school, they  
 393 have many community centres, even the power stations have, like, em, like, it has like,  
 394 not an amusement park, but there's some kind of park...

395

396 Yeah.

397

398 ...and over there, many of the staff speak English, so just, like, working, just be in a  
 399 company, just somehow be related to other people who, who can speak English...

400

401 Yeah.

402

403 ...or, the community is a, is a community itself in a company...

404

405 Yeah.

406

407 ...and, just joining community, try to, try to be involved in Japanese lifestyle...

408

409 Yeah.

410

411 ...like, for me, I had an advantage that I had, I had been here ten years already, ten years,  
 412 around, and I made a, I made it, a effort to go to Japanese school every Saturday, so I met  
 413 many foreigners there and Japanese...

414

415 Yeah.

416

417 Ehm, there's not many people from Hawaii over here. I think the only one up here so, it's  
 418 not like I, I cruised with Hawaii people every weekend...

419

420 Yeah.

421

422 ...I mean, I, I met foreign, I met English, Irish, eh, Japanese. Some people are, I know,  
 423 man, the English are, just stuck together...

424

425 Yeah.

426

427 ...so it's give and take, I mean, the government has to do something about it and even  
 428 foreigners have to, like, try to get involved in community activities or.

429

430 Yeah. I think that's a really...

431

432 Yeah.

433

434 ...important point. I, I definitely agree with you, em...

435

436 Yeah.

437

438 ...*I lived in Japan for about 9 years...*  
 439  
 440 Oh yeah? Wow.  
 441  
 442 ...*so, n, n, not as long as you...*  
 443  
 444 Yeah.  
 445  
 446 ...*but, you know, for, for some time and I do understand that feeling that if you want to be*  
 447 *part of the community, the community has to make an effort...*  
 448  
 449 Yeah.  
 450  
 451 ...*but you have to make an effort...*  
 452  
 453 Yeah.  
 454  
 455 ...*too. Absolutely, yeah. Ehm, I was also very interested in when you were saying your*  
 456 *friend or a p, person from Hawaii...*  
 457  
 458 Yeah.  
 459  
 460 ...*contacted you by email...*  
 461  
 462 Yeah.  
 463  
 464 ...*about the news they were watching...*  
 465  
 466 Yeah.  
 467  
 468 ...*in the States...*  
 469  
 470 Yeah, live, yeah.  
 471  
 472 ...*Wh, wh, wh, what did you feel, did you watch any of the news from, I don't know, CNN*  
 473 *or things later on and...*  
 474  
 475 Oh, yes I did.  
 476  
 477 ...*things as it developed? What did you think about the news in say the States and the*  
 478 *news in Japan?*  
 479  
 480 I guess, I really can't tell you so much but just from what people were saying, the  
 481 reaction it got from my parents or my friends. They were like, "Whoa, you have got to get  
 482 out of there. It's dangerous." And I guess in Japan it was more laid back, but.  
 483  
 484 Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I think there's different p, presentation styles between, you know,  
 485 maybe ...  
 486  
 487 Yeah.  
 488  
 489 ...*so like, Japanese news sources...*  
 490  
 491 Yeah.  
 492

493 ...and maybe US news sources but also, I mean, there's different reasons...  
 494  
 495 Yeah, yeah...  
 496  
 497 ...for communicating.  
 498  
 499 ...yeah, they don't want to cause panic, of course, you know [laughter].  
 500  
 501 Yeah, I mean, it makes sense and, you know, I think if you're living in the States and  
 502 you're watching the TV news in the States, possibly they're making a program because  
 503 they want more viewers...  
 504  
 505 Yeah.  
 506  
 507 ...so if they make it, kind of, sensational, they get more viewers...  
 508  
 509 Yeah.  
 510  
 511 ...right? But maybe in Japan at that time, it wasn't about getting viewers...  
 512  
 513 Yeah.  
 514  
 515 ...it was about giving information. Ehm, just in general about the topic of information,  
 516 what did you feel was most lacking? Eh, what information was most difficult for you to  
 517 access?  
 518  
 519 I didn't think so deeply or detailed, so, just, basically, it just comes down black and white  
 520 and...  
 521  
 522 Okay.  
 523  
 524 ...if it was safe or not safe...  
 525  
 526 Yeah, yeah.  
 527  
 528 ...but, like I told you, the people were telling me it was safe at the power station...  
 529  
 530 Yeah.  
 531  
 532 ...some people were telling me that it's not safe but at one point I just made up my mind, I  
 533 mean, I can't just stay indoors all day.  
 534  
 535 Yeah, so it comes down to your, your personal judgement.  
 536  
 537 Yeah, with the information I had on hand, I mean, people at the power station, and it's  
 538 safe. I mean, they're testing the water, the ocean water, they're saying, "Of course, on  
 539 rainy days, stay in doors."...  
 540  
 541 Uhum.  
 542  
 543 ...which I did. Ehm, and then, sss, a year later, some workers at the power station were  
 544 quitting because they were against nuclear power, they felt it was dangerous. And then a  
 545 year later those same people changed their mind...  
 546  
 547 [Laughter]



548  
 549 ...and said, "Oh maybe it was not so dangerous." I mean.  
 550  
 551 *Oh, it's a big...*  
 552  
 553 Yeah.  
 554  
 555 ...it's a big question. It's, it's, it, that actually links up to something I wanted to ask you  
 556 about, ehm, for you when did the disaster finish or ha, has it finished?  
 557  
 558 It hasn't finished yet. The reason why I'm in this school now is, is because of the disaster.  
 559 I was working part-time at the cram school, my private lessons and the power station, my  
 560 main job. And I was teaching one time per week at this school [Note: referring to the  
 561 business he is currently running that has since changed locations] which was by {a  
 562 supermarket in the town} and all those teachers had gone, they, they went back to their  
 563 countries. And that, the previous owner was in {in America, she was American} and she  
 564 said, "{redacted}, can you hold down the school for one month while I come back." So  
 565 for me, I was thinking, "Okay, I'm the only teacher. The kids, I have to give one class." I  
 566 mean, I was working one, another at another *eikaiwa* [Note: English conversation  
 567 (school)] one time a month, I told that staff, I mean the boss, that there's one teacher  
 568 there, right, so I'm going to help this, the rival...  
 569  
 570 Yeah.  
 571  
 572 ...there's only two in {this town}...  
 573  
 574 [Laughter]  
 575  
 576 ...and he understood...  
 577  
 578 Yeah.  
 579  
 580 ...so I was working there for a month, busting my butt...  
 581  
 582 Yeah.  
 583  
 584 ...and, and I was thinking, "This is only going to last a month." And she didn't come back  
 585 to Japan. She was like, "Have you heard the news?" [laughter]...  
 586  
 587 Wow.  
 588  
 589 ..."It's dangerous." And I'm just, I, like, I was telling her, like, literally on the phone, like,  
 590 12, at midnight, it was like, "Get back here!"...  
 591  
 592 [Laughter]  
 593  
 594 ...and then, she came back, I don't know how long after. But I was busting my back, I  
 595 mean, it, but it became, like, after a couple of months, I got into the routine, like, "Wow, I  
 596 didn't even know my threshold," like, "this, I can do this."...  
 597  
 598 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 599  
 600 ...I was working maybe, plus, around eight hours a day, plus, like, emailing management  
 601 and then, we decided to move that, we had to get out of that place because we couldn't  
 602 pay the rent. We lost students...

603  
604 *Yeah.*  
605  
606 ...we moved to a house, the owner's house. She had come back to Japan...  
607  
608 *Yeah.*  
609  
610 ...then, it was on the second floor. Too small and there was, like, a narrow stairway. I  
611 said, "We had to get out this." So I found this place. And then, upon finding this place,  
612 we said, "Let's be partners."  
613  
614 *Wow.*  
615  
616 And then after that, she's going through a lot of stuff privately and...  
617  
618 *Yeah.*  
619  
620 ...with her body condition, so she ended up having to pull out of our partnership and she  
621 said, "{redacted}, take over this company." And then, I work Saturdays, because, bef,  
622 when the earthquake occurred, I was working at the power station. Saturdays were off...  
623  
624 *Yeah.*  
625  
626 ...but as soon as I worked at this school, I couldn't teach during the weekday because I  
627 was working at the power station the other, so those students, many of them had to move  
628 to Saturday...  
629  
630 *I see.*  
631  
632 ...and those students are still learning on sa, they don't want to go back to the weekday, so  
633 I still work on Saturday...  
634  
635 *Wow.*  
636  
637 ...I'm still running this company and it's not, when I got here, there was maybe, like, 55  
638 students. Now there's almost 80, so it's, like...  
639  
640 *Wow.*  
641  
642 ...before there was 130. So it's still a work in process...  
643  
644 *Yeah.*  
645  
646 ...ehm, I lost my job at the power station due to budget, not getting enough money, so, I  
647 mean, they had to cut back...  
648  
649 *Yeah.*  
650  
651 ...and so, I took over this company in September. Last September, sorry, yeah, it's a  
652 year...  
653  
654 *Yeah.*  
655  
656 ...yeah, it's a year today...  
657

658 Wow.  
 659  
 660 ...yeah, so I just lost my job in March, end of March this year...  
 661  
 662 Yeah.  
 663  
 664 ...em, I'm try to take, run this company, get it back on its feet. The reason why I have it  
 665 [laughter] is just all because of the earthquake [laughter].  
 666  
 667 Yeah, *that's fascinating...*  
 668  
 669 Yeah.  
 670  
 671 ...*absolutely, it had a big impact...*  
 672  
 673 Yeah...  
 674  
 675 ...*on your life...*  
 676  
 677 ...my life has changed, yeah.  
 678  
 679 Yeah. *But, you know, in, in bad ways of, like...*  
 680  
 681 Yeah, yeah.  
 682  
 683 ...*losing jobs but in good ways...*  
 684  
 685 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 686  
 687 ...*maybe, too, there's been some positive impacts. Em, do you feel, even though obviously*  
 688 *the disaster hasn't finished, do you feel that, em, things are starting to turn around or?*  
 689  
 690 Yeah, it is. Yeah. The streets are almost 100 percent, I mean, not 100 percent, there's still  
 691 cracks here and there but...  
 692  
 693 Yeah.  
 694  
 695 ...it's rideable...  
 696  
 697 Yeah, yeah.  
 698  
 699 ...eh, the community is still divided.  
 700  
 701 Oh really?  
 702  
 703 We just had the elections a couple of weeks ago. The whole nuclear power...  
 704  
 705 Yeah.  
 706  
 707 ...nuclear power, em. There still is cracks in the wall in my apartment. I see it every day.  
 708  
 709 Really?  
 710  
 711 Uhuh.  
 712

713 *And...*  
 714  
 715 It's definitely changed but it is getting back to normal. [Note: the participant emphasised  
 716 the word normal ironically]  
 717  
 718 *Yeah, the, the, yeah, I mean, I...*  
 719  
 720 Yeah.  
 721  
 722 *...what is normal is a very good, good question.*  
 723  
 724 You felt the earthquake yesterday, right?  
 725  
 726 *Yes [laughter].*  
 727  
 728 I mean, I, I woke up, like, in a, I just grabbed my cellphone, put on my glasses, put on my  
 729 pants. I have everything ready. Before, I didn't have my clothes ready. Now, I have  
 730 everything ready.  
 731  
 732 *That's really interesting. You know, it was pretty big, right?...*  
 733  
 734 Yeah.  
 735  
 736 *...em, eh, I mean, I was in, I was in Tokyo, so it wasn't really so strong for me...*  
 737  
 738 Oh.  
 739  
 740 *...but it was because it was the middle - well, what was it? 2 in the morning or 2.30 or*  
 741 *something...*  
 742  
 743 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 744  
 745 *...whenever it's in the nighttime I think it's a bit more shocking.*  
 746  
 747 It was.  
 748  
 749 *Ehm, but that's very interesting...*  
 750  
 751 Yeah.  
 752  
 753 *...that you have everything ready now...*  
 754  
 755 Yeah, it's all ready.  
 756  
 757 *...so you've, kind of, changed your behaviours a little bit.*  
 758  
 759 My keys, my wallet are already in my pocket.  
 760  
 761 *Yeah, like, what would you say would be good advice for other foreigners coming to*  
 762 *Japan? What would you say to be prepared for in terms of a disaster? What, what advice*  
 763 *would you give someone?*  
 764  
 765 Huh, jeez, I mean, just think there could be a disaster tomorrow...  
 766  
 767 *Yeah, yeah.*

768  
 769 ...I mean, if you thought about that, I mean, how would, that's basically how I lived  
 770 before that...  
 771  
 772 *Yeah.*  
 773  
 774 ...like water and cans, so I didn't have my pants ready though [laughter]...  
 775  
 776 *[Laughter]*  
 777  
 778 ...but I mean, the more ready you are, the better prepared you are, the better, I mean. And  
 779 what's important for you, I mean. For me, it was my family so it was, just, if I had my  
 780 son in hand, I mean, that's the most, for them, if you're, if you're a foreigner right off the  
 781 plane, you might be just thinking about, if you're living by yourself, you are probably  
 782 thinking about, well, the consulate or the embassy or...  
 783  
 784 *Yeah.*  
 785  
 786 ...it's apparent that was going to be the most important thing...  
 787  
 788 *Yeah.*  
 789  
 790 ...I mean, for me, it wasn't a worry about shelter, like, going to the community centre, I  
 791 felt comforta, confident living in my car...  
 792  
 793 *Right.*  
 794  
 795 *[Laughter]*  
 796  
 797 *Right, right.*  
 798  
 799 I mean.  
 800  
 801 *But, yeah, maybe that's an individual characteristic as well. Maybe you're just a more...*  
 802  
 803 Yes, yes.  
 804  
 805 *...self-sufficient person.*  
 806  
 807 So, yeah, I mean, just try to be, you have to have the canned goods, water, fill your  
 808 bathtub with water, em, have the embassy phone number online, I mean, don't be so  
 809 dependent upon, on the Internet...  
 810  
 811 *Yeah.*  
 812  
 813 ...because you might not be able to use your phone or the Internet. So know where the  
 814 community cen, where the evacuation centre is, I mean, know where there is high ground,  
 815 flat ground. I mean, just...  
 816  
 817 *That's a.*  
 818  
 819 ...just have a good sense, I mean.  
 820  
 821 *Yeah. But the, that's very interesting that you talked about, like, not being too, too*  
 822 *dependent...*

823  
824 Yeah.  
825  
826 *...on the Internet because a lot of people who talk about the disaster talk about social*  
827 *media and Twitter and Facebook. Were you able to use any of those things or?*  
828  
829 I was, yeah, but just took it with a grain of salt. I mean, I was hearing things first-hand  
830 from the people at the power station, my family in America, Hawaii, Internet use. I mean,  
831 I just weighed it from there, I mean.  
832  
833 *So it wasn't particularly useful.*  
834  
835 For me, yeah, I mean, people were saying different things from different places. Of  
836 course, I had to use good judgment overall, when it's rai, raining, or not to surf as  
837 much...  
838  
839 Yeah.  
840  
841 ...I went in maybe three times after the earthquake.  
842  
843 *Uhuh, uhuh.*  
844  
845 I was worried about my son but what could I do? I couldn't run away to Hawaii. My son,  
846 my wife wouldn't run away. Her parents live in {this town}.  
847  
848 *Right.*  
849  
850 I mean, it wasn't any choices for me [laughter].  
851  
852 *Right, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
853  
854 Yeah.  
855  
856 *I think, as you said, if you were somebody who, maybe, moved here just off the plane...*  
857  
858 Yeah...  
859  
860 *...and if you didn't have a family...*  
861  
862 *...go back home...*  
863  
864 *...you might have made a...*  
865  
866 *...yeah, yeah...*  
867  
868 *...different choice, maybe.*  
869  
870 *...of course, I would have, yeah.*  
871  
872 *Yeah, ehm, so I don't think that there's any such thing as right ways or wrong ways...*  
873  
874 Yeah.  
875  
876 *...it's, you, you base it on what your, your...*  
877

878 Yeah.  
 879  
 880 *...situation is, right? Ehm, the other thing, I'm, I'm also glad you mentioned about the*  
 881 *embassy and the consulate. I'm a bit interested in that. Did they contact you directly?*  
 882  
 883 No, but my friend in Saitama, he's from, the same as me, he told me about it...  
 884  
 885 Okay.  
 886  
 887 ...he was saying you can take your family on the plane. So I don't know if he contacted  
 888 the embassy. It wasn't a big worry for me...  
 889  
 890 Yeah.  
 891  
 892 ...but just knowing that, I felt safer.  
 893  
 894 Yeah, that if...  
 895  
 896 That was good information, yeah...  
 897  
 898 Yeah.  
 899  
 900 ...that I could have gone, I could have taken my family to Hawaii or somewhere in  
 901 America or something.  
 902  
 903 They would have...  
 904  
 905 Yeah.  
 906  
 907 ...flown you and.  
 908  
 909 I don't know if my wife would have went [laughter]...  
 910  
 911 [Laughter]  
 912  
 913 ...should have gone.  
 914  
 915 Yeah, but you had maybe, that..  
 916  
 917 Yeah.  
 918  
 919 ...was a Plan B or something.  
 920  
 921 Yes.  
 922  
 923 Em, also, just similarly, do you remember did the, like, village office or city office contact  
 924 you?  
 925  
 926 No.  
 927  
 928 No.  
 929  
 930 Maybe through the speaker, the megaphone.  
 931  
 932 Yeah. But no direct?

933  
 934 No direct contact. Nobody came to my house. I might have got a letter or, I might have  
 935 got a letter where to go for the, eh, water after, one week later. They were pumping it out  
 936 at the junior high school...  
 937  
 938 *Okay.*  
 939  
 940 ...but right near my house had a well, there was a well, an underground well. So that was  
 941 convenient. Yeah, if, word-of-mouth.  
 942  
 943 Yeah.  
 944  
 945 If the *shiyakusho*, city office, knew where each foreigner was living and had, like, a  
 946 representative go to each house, if they're home or not, maybe they're at a community  
 947 centre, but go to the community centre and having some, somebody to be able to speak,  
 948 able to speak in English would have been helpful.  
 949  
 950 *Yeah.*  
 951  
 952 I can imagine just being, I mean, when, I was living in Japan when 9/11 happened...  
 953  
 954 *Okay.*  
 955  
 956 ...my first year, and then my brother lives in New York, near Time, eh, Times Square...  
 957  
 958 *[Sharp intake of breath]*  
 959  
 960 ...so, I mean, I went to the, I rode, I had a bicycle back then, rode to the, em, station to use  
 961 the public phone, couldn't get in touch with my brother but I got in touch with my mother  
 962 in Hawaii who said he was okay. Mmm. But that was in New York. I mean, if that had  
 963 been over here, one year, when I was right off the plane and I mean...  
 964  
 965 *Yeah.*  
 966  
 967 ...just I would be calling my boss, maybe...  
 968  
 969 *Yeah.*  
 970  
 971 ...in Tokyo, she lives in Tokyo...  
 972  
 973 *Yeah.*  
 974  
 975 ...I would be like, "What do I do?" If I couldn't contact her then I would have to find,  
 976 contact one of the students at the power station or...  
 977  
 978 *Yeah.*  
 979  
 980 ...talk to my neighbour. I mean, my Japanese wasn't up to par [laughter] wasn't, wasn't  
 981 good at that time...  
 982  
 983 *I can imagine.*  
 984  
 985 ...so it would have been a different story.  
 986



987 *Yeah. Ehm, the, the, this is pretty much my last question, ehm, the, you're talking about*  
 988 *some people, maybe, coming to Japan and, you know, they're just starting out. Ehm, you*  
 989 *know, city offices or government are going to try and provide information, maybe in*  
 990 *English, but also in Chinese...*  
 991  
 992 *Yeah.*  
 993  
 994 *...or Korean or, em, Tagalog or Portuguese or, you know...*  
 995  
 996 *Yeah.*  
 997  
 998 *...it, it depends on the area but...*  
 999  
 1000 *Yeah.*  
 1001  
 1002 *...you know, English might not be the best language. For you, in, in your image of, sort*  
 1003 *of, this part of Japan, is English maybe the most convenient...*  
 1004  
 1005 *Yes...*  
 1006  
 1007 *...second language?*  
 1008  
 1009 *...it is, yeah.*  
 1010  
 1011 *Yeah.*  
 1012  
 1013 *It is.*  
 1014  
 1015 *Because what some, eh, government sources are saying is instead of trying to provide*  
 1016 *information in, you know, English and Chinese and so on, they'll provide it in Easy*  
 1017 *Japanese.*  
 1018  
 1019 *That's what I was getting, yeah, yeah, that, you're right. That's how it should be, right?*  
 1020  
 1021 *Have you, have you seen Easy Japanese before or do, did you, do you, have you seen any*  
 1022 *documents written in it or in anything like that?*  
 1023  
 1024 *Yeah, they interviewed me a couple months ago. Em, they had a list of all these words,*  
 1025 *technical words, and then, after - you checked which one you knew which one, and I*  
 1026 *didn't know most of them - after we discussed about what kind of, instead, instead of this*  
 1027 *word what kind of other word would you think of in your vocabulary, knowing, of your*  
 1028 *Japanese, and we were discussing about that. If foreigners, and then some foreigners,*  
 1029 *many foreigners make it a point to learn Japanese when they get here. Some don't but*  
 1030 *they should learn, there should be, like, a pamphlet or a handout with these terms on it.*  
 1031 *Or even like a once-a-month practice. Or half-a-mon, half-a-year practice. Where to go,*  
 1032 *what to do, these words and signs.*  
 1033  
 1034 *That's a really good idea.*  
 1035  
 1036 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1037  
 1038 *Really, really good advice. I agree with you that if a foreigner is living here, they should*  
 1039 *make an effort to, to learn Japanese and for those people, maybe Easy Japanese is a good*  
 1040 *solution, but, of course, you also have to think about short-term people, like, if you're just*  
 1041 *here for business or just tourist, tourism, even Easy Japanese is not going to...*

1042  
 1043 Yeah.  
 1044  
 1045 *...be useful, so I think my feeling just personally is that you need to have a variety of*  
 1046 *channels...*  
 1047  
 1048 Yes.  
 1049  
 1050 *...a variety of types of information as possible. That's very difficult...*  
 1051  
 1052 That is, yeah.  
 1053  
 1054 *...very, very, difficulty, but I'm interested in the Easy Japanese and I'm very interested to*  
 1055 *hear that you were taking part in, in that study...*  
 1056  
 1057 Yeah.  
 1058  
 1059 *...I think, I hope they develop it. It could be really good work, em. But I can speak, eh, eh,*  
 1060 *Japanese too, but I, I find reading Easy Japanese is a little bit difficult for me because,*  
 1061 *you know, it's all the, the hiragana or furigana [Note: relatively simple scripts of*  
 1062 *Japanese that can be used to indicate how more complex Chinese characters should be*  
 1063 *read] is written on top...*  
 1064  
 1065 Yeah, yeah.  
 1066  
 1067 *...I'm not used to that so it takes a little bit of time to, to get used to it. But overall it*  
 1068 *seems like it's a pretty good, pretty good system. Basically, then, just as a last question, is*  
 1069 *there anything else that you'd like to make a comment on or anything I haven't talked*  
 1070 *about that you think I should be talking about, or?*  
 1071  
 1072 No. So you were here for 9 years?  
 1073  
 1074 *Yeah, I was here, so I was here on and off for 9 years. I, for example, I lived here for 3*  
 1075 *years, and then I went to Australia for 1 year, and then I came back for another 3 years,*  
 1076 *and then I went to Ireland, and then I came back for three years. So I was not here*  
 1077 *continuously for 9 years...*  
 1078  
 1079 Yeah.  
 1080  
 1081 *...but, yeah.*  
 1082  
 1083 And you want to stay in Ireland?  
 1084  
 1085 *Yeah, well, ehm, so, I was in Japan, I was in Tokyo when...*  
 1086  
 1087 Oh yeah. Really?  
 1088  
 1089 *...the, the disaster happened. I worked, I worked there. And I left Japan about a year, a*  
 1090 *year-and-a-half after, eh, the disaster to go and start, start this project...*  
 1091  
 1092 Really?  
 1093  
 1094 *...and now I'm doing this project I'm very happy to be back in Ireland because my family*  
 1095 *is there...*  
 1096

1097 Yeah.  
1098  
1099 ...ehm, I, I felt, for me, when the disaster happened, I realized how important my family  
1100 was and how much I was missing them, so I think I'm staying in Ireland, if I can. I, I  
1101 don't know, the job situation is very bad in Ireland right now. Eh, our economy is not  
1102 doing so well, so I don't know if there will be any opportunities for me. I may have to  
1103 travel again, but I'd like to stay in Ireland.  
1104  
1105 So this project, you're going to apply it to, you can apply it, are there natural disasters in?  
1106  
1107 Well, not, eh, we have flooding...  
1108  
1109 Flooding.  
1110  
1111 ...the main thing we have is flooding. Ehm, so I don't think that this project would really  
1112 apply as such to Ireland but I'm also interested in the case of New Zealand...  
1113  
1114 New Zealand.  
1115  
1116 ...after I finish up here I'm going to go to New Zealand...  
1117  
1118 Uhuh.  
1119  
1120 ...to Auckland and Christchurch because they obviously had big earthquakes there, so  
1121 maybe some of the ideas here might be useful for, for people in Christchurch as well.  
1122  
1123 I see.  
1124  
1125 Ehm, but really the reason I'm doing this is because I'm interested in language and  
1126 culture, not so much that I'm interested in disaster...  
1127  
1128 Yeah.  
1129  
1130 ...but I'm interested in language and culture and I just think for me the disaster, it, kind  
1131 of, highlighted some issues about what it's like to be a foreigner in Japan.  
1132  
1133 Yeah.  
1134  
1135 Like, for me, I have an experience of being in a foreign, a foreigner in Japan and you,  
1136 kind of, you just go by with daily life, and you do your job, and you meet your friends,  
1137 and maybe you make roots or make a family, but when the earthquake happened, or when  
1138 a disaster happens, it's like everything becomes more extreme or something...  
1139  
1140 Yeah.  
1141  
1142 ...so you notice things about being a foreigner...  
1143  
1144 Yes.  
1145  
1146 ...in a, a, a, a foreign country...  
1147  
1148 Yeah.  
1149  
1150 ...and I'm just really interested in the idea of what it's like to be a, a non-Japanese person  
1151 living in Japan.

1152  
 1153 Like, you said, rather than disaster, even in Ireland, just the channels, yeah, to get through  
 1154 to foreigners living in Ireland, yeah, the channels.  
 1155  
 1156 *Oh absolutely. One of the things that for sure, I think, is going to be, like, a theme in this*  
 1157 *is the fact that it's dangerous to put too much effort into just one channel...*  
 1158  
 1159 Yeah.  
 1160  
 1161 *...when I was starting this project, I was really interested in social media, like Twitter and*  
 1162 *Facebook, because all I could read about in all of the other research was about Twitter*  
 1163 *and Facebook and I was like, "Wow, that's really interesting." But what very quickly*  
 1164 *became clear is that that's good and maybe it's useful in some ways, but if you have no*  
 1165 *power and if you have no telephone signal, it's absolutely useless. So, you know, I know*  
 1166 *that people, say, up in Miyagi, they used radio...*  
 1167  
 1168 Oh.  
 1169  
 1170 *...as a way of communicating. Radio for Japanese people was really useful. Especially*  
 1171 *older Japanese people. Ehm, because in parts of Tohoku...*  
 1172  
 1173 Yeah.  
 1174  
 1175 *...it's a lot of older people. And so then, I was like, "Wow, if you only have social media,*  
 1176 *that's not a good idea. If you only have radio, maybe that's also not a good idea."...*  
 1177  
 1178 Yeah, yes.  
 1179  
 1180 *...so you have to think about how to, to, I, I guess, be widespread. What I'm also*  
 1181 *interested in is, I'm, I'm very interested in translation, but I'm also interested in the, sort*  
 1182 *of, role that translators can play in terms of culture. Not, not just language. Ehm, I think*  
 1183 *there are some cultural barriers for people living in Japan. If, it's just a, a culture*  
 1184 *shock...*  
 1185  
 1186 Yeah.  
 1187  
 1188 *...and sometimes people like, you know, maybe, maybe your wife or your neighbours or*  
 1189 *something, they might be able to explain some cultural things to you...*  
 1190  
 1191 Yeah.  
 1192  
 1193 *...not just language things...*  
 1194  
 1195 Yes.  
 1196  
 1197 *...so, I don't know, did you feel any cultural differences in your experience?*  
 1198  
 1199 Of cour, I guess, mine is, maybe, in some senses highlighted and in some senses not. I  
 1200 mean, I'm not caucasian, so I don't really stand out as much, but when they hear that I  
 1201 come from Hawaii, many people think I'm, maybe, mixed Hawaiian or some Japanese  
 1202 and then I tell them, "I'm Okinawan." And then, well, first I say, they say, "Are you half-  
 1203 Japanese?" And I'm like, "Eeehhhh, yeah, I'm Japanese, eh." And then they say, "You're  
 1204 half." And then I say, "Well, actually, I'm Okinawan."... [Note: Okinawa is a prefecture  
 1205 of Japan, but many people living there identify with a separate cultural, historical,  
 1206 linguistic, and racial heritage to that of mainland Japan]

1207  
 1208 *[Laughter]*  
 1209  
 1210 ...and they said, then, they'll say like, "Oh, Okinawan is Japanese." So something is a  
 1211 little, some things are very similar, but those things that are different get highlighted...  
 1212  
 1213 *Yeah.*  
 1214  
 1215 ...like, I'm American, so our culture is a little different, but I'm also, I had a Japanese  
 1216 family...  
 1217  
 1218 *Yeah.*  
 1219  
 1220 ...the food and, and within the Japanese, I was Okinawan, so that's a little different the  
 1221 food and language...  
 1222  
 1223 *Yeah.*  
 1224  
 1225 Yeah, but, many things, I mean, I, I love the food, so and the characters are the same...  
 1226  
 1227 *Yeah.*  
 1228  
 1229 ...I guess, yeah, being from Hawaii, it's small, but you're living with many kinds of  
 1230 people...  
 1231  
 1232 *Yeah.*  
 1233  
 1234 ...so it's, kind of, wider...  
 1235  
 1236 *Yeah.*  
 1237  
 1238 ...feel, take on things compared to Japanese so.  
 1239  
 1240 *Yeah. Mmm, I think, for sure, the Japanese people have, maybe, been a bit closed in the*  
 1241 *past about being exposed to other cultures and other people but I do think they're trying*  
 1242 *to open up now, and...*  
 1243  
 1244 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1245  
 1246 *...like, you know, the Olympics in Tokyo in 2020...*  
 1247  
 1248 *Oh.*  
 1249  
 1250 *...that's, maybe, going to have an impact on how broad and wide people have to look...*  
 1251  
 1252 *Yes.*  
 1253  
 1254 *...now in the future, so I think it's changing a little bit. But I, I, I, I don't know, I don't live*  
 1255 *here anymore so I, I'm a bit removed.*  
 1256  
 1257 It has changed. The, the twelve years I've been here, it has changed. I mean, at the power  
 1258 station, well, one rule was I couldn't live in {the nearest town to the plant}...  
 1259  
 1260 *Wow, okay.*  
 1261

1262 ...that's why I was living in {another town}. Another rule was I couldn't drive. And, of  
 1263 course, I started off wearing a tie...

1264

1265 *Yeah.*

1266

1267 ...but all that changed, yeah. I could, I could drive my car on the grounds, I could get a  
 1268 pass.

1269

1270 *Yeah.*

1271

1272 I still lived in {another town but} I was getting closer to {the town where the plant is  
 1273 located}...

1274

1275 *[Laughter]*

1276

1277 ...I lost the tie...

1278

1279 *Yeah.*

1280

1281 ...I mean, inside changes within the company. I mean, that image of, I guess, all the  
 1282 teachers before me were from England or America. I'm from Hawaii...

1283

1284 *Yeah.*

1285

1286 ...which is in America, but it's, it's a different kind of person, I guess.

1287

1288 *Absolutely, yeah, yeah. I have to say, I, I'm really, really grateful for you speaking to me.*  
 1289 *It's been so interesting and I hope that it hasn't been stressful for you...*

1290

1291 No, no.

1292

1293 ...em, and that was, absolutely, that was kind of the last question here *[Note: I began to*  
 1294 *look for the Likert Scale Stress handout on the table between us] eh, wait now, that's not*  
 1295 *the one. Ah, oh, I think you have it just there. Ehm, just after talking today, I just want to*  
 1296 *make sure that the people I talk to don't feel extra stress because of me talking to them,*  
 1297 *so, ehm, if you could just let me know, sort of, roughly how you feel now, after talking*  
 1298 *about this.*

1299

1300 So at first would be zero?

1301

1302 *Yeah, I mean...*

1303

1304 Before the conversation would be zero?

1305

1306 ...yeah, or, or, just like, if before the conversation started you were at zero, what, where  
 1307 do you feel now? Maybe you're still zero, maybe you're ten...

1308

1309 *Yeah.*

1310

1311 ...where do you feel now?

1312

1313 *[Note: the participant marks on the scale]*

1314

1315 *Okay, perfect. Ehm, the reason that I do this is because some of the people that I've*  
 1316 *talked to had very tough experiences and, you know...*

1317  
1318 Yeah.  
1319  
1320 *...their lives were threatened or people around them lost their lives, and an agreement I*  
1321 *made with the university is that if anybody was over a certain level, then we'd introduce*  
1322 *counselling services...*  
1323  
1324 Uhm, yeah.  
1325  
1326 *...because I don't want to create more damage by talking to them. So thanks a million...*  
1327  
1328 Okay.  
1329  
1330 *...for that and for all your time.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.  
4

5 Note: This participant was in Australia from March 11-14 and arrived back in Japan on  
6 March 15 (i.e. the fifth day after the onset of the disaster).

7 *2013/9/20 Interview with Participant 10*

8 *Researcher: So that's all the, kind of, paperwork...*  
9

10 Participant: That's all? That's for later? [Note: he pointed to the remaining sheet on the  
11 table between us containing the Likert Scale about anxiety after the interview that I  
12 intended to show him at the end of the interview]  
13

14 *...Yep. Ehm, so, if I could just start with a real general question?*  
15

16 Yeah.  
17

18 *Could you just tell me what happened to you in 2011 in the disaster?*  
19

20 Okay, 2011, in the disaster, I wasn't actually in Japan.  
21

22 *Okay?*  
23

24 I was in Australia by myself, actually. I left my family here. I'm married. I've got two  
25 kids. Ehm, I had left them behind, actually. Talking about it upsets me a bit. [Note: The  
26 participant began to shed some tears at this point.] Actually, I haven't talked about it  
27 much. [Note: he regained his composure and took a drink of water.] That's a bit weird.  
28 Yeah, but, em, being over there was probably worse than being here, I think, because no  
29 contact, ehm, yeah, I didn't think it would affect me like this. Wow. [Note: again the  
30 participant took a little time to collect himself.] Yeah, em, yeah, no contact with them.  
31 Ehm, it was only for a Welsh friend of mine who had a computer with battery power still,  
32 and his wife was still working amazingly, and I got through to him through Skype. And  
33 then, such a good friend, ehm, he had been around and checked on my family which was  
34 a great relief. [Note: at this point the participant shed a few more tears] And then, yeah,  
35 that was it, just the worry and, yeah, it's quite weird. And it, shit, sorry, mate.  
36

37 *Yeah, no, don't, please don't apologise at all.*  
38

39 [Note: The participant took a little time to regain his composure and then continued]  
40 Wow, yeah. But anyway, that all got done, and, eh, then I had to get back. I wanted to  
41 get back as quick as I could. So, eh, yeah, I couldn't get any flights out of Australia. No  
42 airlines were actually flying into Japan at the time. They, yeah, they were still worried  
43 about Fukushima. They didn't know which way that was going to go whether it was  
44 going to go berserk or stay the way it has for the last couple of years. [Note: by saying  
45 'the last couple of years' the participant is probably referring to the likelihood of  
46 Fukushima further endangering the Tokaimura nuclear power plant which is also located  
47 in Ibaraki. A serious nuclear accident occurred at the Tokaimura facility in 1999 and is  
48 still seen by many to be unstable.] Ehm, but yeah, finally got back. My ticket was to  
49 come back on the 15th and I got back on the 15th anyway but I still did have worries. I  
50 still had, my car was in a parking lot at the airport, so I didn't know if that would be  
51 driveable, I didn't know if it was, if it was going to be cool, and then, ehm, also, yeah, I  
52 didn't even know whether I'd be able to drive all the way from Tokyo to here after seeing  
53 some of the some of the, some of the photos starting to come out on the news in Australia



54 of {the city in Ibaraki in which he lived and worked}. I could see the roads were in a bad  
55 way, so I didn't even know if I'd make it home. I did manage to get back. The roads  
56 were, yeah, they were a bit of a mess and there a few detours and whatnot, but I did make  
57 it back without too much trouble. Eh, come back to find the place, eh, yeah, an absolute  
58 mess, mate. Ehm, the place was rocking and rolling. It was, you, you were here yourself,  
59 so you know, it was, on, well, every thirty minutes it was, there was a decent sized  
60 quake...

61  
62 *Yeah.*

63  
64 ...so, eh, yeah, that was that, and then, eh, eh, well, being no power, no water, we  
65 couldn't run the business, but we still had a lot of food...

66  
67 *Yeah.*

68  
69 ...so we started cooking it up and just handing it out to people that didn't have food. Ehm,  
70 did that at both our shops. Ehm, {the two neighbouring cities in Ibaraki in which he has  
71 shops}. We got our water and electricity back within about a week, as I said, I got back  
72 on the 15th, a, a, at the time there was still no electricity and water. A couple of days  
73 later, we got our electricity and water. Everything seemed to pretty much, well, it didn't  
74 go back to normal obviously...

75  
76 *Yeah.*

77  
78 ...I mean, no-one would go outside, eh, coming from Ireland you'd know what the 17th  
79 is [Note: March 17, St. Patrick's Day]...

80  
81 *Oh God, yeah, it would have been a big day.*

82  
83 ...it's actually one of our biggest days of the year, so it really hurt us a bit but, eh, we  
84 had the water back on and electricity so, and we were doing, eh, like 300 yen lunches  
85 and dinners [Note: this would be about 1/3 the price of a standard lunch and perhaps 1/10  
86 the price of a standard dinner] just to help out kind of thing, and at night I, kind of,  
87 already had had enough of it just after a couple of days and decided I would sit outside  
88 and have a Guinness being St Patrick's Day.

89  
90 *[Laughter]*

91  
92 Ehm, attracted a few of the locals in, in fact twenty or so of us. I had told them, basically,  
93 if we drank the Guinness, it's got enough iron in it to counteract the radiation we were  
94 going to get...

95  
96 *[Laughter]*

97  
98 ...and everyone seemed to agree with me. Everyone was quite happy to knock a few  
99 back. Ehm, eh, em, with that said, too, a lot of my friends, well everyone I knew  
100 basically, eh, the only thing you could get at convenience stores was cigarettes and  
101 beer, basically, and for me and a few of my mates that was fine...

102  
103 *[Laughter]*

104  
105 ...but obviously for other people it was a bit of a challenge. But I did find that, just from  
106 asking around, people were pretty much drinking every day...

107  
108 *Yeah.*

109  
110 ...just for the stress. And, vertigo or in like...  
111  
112 *Yeah.*  
113  
114 ...just because the place was shaking so much, you didn't know whether it was shaking or  
115 not half the time, but if you had a few drinks in you actually, like, [laughter] it didn't  
116 really matter.  
117  
118 *[Laughter] Nothing mattered so much.*  
119  
120 Yeah. I mean, no, weren't, wasn't getting around rolling drunk but, em, yeah, a few beers  
121 here and there. Ehm, eh, yeah, I have an apartment in {a city in Ibaraki} as well so I was  
122 staying there, eh, two weeks before the electricity and water came back on over there. Bit  
123 of a struggle. One thing I remember quite well and I really did like was the community  
124 bonding together the way they did. Ehm, I wish it actually was a bit more prolonged. It,  
125 it, kind of, finished rather quick. I mean, about six months after, I guess, things really  
126 kind of went back to normal. But for those six months, people were talking to each other  
127 in the streets, ehm, for those two weeks in {a city in Ibaraki} lining up for water, ehm, it  
128 was really cool...  
129  
130 *Yeah.*  
131  
132 ...just talking to the locals and everyone being in the same position...  
133  
134 *Yeah.*  
135  
136 ...maybe talking about the six quakes we had through the night that were enough to wake  
137 you up and, ehm, obviously, for some people their housing and apartments were, they  
138 didn't have one. Ehm, mentioning that, on the day of the quake, ehm, as I said, I wasn't  
139 here, but my wife actually took in a crew of Canadian reporters. No hotels, nowhere to  
140 go, and they just, luckily they, they found this place...  
141  
142 *Yeah.*  
143  
144 ...and, yeah, they slept on the floor in here and...  
145  
146 *Crikey.*  
147  
148 ...so, em, eh, and afterwards also, I, I did quite a few, took a few reporters around and  
149 whatnot to see some of the bit more damaged areas, eh, {a port in Ibaraki}, eh, big fishing  
150 area, actually I have got a lot of friends from down there. Ehm, and, well, a lot of them  
151 are quite old too so, just, it basically finished their careers, ehm...  
152  
153 *Yeah.*  
154  
155 ...couple of them are still fishing now, but most of them had to stop what they were doing  
156 and change work.  
157  
158 *Yeah.*  
159  
160 Ehm, yeah, ehm, what else is important about that time? Basically just the amount of  
161 quakes we were getting. Ehm, oh, one little funny story, I guess. My other shop in {a city  
162 in Ibaraki}, ehm, after about two weeks after the quake, obviously we were still getting  
163 nasty aftershocks...

164  
165 *Yeah.*  
166  
167 ...but I wanted to put my beers back, eh, my bottles back on the shelves, my display, but  
168 em, I don't know we'd gone about three or four days without anything serious, so I  
169 thought, "Stuff it, I'll pack, put them all back up," because I had, had enough whacked  
170 them all back up. They'd been up there an hour and we got hit with a 7 [Note: highest  
171 level of the Japanese Seismic Intensity Scale - extremely violent shaking].  
172  
173 *Ahhh! It must be so.*  
174  
175 [Laughter] Three more bottles hit the deck. I mean, we did, during the quake we lost all  
176 our alcohol, we lost all our plates, we did lost any food that was just in refrigerator, ehm,  
177 all the food that was in our freezers, and that, obviously, we could use...  
178  
179 *Yeah.*  
180  
181 ...we started using over the next couple of days. But, em, in that sense, there was no real  
182 concern for my family knowing that they had enough food...  
183  
184 *Yeah.*  
185  
186 ...and water and whatnot. But, eh, yeah, I think that's, if you can think of anything else  
187 you'd like to ask.  
188  
189 *Oh, there's, absolutely, there's a few things I'd like to, kind of, em, clarify with you or*  
190 *just get a bit more detail on. One, one thing I'm interested in is you mentioned six months*  
191 *as a, kind of, period when things seemed to go back to normal?*  
192  
193 Yeah, I mean, I think it's always there. I mean, it's still there now, but, I mean, I don't  
194 know if you felt that quake last night?  
195  
196 *I did, I did, yeah*  
197  
198 Were you, were you here?  
199  
200 *I was in Tokyo so it wasn't that bad.*  
201  
202 Okay, so it was a little bit watered down, eh.  
203  
204 *It was definitely watered down. I've heard it was very strong up this way.*  
205  
206 Oh, yeah, it, it was enough to wake you up...  
207  
208 *Yeah.*  
209  
210 ...I would have been in my REMs then, so , [laughter] it was, em...  
211  
212 *[Laughter]*  
213  
214 ...yeah, so I did manage to wake up for that. And that, that is, that still is in everyone's  
215 back of their mind, you know, that, I think, I don't know if everyone is attuned to it, but  
216 I've ac, I've actually got this thing with my ears now. I can hear them coming...  
217  
218 *Yeah.*

219  
 220 ...like, well, before anyone else...  
 221  
 222 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 223  
 224 I just tell people there's one coming and they're looking at me and their phones aren't  
 225 going off [Note: Japanese mobile phones have an earthquake early-warning alarm that  
 226 should ring a few seconds before an earthquake strikes. It is an imperfect technology that  
 227 doesn't always work.] and, sure enough it'll hit. It's like a, it's like a truck coming down  
 228 the street but a lot, lot, awww, a lot more scary, I guess.  
 229  
 230 *Oh I can, aw, I, I can just, I can only get a sense of it. I was only really in Tokyo and in*  
 231 *Iwate. So both, when, when I was in Iwate, I was in the mountains so it wasn't as bad as,*  
 232 *you know, we didn't get hit by the tsunami or anything...*  
 233  
 234 *Yeah.*  
 235  
 236 *... like that. So it was in those two areas. It was, kind of, watered down compared to, like,*  
 237 *say, this area or to Miyagi area.*  
 238  
 239 Aw, but I didn't talk, I can show you a bit later, em, you can still see it. Basically, the  
 240 front quarter of the car park over there dropped about, dropped about 70 centimetres so,  
 241 we had about a, we had a 15-metre fissure going through that car park so, I mean,  
 242 someone was looking upon us...  
 243  
 244 *Yeah.*  
 245  
 246 ...because this, the actual building, both structures, even my other shop, must have been,  
 247 yeah, some of the only few that had very little structural damage.  
 248  
 249 *Do you know how old the?*  
 250  
 251 *Yeah, I built this place...*  
 252  
 253 *You [laughter] yeah, okay, well, you've confidence then [laughter] in the structure.*  
 254  
 255 ...it's eleven years old.  
 256  
 257 *Wow, crikey!*  
 258  
 259 *Yeah, so.*  
 260  
 261 *That's amazing. That really is amazing.*  
 262  
 263 Yeah, well, the apartments next door, half, more than halfway along they had a, a gap  
 264 underneath their foundation that was, well, a metre deep.  
 265  
 266 *When you're talking about, like, 70 centimetres that's, that's huge.*  
 267  
 268 Oh, and, like, I mean, that was here. That's, this area has been totally transformed since. I  
 269 mean, they knocked down that many buildings afterwards, ehm, yeah, this side of {a city  
 270 in Ibaraki} was actually quite hardly hit...  
 271  
 272 *Yeah.*  
 273

274 ...quite hit hard. Eh, all the plumbing and that, as you can see [Note: he points through the  
 275 window to construction work going on in the street outside the entrance to the bar] this is,  
 276 this is actually, they're still fixing...  
 277  
 278 *Yeah.*  
 279  
 280 ...the pipes from it now. Ehm, but yeah, the six month period, yeah I'd say it was about  
 281 six months everyone had, kind of, decided it's, it's time just to forget about it and let's,  
 282 let's get on with this, kind of thing.  
 283  
 284 *Yeah.*  
 285  
 286 *Yeah.*  
 287  
 288 *Em, the reason I'm interested in this is because for, like, some types of disaster, you*  
 289 *know, like, let's say a hurricane or something like that, there's se, seems to, like, a fairly*  
 290 *clear beginning and a fairly clear, sort of, time where people say, "Okay, this is over*  
 291 *now." But the sense I'm getting from this is that it is still ongoing for a lot of people...*  
 292  
 293 *Oh, it...*  
 294  
 295 *...in some ways, yeah.*  
 296  
 297 ...for me, very much so. I mentioned I've got an apartment in {a city in Ibaraki}, ehm,  
 298 yeah, it didn't help my marriage any. I know a lot of foreigners fled. I wasn't planning  
 299 on fleeing but I would have loved to have got, I would still like to get my kids out of here.  
 300 My wife doesn't - she's Japanese - she doesn't see the same danger, I guess, that I'm feel,  
 301 feeling myself...  
 302  
 303 *Yeah.*  
 304  
 305 ...em, and also, she's worried about their age and everything but I've told her, like, she  
 306 can go too, and everyone just go.  
 307  
 308 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 309  
 310 Ehm, it's something I never, I don't want to be, I don't want to have to use it as an 'I told  
 311 you so'...  
 312  
 313 *Yeah.*  
 314  
 315 ...I just hope, fingers crossed, and it is ongoing, mate, I mean, em, I've got these things  
 316 about clouds. Before the big quake the sky was streaked, the clouds were...  
 317  
 318 *Oh, I've heard about that, yeah.*  
 319  
 320 ...and, em, basically, if you get a day like that, it will put the wind up anyone...  
 321  
 322 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 323  
 324 ...and here they will start going, "Oh, we're going to get one." And apparently, eh, two  
 325 days ago...  
 326  
 327 *[Laughter]*  
 328

329 ...there was some streaky clouds before this one here but here, but there were also, there  
 330 was also a report from the science people, monitoring place that said this area will,  
 331 between Fukushima and even down to Chiba, there was going to be a fairly big fault slip  
 332 over the next couple of days, so I'm hoping that was it last night.  
 333  
 334 *Yeah, yeah, you see, this, this is unfortunate, you, you, you don't know what big means*  
 335 *anymore because.*  
 336  
 337 Yeah, well, I've a, I'm pretty sure that was it last night...  
 338  
 339 *[Laughter]*  
 340  
 341 ...but again...  
 342  
 343 *Yeah.*  
 344  
 345 ...yeah.  
 346  
 347 *Yeah.*  
 348  
 349 No, it is ongoing.  
 350  
 351 *Ehm, the other, there are a couple of other things I'm really interested in, ehm, so*  
 352 *because you were, ehm, overseas at the time when the, the first big earthquake*  
 353 *happened...*  
 354  
 355 *Yeah.*  
 356  
 357 *...I know that you used Skype to connect with, with your friend...*  
 358  
 359 Yes.  
 360  
 361 *...your Welsh friend here. Em, were you able to get any other information like through,*  
 362 *let's say, how did you find out about?*  
 363  
 364 The Australian news was, gave me, really annoyed me. Em, basically the, their first  
 365 report that they released on the news in Australia was Fukushima plant and Tokai plant  
 366 had both been affected by the quake, so I was, you can understand why I was so  
 367 distraught and why it still upsets me today...  
 368  
 369 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 370  
 371 ...ehm, yeah, it, they then, they didn't actually, they didn't actually come back with any  
 372 more reports on Tokai on the English news. Australia has an international television  
 373 station, SBS, ehm, they did give a little bit more detail and said that there was nothing to  
 374 worry about in Tokai eventually, which put my mind at ease. Ehm, eh, the newspapers  
 375 were not helping any at all, media, international media, actually, gave everybody, em, the  
 376 shits basically because - eh, I don't know about swearing mate - [Note: as he says this he  
 377 looks down at the audio recorder and I indicated that he should not worry about it] but  
 378 just blowing things out of proportion and it's not what we needed at the time. What we  
 379 needed was detailed information. Getting it out of here in Japan if you could not speak  
 380 Japanese, I think even if you could speak Japanese, ehm, it was limited. I mean, well no  
 381 electricity, ehm, I talked to all the people that were here for it. Local people. And, I don't,  
 382 they, I, they couldn't have been as scared as I was in a sense because they did not know  
 383 the tsunami was even happening. And that's, that's probably what sent the wind up me

384 the most in Australia was seeing this tsunami just wash over pretty much very close to  
 385 where I live and it was, eh, not being able to contact my family at the time was, eh,  
 386 yeah, really, really hard. Ehm, other information? Being where I am, I guess, eh, I look  
 387 after a lot of the, eh, nuclear workers actually. They, they do head in to {the participant's  
 388 shop in a city in Ibaraki} more than here. Ehm, lucky enough to call a lot of them good  
 389 friends. I've looked after them for, well, at that time for fourteen years, so they were  
 390 happy to pass on any information about the Tokai plant.

391  
 392 *Right.*

393  
 394 Ehm, there were loudspeakers, eh, in {the city in Ibaraki where the participant has one of  
 395 his shops} they've got a speaker system. All that was telling us in Japanese was, eh, stay  
 396 inside, keep your windows shut, and if it's raining, stay out of the rain. Ehm, for me, that  
 397 wasn't a surprise because I was here for the, eh, the refueling disaster as well. So pretty  
 398 much handled the same way. Yeah, information. Foreigners then started to come up with  
 399 things like, eh, Facebook. I wasn't a huge Facebook user at, at the time really, but  
 400 there's a {a city in Ibaraki's} International Association, they posted quite a lot of things  
 401 and then, even to this day they still get, do pretty well on informing you what's happening  
 402 in Ibaraki and the area. Ehm, other than that, I can't really think of anywhere else I was  
 403 looking for information. It started after a while, it just, I was here so...

404  
 405 *Yeah.*

406  
 407 ...you kind of, you didn't really to know any more. Just all you needed to know was have  
 408 you got water, have you got petrol to get to the airport, not that that would have done any  
 409 good...

410  
 411 *Yeah.*

412  
 413 ...but I suppose it would be useful, so. Yeah, I don't know, yeah. That would be about it.  
 414 Internet, but again, international media was more annoying than helpful and inside  
 415 information, unless you could speak, read Japanese almost no.

416  
 417 *This is one, this is one of the reasons why I asked in, in that sheet about, like, not just*  
 418 *speaking Japanese but trying to break it down into the different sections...*

419  
 420 *Yeah.*

421  
 422 *...because some people speak really well but they have difficulty reading. Yeah.*

423  
 424 Well, I speak, I speak relatively good Japanese and I can listen to it relatively well, eh,  
 425 so even the loudspeaker I could understand most of it...

426  
 427 *Yeah.*

428  
 429 ...so I knew, like, em, that it told us, "Take cover. Don't go outside." "Yeah, right?"

430  
 431 *Yeah.*

432  
 433 So, the thing about that is, the loudspeakers, there's no way, you can't...

434  
 435 *[Laughter]*

436  
 437 ...you can't hear them without going outside...

438

439 [Laughter]  
 440  
 441 ...and even if you're in your house where, it's not enough, you've got to get close to one of  
 442 them and, yeah [laughter], it's stupid. So then, they, they [indistinct] out, well, actually,  
 443 they brought them out, they brought them out after the refueling one, eh, they gave  
 444 everybody little radios, eh, to have in your house and you're supposed to keep them  
 445 plugged in all the time. Most people I know did they kept them for about a year and then  
 446 they just stuck them in their cupboard somewhere [laughter].  
 447  
 448 [Laughter]  
 449  
 450 So, they were useless as well and even if they had them, it wasn't like they were about to  
 451 broadcast anything over in English. I heard from people that lived in Tokai, {redacted},  
 452 ehm, Tokai government were actually doing English announcements...  
 453  
 454 Okay.  
 455  
 456 ...ehm, which was good for them. [Laughter] Ehm, why, why {the cities the participant  
 457 lived and worked in} was not getting that service, I don't know. Ehm, yeah, so.  
 458  
 459 *That's certainly one of the issues I'm looking at, em, you mentioned, like, there was a {a*  
 460 *city in Ibaraki's} International Association...*  
 461  
 462 Yes.  
 463  
 464 ...they, they, that Facebook update was in English was it or?  
 465  
 466 In English.  
 467  
 468 *Any other languages or did you not?*  
 469  
 470 Ehm, they were giving, they were giving links to Japanese pages and links to, you know,  
 471 Earthquake Watch, and all this kind of stuff. It was, eh, you know, there was people  
 472 getting into it and there was people that didn't want to know about it as well, you know. It  
 473 happened, ehm, one thing I guess, being a bar owner in the area for a long time, ehm, the  
 474 news came out at a later date that said, like, 70% of foreigners had fled Japan. When I  
 475 first heard those figures, I thought, "No way! It can't be right." Ehm, after running the  
 476 shop for a couple of months, no, they, they, they might have even underestimated it in  
 477 this area, anyway. I think, definitely 80% of the foreigners just took off. Ehm, I don't  
 478 blame them, ehm, I, I, I've got a family and a business here so it wasn't really an option  
 479 for me. Ehm, one option was to send my kids out of here and my parents were, eh, livid  
 480 [laughter] about that and, well, they didn't even want me to stay but I just told them,  
 481 "This is, this is where I live and I can't, I can't leave my friends like that." So, and when I  
 482 say friends, well, Japanese and foreigners alike, ehm, yeah.  
 483  
 484 *Oh, yeah. Absolutely, em, the, the reason with the, eh, the way I think, say, Tokai might*  
 485 *have provided something but then {other places in Ibaraki} didn't, I think a lot of it is*  
 486 *volun, voluntary...*  
 487  
 488 Yeah.  
 489  
 490 ...those international associations are kind of NPOs or sort of volunteer organizations  
 491  
 492 Well I do know {a city in Ibaraki's} International Associating, Association is well  
 493 organized...



494  
 495 *Yeah.*  
 496  
 497 So, eh, I actually know the lady that ran the thing, but, ehm, if it's the same one. Yeah  
 498 she's always on top of things and she's always getting the, the local gaijin [Note: means  
 499 foreigner] community informed on stuff which is great...  
 500  
 501 *Yeah.*  
 502  
 503 ...but obviously she doesn't have the power to tell everybody...  
 504  
 505 *No.*  
 506  
 507 ...and, eh, yeah, so I mean the other thing is, I guess, once everyone got their power on,  
 508 the other information was, "Everybody work now." You know, em, the gaijin community  
 509 here is sort of the old, it's a, it's quite an old group that's been here for a long time. They  
 510 all stuck together through it and people that I think were on the year contracts and two-  
 511 year contracts soon just buggered off...  
 512  
 513 *Yeah.*  
 514  
 515 ...people that had moved here and made Japan their home, ehm, they went through it  
 516 with the Japanese just like they would have been Japanese...  
 517  
 518 *Yeah.*  
 519  
 520 ...I guess, ehm, yeah, I mean, I guess the, the good information, the useful information at  
 521 the time was actually which convenience store was being stocked, eh, which supermarket  
 522 had food. Ehm, which petrol station was going to open that day and, and that information  
 523 all came by, just, your friends...  
 524  
 525 *Yeah.*  
 526  
 527 ...the language, and that, that was Japanese all...  
 528  
 529 *Yeah.*  
 530  
 531 ...for me, because I speak the language, a few Japanese people called me and said, "If  
 532 you need petrol tomorrow, the petrol station down the road from my place is opening and  
 533 they're letting you get so much amount of fuel or they're letting you fill your tank," or  
 534 whatever.  
 535  
 536 *Yeah.*  
 537  
 538 So, em, I think, yeah, most of the information, word-of-mouth.  
 539  
 540 *Yeah.*  
 541  
 542 *Yeah.*  
 543  
 544 *Ehm, the, It's very interesting that word-of-mouth has come up with talking to you, it has*  
 545 *come up lots of different places. Some of the people I spoke to in Sendai or other people I*  
 546 *have spoken to near here, they all say that word-of-mouth is actually more important*  
 547 *than many people realize beforehand...*  
 548

549 Yeah.  
550  
551 *...especially for things like, say, where to get water, where to get petrol.*  
552  
553 Well, actually, lining up for *onigiris* [Note: a Japanese rice-ball that is a standard food  
554 item handed out in emergencies] and stuff like that, a lot of the schools opened up on the  
555 second day – I wasn’t here for it – but I know a lot of my friends said, yeah, they were  
556 told by their next-door neighbour just, “Come with me,” kind of thing, “we’ll go get some  
557 rice-balls.”  
558  
559 *Yeah. And that actually kind of tallies up with one of the things the Japanese government*  
560 *is talking about now, ehm, they are obviously thinking about recommendations for how to*  
561 *make things better in future disasters, but it’s a big ask...*  
562  
563 It is.  
564  
565 *...one of the things they’re talking about is community. Like, if foreigners are more part*  
566 *of their local community, they feel it is more likely that.*  
567  
568 Aw, for sure. I mean, ehm, obviously, I’ve been here a long time. I was in, once I was  
569 back, I was inundated with the locals asking me for information and what to do. Ehm, and  
570 luckily for me, I, I do have a lot of Japanese friends, so I could help most people. If not,  
571 they could come here...  
572  
573 *Yeah.*  
574  
575 ...and I could feed them and look after them and whatnot. But, em, yeah, that would be  
576 very helpful, I think, someone knowledgeable in the area, knowledgeable in the language  
577 and that interacts with the, that source...  
578  
579 *Yeah.*  
580  
581 ...of information would definitely help the foreign community.  
582  
583 *Have you any tips for how to become more part of a local community in Japan?*  
584  
585 You need a lot of patience, tolerance. Ehm, they don’t do things, when it becomes a  
586 committee or a group, things get quite complicated as far as my knowledge. It’s not done  
587 the same way it would be done in Australia or the UK, ehm, but basically, yeah, I guess,  
588 um, eh, maybe people like myself that have been here a long time that do have contacts in  
589 City Hall or in, in the government, maybe, I don’t know, maybe three times a year, sit  
590 down and have a meeting, work out and make sure you’re clear with the evacuation plan.  
591 Ehm, being, being in a position where you can get the information to the other foreigners,  
592 having that information would, would be great, you know, and even a couple of practice  
593 drills through the year wouldn’t hurt, you know, just, yeah, mock, mock community  
594 evacuation plans and whatnot. Meet up at your local school at some time, would be good.  
595 Ehm, eh, I, I’ve been here a long time, I’ve gone through a few quakes. I’ve been in the  
596 ocean having a swim and a surf and whatnot when a quake has hit and the tsunami alarms  
597 go off, but, eh, one of my friends [laughter] runs a beach house down there, and they’re,  
598 “No, just stay out there, just stay out there.”  
599  
600 *[Laughter]*  
601  
602 It’s like, so the, the thing was complacency, ehm, I believe two years on now most people  
603 have actually gone back to being complacent. Eh, for, for a year, I’d say, everyone kept

604 their backpack stocked, blanket, water, essentials, whatever, passport, all that, near the  
605 door or near a place easily to grab where you could evacuate. Em, I'd be surprised if you  
606 were to do, like, a bit of a censor on, a census on that now I would imagine most people  
607 have let that slide. Ehm, completely if you see the footage from, from where the tsunami  
608 hit, eh, there's one where a fire truck is going along the road telling everybody that  
609 there's a tsunami coming, you better move along, and then the fire truck, pe, people on  
610 the fire truck could see the tsunami coming, and they have just started to speed up and  
611 then basic, it's from, they're just yelling out "Run" in Japanese, it's, because these  
612 people, they've gone through that many quakes and then those tsunami warnings go off  
613 and then 50 centimetre, like, a, a ripple rolls on to the beach...

614  
615 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*

616  
617 ...Okay, it's over. They, the, the biggest, the biggest thing, I think, that caused the most  
618 of the problems was complacency.

619  
620 *Yeah.*

621  
622 I believe that it was ten minutes before the first tsunami hit. Ehm, they, the ten minutes  
623 for a lot of them, they could have gone up to two-hundred metres, em, but because it  
624 happens all the time, they were just like, "Oh, it won't happen."...

625  
626 *Yeah, yeah.*

627  
628 ...and I think it has gone back to that now.

629  
630 *Yeah, after, after two years.*

631  
632 Two years, so, I mean, right after the quake for those six months, basically, any major  
633 aftershock, it was out of bed, grab the backpack and be ready to move. Last night [Note:  
634 he mimes waking up, raising his head off the pillow and opening one eye]...

635  
636 *[Laughter]*

637  
638 ..."No." and back to sleep, it's like.

639  
640 *I guess, it's a human thing to do maybe, I don't know. Is it?*

641  
642 Well, I mean, I've got other friends that go the other way that are, you know, if they see a  
643 flock of birds flying south, they're like, "The birds are leaving, the birds are leaving."  
644 [laughter]

645  
646 *[Laughter]*

647  
648 And it's, like, one of them said, like, "There's reports of dolphins fleeing Japan."

649  
650 *[Laughter]*

651  
652 And it's like, "Oh no!" [Note: he covered his face with his hands in exasperation]

653  
654 *Yeah.*

655  
656 And, and the streaks of clouds even...

657  
658 *Yeah, yeah.*

659  
 660 ...even though I, I think there's something to them.  
 661  
 662 *I've heard that one, yeah. I have heard about that one.*  
 663  
 664 And I really do think there is something to that because, well, again, my mate that owns  
 665 the beach house down there, he's pretty good with the weather and whatnot...  
 666  
 667 *Yeah.*  
 668  
 669 ...and he'd actually, he actually mentioned to me about the clouds, he said he'd seen the  
 670 clouds, and then, yeah, he seen them a couple of days ago and he mentioned it and when I  
 671 got back to work, my manager told me, "There's a seismic warning for the area." And I  
 672 was like, "Oh right? Cool."  
 673  
 674 *[Laughter]*  
 675  
 676 "My mate down the beach knows his stuff."  
 677  
 678 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 679  
 680 So.  
 681  
 682 *There's just one other thing I did, kind of, want to get a bit more detail on.*  
 683  
 684 Um.  
 685  
 686 *And that was about the reporters. I think that's a really interesting topic in terms of, so*  
 687 *first of all, the Canadians...*  
 688  
 689 The Canadians.  
 690  
 691 *...did they have a translator with them or could they speak Japanese?*  
 692  
 693 No, that's why they sought, that's why they sought this place out, they said. Because they  
 694 knew it was run by an Australian...  
 695  
 696 *Yeah.*  
 697  
 698 ...and luckily my wife does, has a very good sense of Jap, of English. Ehm, and she could  
 699 help them out. I mean, none of my staff were here. Well, I mean they were all getting  
 700 ready. My manager was in the shower...  
 701  
 702 *[Laughter]*  
 703  
 704 ...and so he's out in the street, he couldn't even, he didn't even have time to grab a big  
 705 towel...  
 706  
 707 *[Laughter] Oh God.*  
 708  
 709 ...he had a little, he had a little wash around [Note: he gestured as if holding a small wash  
 710 towel at his waist] and he was soaking. So they were all getting ready for work so they  
 711 didn't actually make it in, so, that was, in a way, that was good timing for my staff. But,  
 712 ehm, yeah, I, I believe the reporters had, eh, they had come down from Tokyo, and, eh,  
 713 yeah, when they got here, they didn't, I don't think they realized even how like we're a

714 hundred, a hundred and a bit kilometers away from the epicenter. I don't, I didn't think  
 715 they thought it would be this bad here...  
 716  
 717 *Yeah.*  
 718  
 719 ...but when they got here, I mean, the {hotel of a major international chain}, they had to  
 720 close, they've been closed for a year and a half [Note: a large hotel near the main train  
 721 station of the city in Ibaraki where the participant worked was very severely damaged in  
 722 the earthquake and was still being worked on at the time of the interview]...  
 723  
 724 *Yeah, I was surprised to see that.*  
 725  
 726 Yeah, so, I mean, for them, they were lucky.  
 727  
 728 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 729  
 730 It was very lucky, I mean. I'm sure, I, I love Japan for the people. I think they're really  
 731 nice people. Ehm, and, usually, I think if you're in need of help, even if they don't, if they  
 732 can't speak English...  
 733  
 734 *Yeah.*  
 735  
 736 ...they will try to help you in the sense that, em, so I don't think they would have been in  
 737 dire straits...  
 738  
 739 *Yeah.*  
 740  
 741 ...they were lucky.  
 742  
 743 *But it was great that your wife was able to take care of them...*  
 744  
 745 *Yeah.*  
 746  
 747 *...that must have been hard work for her.*  
 748  
 749 Ehm, she's a strong woman, mate. Ehm, yeah. Ehm, again, I guess, this is her life. What  
 750 we do here, we, we look after people. Ehm, I think she, kind of, it's, kind of, a natural  
 751 thing...  
 752  
 753 *Yeah.*  
 754  
 755 ...she does a great job of looking after my boys. Eh, yeah, I guess, for her at the time,  
 756 yeah, I, I felt like an absolute arse being in Australia. But the reason I was in Australia - I  
 757 should tell you that, too - I went, I had gone back to fix up my parents' house after the  
 758 enormous amount of rain that they got that year [laughter]...  
 759  
 760 *[Laughter]*  
 761  
 762 ...so they, the house was in a bit of a mess, and I spent three weeks back there cleaning  
 763 up...  
 764  
 765 *[Laughter] God.*  
 766  
 767 ...and I was literally doing, I was literally doing the last little bit and after that, I had three  
 768 days on the Gold Coast, just to unwind before coming back, but I was doing my last little

769 bit on the, on the back yard, and my sister came out crying and it's just, "Oh, what?" And  
 770 she was like, "Just come look at the TV." And I went in and looked at the TV and I just  
 771 seen this wave just washing over Japan and I'm like, "Oh my god." Yeah.  
 772  
 773 *It's hard to believe.*  
 774  
 775 Yeah. It was, it was hard. And then, yeah, I can say for me that was very hard but then  
 776 again I had, I was very worried about my wife. When I finally did get through to her, aw  
 777 jeez [laughter], she said the worst possible thing in the world, the, the one thing I didn't  
 778 want to hear: "There's water everywhere." "Oh my god [laughter] shit."  
 779  
 780 [Laughter]  
 781  
 782 "So the tsunami has come up and hit {the participant's place of residence}." And she was  
 783 like, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no." [Laughter] "The pipes around the house have cracked."  
 784 And I'm like, "Oh right, it's okay." [laughter]  
 785  
 786 [Laughter] *Oh my goodness.*  
 787  
 788 She was, "Yeah, there's water everywhere." "What!" [laughter] Yeah, looking back at it  
 789 now you can have a chuckle but...  
 790  
 791 *I'm sure at the time it didn't feel that way...*  
 792  
 793 ...shit, I just...  
 794  
 795 *...I'm sure you didn't feel that way.*  
 796  
 797 ...I thought especially with the (indistinct) that they just ha, hammered into you on the  
 798 TV. Ehm, it was, I showed a French reporter around, a French and a Spanish reporter  
 799 around down at the harbour. Ehm, but I did see a CNN reporter down there and I actually  
 800 did catch it on TV, it was laughable. Because he's up there on the wall and, you know  
 801 how they talk in the media, "So, ehm, there's just been a quake a couple of, ten, fifteen  
 802 minutes ago, do you see the water rising at all? And this reporter has just got this puzzled  
 803 look on his face [laughter]...  
 804  
 805 [Laughter]  
 806  
 807 ... like "Should I run?" or something like that. And then he just turns around and goes,  
 808 "No."  
 809  
 810 [Laughter]  
 811  
 812 [Laughter] So I mean, they were doing their best to, on the international news, to make it  
 813 sound like we were falling apart here.  
 814  
 815 *Yeah.*  
 816  
 817 Ehm, in a sense, thinking back then, ehm, I remember being very proud. I remember I  
 818 was happy to be here with the Japanese to get through it the way they did. And just, like,  
 819 eh, you've got to have seen the photos of the highway, just, just up from here. Like, just  
 820 up on the highway here. It was a drop it would have been, aw, 15-foot...  
 821  
 822 *Yeah.*  
 823

824 ...half the highway was gone...

825

826 *Yeah.*

827

828 ...that was fixed within, aw, four days. They had that highway running again. Ehm, eh,

829 business-wise, yeah, okay, four months of nothing basically. But then with that, with that

830 rebuilding that had to go on, business-wise, eh, things became bearable.

831

832 *Yeah.*

833

834 Ehm, another good story, I remember I was working in {a city in Ibaraki where the

835 participant had a business} about, I'd say it would have been about a month-and-a-half

836 after the quake, and this old Japanese guy came in and he was a bit messed, a bit messy, a

837 bit dirty, and he, he looked like he had had a few already. So I was going, "Aw, has he

838 got any money?" kind of thing and I start, I worried a little bit. And he orders a double

839 whisky, and a good one, too, and I'm like, "Oh, I might just go over and chat to him and

840 see what's going on. So I went and had a chat to him. He had been working for a month

841 straight with no day off up in Fukushima...

842

843 *Oh!*

844

845 ...he couldn't walk [Note: the participant began to shed some tears at the memory of all

846 the people buying drinks for this man who had worked so hard in Fukushima] they got

847 him messed up, man. It was cool. It was a good story. Really good story. Happy story.

848 [Note: the participant took a moment to collect himself] Very, mate, very proud. Sorry

849 again.

850

851 *Not at all.*

852

853 Really proud of him. He had to be, oh, in his sixties and you could see he had worked

854 himself to a standstill basically. Yeah, well, once everyone found out what he had been

855 doing, they just wouldn't let him pay for anything. [Note: the participant took a few more

856 minutes] No, it was really good. Really proud to be, em, here during that time. Really, eh,

857 really, really impressed with the Japanese people and just how they just, sort of, you

858 know, I, I, well, they are not new to disasters themselves...

859

860 *Yeah.*

861

862 ...so just, just their resilience, and their just, "Let's get on with it."

863

864 *Yeah.*

865

866 And the, "If we all get in and we do it, it will all be done." And, eh, in that sense, that

867 community, that community feel of being part of the community, even foreigners that did

868 hang around it was appreciated by them...

869

870 *Yeah, yeah.*

871

872 ...they loved it. It was like, "Oh you didn't run. You're not a *fly-jin* [Note: a derogatory

873 term for foreigners who left Japan during the disaster]

874

875 ."...

876

877 *Yeah.*

878

879 ..which a few people got nicknamed, *fly-jin* or *why-jin*...

880

881 *[Laughter]*

882

883 ...ehm, yeah, so, but no, they're just, they're amazing people, the Japanese...

884

885 *Yeah.*

886

887 ...and, eh, yeah, if there was a, if there was ever an actual disaster, and I could choose of

888 being in Australia or being here, I would actually choose here...

889

890 *Yeah.*

891

892 ...because of the way they did behave...

893

894 *Yeah.*

895

896 ...em, I wasn't here during the quake itself, but, ehm, I, from what I understand from

897 what I've heard of everyone's stories. Even the level of panic, it just wasn't there...

898

899 *Yeah, yeah.*

900

901 ...it was just like, "Okay, let's stay inside and see what happens," kind of thing. Yeah, I

902 think the panic, the panic I experienced after the quake and being back was, yeah, just

903 more, just, trying to calm the foreigners down. Like, basically, they couldn't, they

904 couldn't get to the airport and all this kind of stuff, and some of them wanted to leave but

905 couldn't, em, they, those people weren't much help for the people who did have to stay.

906 *Yeah.*

907

908 *But no, I think, em, like, the stories, the, the, just looking at the recovery and the speed of*

909 *the recovery and the way, I think...*

910

911 *Amazing,*

912

913 *...that, the story that Japan has to tell is a valuable one for the rest of the world, too.*

914 *There is a lot that we can...*

915

916 *It really is.*

917

918 *...that the rest of the world can learn.*

919

920 Well, actually, yeah, it really is. Em, I look at 9/11 and then I look at the UK bombings.

921 9/11 you've got people screaming, running everywhere. Em, in the UK bombings you

922 know well the UK not being surprised that they, they've, they've had experience of

923 terrorism and stuff like that before but just one guy coming out of the subway just totally

924 covered in dust. "What happened?" - the reporter trying to make it all, "I think some sort

925 of explosive device has gone off in the subway."...

926

927 *[Laughter]*

928

929 ..."What are you going to do?" "I think I'm going to make my way to my office."

930

931 *[Laughter]*

932

933 And it was, just, it was, yeah, again, I, I, out of the US and the UK, I choose the UK.



934  
 935 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 936  
 937 I think it is that experience of going through something so traumatic and just, I don't  
 938 know, having no, it's in-built in them, I guess...  
 939  
 940 *Yeah.*  
 941  
 942 ...it's engrained in them and they can get through stuff like that. I imagine anything of  
 943 that proportion to happen in Australia, the amount – well, again, looting, crime – it  
 944 would, it would have been rampant. I really believe that. Ehm, I don't, I don't like to  
 945 believe it, I'd like to think Australians were better than that. But, no, I just, I really think  
 946 there would be a lot of looting and...  
 947  
 948 *Yeah.*  
 949  
 950 ...whereas here, it was just like, well it's like it is always anyway...  
 951  
 952 *Yeah.*  
 953  
 954 "If that's, if that's his car, that's his car. If that's his bike, that's his bike." It's, like, the  
 955 only difference, I guess, at that time, if, if, if that house or if that was damaged and you  
 956 fixed up your place, it was like, "I've got no work at the moment. I'll go across and I'll  
 957 give them a hand, you know."  
 958  
 959 *Yeah.*  
 960  
 961 So that was, ehm, that's, that's what I was doing, too. Ehm, once, I mean, by the time I  
 962 got back, my staff had been in and pretty much got all the glass and everything all  
 963 cleaned up in here and so there really wasn't much to do around here. All I could actually  
 964 do was go help neighbours or I was actually over in {a city in Ibaraki where the  
 965 participant had a business}, ehm, a little bit of an older area again, so I was helping out  
 966 around there. When I say helping out, it was just moving rocks or...  
 967  
 968 *Yeah.*  
 969  
 970 ...(indistinct) stuff like that, but again, it was, yeah, I can't say it was fun, but it, it was  
 971 just good to be helping and feeling like you're doing something because there's, the  
 972 uselessness and the frustration also, the quakes coming every hour and whatnot...  
 973  
 974 *Yeah.*  
 975  
 976 ...you needed to do something. My line of work, I had nothing to do. If I was in here, I  
 977 would have just been drinking...  
 978  
 979 *Yeah.*  
 980  
 981 ...and that wouldn't have helped anyone at all...  
 982  
 983 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 984  
 985 ...but, so, um.  
 986  
 987 *Em, does, just one last question about, em, in, did you receive any information from the*  
 988 *Australian Embassy?*

989  
 990 That's a good one, I'm trying to think back. I think due to the fact that I would have  
 991 shown up on the computer, em, of being in Australia...  
 992  
 993 *Yeah.*  
 994  
 995 ...they did not bother to contact me and they haven't, they did not bother to contact me  
 996 after that. Em, yeah, I would say I'm a little disappointed in the Australian Embassy but  
 997 then again from what I hear many nationalities were in the same boat. It was basically, I  
 998 don't know, maybe, maybe if there was fresh paperwork sitting on there and you'd only  
 999 been there for a year and parents were calling the embassy and that, they made an effort  
 1000 to contact you, ehm, but I know from a lot of my friends, too, that their embassy didn't  
 1001 contact them either...  
 1002  
 1003 *Yeah.*  
 1004  
 1005 ...so yeah.  
 1006  
 1007 *Yeah, no.*  
 1008  
 1009 Anyone that did, basically, I think the embassy were saying, "Your parents have called us  
 1010 and they were wondering if you were okay." So, it was like, yeah.  
 1011  
 1012 *I think there may have been a kind of a numbers element to it as well...*  
 1013  
 1014 Oh you can't contact everyone, yeah, I understand that.  
 1015  
 1016 *...because, well, say, the Irish community were pretty small, so I think there is only about*  
 1017 *a thousand Irish people in all of Japan and so, I, I think they managed to get in contact*  
 1018 *with the, the Irish community pretty, eh, pretty comprehensively but I imagine Australian*  
 1019 *would be a bigger number.*  
 1020  
 1021 Well, actually, I think, I ended up, I ended up calling the embassy myself anyway, just  
 1022 checking in, kind of thing.  
 1023  
 1024 *Yeah.*  
 1025  
 1026 I think I did. I can't remember. There was nothing official. I know they didn't call me.  
 1027  
 1028 *Yes, yeah, yeah. Em, I, I'd imagine as well from speaking to some other people from*  
 1029 *different nationalities that there may have been programs or place or plans in place for*  
 1030 *disasters but the problem was that the staff who would have carried out those...*  
 1031  
 1032 They had already buggered off! Yeah. I believe that was the case. Again, I was lucky in  
 1033 that sense. Em, I had a Plan B. Ehm, as I already mentioned, I look after the, the guys that  
 1034 work out at the nuclear power plant there, ehm, the project manager at the, at the time had  
 1035 basically reassured us that, "Anything big happens, make your way towards the plant  
 1036 because they will be taking us out in helicopters." He said, "Your family will be allowed  
 1037 to board the helicopters." I said, "Sweet!" And it would have been the easiest thing to  
 1038 drive because everybody would have been heading the other way [laughter]. So it would  
 1039 have been (indistinct). It would have seemed strange to drive toward the nuclear power  
 1040 plant, but, em, that was the, that was my Plan B.  
 1041  
 1042 *Yeah.*  
 1043

1044 Plans after that, I wanted, I was trying to convince my wife to let me have a, buy a Range  
 1045 Rover [laughter]...  
 1046  
 1047 *[Laughter]*  
 1048  
 1049 ...a four-wheel drive, I wanted because, yeah, but again, that airport exit, after the, some  
 1050 thinking, just made no sense. The amount of people trying to get out...  
 1051  
 1052 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1053  
 1054 ...eh, the roads...  
 1055  
 1056 *Yeah.*  
 1057  
 1058 ...yeah, so. Yeah, yeah, like I said, I was lucky I had that Plan B, because everyone else  
 1059 basically if anything big happened afterwards, you were going to just have to ride it out...  
 1060  
 1061 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1062  
 1063 ...that was it, so.  
 1064  
 1065 *Well, I mean, I, I really can't thank you enough for sharing your story...*  
 1066  
 1067 Not a problem, mate.  
 1068  
 1069 *...it was amazing to hear, eh, what you.*  
 1070  
 1071 I haven't talked to many people about, em, that experience of being in Australia,  
 1072 obviously outside my Welsh mate, but, yeah, I, I really didn't think it would upset me that  
 1073 long after the event...  
 1074  
 1075 *Yeah...*  
 1076  
 1077 ...it took me a bit by surprise.  
 1078  
 1079 *...that's, kind of, the, the, the last thing. I just I hope I haven't caused you too much*  
 1080 *anxiety or stress and...*  
 1081  
 1082 Oh, not at all.  
 1083  
 1084 *...I don't want you to feel that this has been [Note: I handed him the Likert Scale to mark*  
 1085 *his stress and smiling he quickly circled 0/10]*  
 1086  
 1087 Not a problem, mate, not a problem. But, yeah, it just, that surprised me.  
 1088  
 1089 *Yeah.*  
 1090  
 1091 And I guess, yeah, being frustrated with the Japanese, you know, ehm, with the lack of  
 1092 information, I already had that due to the, due to the, em, refuelling situation [Note: the  
 1093 participant is referring here to the 1999 Tokaimura nuclear accident]  
 1094  
 1095 *Yeah.*  
 1096  
 1097 So, I've not, actually, I think I lied, I did do a study. I did one study for that months not  
 1098 the, not the earthquake. I did one study for the, eh, the Japanese, the {a city in Ibaraki}

1099 government. Basically, about how they treated the foreigners during that, and they  
1100 vowed, you know, that they were going to improve it. Ehm, yeah, obviously, I think that  
1101 was something, like, - when did that happen – but there was quite a big difference, I think  
1102 it was 2001, I think. So, in those ten years they've done bugger all.

1103  
1104 *[Laughter]*

1105  
1106 Em, eh, again, I think if we were to have another quake any time soon, it is going to be  
1107 the same. Eh, that's it.

1108  
1109 **The following is my recollection of some conversation that took place with the**  
1110 **participant just after I had switched off the audio recorder and just before we**  
1111 **parted.**

1112  
1113 The participant said that social media was very useful for him as a communication tool  
1114 and as a way to share and spread information with others in his network, especially at  
1115 times when they were being warned not to leave the house due to the danger of radiation.  
1116 He mentioned Facebook in particular and said that he felt these tools had gotten better  
1117 now that you have the ability to manage your connections and rank people you know in  
1118 different groups, orders of closeness, what content they can see, etc. He did recognize that  
1119 some people using social media who were panicking did not help, but that these people  
1120 could be managed as above.

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.  
4

5 Note: This participant began the interview in his car driving me around the coast where  
6 the tsunami had hit. This meant the first thirty minutes or so of interview data did not get  
7 recorded and he started speaking before I had had a chance to read him the informed  
8 consent. For this reason, the interview did not follow the more standard flow from general  
9 to particular that I had established in the previous interviews.

#### 10 2013/9/21 Interview with Participant 11

11 *Researcher: [Note: as the participant is filling out the profile data, I explain the question*  
12 *about previous experience of earthquakes.] So the last thing there is just about your*  
13 *experience of natural disasters before 3.11, like how frequent you felt you'd had, eh,*  
14 *natural disasters. Some of the people I'm talking to are from New Zealand and they*  
15 *would have been through various earthquakes in the their childhood...*  
16

17 Participant: Uhm, uhm.

18  
19 *...and that before they came to Japan.*  
20

21 So Japanese earthquakes? [Note: The participant looks away trying to estimate how many  
22 quakes he many have experienced in this more than twenty years in Japan.]  
23

24 *Yeah, if you've been here, like, twenty-something years, you've obviously had a lot of, of,*  
25 *of earthquakes.*  
26

27 Well, thousands now.

28  
29 *Yeah, probably. Well, certainly, you were saying there, hundreds of, eh...*  
30

31 Well, it's up to, it's up to, have you ever looked at Japan Quake Map [Note: this is a  
32 website that displays the earthquakes and aftershocks of the 2011 disaster as expanding  
33 coloured circles laid over a map of Japan in a kind of gifset animation.]?  
34

35 *Yes, yes. The [laughter]...*  
36

37 That is just...

38  
39 *...it's like fireworks or something [laughter].*  
40

41 *...it's, it's over 3,000 now.*  
42

43 *Em, it's over 3,000 since the, the?*  
44

45 Yeah. And they were only measuring above 4.5.

46  
47 *Yeah. Did you feel the earthquake there the other, eh, two, two nights ago was it now?*  
48 *Three nights ago?*  
49

50 Fuck yeah!

51  
52 *[Laughter]*  
53

54 I was waiting for the third kick.  
55  
56 *You felt it.*  
57  
58 I was, I was listening to a talking book and I heard it coming, “Oh no, here it comes!”  
59 and “Oooooohhhh!” and then the second kick and “Oooooohhhh!” Got out of bed. Stood up.  
60 And I was waiting for the third kick...  
61  
62 *Yeah?*  
63  
64 ...because that’s what happened in the big one, right? It was three kicks...  
65  
66 *Okay.*  
67  
68 ...and I, and it didn’t kick and I went, “Oh fuck!” And I went downstairs and turned the  
69 TV on to see if there was any news about Fukushima.  
70  
71 *Yeah, that’s kind of, the, the, sort of, first real question I had was, em [Note: the*  
72 *participant hands me back the profile questionnaire as I am speaking] - ah, thank you*  
73 *very much - now that you have been through the 3.11, em, earthquake, have you, sort of,*  
74 *changed your behaviours in any way, ehm, when something happens?*  
75  
76 Eh, in, in another earthquake or something?  
77  
78 *Yeah, or just?*  
79  
80 Eh, before, generally I keep my car, don’t let it get low. It’s just on half at the moment, I  
81 saw, so I’ll fill that up...  
82  
83 *Okay.*  
84  
85 ...I keep spare petrol at home. I do keep water supplies and stuff, yeah, I do. I have a  
86 supply and keep my passport with me always...  
87  
88 *Ah, okay.*  
89  
90 ...it’s in the car now. So, I’m, sort of, ready to move at any drop of a stick...  
91  
92 *Right, yeah.*  
93  
94 ...because of the situation there. Eh, oh, I am selling up, by the way. So, ehm, someone  
95 wants to buy the business [Note: the participant owns a language school in the town I  
96 visited him in.] and I’m selling place next year. I’m going back to Australia next month  
97 for four months and then when I come back, just, just sell everything up.  
98  
99 *A, and, do you plan to move home to Australia permanently or will you move to another*  
100 *location?*  
101  
102 No, I, I wouldn’t be there permanently but I’ll leave six months here, three months in  
103 Australia, three months somewhere else...  
104  
105 *Ah, okay.*  
106  
107 ...but what I’ll probably do is get something down south in Kyushu...  
108

109 *I see.*  
110  
111 ...em, and, and just, eh, live down there...  
112  
113 *I see.*  
114  
115 ...away from everything.  
116  
117 *You still have that connection to Japan, though?*  
118  
119 It's, it's like with that thing there at the moment [Note: the participant is referring to the  
120 nuclear disaster in Fukushima], you know, which could tumble over or whatever...  
121  
122 *Yeah.*  
123  
124 ...and I seriously talk about that in my - are you recording?  
125  
126 *Yeah, yeah, sorry, yeah.*  
127  
128 I seriously talk about the, the Number 4 reactor. You obviously know what happening to  
129 that [Note: this is the reactor from which Tepco plan to remove the fuel rods in November  
130 2013 as the reactor building itself is extremely structurally unsound.]?  
131  
132 *Yeah.*  
133  
134 I mean, that's in such a situation where it can collapse any time, and the, so it's, yeah,  
135 every time we have an earthquake, it's like, "Is it okay...  
136  
137 *Yeah.*  
138  
139 ...or did it drain the water?" Probably, if the, if the cooling system goes, you've probably  
140 got about a week before it boils dry, but if it just drains then, well, you know, you fucking  
141 want to get out of here straight away. Japan's finished...  
142  
143 *Yeah.*  
144  
145 ...and, as I say in the book, once that goes up, they, they won't be able to work in the  
146 nuclear plant, so the others will eventually go up as well, so you're talking about an  
147 accident, if that went like that, you know, just that one fuel pool would probably do 50-70  
148 times the amount of Chernobyl. And a lot of the facts about this have been done by, you  
149 know, eh, Fairewinds...  
150  
151 *Okay.*  
152  
153 ...Arnie Gundersen, so he's been through all my facts and checked them. Em, looked at  
154 his website?  
155  
156 *No, no. I.*  
157  
158 It's called fairewinds.com [Note: the URL is actually fairewinds.org] and it's, it's, eh,  
159 F.A.I.R.E, it's got an E on it, and then winds dot com.  
160  
161 *Uhum.*  
162  
163 Em, I can give you a contact of his wife, if you email me...

164  
165 *That would be great, yeah.*  
166  
167 ...but, eh, yeah, and then if the others catch on fire, if they, if they can't control them  
168 because they've lost, no-one can enter the plant, so you've got another, what, five pools  
169 to go up, you're talking about, it's something like 500 times the amount of, em,  
170 Chernobyl...  
171  
172 *Uhuh.*  
173  
174 ...and that's what's sitting there and nothing is being done about it...  
175  
176 *Yeah.*  
177  
178 ...and living this close, you know, a hundred-and-ten k's away, everybody pretends  
179 there's nothing wrong, people living around here, and, well, or try to just forget about it,  
180 but I guess because I've written two books about this, so immersed in it, you know?  
181  
182 *Yeah.*  
183  
184 My wife gets a bit pissed off. She'll say, you know, "Stop bloody going on about it."  
185 Well, you know, it's actually really there...  
186  
187 *Yeah.*  
188  
189 ...it's really what's going to happen if it happens. What they're trying to, trying to do  
190 actually is from November is pull the rods out from the Number 4. Arnie reckons,  
191 Fairewinds, he's the expert, he reckons it's a fifty-fifty shot. Ehm, they've never ever  
192 tested this manually and they're so close together, the rods, like, you know, a centimetre  
193 or so apart, and a lot of the casing is broken because of the salt water, eh, they say some  
194 of them are bent...  
195  
196 *Yeah.*  
197  
198 ...if one breaks and falls off and hits the others, then, you know, and that's one reason I'm  
199 not going to be here when they do it...  
200  
201 *Right, right.*  
202  
203 ...and the other thing is, even if, he says, even if it touches one of the others, it could set  
204 off, and he says they're going to try and perform this...  
205  
206 *In November.*  
207  
208 ...starting from November.  
209  
210 *Em, just, do you mind me asking had you been, kind of, an expert on radiation before the*  
211 *disaster or did you find all this out subsequent to 3.11.*  
212  
213 Ehm, I knew reasonably about the nuclear industry before, where we have the school is in  
214 {an area in Ibaraki near a nuclear power station} so, and as I said first, I actually worked,  
215 my first job was {as an English teacher in a nuclear power plant}.  
216  
217 *Ah, okay, okay.*  
218



219 So I knew a lot of guys, I taught a lot of the scientists...

220

221 *Yeah.*

222

223 ...involved in the, eh, fusion, eh, a director there as well, and {a person related to the

224 participant worked in} Tokai 1 Power Plant, {redacted}, so yeah, I do have a lot of

225 friends in the industry, and Americans as well, so, they had a fair idea of what was going

226 on. But, no, I wasn't a radiation expert.

227

228 *Yeah, the, the reason I'm asking is...*

229

230 Um.

231

232 *...just because I'm interested in translation, so I wanted to know how you got the*

233 *information. Was it in Japanese and you just were able to understand it or did you find?*

234

235 No, it's just I got English, eh, all through other friends, like, American guys in the nuclear

236 industry, eh, another Japanese guy who studied nuclear, eh, physics in Tokyo University

237 (an ex-student) gave me a lot, stuff that I couldn't find...

238

239 *Yeah.*

240

241 ...but a lot of it, Fairewinds, there's an awful lot out there in English, if you search for it...

242

243 *I see.*

244

245 ...there, there is. You've got to look at alternative media...

246

247 *I, I see.*

248

249 ...that's the, because, I mean, there was a complete black-out, I mean, when they started

250 that, the reactor at Oi [Note: Oi had been Japan's only operating nuclear power plant

251 following the disaster, but all reactors were put offline in September 2013], I think, a year

252 later, which they didn't need to start, it was just to say, well, "we can start them up again"

253 sort of thing. I mean, they said there was going to be a big power shortage, but how much

254 power if this was started, that was, eh, last summer, and it went on and on and on, and

255 they would have to make these drastic cuts, I heard nothing this year about these drastic

256 cuts or anything that they'd need to make...

257

258 *Yeah, yeah.*

259

260 ...there was zero in the paper, so it was all a load of crap. Eh, but, eh, when they started

261 that up, it was complete media blackout and they demonst, the first demonstration which

262 they reckon had over a hundred-thousand people, there was nothing in the news. It's just

263 a little flicker once on NHK and that was it. Complete media blackout, they, they went

264 wild on the Internet, so they couldn't keep quiet and then when the protests started going

265 every week, all that came out in the news, but again, they suppressed it quite a lot.

266

267 *Yeah.*

268

269 You know they've brought in a new, well, they're passing a new law, send me, remind

270 me to send you the link, that if you publish anything about Fukushima that is harmful to

271 the government or the country, it's not really explicit on what you is or not and if it's on a

272 blog or anything, that it's a criminal offence and they can prosecute you.

273

274 *Crikey.*  
 275  
 276 It's going through right at the moment.  
 277  
 278 *Wow.*  
 279  
 280 I don't know how my translation of the book in Japanese is going to go. [Note: the  
 281 participant has written two books on the Fukushima disaster.]  
 282  
 283 *Yeah, yeah. That's, that's, em, a very extreme law. My goodness.*  
 284  
 285 So you can see how worried they are about covering it up.  
 286  
 287 *Yeah. And you mentioned, you know, blog and social media, I mean, how do you control*  
 288 *that as well?*  
 289  
 290 Well, that's the, that's the big question. How far are they going to go...  
 291  
 292 *Yeah.*  
 293  
 294 ...or what kind of story is it? I'm not quite sure of the details of it. But yeah, that's as far,  
 295 that's how they're going.  
 296  
 297 *And I'm also just, kind of, now that you've brought up things like blogs and social media,*  
 298 *I am particularly interested in that in terms of disaster. I know earlier on you said that,*  
 299 *em, when the disas, when the earthquake hit you couldn't use your phone to call out and*  
 300 *some international calls could come in. Em, were you able to access the Internet to look*  
 301 *at, eh, eh, anything?*  
 302  
 303 No, it was all down.  
 304  
 305 *And, do you remember how long it took before that sort of thing came...*  
 306  
 307 The power came...  
 308  
 309 *...back?*  
 310  
 311 ...back on, eh, on the Sunday afternoon where we were, but this area was out, like {area  
 312 of Ibaraki near coast} was out for like two weeks or three weeks. Tokai was up because  
 313 it's, there was another power station so then they probably had to give power to the  
 314 nuclear power station, so that area was quick.  
 315  
 316 *Yeah. Okay, I see.*  
 317  
 318 But, the thing is then, Tokai only just survived and the reason it survived was, you'll read  
 319 it in the book anyway, but they had decided to increase the size of the tsunami wall, ehm,  
 320 by, it's in the book, three or four metres...  
 321  
 322 *Uhum.*  
 323  
 324 ...and they were in the process of moving the generators up to the second or third stories  
 325 of buildings. They had moved one, and that's the only that survived. That's the only one  
 326 that kept that one going. It's quite scary because, you sort of, when you read how many of  
 327 the power stations lost their generators, which is not, never publicized. You don't really  
 328 hear about it.

329  
 330 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 331  
 332 And lost their pumps and stuff and, it's, [laughter] you know...  
 333  
 334 *That's, it's...*  
 335  
 336 ...it could have been a much bigger problem.  
 337  
 338 *...yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I, I, I do remember hearing that, eh, like some of the, em, I*  
 339 *guess, faults that have been shown with the design were were known beforehand and had*  
 340 *been.*  
 341  
 342 The design of the reactor was faulty from the beginning and the guys who designed it -  
 343 and it's in the book again - em, resigned over the design faults and that was in the mid-  
 344 1970s, and they continued to use it, ehm, until that, it was, the containment was too small,  
 345 the bottom, they put the rods into the bottom which was, you know, really did melt  
 346 through, em, it's all in the book...  
 347  
 348 *Yeah.*  
 349  
 350 ...all the facts about it. It, they knew and they continued to use it. As Arnie said, he was  
 351 talking to his wife in the months before the accident and she said, "Where do you think  
 352 the next nuclear is?" And he goes, "Well, I don't know where but it will be in one of the,  
 353 eh, what's it, W, what are they called, Boiling W 1," or whatever, it's called, the reactor.  
 354  
 355 *Which is the type of reactor. So, it was, it was known about. Em, I did also want to touch*  
 356 *on you talked about how there was an information blackout in the Japanese media, did*  
 357 *you try to, because obviously you speak many languages, did you try to use overseas*  
 358 *media to get information?*  
 359  
 360 *Yeah.*  
 361  
 362 *And what type? H, how? If you could just talk a bit more about that?*  
 363  
 364 So, you know, I saw that it was, it was a complete blackout, because I was watching,  
 365 someone was filming it live and it was on the Internet, I forget how, who sent me the link,  
 366 but I watching them demonstrate when they were just about to start them up, and I was  
 367 encouraging them to go out, charge, be samurais [laughter]...  
 368  
 369 *[Laughter]*  
 370  
 371 ...and knock the gates down. I was, without leaving my name. Em, anyway, eh, I rang  
 372 people in Australia and I said, "Is there any news about this starting up?" And then yes  
 373 there was in Australian newspapers, em, but there was, I said, "Is there anything about the  
 374 demonstration in Tokyo? There's 150,000 people." "No." And then I went to another  
 375 alternative media, which did have it, which was, eh, Alex Jones knew what was going on,  
 376 and also The Drudge Report knew what was going on. And those two media, alternative  
 377 media outlets knew, were, were putting it up...  
 378  
 379 *Okay.*  
 380  
 381 ...and then it was getting spread around...  
 382  
 383 *Ah, okay.*

384  
385 ...but in, for the Japanese, some people were, you know, Japanese people were putting it  
386 up on, you know, Facebook and stuff like that...  
387  
388 *Yeah.*  
389  
390 ...were getting shut down sometimes, too.  
391  
392 *Really? That's, that's fascinating because that's really, kind of, the sort of story I*  
393 *associate with, I don't know, let's say China or somewhere like that. It's not what I*  
394 *imagine of, of, of Japan.*  
395  
396 No, no. Em, shut it down.  
397  
398 *Yeah. And in terms, again because, you know, my, my focus is on the idea of, like,*  
399 *translation and interpreting and stuff like that, as somebody from this area, were you*  
400 *asked by, I don't know, any media or that to, to help them out, to show them around or*  
401 *anything like that?*  
402  
403 As I said earlier, I wasn't here most of the time anyway.  
404  
405 *Yeah, yeah, but, I mean, even sub, subsequently you came back.*  
406  
407 *Yeah, yeah.*  
408  
409 *Em, because I know that a lot of the reporters who, who came to, you know, all over*  
410 *Japan, but who came to this area, they had no preparation...*  
411  
412 *Um.*  
413  
414 *...they didn't, I think some people who came to {cities in Ibaraki} or that, they didn't*  
415 *really know anything about the area, they didn't speak Japanese, so I was just wondering*  
416 *how they?*  
417  
418 No contact whatsoever. I would have liked to if someone had contacted me.  
419  
420 *Yeah. But also just in terms of contacts, you mentioned before that, eh, on the,*  
421 *immediately after the disaster, you didn't get any contact from anyone about the, the*  
422 *nuclear accident. Eh, did you ever get contacted subsequently by, like, the Australian*  
423 *Embassy or?*  
424  
425 [Note: The participant shook his head in answer to this.]  
426  
427 *Never.*  
428  
429 I don't think I'm registered with the Embassy anyway, so they probably don't, ehm, I'm  
430 sure they know I'm here...  
431  
432 *[Laughter]*  
433  
434 ...I'm sure they know I'm here. They must. Ehm, no, no, I remember when I, like, got to  
435 {the town in the west of Japan that the participant went to after the disaster struck} and  
436 the third one went up, and I rang my friend who was living up here, an Australian guy  
437 who now lives back in Australia. And I rang him up, it was, I had just got through, I had  
438 been trying to get through to him for days, and I said to him, "Where are you you

439 {redacted}?" He said, "Look mate, I can't talk. I'm running out of the house. The wind's  
 440 blowing onshore." And I said, "Are you still there?" I just said, you know, "Get out of  
 441 there, mate." You know, I couldn't believe he was still here...

442

443 *Yeah.*

444

445 ...with his two kids. Young boys. Only, he's got a Japanese wife who, you know, is a  
 446 pretty, my wife is not like that so, you know, she believes it's all serious. He actually and  
 447 his boys evacuated to Tokyo without his school's permission - he was working for the  
 448 Junior High School - eh, they cut his pay for evacuating during that time without letting  
 449 them know. Because they were asking him to come into the office or something  
 450 ridiculous like that.

451

452 *Oh dear, that's very, that's very upsetting. And, so, it sounds like, in a way, the, your*  
 453 *community of friends was the way you, kind of shared information.*

454

455 Yes. Eh, you know, when I got to Shikoku [Note: a region in the west of Japan] I rang up  
 456 my, he'd be another good person to talk to, my doctor friend who lives in {an area of  
 457 Ibaraki} and I said, you know, "What's the situation?" And he goes, "Oh, it's blowing  
 458 from the north today." He says, "Where are you?" I said, "Shikoku." He said, "That's a  
 459 good place to be in. Don't let {the participant's daughter's name} come back." That's my  
 460 daughter. "Don't let her come back." I said, "Okay, thank you." And then I said, I  
 461 remember, I forgot there was an Aussie girl going to High School in {this friend's place  
 462 of residence} and staying with them, and I said, "Shit, what happened to the girl?" And  
 463 he goes, em, "She's still here." And I'm, like, "Really? Can I talk to her?" And she gets  
 464 on the phone, because she'd been up to the house a few times, and I said, "How are you  
 465 going? What's going on?" And she goes, "Can you tell me what's going on? I don't know  
 466 what's going on. No one is telling me what, some people are saying this, some people are  
 467 saying." And I said, "Look, just get out of there as quick as you can. Get as far away  
 468 south as you can." "How do I do that?" I said, "Just get on a train. You just got to get  
 469 someone to drive you. Just get out of there. Put me back on to him."...

470

471 *Yeah.*

472

473 ...and he came back on and I said, "You got to get her out of there." And he said, "Yeah,  
 474 we're arranging it." And I think she was gone in, like, the next two days. I mean, she was  
 475 there at the worst time. Again she was left incommunicado. No communication.

476

477 *Sorry, was that girl the same AET [Note: assistant English teacher] you were talking*  
 478 *about earlier on?*

479

480 No...

481

482 *Is that a different...*

483

484 ...this is a different girl.

485

486 *...oh so that other AET was also?*

487

488 She wasn't the AET. This girl was actually a high school student. She was...

489

490 *Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah, I'm sorry.*

491

492 ...homestay at the doctor's. I mean, I've got an e-mail for her too. She can talk, if you  
 493 want. But, eh, yeah, she was just there for junior high, she really had no idea what to do.

494 And I was really sorry, because in the rush of the thing, I completely forgot she was here.  
 495 The other guy, the British guy who lived right opposite them was a friend who is now  
 496 living in Kyushu [Note: in the south of Japan], he left with his family, his daughter, his  
 497 son and his wife. And I said, "Why didn't you take her?" So, he said, he said, "I tried to,  
 498 but they wouldn't let me take her. They said it wasn't my responsibility because it was  
 499 Lions Club or something, not Lions Club, Rotary, one of the two. They had responsibility  
 500 for her." Just get in, get in the car, man. I would have said, "Just get in the car!"  
 501  
 502 *Yeah, yeah. Because, obviously, one of the things I would like to, sort of, see happen, I*  
 503 *don't know if it's, if it's possible, you know, but people like yourself, you speak Japanese,*  
 504 *you have community friends, but some people are going to come to Japan without any*  
 505 *network...*  
 506  
 507 That's what happened to them, that's, that's exactly what happened to the AETs...  
 508  
 509 *Yeah.*  
 510  
 511 ...they were just left in their apartments, and if food was out, they were like, "Where do  
 512 we get food? Where do we get water?" [Laughter] No one came around to help, they said.  
 513 I mean, they, someone came around and just said something, you know, eh, and that was  
 514 it. They didn't really understand what they said...  
 515  
 516 *Because it would have been in Japanese?*  
 517  
 518 ...in Japanese. Because a lot of these schools that have the AETs don't, you know, you're  
 519 lucky to have anybody who speaks English...  
 520  
 521 *Right, yeah.*  
 522  
 523 ...and if the teacher is commuting from {nearby large cities in Ibaraki}, the one that does  
 524 speak English, they're not going to come in. No way...  
 525  
 526 *Di, disaster. Yeah, yeah.*  
 527  
 528 ...they're going to look after themselves. So that basically, I said, basically what  
 529 happened was there [Note: the participant made a gesture of open hands spread apart  
 530 indicating helplessness, nothing to be done.].  
 531  
 532 *Oh yeah, it's, because, em, like, obviously, everybody now is trying to come up with ways*  
 533 *to prevent that sort of thing from happening in the future but, I don't know, would you*  
 534 *have any idea on how, how could you, eh, prevent that sort of thing?*  
 535  
 536 Well, they, as the Japanese have evacuation centres and all that set up, they should have  
 537 support in English, which they do in Tokai, because there are parents, and staff, but, you  
 538 know, like Ota and these other places don't. And they should have a professionally taped  
 539 announcement through their announcement system that says the, "To English speakers,  
 540 please report to, you know, whatever evacuation centre. Please go there." And, you know,  
 541 then they can be taken care of, obviously the half English, half Japanese, but, at least they  
 542 know where to go.  
 543  
 544 *Absolutely, that's key information...*  
 545  
 546 *Yeah.*  
 547

548 ...because I know you mentioned earlier on, there was a message in Tokai but it was  
 549 difficult to even understand the person's English.  
 550  
 551 That's right. Yeah...  
 552  
 553 Heavily...  
 554  
 555 ...accented...  
 556  
 557 ...accented and...  
 558  
 559 ...and, yeah. So I ended up understanding the Japanese better. So.  
 560  
 561 Aaaahhh, that's a fairly small, you know, that would be an easy improvement to make but  
 562 could have a big impact on.  
 563  
 564 And being Tokai, a lot of people speak English in Tokai...  
 565  
 566 Yeah, yeah.  
 567  
 568 ...because there's the nuclear industry there and J-PARC [Note: this is the Japan Proton  
 569 Accelerator Research Complex] and all the research into new energy. A lot of people  
 570 speak really good English, so they shouldn't have a problem finding someone to do it in  
 571 English...  
 572  
 573 Yeah, yeah.  
 574  
 575 ...I know s, so many people that speak good English in Tokai. Why they put this lady on  
 576 that you could hardly understand...  
 577  
 578 Yeah.  
 579  
 580 ...I'm not quite sure.  
 581  
 582 I know that, like, yeah, the, the, the disaster is so huge, there are many, many things to  
 583 improve and many, many things to talk about and I'm just doing one small thesis just on  
 584 language stuff.  
 585  
 586 But I'll go back to the first nuclear accident that happened when the JCL accident  
 587 happened as well. So there was, there was no English announcement actually on that one.  
 588 Ehm, and during the, my wife spotted it first, she had the TV on in the afternoon, and she  
 589 just said, "There's a leak." And I thought she meant our bathroom upstairs was leaking,  
 590 or something. "Oh, no, no, no. Tokai." And I said, "What do you mean?" I went and  
 591 looked out the window and saw reporters standing on the road with geiger counters  
 592 showing radiation levels. And I go, "Right, we better ring our government office in Tokai  
 593 and see what's happening." You know? And she rings them up and they go, "Oh nothing  
 594 to worry about. It's fine. You can be outside. It's all okay." And we go, "You've got to be  
 595 shitting me. That it's safe for children to be outside, it's all cool?" I said, "You've got to  
 596 be kidding me." So I rang up my office and said to the girls, "Close the school. Just put a  
 597 sign on the door that we're closed today and get out of there." And I knew which way the  
 598 wind was blowing, being a surfer...  
 599  
 600 Oh, of course, yeah.  
 601

602 ...and I said, I told them which way to go according to the wind. It wasn't that type of one  
603 anyway. It was like a big X-ray going off, actually, so it wasn't actually a release of  
604 particles, you know, material, it was more like an X-ray coming out. But, ehm, so they  
605 left and then I packed up straight away and grabbed the kids from school and went to, the  
606 first night I went to {a town}, about 50 k's away. Then, you know, I'm watching the TV  
607 that night. "Oh, now, we've got a 10-km don't go outside zone. Here we go!" And then it  
608 went to 20 km...

609  
610 *Yeah, yeah.*

611  
612 ...so you know, I thought, "Here we go!" Communication, again, I was communicating  
613 with foreigners I knew...

614  
615 *Yeah.*

616  
617 ...different people in America that I knew, people in the nuclear industry I knew, {a  
618 person related to the participant who worked in the plant} was saying it was fine, it was  
619 okay. Having said that, my sister came and she took off with me, so that's not good. Ehm,  
620 but, eh, again, the media was not giving you a true report...

621  
622 *Yeah.*

623  
624 ...but after that finished and I did talk to some nuclear scientists about exactly what  
625 happened in the situation, they said, "Well, no. It was more like a giant X-ray going off."  
626 So you had to be, to be really effected, within 300 metres to 500 metres and then maybe  
627 maximum just a kilometer away. {A person related to the participant} was probably 400  
628 metres away at the second-hand shop when it happened. Got breast cancer two years  
629 later. My other friend was, {friend's name} who lived up here was, you know, the  
630 Australian, he was probably, there was, there was apartments in a straight line from  
631 where that happened, 150 metres? They kept them all inside. He was there. They scanned  
632 him and they detected radiation. Ehm, his first babies, one had quite a few problems, you  
633 know, bone and hearing problems and all sorts of things. We don't know where that's  
634 from...

635  
636 *Right. Yeah.*

637  
638 ...and we'll never be able to say...

639  
640 *Yeah.*

641  
642 ...but I haven't heard anything else really much about it. Ehm, I mean, you know there  
643 was another leak in Tokai a few months ago...

644  
645 *Yeah, yeah.*

646  
647 ...they didn't tell us until two days later. There's a, there's a fucking primary school down  
648 the wind about 300 metres from it. I mean, it goes on and on.

649  
650 *Yeah.*

651  
652 One of the questions I had for when that first nuclear accident happened to one of the  
653 nuclear scientists I used to teach. I said to him, "Do you think there'll be another nuclear  
654 accident? And he goes, "Oh it's not a question of there being another accident, it's just a  
655 question of when and how big it will be." That was his answer. That's, kind of, that's the  
656 way they look at it.



657  
658 *So do you think that having, do you think having been there for the first, the first accident,*  
659 *do you think that having been there for that accident, so f,for the early accident, changed*  
660 *how you behaved in the 3.11?*  
661  
662 Oh, definitely. Definitely. Ehm, because, you know, straight away I knew, you know, I  
663 knew it was a pack of lies...  
664  
665 *Yeah.*  
666  
667 ...when nuclear power starts to dry up, mate, it's not okay.  
668  
669 *Yeah, yeah.*  
670  
671 That's, like, a complicated business. If they, they don't actually blow up. Well actually  
672 those ones were designed for the top of the building to blow off, this guy told me, one of  
673 the engineers. Who would design something like that?  
674  
675 *[Laughter] To blow up.*  
676  
677 Imagine you designing in case it got a helium build up that the roof would blow off.  
678 That's what one of the guys told me. Can you fucking believe that?  
679  
680 *It's, it's ,actually, one just one, really this is my, kind of, final, final question, em, one of*  
681 *the things that people have talked about is sort of sensationalism in the overseas media*  
682 *about the situation in Japan. Wh, what's your opinion on that? Do, do you feel the*  
683 *reporting that you saw in the overseas media was appropriate?*  
684  
685 At, at that time or now?  
686  
687 *Well, I guess first of all, at that time, and then, maybe, now, if you could deal with them*  
688 *separately.*  
689  
690 No. It was very under-reported in Japan. Em, they, you know, hid most of the information  
691 from the public. I mean, when that reactor blew up in Fukushima, I don't know if you  
692 know, they didn't show it on Fukushima TV. Not for about 6, 7 hours. They showed it on  
693 other TV channels. [Exasperated laughter] They didn't show it in Fukushima.  
694  
695 *Wow.*  
696  
697 *Yes.*  
698  
699 *Really. Really.*  
700  
701 Em, no, they really downplayed it in the Japanese media, like, "Nothing wrong guys. It's  
702 okay. Don't panic." [laughter]  
703  
704 *Crikey.*  
705  
706 But I met a lot of people, even Japanese, who evacuated at the time, you know, it's not  
707 just the foreigners...  
708  
709 *Yeah, yeah.*  
710

711 ...that's bullshit. You know, one lady cal, said to me, you know, called me the 'fly-jin'  
 712 jibe [Note: a derogatory term for foreigners who left Japan during the disaster]. I was, I  
 713 said, "Okay, let's put it this way, your daughter is studying in China, a hundred  
 714 kilometers away from a reactor, three reactors blow up after a big tsunami and  
 715 earthquake, are you, what are you going to do? Are you going to say, 'Cool, just stay  
 716 there,' or are you going to say, 'Come home.'" And she goes, "Okay, yeah. I see what  
 717 you mean." And I said, "Yeah," [laughter] "that's what happened." You know, what do  
 718 you think is going to happen?  
 719  
 720 *Yeah, no, I'm very glad that you mentioned that actually because you are not the only*  
 721 *person to, to talk about that in, eh, in, in, in their stories, yeah. It was, I, I, I mean,*  
 722 *absolutely, I can understand the decisions that people made, and I think that's a good*  
 723 *way that you described it there, "Okay, let's, let's turn the tables and, yeah, see how*  
 724 *you'd react." Em, that's pretty much all I have, if there's anything else, unless there's*  
 725 *just anything else in terms of communication and getting information and different*  
 726 *languages. Is there anything you'd, you could think of that I haven't talked about or?*  
 727  
 728 You know, it was, it was difficult to know who was telling the truth and what, what was  
 729 actually going on was the main problem, right? Em, and I really turned to people that  
 730 were in the nuclear industry to give me information, people that were actually monitoring  
 731 it in America, and saying, "Okay, what's the radiation leak?" And he goes, "Aw, look  
 732 like it's safe to go back now, but not for too, too long. Beware," as he said, "if one of  
 733 them 'burps' get the hell out of there."  
 734  
 735 *And that, this, you, you, you, you said if one goes, it's likely that it would be this kind of*  
 736 *chain.*  
 737  
 738 Well, nobody would be able to survive that much radiation to be able to run the plant  
 739 [laughter] that's the problem...  
 740  
 741 *Oh my goodness.*  
 742  
 743 ...and it's all kept secret from the public. No one knows about it. So I actually start the  
 744 book off with that happening...  
 745  
 746 *Okay.*  
 747  
 748 ...and that's how I start both books off in different ways, but just to get people - oh well, I  
 749 write action books, too - you know?  
 750  
 751 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 752  
 753 And as I say, it is science fiction, so don't get dismayed in the first, sort of, seventy pages  
 754 of what's going on, because there is a bigger message once it all happens, you know, I get  
 755 a third perspective. The second book is pretty straightforward. The same characters with a  
 756 few added extracts. Em, in the second one, I put in Americans, you know, chopper pilots  
 757 and stuff.  
 758  
 759 *Ehm, this is not really to do with the project. It's just for my own interest. What, kind of,*  
 760 *motivated you to, to write the books. When, when did it strike you to do?*  
 761  
 762 Oh, I was a writer, anyway.  
 763  
 764 *But I mean, sorry, not the science fiction version, the, eh, the version you said which was*  
 765 *more you'd taken the science fiction stuff out.*

766  
767 Oh, it's because someone said, "I really liked it, but I'd like to read one without the  
768 science fiction in it."  
769  
770 *Oh, okay. Okay.*  
771  
772 And I said, "Sure. Okay, well, I'll do that. That won't take me long. Just take some  
773 characters out and put some new ones in." That's what I did.  
774  
775 *Oh, I see.*  
776  
777 And that should be out soon, actually.  
778  
779 *Well, as I said, I'll definitely check them out. And thank you again for everything.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.  
4

5 Note: the participant and the researcher worked together in the same company at the time  
6 of the disaster and actually sat at desks beside each other. Both were at their desks at the  
7 onset of the disaster and spent the first few hours of the immediate post-disaster period  
8 together.

9 *2013/9/22 Interview with Participant 12*

10 *Researcher: So that's all the paperwork...*

11  
12 Participant: Okay.

13  
14 *...and then - [Note: the researcher clears up the forms on the sofa between him and the*  
15 *participant] I will keep that one, this one, as I said, is for afterwards - ...*

16  
17 Okay.

18  
19 *... just to get down to it, I usually start with a very general - thanks [Note: the participant*  
20 *hands me back the pen I had given him to fill out the profile sheet] - [laughter] a very,*  
21 *very general question, just tell me what happened to you in the 2011 disaster.*  
22

23 Oh, well, from my perspective it was, I mean, it was fairly, I was in Tokyo and, like, it, it  
24 wasn't that bad as such. I mean, I never once lost electricity, Internet or water [Note:  
25 gesturing to the researcher] the same experience, em, ehm, I was, the earthquake scared  
26 me. I did think I was going to die, em, when I was under the desk, and it was made worse  
27 by someone shouting "daijobu, it's going to be okay" at me [laughter] [Note: the  
28 participant is referring to the fact that I, the researcher, shouted this at him while we were  
29 both sheltering under our office desks side by side]...

30  
31 *That was me, by the way.*

32  
33 ...[laughter] ha, ha yeah! I know. Eh, you were saying for the record?

34  
35 *Yeah.*

36  
37 Okay. Like, that made me even more confident that it was not okay.

38  
39 *Oh, that's good for me to know.*  
40

41 Ehm, like, I did, I really, really thought I might die. Ehm, because I was being, as I was,  
42 like, being thrown around under that desk was pretty scary. And afterwards, of course,  
43 and we ran, we ran outside and the, the, the, the {skyscraper that was directly beside our  
44 own office building} that wasn't finished - finished now, it looks very nice - [Note: the  
45 skyscraper directly beside our own office building was under construction at the time of  
46 the disaster and had a huge crane hanging from it on March 11] ehm, it, eh, was waving  
47 back and forth, like, you remember that?

48  
49 *[Note: the researcher just nods because he wants the participant to focus on telling his*  
50 *own story rather than also imagining the researcher's story]*  
51

52 And, like, I started crying and I had, I had another co-worker patting my hand, and, ehm  
53 [laughter] {co-worker's name}, eh, like, it was just, and, I, I, I wasn't, it was strange for

54 me, because when I was crying, I was, I wasn't crying because I was, then at that point I  
55 didn't think I was going to die anymore, it was just, utter, utter stress, like, pouring out of  
56 me. Like, I haven't been in that situation too many times in my life where I've just been  
57 so stressed that I've cried. I've had, I've had one other experience like that, and that was  
58 in college when I had no money, and, like, I had no idea how I was actually, I thought I  
59 wasn't going to be able to do my Masters, which I had, like, all applied for and, like, was  
60 finished and I needed money. That was, like, the only other thing that was similar to me,  
61 for me. Ehm, and then I went home and, like, I found, like, a lot of, everything in the  
62 house was thrown around of course, and, like, some things were broken and that upset me  
63 again, like, em, I was, uhm, I was watching the news and the, the thing, like, that added  
64 so much stress [laughter] was the *kinkyujishinsokuho*, the emergency earthquake warning  
65 notification system, but that little noise beeping off. Ehm, I've kind of forgotten what  
66 your question was. Can you remind me?

67  
68 *Just tell me what happened to you.*

69  
70 Okay. Just what happened, yeah. Ehm, that's what I'm doing. Okay [laughter]. Ehm,  
71 yeah, and so I went home, I tidied my apartment and I remember waking up the next day,  
72 and I woke up, em, fair, pretty much, like, I woke up, like, as normal, but I just didn't  
73 want to get out of bed. And I went into work late, and just said sorry [laughter]. And I felt  
74 bad, I felt a bit guilty for going into work late as well, but I just remember just going and  
75 just not getting out of bed and, eh, uhm, yeah, that was it. The, the, one of the worst  
76 things that stayed with me or has stayed with me was when we were in work and on the  
77 news there was, ehm, eh, this is upsetting me now, eh, there was, ehm, on the TV there  
78 was the live broadcast and you could see, you could see a car driving up the road, I think  
79 it was in Miyagi-ken, and, eh, like, they were driving forward and they could see the  
80 wave coming to them and, like, this [Note: the participant gestures as if one hand was a  
81 car and the other hand was a wave approaching], and the car starts turning around and  
82 reversing, and, eh, like, so you can see the car trying to reverse, but the wave is actually  
83 coming in from the other side as well, and then the picture just cut off, yeah. That, that  
84 really, like, that really, that's upsets me now still thinking about that, like...

85  
86 *Uhum.*

87  
88 ...I don't know who was in that car, like [Note: the participant's voice waivers and his  
89 eyes water] in my imagination it could be, like, a mother with her little child or something  
90 like that. Uhm, yeah, but for me, I was, I was very comfortable in Tokyo, like, I didn't, I  
91 really, like, there was big problems, things about the radiation, but personally I felt at  
92 200km we were, we were fine, you know, like, but, the, from what I knew of Chernobyl,  
93 like, the, the worst, like, area was, like, up to 50km I think, or something maybe up to, I, I  
94 forget now at this point, but, I, I did, I felt very safe, and I also, another thing I did is I  
95 checked the routes of rivers that come in to Tokyo to see if they passed anywhere near  
96 Fukushima for the water supply, and I also thought that the water was safe there as a  
97 result of that, so. Given the fact that I never lost, sorry, I said water, Internet and  
98 electricity, but I also should have added gas, like, lost nothing, like, my life was very  
99 comfortable. Ehm, yeah. In a way, like, felt slightly guilty actually, like, you know, like, I  
100 had all the, I was very comfortable, my, all the amenities I needed, and, you know, there  
101 was 20,000 dead on the other end of the country and hundreds of thousands without  
102 homes, like, you know, that felt, you know, a mixture of, well, guilt, stress, panic, yeah,  
103 lots, lots of feelings at the time. Ehm, uhm, uhm, that pretty much sums up my, my.

104  
105 *Okay. Well, first of all, there's a couple of things I want to ask you about, but before I do,*  
106 *I also want to tell you that I thought I was going to die as well.*

107  
108 Oh.

109  
 110 *Ehm, I, I've had that experience once before in my life when I nearly drowned...*  
 111  
 112 Uhm.  
 113  
 114 *...and I did actually feel at the time, eh, when I nearly drowned that I was going to die...*  
 115  
 116 Uh.  
 117  
 118 *...so I had experienced it before, but this was a different feeling. As you said, we were*  
 119 *both under our own desks...*  
 120  
 121 Yeah.  
 122  
 123 *...and we were being shaken around...*  
 124  
 125 Yeah.  
 126  
 127 *...and, eh, I don't remember the man's name, but do you remember the bucho [Note:*  
 128 *bucho means senior manager] who sat beside us...*  
 129  
 130 {says manager's name}.  
 131  
 132 *...{redacted} When I was saying, "Daijobu, daijobu" [Note: this means 'it's okay, it's*  
 133 *okay] to you...*  
 134  
 135 Yeah, yeah.  
 136  
 137 *... "it's okay, it's okay," he said, "Daijobu ja nai yo." [Note: this means 'it's not at all*  
 138 *okay. "] [laughter]...*  
 139  
 140 Yeah, yeah.  
 141  
 142 *...he said, "It's not okay."...*  
 143  
 144 Yeah.  
 145  
 146 *...eh, for me, I ca, I, I'd love to tell you why I kept saying daijobu, daijobu...*  
 147  
 148 [Laughter]  
 149  
 150 *...I don't know that I was saying it to you...*  
 151  
 152 To you! I don't think it was. I don't think you were saying it to me.  
 153  
 154 *...I don't think I was. I think I was saying it to myself...*  
 155  
 156 I thought so, too.  
 157  
 158 *Yeah, but what I would like to ask you is why that made you feel worse.*  
 159  
 160 Because I, because I think you were saying it to yourself [laughter], yeah, I felt that. I was  
 161 like, "You're not talking to me." [Laughter] I was like, "It's nice." Like, I, I didn't, I  
 162 appreciated the sentiment, though, like, I won't lie. [Note: the participant covers his face  
 163 with his hands and the audio becomes slightly muffled] I did, I was glad to, you know, I

164 was still fairly fresh off the boat, so to speak, at that time, like, just about five months in  
 165 Japan, you know. Eh, I was glad to have, eh, an Irish person beside me. I don't know,  
 166 like, it, it, it helped. Em, you know, it's like, you know, it sounds a bit, it sounds a bit  
 167 exaggerated if you say like a comrade or compatriot, you know, *doshi, airurandojin-*  
 168 *doshi*, you know, it's like that, that did have, that did, it was good for me, but, like, I did,  
 169 I did feel you were speaking to yourself more than [laughter] you were speaking to me.  
 170  
 171 *I absolutely was. I absolutely was. It was a very strange feeling for me.*  
 172  
 173 I actually imagined the floor going from under us, I thought we were going to crash down  
 174 into the, or, like, from above, our desks were pretty sturdy, so I didn't imagine anything  
 175 coming down on top of us, but I thought we were going to go down, like, and...  
 176  
 177 *Uhm.*  
 178  
 179 ...I didn't think that was going to end well...  
 180  
 181 *Uhm.*  
 182  
 183 ...yeah, that's what I was thinking about. Ehm, and the aftershocks were, they were  
 184 traumatic as well, but the, the worst thing about that was the, the system.  
 185  
 186 *Yeah, I want to ask you about that, obviously, because what was it about the system that*  
 187 *you didn't like?*  
 188  
 189 It's the sound, right? It's just, it's just, it, eh, I, I have asked people who have, like,  
 190 obviously never had to deal with it before, I've played it back, I think I've played it back  
 191 from my, I think I sent a YouTube link to one of my brothers, and he was like, "Yeah,  
 192 that does sound pretty panicky." Panicked, you know. It, it's probably a good thing that it  
 193 has that because it makes people move, in a way. But of course, it just became extra sense  
 194 then after the earthquake because you were just like, "Oh god, what's coming next?" you  
 195 know. Ehm, like, you fear a bigger one, I feared a bigger one, you know, like, that's what  
 196 I thought about, ehm, and up on the 8th floor [Note: referring to the floor of the apartment  
 197 building he lived in] the highest, the highest place in the building [laughter] I mean,  
 198 probably, eh, where my apartment was, like, I didn't, I didn't feel terribly, terribly safe.  
 199 But as it turns out, Japanese buildings are actually very, very, very good at withstanding  
 200 earthquakes. Shockingly good at it. Ehm, so I have a lot of confidence in that now.  
 201 Except, kind of, for the building where, I work, where you worked, because it does feel a  
 202 little bit old [laughter]...  
 203  
 204 *Uhuh.*  
 205  
 206 ...but apart from that, yeah, I feel very safe in Japanese buildings. In, particularly in  
 207 skyscrapers. If I was in a place like Roppongi Hills, [Note: this is a famous skyscraper in  
 208 the Tokyo skyline. Construction on it began in 2000 so it would have used very modern  
 209 construction techniques and been subject to rigorous building regulations.] like, I think I  
 210 would feel super safe. Ehm, safer than being anywhere at street level because nothing is  
 211 going to fall on you, probably, inside those buildings...  
 212  
 213 *Uhum.*  
 214  
 215 ...because it's just the way they're designed and, yeah. Ehm, but yeah, to try to stick to  
 216 your question, it's, it's just, I think it's a combination of experience, em, you, asso, you  
 217 associate negatively. You know, it's like being shouted at by your mother or father,  
 218 maybe. A bit like you're bracing yourself. That's, I think that's what it's like.

219  
 220 *You're really hitting home with me now because I'm actually more traumatized in some*  
 221 *ways by the alarm than by the experience of the earthquakes...*  
 222  
 223 [Laughter] Yeah.  
 224  
 225 *...ehm, if I, if I heard it now, I'd actually possibly have a bad reaction. I really wouldn't*  
 226 *react very well so don't, please, play it for me or anything.*  
 227  
 228 Oh right.  
 229  
 230 *I actually, I actually would probably get quite a bad reaction to it...*  
 231  
 232 Yeah.  
 233  
 234 *...and I do think there's an element of a negative association with it...*  
 235  
 236 Yeah.  
 237  
 238 *...ehm, because we had hundreds of aftershocks...*  
 239  
 240 Yeah, yeah.  
 241  
 242 *...in the days following the earthquake, even in Tokyo, and I remember being pulled from*  
 243 *my, sort of, fitful sleep...*  
 244  
 245 Yeah, yeah.  
 246  
 247 *...repeatedly, and so, I, I, I also, you know, there are plenty of cases where an earthquake*  
 248 *happens and there's no warning...*  
 249  
 250 Yeah.  
 251  
 252 *...there's a warning and there's no earthquake...*  
 253  
 254 Yeah.  
 255  
 256 *...so it's not a reliable system so...*  
 257  
 258 Yeah.  
 259  
 260 *...I, I respect them for trying to introduce something...*  
 261  
 262 Yeah.  
 263  
 264 *...I'm not saying they should get rid of it...*  
 265  
 266 No.  
 267  
 268 *...but it definitely has traumatized me, too.*  
 269  
 270 It's traumatized me. Ehm, I, I don't think it should be gotten rid of because it, it does,  
 271 like, it's not always accurate but it, it, it works to an extent. It, like, it's definitely, like,  
 272 predicting earthquakes, it's a bit like predicting the weather, you know, like, probably,



273 they're probably slightly better at predicting weather, like, generally the weatherman is,  
 274 at least in Japan, the weatherman is generally right...

275

276 *Yeah.*

277

278 ...but, yeah, it's similar thing, like, there's still cases of it being wrong, yeah. Ehm, if, if,  
 279 if it just adds, you know, five to fifteen seconds to one bad earthquake, like, that's a  
 280 major deal, like, you know. Even if it is traumatic, I would never suggest that it should be  
 281 gotten rid of...

282

283 *Uhm.*

284

285 ...even, even though it makes mistakes.

286

287 *Oh, I would agree with you. I would agree with you. So, as you know, I'm interested in*  
 288 *how people got information and how they communicated. So you said you watched TV*  
 289 *when you went home...*

290

291 I left my TV on all the time, yeah.

292

293 *...what were you watching?*

294

295 The news. It was Japanese news, which I wasn't very capable of understanding at the  
 296 time.

297

298 *So how did you?*

299

300 Ehm, well, reading was always a strong ability, strongish ability for me in Japanese, so I  
 301 would, of course, there were lots of charts, graphs and pictures on the news, and with my  
 302 *kanji* ability [Note: ability to read the Chinese characters used in the Japanese language] I  
 303 was relatively able to get information out of what was on screen. Ehm, the speaking  
 304 didn't help but it was, it, the noise of people talking or whatever there. Of course,  
 305 Facebook and, like, just the Internet in general. To be honest, I didn't watch too much  
 306 English news. I didn't really check it. I, I don't know why when I think back now. It's, it  
 307 just felt like I, I don't know, it never occurred to me to bother looking at it. I got  
 308 everything I needed from friends, I suppose. Ehm, just asking. Ehm, yeah. Facebook,  
 309 like, was a big source of news. And then Facebook introduced, shortly after that  
 310 Facebook introduced some sort of, eh, like, emergency, like, what was it, I forget the, you  
 311 know the *anpi shisutemu*?

312

313 *Anpi kakunin, yes.*

314

315 Facebook introduced something like that system. So, it's, the system we have at work  
 316 where you say you're safe after an emergency event, Facebook introduced something like  
 317 that after as well, I think. Sorry that's more of a future question than [laughter] at the  
 318 time. That applies to the future. That would have, so like, if there was ever another  
 319 earthquake again, like, I would go to Facebook and click the little button that says I'm  
 320 still alive, you know. Em, eh, but apart from that I posted, I just posted on Facebook that  
 321 I'm okay, yeah.

322

323 *And so, you said you were watching the news...*

324

325 *Yeah.*

326

327 *...using your existing Japanese ability...*

328  
 329 Yeah.  
 330  
 331 *...were, was translation a part of that?*  
 332  
 333 Trans, translating for people or for myself? What do you mean, understanding it for  
 334 myself?  
 335  
 336 *Did you use dictionaries?*  
 337  
 338 Oh, okay. Oh yeah [laughter]. Yeah, like, I mean learned pret, I learned plenty of words  
 339 at that point that I'll, I'm about to say I'll never forget but yeah *ekichoka*, right, that was  
 340 one. Soil liquefaction. Eh, *yoshin*, and I didn't know the words for, eh, *yoshin*, foreshock?  
 341 Aftershock? Aftershock, and stuff. Turns out there's a, there's a foreshock. It's *yoshin*.  
 342 It's *arakajime* [Note: the participant is explaining the Chinese characters that make up the  
 343 word foreshock in Japanese]...  
 344  
 345 *Oooh.*  
 346  
 347 ...so the pronunciation is the same but the *kanjis* are different [laughter]...  
 348  
 349 *Okay.*  
 350  
 351 ...which is like the worst thing ever to have ant, antonyms with the same pronunciation  
 352 [laughter].  
 353  
 354 *[Laughter]*  
 355  
 356 Ehm, but yeah, ehm, yeah, those were it.  
 357  
 358 *Y, y, y, you said you were also asking friends...*  
 359  
 360 Yeah.  
 361  
 362 *...what languages were you using?*  
 363  
 364 Oh, English. I mean, just, my friends were all only English speakers at that time. Ehm,  
 365 like, I just, I, I didn't have Japanese friends really.  
 366  
 367 *So where were these friends?*  
 368  
 369 Eh, they lived in Tokyo. Ehm, like, eh, I had a French friend who lives in {central  
 370 Tokyo}, em, he still lives in {central Tokyo}. I was going to be meeting him today if the  
 371 weather was good. Em, like, I was talking to him. Em, I had another friend...  
 372  
 373 *With mobile phone or?*  
 374  
 375 Oh how? The method of communication? Oh, Internet and mobile, yeah.  
 376  
 377 *You could, you could connect?*  
 378  
 379 Oh at the time? Sorry this is the days after. You're talking, you're talking about, like, the  
 380 day. Of course, no, yeah, of course, no. Like, there was no, mobile phone connection was  
 381 out, but I mean the Internet was fine, like, so that was, at that point I was mostly talking  
 382 to people back home. Like, you know, that was my family and other people, like, just

383 saying I was okay and a lot of people were telling me to leave, you know. I was kind of  
384 like, “Nah.” Ehm, but I mean within a few hours, maybe, after the earthquake, like, the  
385 phones came back, you know, I mean, like, so then I was, I was able to use the phone  
386 then, like. I, I messaged people. I messaged someone who was, at that time I was, kind of,  
387 seeing, you know. Ehm, like, uhm, uh, I, I did have Japanese friends but, like, one of  
388 them would have been in Aomori [Note: in the far north of Japan] at the time, so, well,  
389 she sent a message to ask if I was okay, like, you know, that type of thing. Ehm, yeah.  
390 The number of people I knew in Tokyo, like, I knew well at the time was very limited. I  
391 mean, you, you were one of them and, I mean, of course, and going over to your place  
392 was, ehm, that was a good source of comfort as well. It was, just walking over to you  
393 [Note: the participant covers or rubs his face with his hands and the audio becomes  
394 slightly muffled] and it was all a bit surreal, I remember, when I was walking over there,  
395 like, it was just, there was, I think there was, there was a lot of people around, wasn’t  
396 there? Like, a lot of people just couldn’t go home, like, it was, if I remember correctly,  
397 like. And there was people, yeah, there was, there was far more people in {the area of  
398 central Tokyo where we both worked} around, and...

399  
400 *Uhum.*

401  
402 ...{the areas of central Tokyo where we lived} at that time, like, there was, yeah, I  
403 remember that. A lot of stranded people. That also made me feel guilty. It was, like, you  
404 know, I kind of felt, you know, got an apartment up there, you know, nice and  
405 comfortable to myself with an unused futon, you know, and the hotels were undoubtedly  
406 full, you know, like, ehm, that was, that was strange. I’m sorry, I’ve forgotten [Note: the  
407 participant covers his face with his hands and the audio becomes slightly muffled] what  
408 your question was again.

409  
410 *[Laughter] That’s okay.*

411  
412 I’m rambling on.

413  
414 *No, I think the rambling is important...*

415  
416 Yeah.

417  
418 *...because that’s giving me context and sometimes that’s a way to remember...*

419  
420 Yeah.

421  
422 *...remember things. Like, I’m interested, you went straight from 3.11, which was the*  
423 *Friday...*

424  
425 Yeah, yeah.

426  
427 *...to turning up late for work the next day, but that means...*

428  
429 Ah, that wasn’t the next day.

430  
431 *...no Saturday and Sunday.*

432  
433 Yeah, the next work day.

434  
435 *What did you do on Saturday and Sunday?*

436  
437 I don’t remember.

438  
 439 *Okay.*  
 440  
 441 I have absolutely no idea. Ehm, I, it's likely I went out, It's very likely I went out and met  
 442 friends. I pro, I probably did go drinking. Em, actually, no, no. It's not likely I went  
 443 drinking. Because when I get very stressed, if I, if I'm very, very stressed, I tend to avoid  
 444 alcohol actually. Ehm, but I probably did go out. I would not have waited at home, I  
 445 think. Yeah, ah, it's very hard for me to say. I'm sorry. I really, I don't remember.  
 446  
 447 *No, I just, I just...*  
 448  
 449 Yeah.  
 450  
 451 *...I just wanted to, to clarify that.*  
 452  
 453 Yeah.  
 454  
 455 *And, in terms of getting information...*  
 456  
 457 Yeah.  
 458  
 459 *...what did you feel you could get information about and was there things that you felt you*  
 460 *couldn't get enough information about?*  
 461  
 462 Uhm, I felt like the, the earthquake itself, eh, the damage effected by the earthquake, eh,  
 463 excluding Fukushima, which I'll come to in a minute, excluding Fukushima, like, the  
 464 damage effected by the earthquake, like what was destroyed, what was done, who was  
 465 missing, you know, where the, where the effects were, you know, like I knew that there  
 466 were parts of Chiba that were having it, that had it a bit, eh, rough, eh, which was  
 467 relatively close, ehm, and not just, it wasn't so far removed from me, like, it was,  
 468 Disneyland which was, how far is Disneyland from {central Tokyo}? Like a twenty-  
 469 minute train ride? Keiyo Line is...  
 470  
 471 *Possibly even less. It's really fast.*  
 472  
 473 ...less than twenty minutes. Yeah, like, it wasn't that far away. Disney was shut down  
 474 because they had, they lost power and water, which was a big thing for me. Like, it's just,  
 475 like, twenty minutes away, like, it was one and I was fine, ehm, so, like, I felt like the  
 476 information of, like, who had what or, you know, what areas were badly affected,  
 477 etcetera, like, was very good. Fukushima, yeah, I didn't, I felt like the foreign media  
 478 covered it a lot but there was just so much, there was too much information about that,  
 479 and there was too much opinion. There was a lot of loud opinions going around, like,  
 480 about how bad that was. Ehm, the Japanese penchant for understatement just left me with,  
 481 like, where the hell do you draw the middle line, like, you don't know how far to one side  
 482 or the other it should have been. I didn't trust it, em, and there's still problems going on  
 483 in Fukushima right now even, like, I mean, there, they had like 300 tonnes of seawater,  
 484 like, they're leaking 300 tonnes of seawater every day, or, I don't know if they've finally  
 485 stopped that or no.  
 486  
 487 *I don't think so.*  
 488  
 489 Yeah. They have a fantas - this is very off the point, but - they have a fantastic idea now  
 490 where they're going to introduce a, sort of, an underground frozen chamber...  
 491  
 492 *Uuuhhh...*

493  
 494 ...you know about it?  
 495  
 496 ...*I read about that, yeah.*  
 497  
 498 Yeah, they have one in the US apparently as well. Apparently, it's highly effective and I  
 499 read up on it and it seems like a fantastic idea because ice, water cannot move through  
 500 ice. So if you permafrost the ground, like, it seems, it sounds like a terribly good idea.  
 501 Ehm, yeah, but that will take time to implement and much like then as now the Japanese  
 502 don't seem to be inclined to ask too much for foreign assistance, and in, in the extent of  
 503 'we can take care of it', like, yeah, like, I feel like, yeah, the Japan, Japan is, probably has  
 504 sufficient, uh sufficient? Sufficient experts, yeah, like, they probably have enough  
 505 experts, they probably have the manpower to do it, but bringing in foreign assistance is  
 506 only adding manpower. You know, like, it just makes it quicker. And, and that's, I didn't  
 507 like that, I just, I felt like, "You should take any foreign assistance that's offered with this  
 508 because there's no, this is not a matter of saving face, you're talking about nuc, like,  
 509 leaking nuclear material. This isn't just a Japanese problem. It stays in the environment, it  
 510 gets into the oceans, it's a global problem instantly. So, it shouldn't be a matter of pride.  
 511 It's not a matter of just Japan, you know. It's not like, I don't know, fixing rail lines,  
 512 which, which is only Japan. Which they would likely more readily accept help for. I don't  
 513 know. Possibly. Ehm, but like, it's, it's a, that's a global problem, like, that should have  
 514 been addressed globally. Unfortunately, like, borders are, like, a country has its borders  
 515 and, like, even if a company, a country is, you know, leaking radioactive waste into the  
 516 oceans, like, there's not a hell lot, of a lot, legally that any, you know, like, any country  
 517 can do short of declaring war, you know, em, "We're being attacked by radiation."  
 518 [Laughter] Ehm, like, I really felt they should have taken the assistance, ehm, and  
 519 apparently, from what I know they still aren't...  
 520  
 521 *Uhm.*  
 522  
 523 ...like, they still aren't asking, taking much in the line of assistance and Tepco [Note: the  
 524 power company that runs the Fukushima power plants] like, oh, like, their, Tepco's  
 525 favourite line is *nani nani ni tsuite kento shiteimasu*, you know, like, like, they're looking  
 526 into it, you know, em, but like, they're constantly looking into it but wh, wh, where's the  
 527 action...  
 528  
 529 *Uh.*  
 530  
 531 ...that accompanies the looking into it, you know, like, two-and-a-half year's later, they're  
 532 finally thinking of installing this permafrost thing, you know, like, I'm sure the, the, the  
 533 woman who designed that permafrost system in the US, for the problem in the US,  
 534 probably thought from the get-go, "You should permafrost the ground now." You know,  
 535 like, I'm sure she thought that. And, I don't know if she said it or not, I'm sure, someone  
 536 with her expertise and, you know, like, I get the feeling, like, she probably did try to say  
 537 something, maybe, I don't know. Or someone probably said something similar but it  
 538 didn't happen. You know, that just, it does, it does irritate me. Ehm, yeah. Though the  
 539 man, the head, I think he was the head of Fukushima facility, he has already passed away  
 540 , hasn't he?  
 541  
 542 *Yeah.*  
 543  
 544 Yeah, he got cancer.  
 545  
 546 *Yeah.*  
 547

548 Yeah, I have, I have the utmost respect for him. Em, he was, he kind of did a bit of a  
 549 captain-going-down-with-the-ship thing, in a little bit, but, which I, you know, it sounds  
 550 good on paper but, like, he, yeah, but apart from, he didn't pointlessly go down with the  
 551 ship. He was there, he was trying to do something, ehm, yeah, and there just needs to be a  
 552 little bit more openness about it, and, yeah. Uh.

553

554 *Well, I can certainly see where you, you didn't feel there was enough information coming*  
 555 *through...*

556

557 Yeah.

558

559 ...but...

560

561 [Laughter]

562

563 *...you said that, you know, about, sort of, the location or the, the extent of the earthquake*  
 564 *damage, you felt you really did have enough information but, can I just be clear about*  
 565 *how you got that?*

566

567 Oh how? Again, TV, whatever popped up on the news that you could, it's very, you don't  
 568 need to understand Japanese to see the train tracks that aren't operating, or whatever, you  
 569 know, or, em, also just, em, could, you could also realize from - [Note: for the following  
 570 two sentences the participant is just quietly talking to himself] Well, I don't think I  
 571 checked Facebook. Would Facebook? - I don't know what site I would have checked like,  
 572 and, I would have, I used Tokyo Metro at that time, so, I probably just checked the metro  
 573 website, Tokyo Metro website.

574

575 *Yeah, yeah.*

576

577 Ehm, ehm, it would have been, again, at that time it would have been a little bit difficult  
 578 for me to read, but I, I would have been able to muddle my way through it, like...

579

580 *Okay.*

581

582 ...em, much like I've managed to muddle my way through the online banking [laughter].

583

584 *Okay [laughter]. So...*

585

586 Probably easier than the online banking.

587

588 *...[laughter] the reason I'm, kind of, coming back to this point again and again...*

589

590 Yeah.

591

592 *...is because I'm interested to see if anyone was aware of specialized websites. There*  
 593 *were specialized websites.*

594

595 Eh, no.

596

597 *No. Okay.*

598

599 No, not really. Ehm.

600

601 *There were websites, for example, of the government ministries that were translated into*  
 602 *multiple languages, but you never?*

603  
604 No, no. It seems like a terrible waste.  
605  
606 *Th, this is, this is one of the things that I'm interested in...*  
607  
608 Yeah, no, I didn't know about that. I wouldn't, it, it's a sa, I don't know if it's sad or  
609 stupid, but, like, it, it, just, it doesn't occur to you to go to government websites, it doe, it  
610 doesn't occur to me, anyway, like, it doesn't come to my mind, you know. Like, em, I  
611 never, it would never occur to me to look at that. Em, the Irish Embassy, oh, the Irish  
612 Embassy were emailing me! That was a source of information. I forgot about that. Like, I  
613 still get emails from them. Em, that is like, the mo, like, for me, the Irish Embassy is, like,  
614 the most use I've made of the Irish government in my entire life is when I was in Japan,  
615 you know, like, I'd, I, I never, I never would have thought to use them, but when they  
616 were emailing me, I was, like, "Oh, oh, thank you," you know, like, "this is useful  
617 information." They included information and links, em, I, I don't remember what they  
618 linked to exactly but it was in there. Ehm, but like, yeah, I don't know, it wou, it would  
619 be good, I guess, for, em, it's not centralized, it's voluntary. Like, I voluntarily became  
620 part of the Irish Embassy's mailing list, thanks to you. [Note: it was the policy of the  
621 company we both worked for to encourage foreign staff to register with their embassy in  
622 case of emergency and I had encouraged the participant to do so] Ehm, but, like, actually  
623 thinking about it, like, there probably should be, like, to go with the, the - sorry this off,  
624 off, away from your question, but - to go with the, the emergency earthquake warning,  
625 they should probably just include links [laughter] to their own, eh, the government  
626 websites, like...  
627  
628 *That's a very good idea.*  
629  
630 ...yeah, and they should probably include 'For further information, for English  
631 information, click here' or something.  
632  
633 *Oh, that's an excellent idea.*  
634  
635 Yeah. That would be...  
636  
637 *Have you thought about that before or has that just come to you now?*  
638  
639 ...no, it just came to me right now...  
640  
641 *Inspired!*  
642  
643 ...that would be, that would be a very good way, especially during a big...  
644  
645 *That's a really good idea.*  
646  
647 ...or just using the same system, you know, like they can mail everybody at once. So, of  
648 course, the system fails and occa, occasionally it's wrong but, like, once there's been, you  
649 know, a massive earthquake use that, just send people information links...  
650  
651 *Very nice idea.*  
652  
653 ...em, yeah. Probably would be a good idea, yeah.  
654  
655 *Okay, you said that the Irish Embassy was contacting you...*  
656  
657 Yeah.

658  
659 *...do you remember getting any contact from the city office or ward office or any of the*  
660 *local authorities?*  
661  
662 Oh, no, I don't. I, I don't think so. That's not to say that there wasn't any, but I don't  
663 remember. I mean, the company performed some of those functions that might have been  
664 carried out with, eh, like, local councils in other countries. Like, the company takes a list  
665 of everyone being safe, like, and etcetera. Em, it's like what, what, I'm going to ask you  
666 now, was there?  
667  
668 *Eh.*  
669  
670 To you, for you, did you get anything?  
671  
672 *Eh, we both lived in the same ward...*  
673  
674 Yeah.  
675  
676 *...didn't get a thing...*  
677  
678 You didn't get a thing [laughter].  
679  
680 *Didn't get a thing. But, ah, that's...*  
681  
682 Yeah.  
683  
684 *...you know, some people may have received things and just seen it's in kanji and thrown*  
685 *it away.*  
686  
687 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, I wouldn't have done that, like, em, many disaster things  
688 came in the coming months [laughter] you know, which is a very human thing to do, em,  
689 you know it's like...  
690  
691 *Can you explain a bit more about that?*  
692  
693 Eh, we, about what a very human thing to do?  
694  
695 *No, no, no, no. Many disaster things came in the coming months.*  
696  
697 Lots of little disaster booklets, eh, earthquake, like, preparedness things came in the  
698 coming months. They had probably come before that as well. I was only in Japan five  
699 months so, like, I have no idea, like. Em, probably April is probably the time for them all  
700 to be sent anyway, or something, you know, like, eh, but, after that I did get many  
701 earthquake things, em.  
702  
703 *Do you remember what language they were in?*  
704  
705 Oh, no. Definitely there was Japanese there, like, I, I, I got some multilingual things. Eh,  
706 to be honest, when I think about multilingual things, the most multilingual thing I can  
707 think about is the Docomo [Note: a Japanese mobile telephone carrier] pamphlet. It  
708 comes in Portuguese, English, Spanish, I think, Chinese and Korean, em [laughter]. The  
709 {ward in which we both lived} , like, anything of the {redacted} Ward Office, like, it  
710 might have been multilingual, I, I don, don't remember. I can't...  
711  
712 *Okay.*



713  
714 ...I can't say, em. Definitely some things that the Ward Office issued were multilingual,  
715 you know. Whether the specific earthquake warning information was or not? I think I got,  
716 eh, *hinanbasha*, *hinansho*, eh, emergency evacuation site thing in English. I'm pretty sure  
717 that came to me in English. Where to go if there was, yeah. Apart from that, though, I  
718 can't remember. I can't remember about the general preparedness things. But those  
719 booklets were filled with pictures, em, which made them quite easy to understand, like, I  
720 mean, there were, there was things like showing, like, a person turning off the gas, you  
721 know, things like that, like, I can remember that, like, so even, even if it was only  
722 Japanese, like, there were, it was, it was, it communicated itself, I think, I think.  
723  
724 *Okay. Then, you talked about, like, 'in the coming months'. What I've asked a lot of*  
725 *people is to tell me when did the disaster end for you?*  
726  
727 When did it end?  
728  
729 *If it has ended.*  
730  
731 Oh, it ended. Fukushima hasn't ended, but [laughter] ehm, when did it end? Ehm, hum,  
732 when the trains started running normally, ehm, when I heard Disneyland had reopened,  
733 which was a while later, em, em, I've a little bit of information for you that's a bit beside,  
734 but I met someone from Disneyland, eh, who worked in Disneyland as a dancer during  
735 the earthquake, he told me that Disneyland had it's own, like, power and water  
736 generators, so, like, the staff would go there to have showers and stuff...  
737  
738 *[Laughter] Really?*  
739  
740 ...yeah, no, it was fantastic, yeah...  
741  
742 *Wow.*  
743  
744 ...yeah, ehm, which was really interesting for me...  
745  
746 *Yeah.*  
747  
748 ...but I'm not surprised, like, that place, like, like, it's a, it's a complex, like...  
749  
750 *Yeah, yeah.*  
751  
752 ...it's an utter complex...  
753  
754 *Yeah.*  
755  
756 ...you know? Ehm, but, yeah, ehm, trains in particular. When everyone had come back to  
757 work, and when, when I heard that the people in the factories in Iwate and, eh, in, in {an  
758 area of Ibaraki}, so, when they were operating as normal [Note: the company we worked  
759 for had plants and offices throughout the disaster zone] I felt that it was pretty much back,  
760 we were, you know, back on track, like, I mean, there's still remaining things as a result  
761 of that. The Joban-sen, the Joban line which runs right beside me here still doesn't go to  
762 Sendai...  
763  
764 *Uhum.*  
765  
766 ...you know, in Mito, you can see the, Sendai is blacked out, you know, you, like, I see  
767 that and I think, "Oh, the earthquake is, you know, the earthquake, the effects of the

768 earthquake are still here,” you know? [Note: the participant is referring to the fact that the  
769 Joban line which used to run through Fukushima to Sendai is now not operational in parts  
770 because of the nuclear accident.] Ehm, yeah, so, like, has Japan completely recovered  
771 from that? No. I mean, Fukushima is still a problem, some of the train lines are still not  
772 repaired. Ehm, but like, the disaster ended, like, for me probably around the time that,  
773 ehm, probably when I came back after Golden Week. I had booked my holiday to Ireland  
774 and when I came back after Golden Week, but then I got sick and I was out for ten days  
775 with the flu, and it was one of the, that was, that was one of the worst personal  
776 experiences of my life, as you may remember, when I came back to work, I was not in a  
777 good position for various reasons [Note: the participant experienced the break-up of a  
778 personal relationship].  
779  
780 *Yeah.*  
781  
782 Ehm, yeah, so, that was a bad year.  
783  
784 *[Laughter]*  
785  
786 *[Laughter]* That was a terribly bad year, like, to be honest, that probably, like, made,  
787 extended the feelings of the disaster for me in some ways, like, I, I, you know, like, it did,  
788 like, getting sick, like, I was so emotionally and physically weak, em, I think I lost  
789 weight, I’m sure I lost a bit of weight, like...  
790  
791 *Oh yeah.*  
792  
793 ...I lost quite a lot, visibly, I think, I feel like I lost weight at that time and, em, yeah, I  
794 just, so in that way, like, if I in, include, like, what may have drawn it out or been a  
795 completely separate issue, like, I can either say when I came back after Golden Week or  
796 probably until the following September or later, June or July when I finally stopped, eh,  
797 crying *[laughter]*...  
798  
799 *Huhum!*  
800  
801 ...about, eh, the, what I’ll, what I’ll, em, misleadingly label the flu trauma.  
802  
803 *[Laughter]* *Yeah, yeah, well, I mean, it’s, it’s difficult to, it’s a bit of a chicken-and-an-*  
804 *egg situation, isn’t it?*  
805  
806 *Yeah.*  
807  
808 *It could be that that drew it out, or...*  
809  
810 *Right.*  
811  
812 *...or it could be that you reacted in a more...*  
813  
814 *Yeah.*  
815  
816 *...extreme manner because you were already...*  
817  
818 *Yeah.*  
819  
820 *...emotionally vulnerable.*  
821  
822 *Yeah, it’s, it’s hard to tell.*

823  
824 *Yeah, I don't think it's possible to pick those two apart.*  
825  
826 No, I can't. I can't say for sure.  
827  
828 *Yeah, yeah. There's a couple of other things. Just these are slightly unrelated...*  
829  
830 Uhum.  
831  
832 *...but one of the recommendations that a lot of, say, NPOs or local authorities are, are*  
833 *coming up with...*  
834  
835 Uhum.  
836  
837 *...in terms of how to help foreigners better in the future...*  
838  
839 Uhum.  
840  
841 *...is, for example, things to do with getting foreign people more involved in the local*  
842 *community.*  
843  
844 Oh, yeah. I definitely think that would help. Sorry, I'm interrupting your question.  
845  
846 *Not at all, no. Do, do you want to expand on that or?*  
847  
848 Oh, right, huh. It's, kind of, it's, it's easier to get involved in the local in a small area than  
849 a town or a city. There's not really that much of a local community in a city, you know?  
850 Ehm, uhm, well just by being, if you're more, if you're more involved in the local  
851 community you're just going to know where things are. For example. Ehm, but, uhm,  
852 I'm, I'm sorry, you said that, like, NPOs are having ideas of, like, bringing in people -  
853 I'm wearing two different coloured socks [laughter] eh, they're subtly different shades...  
854  
855 *Okay [laughter].*  
856  
857 *...ehm, the [laughter]...*  
858  
859 *They're trying to integ...*  
860  
861 Yeah.  
862  
863 *...find ways to integrate foreigners...*  
864  
865 Uhum.  
866  
867 *...into the local communities more...*  
868  
869 Yeah.  
870  
871 *...because, for example, in the Kobe earthquake...*  
872  
873 Yeah.  
874  
875 *...one of the big findings was that the people who respond first...*  
876  
877 Uhum.

878  
879 *...are your neighbours or passers by. It's not actually the official emergency responders*  
880 *because they can't always get to the disaster zone...*  
881  
882 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
883  
884 *...immediately. So there's a fear that if foreigners aren't implicated in the local*  
885 *communities...*  
886  
887 Uhum.  
888  
889 *...they may not either be able to help...*  
890  
891 Uhum.  
892  
893 *...or they may not be able to be helped because people won't know about them.*  
894  
895 That definitely.  
896  
897 *...I just want, well, first of all, let me break it into two...*  
898  
899 Yeah.  
900  
901 *...did you feel part of your local community in the 3.11 disaster?*  
902  
903 Yeah, no, no, not really, no. I mean, if I, if I went to, if I went to the {redacted} Ward  
904 Office, I'm sure I would have gotten plenty of help. If I, if I had just gone and been  
905 involved in it, I would have, if I had gone and taken Japanese lessons at the local {ward  
906 of Tokyo in which the participant lived} , which I just never got round to for no good  
907 reason, I, I'm sure I would have been, eh, more part of the local community, like, em, but  
908 unfortunately, like, you live in apartment, you know, with strangers, it's just like, even  
909 the Japanese people don't know each other there, you know, like, it's near impossible but,  
910 eh, disaster can bring out a bit of a community, ehm, community spirit, like, I mean,  
911 when I was going up and down the stairs to my apartment because the elevator was out,  
912 like, I met Japanese people, I couldn't really speak Japanese, but people stopped and  
913 talked to me, you know, like, that would not have happened on a normal day, you know,  
914 like, and that's, people know, like, you know, like, it's time to be that little bit more, ehm,  
915 involved in someone else's life, just make sure people are okay, like, and just stopping  
916 and talking, like, they stopped and talked to me, like, one woman stopped, she just asked  
917 me what floor I lived on, and, like, if I was okay, if everything else was okay, blah, blah,  
918 blah, you know, like, and, like, I, I think, like, of course, as a foreigner, like, there's a bit  
919 of, as a foreigner, there's a bit of novelty value in me, but I think she would have, I think,  
920 like, if she had bumped into a Japanese person on that stairs, she would have done the  
921 same thing, you know. Ehm, so, like, yeah, I, I, no, I wasn't involved, but at the same  
922 time I don't feel it was too a significantly greater extent than a Japanese person wasn't  
923 involved in the local community.  
924  
925 *Yeah, yeah. Ehm, I, I'm not saying that being involved in the community is a good or a*  
926 *bad idea, I'm just trying to get a sense of what the people I'm talking to feel about it...*  
927  
928 Uhm.  
929  
930 *...maybe I'll have something to say about it later on, but for now I'm really just trying to*  
931 *see was anyone implicated, if they were, why, how did they do it...*  
932

933 Uhm.  
 934  
 935 *...that kind of thing.*  
 936  
 937 Can I ask you what you mean by implicated?  
 938  
 939 *Ehm, like, associated in some way with the local community.*  
 940  
 941 Oh, okay, okay.  
 942  
 943 *Ehm, involved, I suppose I mean.*  
 944  
 945 Okay, okay.  
 946  
 947 *Because I think...*  
 948  
 949 Yeah, not terribly.  
 950  
 951 *...yeah, yeah, no, I, I think sometimes you can say you're part of the community...*  
 952  
 953 Uhm.  
 954  
 955 *...but not really do anything about it...*  
 956  
 957 [Laughter]  
 958  
 959 *...and then when a disaster happens, are you really a part of the community, you know?*  
 960  
 961 Yeah.  
 962  
 963 *So that's why, like, it's, kind of, I'm trying to think of a way to, to describe what I mean*  
 964 *by being active, I suppose, in the community.*  
 965  
 966 To, to put it into something that I do think is a bit unique to Japan, I felt very much like a  
 967 part of the company community. It's the, they do check up, like, as you, that, the, the  
 968 *anpikakunin* system [Note: automated system over ICT where employees must confirm  
 969 their status after an emergency], the, it checks you, like, it asks how are you, how is your  
 970 family, how is your home? There's a fourth question which I can't remember. Oh, can  
 971 you come to work? [Laughter] Ehm, [laughter] obviously. It's a simple question, yes or  
 972 no. They're not, ehm, it's an obvious one. Ehm, like, I felt like part of the work  
 973 community. People were checking on me, you know. Most of them were sure I was gone  
 974 [laughter]. I, I didn't realize the extent of how much they were sure I was gone until later  
 975 on when I was talking to {a work colleague}. Like, she, she was telling me, like, a year  
 976 ago, she was like, "I, I thought you were gone." She said, she was just telling me, like, in  
 977 English [Note: this is a slip of the tongue, the participant means 'in Japanese'], she was  
 978 like, "*zettai kaerun daro to omotteita*" It was like, "I thought one hundred percent you  
 979 were gone." And she was just like, and like, but she, they, they checked on me, you  
 980 know, they, they asked about me and, ehm, like, uhm, being close in Japan and being  
 981 close in Ireland, and I can't say Europe but, like, Ireland, like, they're two very different  
 982 experiences. People, even people you're close with, they, like, they, they don't ask much,  
 983 you know, and they don't expect to be asked much. It's, the Japanese sense of community  
 984 is very different. It's very innate. It's very, I want to, I don't want to say latent. Things  
 985 are expected and, eh, everyone is expected to do them. And, and to understand it  
 986 inherently. That's, kind of, the sense of Japanese community, like, it's, it's all very  
 987 vague...

988  
 989 *[Laughter]*  
 990  
 991 *[Laughter]* Don't you love that word.  
 992  
 993 *Oh, yes. Did you feel part of any other community?*  
 994  
 995 Oh, the foreigner community. Of course, I felt part of the foreigner community.  
 996 Especially when people were leaving and flying off to Osaka, like, and, me and two, the,  
 997 some people, I know people who went back to the US, I know people who went to Osaka.  
 998 Ehm, the, however, my two, who would have been the two closest people to me, ehm, my  
 999 French friend who lives in {central Tokyo}, he didn't go anywhere, and the person I was  
 1000 seeing, eh, he also didn't go anywhere and he was very much of the same opinion. It was,  
 1001 like, em, eh, like, "Ah, it's a bit of an overreaction, like, we're, we're pretty far away  
 1002 here, like, flying off home, you know, like, we still have all our amenities, like, and  
 1003 everything is, you know, how long did the trains take to, like, go, come back?  
 1004  
 1005 *God, that's a good question. Ehm, I think it really depended on the line.*  
 1006  
 1007 But, like, the next day, were they going?  
 1008  
 1009 *They were, I know that the Metro was definitely running by the Saturday.*  
 1010  
 1011 It was?  
 1012  
 1013 *Yeah. Some of the Metro lines by, so that would have been the next day.*  
 1014  
 1015 Yeah.  
 1016  
 1017 *But not all of the Metro lines.*  
 1018  
 1019 Okay. Like, I, I'm almost 100% sure that I got on the train the next day, even though,  
 1020 like, fearing another earthquake, like, I wanted to get out of the house and I wanted to get  
 1021 out of {the part of Tokyo where the participant lived} and I wanted to go somewhere,  
 1022 like. I'm sure I went somewhere. I don't know where I went, but I know I went  
 1023 somewhere...  
 1024  
 1025 *Yeah.*  
 1026  
 1027 ...ehm, a little bit fearful, I got on the train...  
 1028  
 1029 *Yeah.*  
 1030  
 1031 ...I think. Ehm, um, I saw, I remember because I remember just, like, seeing the cracks in  
 1032 the stations, like, and the water coming down. There's still, like, plastic in some of the  
 1033 stations filtering water away which I'm sure are, are directly, are there since, because of  
 1034 the earthquake...  
 1035  
 1036 *Yeah.*  
 1037  
 1038 ...I don't think they're older than that, like...  
 1039  
 1040 *Yeah.*  
 1041

1042 ...ehm, um, but yeah, that's, yeah, I mean, like the trains were more or less running as  
 1043 well by the next day. I mean, within Tokyo.  
 1044  
 1045 *Yeah, no, in Tokyo. And, and, I, I don't think it was all of the train lines by any means,*  
 1046 *and...*  
 1047  
 1048 But the ones that I used were.  
 1049  
 1050 *...yeah, the, we were in a very central area.*  
 1051  
 1052 Yeah, they were very, they were going...  
 1053  
 1054 *Yeah.*  
 1055  
 1056 ...and they were fine, yeah.  
 1057  
 1058 *Yeah. There's just one or two very small questions I want to ask you. These are things*  
 1059 *which, again, you may or may not remember.*  
 1060  
 1061 Yeah.  
 1062  
 1063 *Do you remember any announcements? You know, there's the PA system.*  
 1064  
 1065 Yes. I remember the tsunami warning, eh, which I didn't understand but was translated  
 1066 for me. I do remember it being broadcast that there was the possible risk of a tsunami up  
 1067 to two-metres coming to Tokyo. That never materialized. It did hit parts of Chiba, em, but  
 1068 we were in that little inlet, the Tokyo Bay inlet, like, it was, like, where the earthquake  
 1069 happened, I don't think it could have come in there. I remember that. I remember it being  
 1070 broadcast loud. I think some came in the coming days, like, maybe once or twice, but, it's  
 1071 possible I'm confusing that with those loud vans going around. Like, I don't know. I, I  
 1072 can't say. There definitely were some PA announcements, and, they were impossible,  
 1073 utterly impossible for me to understand, because it was, kind of, static-y, you know, like,  
 1074 crackley, kind of [Note: the participant then covers his mouth with his hand and produces  
 1075 some incomprehensible sounds] over the system so, but, like, the Japanese people around  
 1076 understood.  
 1077  
 1078 *Yeah, this is interesting for me. You said, "It was translated for me."*  
 1079  
 1080 Yeah.  
 1081  
 1082 *Can you be more specific?*  
 1083  
 1084 Like, by whom?  
 1085  
 1086 *Or not by the people but, like, was it a stranger? Was it someone you knew?*  
 1087  
 1088 Oh, the company. Again, it was, it was people from the company. I was with, we were  
 1089 standing outside the company for a while, ehm - when I think that like all the computers  
 1090 were still running in that company, like, after that it, like, you know, it's just shocking,  
 1091 like, everything was still there ticking away. We had a phone call come down from the IT  
 1092 systems asking us to turn a server on its side so it wouldn't fall over. You know, like, it  
 1093 just, like, that's what was going on. People were just, I think thinking so practical-minded  
 1094 about it is a way of, it's, it's a way of comforting oneself especially common in Japanese  
 1095 society. It's, it's the, it's probably the primary, the primary way of comfort is to think  
 1096 about something monotonous like, "Oh that server might fall over, I'll call down and ask

1097 them to turn it on its side.” I think that’s, I think that’s a way of slightly escaping, slightly  
 1098 comforting yourself. It’s to feel you’re doing something useful in the midst of being  
 1099 absolutely useless in the, in the, in the way that counts for the people who were, way, up  
 1100 further north, you know. Ehm, but yeah, sorry, company people translated the  
 1101 announcements, yeah.  
 1102  
 1103 *Yeah, no, em, obviously all of the time I’m trying to come back to this idea of translation*  
 1104 *and interpreting...*  
 1105  
 1106 Yeah.  
 1107  
 1108 ...and.  
 1109  
 1110 Ehm, I never really stopped a person on the street and asked them to help me with  
 1111 something. But I would have, I could have done that no problem. Em, like, it wouldn’t  
 1112 have bothered me for, so, to ask someone to read something for me. Even, like, ehm, like,  
 1113 if I, if I, if I really needed something to be checked, like, I would have, I could have asked  
 1114 someone to, to read something for me. Like, possibly just hearing it pronounced would  
 1115 have helped.  
 1116  
 1117 *Uhuh.*  
 1118  
 1119 Ehm, ehm, but, eh, yeah, no, no, I never really asked anyone for help except...  
 1120  
 1121 *Okay.*  
 1122  
 1123 ...company people, which includes yourself...  
 1124  
 1125 *Yeah.*  
 1126  
 1127 ...at the time.  
 1128  
 1129 *And then, again, this, I’m just, kind of, tidying up some of the things...*  
 1130  
 1131 Yeah.  
 1132  
 1133 *...that I wanted to ask but didn’t want to interrupt you at the time. You talked about using*  
 1134 *social media...*  
 1135  
 1136 Yeah.  
 1137  
 1138 *...and you definitely mentioned Facebook...*  
 1139  
 1140 Yeah.  
 1141  
 1142 *...were there any other social media that you used?*  
 1143  
 1144 No. Eh, I, I purposely stayed away from other things like Twitter, or even in Japanese  
 1145 Mixi or something like that. I’ve just, I’ve just not bothered. Just one is enough for me.  
 1146  
 1147 *Can you tell me, why or just yeah?*  
 1148  
 1149 Why? Just manage, like one is enough. You waste enough time, you can waste enough  
 1150 time...  
 1151



1152 *[Laughter]*  
 1153  
 1154 ...on one. Seriously. I'm deadly serious...  
 1155  
 1156 *Okay.*  
 1157  
 1158 ...you can waste enough time on one easily enough. I don't want more.  
 1159  
 1160 *Okay.*  
 1161  
 1162 And Facebook is adequate, like, it, like, it's probably the primary one for most people and  
 1163 it's not like Twitter where you have 150 characters or whatever, like, you can write out,  
 1164 "I'm okay. Everything in Tokyo is fine." Em, you know, like, "I'm at home now." You  
 1165 know, you can write a, a little bit more about yourself and, ehm, you can direct messages  
 1166 at people as well...  
 1167  
 1168 *Yeah.*  
 1169  
 1170 ...in Facebook you can tag people or put people's names into messages if you want to  
 1171 make sure things are given. Like I put cousins names into my posts and asked them to  
 1172 relay it to my mother if they were talking to her.  
 1173  
 1174 *I got it. I got it.*  
 1175  
 1176 *Yeah.*  
 1177  
 1178 *So, I can see that you're using Facebook as a communication tool...*  
 1179  
 1180 *Yeah.*  
 1181  
 1182 *...would you have used it as an information-gathering tool when you were in the disaster?*  
 1183  
 1184 Ehm, not consciously, but I did. I mean, if you think about, like, of course I was checking  
 1185 what everyone else in Facebook was posting, like, what they thought, like what about the  
 1186 trains where people, if people were stranded or whatever. Eh, it turns out that the person I  
 1187 was seeing happened to be in {central Tokyo} at the time, em, and, like, walked from  
 1188 {central Tokyo} to where he lived in {suburban Tokyo}...  
 1189  
 1190 *[Sharp intake of breath]*  
 1191  
 1192 ...like, and I remember just thinking at the time, I was like...  
 1193  
 1194 *I'd have enjoyed that [laughter] [Note: I was making a joke here - the participant could*  
 1195 *not believe that I would walk long distances across Tokyo for fun when I lived in Japan]*  
 1196  
 1197 ...you would have enjoyed that, but I remember just thinking at the time, I was, like...  
 1198  
 1199 *I'm joking, of course [laughter].*  
 1200  
 1201 ...your, you'd have loved walking, eh, well, you would have loved it...  
 1202  
 1203 *Not in a disaster.*  
 1204  
 1205 ...if you had planned walking from {central Tokyo}. If you had decided, "I think I'll walk  
 1206 from {central Tokyo} to {suburban Tokyo} today," like, you would have loved that...

1207  
 1208 *[Laughter]*  
 1209  
 1210 ...I think if you had it dropped on you, you might have been unhappy...  
 1211  
 1212 *Possibly [laughter].*  
 1213  
 1214 ...but like, I remember thinking, like, eh, like, he posted it and I was like, "Why didn't  
 1215 you just come to mine?" Like, I was just, {that part of central Tokyo}, like, just behind  
 1216 Tokyo Station is {that part of central Tokyo}, right?...  
 1217  
 1218 *Yeah.*  
 1219  
 1220 ...like it was just like...  
 1221  
 1222 *Yeah.*  
 1223  
 1224 ... "Walk to mine."  
 1225  
 1226 *Eh, I can't speak for that person but some people just want to get home...*  
 1227  
 1228 Ah yeah, there's that.  
 1229  
 1230 *...they just want to see home. They want to, I remember {a work acquaintance we were*  
 1231 *with on the day of the disaster} wanted to go back to...*  
 1232  
 1233 Oh yeah, he was...  
 1234  
 1235 *...Shinjuku or wherever...*  
 1236  
 1237 ...dead set on it.  
 1238  
 1239 *...he didn't live in Shinjuku. He lived somewhere out that way.*  
 1240  
 1241 Yeah, he was dead set on it. I remember that, yeah. Like, I can understand the feeling to a  
 1242 certain extent as well, like, but.  
 1243  
 1244 *We were very privileged. We had a ten-minute walk.*  
 1245  
 1246 Yeah, we were very privileged, yeah, yeah.  
 1247  
 1248 *So.*  
 1249  
 1250 I remember.  
 1251  
 1252 *And I was even luckier than you. My, one shelf had opened, one drawer had opened. That*  
 1253 *was it. Nothing broke, nothing, eh...*  
 1254  
 1255 I spilt my damaged kettle.  
 1256  
 1257 *...nothing was even untidy. Yeah, no, I was, I was extremely lucky. It just went, like, one*  
 1258 *thing had kind of come out. [Note: I gesture easily closing a drawer with one finger.]*  
 1259 *'Pop' that was it. That was my cleaning up...*  
 1260  
 1261 *[Laughter]*

1262  
 1263 *...so like I feel the same feelings you talked about guilt...*  
 1264  
 1265 Yeah.  
 1266  
 1267 *...I definitely felt that, I'm feeling it these last few days too talking to people who've had*  
 1268 *really different experiences.*  
 1269  
 1270 Can I ask you about the, not the detail, but?  
 1271  
 1272 *Yeah, I can tell you some of the people that I spoke to were in Miyagi...*  
 1273  
 1274 Okay.  
 1275  
 1276 *...eh, some of the people that I spoke to were in parts of Ibaraki that were very badly*  
 1277 *affected...*  
 1278  
 1279 Okay.  
 1280  
 1281 *...ehm, so I can't talk about what they experienced...*  
 1282  
 1283 No, of course...  
 1284  
 1285 *...but it was...*  
 1286  
 1287 *...just what I am asking is where is, yeah.*  
 1288  
 1289 *...yeah, like, they did, so, I mean, those Miyagi and Ibaraki were both, as you know, in the*  
 1290 *tsunami path...*  
 1291  
 1292 Yeah.  
 1293  
 1294 *...ehm, so...*  
 1295  
 1296 Ibaraki didn't get so much of a tsunami, did it?  
 1297  
 1298 *It did, so we drove around and looked at parts that had.*  
 1299  
 1300 Mito did...  
 1301  
 1302 Yeah.  
 1303  
 1304 *...near Mito did. Ehm, definitely...*  
 1305  
 1306 Yeah.  
 1307  
 1308 *...no, I know that.*  
 1309  
 1310 *So, yeah.*  
 1311  
 1312 The reason I know that is because I was in Mito a few months later, this was after I had  
 1313 moved to {another area in Ibaraki}, eh, there was a typhoon and, like, it was flooded  
 1314 between Tokai and Mito, I was on the train. I was just looking at fields flooded from the  
 1315 typhoon, so I can imagine that's exactly where the tsunami would have rolled in.  
 1316

1317 *Yeah. So, ehm, I understand when you mentioned about feelings of guilt. I don't think we*  
 1318 *should feel guilty but we...*  
 1319  
 1320 *It's a natural reaction, survivor's...*  
 1321  
 1322 *Yeah.*  
 1323  
 1324 *...survivor's guilt.*  
 1325  
 1326 *Yeah, well, I mean, but also, you know, I mean, also don't want to say that people who*  
 1327 *were in Tokyo didn't have an experience of trauma or disaster because everyone dealt*  
 1328 *with it differently. I think it seemed for you, my image of your experience is, you were*  
 1329 *very upset on the day of the earthquake...*  
 1330  
 1331 *Yeah.*  
 1332  
 1333 *...and then you progressively got better and better. I was fine on the day of the, relatively*  
 1334 *fine on the day of the earthquake. I got progressively worse and worse.*  
 1335  
 1336 *Yeah. That sounds accurate.*  
 1337  
 1338 *Yeah, yeah. It affected me in a very strong way but over time. I didn't affect me on the*  
 1339 *day...*  
 1340  
 1341 *Yeah.*  
 1342  
 1343 *...or even I would say on the first day or two...*  
 1344  
 1345 *Yeah.*  
 1346  
 1347 *...but it progressively affected very, very negatively.*  
 1348  
 1349 *I remember weeks later you were, like, still stressed and, like, panicking about small*  
 1350 *earthquakes as well that at which point I had, kind of, recovered from it.*  
 1351  
 1352 *Yeah. So everyone has different experiences.*  
 1353  
 1354 *Yeah.*  
 1355  
 1356 *And different things are traumatic for, for different people.*  
 1357  
 1358 *Yeah.*  
 1359  
 1360 *So, you know, just because we were in the centre of Tokyo, doesn't mean that another*  
 1361 *person in the centre of Tokyo didn't have a big disaster to go through in their own way.*  
 1362 *And also that's another reason why I'm asking people when it began and when it ended*  
 1363 *for them, because...*  
 1364  
 1365 *Yeah, that's an interesting question, yeah. I, I definitely couldn't draw a line, but...*  
 1366  
 1367 *No, well, but I mean, even by you saying Golden Week, I know that that's, sort of, April,*  
 1368 *May...*  
 1369  
 1370 *Yeah.*  
 1371

1372 ...so that's, we're talking about, let's say, two months...

1373

1374 Yeah, yeah.

1375

1376 ...so, basically then just to finish, there's a couple of things. Is there anything else you

1377 think is worth mentioning about how you got information, how you communicated or

1378 feelings of community?

1379

1380 Ehm, okay, well, I'll start with feelings of community because it's easiest to answer. Em,

1381 the company was the community, like, it was, it's the community unit. You see, that is

1382 Japanese society. The way it seems to be built up is, like, the company is the community

1383 unit, like, it's, and I really appreciated it, like, that, I've told you this multiple times

1384 before and I've said it already in this interview, but, like, I, I thought that it was very well

1385 gelled together, taken as company unit. You cannot think of it, if you think of it as the

1386 traditional community in Europe based on the people around where you live. No. It, kind

1387 of, for me, it would fail in that way. But then there is this completely other, completely

1388 expected community, which is the company community. Ehm, information, ehm, yeah, I,

1389 I never felt like I lacked information, like, I never felt like there's not enough, you know,

1390 the, it's, the problem with the modern world is that there's too much [laughter], you

1391 know...

1392

1393 Okay.

1394

1395 ...like, there's all, there's just too much, you don't know where to look...

1396

1397 Yeah.

1398

1399 ...you know, who's telling the truth, and, you know, you can only rely on your own

1400 opinion in the end then. Ehm, which has to be pulled from multiple sources which is, it's

1401 time-consuming in reading, it's, it's almost as bad as dealing with politics, you know,

1402 like, it's not quite that bad, but it's, it's up there, you know. Ehm, yeah, and in terms of

1403 services, like, I, I felt that it was pretty okay, like, I didn't even know about the Japanese

1404 government one, like, I, probably if I did, I probably would have absolutely nothing to

1405 ask, but it's, it's just a matter of knowing where to look, like. You never, you never learn,

1406 you never learn where something is, well, you can sometimes if you're lucky. You'll

1407 remember where something is. You were told, "Oh, go here in this event." Most of the

1408 time, you just forget it. Like, it takes one, it takes it to happen once, you know, to know.

1409

1410 Absolutely, I mean I'm obviously going to try and make some sort of recommendations...

1411

1412 What's this? [Note: the participant points to an insect on his arm]

1413

1414 It's a fly or something, I think, is it? Oh no, it's a mozzie.

1415

1416 It was massive. Where is it gone?

1417

1418 Eh, it went up there somewhere.

1419

1420 Shit. That was, that was a big ass thing. Oh, it's over there. I see it, I see it, I see it.

1421

1422 [Note: the participant goes off to kill the mosquito with a tissue box] Oh, I'd use the

1423 tissue because, em...

1424

1425 You mean the box or the actual tissue itself.

1426

1427 *The tissue itself because the box, you're going to, the box, you won't get enough purchase*  
 1428 *on him.*  
 1429  
 1430 Okay, no, I'm going in with my box.  
 1431  
 1432 *[Laughter] Okay. Jesus. [Laughter]*  
 1433  
 1434 Sorry.  
 1435  
 1436 *[Note: the participant bangs the box on the wall] Your neighbours are awake anyway*  
 1437 *[laughter].*  
 1438  
 1439 Damn, big ass thing.  
 1440  
 1441 *You do realize I have to transcribe this [laughter].*  
 1442  
 1443 *[Laughter] 'Bang of the mosquito'.*  
 1444  
 1445 *Yeah, how do you transcribe bang, it will be like Batman or something.*  
 1446  
 1447 Well, most of it ended up on the wall.  
 1448  
 1449 *Oh dear [laughter]. But you did very well.*  
 1450  
 1451 But you know I'm just happy to see that there's no blood, there's no blood in it...  
 1452  
 1453 *Oh yeah, yeah. They didn't get you.*  
 1454  
 1455 No. He didn't get either of us.  
 1456  
 1457 *Now, this last question seems kind of pointless because I think the main anxiety level is*  
 1458 *related to the mosquito [laughter]. [Note: the researcher hands the stress scale to fill*  
 1459 *out]*  
 1460  
 1461 No, I have no anxiety. I don't mind...  
 1462  
 1463 *Okay.*  
 1464  
 1465 ...I didn't mind talking about it at all. I, I didn't.  
 1466  
 1467 *Good.*  
 1468  
 1469 Eh, remembering it didn't make me feel sad, like, I'm going to say. Like, anxiety is kind  
 1470 of a panic like I, I felt terribly sad talking about some things, like, I'm going to give it a  
 1471 one...  
 1472  
 1473 *Okay.*  
 1474  
 1475 ...just because a zero seems like a lie.  
 1476  
 1477 *Okay, cool. Ehm, yeah, unless you have any other questions or comments, that's pretty*  
 1478 *much it.*  
 1479  
 1480 No. That's it. I, I, well, I can ask something, I suppose. I, I occasionally forget the  
 1481 significance of that event, like, you know, it, it's, you know, I remember watching the

1482 Thai, the great, well, it wasn't just Thailand, it affected many of the countries in the  
 1483 region...

1484

1485 *Yeah.*

1486

1487 ...but it's called, normally referred to as the Thai tsunami, but like, I remember that, like,  
 1488 and I remember watching that on TV and, like, it, it, being in it was, but I, well, again, I  
 1489 don't feel like I was in it exactly...

1490

1491 *Uhuh.*

1492

1493 ...you know, like, but being near it, eh, was, ehm, uhm, I think if I had been in the, a good  
 1494 comparison I think would have been, like, if I lived in the East of Japan and had been  
 1495 reading about the earthquake, massive tsunami which was happening relatively close in  
 1496 the same country, I think that that probably would have been more stressful than, say, just  
 1497 watching the Thai event from home, and then further stressful was, of course, actually  
 1498 being in the earthquake and being shaken around and thinking I was going to die, ehm,  
 1499 like, it's, your, your prox, like, just the proximity to the event as well probably added to  
 1500 it. But, but it's hard for me to say that because I was actually physically shaken, eh,  
 1501 physically being shook by an earthquake...

1502

1503 *Yeah, yeah.*

1504

1505 ...quite strongly. Of course, I never, I haven't, I never have and haven't experience,  
 1506 experienced anything like that since...

1507

1508 *Yeah.*

1509

1510 ...ehm, ehm, I think if it happened again, I'd be slightly more well equipped to deal with  
 1511 it. Ehm, not that I'm asking for that, though [laughter]...

1512

1513 *Yeah.*

1514

1515 ...ehm, like, it's hard to, what can you say, ehm, uhm...

1516

1517 *How do you mean you'd be more well equipped to deal with it?*

1518

1519 If it happened again? I think like, like, I'd know a little bit more what to expect. I, I  
 1520 would be more ready, I would know where to, first thing is I'd know to go and just check  
 1521 the Japanese government, Japanese government websites...

1522

1523 *[Laughter]*

1524

1525 ...right? Eh, that, that would probably occur to me now, you know, based on what has just  
 1526 been said here, like, I would probably think to do that. Ehm, yeah. So, uhm, but, like, that  
 1527 is one thing. And of course, like, now I know what being shaken strongly is like. And I  
 1528 have a touch more confidence in the buildings, like, I, I, as long as you're not standing  
 1529 under something heavy that's going, able to fall, you should be fine...

1530

1531 *Yeah.*

1532

1533 ...like, I mean, the, like, like nothing fell in Tokyo...

1534

1535 *Yeah.*

1536

1537 ...you know, like, and it was strong...

1538

1539 *Yeah.*

1540

1541 ...like, if that was Ireland, if that, if an earthquake, if the, the extent of what hit Tokyo had

1542 hit Dublin, like, Dublin would have been flattened...

1543

1544 *Yeah.*

1545

1546 ...you know, like, gone. Ehm, I don't think there would have been anything left

1547 standing...

1548

1549 *Yeah.*

1550

1551 ...you know, and that wasn't the strongest...

1552

1553 *Yeah.*

1554

1555 ...that was, that was weak...

1556

1557 *Tokyo was relatively weak, yeah.*

1558

1559 ...you know, relatively weak...

1560

1561 *Yeah, yeah.*

1562

1563 Ehm, but yeah, So that's it, like, I, I think, just, I know what the buildings can take, if you

1564 know what I mean, like.

1565

1566 *That, that's really interesting for me because part of it is then, I mean, it's not directly*

1567 *related to translation...*

1568

1569 *Yeah, that's right.*

1570

1571 *...but do you try and give people an understanding for what to expect. How do you do*

1572 *that? That's, maybe is it possible without experiencing it to give people an idea for what*

1573 *to expect?*

1574

1575 There's a fantastic guide for the Japanese *shindo* [Note: Japan's seismic intensity scale]

1576 system on Wikipedia in English which I probably read after the earthquake which

1577 explains the *shindo* 1 through 7 and it's like, "1 is like barely noticeable, most people

1578 won't feel it. 2 is like slight vibrations. Some people don't notice. 3, most people notice.

1579 Possibly light clinking of glasses or something on shelves something like that. 4, quite

1580 strong, most people get panicked. 5, very strong, everybody, like, pretty much everybody

1581 will panic or feel stressed. 6, it talks about sh, shelves start battling and rattling, em, the

1582 building will sway significantly, you will feel the motion quite heavily. Everybody, I

1583 think it says animals may start reacting quite badly as well. That may be for 5 as well."

1584 But basically, the Wikipedia article for the Japanese *shindo* explains it like that and so,

1585 em, if you go and read the *shindo* 5 entry, like, well, pretty much what happened in

1586 Tokyo, you know.

1587

1588 *Okay, that's really interesting. Well, definitely I'm going to check that out because that's*

1589 *probably a translation.*

1590

1591 It probably is a translation, yes.



1592  
 1593 *Yeah, so I'm really interested in that, that, definitely going to follow that up.*  
 1594  
 1595 Yeah, because the Japanese *shindo* system as you know is more about the human  
 1596 experience...  
 1597  
 1598 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1599  
 1600 ...at a particular location. It's not the Richter Scale, which is the power at the centre...  
 1601  
 1602 *Yeah.*  
 1603  
 1604 ...which is useless for describing how it felt...  
 1605  
 1606 *Yeah...*  
 1607  
 1608 ...you know, like.  
 1609  
 1610 *...oh, I've always thought the shindo system is a really excellent way...*  
 1611  
 1612 *Yeah.*  
 1613  
 1614 *...to describe earthquakes.*  
 1615  
 1616 It, it should be, it should be accepted by more countries...  
 1617  
 1618 *Yeah.*  
 1619  
 1620 ...like, em, when I heard, when I was in Ireland and I heard that there was a shindo  
 1621 system, and I heard that there was this, Japan has another system for describing  
 1622 earthquakes, I thought, "Oh god, another system. Why can't you just use Richter or  
 1623 something." You know, like, that's what I initially thought. But, like, well, I, I think I  
 1624 read up on it afterwards, I don't know if I read up on it afterwards, I probably read up on  
 1625 it after I came to Japan, like, after my first earthquake which was, like, ten days after I got  
 1626 here...  
 1627  
 1628 *[Laughter]*  
 1629  
 1630 ...and it was long but small. Ehm, I read up on it, and I realized the usefulness of it...  
 1631  
 1632 *Yeah.*  
 1633  
 1634 ...if you want to describe how bad an earthquake is to someone, familiarity with the  
 1635 *shindo* system is, ehm, indispensable in one sense, and, just, very easy, you know. If I  
 1636 told you that there was a *shindo* 4 earthquake this morning, you might go, "Uh, oh, a bit,  
 1637 a bit of bump!"...  
 1638  
 1639 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1640  
 1641 ...you know, if I told that we had a *shindo* 6, a lower 6, you'd be, your eyes would open,  
 1642 you'd be like, "God, everything okay?" you know, like, and it's, whereas if I tell you that  
 1643 there's a Richter 7, like, to most people that sounds big but the truth is that that could  
 1644 register as nothing in Japan, like, you could have a Richter 7 scale earthquake, forty  
 1645 kilometres down, a hundred kilometres down, and you don't feel a thing...  
 1646

1647 *On the surface.*  
 1648  
 1649 ...yeah, you know, like, it means nothing. I didn't realize the utter shortcomings of that to  
 1650 reflect the human experience, like, and that's what the *shindo* system is. It reflects the  
 1651 human experience. But to be honest, it is scientific, though. Ehm, because it represents  
 1652 acceleration at the surface, at the point. So it's, it's a location-specific. So, like, it  
 1653 indicates, for example, like, I think *shindo* 7 is something like two metres a second, that's  
 1654 the ground moving back and forward, like, two metres a second or something, ehm, like,  
 1655 and that reflects human experience, like, you cannot stand up if the ground is moving like  
 1656 that...  
 1657  
 1658 *Uhuh.*  
 1659  
 1660 ...you know, like that, so it is scientific but then it also has these very nice, probably  
 1661 translations, descriptions...  
 1662  
 1663 *Yeah.*  
 1664  
 1665 ...of the human experience.  
 1666  
 1667 *I like that, and I like the phrase 'reflects the human experience' - I think that's one I'm*  
 1668 *definitely going to be borrowing slash stealing...*  
 1669  
 1670 [Laughter]  
 1671  
 1672 *...slash plagiarizing. For sure, that's interesting.*  
 1673  
 1674 Feel free.  
 1675  
 1676 *Yeah.*  
 1677  
 1678 Feel free.

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/23 Interview with Participant 13*

5 *Researcher: So basically then, the actual, the way I usually start the interviews is just*  
6 *asking people to tell me what happened to them in 2011 on March the, the 3rd. [This was*  
7 *a slip of the tongue on the part of the researcher and should have been March 11th.]*  
8

9 Participant: Okay, are you recording?

10

11 *Yeah, yeah.*

12

13 Okay. Eh, I clearly remember what happened. I was, I was in Tokyo and, eh, I just parted  
14 with clients, French clients, eh, for whom I was, eh, interpreting in a business session.  
15 And so we separated somewhere south, southern part of Tokyo. And, eh, probably five  
16 minutes later, it took place. At that very moment, I, ehm, I had to go to a post office and  
17 there was a post office there. Not, not a section of the city I am familiar with, but anyway,  
18 a post office on the ground floor, eh, I cannot remember that, eh. I went inside, I went  
19 inside and within no time it started to shake. And, ehm, I would say that the first second  
20 was something like, "Ooohhh, an earthquake!" And then it quickly shook seriously, and  
21 that was, "Oh my god! That's a serious earthquake." [laughter]...

22

23 *[Laughter]*

24

25 And I remember two things exactly is that, em, right away, right away, it was a kind of  
26 slow reaction, but after a few, well probably, seconds I started to get pretty scared. And  
27 there is something, I, I really remember, is that there were staff, it was a rath, rather big,  
28 medium-sized, ehm, eh, post office, so like a medium-size, eh, bank office, eh, office,  
29 they have staff here just to welcome, to help you, you know, and there was, eh, definitely  
30 a man [laughter] of the post office, a young man, standing here who showed me to go  
31 under a table. You know there are tables where you stand to write all the, the paper? To  
32 crouch under there. But he would not crouch himself and he looked, he looked kind of  
33 cool. Whereas the, the situation was not cool at, cool at all. That's about what I  
34 remember. It was not (indistinct). Then, well, it subdued, it was, "Oh my god!" Nothing  
35 fall down inside, n, nothing. And I didn't dare go outside. Outside there were no, very  
36 few people. I remember being, well, kind of, eh, "What am I go, what am I going to do?"

37

38 *Yeah.*

39

40 Well, call my wife. No phone already. Eh, I have a son, too, but, eh, he had no mobile  
41 phone at that time anyway. And I, I remember, eh, kind of, going out, "Shall I go out or  
42 what, what am I going to do here?"...

43

44 *[Laughter]*

45

46 ...And there was a foreigner, young foreigner, a Westerner, kind of, crossing the street  
47 who was totally in a, kind of, cool mode. He looked at me in a, kind of, you know,  
48 winking kind of, like, "It's okay. It was just an earthquake. Big deal." I didn't know that  
49 guy. We didn't talk. But some, some kind of, you know, our eyes spoke, you know what  
50 I mean?

51

52 *[Laughter]*

53

54 You know, kind of, well, “What’s the fuss?” And, eh, after a few minutes, I remember  
 55 there were a few people there, eh, just like me, you know, pondering, “What am I going  
 56 to do from here? Wait some more?” Because, it was, eh, some, somewhere in the mind  
 57 you had that feeling that maybe something might fall from, eh, a building or whatever.  
 58 “Might be safer to be here.” Okay. It subdued. So, well, I started to walk. And, eh,  
 59 although the, the district, eh, was not familiar to me, eh, I’m an urban walker so I pretty  
 60 much know Tokyo inside out because this takes more than a lifetime to understand half of  
 61 it...  
 62  
 63 *[Laughter]*  
 64  
 65 ...but at least I was not lost. It was a, kind of, “Oh, a familiar district is somewhere in that  
 66 direction. No problem.” So, I, I started walking in somewhat that direction. And the, the  
 67 road was not as large as that [Note: pointing to the six-lane Hakusan-dori road outside the  
 68 coffee shop] you know, eh, not, not a crooked kind of lane...  
 69  
 70 *Yeah.*  
 71  
 72 ...a serious road. And progressively while walking, I, I tried again and again to call my  
 73 wife. If I remember well, at some, at some point, we couldn’t communicate by, eh, voice,  
 74 but it looked she received an email I sent and she, kind of, answered back. Anyway, em,  
 75 vaguely, probably something within twenty minutes or even thirty minutes, there was a  
 76 second, the second tremor which, eh, which was big enough that you, kind of, stopped  
 77 walking, kind of, oh-my-god kind of stuff. And, eh, then I was approaching a, basically  
 78 it’s a business district, business district after business district, I was app, I was  
 79 approaching - sorry, sorry [Note: he pauses briefly to take a drink of his coffee] - some  
 80 district I was familiar with and the, the shaking was so formidable that, eh, me too, I  
 81 stopped walking. You, you feel, kind of, uneasy and, eh, watching, eh, the buildings  
 82 around, I remember me and other people watching one, one building which is, eh, eh,  
 83 kind of, mirror, kind of, you know, eh, semi-transparent kind of stuff...  
 84  
 85 *Yes.*  
 86  
 87 ...which, which create a mirror kind of, eh, effect...  
 88  
 89 *Yes.*  
 90  
 91  
 92 ...and the building was shaking like that [Note: he gestures an extreme swaying  
 93 movement with his arm]...  
 94  
 95 *Aaaahhhh!*  
 96  
 97 ...it was shaking like that and, and, eh, I’d never seen that, em, I’ve never seen that. It was  
 98 kind of, “Oh my god!” But nothing, nothing fall down...  
 99  
 100 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 101  
 102 ...nothing. I, I, I didn’t see anything like, eh, casualty...  
 103  
 104 *Yeah.*  
 105  
 106 ...okay? Of course, eh, there were, there, the main difference with, em, standard d, eh,  
 107 daily, busy Tokyo was the crowds, eh, of, eh, people standing outside their buildings  
 108 some with, eh, helmets and the kind of stuff they, they are supposed to have, eh, really in

109 any case, in, in, eh, in corporate things. Some not. Eh, an incredible number of static  
 110 people which is not representative of, eh, of Tokyo where there are no benches...  
 111  
 112 *[Laughter]*  
 113  
 114 ...and basically the, the public space, eh, is not designed for people to have a chat while  
 115 standing or just, you know, a cigarette. It's, it's not designed like that. It's a mobile city...  
 116  
 117 *Uhuh.*  
 118  
 119 ...where you are supposed to, to move. So, so many people not moving was, eh,  
 120 impressive. I was moving...  
 121  
 122 *Yeah.*  
 123  
 124 ...I was walking. Of course, there are other people moving but, eh, even if Tokyo is one  
 125 of those many cities, eh, where crowd is, eh, a kind of image. So, so crowded a city which  
 126 is, we have the truth, eh, it was definitely crowded...  
 127  
 128 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 129  
 130 ...because of the density of people standing. And then, well, it was obvious that the  
 131 subway were not running. I had no reason to, to, to watch [laughter]...  
 132  
 133 *[Laughter]*  
 134  
 135 ...I mean, the, the second big one was subdued, well, I went on walking. I knew how to go  
 136 home. All in all it took me something probably like two hours, two hours and a half,  
 137 which is, eh, well, which is unusual even for a walker like me...  
 138  
 139 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 140  
 141 ...but, eh, at the same time, it, it was no, no big deal for, for me. Ehm, while going home I  
 142 passed, eh, by the company where, the, the building where, office where my wife is  
 143 working. Couldn't get in touch. Eh, it, it happened to be adjacent to, eh, one famous big  
 144 park, city park, and the, the park was crowded, outside was crowded. So, okay, eh, I think  
 145 I had some kind of email exchange and, which basically meant "Okay". And so I went, I  
 146 went home...  
 147  
 148 *Yeah.*  
 149  
 150 ...and, eh, I was the first to, to go back home. I think my, my son came back later. Ehm,  
 151 luckily he was at a school two stations away so, in terms of walking distance, forty-five  
 152 minutes or something and nothing, eh, nothing nasty had happened in the school. And,  
 153 eh, when I went home, we live on the fir, on the ground floor or first floor in Ireland? I  
 154 don't know how you call it...  
 155  
 156 *[Laughter]*  
 157  
 158 ...in France it's first floor...  
 159  
 160 *Yeah.*  
 161  
 162 ...in Ireland, I don't know...  
 163

164 *Ground floor [laughter].*  
165  
166 [Laughter] Okay, the ground floor. And, eh, well, opened the door and, eh, I was  
167 expecting something. There were a few something, but nothing, nothing special. A few,  
168 eh, toys in the kids' room, eh, fall down and didn't, didn't break. Nothing, eh, some  
169 drawers were open. But, eh, basically nothing in terms of, eh, breakage. Nothing...  
170  
171 *Yeah.*  
172  
173 ...noth, nothing that could have make a crash...  
174  
175 *Yeah.*  
176  
177 ...nothing happened where probably the, the, the advantage of living on the first, eh...  
178  
179 *Exactly, exactly.*  
180  
181 ...the ground floor. Probably. And, eh, well that was, I can't remember the time, that was  
182 probably somewhere around 5pm or something, something like that. Do you want to  
183 know more?  
184  
185 *Oh, well, just, I mean really as I said, I'm interested in how people communicated and*  
186 *how people got information so maybe would you remember how you started to find out*  
187 *more about...*  
188  
189 Well...  
190  
191 ...the events?  
192  
193 ...about, about the events? Eh, we don't watch TV. Eh, so our source of information at the  
194 time was radio and newspaper. So, of course, I listened to radio and as I understand  
195 Japanese, eh, eh, I didn't listen that much. Of course, I used Internet. Internet connection  
196 was okay at home, you know, no problems to, to use the Internet. Also, I, I started being  
197 busy with my, my customers who were, eh, in a big hotel in Tokyo...  
198  
199 *Aaahhh.*  
200  
201 ...so I got in touch with them, I think we used, we used Skype. Yes, we, they explained  
202 me that, we parted five minutes before, they explained me that it started shaking while  
203 they were boarding a taxi and it's shaking like hell in the taxi. And so they were in a  
204 panicky mood. Eh, back to their hotel. Kind of high-rise hotel where the elevators were  
205 stopped. Anyway, eh, well, you will, you will make the value of, em, on what I'm going  
206 to tell you, eh, for me it's an interesting story in the sense that, em, they, they were  
207 probably more hooked than I was to, eh, news sources and as they, they do not rely on  
208 Japanese language, they were relying, I assume, on everything which is non, which was  
209 non-Japanese: French, they were French, maybe English news sources. And, eh, probably  
210 they were, they were more aware than I about the matter of Fukushima. So, they were in a  
211 total panic and, ehm, they asked me, eh, they told me that they wanted to go to Osaka and  
212 that they would pay any means of, eh, transportation because they were in that, ehm, they  
213 were thinking that everything was stopped. And, eh, I was not in a panic, well, I was not  
214 shaking. Eh, worried, but not shaking. And they said that the trains are not running.  
215 Tokyo-Osaka is something like, let's say, two hours, okay? Bullet train. So, eh, I told  
216 them, "Okay. I'm going to check. The Internet is working." So I accessed the Japan  
217 Railway website and I didn't notice any information about train being stopped. So I told  
218 them, as they were locating in, in Shibuya, so very convenient place to ju, just go to the

219 ticket booth and you buy a ticket and it looks like there's some delay but, eh, that's about  
 220 it. Trains that way are running. But before that they were ready to pay for a, a cab...  
 221  
 222 *[Laughter]*  
 223  
 224 ...or anything. 550km, well, if, if you pay a huge amount of money the cab will go  
 225 anyway, anywhere. That's, that was the, the things I had to, eh, to deal with as a service.  
 226 And, eh, it was, eh, my wife came back, my son came back, and then we pretended to live  
 227 as usual. Eh, fixing the dinner...  
 228  
 229 *Uhuh.*  
 230  
 231 ...etcetera. Now the problem was that, eh, it was shaking pretty much about every, every,  
 232 every few minutes, or, that, eh, you couldn't relax. It's, kind of, you go to the toilet, it's  
 233 shaking...  
 234  
 235 *[Laughter]*  
 236  
 237 ...you, you start eating, it shakes, you, you don't know. Oh yeah! The gas. Gas was  
 238 automatically cut. So, the, the mobile. I don't remember the mobile phone, but probably  
 239 the landline was okay so I called Tokyo Gas and asked them what to do and, eh, no panic  
 240 on, on that other side: "You just do this, do that." And okay, the gas was back. So, eh, I  
 241 fixed dinner and we had dinner and, of course, we were stressed and, and, eh, we would  
 242 be stressed with tremors for the coming, I don't remember now but, a good month of  
 243 tremors as a matter of fact in daily life...  
 244  
 245 *Yeah.*  
 246  
 247 ...and, eh, at night, couldn't sleep or, or you think you are sleeping and then [Note: makes  
 248 gesture of being startled awake]...  
 249  
 250 *[Laughter]*  
 251  
 252 ...and, and no, no light shaking! Something like serious shaking, okay?  
 253  
 254 *Yeah.*  
 255  
 256 So this added to your own, ehm, stress. Then there were, eh, well, in terms of casualty,  
 257 nothing changed, changed with the family, or the, the Japanese family. My wife's, my  
 258 wife is Japanese, eh, they live in the west outskirts of Tokyo. Everybody was okay.  
 259 Everybody was stressed and tense. And, eh, of course, the school was closed for a few  
 260 days. My wife didn't go to nothing. Because she didn't go to the office the next day, or  
 261 maybe she went but, any, anyway, everything was a question mark...  
 262  
 263 *Yeah.*  
 264  
 265 ...on, on what's going to be open. I had, eh, of course, our source of information was, eh,  
 266 again, eh, radio, national radio broadcast and the Web and as we didn't watch TV, and,  
 267 eh, even my, my wife did not watch, didn't watch especially, you know the video clip that  
 268 sort of thing...  
 269  
 270 *Yeah.*  
 271  
 272 ...I, at least, was totally, eh, clueless in terms of visuals of what happened in Fukushima...  
 273

274 *Uhm.*  
 275  
 276 ...because the, the focus shifted to Fukushima. My French clients, eh, safely went to  
 277 Osaka and I think they, I think, I can't remember whether they started warning me that I  
 278 should seriously consider leave Japan while they were still in Tokyo, because they left the  
 279 next day I think, or whether they started nagging me when they were in Osaka, safe in  
 280 Osaka. I'm going to (indistinct)...

281  
 282 *Yeah.*  
 283  
 284 So, well, they put enormous pressure which probably was the equivalent, well, which was  
 285 the reflection of the pressure they got through, eh, relying on Western source of  
 286 information that were, I started watching at that, of course, I look at websites of French  
 287 dailies and I remember one, may, not the same day, maybe the next day or following day,  
 288 I don't exactly remember but, eh, the top page of the electronic version of, it was  
 289 *Libération* - eh, the number two or number three top daily newspaper, national newspaper  
 290 in France - where the, the, eh, the title was something like "Japan Wiped Out", eh,  
 291 "Northern Japan Wiped Out" with a picture suggesting that it was Tokyo. However, it  
 292 was not a picture of Tokyo. It has not, it had nothing to, a few late, a few hours later it  
 293 would change that, but basically Japan was "wiped out" or on the verge of being "wiped  
 294 out". And northern Japan was Japan. So, the fact that, eh, we didn't rely on TV. We  
 295 didn't rely on video sna, sna, snippets...

296  
 297 *Yeah.*  
 298  
 299 ...we don't watch that, I don't watch that, on purpose. I don't want to look at that.

300  
 301 *I see.*  
 302  
 303 Ehm, so the information was a kind of redundant, eh, stream of, eh, Japanese radio.  
 304 Japanese radio are extremely redundant in that kind of situation. They spell out the name  
 305 of victims. All of a sudden, Japanese turns in to what it is in one sense - a big village...

306  
 307 *Aahhh.*  
 308  
 309 ...all of a sudden, you have deceased people name are being read, read out. Anyway, the  
 310 focus turned to Fukushima. The first, ehm, picture of, eh, something nasty which is by the  
 311 seaside somewhere in the north, eh, we had that through the newspaper, Japanese  
 312 newspaper. [Note: the participant stopped here and explained he needed to go up to the  
 313 counter of the cafe and buy some food, so he gestured to me to shut off the audio  
 314 recorder] I wanted something to eat. So if you can just...

315  
 316 *Sure, yeah, yeah.*  
 317  
 318 ...and I'll be back.

319  
 320 *Okay, no problem.*  
 321  
 322 [Note: the participant bought some food and brought it back to our table. When he sat  
 323 down, I recommenced the recording.] The fact is that I had no breakfast.

324  
 325 *Oh, I'm sorry.*  
 326  
 327 No, no, no, no. It's okay. That's no problem.  
 328



329 *Please go ahead, and...*  
 330  
 331 I will be munching...  
 332  
 333 ...yeah...  
 334  
 335 ...while talking.  
 336  
 337 ...well, it's extremely interesting what you mentioned about the difference between the  
 338 media in Japan and the media overseas. It's, it's certainly something that has come up in  
 339 other interviews with other participants.  
 340  
 341 Yes. The, well, we, we listened to the NHK which is the public radio, and they have  
 342 guidelines and rules of, eh, behaviour. Eh, and that is still in force, I assume. They,  
 343 they're not selling you, you know, a fantastic story. So they behave, voice-wise...  
 344  
 345 Yeah.  
 346  
 347 ...okay? So this, this makes a difference probably compared with the TV channel that are  
 348 showing the little bit of video...  
 349  
 350 Yeah.  
 351  
 352 ...they, they got from somewhere and they, you know, until you die they show that.  
 353  
 354 Absolutely, the same clip, again and again. I, I know that there is some, there is some  
 355 debate about, em, the delivery of the message, even in, in Japanese. I, I've read a few  
 356 research papers on some criticism that maybe NHK behaved too controlled...  
 357  
 358 Uhm.  
 359  
 360 ...too calmly, eh, in major disasters...  
 361  
 362 Yeah.  
 363  
 364 ...that it works well for, sort of, these regular, mild disasters but that they were somewhat  
 365 criticised, I believe, for not conveying in, in Japanese enough of the seriousness, that this  
 366 2011 disaster was special...  
 367  
 368 Yeah...  
 369  
 370 ...it was not the usual.  
 371  
 372 ...and at the same time, we were in Tokyo, which was better than to have been in  
 373 Fukushima. It was, it was, it was different. Ehm, there were ca, there were casualties in  
 374 Tokyo. It happens that the ca, the casualty took place some, em, ten minutes' walk from  
 375 home in, ehm, a hall which is, which was quite used for concerts, you know, that kind of  
 376 thing. We went there a few years ago...  
 377  
 378 Yeah.  
 379  
 380 ...and, eh, some plasters of the roof or something fall down on the people that were, eh,  
 381 like, there for a concert or I don't know. So there were six or eight casualties in Tokyo  
 382 and it happened to have taken place here. Anyway, the, I would say that the main source  
 383 of information was, was the news, of course, ehm, and, ehm, that was about it. So, we

384 listened to a lot of radio, but, eh, we, we tried and keep standard rhythm of, of living  
 385 because there was no, no reason to do this or that. Also, eh, the situation was, eh, fuzzy,  
 386 as far as Fukushima is concerned, and I think for two reasons of course, and I think the  
 387 major reason, at least for me, is that until, until, em, March 11, I, I had no knowledge  
 388 about what nuclear was about [laughter] you know, the plug, the whole thing about the  
 389 origin of the juice...  
 390  
 391 *Yes [laughter].*  
 392  
 393 ...as long as you get the juice, so what? You know, you, you, you, unless you are  
 394 knowledgeable about that...  
 395  
 396 *Yeah.*  
 397  
 398 ...they start using words about, em, stuff you never heard. Ehm, eh, when something like  
 399 that happen you have a whole chunk of what used to be technical vocabulary that falls,  
 400 falls into, eh, public speech...  
 401  
 402 *Right.*  
 403  
 404 ...kids started talking about cesium...  
 405  
 406 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 407  
 408 ...24 hours ago, nobody knew what cesium was. Well, when it started, I, I, even me,  
 409 nobody knew what cesium was except that cesium is bad for you [laughter]...  
 410  
 411 *[Laughter]*  
 412  
 413 ...okay? Later on we would hear about prisium, prisium, you know, it's, sort of, like,  
 414 superman kind of, eh, superhero kind of, but, em, eh, the news turns technological in its  
 415 usage of words no, nobody was used to listen to, and, of course, the frustration there is,  
 416 eh, there was, at my level and the level of my wife, not in terms of we don't understand  
 417 what they are talking about because we don't understand the language, no, the language  
 418 was not a problem. The problem was that, eh, the lack of clarity of, eh, what's happening,  
 419 what should we do, what should we not do. It was, em, it was a mess in the sense that  
 420 nothing was clear beside message of keep quiet and keep cool and don't over, eh, react,  
 421 which was, eh, peppered by reading the foreign news, news sources, where basically  
 422 Japan was over [laughter]...  
 423  
 424 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 425  
 426 ...that was the news, okay? When, when you want to, to, to put me back on track just tell.  
 427  
 428 *Sure.*  
 429  
 430 If I go, the, the, the coming days, so eleven? Yeah. Things, things, eh, went quickly, eh,  
 431 forward. My clients, em, kind of try and persuade me that, "You have to leave Japan  
 432 because it's really nasty. I know some specialist, nuclear specialist in France talked with  
 433 me and told me that, eh, get the hell out of there."  
 434  
 435 *[Laughter]*  
 436  
 437 And, eh, well, this, this thinking is, I would say, easy, eh, if you can see the flame coming  
 438 but you see nothing. Cesium has no colour. Eh, or if you are not living here...

439  
 440 *Yeah.*  
 441  
 442 ...but, eh, me being a resident of Japan for twenty-five or more years, eh, the message  
 443 that's starting to come in, especially one, one, ehm, one disturbing source is starting to be  
 444 the French Embassy.  
 445  
 446 *Wow.*  
 447  
 448 Eh, and, some people related, eh, the standard upscale who are schmoozing with, eh,  
 449 with, eh, ambassadors, etc., sending their own feeds of information which was basically a  
 450 copy-paste of information from the, eh, embassy, and it was negative, it was bad, of  
 451 course. Ehm, there were stories quickly of, em, special plane being chartered by the  
 452 French government to evacuate French citizens who want to leave Japan. But it was, it  
 453 was still a kind of, "Uhm, uhm, I'm not exactly concerned," kind of, you know...  
 454  
 455 *Yeah.*  
 456  
 457 ...anyway, many things were, were crashing together. Eh, bas, at least at home it was not  
 458 the question, "Do we leave Japan?" Or "do we leave Tokyo and go west or go, you know,  
 459 Kyoto or whatever?"  
 460  
 461 *Yes.*  
 462  
 463 It was, ehm, well, it was vague, it was not, "Okay, let's start seriously considering  
 464 packing." No, no. That, it never went through our mind. But the buzz, the Internet,  
 465 someone you know, or someone you know who knows someone...  
 466  
 467 *Yeah.*  
 468  
 469 ...and you hear that, "Oh, that guy, now he's writing a mail, his blog, whatever, he's  
 470 tweeting from Kyoto" and you know that he is, he is a resident of Tokyo and he starts,  
 471 "I'm in Kyoto and feeling much better." And things like that, "Uh oh!" you now, that  
 472 kind of, but anyway, anyway, eh, I quickly wanted to do something. But what was, I had  
 473 no, I was not ready to define what, what would be that something I could do but, ehm,  
 474 just, you know, just stressing morning till evening was frustrating, kind of. "Isn't the  
 475 something to do?" ...  
 476  
 477 *Uhum.*  
 478  
 479 ...so, eh, but I didn't know what. And, eh, I told my wife that, eh, I would ask to do  
 480 something, you know, a contribution, volunteerism, whatever, but I don't know what...  
 481  
 482 *Yeah.*  
 483  
 484 ...and then it was, eh, it was the, the 13th, I think, 12 or 13, not exactly, which was al,  
 485 almost next day. Eh, all of sudden there came an email from the French Embassy. French  
 486 Embassy was recruiting interpreters to go - and this was unclear - to go to Sendai, to go  
 487 North. And, eh, at the same time, the French Embassy was delivering standard warning  
 488 information, lots of information where basically the story was unless you have something,  
 489 some, some, eh, really valid reasons to stay in Japan, we advise you leave...  
 490  
 491 *[Laughter]*  
 492

493 ...which was not, "We advise you leave Japan," but "Get out of Tokyo, and maybe get out  
494 of Japan because there are planes which will be available for free, etcetera." And my  
495 position was, even I remember my, my wife at some point said, "Well, if we have to die, I  
496 prefer to die in Tokyo." But anyway, that mail came and it comes as a relief in a sense  
497 that "Oh, I want to do that. I want to be part of that." So I call my wife, she was at the  
498 office. Probably the next day or two days later. And I told her that there's that mail, they  
499 are recruiting, and I, I would like to go there. And she told me, "Okay, if you want to go  
500 there, go there, but beware." And basically the email was something, if I remember well,  
501 I, I don't want to put that into a, kind of, Hollywood adventure, you know, how I, I was  
502 right and brilliant. No, no, no. Forget about that. Eh, and I'll show you a bit later why. I  
503 think it was "If you want to participate, you email back us, and you come this evening at  
504 the Embassy because we move at night." So the decision was not like, "Okay, let's sleep  
505 on that."

506  
507 [Laughter]

508  
509 No. No, no. It was, "Okay!" So I, I, I emailed back that, eh, I volunteer. And earlier, and,  
510 eh, there was a list of, eh, bring this, this, this and that, you know, clothes or whatever,  
511 boring detail, the shoes, and it would be cold up there, or something like this. So, I, I  
512 bought a few things we did not have at home. I packed and probably something like 6pm  
513 I was at the Embassy. Well, I, I, I can go through what happened, eh, we went to, eh,  
514 Sendai. Okay? Before that, eh, despite the fact that, eh, we, we did not rely on visual  
515 source of information and escaped video...

516  
517 Uhm.

518  
519 ...and I, you know, eh, the first, ehm, the first visual impact was the newspaper we  
520 received, the newspapers are delivered twice a day, morning and evening editions. The  
521 newspaper which is the, the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun* - *Wall Street Journal* equivalent -  
522 which, which is not, ehm, the kind of daily with the big picture on top, unless there's  
523 something exceptional, it came with a big picture of one of those, ehm, fishery port  
524 totally crushed, kind of, total mess, and it was, "Whoa!" That looks serious...

525  
526 Yeah.

527  
528 ...because relying on, eh, audio report from the radio, well, you can't imagine something  
529 you've never seen so "Wow!" that was the picture. Later on, a few days later, we were  
530 there. And it looked like that picture for me. It's like, "Whoa!" Okay? So anyway, I was  
531 hired as a volunteer and not alone because they were looking for at least ten people. And,  
532 in fact, they were not looking for professional interpreters. They were looking for people  
533 ready to help and, eh, with, with a competence in Japanese. Okay? So I went there. Eh, if  
534 I go right away to the consequence of having been there, I think there are two  
535 consequences. One is that when back in Tokyo, I, I felt that, eh, it was a very good idea to  
536 get there because I was totally safe of, ehm, the feeling of, eh, "Oh, I have to do  
537 something," or "Oh, I should have done something, I should have, I should have." I was  
538 not in, eh, eh, conditional past...

539  
540 Yeah.

541  
542 ...eh, I was, well, somehow I was kind of self-patting on the [Note: the participant  
543 gestures patting himself on the back] "You did a good job!"...

544  
545 [Laughter]

546

547 ...kind of, but, psychologically, eh, thinking, it was very good, and very selfish, but very  
548 good to myself that I did that, because I was not in what I was starting to read around, the  
549 frustration of, for instance those people that love Japan, the Japan fan in Europe, oh, you  
550 know, wringing their hands [Note: the participant gestures wringing his hands] "I would  
551 like to help. What can I do to help?" You know?...

552  
553 *Yeah.*

554  
555 ...just putting in, eh, in the Red Cross or something is not, eh, but they can't do that, but  
556 being here, well, eh, I did a part of it...

557  
558 *Yeah.*

559  
560 ...nothing spectacular but I did a part of it, and this terribly, eh, this was a terribly positive  
561 something...

562  
563 *Uhm?*

564  
565 ...because later on I will talk with people, eh, listening to their worries and their views,  
566 some who left, eh, Kyoto, came back, some who left France, etc., and, eh, there quickly  
567 started the, the feeling of, eh, eh, "I was a coward," you know, "I'm, I'm ashamed of."  
568 And, eh, they also that was the time quickly when the buzz about those, ehm, bastard  
569 westerners fleeing Japan. No guts. No balls, eh, kind of story started around. I was not  
570 concerned in any way...

571  
572 *Uhm.*

573  
574 ...eh, and at the same time, I never, I never thought that, eh, eh, cowardice was, ehm,  
575 involved, eh, panicking and the consequence of panicking which was for a few friends of  
576 mine, kind of, em, "And a few hours later I was in a plane,"...

577  
578 *Yeah.*

579  
580 ..."leaving Japan, leaving Asia" was something, was no, no reason to, to jeer at, no  
581 reason to th, think, "Oh, feeble human!"...

582  
583 *[Laughter]*

584  
585 ...no, nothing, no, no! On the contrary, it was something like, "That's tough." It must be  
586 tough, the feeling of, eh, "I should have..." Okay? So, I had not that fear. My wife was,  
587 was in a different position because while I was, and maybe a more difficult position,  
588 because she was in Tokyo, I was in a bus moving with, ehm, the French, ehm, safety  
589 squad that came especially from France and we were moving around Sendai and the  
590 miracle was that, eh, the mobile phone was working no problem. Yeah, it was. We were  
591 expecting that, eh, don't talk. But it was working when I came, so I could call my wife  
592 and she called me while I was in the, in that bus, a huge number of buses and trucks and,  
593 eh, you know...

594  
595 *Yeah.*

596  
597 ...kind of military situation and running on the, eh, the highway, the highway was closed  
598 except for, eh, security, safety trucks and, and cars, and she called me and told me that  
599 the, the embassy called me, asked me whether we, 'we' which means her and my son  
600 maybe me but me being away from Tokyo, were considering boarding that airplane  
601 which was the last one. Well, it's, it's the last one after the end of the world, something

602 like that. And, eh, she called me and she ask, she asked me, “What do you think?” I, I,  
603 could, I couldn’t answer. I was, “Well, if you, if, I’m not in Tokyo, but if you think it’s  
604 better to go, and we’ll see.” And she, she told me that, “I will think about it.” And then  
605 later on, she, she called me, she said, “No. I decided not to go and, eh, told, told the  
606 embassy that.” “Okay.” And, eh, that was it. I was, eh, around Sendai City, eh, it was  
607 supposed to be one week, and it ended after something like 72 hours for safety reasons.  
608 Eh, the specialist with all the geiger counting machines...

609  
610 *Yeah.*  
611  
612 ...were blue since we started going towards, eh, Sendai. There, eh, there, with, eh, the  
613 devices they had were kind of “kweh, kweh, kweh, kweh” [Note: the participant makes a  
614 sort of crackling sound]...

615  
616 *[Nervous laughter]*  
617  
618 ...but, but, but again a, for a specialist, it’s meaningful. For you, it’s like, “Oh, it’s noisy.”  
619 Eh, so it means something...

620  
621 *Yeah.*  
622  
623 ...it start meaning more when the, based on their readings, they said now, it happened  
624 they asked me in the bus, several buses, in the bus, they asked me, “Tell the, the driver to  
625 stop the air conditioning, which means no air intake, because the air is nasty.” Okay, I  
626 told him, so no more air conditioning with the fan. Okay? And, eh, that was about it. But  
627 again, it’s, it’s, there’s nothing visible. One, one guy, one guy especially sitting by my  
628 side later on told me, “Do you have family here?” “Yes,” I said. Then, eh, “Take my  
629 word. Get out of this country.”...

630  
631 *Wow.*  
632  
633 You know, a kind of, that, okay, I asked the driver “Stop!” [laughter]...

634  
635 *[Laughter]*  
636  
637 ...in the middle of nowhere, anywhere, anywhere [laughter]...

638  
639 *[Laughter]*  
640  
641 So, there were, I was one of interpreters and, eh, {redacted} anyway, back to Tokyo, back  
642 to life. Well, not normal life, but anyway. Ehm, what do you want to know more?

643  
644 *Well, for example, {redacted} what were the type of things that you were asked to*  
645 *interpret? What was the information that needed to be mediated in some way?*

646  
647 Hmm. [Note: the participant is in the middle of eating some food] Let’s see.

648  
649 *Oh please take your time [Note: the researcher tries to think of something to say to give*  
650 *the participant time to eat] I, just, I think the whole, eh, experience that you have been*  
651 *explaining is fascinating and why I am particularly glad that I had this opportunity to*  
652 *hear your, your story because I’ve read about some of these, eh, events in research*  
653 *papers or in newspapers, and so on. But to hear someone who actually was involved is, is*  
654 *a very special angle for me.*  
655

656 Something you have to know is that we were not, I can't really, I can't remember, we  
657 were not required to sign, ehm, a non-disclosure agreement so what I saw, what I  
658 witnessed, ehm, I did, I write blogs, but I didn't write into detail. I didn't much write  
659 about that but, ehm, I witnessed, eh, things that, eh, from a journalistic point of view, eh,  
660 was pretty, eh, unsettling and pro, probably the chief editor would say, "No, we will not  
661 report on that." [Laughter] But basically, the French squadrons, eh, arrived and the  
662 Russians was, were already there, the British, I heard about Spanish, you know, coming  
663 from all over the world to help...

664  
665 *Yeah.*

666  
667 ...the problem was the communication was needed at the level of "Okay, we are here.  
668 How can we help? Tell us what to do and we do it." Ehm, incidentally, the, the, the  
669 French squadron are, ehm, specialist rescuer, so their *raison d'être* is to, eh, help people  
670 survive, eh, mitigate, eh, casualties. So that's their, their very strong, very strong, eh,  
671 reason to be here. They, eh, I never, well, I, I thought that time and again, two things: I  
672 never saw people that were so, eh, willing to help. "Our job is to help. Show us where to  
673 help. We help. We want to help." And this something they frustrated with was, ehm, they  
674 were not welcome, as, at least, standard case. Eh, also, on the contrary, dispatch, ehm, a  
675 rescue team, it's not only out of the heart. There's, there is, there's politics behind. There  
676 are many, eh, essential interests which motivate to send people abroad or not. Okay? So,  
677 communication was needed in order to, to get, eh, well, directions, directives from the  
678 local authorities, the Japanese police mostly and army and know, "Okay, tell us what to  
679 do, where, what to do and we'll do it." So that was, eh, our role as, em, interpreters. Eh,  
680 okay so I was attached to a small group. Everybody was attached to a small group. Some  
681 actually didn't move out from the camp, eh, again, I, I consider I was lucky enough to be  
682 part of a group that actually moved on the spot. Even, even if worse. Because even  
683 among other interpreters, and again most people were not professional interpreters, they  
684 happened to speak, eh, French and Japanese. But, ehm, later on, I heard frustration from  
685 some that happened not to be called to move so they were just, eh, you know, chewing  
686 the fat and killing time in ugly weather and, eh, waiting for something to do whereas  
687 nothing was, there, there was nothing to do. So I was, I consider I was lucky enough to go  
688 on the ground for a few, eh, hours. It was like, like jumping in the big picture, eh, we saw  
689 in Tokyo a few days before in the daily. It was just like that. Kind of, everything crushed,  
690 like, "My god!" kind of...

691  
692 *Yeah.*

693  
694 ...everything smashed and crushed down, like, you don't see that. Yeah, the demolition  
695 site, you see that, but it's tiny...

696  
697 *Yeah, yeah.*

698  
699 ...but here, the, the, well, the most disturbing things, eh, no cadaver, we saw one but at a  
700 distance, but, eh, just sawing one is, is enough, kind of, "Oh my god" kind of thing...

701  
702 *Yeah.*

703  
704 ...it's, ehm, we were in the middle of nowhere because there was nothing. It was, kind of,  
705 okay, it used to be something. Mostly, mostly nothing except, well, what they saw, what  
706 they, there showed on TV, there was some photography...

707  
708 *Yeah.*

709

710 ...so we saw that anyway. But basically, the Japanese police would say something like,  
711 "This, this is the territory that you check." Well, look for, look for survivors, look for  
712 cadavers. There were rules, rules which, rules for people that come far away to help  
713 people which was totally, ehm, disturbing, like, eh, if you see a corpse, eh, contact the  
714 police, do not touch it. Basically, it's do not touch Japanese people. It was not written like  
715 that but it was something like that. And also a lot of frustration because before we went  
716 on site in daily, in day time, we waited almost a day doing nothing, and the, and, eh, you  
717 know, rescuers get frustrated because time is key. But, of course, they know how to  
718 behave because, eh, they are military people, but, eh, while joking, of course, "What are  
719 we doing there? People must be dying somewhere and what are we?" At long last, we  
720 went there and, eh, well, we patrolled some, em, specific territory, eh, went into  
721 crumbled, eh, houses, found people, eh, that, ehm, escaped but were coming back to, kind  
722 of, retrieve a few things or look for people, and most of those people were crying because  
723 they were asking for help. And, em, and, eh, of course, asking for help, but, em, like, eh,  
724 "A friend of mine, eh, is over there," and, eh, the young lady was showing a field of mud.  
725 Okay, something like that. Mud. And, em, the, well, the, the, eh, the people, the people,  
726 eh, they have this, I don't know, sonic radar? They have that kind of stuff but, ehm, they,  
727 they were lacking, things were lacking, eh, more precise directive from the Japanese  
728 police. One of the most disturbing, or if you get cynical, funny, but it was not funny, si,  
729 single situation was, eh, I remember there was a little kind of a, not even a, a hill, a kind  
730 of, eh, turfy kind of place, which was probably a holding spot, kind of shrine or  
731 something, which later on I saw on a picture taken from a helicopter, but anyway, kind of,  
732 "Oh, I was there!"...

733  
734 *[Laughter]*

735  
736 ...but anyway, [laughter] and, he, we climbed there and there were Japanese, eh, safety, a  
737 group of Japanese rescuers there, and there, there, I, I seriously interpreted for a brief ten  
738 or fifteen minutes. The French wanted, the French, ehm, felt that, eh, they were  
739 manipulated, in a sense. They couldn't find a corpse. We couldn't find nothing...

740  
741 *Uhm.*

742  
743 ...so they, they asked me, "Tell them, ask them about this territory. Have they already  
744 covered it?" And they genuinely answered, "Yes." So, ehm, we were looking, we were  
745 searching for casualties on a territory which were, which was, which had already been  
746 search. And there were signs, poles and, kind of, things which suggested that people  
747 already came here, it was already searched...

748  
749 *Yeah.*

750  
751 ...but anyway, there's, eh, international relations behind that, so no comm...

752  
753 *Yeah.*

754  
755 ...no comment.

756  
757 *Yeah.*

758  
759 Eh, came back in, in Tokyo with those little stories I was part of and, ehm, and on, eh,  
760 back on the Internet you had the buzz of, eh, espec, especially, well, the buzz like, "Oh,  
761 those French!" Yeah, especially French that flee Japan. "Ah, put a sock in it!"...

762  
763 *Yeah, yeah.*

764



765 “The hell with that!” Anyway, ehm, a second good thing, I can really show you - self-  
 766 patting [the participant again makes a small gesture of patting himself on the back]...  
 767  
 768 *Yeah [laughter]*  
 769  
 770 ...a second good thing I, I did after being back to Tokyo is that, ehm, everybody was  
 771 stressed, me included. But I pretentiously and cheekily considered myself above the  
 772 crowd in the sense that I did something. So, everybody I, I read about or heard that, you  
 773 know, wringing the hand, “I’d like to do something”, I was, “I did something.” It was not  
 774 pride that “I did something. You did nothing.” No, no, no, no. I did something so I  
 775 understood that there must be such frustration to have done nothing, which, eh, later,  
 776 way, months later, I could, eh, confirm with some friends, relations, eh, who were, kind  
 777 of, so ashamed to have done nothing. So, I wanted to do something, eh, quickly in terms  
 778 of, eh, everybody’s so stressed, when you are stressed, what you need is to discuss, talk,  
 779 communicate. Let’s have a dinner party. And at the same time, let’s have a dinner party  
 780 that will support the neighbourhood, because the neighbourhood was the ghost town for a  
 781 few days, for many reasons, of course. Ghost town. So, I had that, eh, regular mail from,  
 782 em, a French guy I know nothing about but who is a kind of, em, representant of, eh,  
 783 French residents in my ward. There are, there’s 23 wards in Tokyo, okay? And he was  
 784 dispatching information, eh, many copy-paste from, eh, from, eh, the Embassy. And  
 785 anyway, and, eh, for lack of, eh, consideration of privacy, he was dispatching on CC so  
 786 the CC list was a huge list of, basically, French residents in my ward. But I would not use  
 787 that. I came to the idea of, em, let’s have a dinner party, not at home, let’s go to a  
 788 restaurant, not far away. I was not using Facebook, but I was suggesting somewhere, a  
 789 blog, or, I remember that, “Let’s organize,” nobody would read that but, “let’s organize a  
 790 neighbourhood, a neighbourhood dinner.” Because boarding the subway was, kind of,  
 791 you weren’t safe...  
 792  
 793 *Uhm.*  
 794  
 795 ... “Will I be able to come back after dinner?” [laughter]...  
 796  
 797 *[Laughter]*  
 798  
 799 ...you know? Okay, so, in your, in your neighbourhood, you spot a restaurant, a place  
 800 that, eh, kind of, which is open, and that you, you like, and, eh, as a short support and, eh,  
 801 support other people, friends or neighbours, well, neighbours, that kind of relationship  
 802 doesn’t exist in Japan...  
 803  
 804 *[Laughter]*  
 805  
 806 ...in cities, but anyway, “Let’s organize a party.” And I did organize a party and, eh, we,  
 807 eh, were twelve. And, eh, {redacted} it was a nice dinner, because getting together  
 808 allowed people to talk...  
 809  
 810 *Uhm.*  
 811  
 812 ...some people knew other people, some didn’t. Eh, only two people I didn’t know came.  
 813 Japanese-French couple came. And it was nice, you know. Very nice to talk and to, kind  
 814 of, diffuse the stress for, for, for a few hours with food, and, and, and good beverages. So,  
 815 eh, I’m probably, probably over-proud of the fact that I did two things which, eh, helped  
 816 me never feel like, eh, I should have done this, which, which could have been including,  
 817 “I should, we should have go to France.”  
 818  
 819 *Yeah.*

820  
821 Now, we, it's, it's now three years, eh, well, it, it would not have been a good idea, eh, to  
822 go to France. Ehm, nuclear-wise, definitely, ehm, I was nuked...  
823  
824 *Yeah.*  
825  
826 ...for sure. Everybody that went there was nuked, for sure. {redacted} Ehm, before we,  
827 we board the bus at, eh, the French Embassy on the way north, one of the organizer,  
828 military, French military staff, eh, told us in military tone that, eh, "Well boys (not  
829 girls)...  
830  
831 *[Laughter]*  
832  
833 ...eh, you will see ugly things, okay, so when you come back to Tokyo, I advise that, eh,  
834 you check with, eh, you know, the consulate or something." And that was the only  
835 suggestion that came from the embassy, because back in Tokyo, and in the coming weeks  
836 and months, I had a few friends, especially friends that left in a panicky mood in Paris,  
837 and actually who did not come back talk over Skype...  
838  
839 *Yeah.*  
840  
841 ...or I heard buzz of people I didn't know that were mentally in really bad shape...  
842  
843 *Yeah.*  
844  
845 ...and definitely would have, eh, benefited from, eh, talking with someone. Not with  
846 me. I'm, I'm no counsellor, only we talked. Oh, yeah, yeah, now it comes back to, to my  
847 mind. One, one, em, friend of mine, lady, single, explained me from Paris how she was,  
848 kind of, em, swirled not by the tsunami...  
849  
850 *Yeah.*  
851  
852 ...by the panic of French people she knew around and she explained me that it was a kind  
853 of, eh, "Eh, you don't board, you don't board the plane? The last plane." You know, the  
854 last plane at the end of the world...  
855  
856 *At the end of the world, yeah.*  
857  
858 ...and she board the plane a few, eh, a few hours later, leaving everything in the room  
859 where she lived. And, and, kind of, eh, after the, after, and twelve hours later ending up in  
860 Paris. Okay? And a few months later coming back to Tokyo and, eh, we were not  
861 especially, eh, chummy or deeply friendly but, you know, I had met her for other reasons  
862 before and, eh, she contacted me, we had a few talk over Skype, but she contacted me,  
863 tell me, "{redacted}, I'm coming back in Tokyo, eh, next week," or something, and  
864 really, we, we, we were in, eh, friendly terms but, eh, not much like that, not in, nothing  
865 intimate, eh, friendship, and, eh, probably because I was the one with whom she had the  
866 opportunity to talk, eh, on the tame tone, not the "Waaahhh, aaahh" kind of, you know,  
867 tame tone, and, eh, probably no-one sneering at her or, you know, innuendos of, eh, that,  
868 she, she, she told, I was totally surprised, she told me that, "I'm coming back Tokyo, but  
869 I'm totally panicky about a situation I want to avoid which is to arrive at the airport and  
870 nobody is meeting me. Will you meet me?" Six, six, six in the morning, the plane. I said,  
871 "Okay. Okay." And so she was glad someone was meeting her, eh, at the air, at the  
872 airport. And that was the last time we met in Japan. She's in France. She, she went back  
873 to France, and she didn't come back. Anyway, so I did my part...  
874

875 *Uhm.*  
876  
877 ...which I'm, eh, stupidly proud of but, eh, everything for me is really even  
878 communication in a way, okay, so, but coming to your work, well, eh, I speak and  
879 understand Japanese so the, the, any matter of, eh, we don't know what to do because we  
880 don't understand the message of the authorities...  
881  
882 *Uhm, uhm.*  
883  
884 ...has never been an issue.  
885  
886 *Yeah.*  
887  
888 I've been here for too long...  
889  
890 *Yeah.*  
891  
892 ...probably. It has never been an issue. I did not, I have never been, eh, an active, eh,  
893 participant of so-called, eh, local French community, for which I have never been, I have  
894 always had an uneasy feeling with that. For reason which have nothing to do with your  
895 research...  
896  
897 *[Laughter]*  
898  
899 ...but anyway, I know, nothing wrong with that, and it's not unique to French...  
900  
901 *Uhm.*  
902  
903 ...it's, it's something specific with you dealing with the ecosystem of the so-called  
904 community of your home country, and it happens in any country, but anyway. Eh, that's  
905 about it {redacted}.  
906  
907 *Community is a little bit related into the work I'm doing, because, eh, what I'm doing as*  
908 *well is looking at some of the recommendations that the Japanese local authorities are*  
909 *making for how to better support foreign residents in the future, and one of the*  
910 *recommendations that has come across fairly strongly is that foreign residents need to be*  
911 *more integrated into the local, eh, Japanese community, or their local communities. I*  
912 *remember just a few minutes ago, you kind of said, "Well, that doesn't happen in, in, in*  
913 *Japanese cities." I wonder if you could, eh, develop that a little bit more or expand on*  
914 *that. What, what did you mean by that?*  
915  
916 All right, just, just, I, I have plenty of time, just to, okay, I will call my wife to tell her  
917 that I will be late.  
918  
919 *Oh, I'm sorry.*  
920  
921 No, no, no, no. No problem.  
922  
923 *Are you sure, really?*  
924  
925 Well, I will call her in about 30 minutes. I have something to do but that's, eh, for later in  
926 the afternoon. Could you rephrase your?  
927

928 *So, so, ehm, a few moments ago, when we were, eh, when we were talking about the idea*  
 929 *of community, you, you talked about having dinner with the neighbours, and you said,*  
 930 *that doesn't happen...*  
 931  
 932 Uhm.  
 933  
 934 *...in Japan, in big cities...*  
 935  
 936 Uhm.  
 937  
 938 *...I just wonder if you could explain wha, why you said that or?*  
 939  
 940 Uh, well, a big city, culturally speaking, it's, you know, you have noticed, is this your  
 941 first time in Japan?  
 942  
 943 *Oh no, I've been here before, so, I'm, I'm...*  
 944  
 945 Okay.  
 946  
 947 *...I, I have a sense of why you said it...*  
 948  
 949 Just to be safe.  
 950  
 951 *...I just want to make sure I haven't misunderstood you.*  
 952  
 953 Ehm, people are, 99% of people are very behaved. There is no visible, visible clash in,  
 954 ehm, public domains, territories. Eh, well, culturally even amongst themselves, Japanese  
 955 people do not invite at home. There are always exceptions. Well, the family, maybe, but,  
 956 eh, do not. Okay? So, having dinner is having dinner out. Or lunch. Okay? When it comes  
 957 to foreigners, I don't know. I'm a foreigner, but, em, am I representative of any trend?  
 958 But, ehm, spending all your life here is, is, ehm, for many, for many, is, ehm, an exercise  
 959 in self-diagnosis. I mean, self-diagnosis about basically, eh, human relationships. And,  
 960 em, for the, for the friend or people I have met on friendly terms who are French, or not  
 961 even French but Westerners, ehm, with a long enough, ehm, relationship with Japan,  
 962 living in Japan, and granted, granted, they are not, they are not member of the wealthy,  
 963 plush expatriate world, which is different...  
 964  
 965 Uhm.  
 966  
 967 ...ehm, all have had to accommodate daily with the fact that, eh, you don't belong.  
 968 Belong, the, the belonging is, is - personally, if, if I were on your - you are so lucky, you  
 969 do a PhD...  
 970  
 971 *[Laughter]*  
 972  
 973 ...if, if I were on your position, I would love to, to deal with really a few topics related  
 974 with, eh, notions of belonging, that kind of thing. Anyway, I would say that belonging is  
 975 not part of the blueprint. Is it specific to Japan? I don't know. I'm pretty sure it's not  
 976 specific to Japan, but, eh, anyway. Belonging is not that, eh, deep communication, the  
 977 kind of compensa, conversation - well, I am monopolizing this but - the kind of  
 978 conversation we are having, the kind of conversation I have with other foreigners, are  
 979 conversation that are not considerable with Japanese people. And it's not a matter of  
 980 language. I have no problem speaking Japanese. I could, I could speak to Japanese and  
 981 say, tell the same thing, only you don't, you don't talk like that. You don't relate like that.  
 982 Ehm, it may happen but, eh, probably some connections I don't have or I will never have.

983 But probably, I, kind of, suspect that connections are related with whether you spend your  
 984 school days in Japan or not, which may make, despite the fact [laughter]...  
 985  
 986 *Uhuh.*  
 987  
 988 ...may make a totally different approach to belonging to, to feeling like, "Well, I'm part  
 989 of that." "I'm not." Anyway, ehm, when you go beyond, eh, food, dwellings, the weather,  
 990 next door's, eh, you know, barking dog...  
 991  
 992 *[Laughter]*  
 993  
 994 ...deep down, what is left in terms of frustration is a matter of communication with other  
 995 people because communication with Japanese is totally unsatisfied. It's, we are on  
 996 different roads of, eh, communication and there's no way to fill up the gap besides talking  
 997 with non-Japanese. And this is a common thread of frustration and, eh, that's life!  
 998  
 999 *Yeah.*  
 1000  
 1001 C'est la vie. But, eh, it's something which is nagging you, entertaining your, eh, stomach  
 1002 ache until you die...  
 1003  
 1004 *[Laughter]*  
 1005  
 1006 ...and, and maybe later, but I don't know.  
 1007  
 1008 *[Laughter]*  
 1009  
 1010 Anyway, okay, so that's, that's part of the background.  
 1011  
 1012 *I understand.*  
 1013  
 1014 So people that, that, people that, eh, well, people that don't speak the language, don't  
 1015 understand the language relies on, em, foreigners' newsreels and sources and eh, the  
 1016 email from the Embassy, etc., etc. They are in a different ecosystem, in a different bus,  
 1017 you know.  
 1018  
 1019 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1020  
 1021 To which I don't belong, although I receive the email because I'm registered to the  
 1022 Embassy, but I don't belong, I don't belong to, to that. Is it interesting?  
 1023  
 1024 *Absolu, no, that's absolutely, em, just, to, to let you know that already, even though I've*  
 1025 *only had maybe, thir, I think you're the thirteenth person I've interviewed, it's come*  
 1026 *across very clearly that I can't talk about foreign nationals in Japan as one group, eh, I*  
 1027 *think there's going to be differences between the foreign nationals who, like you said,*  
 1028 *make a part of the expat community who don't speak Japanese, or are just here*  
 1029 *temporarily, versus foreign nationals who have established links and a life here and are*  
 1030 *more long-term. I think there's already seems to be some large difference in their*  
 1031 *experiences based on where they stand on that scale.*  
 1032  
 1033 In Marxist terms, there is a single word which, which forbidden, even to think: class!  
 1034 Ehm, there is no community. Only the same passport. It doesn't make a community.  
 1035 What they call community, which is not specific to France, what they call community is  
 1036 basically an illusion of sameness because of commonness of language and place of birth,  
 1037 which is totally phony, because wha, what is determined is social class, social-

1038 economical class. So the idea that, eh, there's a community, a French community, well,  
 1039 there, there, there are and it's the same for the US and the British...

1040

1041 *Uhuh, uhuh, uhuh.*

1042

1043 ...and the German, etcetera...

1044

1045 *Yeah, yeah.*

1046

1047 There are, there is, of course, something which, eh, translate into, eh, associations of  
 1048 residents...

1049

1050 *Yeah, yeah.*

1051

1052 ...several associations, not only because such associations reflect, well, the, the, it actually  
 1053 reflects something, the forbidden word of, eh, social class, of, eh, experience, of "Where  
 1054 do you live in Tokyo?" "What is the husband doing? Where is the husband working?"  
 1055 Okay? "Who do you drink champagne with on Saturday?" Okay? This is reality. Only the  
 1056 guys at the top are the, are the proponent of community. They use that word community.  
 1057 We! To which I don't feel I belong, but anyway. We!

1058

1059 *I see.*

1060

1061 So, yes, you will never get the same buzz...

1062

1063 *Yeah, yeah.*

1064

1065 ...never get the same buzz.

1066

1067 *That, that certainly confirms that for me, anyway. I'm also - just to go back a little bit -*  
 1068 *there is one issue as well that I'm, I'm, I am very interested in...*

1069

1070 *Uhuh.*

1071

1072 *...you mentioned that of the people who went up to Sendai that se, several of the people*  
 1073 *weren't professional interpreters. Ehm, do you think it was enough to just have*  
 1074 *conversational Japanese or non-specialist Japanese or did, that experience, would you*  
 1075 *have needed professional knowledge of some description?*

1076

1077 I think there are two things in interpreting, at least, the way I approach it, and maybe you  
 1078 don't know but I, I'm not a professionally trained interpreter and interpreting as a matter  
 1079 of fact is something I have been practising less and less, due to the lack of opportunities  
 1080 to do that for many reasons. March 11th totally blew away my market. Totally. Other  
 1081 fact, other factors came into the picture, eh, but, eh, it totally blew my, blew away my  
 1082 market and it never came back. Eh, but anyway, my view, and interpreting of, what is  
 1083 interpretation? And not conference interpreting...

1084

1085 *Yeah, yeah.*

1086

1087 ...I don't do that, is, eh, I know it's way off, it's considered that, it will come off, "What is  
 1088 he talking about? He knows nothing." But, I only know by practising, eh, you, you know  
 1089 that, ehm, the law [laughter] the law tell that the role of the interpreter is just to transfer  
 1090 the meaning back and forth and that's it. The problem is that there are situation where  
 1091 that's it, eh, is an invitation to catastrophe because, because it's not only a matter of  
 1092 words [laughter]. It's, it's, words is just a tiny factor in the full relationship, okay? For

1093 instance, when I deal with - well, these days I almost do not but - when I dealt with  
 1094 people coming here for business, and repeaters, because it's a one-shot, you can't exactly  
 1095 suggest that there's another way to use an interpreter, but with repeaters, it's that our  
 1096 interaction, the interaction with your Japanese counterpart is not starting the moment we  
 1097 get to, to the, eh, meeting room, it starts before. For instance, I used to develop and, eh,  
 1098 use a kind of very simple questionnaire asking my clients, well, you're, you're, you are  
 1099 interpreting for business meetings so you explain that "I am coming to meet my, for the  
 1100 first time or not, for the purpose of this, and here is the PowerPoint," and, you know,  
 1101 background. I used late, late in, relatively late in delivering this to ask questions which I  
 1102 know are not supposed to be asked by interpreters: what's your purpose; what, what do  
 1103 you want to take home at the end of the meeting; what's your expectations; do you know,  
 1104 eh, the power play of people you are meeting? I ask, "Do you have the, do you have the  
 1105 names and positions of the people you are meeting?" Many cases, "None, none of your  
 1106 business!" Okay? Well, maybe it's none of my business but in terms of communication,  
 1107 you know, play of power, eh, know who is who is key. {redacted} So, I, I ask things like,  
 1108 I ask things like, "What do you want to achieve?" Many times the clients are glad to, to  
 1109 tell that, but it happened me that, you know, kind of...  
 1110  
 1111 *Uhuh.*  
 1112  
 1113 ... "None of your business! You just interpret what we are saying." In, in, including the  
 1114 crap...  
 1115  
 1116 *[Laughter]*  
 1117  
 1118 ...including the use - well, I don't say that - including the useless, totally out-of-scope,  
 1119 meaningless, eh, that will generate no valuable information kind of question.  
 1120  
 1121 *Uhuh.*  
 1122  
 1123 So, for me, it starts from here. So, so in the, in the context of Sendai and of Fukushima,  
 1124 eh, of course, people they, they come here, they are supermen, they are, and they are nice,  
 1125 I have never met so nice people, really, so, never met so, the heart, really nice people.  
 1126 But, if, for instance, the strategy is to find out what's happening here, what have the  
 1127 Japanese authorities and army authorities done so far, where can we help, what are they  
 1128 not talking us...  
 1129  
 1130 *Uhm.*  
 1131  
 1132 ...I think, do you, do you just run around, like, here [Note: gesturing like writing on a  
 1133 piece of paper] and you start, eh, aligning the question in French and ask the interpreter,  
 1134 "Please tell them that." Which actually happened, as it happens usually, okay?  
 1135  
 1136 *Yeah.*  
 1137  
 1138 And, well, you get, get what you're not looking for because Japan, Japan doesn't work  
 1139 like that, like communication-wise...  
 1140  
 1141 *Yeah.*  
 1142  
 1143 ...it's not, we're not in Texas [laughter]...  
 1144  
 1145 *[Laughter]*  
 1146

1147 ...we're in a different Texas. Okay? In this Texas, things, ehm, question you just throw  
 1148 like that may not yield what you expecting because, well, if you're expecting something,  
 1149 maybe the question should be formulated in a different manner in order to generate what  
 1150 are you looking for. Okay?

1151  
 1152 *Yeah.*

1153  
 1154 But officially, this is not the role of the interpreter. For me, it is the role of the interpreter  
 1155 because culture is, is so different here that just pretending that, "Oh, we are all, you  
 1156 know, we all speak, we all speak English around here so we don't need an interpreter."  
 1157 "Goodbye. Enjoy, enjoy!" It always happens, always.

1158  
 1159 *That's really fascinating. I think the idea of that cultural mediator...*

1160  
 1161 *Yeah.*

1162  
 1163 *...is something that comes across strongly for sure...*

1164  
 1165 *Uhm.*

1166  
 1167 *...I know that there is an idea that if everyone speaks English, it should be, it should be*  
 1168 *fine, but, as you said, with those different cultural viewpoints, it may not be, it may not be*  
 1169 *fine at all.*

1170  
 1171 Has it answered your question?

1172  
 1173 *A, a, absolutely, because, eh, what I was interested in was if, if, if you're going to*  
 1174 *interpret in an emergency scenario, say as a, a member of a team, what, what is going to*  
 1175 *be expected of you or what are you going to need, what sort of tools, and from the sound*  
 1176 *of your story, what is needed is not just language ability, it is this cultural knowledge to,*  
 1177 *maybe, help mediate between why people aren't being asked to do their jobs or.*

1178  
 1179 You know, maybe the French, they did briefings, but if you do briefings without your  
 1180 interpreter, you, you, you are not qualified. The interpreter is the bridge. Okay, get the  
 1181 feedback from the bridge. So, involve, involve the interpreter into the, the dynamics that  
 1182 will come very soon enough. So I know that it goes against the neutrality of the  
 1183 interpreter...

1184  
 1185 *Yeah, yeah.*

1186  
 1187 ...okay, neutrality, my ass! Okay? My, my, my basic, eh, monetary, con, definition is this  
 1188 - neutrality is the side that pays me...

1189  
 1190 *[Laughter]*

1191  
 1192 ...okay? There is no neutrality. There is no neutrality...

1193  
 1194 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

1195  
 1196 ...in business, you know. It doesn't happen...

1197  
 1198 *Yeah.*

1199  
 1200 ...if one side, whichever, because it may happen on one side not the other, it is, eh, doing  
 1201 things in order to fuck you, are you supposed to just transfer? Are you supposed to not



1202 tell your customer? Are you suppose, are you supposed not to refrain and not tell,  
 1203 suggest, maybe it's not impolite, suggest quickly, brief your customer that your question  
 1204 framed that way will yield nothing. I have done that...  
 1205  
 1206 *Yeah.*  
 1207  
 1208 ...with some customers that, I've done that. I suggest you ask this otherwise you will  
 1209 never get the answer you are looking for. That's not in the books. In the books is, "You  
 1210 shut up and you say," [laughter]...  
 1211  
 1212 *[Laughter] Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1213  
 1214 ...that's why I am a disaster when it comes to interpreting.  
 1215  
 1216 *Aaah, I doubt that very much! You did mention, though, that since the 3.11, it had*  
 1217 *affected your interpreting customer base and, and, and your business, my, kind of, final*  
 1218 *question is, for you, when did the disaster end or has it ended?*  
 1219  
 1220 Well, the fact that my business was, ehm, impacted deeply, as a freelancer, I had been  
 1221 working alone indefinitely for so many years, except for a few, three-and-a-half year  
 1222 where I was, em, an employee in the company, which helped confirm me that I can't  
 1223 work in a company...  
 1224  
 1225 *[Laughter]*  
 1226  
 1227 ...beside that, I have been into freelancing for, for close to thirty years and I have changed  
 1228 jobs, eh, I am in transition, I have been in transition for thirty years, probably, but right,  
 1229 right now, I am clearly in transition, because I have to, I have to call interpreting quits.  
 1230 It's quitting me. So I have to call that, well, there, there may be, I have had, in the past  
 1231 two weeks, three inquiries for interpreting and they pay nothing. They want to pay  
 1232 nothing. They want to pay nothing.  
 1233  
 1234 *Uhum.*  
 1235  
 1236 They are wanting to pay by the hour, and this, well, it started with March 11th, but on  
 1237 2008, it start 2008 with the Lehman...  
 1238  
 1239 *Oh the, the shock, yeah.*  
 1240  
 1241 ...you know, with the precarity as obvious with, "Okay, you get twice as much as what  
 1242 they pay at McDonalds per hour. And you don't want to do that. Someone will. Which is  
 1243 true. I'm not talking about conference interpreting price, okay? Ehm, well, there are, there  
 1244 are many factors that can be really relating one another to March 11th, but not only, not  
 1245 only it just, it just added, it generated the smash into something which was, kind of,  
 1246 crumbling, It was a direct slap, eh, into the face of my ecosystem which was, actually, not  
 1247 bad, despite 2008, it was not bad because I had, I had a very good, eh, regular, eh,  
 1248 customer. The one I was working with five minutes before the shaking. Okay?  
 1249 Everything disappeared for, eh, the, eh, 3.11 was a big factor, not only, but, it was an  
 1250 opportunity to reshuffle things, voluntarily or not, mostly not voluntary. So that's, so  
 1251 that's life. So now, nowadays I am more inclined to trying again, eh, recreate something,  
 1252 unfortunately out, not out of interpreting, because I love to do interpretation, despite the  
 1253 low pay, it can be bad. But, yes, it has changed, eh, the world but, again, it's one factor  
 1254 among other world-shaking events that were not, eh, related with, that were, well, the  
 1255 world has been changing deeply in terms of, basically everything is about lowering fees,  
 1256 everything is, eh, cheapening things...

1257  
1258 *Yeah.*  
1259  
1260 ...this has been clear enough. Also, I'm getting older, which is not a disease but, eh,  
1261 there's some pressure or some, some stage at which it is clear that there's a well-defined,  
1262 younger generation that, eh, may do even better than you, it's fresher than you, and it's  
1263 less demanding than you. This is, this is clear. So, March 11, in a, in a sense has shaken  
1264 many things, eh, the result of which is, eh, my current situation. It has brought incredible  
1265 life and work opportunities for the, eh, interpreters, I know. If you are into nuclear, eh,  
1266 you have lifelong job. I worked, not as an interpreter, I worked for one nuclear company  
1267 after March 11. Never had that much before. It doesn't lack of money. But I discovered  
1268 myself as being anti-nuclear. Before that, I was, I was, eh, a total idiot [laughter]...  
1269  
1270 *[Laughter]*  
1271  
1272 ...a total, I knew nothing. I knew nothing. I mean, everything was, everything is working  
1273 as long as it doesn't smell of cesium...  
1274  
1275 *Yeah.*  
1276  
1277 ...kind of, "Well, everything is working. Light is on. Life is good."...  
1278  
1279 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1280  
1281 ...okay? So I discovered many things...  
1282  
1283 *Uhum.*  
1284  
1285 ...many things which I cannot talk about because I'm under, under NDA for that...  
1286  
1287 *Ah, okay.*  
1288  
1289 ...but, eh, I, I discovered a lot of things. I was totally, as a, as a total dumb, I was totally  
1290 unaware. But if I were smart and, eh, intelligent and, eh, crafty, interpreting nuclear? You  
1291 have lifetime, a load of work. You, you are booked every day, every day for the next  
1292 forty years. Sure. Guaranteed. Guaranteed.  
1293  
1294 *That's, that's quite incredible. That's very incredible.*  
1295  
1296 You want something sweet? [the participant offers me some of the cake he bought]  
1297  
1298 *Thanks, thanks, I'll take that.*  
1299  
1300 I think you, you need some calorie, some energy.  
1301  
1302 *To process that! Well, all I can say is thank you so much for sharing, eh, your story with*  
1303 *me.*  
1304  
1305 I don't know if I could help or not.  
1306  
1307 *Absolutely.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/24 Interview with Participant 14*

5 *Researcher: So then, basically, usually what I ask everybody at first is just to tell me what*  
6 *happened to you...*

7  
8 Participant: Okay.

9  
10 *...in, in the 2011 disaster.*

11  
12 So, 2011 disaster. March 11. I was at school when it, the earthquake happened, but it was,  
13 it might be, em, interesting to note that, you know, before the earthquake we had  
14 numerous earthquakes and some of my Japanese friends were concerned that a big  
15 earthquake was going to happen. And, it actually started two days before the earthquake,  
16 because I was at a school the 9th, we had like a 7.0 earthquake and it was big enough that  
17 the students went under their desks, and two days before the earthquake I was at that  
18 school, ehm, in the afternoon, you know, things continued as normal. Two days later was  
19 the big earthquake, that school was destroyed completely. Completely destroyed, ehm, so  
20 yeah, it was, I mean, I didn't know that until, until afterwards, but it, kind of, when you're  
21 talking about March 11th, to me it, kind of, starts a little bit before the earthquake  
22 because I remember Japanese people being concerned about the possibility of an  
23 earthquake, and at the school that I was at, {an elementary school in Miyagi}, they  
24 always left the TV on, every day I was there because I thought it was strange, in the  
25 teachers' room, they had a TV on, and I asked, "Why is the TV on?" We're close to the  
26 school [Note: I presume this was a slip of the tongue and he meant 'shore' or 'ocean' or  
27 something, not school] if there is a tsunami, we need to know that information. The  
28 school was destroyed, like two stories up, just gone, completely. So, ehm, yeah. Okay, the  
29 day of earthquake, luckily I wasn't at that school, ehm, all the children were saved from,  
30 on Wednesday [Note: this means March 9, 2011 - two days before onset] what it was is  
31 I'd go to one school in the morning and another school in the afternoon, the school that I  
32 went to in the afternoon was destroyed. The good thing was that all the students were  
33 saved. They got rescued off the top of the building by helicopter. The school that I went  
34 to in the morning, eh, one of the students was unfortunately lost, and the, the only reason  
35 that, eh, that he lost his life was because his grandmother had worried, earthquake  
36 happened, she came to the school, picked him up. All the other students had evacuated to  
37 the top of the building, and they went to their home towards the sea and was lost. So, it's,  
38 em, yeah, I mean, considering what happened to the school, I think that, that, the students  
39 were pretty fortunate. So going back to where I was on the day of the earthquake, I was at  
40 the school which is a little bit out in the countryside, it's towards the mountains. So there  
41 wa, wasn't any damage from the tsunami. There was little damage from the earthquake.  
42 Lots of shaking. It was really violent shaking for a minute. I was in the teacher's room of  
43 the school. All the desk drawers opened up, eh, sounds that I had never heard before,  
44 squeaking sounds of the school, deep rumbling, em, but there was no significant damage  
45 to the place out of that. So, eh, it was a cold day. We evacuated outside to the school  
46 ground, and we spent about twenty minutes of time there. There were numerous  
47 aftershocks, and we evacuated to the school gym, the school gymnasium became a  
48 refugee centre, a refugee, a refuge, a centre for refuge, sorry, I had that wrong. So people  
49 from the community started pouring in, and, yeah, I realized that, you know, it was either  
50 stay there at that school or try to get back to my house. That's not my base school, em, I  
51 was an ALT [Note: Assistant Language Teacher in the Japan Exchange and Teaching  
52 Program] at the time, so I was positioned in a base elementary school and I was out, sort  
53 of, on a, a trip to a, a school that I go to once every two weeks. So while we're standing

54 there, I decided to walk back to my flat which is about, em, 11 or 12 kilometres away,  
 55 which, you know, it wasn't rough but, em, it started snowing and there was just, like,  
 56 mass of people walking and the, the roads were chaos, all of the lights were down, em,  
 57 but again the place where I was at, at the time of the earthquake, there was no real, there  
 58 was damage but nothing like you would see on the coastline, it was just completely, you  
 59 know, different at the coast. And we didn't know what had happened at that time.  
 60  
 61 *Yeah.*  
 62  
 63 So that's where I was on the day of the earthquake.  
 64  
 65 *Em, at that time, do you remember any announcements or PA system, were anything*  
 66 *working in that area or in the school, do you remember?*  
 67  
 68 Okay. The thing that I remember is the principal of the school after the earthquake, he  
 69 switched on to a different mode. They must have had some sort of training, but the  
 70 normally laid-back principal just, you know, switched on. He had his loudspeaker and  
 71 there is a school transmission system and he said, "You need to get under your desks.  
 72 There is an earthquake." And after the shaking stopped, after the shaking stopped, they  
 73 checked the hallways to make sure it was safe to evacuate, and went outside. As far as  
 74 announcements in the community, em, loudspeakers, I know that they're there, but I  
 75 don't remember, I don't remember. Em, two days before the earthquake when I was at the  
 76 school, em, I do remember being, there being a siren. That happened right around noon.  
 77 12:56, I think that earthquake was? 11.46? That's the day of the 9th, but, on the day of the  
 78 earthquake, I don't, sorry, I don't remember.  
 79  
 80 *Oh no, please don't apologize, em, as I said, because I'm, kind of, coming at this from a*  
 81 *language and linguistic point of view, I'm interested in things like: if there were*  
 82 *loudspeaker announcements, were they in Japanese or were they in various languages...*  
 83  
 84 *Uhm.*  
 85  
 86 *...that kind of thing?*  
 87  
 88 My guess would be - no I don't know this, but - eh, they probably would have been in  
 89 Japanese only.  
 90  
 91 *Yeah, yeah. You said as well then that you decided to, to walk home. A, at that time, how*  
 92 *did you try to communicate with important people in your life?*  
 93  
 94 Well, at that time, em, I basically thought it was just another earthquake. I knew that it  
 95 was big, I knew that it was long, powerful, but I thought, "Okay, it's another earthquake.  
 96 The power is off. It'll be back. I thought it would be a matter of days. And I did look at  
 97 my cell phone, that was probably my go-to source for information. There was a TV  
 98 function on it and I saw some news coming and they said something about a tsunami, but  
 99 it wasn't, em, you know, didn't have any idea of the scale and I didn't, hadn't thought  
 100 really to communicate with anyone yet because I just didn't realize...  
 101  
 102 *Uhuh.*  
 103  
 104 ...the scale of what it was. I think, maybe, at that time, I did try to send an email but the  
 105 email was already, sort of, not work, the phone's email, you know.  
 106  
 107 *Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 108

109 Em, so cellphones were pretty much, em, you couldn't use them. Everything was  
 110 jammed, eh, I don't know if jammed is the right word but you couldn't connect...  
 111  
 112 *Yeah.*  
 113  
 114 ...if you wanted to make a phone call, it wouldn't go through. Ehm, mail was the same. I  
 115 remember on my phone, opened it up and it was, it had the same reading which you  
 116 would when you go into a tunnel...  
 117  
 118 *Ah.*  
 119  
 120 ...so it was, like, they say *kengai* in Japanese. It was like that on my phone. [Note: *kengai*  
 121 means 'out of service or range' or 'no service'] I could use, like, to get televis, eh,  
 122 television transmissions but as a communication tool, couldn't.  
 123  
 124 *Yeah.*  
 125  
 126 I think once or twice that evening I could so the first contact I made was, eh, with one my  
 127 friends in Aomori [Note: a prefecture in the far north of Japan not so seriously affected in  
 128 the disaster] and what I got him to do, eh, because, eh, at that time, I knew that it was on a  
 129 national, world-scale, because usually when there's an earthquake there's no news of it.  
 130  
 131 *Yeah.*  
 132  
 133 Ehm, so I got one of my friends in Aomori to post on my Facebook account that I was  
 134 okay. Ehm, and occasionally, I did get incoming mail, eh, but, and I could see that people  
 135 had tried to call my phone, and international calls, I did see that. But, as far as any type of  
 136 working connection, it just wasn't happening on that day.  
 137  
 138 *Right. And just, just to be clear, you, you said your TV had that, or your telephone had*  
 139 *that TV function...*  
 140  
 141 *Right.*  
 142  
 143 *...those programs were in Japanese?*  
 144  
 145 *Japanese.*  
 146  
 147 *Japanese. So it was, like, the NHK broadcast or one of those?*  
 148  
 149 *Uhum, NHK and Sendai local television.*  
 150  
 151 *Yeah. Ehm, then, obviously, you know, you had maybe through your friend in Aomori*  
 152 *been able to post on your Facebook. When was it you were able to, to get contact directly*  
 153 *with people? How, how long did it take before communication was up for you?*  
 154  
 155 *Uhm, with people outside of the city, yeah, outside world, probably the next day, I was*  
 156 *able to talk with one of my friends in Aomori. I had moved there the year before and*  
 157 *that's where my most important people in Japan were, in Aomori. Of course, I had friends*  
 158 *here, but, we, eh, I don't think I got to talk to my parents until a few days after.*  
 159  
 160 *That's quite a long time.*  
 161  
 162 *Ehm, they were quite worried, obviously. I think I was able to send them a short message*  
 163 *through the, the phone, you know, at that time I didn't have a smartphone, I just had the*

164 standard cell phone so it was, em, limited as to what you could type. But I think I sent,  
 165 sent something like, "Big earthquake. I'm safe. Don't worry." But even with, with a  
 166 message like that, they still worried...  
 167  
 168 *Of course.*  
 169  
 170 ...and they were on the local TV at home, ehm, you know, because people wanted to  
 171 know about these photos of, these pictures of destruction in Japan and the way it was  
 172 broadcasted abroad was that Sendai was hit by the tsunami and Sendai, there was a  
 173 nuclear meltdown by Sendai, and it was the, of course, that's all the information they had,  
 174 but it, it sounded like, that, that, that everything was, you know, had been hit. Well, the  
 175 earthquake happened everywhere but the destruction was only, the mass destruction was  
 176 only on a part of, like, Sendai, it wasn't all of Sendai, but if you, if one of your friends is  
 177 living in Sendai, even if you don't know that they don't live by the sea, you hear Sendai  
 178 is hit by an earthquake, you're going to worry. So, my parents, even though that they had  
 179 that basic information that I'm alive and safe, they were still quite worried.  
 180  
 181 *Of course, I can, I can only imagine. So you got back to your apartment...*  
 182  
 183 Yeah.  
 184  
 185 *...how did you start making decisions then?*  
 186  
 187 Well, ehm, I walked back and the, the, the town was just dark, ehm, filled with cars, the,  
 188 it was just a monumental traffic jam. I, eh, went back to my apartment. It was cold. I  
 189 knew that I had a little bit of food there. I just thought, "Okay, well, you know, I'll just  
 190 get warm, go to bed, and wake up and see what happens tomorrow." And that was, sort  
 191 of, my game plan. And, when I got cold, I went to my car, turned it on, and got warm in  
 192 the car, and I used my car to charge my phone, I had a charger, so I was really lucky in  
 193 that regard. Em, so, yeah, I mean, basically the next day, I, kind of, had a game plan  
 194 which was find some place to get food, find some place to get water. So, eh, [laughter]  
 195 my friend and I, kind of, joked about this, eh, we [laughter], in our ALT meetings here  
 196 we'd always talked about disaster management and where is the first place you're going  
 197 to go during an earthquake and my friend said, you know, "The first place I'm going to  
 198 go is the liquor store." [laughter]...  
 199  
 200 *[Laughter]*  
 201  
 202 ...we have one in our neighbourhood and it was actually the first place I went because  
 203 [laughter] I mean, not only liquor do they have but also, you know, lots of bottled water  
 204 and other provisions. But the first place I did go was the liquor store...  
 205  
 206 *[Laughter]*  
 207  
 208 ...and it wasn't to get liquor. There was already a massive line outside and I lined up and I  
 209 think I got two two-litre bottles of something, you know, it wasn't liquor [laughter]...  
 210  
 211 *[Laughter]*  
 212  
 213 ...it was tea, or something, but, that's what I did. And I realized, you know, it's probably  
 214 going to be like this for a couple of days so the second day I went and walked to one of  
 215 my friends apartments. It wasn't a friend who I was particularly close to, em, until after  
 216 the earthquake, during the earthquake, but, eh, that was probably one of the best decisions  
 217 I made was going and seeking someone I knew...  
 218

219 *Yeah.*  
220  
221 ...and we stayed, you know, the next four or five days together and other ALTs came  
222 together in his, we just, sort of, camped out in this one-bedroom apartment. My friend, he  
223 was from Canada, I'm from the States. We had people from Scotland there. We had  
224 Japanese people coming and stopping by, so we had our own little support group...  
225  
226 *Yeah.*  
227  
228 ...in the city. That was really good, that was. We shared our food.  
229  
230 *And, I guess you were sharing, probably, your information and your ideas and?*  
231  
232 Yeah, we shared our information. Eh, it happened on Friday, so we spent the weekend  
233 there. Okay, what happens Monday? So Monday, obviously, we wanted to go in to our  
234 work and figure out what's going on. My work is 10km away, so I went to the Board of  
235 Education and, kind of, tried to get a handle on our, on what happened and, eh, the scale  
236 of things. I saw some of my co-workers there, eh, Japanese co-workers and, you know, I  
237 said, "Well, what do we do?" "If you want to volunteer you can try volunteering at {an  
238 institution of the Sendai government}." So that's what I did. I joined the multi-language  
239 support team for three or four days, yeah. So that's what I did, which involved translation  
240 and helping foreigners here and honestly it was really stressful. It was really stressful  
241 being there. So, if you'd like to know about that, I guess I can talk about that a little bit.  
242  
243 *If you're happy to, yeah.*  
244  
245 One of my supervisors suggests, "If you want to volunteer, if you can't go to school, why  
246 don't you go to {an institution of the Sendai government} and see if you can help out?"  
247 So I did. Ehm, and, you know, this {institution of the Sendai government}, they helped  
248 foreigners to, on a day-to-day basis...  
249  
250 *Yeah.*  
251  
252 ...you know, with their daily life, their daily life needs. You know, if they need  
253 translation, there's a hotline they can call. If they need, eh, some sort of support in daily  
254 life, you know, if there's a doctor they need to go to, they can call there and ask for  
255 support. So during the earthquake they set up, eh, eh, I don't exactly know the official  
256 title of the, of the team that they used but it was like a *tagengo*, eh, *sapooto chiimu* or  
257 something like that. A multi-language support team. And what it was was the official  
258 information we had about the buses running and anything that was provided by the city or  
259 local information, we would translate it and make it available to the foreigners. We had a  
260 bulletin board there, and one of the jobs was to answer the phones which was I, which I  
261 was doing, so, had all these phone calls coming in and, eh, you know, there were  
262 completely legitimate phone calls and things I was worried about, too, but, by virtue of  
263 being on the team, I was, sort of, in the position of giving people information to make  
264 them feel more comfortable, but the fact is, that was quite stressful at the time. At the  
265 time, hearing people ask questions about things that you are concerned about yourself is,  
266 eh, that's stressful info, information, you know, like people would ask, eh, "We just saw  
267 an explosion on the TV. Is it safe to live here?" And I'm just like, em, eh, [laughter]...  
268  
269 *[Laughter]*  
270  
271 ..."That's a really good question." And, sort of, having to go by the information you have  
272 and stand by that, you know, and when you are somewhat dubious of the, the content or  
273 the veracity of that information, then it's a little bit stressful, you know. But, the main

274 thing was to provide the basic information of, em, you know, buses and how to get into  
 275 the city, how to get out of the city. People would ask, "How do I get out of Sendai if I  
 276 wanted to leave?" And we got more and more of those questions as the, the dias, you  
 277 know, as it progressed from the earthquake to the nuclear disaster, we got more and more  
 278 questions involving transportation and how do I get out of Sendai, what can I use, you  
 279 know, and the fact is that a lot of the transportation systems were down and, em, you  
 280 know, that was, eh, that was, sort of, stressful, realizing that, eh, you were here and, eh,  
 281 you were, [laughter] kind of, stuck here in some regard if something really bad were to  
 282 happen. Really bad, I mean, on the scale of, you know, like, a nuclear, not a meltdown,  
 283 but something even worse like an explosion...

284  
 285 *Yeah.*

286  
 287 ...that put us into immediate danger...

288  
 289 *Yeah.*

290  
 291 ...you know. That was my main concern at the time.

292  
 293 *Of course, yeah.*

294  
 295 And obviously it wasn't MY major concern, too, because the embassy sent buses to get  
 296 their na, nationals, you know, for all those wanting to, eh, to leave Sendai, em, the  
 297 embassy sent buses to Sendai. I'm sorry if I, kind of, got off track.

298  
 299 *No, that's absolutely linked to the kind of things I'm interested in, em, I would like to*  
 300 *know how different countries embassies actually communicated with their citizens or*  
 301 *gave information. You know, as a US citizen, what happened?*

302  
 303 Well, as a US citizen, eventually the, the embassy came up and said, set up a, I, I don't  
 304 know what exactly you'd call it, but in {the institution of the Sendai government at which  
 305 the participant volunteered}, they set up a table and I know they had a, a few personnel  
 306 there from the embassy and they were, em, they had a list of people that lived in Sendai  
 307 and they were trying to find the people, em, but I do know that some embassies were  
 308 more proactive in finding their nationals and caring for them, but the US Embassy was a  
 309 little bit, eh, they came eventually but I don't think it was the, quite the quick response  
 310 that the UK provided. I mean, I, yeah, I don't exactly have all that information as to how  
 311 the embassies came in, but I know that, that a lot of them did personally come to Sendai  
 312 looking for their citizens. {A colleague of the participant who I would also interview}  
 313 might be able to answer those questions.

314  
 315 *But even just personally did they contact you with emails or?*

316  
 317 They didn't contact me at all.

318  
 319 *Okay.*

320  
 321 I had to contact them, so.

322  
 323 *I see.*

324  
 325 I know that a lot of the embassies hunted, hunted them down is a weird expression but,  
 326 looked for their, their nationals. With the US Embassy, I remember them coming to  
 327 Sendai, I was, I saw them there when I was at the, when I was volunteering with the, eh,  
 328 multi-language support team at {an institution of the Sendai government} and I said, "I'm



329 from the, you know, I'm a US citizen, is there anything I need to do, you know, so that  
330 you guys are aware?" They were just, "Call the embassy and register." "Well, I  
331 registered." "But call them to see and let them know you're here and safe." So that's what  
332 I did.

333  
334 *And, in that multilingual support group, was it mostly English speaking people or?*

335  
336 Well, not as a native language, mostly, eh, international students, there were some  
337 graduate students there from {a major university in the region} and some other colleagues  
338 from the Board of ALTs had come in to help, and, yeah, it was mostly people from,  
339 graduate students from the university, some people who were already working in the, in  
340 this {institution of the Sendai government} and some, eh, bilingual people from the  
341 community had all come in. But English-as-a-native-language speakers? There, there  
342 were only two or three.

343  
344 *I see. Because, obviously, in places like Sendai when you say, you know, foreign people*  
345 *that could mean Chinese or Brazilian or?*

346  
347 Oh yeah. we had, eh, people from China, from Iran, from, yeah, there was a woman for  
348 France, people from all over the world, probably 15 or 20 people on the team and we  
349 broke off into groups, you know. We had one group answering the phone, we had one  
350 group translating the information on the, em, on the, eh, the, eh, public transportation, bus  
351 schedules, what buses were running, trains, eh, so we broke off into different teams and  
352 that's how we handled it.

353  
354 *And, obviously, that must have been extremely stressful.*

355  
356 It was.

357  
358 *Afterwards was there some support for the volunteers?*

359  
360 Well, here's what happened with the support team, em, it lasted probably, em, I don't  
361 know exactly when, eh, when it was formed, but I joined on that Monday. Some of the,  
362 eh, volunteers had decided to go home and it was obvious that there was, our members  
363 were, sort of, eh, you know, me personally, I left because I needed to, eh, to go stay with  
364 some friends. I was, a time when my parents had, eh, told me, this is, I had already had  
365 contact with them, and they had seen the news, and they basically said, "Leave Sendai."  
366 You know, "Where are you?" They'd give, and I'd see, "Are, have you left Sendai yet?"  
367 "No." They'd call me and say things like, "Where are you?" So, I temporarily left the city  
368 to stay with some friends who didn't live here, em, just to, kind of, cool down. Eh, so,  
369 that's what I did and I'm sure that a few of the other members did similar things. So, I'm  
370 not going to say that it disbanded. I know that there were a few people that stayed.  
371 Obviously the people that worked at the uni, {an institution of the Sendai government},  
372 ehm, you know, it was their job. I went as a volunteer because I couldn't go to work, I  
373 couldn't make it to my school. So that's, sort of, the reason I joined. Because I wanted to  
374 do something, and I stayed as long as I could. When it was time for me to [laughter]  
375 leave, I left.

376  
377 *I think, this is a theme that has come up with other people that I've spoken to, for*  
378 *example, in Ibaraki or in other parts of, of the disaster zone, but if you do a volunteer*  
379 *effort, it's really hard work and mentally and physically stressful and it can only be done*  
380 *for a certain period of time.*

381  
382 It's really stressful, especially in the situation like we had, because it wasn't just the one  
383 event. Okay, the earthquake happened. Then the tsunami happened, okay. And then you

384 had the nuclear problem so it's not, whatever information you have, whatever information  
 385 you had, it was not fixed. With each hour, with each moment, it was subject to change.  
 386 And what I knew from watching the news is that things were changing and things were  
 387 changing quickly. The news, even if you understood Japanese perfectly, the amount of  
 388 information you were getting, could not keep up with the pace the information was  
 389 changing, so working at {an institution of the Sendai government}, that for me,  
 390 volunteering there, I was watching the TV, trying to figure out what I could, my relation  
 391 to this information, okay, based on what the media is saying, what can I figure out as a  
 392 thinking individual without, you know, just laying my concerns aside, because I want to  
 393 know what's happening, and I'm being asked what's happening, watching the news,  
 394 trying to figure out what's happening, and answering questions, people that are honestly  
 395 concerned as I am, too, and somewhat having to endorse the official information. "Oh  
 396 it's," every, you know, "This is what's happening," knowing that everything's changing,  
 397 so it was just, you know, when you get a phone call, "I really don't know what's  
 398 happening." So to be a volunteer, not only do you have to have language skills, but you  
 399 have to be, sort of, a pillar of positivity, too. You have to be, and, and, at the same time,  
 400 really rooted in reality. You have to be able to give support in a way that, that, you know,  
 401 you have to, I, it's tough, it's tough. And I didn't know personally when I answered a  
 402 phone call and tried to help someone if I was in a better state before the phone call or  
 403 after the phone call [laughter]. My friend and I joked, because he noticed that I was, sort  
 404 of, stressed out. I mean, now I'm, sort of, in a different position here, em, I know that as  
 405 my job, I have to support people as an advisor here. Whatever happens, I'm the person  
 406 that people are going to go to, you know, so I would have a different mindset, eh, if the  
 407 same thing happened. But, my friend and I joked a bit. He said that after I went to {the  
 408 institution of the Sendai government at which he volunteered}, I was always a little bit  
 409 more stressed out. So he said, you know, "Someday, next, tomorrow when you answer  
 410 the phone, eh, someone is going to ask you, ask you a question, and you're just going to  
 411 say, 'Oh my god, thank god you called, you know, I'm so glad, I so needed to talk to  
 412 someone, you know, thank you, I wanted to ask you the same thing.'" [laughter]

413  
 414 [Laughter]

415  
 416 You know, so there's that side to being on, eh, a support team like that.

417  
 418 *Epecially, as you said, in such a complex situation that was changing all the time...*

419  
 420 Minute to minute.

421  
 422 *...and, you know, you, you mentioned how on the TV you were getting these masses of*  
 423 *information. You know, even if you spoke Japanese perfectly, as you said, I, I remember*  
 424 *in my experience, hearing these things in Japanese about nuclear power. If, if I looked it*  
 425 *up in my dictionary, I still didn't know what it meant in, in English...*

426  
 427 Yeah.

428  
 429 *...so how, I don't know, how, ehm, its possible to, kind of, communicate these very*  
 430 *complex things.*

431  
 432 Right. Okay, so the language that was used at all times was, em, in terms of the disaster  
 433 was very opaque, you know, you couldn't figure it out, em, at all. I couldn't figure it out.  
 434 I remember reading it, being able to understand the Japanese, and it was just like, "Okay,  
 435 there's, there's, there's no connection." I don't, you don't know what happened, you  
 436 know, but that's characteristic of what's happening today, em, but here's the thing that  
 437 was hard for foreigners here is because the foreign media, the way that they covered it,  
 438 and the way that the Japanese covered what was happening were just so completely

439 different, you know, and, it, it was just hard in a situation where you've, you know, you  
 440 don't have power, you don't have electricity in your flat, or you don't have food, to be  
 441 able to look at these two different sources, multiple sources and interpret for yourself  
 442 what's happening and what's your best bet for behaving, you know, as to what to do, it  
 443 was pretty stressful for a lot of people, myself included, em.  
 444  
 445 *I can imagine, I can just imagine. On top of that, I know that there was also a lot of social*  
 446 *media going on at that time. In Sendai, were you able to access any of that.*  
 447  
 448 So, eventually, I was able to get my Facebook account which I never really used at all,  
 449 but, em, yeah, I would say, eh, 3 or 4 days after the disaster. Luckily my friends, eh, lived  
 450 in the centre of the city and there was an island of power. He had, eh, he had electricity,  
 451 didn't have water, but, eh, he had electricity and he had the Internet, so we were able to  
 452 use his apartment as, sort of, a, eh, shelter, Internet cafe, information hub. I would, I don't  
 453 really know what I would have done if there hadn't been a place like that.  
 454  
 455 *Did you find social media to be useful?*  
 456  
 457 Yeah, definitely. Em, and I know that our department here, the Board of Education, that's  
 458 how they found out that a lot of people were safe and okay was through social media and,  
 459 em, we were encouraged to, to, you know, one of my elders here had suggested, you  
 460 know, show pictures of everyone, not only that you're okay, but that, you know, that  
 461 convey that you're - I wouldn't say flourishing but - you're, that show what's actually  
 462 happening. Because we were in an apartment with, you know, four or five people and we  
 463 were in, we weren't having a bad time, you know, we were supporting each other and,  
 464 em, yeah, so it was good to, to, to let people know not only we're safe but we're at times,  
 465 you know, we're, we're doing well, I don't know if you'd say doing well but, you know,  
 466 but we're here and we're, we're having a laugh too. We were stressed out but, em.  
 467  
 468 *And it sounds very much like you were all there for each other.*  
 469  
 470 Yeah, we had a, a, a group of four or five people that pretty much...  
 471  
 472 *Became a kind of community...*  
 473  
 474 ...right.  
 475  
 476 *...at, at that time. Did you ever at any point consider going to some, I don't know like, ce,*  
 477 *centre for refuge or anything like that?*  
 478  
 479 Eh, no. I didn't. I didn't. Em, in retrospect, I probably would have. Em, and I know that in  
 480 my neighbourhood there is a school that I made visits to once a week, and, of course, all  
 481 the schools become centres for refuge, it's, sort of, something that has happened, you  
 482 know, traditionally in, in the past, schools are, sort of, the centres of the community and  
 483 even, you know, when they have sports days, people who aren't involved in the school  
 484 come and gather at the school. It's, sort of, a, you know, centre of the community. So I  
 485 remember meeting one of my co-workers in the street and they said, "Oh, you should  
 486 have," you know, "we've had, our school is a refuge in, was a refuge centre. You should  
 487 have come, you should have come to the school." It didn't cross my mind, you know, but  
 488 I thought that if I would have gone, I might have, I would have been able to be with  
 489 people who were experiencing the same thing and maybe a deeper sense of community at  
 490 that time.  
 491  
 492 *Um.*  
 493

494 So I probably would, but we had our own sort of refuge centre.  
 495  
 496 *It sounded like it, I mean, you had electricity and some Internet power. These are the*  
 497 *things you are looking for a, at that time. Em, when did things start to, I guess, get back*  
 498 *to normal for you? What I have been asking people is when did the disaster end for you,*  
 499 *but that's a very difficult thing to say, maybe.*  
 500  
 501 When did the disaster end?  
 502  
 503 *If, if it has ended.*  
 504  
 505 Em, well, I would say the, eh, immediate, well, I guess there are different levels you can  
 506 answer that question on. One of my friends was, eh, her family was greatly affected by  
 507 the tsunami. It came, and, em, up to the second storey of their house and they rebuilt in  
 508 the same p, place. They lost a family member but I was close with that family, Japanese  
 509 family and they recently moved back in their house so as far as my friends, people that I  
 510 know getting back to their normal life, I would say that they're getting close to it, you  
 511 know. But for me, em, I would say that the acute sense of the disaster ended when I went  
 512 to the supermarket and things were there again and, em, well, here's the deal, after the  
 513 earthquake, any time you had some sort of food or something new, you found something  
 514 new, you know, that you didn't eat yesterday, it was just exciting. "Oh, I've got  
 515 something new," you know, or when you went to the store and something was open or  
 516 they had this different food item that they hadn't had, it was just, like, you know, I don't  
 517 know, seeing a flower bloom, I, that's weird but, you know, seeing something really  
 518 special. Going to the store and seeing food was really special, so I guess when that special  
 519 feeling wore off, like a month or two later, and everything was there again and available,  
 520 then it, sort of, ended for me, I guess you could say.  
 521  
 522 *I see. And, I'm very interested in you, you, you know, you talking about the store having*  
 523 *this thing suddenly or this thing coming back, h, h, how, how were these things*  
 524 *communicated...*  
 525  
 526 Oh yeah...  
 527  
 528 *...among each other, did?*  
 529  
 530 So people had that on Facebook, you know, em, someone would get, eh, information  
 531 somewhere that this store is going to be open from 10-5, and I remember hearing about it  
 532 at my friend's apartment. "Okay, I heard that so-and-so is going to be open from 10 to 12  
 533 tomorrow." It was also short...  
 534  
 535 *[Laughter]*  
 536  
 537 ...you know, like, [laughter] sporadic times, but, sure enough, you'd see people lining up  
 538 in front of the store. There would be a sign posted, so walking to the town you would, eh,  
 539 pick up on things, I think there were signs, but also by word of mouth and through social  
 540 media that was communicated. So what we did is when we were, sort of, living together,  
 541 we would go out and people would get different things, you know, and bring them back,  
 542 and we would share them and that was really neat. And food tasted really good. It tasted  
 543 really good.  
 544  
 545 *Yeah.*  
 546  
 547 Yeah. But we were just lucky to be in the city, you know, and just, you know, to think  
 548 about what happened some of the people, you know. You really can't complain about our

549 situation. We were, I always tell people, we were inconvenienced but not really injured or  
 550 damaged or, we were inconvenienced. I'm just, the ALTs that were here in the city, you  
 551 know.  
 552  
 553 *Yeah. Ehm, I mean, I totally understand what you mean about, sort of, different levels of*  
 554 *experience for, for people but still, I, I understand that you were inconvenienced, but it*  
 555 *was a very stressful time. Has, has it changed you in any way? Has it changed your*  
 556 *behaviour or thinking or?*  
 557  
 558 Yeah, it has. I would say after the earthquake, em, during the earthquake, my friend, eh,  
 559 he would, there would, you know, people took different reactions. Some people thought,  
 560 "I got to get out of Sendai. This is not safe. I don't trust the, the media at all. We've got to  
 561 get out of here. It's melting down," you know, "it's dangerous. It's not safe. Get out."  
 562 People had that attitude, you know, and some people left and I remember seeing my  
 563 friend, em, and he was just the type of person that I could tell he was stressed but just the  
 564 amount of support he gave to other people, I felt so much better after I talked with him  
 565 and I thought, you know, I want to be that kind of person in a disaster. If something  
 566 happens, not to be more the person who freaks out and doesn't know what's going on,  
 567 you know, and just makes irrational decisions, but someone who can really look at things  
 568 level-headedly and be supportive of other people so I would say that the earthquake made  
 569 me want to be more of a support for other people. That's one of the things I thought  
 570 during the earthquake and after the earthquake. But changed as a person? Hmmm. Yeah, I  
 571 guess, eh, as a teacher it made me think about what are you going to do when you're,  
 572 when you lead people. If you're in a class when this happens or you're with students,  
 573 you're walking on the street and, eh, at my school, I often walked with my students to  
 574 school, what do you do, you know, I look about, I look at my environment a little bit  
 575 differently. What kind of things can go wrong, so, yeah, it changed my perspective on  
 576 things a bit. Yeah.  
 577  
 578 *And, obviously, what I would like, in, to be able to do after speaking to all these people*  
 579 *I'm speaking to is to try and come up with some, I guess, concrete recommendations for*  
 580 *how foreign nationals can be supported better in future, e, especially in terms of getting*  
 581 *information or communicating. Is, is there anything that strikes you that would have*  
 582 *helped you more?*  
 583  
 584 Hmmm. What would have helped us more? I would say, eh, I'd just realised it at the  
 585 beginning of our conversation, but the emergency announcements, the loudspeakers,  
 586 having that in English is probably a good thing for the future, because there are more and  
 587 more foreigners living in Japan these days and a lot of them don't speak Japanese and  
 588 emergency announcements, if you don't understand, you know, the language of the  
 589 announcements, you're pretty much, you have to rely on a transla, you have to get the  
 590 information second-hand...  
 591  
 592 *Yeah.*  
 593  
 594 ...and even if you have someone who is fluent in English translating for you, to get  
 595 something first-hand immediately gives you a little bit more, eh, you know, I don't want  
 596 to say comfort but, eh, you know, gives you a little bit more security...  
 597  
 598 *Hmm.*  
 599  
 600 ...I think, so having emergency announcements, you know, like they have on the  
 601 shinkansen, you know, "The Shinkansen will be stopping," you know, that's standard in  
 602 the service industry, you know, more and more. [Note: he is referring her to the

603 professional, high-quality bilingual English-Japanese announcements that are standard on  
 604 the Japanese bullet train]

605

606 *Yeah.*

607

608 Announcements at supermarkets and grocery stores...

609

610 *Yeah.*

611

612 ...you know, I've heard that in English, em, but, yeah, emergency announcements, that  
 613 might be something to look into.

614

615 *Yeah, especially, obviously, one of my considerations may be typh, eh, tsunami*  
 616 *announcements because in terms of tsunami warning, that can really be life or death, you*  
 617 *know, if you're told to go somewhere, to high ground or something, that can be very, very*  
 618 *important so.*

619

620 Definitely.

621

622 *Yeah. I, I, I, I think in terms of concrete recommendations - I'm sure they're looking into*  
 623 *it, I'm sure they're looking into it - but just in case, I could make some sort of*  
 624 *recommendation and that would be something. Also, what I'm interested in is, you talked*  
 625 *about how, you know, in a disaster situation, the person translating is also often a person*  
 626 *suffering.*

627

628 Yes. Uhum.

629

630 *I want to think of ways that that could be eased but I don't know how.*

631

632 Uhum. Yeah. How can that be eased? Well, eh, one of the things about disaster is that, eh,  
 633 you're daily life is one thrown out of rhythm. Okay? You're used to going to work every  
 634 day, you're used to getting a train. Every part of your routine is going to be thrown out of  
 635 rhythm and our routine is really where we get a lot of our security from...

636

637 *Uhum.*

638

639 ...you know, it's the same principle if you don't, you know, if you miss work for too long,  
 640 you, kind of, feel like something's off because our activity, what we do, what we focus  
 641 on, gives our life structure. Our projects, you know, so during the disaster you're thrown  
 642 out of tune, you, you can't go to work, you can't do the things you normally do, so, em,  
 643 in a lot of ways, your purpose or your mission is also not going to be there. You have free  
 644 time, basically. So, in my experience, having something to focus on and have something  
 645 to do, whether its volunteer work or, you know, translating, is, and having a sense of  
 646 mission makes it easier to be here, wanting to help people. So as far as making that job  
 647 easier, em, I don't really know how it can be made easier, just, you know, taking in  
 648 account that, that it, just being aware, that, that your position is one where you're going to  
 649 be hearing a lot of different, eh, attitudes and a lot of different reactions to something and,  
 650 eh, just, you know, keep a strong footing and I, I don't know, but I'm interested in that,  
 651 too.

652

653 *Yeah, because I think even the, you know, I, I'm obviously looking at things from a*  
 654 *translation perspective but its not just translating, it's counselling and support and*  
 655 *advisor and so many different roles wrapped into one...*

656

657 Uhum.

658  
659 *...that it's a lot of different skills that people are using in those situations.*  
660  
661 I know.  
662  
663 *It's, it's tough to, kind of, unpick [laughter].*  
664  
665 Mmm, yeah.  
666  
667 *The o, the, kind of, this is really almost the, the last question but I think it seemed from*  
668 *your, your experience that you were very integrated into different communities...*  
669  
670 Uhum.  
671  
672 *...you were part of the school's community, working in various schools, you were part of*  
673 *your local neighbourhood community with people asking you to, you know, stay at the*  
674 *refuge centre, you were part of your, I guess, friendship...*  
675  
676 Yes.  
677  
678 *...community as well. Have you any advice for foreign people who come to Japan em,*  
679 *kind of, just off the boat, how do they integrate into the communities?*  
680  
681 Well, I've always told people that if you want to, em, make friends with Japanese people  
682 or you want to, eh, eh, be a part of things, okay, even if you speak Japanese, you know,  
683 that's good to speak Japanese but, eh, there's only so far that humans can go on a level of  
684 language, even if you speak Japanese perfectly, you need to get involved in activities, and  
685 that's the way that I met my friends in Japan, became close to people is by doing  
686 something. Playing soccer, you know, while I was in Aomori. I had some good friends in  
687 Aomori who I would go surfing with in the morning. They became my best friends who  
688 called me after the earthquake, you know, every day, "What can we send you? Are you  
689 really okay?" You know, eh, but getting involved in action, doing something, finding an  
690 activity that you can do with Japanese people, joining a club or something. Em, you  
691 know, getting involved in a club or activity is a really good way to be integrated into a  
692 network and the closer you get to people, you know, the more the, the concern they'll  
693 show for you. I think that's em, you know, that helped me a lot, knowing that my friends  
694 in Aomori were, you know, even when they heard that I was okay, they'd call and say,  
695 "*Daijobu?* Are you okay? What can we send you?" "Oh, I'm, I'm okay, don't send me  
696 anything." "Oh," you know, "we'll drive a stove down."  
697  
698 [Laughter]  
699  
700 And, "I don't know how, I don't need a stove. I'm warm enough," you know...  
701  
702 [Laughter]  
703  
704 ...but, yeah, my Japanese friends were really good. It was really good.  
705  
706 *Yeah. I think that's, that's clearly one of the important learning points for a lot of people*  
707 *that I've, eh, spoken to is, in these tough circumstances, you do maybe, I mean, you*  
708 *always value your friendships, but maybe you see them more clearly or in a different light*  
709 *or, or something after, after this kind of thing. That's really pretty much it except for just*  
710 *this last one here, em, I'm afraid that by asking people to recall the events that I'm going*  
711 *to cause more stress for the people I speak to, so I just want to check that I haven't*

712 *caused you terrible stress remembering these things. [Note: I pass the participant the*  
713 *Likert Scale for stress to mark]*  
714  
715 You know, there always is a little bit of stress involved [laughter].  
716  
717 *Yeah, but please answer as honestly as you, as you want.*  
718  
719 I'd say, I'd say around 2 point 5.  
720  
721 *Okay [laughter].*  
722  
723 We'll give it a two.  
724  
725 *Okay [laughter]. You, you were very generous. It's, it's really...*  
726  
727 I don't know, somewhere between.  
728  
729 *Yeah, it's really just because I, I, sometimes, some of the people I've spoke to have*  
730 *mentioned how they've never talked about these things.*  
731  
732 There's things that I, still parts that, I don't talk about everything. Yeah, there were some  
733 times that, em, probably, em, don't want to recall, I mean, they're there, but, eh, yeah,  
734 there's something, there's just, I mean, one day I got really stressed out and being, eh, I  
735 was 29 at the time, just, it's, it's, it was, yeah, talking to my parents on the phone, just  
736 trying to figure out what I was going to do, and just, I guess I was just thinking too much  
737 or worried too much, I don't know, there, you have got to, I, I, got my head back, you  
738 know, but.  
739  
740 *Yeah. This question was very important to me because I didn't deal well with the stress...*  
741  
742 Um.  
743  
744 *...after the earthquake and I was in Tokyo, I was even less in, inconvenienced, you*  
745 *couldn't even say I was inconvenienced really at all in my experience, but I found that I*  
746 *was okay on the day of the shaking and I was pretty much okay a couple of days after it,*  
747 *but definitely my mental health degraded...*  
748  
749 Oh yeah.  
750  
751 *...very, kind of, I guess, kind of, rapid, just scaring, scarily rapidly...*  
752  
753 Yeah, definitely.  
754  
755 *...and m, m, my, the reason I ask about things like community is because I didn't feel*  
756 *attached to friendship networks or local, local networks. Even though I had been here a*  
757 *very long time, I found that living in the city it was very temporary, I would know people*  
758 *for six months or a year, then they'd move on.*  
759  
760 Yeah. That's similar to what I felt in Sendai at the time. I mean, I have a deeper  
761 connection now, but I had just moved here and it was still, sort of, unfamiliar to me, and I  
762 really felt home in Aomori. I had been there five years as an ALT, two years as a student.  
763 And, I wanted to be there, so six days, five days after the earthquake, that's where I went,  
764 to stay with one of my best friends. Just, you, you know, you, you have got to find a  
765 place, you know, where you can find support, you know, and that's where it was. And



766 that's where I needed to be. So, I took the most indirect route to Aomori, just going  
767 across, em, to Yamagata by bus and taking a taxi...  
768  
769 *[Laughter]*  
770  
771 ...for, like, \$150, then going to some, one of the only operating trains and going up...  
772  
773 *[Laughter]*  
774  
775 ...staying with my friends for two days and then getting back. Em, that, this was days  
776 after the earthquake, so, it was the next weekend after...  
777  
778 *Yeah.*  
779  
780 ...so it was a week. But yeah, it was, em, it was a stressful time for a while.  
781  
782 *Yeah, yeah. I think, em, for, for different people, just different people react differently. I*  
783 *had a colleague who seemed extremely stressed on the day. Like, really, I was very, very*  
784 *worried about him, very, very worried about him on the day, and on, maybe, the next two*  
785 *or three days. But then, he seemed to, just, kind of, I don't know, hit an upswing and he,*  
786 *he dealt with it all very well. Whereas I went [laughter] the opposite...*  
787  
788 *Yeah.*  
789  
790 *...direction, but we both experienced, like, we were sitting desk by desk...*  
791  
792 *Uhum.*  
793  
794 *...so we experienced exactly the same things. I, I don't, I, I suspect, the reason I ask this*  
795 *question is I suspect it was to do with friendship networks or something like that...*  
796  
797 *Yeah...*  
798  
799 *...he was very integrated.*  
800  
801 ...and also, em, I don't know if you watched the news, but I found that watching the news,  
802 of course you want to watch the news to find out what is going on and see if there are  
803 new developments, but there is a certain point you need to distance yourself from the  
804 news because seeing things over and over and over and over again is not good for your  
805 mental health. It heightens the sense of disaster and urgency and even if you know you  
806 are safe, you know that you are in a safe place, it is not good. And I think that's one of the  
807 things that, that it, kind of, affected me negatively, was the fact that I watched the news  
808 too much, you know, just glued to it. And I'm sure that, you know, all the shelters and  
809 places, the people were constantly watching the news but, you know, it, it can be  
810 unhealthy, too, you know. So you have to watch the news, whether it's from abroad or  
811 from Japan, you have to realize that you, you, kind of, have to take a step back from that  
812 and, and, and function, you know. Instead of just being in crisis mode. Em, you know, I  
813 say this as someone who is, I'm not, I'm not a victim of the disaster, someone who was  
814 just in the city, you know, my four friends and my students, and that's, I, kind of, feel  
815 really self-centered and, eh, ina, unappreciative of, I don't want to talk about things like  
816 this, you know, because it was, for me, comparatively, like, it was nothing compared to  
817 what other people went through. But still, it's a real reaction that I had.  
818  
819 *Yeah, yeah, I think everybody's experience is valid. That's my, that's my view on it.*  
820

821 Em, yeah, guilt, you know. There's some guilt, too. Guilt for being here and, eh, you  
 822 know, knowing that people, you know, have gone through the worst. There's a lot of  
 823 different feelings that, that come along with the earthquake, you know. {redacted}  
 824  
 825 *After the disaster, some foreign people were criticised in the media, and.*  
 826  
 827 Yeah, they called them *fly-jin*... [Note: *fly-jin* is a derogatory play on the Japanese word  
 828 for foreigner]  
 829  
 830 *Yeah.*  
 831  
 832 ...not *gaijin*, *fly-jin*. Fly away.  
 833  
 834 *Did, did that?*  
 835  
 836 Ehm, yeah, there was some criticism. I remember, em, being introduced by Japanese  
 837 people and they said, "He stayed here during the earthquake." You know, they were like,  
 838 "That's his saving grace," or whatever, eh, I don't, I don't know to that, but that was one  
 839 of the things that people commented on like, "You stayed here during this time and your  
 840 country said," you know, "come home." Eh, criticized? Maybe, I don't know, yeah. I  
 841 know that some people, eh, here, teachers here did go home. But they came back. Yeah, a  
 842 lot of people were criticized. There was the term *fly-jin*, you know, you know, I realized  
 843 that, eh, news, I think most of the people were concerned about the, the safety of  
 844 Fukushima and all. There was, embedded in the news is culture, right? How much  
 845 information do you give? What purpose do you give people news? Is it for entertainment  
 846 purposes? Is it to keep them safe? Is it to keep them, eh, is it really to give them  
 847 information to base their decisions on or is it to keep them calm, you know? So, a lot of  
 848 the Japanese news was to not give people too much information, you know. And the  
 849 foreign press was really in on it, sort of, as, eh, you know, "This massive thing has  
 850 happened, there's a meltdown," and, em, you know, it's just the different perspectives  
 851 that the cultures take on, em, on how much information they give.  
 852  
 853 *Yeah.*  
 854  
 855 Do you understand what I mean?  
 856  
 857 *Oh, absolutely.*  
 858  
 859 I don't know if it's so well-stated...  
 860  
 861 *No, absolutely...*  
 862  
 863 ...but it's the way I feel deeply, you know.  
 864  
 865 ...*absolutely understand and, to be honest, you're not the only person who has talked*  
 866 *about it. Em, a lot of people who have talked to me have mentioned how they found this,*  
 867 *kind of, disconnect between what they were seeing on, let's say, NHK news, and what*  
 868 *they were seeing on, let's say, CNN news or some other, it, it didn't relate to, neither one*  
 869 *related to their experience. Em, and probably for just those reasons you were talking*  
 870 *about, you know, em, the CNN was maybe framed for an audience at home in the States*  
 871 *to get viewers...*  
 872  
 873 Uhuh.  
 874  
 875 ...*then the NHK one was framed for, let's say, Ja, Japanese domestic audience...*

876  
 877 Uhuh.  
 878  
 879 *...to, perhaps, like you said, to keep people calm or not to give too much information.*  
 880 *Then the foreign people over here in Japan didn't fit exactly either of those frames.*  
 881  
 882 Got your foot in both streams, don't you, you know, when you're in here and the  
 883 situation, you're experiencing something, and someone is telling you that it's not safe to  
 884 be in Sendai, you know, evacuate. Yet you're s, right here and your immediate experience  
 885 is telling you, "Yes, it, I'm, I'm fine here." And then you have people that love you from  
 886 abroad saying, "Leave, because it's like this in Sendai." And you say, "No, it's not." And  
 887 you're just, you're being pulled in two different directions and just being in that situation  
 888 yourself is, you're prone to, to lots of stress.  
 889  
 890 *Uhuh, uhuh. I do, I understand what you mean about the, I don't want to say, not badge*  
 891 *of honour, kind of thing, but I was also, I, I experienced some of that feeling with my*  
 892 *company about because me and my other non-Japanese colleagues didn't go home, it was*  
 893 *mentioned a lot, and not necessarily, we weren't introduced as the people who didn't go*  
 894 *home, but it was definitely mentioned as a, kind of, a negative comparison to other people*  
 895 *who did go home. But I, I can understand why people went home. A lot of the people who*  
 896 *went home had children or families or different considerations or, just, they just had a*  
 897 *different view on things...*  
 898  
 899 Yeah.  
 900  
 901 *...but, eh, the, I think the fly-jin thing is going to be something I will talk a little bit in my*  
 902 *thesis because it is part of what was swirling around at the time...*  
 903  
 904 Right.  
 905  
 906 *...and afterwards, you know. And still a little bit, I think. I don't think it's completely out*  
 907 *of the, sort of, the national media or whatever.*  
 908  
 909 Uhuh.  
 910  
 911 *What's it? Two, two, two-and-a-half years later.*  
 912  
 913 Right. {redacted}  
 914  
 915 *And just what we were saying about when you might be the person who is able to*  
 916 *translate, but you are also suffering yourself.*  
 917  
 918 Yeah. And you have the, the responsibility, all the teachers here, em, they stayed at  
 919 school and they had to contact, em, they, they had to wait until all the, eh, the parents  
 920 came to get their children (indistinct) because that was my job, in an elementary school,  
 921 and they had to wait until they came to the school so, eh, you know, you're responsible  
 922 for other people and typically ALTs, you know, were here to work but (indistinct) we  
 923 were, kind of, were, kind of, guest status, beyond the normal, I mean, it's, it's part of the,  
 924 the workplace, you know, ALTs are, they are, but it's something that's added on to  
 925 normal duties, having to take care of this person, having to work with this foreigner, you  
 926 know, em, so I can see how.  
 927  
 928 *Yeah, yeah. I mean, I, I've always thought that, you know, being a teacher especially of*  
 929 *young, younger children is an extremely responsible role and you have huge*  
 930 *responsibilities, but I was very interested when you said how now, maybe having*

931 *experienced the disaster, you are even more aware of, like you said, your environment.*  
 932 *What would you do? Those kind of things.*  
 933  
 934 Definitely, yeah, after the disaster, it makes you think, do you want to be someone who  
 935 is, who has to be taken care of when you don't have anything that's, like, physically de,  
 936 de, debilitating or do you want to be someone who takes care of other people? For me,  
 937 it's the latter, you know, you want to be someone who can go to support people. And,  
 938 you know, I think I was. I gave support to the extent that I could. A, after the immediate  
 939 disaster was over I volunteered and helped my friends and we made a team of ALTs and  
 940 we went out and helped them dig the mud from the house, but, yeah, it's one thing that I  
 941 learned is how to help people rather than be helped, you know.  
 942  
 943 *Yeah. That's pretty huge [laughter].*  
 944  
 945 [Laughter] But let's see if I can do that [laughter].  
 946  
 947 [Laughter] *Yeah, and I mean, that's, I guess, that's one of the things about living in*  
 948 *Japan, I mean, it's never really a question of if there's going to be another, kind of a,*  
 949 *disaster, it's always when, really, I mean, not necessarily of that magnitude, but, you*  
 950 *know, Japan is fairly regularly hit by different sorts of...*  
 951  
 952 Uhuh.  
 953  
 954 *...natural disasters, so.*  
 955  
 956 Yeah, not if but when. {redacted}  
 957  
 958 *And just getting back to Japanese television.*  
 959  
 960 That's the one device in your room that you wanted to destroy after the earthquake.  
 961  
 962 [Laughter] *You see, this is, this is the thing, I mean, when is, you know, when is*  
 963 *information useful and when does it become a problem.*  
 964  
 965 I stopped watching TV.  
 966  
 967 *Completely?*  
 968  
 969 I turned my TV on last week for the first time in months, months. It's just, I don't, I don't  
 970 really rely on, for any news information, I don't, I listen to radio, but I just don't watch  
 971 the TV any more and I didn't after the earthquake after a certain point. I mean, I would  
 972 watch the TV when there was an earthquake to find out magnitude, you know...  
 973  
 974 *Yeah.*  
 975  
 976 *...where was the earthquake...*  
 977  
 978 *Yeah.*  
 979  
 980 *...and then after that I'd turn it off. That's what I used the TV for.*  
 981  
 982 *And was that because you just had too much of the repeating cycle or?*  
 983  
 984 It could be, it could be. I think that I, somewhere in trying to figure my own little  
 985 interpretation of this whole earthquake, nuclear meltdown, all this stuff, I just, I, it was

986 mind-boggling, just trying to get perspective on a situation where you didn't have all the  
 987 information, em, you know and trying to figure out what really happened. More  
 988 interested, you know, in, sort of, what people are doing, and how they're getting along  
 989 rather than just, yeah, well, I don't watch so much TV anymore. That might be an  
 990 indication of something. It might be a question to ask other people, too: do you still watch  
 991 Japanese television?  
 992  
 993 *Absolutely, yeah, I'm going to now [laughter] for, for that very reason. Yeah, it's, it's*  
 994 *fascinating how, you know, as we said, two-and-a-half years later, there is, there are*  
 995 *some long term effects to the way you behave. I mean, that's, that's a change in your*  
 996 *behaviour that, that resulted from the disaster. {redacted} This is something that very,*  
 997 *very strongly came across. One person said that they, they, before the disaster, they*  
 998 *didn't watch TV...*  
 999  
 1000 Uhuh.  
 1001  
 1002 *...so they just didn't like the TV...*  
 1003  
 1004 Uhuh.  
 1005  
 1006 *...and they listened to the radio and found that it was just repeating the names of the*  
 1007 *people that had passed away.*  
 1008  
 1009 I think it was the names of the people that, eh, were missing...  
 1010  
 1011 *Ah, okay.*  
 1012  
 1013 *...which in most cases corresponded to people that passed away, but people that, names of*  
 1014 *people they were looking for, unaccounted for.*  
 1015  
 1016 *Do you know why they repeat those names like that?*  
 1017  
 1018 Because, eh, eh, if you were alive, and you heard that, you could report to people and,  
 1019 and, em, you know, say that, that, "You don't have to look. I'm here, alive." It was not  
 1020 repeating the people's names that had passed away but repeating, saying their names  
 1021 because if that person heard the broadcast, they would know that people were looking for  
 1022 them, you know. So that there was also, em, a registry that, that all the cell phone  
 1023 companies. Did you hear, did you heard about that?  
 1024  
 1025 *I think so, yeah, you could say you were safe...*  
 1026  
 1027 Right.  
 1028  
 1029 *...or say you were looking for someone or something.*  
 1030  
 1031 There was som, something set up on, online to find people. I don't know what exactly.  
 1032  
 1033 *Yeah, there was a Google Person Finder...*  
 1034  
 1035 Google Person Finder, that's the one.  
 1036  
 1037 *...yeah. Yeah. So the radio one was the same idea. I, I'm, I'm just wondering if I was in a*  
 1038 *disaster and I heard just this list of names, I wonder if that would, would that be, would I*  
 1039 *listen to radio then. Di, eh, did you use the radio at all as a way of?*  
 1040

1041 Didn't, no. Didn't use the radio once. I don't think I had a radio.  
1042  
1043 *[Laughter]*  
1044  
1045 But I do now!  
1046  
1047 *[Laughter]*  
1048  
1049 The Centre for International Relations, they, they gave us all a, em, handheld crank radio  
1050 with a, eh, USB connector and a power adapter for phones so that you could use it during  
1051 an earthquake.  
1052  
1053 *Oh, wow, that's a good idea. That's a really, really good idea.*  
1054  
1055 Yeah.  
1056  
1057 *To have that in a pack or something at home is, like, a really good idea. Especially*  
1058 *because I know, like, you mentioned about recharging your phone in your car. A lot of*  
1059 *people did that but then the gas ran out.*  
1060  
1061 Right [laughter].  
1062  
1063 *[Laughter] so, like. {redacted} One thing I've been thinking about as I've been doing this*  
1064 *is for things like Facebook, I can see how it's really useful as a communication and*  
1065 *keeping in touch with people in your networks. What I'm not so convinced by yet is using*  
1066 *Facebook as a way to gather information. Did, I know you used it as a way to keep in*  
1067 *touch, but did you use it as a way for getting information?*  
1068  
1069 Some people did. Some people did. Em, post store openings...  
1070  
1071 Okay.  
1072  
1073 ...gathering information? I think for gathering interpersonal information and getting to  
1074 know how someone was doing, you know.  
1075  
1076 *Ah, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
1077  
1078 That's why we were encouraged to put pictures of us, you know, eating whatever we  
1079 were eating...  
1080  
1081 *[Laughter]*  
1082  
1083 ...cucumbers dipped in miso sauce and smiling to friends to, you know, to let, because it  
1084 shows, it gives information but, sort of, a different aspect, you know, to what that person  
1085 is experiencing...  
1086  
1087 Yeah.  
1088  
1089 ...because people post photos of what they are doing so, you know, it's, it's a different  
1090 type of information.  
1091  
1092 *I got it. Yeah. I got it, I got it. Yeah.*  
1093  
1094 Maybe even by looking at someone's Facebook page, not only do you know that they're  
1095 safe but also, kind of, get, get an idea of that they're doing, you know?

1096  
 1097 *Yeah.*  
 1098  
 1099 What they're experiencing mentally. If they're laughing about it or if they're crying about  
 1100 it, basically, you know.  
 1101  
 1102 *Which is important to know...*  
 1103  
 1104 *Yeah.*  
 1105  
 1106 *...I mean, it's absolutely, that's vital information in other ways as important as where the*  
 1107 *water is or, or, or those things as well. {redacted} Was there ever any sense of feeling*  
 1108 *trapped?*  
 1109  
 1110 Oh, yeah. Especially because, you know, all the, em, transportation to the city was shut  
 1111 down. Where, how do you, eh, how do you leave Sendai? Obviously you can't go by  
 1112 airport. Airport is covered in mud and American military are, they're digging it out.  
 1113 Trains? No way. Shinkansen? No way, not for ages, too many, too much damage on the  
 1114 tracks [Note: the Shinkansen is the Japanese system of superfast bullet trains] Cars? Well,  
 1115 you can't use the highway because it's restricted to, eh, volun, eh, you know, official  
 1116 groups. Ehm, buses? They were best, about the only way you could leave Sendai if you  
 1117 wanted to. Or walk. Yeah, it was, and then, even if you had money, you couldn't really  
 1118 buy things, so it was, you did feel, kind of, stuck, because all the system of distributions  
 1119 had shut down and you, kind of, wondered, you know, "What would happen if one more  
 1120 thing went wrong?" You know, I'll tell you a funny story that happened. Em, I got, kind  
 1121 of, one day I was like, "Okay, well, you know, I'm stressed out." I somehow got the idea  
 1122 that it would be good to, to get money out of the bank, just in case, you know, I needed  
 1123 money. So I went to my post office account, the ATMs were working, this was probably  
 1124 the Wednesday after the earthquake, five days afterwards. And I said, "Okay, the ATMs  
 1125 are working again. I'll get my money out." So, get like \$2,000, all the money I have.  
 1126 \$2,000 out of the post office account I was like, "Yeah, okay, okay, I'm set." Then, I  
 1127 turned around and the *conbini*, convenience store, the only thing that I could buy were  
 1128 two little jars of imitation peanut butter. So I've got \$2,000 but what is \$2,000 get me?  
 1129 One hundred yen peanut butter, two jars of it...  
 1130  
 1131 *[Laughter]*  
 1132  
 1133 ...that eventually got me sick...  
 1134  
 1135 *[Laughter]*  
 1136  
 1137 ...so, you know, [laughter] money, even if you have money, it doesn't get you anywhere.  
 1138  
 1139 *Oh, the thing is, you have to be able to laugh at that stage.*  
 1140  
 1141 That is the point where it was a turn for me, because I was able to laugh at the  
 1142 ridiculousness of my own behaviour and just, like, you know, just take it, you know, you  
 1143 want to get money, you can't don't anything with it.  
 1144  
 1145 *Can't do anything [laughter]. Well, listen, thank you so, so, so much for spending so*  
 1146 *much time answering my questions, I really, really appreciate it.*  
 1147  
 1148 No problem. {redacted}  
 1149

1150 **The following is my recollection of some conversation that took place with the**  
1151 **participant just after I had switched off the audio recorder and just before we**  
1152 **parted.**

1153  
1154 The participant mentioned that reaction to a disaster seems culturally bound to him based  
1155 on his experience. He said the Japanese colleagues of his went back to work after the  
1156 disaster. He couldn't go because he couldn't get to his base school. Not going to work  
1157 would have been considered paid vacation so he contacted the board of education and  
1158 arranged to volunteer with {an institution of the Sendai government} as a way of  
1159 working. For Japanese people, going to work (almost continuing on as normal, to a  
1160 certain extent even after a massive disaster) seems to be a way of coping.



1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/26 Interview with Participant 15*

5 *Researcher: So basically then just to start...*

6  
7 Participant: Yes.

8  
9 *...if you can tell me what happened to you on, in the 2011 Disaster.*

10  
11 In 2011, so, ehm actually I was waiting for, for a bus, like, in the bus station during, like,  
12 I mean before the earthquake, so, and suddenly the earthquake, like, is starting. Ehm, at  
13 the beginning, I thought, like, it's not, I mean, like, not very big, like, earthquake, so, like,  
14 it stop and everything will be like normal after that. But the earthquake, like, continued  
15 for quite long time. Maybe, eh, ten minutes or even more than that. So it's, it was quite  
16 long time and suddenly the electricity, like, stopped and, yeah, and, so, after that I started  
17 to feel the earthquake is like a disaster. Eh, the bus came, like, in time [laughter]...

18  
19 *[Laughter]*

20  
21 ...and I went back to my, like, laboratory so met, I met my professor and, eh, like,  
22 everybody there, they, they told me that I should go to shelter. I not come to university  
23 again because the situation is not, like, good. At that time it's, like, quite dangerous to  
24 come to the university to the laboratory. So, I went to a shelter, like, in {a village in  
25 Miyagi}, it's like very close to the village where I live, and, eh, so at that time, no  
26 electricity and also the network for, like, mobile phone was, like, not connected, I mean,  
27 was stopped, so I couldn't contact anyone, like, to ask my other friends, like, about are  
28 you okay or not or, ehm, so after that so what happened? Yeah, I stayed like in shelter for  
29 maybe two-to-three days like till the electricity come and then after that I went to my  
30 home. After that, eh, like the problem I faced during my stay in the shelter is that the  
31 main language for communication was Japanese language, and because I don't know,  
32 like, Japanese very well, so it was, like, a problem for me. I didn't know, like, what is  
33 going on, what, what's happening. And, eh, after, like, one day, they distributed, like,  
34 news, eh, paper with letters, newspapers, and, eh, of course it was in Japanese. I could su,  
35 I could see the, the, the pictures that, like, there tsunami and there is, like, a problem in  
36 Fukushima, there is, like, explosion in the reactor or something like that, but I couldn't  
37 understand it just, like, from the pictures. And there is no Internet, you know, like, at that  
38 time. No electricity. So it was a problem at that time. Eh, and, my family called me from  
39 Sudan, like, "Are you okay?" I said, "Yes, I'm very fine. No problem." They said, "But  
40 there is tsunami." I said, "Tsunami? Where is it. There is no tsunami here. There is no  
41 tsunami in the road." They said, "No. There is tsunami. We, we, we, like, we are seeing,  
42 seeing now in, like, in news, there is tsunami and everything is destroyed and so on, and  
43 so on, and so on, and it is in Sendai." I said, "No,"...

44  
45 *[Laughter]*

46  
47 ...[laughter] "everything is very stable and there is no problem at all." But after, like, the  
48 electricity come, the electricity came and, eh, like I searched, like, news and everything, I  
49 saw that yes, there was a tsunami and that, like, everything was, like, destroyed in, in the  
50 coast, coastal area, but, eh, just, like, the centre of Sendai is okay. I mean, like, the Sendai  
51 City itself was not, like, affected. I mean, like, the effect, the effect was not, like, very  
52 big, but only, like, the coastal region was completely destroyed. Ehm, so after that, ehm,  
53 what happened after that? Yes, after that, like, the Embassy of Sudan in Tokyo called me

54 and asked me, "What will you do? Will you go back to Sudan or will you stay?" I said, "I  
55 want to stay." "But if the situation is, like, eh, worse, worse and, like, more and more  
56 maybe I will go back to Sudan," I said. So, the situation was, was okay. There is, like, eh,  
57 like, lacking food and, like, the stuffs. When you go to the convenience store you can't,  
58 like, buy what you need, but the life was going well. The, the, the last only one problem  
59 which is, eh, Fukushima, like, nuclear reactor, and the level of radiation was, like,  
60 increasing, and so on, and so on, and so on. So after maybe three weeks after the  
61 earthquake, I decided to go back to my country to Sudan because, first, the radiation level  
62 was high and also because, like, the, the, the laboratory was, like, how to say, there is no,  
63 there was no work in the laboratory. It was like, most of the machines were destroyed,  
64 and so on, and so on, and so on. So I decided to go back to my home for one month and  
65 after that I came back again. Eh, the problem I faced during this time is that there was,  
66 like, a lack of information. First, because of languages, because my Japanese language is,  
67 was not good to understand what was going on and, second, because, eh, even Japanese  
68 people didn't know, like, very well what was going on at that time. So this is what  
69 happened.

70

71 *It's an extremely interesting experience. I would like to ask you some more, eh, questions*  
72 *about some of the details.*

73

74 Yes.

75

76 *Ehm, to go back to the day of the earthquake, you decided to go to the evacuation centre,*  
77 *how did you find the evacuation centre? How did you know that information?*

78

79 Ehm, how did I know it? Actually just by, like, seeing, like, most of, most of people were,  
80 like, going and, like, how to say, carrying their items...

81

82 *[Laughter]*

83

84 ...and so on, and so, so I followed them [laughter]...

85

86 *[Laughter] Okay.*

87

88 ...and [laughter].

89

90 *It seems basic, but it's a very useful hint [laughter]...*

91

92 Yes [laughter].

93

94 *...it's a very useful hint for, for people because, obviously, you know, language and*  
95 *communication is difficult, but if you just follow the other people, maybe that's a very*  
96 *good piece of advice.*

97

98 Yes, yes, yes. This is what happened.

99

100 *Ehm, also, I'm asking you to remember now two years ago, can you remember now, when*  
101 *the bus, at the bus station and the earthquake struck, can you remember any*  
102 *announcements or, you know, there's a PA system or there's some, like, speaker system in*  
103 *Japan, can you remember any?*

104

105 No, no, there was no, any announcement at that time, no.

106

107 *Nothing.*

108

109 No, at all. Yeah, at all. No. Even inside the bus. No, no, no announcement. Yes.  
 110  
 111 *So even in Japanese, even in any, there was no?*  
 112  
 113 Yes, yes, yes, yes. And even, like, in mobile phones, we didn't receive any, like,  
 114 notification, yes, at that time.  
 115  
 116 *Then, so, you were in the evacuation centre...*  
 117  
 118 Yes.  
 119  
 120 *...and, of course, the language of the evacuation centre was Japanese...*  
 121  
 122 Yes.  
 123  
 124 *...so they distributed some newspapers...*  
 125  
 126 Yes.  
 127  
 128 *...was there any other information given to you, or were there any, I don't know, English*  
 129 *interpreters or anything? Volunteers or anything like that?*  
 130  
 131 Eh, yeah, honestly, honestly, sometimes yes. Like, some volunteer, English-speaking  
 132 volunteer like Japanese people they tried to translate what, what is going on, but not all  
 133 time, just, like, sometimes.  
 134  
 135 *Of course.*  
 136  
 137 Um.  
 138  
 139 *And tho, those volunteers, were they, I don't know, other people inside the centre or did*  
 140 *they come from another place?*  
 141  
 142 No, no, other people inside the centre, yeah, yes.  
 143  
 144 *So they were just...*  
 145  
 146 Yes  
 147  
 148 *...in the same situation [laughter].*  
 149  
 150 Yes, yes, same situation, yes.  
 151  
 152 *Yeah, it's it's one of the things which, eh, is a big problem for any country but, of course,*  
 153 *for Japan the translators are often also suffering.*  
 154  
 155 Yes.  
 156  
 157 *They, so they have a lot of stress and a lot of pressure. Then, so your family was able to*  
 158 *telephone you from Sudan.*  
 159  
 160 Yes, but, how to say, like, the earthquake happened at maybe 2 o'clock, 2pm or  
 161 2.40pm...  
 162  
 163 *Yeah, yeah.*

164  
165 ...yes. And they were trying to call me, maybe, since, maybe, 3pm and they succeeded,  
166 maybe, around 12am, like, so it's, like, after quite a long time ...  
167  
168 *A long time.*  
169  
170 ...yes, quite a long time.  
171  
172 *A day...*  
173  
174 Uhuh.  
175  
176 ...*a whole day basically.*  
177  
178 Yes, yes.  
179  
180 *And how did your family know the information?*  
181  
182 Eh, from the news.  
183  
184 *From the news.*  
185  
186 Yes, news channels.  
187  
188 *T,T, TV news or radio news?*  
189  
190 TV, TV, TV, yes, yes, yes.  
191  
192 *Okay, so already the information about the tsunami and...*  
193  
194 Yes  
195  
196 ...*Fukushima was, this is a very interesting point to me that people in, in Sudan had more*  
197 *information than you in Sendai [laughter].*  
198  
199 Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, because you know, like, eh, Al Jazeera Channel, like, it's,  
200 like, a very big channel now in the area so they, they are very fast, like, they are very fast.  
201  
202 *Yeah.*  
203  
204 So they even, like, how you say, like, video recorded the tsunami and like everything and,  
205 and I don't know who sent, who sent it, the, the information at that time.  
206  
207 *Yeah. But possibly it was some people just with the mobile phone, or?*  
208  
209 The network, well, the network was very weak at that time so...  
210  
211 *Of course, yeah, yeah.*  
212  
213 ...I don't know how [laughter].  
214  
215 *[Laughter] How did they? Yeah. Although, one thing I do know is that different places*  
216 *had different, eh, access, eh...*  
217  
218 Ah.

219  
 220 *...some, I think some places were very, very bad, some places had, you know, a little*  
 221 *access or temporary, temporary access. So you were in the evacuation centre for about*  
 222 *two or three days until the electricity came back, you said.*  
 223  
 224 Yes, maybe three days, two nights.  
 225  
 226 *Three days, two nights. So, when the electricity came back, how about your*  
 227 *communication and your information gathering? Did it change?*  
 228  
 229 Yes, a lot. Because now I, I could use, like, the Internet at that time, so I could  
 230 communicate more with my friends, like, in, inside Japan and also outside.  
 231  
 232 *What tools, em, did you use to communicate? Email or...*  
 233  
 234 Emails, yes...  
 235  
 236 *...Skype or?*  
 237  
 238 ...emails and, like, Facebook.  
 239  
 240 *Facebook.*  
 241  
 242 At that time, yes. Email and Facebook. Yeah.  
 243  
 244 *Can you tell me why?*  
 245  
 246 Used Facebook?  
 247  
 248 *Why you used Facebook or emails or?*  
 249  
 250 Ehm, actually, I, I don't know why, why I used, like, Facebook. Facebook, because, like,  
 251 I use it, like, always maybe. So that's why I used it at that time. And, eh, emails also  
 252 because I could ask, like, about many people by sending, like, the same email. Like,  
 253 "How are you? Are you okay?" And so on, and so on, and so on. That's why I send it at  
 254 that time.  
 255  
 256 *Yeah, yeah. You, you make a very interesting point there, eh, when people study about*  
 257 *disasters, they say that people use the technology they are already comfortable with.*  
 258  
 259 Ahhh. Ah.  
 260  
 261 *So you used Facebook...*  
 262  
 263 Facebook.  
 264  
 265 *...in your daily life...*  
 266  
 267 Yes.  
 268  
 269 *...so you used Facebook...*  
 270  
 271 Yes, yes, yes  
 272  
 273 *...afterwards*

274  
 275 Yes, yes, yes...  
 276  
 277 *It's a very interesting point.*  
 278  
 279 ...And even, even I used it, like, in the same day the disaster because the, the, the network  
 280 was very weak but the Internet connection was not, like, so weak at that time. So you can  
 281 use Facebook even at the time of the disaster. But it was, like, how to say, it was a little  
 282 difficult.  
 283  
 284 *Okay.*  
 285  
 286 Maybe even I can show it to you. [Note: he was suggesting to show me his Facebook  
 287 page from that period. He started going through the Facebook application on his phone  
 288 but I kept asking questions because I was afraid I would lose all my interview time in this  
 289 search for old Facebook data.]  
 290  
 291 *Yeah, that would be great if you could. So it means actually on March 11th you were able*  
 292 *to put a Facebook...*  
 293  
 294 Yes, yes.  
 295  
 296 ...entry.  
 297  
 298 Yes.  
 299  
 300 *Oh, that's very important.*  
 301  
 302 Yeah.  
 303  
 304 *And when you use Facebook do you use it in Arabic? Do you use it in English? Do you*  
 305 *use it in Japanese? What, what?*  
 306  
 307 Eh, actually, all of them but, like, mostly in Arabic and, eh, sometimes in, in English or  
 308 Japanese...  
 309  
 310 *I see.*  
 311  
 312 ...sometimes. But mostly in Arabic, because like it's my native lang, language...  
 313  
 314 *Yeah.*  
 315  
 316 and it is easier for me to [laughter].  
 317  
 318 *Yeah, of course, of course. [Note: there was a pause as he was still trying to find the*  
 319 *relevant Facebook entries on his phone, so I continued with some questioning.] Did you*  
 320 *use any other social media?*  
 321  
 322 Maybe no, could be not. Yeah, just, like, eh, eh, Facebook or emails.  
 323  
 324 *Emails.*  
 325  
 326 Yes.  
 327  
 328 *Uhum.*

329  
 330 [Note: at this point he gave up trying to find the relevant Facebook entries on his phone.]  
 331 It's very difficult, maybe.  
 332  
 333 *Okay.*  
 334  
 335 I can't, I'll show it to you later  
 336  
 337 *Oh that would be great. Eh, also, em, I'm very interested in when you were using the*  
 338 *Internet how did you get information? So, I know that you could use Facebook and email*  
 339 *to communicate with important people. How did you gather information...*  
 340  
 341 Facebook...  
 342  
 343 *...about what was happening?*  
 344  
 345 *...in Facebook. Because, like, like, most people, like, in Japan or outside they write, like,*  
 346 *some information about what is going, what is happening. Even before the electricity*  
 347 *come, before the electricity came, they, they put or they uploaded some information that*  
 348 *there are, like, some places in Sendai in which there is electricity, so even you can go*  
 349 *there and charge your mobile phone and do so on, and so on, and so on, and so on. So all*  
 350 *this through, through Facebook.*  
 351  
 352 *And these were your, your friends or...*  
 353  
 354 Yes...  
 355  
 356 *...colleagues or?*  
 357  
 358 *...my friends.*  
 359  
 360 *Ah.*  
 361  
 362 Friends, yes, yes, yes.  
 363  
 364 *So it was kind of a network.*  
 365  
 366 Yes, yes.  
 367  
 368 *Were these friends, eh, Japanese or?*  
 369  
 370 They were Japanese, yes, yes, yes. Yes, they were Japanese but they sent, like, the  
 371 information in English at that time. They were very kind, at that time [laughter].  
 372  
 373 *Yeah, this is a very important point, eh...*  
 374  
 375 Yes.  
 376  
 377 *...because under stress it is difficult to, it is difficult to, eh, understand.*  
 378  
 379 Yes. [Note: he starts searching his phone again for the history of his interactions on  
 380 Facebook.] I don't know how, how, to search, like, for the history, but I send you.  
 381  
 382 *A, A, afterwards, yeah, if you can. That would be great. Ehm, also, did you use any news*  
 383 *media?*

384  
 385 News media?  
 386  
 387 *Did you...*  
 388  
 389 What do you, like, TV or?  
 390  
 391 *...TV or*  
 392  
 393 Yes, yes, yes, yes. I kept it on. I couldn't understand, like, 100% what is go, what is  
 394 happening, but I kept it on so that if there is, like, how to say, alert or something like that,  
 395 I could know, maybe.  
 396  
 397 *Okay, so that was the TV. Did you use any other, eh, online newspapers or radio or any*  
 398 *other tools?*  
 399  
 400 Yes, online, online newspaper. Yes. I used, eh, like, eh, Japan Today, and there is a  
 401 website, I think, called Kyodo, or something like that. Kyodo News also was very good at  
 402 that time.  
 403  
 404 *It's a very fa, yeah, it's a very famous, eh, news, news agency, right?*  
 405  
 406 Yes.  
 407  
 408 *Kyodo.*  
 409  
 410 Yes, yes, yes  
 411  
 412 *And that wa, Japan Today, I think, is in English.*  
 413  
 414 Yes, in English.  
 415  
 416 *And Kyodo?*  
 417  
 418 Also in English.  
 419  
 420 *Also in English.*  
 421  
 422 Yes, also in English.  
 423  
 424 *Did you also use Al Jazeera?*  
 425  
 426 Al Jazeera. Yes. Also I used it. Yes.  
 427  
 428 *Eh, watching TV online, eh, or using just the website?*  
 429  
 430 Just the website at that time. At that time, just, like the website.  
 431  
 432 *So you were gathering information from [laughter]*  
 433  
 434 [Laughter] From everywhere [laughter] to survive! [laughter]  
 435  
 436 *For you, which was the most useful way to get information?*  
 437  
 438 Maybe Facebook. Yes. Facebook.



439  
 440 *Can you say why?*  
 441  
 442 Ehm, how to say, because, like, eh, for news, like, news, like, online news, like, websites,  
 443 I could read information about what is going on, but it is not, like, in time. Maybe what  
 444 yesterday happened or what, like, eh, maybe, twelve hours ago happened, or something  
 445 like that. But on Facebook I could read what is going on now so it was more, like, useful.  
 446  
 447 *That's a really interesting point. Actually, I think, so I told you, you are person number*  
 448 *fif, eh, fifteen...*  
 449  
 450 Yes.  
 451  
 452 *...I think you are the first person to say this point but it's very true.*  
 453  
 454 Ah, I see.  
 455  
 456 *It's on time information, right? Whereas newspapers or so on, it's information that is*  
 457 *already a little bit out of date.*  
 458  
 459 Yes, yes.  
 460  
 461 *That's very interesting. That's very, very interesting. I'm also very interested in your*  
 462 *embassy's contact.*  
 463  
 464 Yes.  
 465  
 466 *So you said, I think, they gave you a call.*  
 467  
 468 Yes.  
 469  
 470 *This was just on, to your mobile phone?*  
 471  
 472 Yes  
 473  
 474 *And it was about one, did you say one week after or? I forget.*  
 475  
 476 Eh, they called me like one day...  
 477  
 478 Ah.  
 479  
 480 ...one day after. Eh, but they continued to contact me, like, every one day or every one or  
 481 two days.  
 482  
 483 Wow.  
 484  
 485 Yes.  
 486  
 487 *By mobile phone call.*  
 488  
 489 By mobile phone, yes. Just, just because, like, I am the only Sudanese {in a certain  
 490 area}...  
 491  
 492 *[Laughter]*  
 493

494 ...so, [laughter] if they did, like, anything to me, so they, they, like, say in the newspaper  
 495 that they evacuated the only Sudane, not the only Sudanese, but they, they evacuated all  
 496 Sudanese in {in a certain area} or so on, and so on [laughter].  
 497  
 498 *[Laughter]*  
 499  
 500 [laughter] That's, like, earned credit to them.  
 501  
 502 *You felt like you were a little bit of a PR, eh, opportunity [laughter].*  
 503  
 504 Maybe, yes [laughter].  
 505  
 506 *[Laughter] But that's a very interesting point. But, you know, can I ask, did you register*  
 507 *with your univer, or with your embassy when you arrived in Japan?*  
 508  
 509 No.  
 510  
 511 *How did they find you?*  
 512  
 513 Actually, I don't know exactly, but I think they, they asked one of my friends, like, to, to  
 514 give me, to give them, like, the, my contact, like, information. And actually, not only  
 515 Sudanese university [Note: he means embassy here but my earlier mistake probably  
 516 caused this slip because he self-corrects in a moment] but also the, maybe Gatari, I don't  
 517 know how to say, like, is it Qatari or Gatari, maybe Gatari university, Gatari Embassy  
 518 also contacted me [Note: he was unsure of how to pronounce Qatari in English and went  
 519 with a voiced-consonant pronunciation] .  
 520  
 521 *Ah.*  
 522  
 523 And I, also, I didn't know how they get my telephone number so [laughter].  
 524  
 525 *[Laughter]*  
 526  
 527 I think from one of my friends.  
 528  
 529 *Right, right. And so these would have been your friends in Japan in other places?*  
 530  
 531 Yes, yes, yes, yes.  
 532  
 533 *Eh, your friends were located outside Tohoku area or [Note: north-east part of Honshu*  
 534 *Island where earthquake was centred]?*  
 535  
 536 Outside, yeah, yeah. {redacted}  
 537  
 538 *I got it...*  
 539  
 540 Yeah...  
 541  
 542 *...I got it, I got it.*  
 543  
 544 ...lots of them in the, like, west side of Japan, like...  
 545  
 546 *Uhum.*  
 547  
 548 ...western side, maybe Osaka, Kyoto and this area.

549  
550 *And the information that you received from your embassy, was it useful for you?*  
551  
552 No. It was not. It was not. Because, like, I had more information than them...  
553  
554 *[Laughter]*  
555  
556 ...at that time [laughter]. So they were, like, asking, "Are you okay?" and "Is the situation  
557 okay now?" or "Will you stay or go back?" "Is the level of radiation is okay now, or  
558 not?" So they were just, like, asking but not, eh, providing information.  
559  
560 *So you were helping them [laughter]?*  
561  
562 Maybe [laughter].  
563  
564 *Eh, no, but, honestly, eh, I can tell you that one other person I spoke to...*  
565  
566 Yes.  
567  
568 ...had the same situation. Eh, they were also {redacted} in Miyagi Prefecture and they  
569 said they were also giving information to their embassy. It was very difficult, I think, for  
570 the embassy staff to know. Uhm, you also raised an interesting point, ehm...  
571  
572 Yes?  
573  
574 ...I know you, you're a scientist...  
575  
576 Yes.  
577  
578 ...right?  
579  
580 Yes.  
581  
582 *Is your science based on radiation expertise?*  
583  
584 Actually, it's a bit fa, a bit far from that. Yes, it's, it is different, it's different. It's, like,  
585 kind of, genetics and so on, so.  
586  
587 *Ah, so it's quite, that's quite different.*  
588  
589 Yes.  
590  
591 *How did you understand about the radiation story?*  
592  
593 Uhm, maybe because, like, eh, how to say, I, like, knew the, knew that it's, it's, like, how  
594 to say, the, dangerous for my, for my health or, so I decided to read about it on the  
595 Internet. And even I tried to compare between, like, what's ha, what's happened in, eh, in,  
596 eh, Fukushima and, eh, what happened in, eh, the nuclear reactor in Ukraine...  
597  
598 *Ah, Chernobyl.*  
599  
600 Chernobyl, yes, Chernobyl. And, eh, the basic level of radiation and what we are, like,  
601 how to say, allowed to expose to, and what's the limit. So I started to read, like, all this  
602 information at that time. Now maybe I forgot it but...  
603

604 *[Laughter]*  
605  
606 ...at that time, yes.  
607  
608 *Can you remember where, where you found that information, what language that*  
609 *information was in?*  
610  
611 Ehm, the language, like, were both, English and Japanese. The website, for, for the level  
612 of radiation [Note: he then started checking his phone browser history to find the website  
613 but to no avail] yeah, actually it's difficult...  
614  
615 *Of course, of course, yeah.*  
616  
617 ...it's difficult.  
618  
619 *Ehm, Just by chance if you, if you did remember, eh, I just wanted to ask.*  
620  
621 Okay maybe I can send it to you by, by email.  
622  
623 *Oh, that would be great. [Note: he did send the website URL to me after the interview*  
624 *and it is a website that was hosted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science*  
625 *and Technology in Japan [http://eq.wide.ad.jp/index\\_en.html](http://eq.wide.ad.jp/index_en.html) though it appears to now*  
626 *have been taken down]*  
627  
628 Yeah, yeah, because even, like, I, I, keep, I kept it, like, in my Favourite List and  
629 [laughter]...  
630  
631 *Ahhh.*  
632  
633 ...I could go back.  
634  
635 *Why did you keep it in your Favourite List [laughter]?*  
636  
637 [Laughter] Like, so that I can, how to say, I, eh, can know, like, the level of radiation,  
638 like, on time, every day. Every day I started to check, to check, to check.  
639  
640 *I understand. That brings me to another point, eh, I wanted to ask you about...*  
641  
642 Yes.  
643  
644 *...before March 11th...*  
645  
646 Yes.  
647  
648 *...did you feel prepared for an earthquake or a disaster.*  
649  
650 Before, no. No. Not [laughter]. Like, ehm, like, I knew that, like, Japan is, eh, how to say,  
651 like, a earthquake-prone countries and pro, prone country and so on, and so on, and so,  
652 but I didn't prepare anything for this. Like, even, like, the evacuation pack and so, and  
653 passport, and all this stuff. I didn't do anything for that and food and, yeah. Didn't  
654 prepare anything.  
655  
656 *And after March 11th, have you changed your behaviour?*  
657  
658 A little.

659  
 660 *[Laughter]*  
 661  
 662 Yeah *[laughter]* a little. Just now, like, I know where is my passport *[laughter]*...  
 663  
 664 *Okay [laughter].*  
 665  
 666 ...and, *[laughter]* and, eh, yeah, and, eh, maybe I, I'm storing, like, em, some, like, kind of  
 667 food and so on, and so on, and so on. That's all, I think.  
 668  
 669 *Okay, uhuh.*  
 670  
 671 But also, like, eh, I, I still don't have, like, evacuation bag.  
 672  
 673 *[Laughter]*  
 674  
 675 I know it's dangerous but *[laughter]*.  
 676  
 677 *I think many, many people living in Japan have no [laughter] evacuation bag. Ehm, I'm*  
 678 *also interested to know, eh, for you, did you receive much contact from Sendai Local*  
 679 *Government or local authorities?*  
 680  
 681 Ehm, uh, eh, no. But I received, like, a contact from Sendai International Centre. I think  
 682 this is governmental...  
 683  
 684 *Uhum.*  
 685  
 686 ...so, they were asking also about me and about, like, other foreign people I know so.  
 687  
 688 *When did that contact come, can you remember?*  
 689  
 690 Maybe two or three days after the, the earthquake.  
 691  
 692 *So you would have been in the evacuation centre still...*  
 693  
 694 Yes, yes. At that time, yes.  
 695  
 696 *Um, did, did they give you a telephone call or?*  
 697  
 698 Telephone call.  
 699  
 700 *Ah, telephone call.*  
 701  
 702 Yes.  
 703  
 704 *Yeah, yeah. How about from your university? Did they give you some contact or support*  
 705 *or?*  
 706  
 707 Eh, like, just after the earthquake or after, for example, one month or two months after  
 708 that?  
 709  
 710 *Whichever.*  
 711  
 712 Eh, eh, like, during the first days, like, only from my professor who was, like,  
 713 always, like, asking about my health and what, where I am and so on, and so on, and so.

714 But from the university, no. I didn't receive any, like, contact. I received it just maybe  
 715 after, maybe, around one month when I go back to my country. So they, they were, like,  
 716 contacting me and, eh, they were telling me, like, the situation in Sendai now...  
 717  
 718 *Uhum.*  
 719  
 720 ...and the level of radiation, and so on, and so on. Is it dangerous or not. And, eh, are like  
 721 laboratories working now or not, and so on. And even they, they suggested to provide,  
 722 like, someone to, like, clean and check my room to find if there is, like, cracks and so on,  
 723 and so on.  
 724  
 725 *Wow.*  
 726  
 727 Yes, yes.  
 728  
 729 *It's a good...*  
 730  
 731 Yes.  
 732  
 733 *...it's good to know.*  
 734  
 735 Yes.  
 736  
 737 *Ehm, I also, kind of, this is linked to what you just said, for you, when did the disaster*  
 738 *finish if, if, if it's finished?*  
 739  
 740 [Laughter] Uhm, should I consider the Fukushima or no?  
 741  
 742 *Whatever you want to consider.*  
 743  
 744 [Laughter]  
 745  
 746 *I mean, maybe if you want to divide up or whatever, whatever you feel.*  
 747  
 748 Yeah, yes. If I consider Fukushima, I think it is not finished still now because now the  
 749 situation is not under control in Fukushima. But if I didn't consider that, I think, maybe, it  
 750 is finished after just, maybe, one week after it. Yes. Because after just one week,  
 751 everything, like, returned to the normal. That's, normal, like, way. Ah, sorry, maybe one  
 752 month, after one month, after one month. Not one week.  
 753  
 754 *So when you say normal, what, what, what does normal mean in, in this case for you?*  
 755  
 756 Eh, yes. Normal, I mean, em, you could find, like, for example, what you want to buy, for  
 757 example, food and all these stuff without staying in line for very long time and so on, and  
 758 so on, and so on. And, eh, also you could, eh, like meet your friend, contact anyone at any  
 759 time.  
 760  
 761 *I see, I see. But if you consider Fukushima?*  
 762  
 763 Fukushima, no till now. Yeah, no. Because it's not under control, I think. And, eh, even,  
 764 like, you know, like, from the news there is still, there is, like, leak for the, for the, like,  
 765 radiated water, contaminate, like, radiation, contaminated water...  
 766  
 767 *Yeah.*  
 768

769 ...to the ocean and it is a bit dangerous.  
 770  
 771 *Yeah*  
 772  
 773 Um, um. Like, till now, I, I even, like, eh, when I buy anything I try to, like, read it. If it's  
 774 from Fukushima or no. So it's like [laughter] so even this one [Note: he shows me the  
 775 coffee drink (like a juice box) that he has not opened and not drunk from that was given  
 776 to him by the professor before the interview started.]  
 777  
 778 *Yeah, I [laughter] didn't even think to look. [laughter].*  
 779  
 780 [Laughter]  
 781  
 782 *So, and of course, this is all in kanji, kanji characters [Note: kanji are the Chinese*  
 783 *characters that form part of the Japanese writing system], so it is difficult.*  
 784  
 785 *Yeah, only in kanji but I can read, like, eh, like, a little, very little. For example, this one*  
 786 *is, like, from, Tokyo, maybe.*  
 787  
 788 *Ah, okay. Okay, So once you see?*  
 789  
 790 *A little better. Like, ehm, I mean, better than to be, like, from Miyagi, from Fukushima,*  
 791 *from, like, this area.*  
 792  
 793 *So even though kanji are difficult, you would be able to know, okay this is...*  
 794  
 795 *Like...*  
 796  
 797 *...Fukushima, this is...*  
 798  
 799 *...basic kanjis, yes.*  
 800  
 801 *...yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 802  
 803 *Basic one, yes.*  
 804  
 805 *And you check your food...*  
 806  
 807 *Yes.*  
 808  
 809 *...that's very interesting....*  
 810  
 811 *Yes.*  
 812  
 813 *...that's very, very interesting.*  
 814  
 815 *But especially like for, for Fukushima...*  
 816  
 817 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 818  
 819 *...it's, like, from Fukushima, I usually don't buy it.*  
 820  
 821 *I got it, I got it, I got it. Ehm, the, the final kind of topic that I talk about is community.*  
 822  
 823 *Community? Yes.*

824  
825 *Ehm, a lot of NPOs or volunteer associations are recommending that foreign people...*  
826  
827 Yes.  
828  
829 *...need to be a part of the local community because if another disaster happens, if they're*  
830 *part of the local community, it's better.*  
831  
832 I see.  
833  
834 *This is, this is what they say.*  
835  
836 Um.  
837  
838 *Ehm, first of all, can I ask you, did you feel part of your local community at the time of*  
839 *the disaster?*  
840  
841 Uhm, actually, no, no. At that time, Um, Maybe because of language barrier.  
842  
843 *So, because you didn't speak enough Japanese?*  
844  
845 Yes.  
846  
847 *I see. Did, did the local community make some effort or did you make some effort to, to*  
848 *join together?*  
849  
850 Uhm, at that time or now?  
851  
852 *At that time.*  
853  
854 Actually, I don't remember exactly. Ehm, I tired, like to communicate with some  
855 people...  
856  
857 *Yeah.*  
858  
859 ...but, eh, it was, like, very boring Japanese and, eh, I didn't continue for, for a long time.  
860 Just to ask someone question, receive the answer and that is all, at that time. Um.  
861  
862 *Well, this is a very common, eh, theme with many of the people I've been talking to that*  
863 *there was maybe little contact before, before the disaster.*  
864  
865 Yes.  
866  
867 *How about now? Eh, two years have passed. Do you feel linked to your local community?*  
868  
869 Eh, maybe just, like, through Facebook, just through Facebook. Em, uhm. Because like  
870 even we have, like, some, like, you could say, like, mailing list or, like, group mail or  
871 something like that, it's that Facebook, ehm, contain, like, Japanese people and, like,  
872 some foreign people so, like, I mean, my friend, it's not like very big one...  
873  
874 *Yeah.*  
875  
876 ...so we could receive, like, some information from, from it. I mean, some of information  
877 and if there is the, like, a news, for example, the leak of, in Fukushima, after the last



878 typhoon, they decided to, to leak the water inside the ocean, so I received, like, some  
 879 information about it.  
 880  
 881 *Yeah. So basically, you made your own community.*  
 882  
 883 Yes, yes.  
 884  
 885 *Very interesting.*  
 886  
 887 Yes.  
 888  
 889 *And technology like Facebook has helped you...*  
 890  
 891 Yes, yes.  
 892  
 893 *...to create your own community.*  
 894  
 895 Yes. And even, now there are like many groups on Facebook like 'Foreign People in  
 896 Sendai'...  
 897  
 898 *Uhum.*  
 899  
 900 ...and, eh, there's a group called Want to Do Something, 'Really Want to Do Something  
 901 For Japan' and this one is for, like, volun, like, volunteer foreigner who, who, who  
 902 wanted to, to help, like, in volunteering work after the earthquake and tsunami. Like, to  
 903 go to tsunami area and help people. Um. So, like, I joined both, like, groups and I could  
 904 receive, like, some information about what is going on.  
 905  
 906 *And just, eh, sorry to keep asking the same question...*  
 907  
 908 It's okay.  
 909  
 910 *...but, eh, because I'm interested in language...*  
 911  
 912 Yes.  
 913  
 914 *...those groups, what language do they?*  
 915  
 916 Eh, English, English.  
 917  
 918 *Ah, English.*  
 919  
 920 Yes. It's English.  
 921  
 922 *English. So there are Japanese people, there are people for all over, different countries*  
 923 *but using English...*  
 924  
 925 Yes....  
 926  
 927 *...as a communication tool.*  
 928  
 929 ...yes, yes. For, for the group call, for that group called, eh, 'Foreign People in Sendai', it  
 930 uses, eh, English language and maybe few Jap, like, there are few Japanese members.  
 931  
 932 *Ah, okay.*

933  
 934 Few, few. Not so many.  
 935  
 936 *I got it, I got it. That's pretty much all the questions I have. Do, do, do you have any*  
 937 *comment or topic or question that you would like to make about communication or*  
 938 *language or...*  
 939  
 940 Eh.  
 941  
 942 *...translation or?*  
 943  
 944 Uhm, I think no. Just like, eh, after the earthquake I went to, like, {my} University  
 945 dormitory, like, called {redacted}, like, a big kaikan or big dormitory [Note: in this case,  
 946 kaikan would mean 'hall' but the function is probably more like a centre for international  
 947 exchange. {redacted}] so I went there and asked, like, in the office about information  
 948 and they gave me a lot of information. This was the second day at night.  
 949  
 950 *Ahhh.*  
 951  
 952 Second day. I went with some of my friend, so we went to ask about, eh, the information  
 953 about, like, eh, for example radiation, and this, like, happened before the electricity came.  
 954  
 955 *So, what type of information could they give you, eh?*  
 956  
 957 The, the, well, like, eh, the level of radiation, when the electricity will come to Sendai,  
 958 and, eh, like, gas, when it will come to Sendai, when they will repair it.  
 959  
 960 *And this was all just face-to-face?*  
 961  
 962 Face-to-face, yes. And they tried to give us as much information as they could at that  
 963 time.  
 964  
 965 *In Japanese? In?*  
 966  
 967 In English.  
 968  
 969 *In English.*  
 970  
 971 Yeah, it was in English.  
 972  
 973 *Did they give you any papers or documents or anything like that or just voice, voice*  
 974 *communication?*  
 975  
 976 No, just voice communication. Yeah. Just voice communication.  
 977  
 978 *That's very interesting. So that was the...*  
 979  
 980 Yes, and...  
 981  
 982 *...second, second day, before power.*  
 983  
 984 ...yes, yes, and even in the first day, they offered to use, the, like, how to say, the public  
 985 telephone inside the dormitory for free to call your family back. It was, like, international  
 986 call, but for free. And, em, huh, I didn't hear about this until maybe, like, the second or  
 987 third day...

988  
 989 *[Laughter]*  
 990  
 991 ...at that time, I could, like, call my family by my mobile phone but, eh, they offered it on  
 992 the first day.  
 993  
 994 *I got it. So that's very good support that the...*  
 995  
 996 Yes.  
 997  
 998 ...that the, and that dormitory, is that university-, eh...  
 999  
 1000 University, yes.  
 1001  
 1002 ...organized dormitory or is it a private business?  
 1003  
 1004 No, no, no. University-organized.  
 1005  
 1006 *Organized, um, okay. It's great, yeah, thank you for mentioning that. I think that's a very*  
 1007 *useful, eh...*  
 1008  
 1009 Ah, I see  
 1010  
 1011 ...useful topic. Well, overall, just, again, thank you so much for your experience. I'm  
 1012 sorry I spoke for longer *[laughter]*...  
 1013  
 1014 No, no, no.  
 1015  
 1016 ...forty-two, forty-two minutes...  
 1017  
 1018 *It's okay. It's okay. It's okay.*  
 1019  
 1020 ...is a very long time. The, the very final question is just this question here *[Note: I show*  
 1021 *him the Likert Scale to mark his stress level]* .  
 1022  
 1023 Yes.  
 1024  
 1025 *Ehm, I don't want to cause you more stress.*  
 1026  
 1027 Yes *[laughter]*.  
 1028  
 1029 *[Laughter]* So please, can you just, just tell me roughly now after speaking, is your stre,  
 1030 where is your stress, stress level?  
 1031  
 1032 Okay, like, em, how to say, like, if I started from zero, I mean, before the interview, start  
 1033 from zero...  
 1034  
 1035 zero...  
 1036  
 1037 ...or start from...  
 1038  
 1039 ...exactly. So before the interview you maybe felt like...  
 1040  
 1041 Zero.  
 1042

1043 *...zero, normal, per character.*  
 1044  
 1045 Ah, okay so in that case  
 1046  
 1047 *Ah okay, still zero - phew [laughter]!*  
 1048  
 1049 [Laughter] Yeah., in that case.  
 1050  
 1051 *Yeah, the reason I wanted to ask people about this, eh, this topic is because sometimes*  
 1052 *when you remember these, you know, difficult experiences it makes you feel more stress*  
 1053 *or it makes you feel more anxiety, and I just want to make sure that if, say for example, if*  
 1054 *you put, you know, 6 or 7...*  
 1055  
 1056 [Laughter] It's high.  
 1057  
 1058 *...then, then, eh, for example, I have a counsellor service which I could introduce you to,*  
 1059 *em, so we found out about some English language counselling - I'm afraid we have no*  
 1060 *Arabic [laughter] counselling - but there is some English language counselling services*  
 1061 *in Japan...*  
 1062  
 1063 Yes.  
 1064  
 1065 *...so if, for example, you gave a high level, then we would introduce the counselling*  
 1066 *service, but because you put zero [laughter]...*  
 1067  
 1068 Yeah, yeah.  
 1069  
 1070 *...it seems you're okay.*  
 1071  
 1072 Yeah, of course, this one, if I started from zero.  
 1073  
 1074 *Yeah. Exactly.*  
 1075  
 1076 It didn't increase, like, increase. It didn't, like, decrease, so [laughter]  
 1077  
 1078 *It's just the normal, you stayed the same. That's good to know. That's very, very good to*  
 1079 *know.*  
 1080  
 1081 Yes, yes.  
 1082  
 1083 *Okay. well that's it.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/26 Interview with Participant 16*

5 *Researcher: Okay, so basically how I start the interview is I just ask, please tell me what*  
6 *happened to you in the 2011 disaster, yeah.*

7  
8 Participant: During the, eh, yes. Actually, during the earthquake, I was the student of the  
9 university. My lab was in {an area of Miyagi} in the top of mountain. There's, actually, I  
10 had an interview with different professor in {a campus of his university} that's, it's  
11 around 2.30. I was in {this} campus and, eh, my interview with that professor was  
12 scheduled at 3pm, as far I remember. It was 3pm that I was waiting outside of this  
13 building, and eh while it's around ten minutes before three, I just was thinking to enter  
14 the room and I start walking towards that building of professors. There's, suddenly I  
15 found that everything around me just besides the building and trees and everything just  
16 shaking. In thought this, yes, in Sendai because earthquake is, eh, it was 11 March but  
17 maybe it was 7 March there was another big earthquake and the intensity was around 7.1,  
18 as far I remember, it was 7.1, then I thought that this may be quite similar, it will stop  
19 with the short time. But, eh, I found that the intensity was increasing and it was not  
20 stopping for long time, and after everybody from different buildings was, eh, were just  
21 running. There was free space in front of that building, and everybody was running at that  
22 place and, eh, they, all of them were scared about this situation, they cannot say anything,  
23 what is going to happen or something like this. I also found that there is an, one big  
24 building, like, it may be eight floors building, the top of this building, one part just partly  
25 collapsed...

26  
27 *Wow.*

28  
29 ...and exactly I was scared too much because I found in the road there is some, eh, crack,  
30 some crack in front of myself...

31  
32 *Wow.*

33  
34 ..., eh, I was astonished about this situation and I actually could not understand what I, I  
35 have to do, or something. This, I saw, saw Japanese people were running to a free space. I  
36 was running with them, here to there, here to there. And they said - at that time I found  
37 that professor who eh - and he said, "Don't be worried. Just, eh, stay with us. Don't try  
38 to move anywhere." I was trying to move in {the university campus where the participant  
39 worked} or go to my place, but he said, "No, just stay here with us." And, eh, it was  
40 around 6 minutes, after 3 minutes, around 3 minutes, it was stopped and again start. After  
41 6 minutes, the earthquake was stopped, but within this time many buildings, many, eh,  
42 surrounding me there is many buildings I found many crack inside, on the road, and, eh,  
43 on the buildings' wall, there are many cracks and, eh, actually, my wife was with me in  
44 Sendai and we are living in {university accommodation in Miyagi}, this is quite far from  
45 here. Actually, I used my car to come here as well. There's, on the day, my car was in  
46 {the university campus where the participant worked} and I walked towards the {other  
47 campus}. At that time, I, I had not car with me, the car was in {the campus where he  
48 worked}. As I start, I tried to call my wife to the mobile, but at the time the network was  
49 collapsed, that, there was no network around here. Eh, I tried to call my friends or other  
50 friends around {the area where the university accommodation was located}, but there was  
51 no network. I was really, eh, what to say, it was, was my thinking that whatever my wife -  
52 actually, she was carrying a baby at the time [Note: at this point the participant began to  
53 shed some tears and paused] - and it was maybe around five months or six months of the

54 baby inside her, but this really tough situation, and I thought that is he, is she alive or not.  
55 This is a real fact. I thought is she alive or not. It was my thinking. I thought if the  
56 building around here is really good quality building, obviously, they have (indistinct) in  
57 {the campus where he worked} but what about my place? Maybe this building must  
58 collapsed and my wife died or something. It was, I was thinking like this. At that time, eh,  
59 I run through the, after stopping the earthquake around six minutes, the aftershock was  
60 holding after one or two minutes, after, within thirty minutes, there are maybe ten to  
61 twenty aftershocks. At this situation, I ran through the {the campus where he worked}  
62 and I, at the time, I found our, my professor, my supervisor and other staffs of this lab  
63 were waiting on the first floor free space. They was looking for me, they, they were  
64 looking for me as, eh, I said, "I'm okay but I want to go back to my place because my  
65 wife is in the place." My professor says, "Okay, you, you can sign here that you are going  
66 back. Because if there is something like, eh, more destructive here, then we will be  
67 responsible for this, that you have to sign here if you want to go back." And I signed and  
68 I go back my place with car, but, eh, at the time, the snow, snowfall was start. And, eh,  
69 there is the bridge, I just forget the name of the river, eh, toward, while I was through the  
70 road, there is a big bridge...

71  
72 *Uhum.*

73  
74 ...and I found big traffic like it was big, eh, it was long, maybe it was very long traffic.  
75 That's why I was waiting at that place. At that situation, I could, through my car, I could  
76 not walk. I thought that it was mistake I am bringing my car. But at this situation, I could  
77 not do anything. Around after one hour, I reached my place and I, I found my house is  
78 still, it not collapsed, but I thought maybe my wife is alive, but, but, maybe there are  
79 many big furniture, maybe she is injured too much. I asked the people's around there,  
80 they said, "Oh I," one of the people said, "Oh, I saw your wife to get out from the room  
81 and she was, eh, during, after the earthquake she was staying here with us. But now,  
82 where she is, I can't understand. I, I, I cannot know. I don't know," he said. And I asked  
83 him, "Do you know," I asked another friend, "Do you know where is my wife?" I was  
84 asking everybody. One of my other friends, "Oh I know they may be, all of Bangladeshi  
85 peoples are going to the, eh, {nearby} Elementary School. There is a camp. They, they  
86 opened, they declared this to be a camp after the earthquake and, eh, I went there and I  
87 found my wife at that time. It was really so tough situation. [Note: at this point the  
88 participant began to shed some tears and paused] It was really tough.

89  
90 *Oh, I can only imagine. I can only imagine.*

91  
92 I found my wife, my friends, and I was crying. Everyone was crying. [Note: he paused  
93 again to let his emotions out] I, that, even now when I thought, when I think these things,  
94 I cannot keep myself okay. [Note: he paused again to let his emotions out] Then, actually,  
95 ah, there in some place in {the} Elementary School for us, all the peoples from different  
96 countries, Japanese, foreigners, and we started to, we stayed that place. There is some  
97 food for us. First night, just dry food and, eh, you know, it, it's camp, it's, life is not  
98 normal, but, eh, we tried to quiet. After one day they said, "Maybe it's difficult to supply  
99 food for everybody." There's, many peoples just take the biscuit or bread, like this kind.  
100 [Note: he paused again to let his emotions out] And, eh, there was no water. We tried to  
101 find a bottle of water and everybody shared just a little, and we tried to inform our  
102 embassy, Bangladesh Embassy, actually, all the community was trying to make  
103 communication with their embassy to rescue them from here. And we got, after one day,  
104 we found that the Indonesian may be the first one. Indonesia Embassy, they sent a car.  
105 We heard that, we tried to contact in Bangladesh Embassy. They said, "It's okay. We can  
106 help." But, eh, actually, they helped us finally, but, eh, at first, frankly to, frankly  
107 speaking to you, at first maybe they were not so responsive, they make it late because we  
108 contact with them they say, they said, "We can understand the situation but it's not

109 possible to send any car with Indonesian community,” and maybe another country, I  
 110 cannot remind. And I answer, “They are sending car but you are not sending.”  
 111  
 112 *Yeah.*  
 113  
 114 ...then everybody is pushing and we contact in our country. Not Tokyo. Finally we  
 115 contact in our country in Bangladesh Ministry and, eh, maybe they contact with us, like,  
 116 in my case, eh, I contact with the head of my organization of some, everybody people  
 117 tried to contact their position...  
 118  
 119 *Yeah.*  
 120  
 121 ...and finally, they agreed that okay, “We’ll send a bus for you. I think it’s okay. It’s  
 122 enough, it’s enough. We can arrange ourselves anyway to go there.” Finally, we have  
 123 very good, but it was too late and during this time, actually, while we was contacting,  
 124 contacting, contacting with the embassy, we heard about the Fukushima Nuclear Power  
 125 Plant explosion. Eh, that was really, really [Note: the participant paused to shed some  
 126 tears] tough situation for us because, actually, who had family here, they can realize the  
 127 real thing. Because if I were, a, alone, then maybe I can, I could say, “Oh, I am safe.  
 128 Okay.” But I was thinking on my wife, she was carrying a baby, you know, nuclear  
 129 explosion is really destructive for this situation, for the babies. [Note: the participant  
 130 again paused to let his emotions out] They have very small kids, my friends. Who are  
 131 thinking about this matter, and it does actually, really, very odd times. Some proverbs,  
 132 you know, are, some country or some commented, ‘Misfortune not comes alone’. Like,  
 133 there is earthquake and there is nuclear explosion, explosion, and maybe two or three  
 134 days later, eh, in the camp, somewhere someone is cooking or something or electricity.  
 135 The, it was burning, firing, like we found this fire is spreading everywhere and, and at  
 136 that time, actually, I was helping one of my friend with my car. One of my friend request  
 137 to take his passport from his place, maybe he was living in {another area of Miyagi}. I  
 138 was driving car and I come, I came his place to help him, but when I was going back I  
 139 heard there is fire.  
 140  
 141 *Ah.*  
 142  
 143 This, again I afraid, what about my wife and other kids of my friends, because there was  
 144 many womens and kids. After going back, I found the, all of them were, are safe, thanks  
 145 to almighty. Then, from that day we can, or we could not stay at that camp because it was  
 146 burnt. We start to say in, eh, {the university accommodation} lobby. There is some places  
 147 for me, for us, all peoples from different countries. And, eh, some peoples stayed at {a  
 148 local} Civil Centre or something like that.  
 149  
 150 *Uhuh.*  
 151  
 152 Eh, and after one day, the bus came here from our embassy. They sent a bus and finally  
 153 we arrived Tokyo and the, obviously, Bangladesh Embassy after they, they helped us too  
 154 much. After arriving Tokyo, one of business men, I cannot skip his name, his name is  
 155 Sakura, Mr. Sakura, Mr Sakura and some others people, they helped us too much, they  
 156 arranged some location, then some place, we stayed there, because at that time, the ticket  
 157 was not available, the, as like in my case, I stayed three days Tokyo, because to get, and  
 158 many families were staying there. And Mr Sakura and others, some others, arranged the  
 159 place there, room or somewhere and they arranged food for all times, they supply us that.  
 160 And finally they dropped us Narita Airport or somewhere, another airport, and then  
 161 another airport, Haneda?  
 162  
 163 *Haneda Airport.*

164  
165 They dropped ours peoples there, as like in my case, they dropped me Narita Airport.  
166 They helped us too much. And finally we go back in our country and we thought it was  
167 really a misfortune for us. Exactly true to say that at this situation, we was thinking just  
168 about ourselves but after going back, actually we can realize what is the situation of  
169 others and during this period, we can heard about the tsunami and that I, but at this  
170 situation, we had nothing to do, actually we had nothing to do. We just wanted to esc, eh,  
171 rescue this, just remove ourselves from here to safe place. But after that we could realize  
172 we and some our friends, we would realize that what is the situation of Sendai at Narita  
173 or, sorry, Natori or some places [Note: Natori was one of the areas worst-affected by the  
174 tsunami] We heard about different places that this situation after tsunami, this situation is  
175 occurred and we are concerning about the nuclear power plant also. That's, from our  
176 country, peoples did not advise us to got back and everybody said you have no need to go  
177 back and I think almost all, every people sees the same situation from their family and  
178 friends...  
179  
180 *Yeah.*  
181  
182 ...they (indistinct) don't need to come back. After one month, eh, after one month I got a  
183 mail from our, from my professor to say, "Maybe things, it's been quite a while and  
184 things become quite normal. It's not normal but quite. If you want to come, you can  
185 come." Then, we decided that, many of my friends together, not their family, not my  
186 family, alone travel here. Came back here after one month and, eh, at the time [laughter]  
187 actually, eh, all of us, were all times ready with our small bag...  
188  
189 *[Laughter]*  
190  
191 ...and even though people start going to sleep and they, they just put their bed like in  
192 emergency things that if earthquake is start, we can run away, something like this.  
193  
194 *Yeah.*  
195  
196 Anyway, in this time, a few, after a few days, we can realize that it may be not so  
197 harmful, it may be the, the, there is some aftershocks, obviously, bu, but it's not so  
198 concerned about this. Eh, then, we actually start, tried, not started, tried to start [laughter]  
199 living normal life. And at that time, actually, from our community, Bangladesh  
200 community or some personal people, we visited some victim area like Natori or some  
201 places and saw the miseries of the peoples. We visited some, eh, camp and we tried to  
202 help physically or like food or something, we tried to do this. Very small, it's not. But we  
203 tried to share things with them and we found that things are becoming normal, it's  
204 obviously takes long time to be normal but, eh, seems quite normal after maybe three or  
205 four months since government tried, Japanese government, obviously they tried to do  
206 this, but still [laughter] you know there is concern with nuclear power...  
207  
208 *Yeah [laughter].*  
209  
210 I don't know, eh, actually, I don't know why the government, eh, I, I, I, I don't criticize,  
211 but I don't know, at that time, I think it's their policy, but they hide some things about the  
212 nuclear power plant. It was, the, for this maybe, because, because, we, we found that,  
213 like, different, eh, newspapers in different countries they say radiation is like this, but  
214 Japan says it was normal. Eh, for this actually, in this situation, these things were quite,  
215 quite confusing. Otherwise government tackled this, the situation, I think, it like becomes,  
216 it seems normal. Obviously it is not normal...  
217  
218 *Yeah.*



219  
 220 ...because who is, who are the sufferers, they knows they are not still in normal life  
 221 because last time, a few days ago, we also visited some places and, I think, it's not  
 222 normal life for the suff, sufferers, but, eh, or victims, but, any the structure or, in fact,  
 223 structure, everything is going quite, eh...  
 224  
 225 *Uhm.*  
 226  
 227 ...but still now when I thinking about that 11 March, it's really. After the earthquake I  
 228 went back my country and, eh, actually I am doing job one organization that, eh, there  
 229 was some seminar, they invite me to talk [laughter] to give the lecture or talk about the  
 230 earthquake during the lecture, actually [laughter] I said, like, "Ah, 11 is always bad  
 231 number." [laughter]  
 232  
 233 *[Laughter]*  
 234  
 235 Like 9/11, like 3/11. And it's one, our, eh, national, eh, problem in Bangladesh happened,  
 236 do you know?  
 237  
 238 *Yes.*  
 239  
 240 It was 3/11 or sorry 1,1,1/11. [Note: on January 11, 2007 wide-scale protest and violence  
 241 erupted across Bangladesh and a state of emergency was declared]  
 242  
 243 *1/11, yeah.*  
 244  
 245 I have the presentation, I just did, first slide I showed 1/11, 9/11, 3/11 [laughter]  
 246  
 247 *3/11.*  
 248  
 249 That 11 is really...  
 250  
 251 *Something's not right [laughter]*  
 252  
 253 *[Laughter]* Tha, that was actually my thinking.  
 254  
 255 *It's an unlucky number [laughter]. Yeah, it, thank you so much for sharing your story.*  
 256 *I'm, as I explained, I'm focusing in particular on things like communication and*  
 257 *language and so on, so there is a couple of points where I'd just like to clear up some of*  
 258 *the details. Um, for example, I know you said that, eh, the Bangladeshi community was*  
 259 *contacting the embassy and then contacting your home country. How? Was it through*  
 260 *email or by telephone?*  
 261  
 262 No. Actually, actually first three days we could not do anything. Eh, three days or two  
 263 days? Two or three days, anyway. 11,12? Maybe three days. I, I cannot remind exactly.  
 264 But maybe three days actually we could not contact with anyone because network is just  
 265 coming and there is no electricity – there is another problem because when mobile  
 266 network, we go the mobile network maybe after one day or something just we, all of us,  
 267 were trying to contact in our country with our families not embassy not official because  
 268 they were really very concerned about us...  
 269  
 270 *Of course.*  
 271  
 272 ...that's, we are talking and I think almost all the people's mobile charge was released  
 273 [laughter]...

274  
 275 *[Laughter]*  
 276  
 277 ...and, eh, finally, after three days when we heard about the nuclear power plant  
 278 explosion, we are very alarmed about this matter and we went, eh, School of Medicine,  
 279 to, em, visit hospital. There is emergency electricity supply, this, we charged our mobile  
 280 phone from there...  
 281  
 282 *Very clever.*  
 283  
 284 ...and, eh, we contact embassy and Bangladesh about the situation.  
 285  
 286 *How did you know to go to the university hospital? That's very clever.*  
 287  
 288 It, it's, it's actually, eh, I think, the first day or, we, we, we had not this thinking because  
 289 we are very anxious and, eh, unconscious about this matter, but, eh, when it seems quite  
 290 normal, we thought it, that it's maybe possible because hospital, there should be  
 291 emergency electric supply.  
 292  
 293 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 294  
 295 That's, we, we, was there and we were not sure but, eh, we walked there and we found  
 296 that there is emergency supply and we put one point and we did it only one point, we did  
 297 it serially all the people charged our mobiles.  
 298  
 299 *And all of those people that you mentioned was it all Bangladeshi people or was it a*  
 300 *mixture?*  
 301  
 302 There was mixture.  
 303  
 304 *Mixture.*  
 305  
 306 Yes.  
 307  
 308 *So, your international friends.*  
 309  
 310 Yes, yes.  
 311  
 312 *I see. Ehm, I'm also interested in inside the, eh, camp, you said you found out about*  
 313 *Fukushima, for example. How?*  
 314  
 315 Actually, it's, eh, one of my friend, maybe he has the mobile connection or, eh, or, or, or  
 316 in his car or somewhere...  
 317  
 318 *Uhuh.*  
 319  
 320 ...can receive the news. Maybe mobile or in his car there is some I don't know exactly  
 321 inside the car is possible to get, eh, maybe his car or his mobile, there is TV channel, that  
 322 from the TV channel he first called me and, eh, two of my friends just, eh, secretly. He  
 323 said, hushing, "Please come here," or around and, "Please come here." And, we said, he's  
 324 senior than us, we said, "What's the problem, brother?" He said, "There is one problem,  
 325 but if I say it openly, everybody will be scared. And everybody will run here and there  
 326 and something. This situation like this." Then we decided to contact our embassy and we  
 327 prepared our cars who had cars. There is maybe in our community, there are a few cars.  
 328 And from that, because there is no gasoline...

329  
330 *Of course.*  
331  
332 ...we thought that we, eh, like, eh, if we can go, like, after Yamagata or somewhere, then  
333 we can find some gasoline station. We, we could do this. For this, we are just preparing  
334 ourself like this. We first will contact with embassy. If they failed, we'll start by our car.  
335 We don't know where we will go. Maybe we will skip through Tokyo or somewhere. We  
336 don't know the road is open or not. But it's really uncertain situation. And we decided  
337 who has kids, especially, and womens we will send them first.  
338  
339 *I understand.*  
340  
341 And then we will, if possible, we will go, otherwise we will fight in this situation...  
342  
343 *Yeah.*  
344  
345 ...and we make decision and then we inform some responsible person about these, this,  
346 we make contact with embassy and, like, they are, and after that night, this morning we  
347 make decision to go to embassy hospital [Note: this is a slip of the tongue – he means  
348 university hospital as above] for charges because many of friends, also in my case, there  
349 is no charge in my mobile. There's a, we found, we are lucky, we found the, eh, there is  
350 charge, point of electricity supply, there is, after that we contacted.  
351  
352 *I got it.*  
353  
354 But actually if we failed to contact or we failed to go Tokyo by bus, maybe we had plan  
355 to escape here, at least our womens and babies from here to some safe places, anywhere.  
356  
357 *Yeah, I understand. And so, that TV signal on maybe that man's car or the mobile phone,*  
358 *that was a Japanese TV?*  
359  
360 Japanese, Japanese. Japanese TV. And, eh, that, that man was living here maybe around  
361 11 or 12 years. He knows Japanese very well...  
362  
363 *I got it.*  
364  
365 ...and he, he was doing job here. He left, eh, Japan last, two months ago, and now he is in  
366 Australia. Eh, and he is really very good in Japanese because, because, he is, he was  
367 doing job in Japanese company.  
368  
369 *Eh, was he, is he a Bangladeshi person?*  
370  
371 Yes.  
372  
373 *Ah, so he was, kind of, translating...*  
374  
375 Yes, yes, yes.  
376  
377 *...for, for the rest of the community.*  
378  
379 Yes, in our community there is few peoples – five or six peoples – they know Japanese.  
380  
381 *I see, I see.*  
382

383 But at that time, that person, that person heard this news and they translated me and my  
384 two or three friends.  
385  
386 *I got it. I understand. Eh, um, also, just again to go a little bit earlier, do you remember*  
387 *when you were in the university, so you were in the {other campus, not where you*  
388 *worked}, and the earthquake happened, can you remember any announcements?*  
389  
390 [Note: the participant shook his head here, so I vocalized his negative response in the  
391 following interjection]  
392  
393 *No.*  
394  
395 Because I was not inside the building, I was just outside the building. I just said you that I  
396 was walking to the building of professor.  
397  
398 *Right*  
399  
400 And actually, actually, in real fact, the, I saw from outside the building that was so big, I  
401 could not imagine what inside the building they were thinking...  
402  
403 *Yeah.*  
404  
405 ...obviously I was afraid because, because there was eight-floor building. It was shaking  
406 like, eh, like oscillator [laughter]...  
407  
408 *[Laughter]*  
409  
410 ...it was oscillating, and, eh, one part of the top floor just collapsed. That time, I thought,  
411 maybe all the building will collapse.  
412  
413 *Yeah, yeah.*  
414  
415 And, I said you, I find crack on the road...  
416  
417 *So scary.*  
418  
419 ...now [laughter] now I am thinking about the movie 2012 [laughter]...  
420  
421 *[Laughter]*  
422  
423 ...because it was obviously not so, so dangerous but I found small, not, not it was divided  
424 [Note: the participant gestured at two things coming somewhat apart with his hands – not  
425 too large a spread]...  
426  
427 *Yeah.*  
428  
429 ...but there was crack...  
430  
431 *Yeah.*  
432  
433 ...I'm not saying it was divided. But...  
434  
435 *You could see.*  
436

437 ...I, I, I was thinking that what it will happen. And it was on the top of the mountain. Will  
 438 it fall down on side or not?  
 439  
 440 *Right, right.*  
 441  
 442 What will happen?  
 443  
 444 *Right.*  
 445  
 446 Actually, and at the time, it was also persecution for me about my family because I can't  
 447 do something because my family she was sick at the time that was in, and, and we are  
 448 living in {the university accommodation}. In Japan peoples don't use big furniture I  
 449 found, at least foreign peoples they don't use big furniture...  
 450  
 451 *Yeah.*  
 452  
 453 ...but in, in {the university accommodation}, it's decorated with big, big furnitures...  
 454  
 455 *Ah!*  
 456  
 457 ...and big shelves in my bedroom...  
 458  
 459 *Yeah.*  
 460  
 461 ...and, em, my wife, eh, was not so able to go outside from the bedroom. It, but, eh, but  
 462 as I thought that she was in bedroom and if one furniture fall upon her...  
 463  
 464 *Yeah.*  
 465  
 466 ...it's really dangerous.  
 467  
 468 *Yeah.*  
 469  
 470 But, thanks god...  
 471  
 472 *Yeah.*  
 473  
 474 ...that, eh, my wife was taking food one side of the room, obviously she was in bedroom  
 475 because she was sick...  
 476  
 477 *Yeah.*  
 478  
 479 ...she could not go the dining place. She is staying at the bedroom and, eh, she was taking  
 480 food nearby the window...  
 481  
 482 *Uhum.*  
 483  
 484 ...and at this side there was no furniture, but opposite side, there was furniture, furniture  
 485 was fall down, falled and she was waiting at this side, safe side, until the earthquake  
 486 stopped and after the stopping earthquake, I heard from my wife, she just, eh, trying to,  
 487 eh, she was trying to come outside but one or two big furniture was falled near the door...  
 488  
 489 *Ah.*  
 490

491 ...that it was difficult. But at that time, one of my friend, one of my friend, he was living  
 492 in {the same area of Miyagi as me} at that time, he rescue his family to the safe place and  
 493 he was thinking about me, that what about my family...  
 494  
 495 *Yeah.*  
 496  
 497 ...I'm in lab but what about my family. He knocked my room and he enter my room. He  
 498 found a door was open, anyway, I don't know, eh, actually, actually my wife, I just said  
 499 you, she was sick, she was afraid or something, she make some kind of, she make the  
 500 door unlocked...  
 501  
 502 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Just in case.*  
 503  
 504 Yeah. My wife was trying to get outside. Just there was some furniture she want to try to,  
 505 maybe it was possible or not later, but my friend entered the room and he helped my wife  
 506 to remove this and to get calm down and after that my wife get down and another family  
 507 just, eh, the, we were staying in the second floor (indistinct) and, em, that family in first  
 508 floor from Bangladesh, eh, she was staying under the table with her baby...  
 509  
 510 *Yeah.*  
 511  
 512 ...and my wife knocked that room...  
 513  
 514 *Yeah.*  
 515  
 516 ...and she was, eh, my friend's wife was saying, she was crying, my wife entered that  
 517 room and at this situation she bring that family outside. Actually, every people helped,  
 518 everyone helped everyone. Like, eh, I said you just, eh, I, I found there is, there was fire,  
 519 fire at the place...  
 520  
 521 *Yeah.*  
 522  
 523 ...I found one of my friends was taking my frie, eh, my wife in the safe place and, eh, my  
 524 wife also saved a baby to take out. Actually, everybody helped everyone.  
 525  
 526 *Yeah.*  
 527  
 528 Oh, actually, at this situation obviously not only Bangladeshi community, all the  
 529 communities, they helped everyone...  
 530  
 531 *Yeah.*  
 532  
 533 ...if possible for them or us, everyone helped.  
 534  
 535 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 536  
 537 Because that was the very odd time, and about the food, you shared because the supply  
 538 was not enough, we shared the food...  
 539  
 540 *Um.*  
 541  
 542 ...many times.  
 543  
 544 *How did you get information about where food was coming from?*  
 545

546 No, that, they, they, they supplied food, eh, in the camp.  
 547  
 548 *Ah, in the camp. Yeah, I got it.*  
 549  
 550 As like the, for I reminded have hundred packet for, to peoples two-hundred-fifty or  
 551 three-hundred...  
 552  
 553 *I got it.*  
 554  
 555 ...thus, we shared and we specially preferred aged person...  
 556  
 557 *Okay.*  
 558  
 559 ...womens, kids, if they are full, then we adult part, men shared the food.  
 560  
 561 *I got it. I got it. And what was the language in the camp?*  
 562  
 563 Mainly Japanese...  
 564  
 565 *Mainly Japanese.*  
 566  
 567 ...mainly, all, all the adults went and, mainly Japanese but, eh, one or two peoples, eh,  
 568 could comment in English, and, eh, to use Japanese it was not difficult for us, because all  
 569 peoples were the same place and many of them know Japanese...  
 570  
 571 *I got it.*  
 572  
 573 ...because, like, in our community, eh, three or four peoples I said about...  
 574  
 575 *Yeah.*  
 576  
 577 ...all of my, my friend that know Japanese because if there is an announcement instantly  
 578 he translated, "Oh, this like this."  
 579  
 580 *I got it. I understand. Then, you said that electricity came back. Can you remember when*  
 581 *electric and so on came, came back?*  
 582  
 583 Ahhhh!  
 584  
 585 *A, about how long do you, do you think it was?*  
 586  
 587 Uhm, it's maybe five, five, four to five days.  
 588  
 589 *Four to five days. So, after about four to five days, how did you get information about*  
 590 *Fukushima or about other topics?*  
 591  
 592 A, after four and five days, we, we, we was able to use Internet. That's like, especially  
 593 because we was outside, one of my friends was in {a section of the participant's  
 594 university located in central Sendai}, he was alone, he sometimes used to use net in his  
 595 lab, he supplied us all the information about Fukushima.  
 596  
 597 *So he would check, eh, newspaper or what? Do you know, how did he get?*  
 598  
 599 Ah, yes, mainly, newspaper, because at that time he actually, he used to, like, eh, one  
 600 channel in Japan, very popular channel in Japan, I just forgot...

601  
602 *NHK?*  
603  
604 NHK. NHK, and, eh, first, he supplied some message from NHK but we requested to see  
605 all international, because at the situation because maybe it's the one policy, as far I know,  
606 if government there is explosion, peoples will be scared and there may be some odd  
607 situation.  
608  
609 *Yeah.*  
610  
611 This first may, everything, if I am say to you, you may just say, "No, it's okay, it's okay."  
612 Like, for this we request our friend that please check all international media and  
613 somethings. But, eh, when he said, "It's melting. It's going to melt." He said, "It's very  
614 dangerous."  
615  
616 *Yeah.*  
617  
618 And, eh, there was some alert about nearby here, there was another power plant in  
619 Miyagi. I just forgot the name, I just forgot the name. [Note: he is referring to the  
620 Onagawa nuclear power plant.] Anyway, he said, "It's maybe some difficulties, some slit  
621 or something there." We said, [laughter] "If it explode..."  
622  
623 *[Laughter]*  
624  
625 ...it's quite impossible."  
626  
627 *Yeah.*  
628  
629 And, Fukushima, obviously, it's not so far from here.  
630  
631 *Yeah.*  
632  
633 Because, nuclear, a hundred miles is not safe.  
634  
635 *No, no.*  
636  
637 Eh, after receiving that news, actually, we were concerned about the explosion, radiation.  
638 Not about the earthquake...  
639  
640 *Yes.*  
641  
642 ...we just forgot about earthquake and we thought that, "What about," because  
643 earthquake is stopped, some after, aftershock, we, we are in safe place. That is no  
644 problem, we can stay here even one month, two month, if we get a little food...  
645  
646 *Yeah.*  
647  
648 ...little water, it's enough. But what about the radiation?  
649  
650 *Yeah.*  
651  
652 It can't be stopped.  
653  
654 *Yeah.*  
655



656 For this we are hardly trying to go back in our country.  
657  
658 *Yeah.*  
659  
660 First thought, we have to go back, then we make decision, we will come back or not or  
661 what we will do.  
662  
663 *I got it. Eh, how did your friend share the information with you? By social media or by e-*  
664 *mail or telephone?*  
665  
666 No, of course, by telephone.  
667  
668 *Telephone. So he directly called?*  
669  
670 Yes, yes, yes. Because all of us, maximum of all, not all, maximum of all, eh, eh, of, eh,  
671 maximum of all us, were at the same place that if he shared one person, we can share  
672 everyone.  
673  
674 *I got it. So...*  
675  
676 Or, or sometimes we called, "What about the situation current?" He said, "Oh this," we  
677 can share everyone.  
678  
679 *...I got it. So it really was that feeling of community...*  
680  
681 Um, yes, yes, yes.  
682  
683 *...links between people and word-of-mouth c, communication.*  
684  
685 Yes, yes.  
686  
687 *Yeah.*  
688  
689 It was about all the peoples but unfortunately, one or two people failed to get some  
690 information as like the bus is coming to rescue them. They heard, some peoples heard  
691 later because the embassy sometimes says, "I, we're going to send." Sometimes they said,  
692 "It's not possible." That the morning they shared that, they shared us that they were  
693 sending a bus that we did this time, actually we tried at best to spread the news  
694 everywhere but unfortunately one or two peoples missed this...  
695  
696 *Ah.*  
697  
698 ...opportunity and they joined, eh, with another embassy, maybe Turkish Embassy or  
699 some, I cannot remind exactly name, maybe Turkish or some embassy, they joined with  
700 us, with that bus...  
701  
702 *I got it.*  
703  
704 ...the last one they said, "Okay." If, because, eh, they were living quite far from here  
705  
706 *I got it. And then, you got to Tokyo and you were in Tokyo for about three days, I think.*  
707  
708 Three days.  
709  
710 *How did you find out information in Tokyo? So, how did you find out more detail?*

711  
712 Eh, actually, actually, eh, we directly, the bus, eh, come from embassy and they directly,  
713 we directly first go the, our embassy...  
714  
715 *Ah, okay.*  
716  
717 ...there's, eh, there's peoples in our embassy and some people, I just said you, some  
718 businessmen...  
719  
720 *Yeah.*  
721  
722 ...and some peoples from Tokyo. At the situation they helped us too much...  
723  
724 *Right*  
725  
726 ...which is, it's really unforgettable...  
727  
728 *It's wonderful, yeah.*  
729  
730 ...eh, they, they helped us too much.  
731  
732 *Yeah.*  
733  
734 I am just talking about one of these mens, I said I didn't know him previously but, eh, he  
735 arranged accommodation for all families. He's big business, he has lots of apartment but  
736 many peoples has lots of apartments...  
737  
738 *Yeah.*  
739  
740 ...he said, "Okay, yeah, I'll responsible for all the families."  
741  
742 *It's wonderful.*  
743  
744 And who has not family, he also said that you may attend with us, but who has not  
745 family, they stayed five or six people they shared different place.  
746  
747 *Right.*  
748  
749 There, there is one mosque, do you know about the mosque are Muslims' prayer place,  
750 mosque. They were staying in the mosque.  
751  
752 *I got it.*  
753  
754 And, but family, the refugees with the family and also this business supplied food for  
755 them at the mosque.  
756  
757 *Ah, it's fantastic. And this was, you said, Mr Sakura, I think...*  
758  
759 Sakura. Sakura Saber [Note: This individual is president of B.J. International Co., an auto  
760 import and export business based in Sagamihara. He has lived in Japan 23 years.]  
761  
762 *...he has a, a, a, a special relationship with Bangladesh community or just?*  
763  
764 Actually, he is doing business in Tokyo...  
765

766 *Ah, okay, I got it.*  
 767  
 768 ...and, he, he is established businessman.  
 769  
 770 *That is fantastic, really fantastic. And then, so, you were back in Bangladesh and you had*  
 771 *to decide whether to come back to Japan or not. How did you get the information to make*  
 772 *your decision?*  
 773  
 774 It's also from news...  
 775  
 776 *Ah, news.*  
 777  
 778 ...because, eh, when I go back my country, went back my country, I get news from  
 779 different channels like BBC, CNN and international channels or Bangladeshi channels or  
 780 Japanese channels...  
 781  
 782 *Ah, even Japanese, uhum.*  
 783  
 784 ...and from Internet, I got some information. And, eh, my professor, I was contacting,  
 785 and, and then, not only me, all of us was, eh, contacting with our professors...  
 786  
 787 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 788  
 789 ...for this situation...  
 790  
 791 *Yeah.*  
 792  
 793 ...will I come or not? Actually, my professor is a very nice person. After earthquake, eh, I  
 794 went, after one or two days, I came in my lab to take my some documents or something, I  
 795 met him. He said, "Please go back your country."  
 796  
 797 *Yeah.*  
 798  
 799 "First, go back your country, then if we think it's safe, we'll send you mail."  
 800  
 801 *Yeah.*  
 802  
 803 He said, "Do you have enough money? If not, I can give."  
 804  
 805 *Wow.*  
 806  
 807 He is really nice man.  
 808  
 809 *Yeah, yeah. And did you ever get any contact from Sendai City Government or Miyagi*  
 810 *Government? Any of those official contacts?*  
 811  
 812 Not, it's not actually personal contact with any community. There's some information  
 813 like, eh, these things. Maybe they, actually, I, I, I don't know Japanese. Thus, maybe they  
 814 gave the information to the peoples who are in charge of the camp. They declared  
 815 sometimes, "This is the condition of electricity...  
 816  
 817 *Uhuh.*  
 818  
 819 ...this is the condition of gas, this is the condition of the earthquake, this is the condition  
 820 of this, this, this, this is the condition of foods...

821  
822 *Yeah.*  
823  
824 ...drinking water.” Like, eh, maybe they were contacting directly with them but general  
825 people were not contacting, have contact with the authority of Miyagi.  
826  
827 *I got it. I got it. I got it. I got it. And then, just as a, kind of, a final question, eh, you had*  
828 *some information trouble, some information lack, what, what step would make things*  
829 *better in the future?*  
830  
831 Actually, I think it’s critical situation, critical situation means it’s really difficult to make  
832 decision, as like as if you say I’m the authority. At this situation, it’s really difficult. If I  
833 spread the real message, you’re saying about the ra, radiation?  
834  
835 *For example, yeah, for example the radiation, or, or any topic but for example.*  
836  
837 No, but if I, I say about radiation, it is really tough decision because if I say the radiation  
838 level is very high and it’s dangerous situation, peoples will run here and there and there  
839 would be some difficult situation. Thus, the government said maybe not good but not  
840 bad...  
841  
842 *I see.*  
843  
844 ...like this. It’s maybe in point of view of the government, it’s okay, but in point of view  
845 us, we can say why they hide the situation? Eh, because if we absorb some, eh, eh, if we  
846 absorb some ra, radiation like our babies, our kids...  
847  
848 *Yeah.*  
849  
850 ...absorb some radiation, it’s harmful. But if government said this is danger level we  
851 could back another place or something.  
852  
853 *Yeah.*  
854  
855 In this, eh, actually contradictory situation...  
856  
857 *Yeah, yeah.*  
858  
859 ...between these. And, eh, about the, after earthquake, eh, about the earthquake, I think  
860 they committed, obviously I’m not saying about the food crisis or water, actually,  
861 especially I say for, in, in my ward, I can understand, I could understand that it’s difficult,  
862 because the main victim area is not {his place of residence in Miyagi}.  
863  
864 *Yeah, yeah.*  
865  
866 The main victim area, some people said why they are not sending aircraft or helicopter  
867 here. I saying that or I think that the main victim area like the tsunami affected area...  
868  
869 *Yeah, yeah.*  
870  
871 ...thus, they’re busy with that place. We’re not main victim area...  
872  
873 *Yeah.*  
874  
875 ...they supplied small food or something for us.

876  
877 *Yeah.*  
878  
879 Thus, I think, eh, the handling is quite okay.  
880  
881 *Okay. Well, it's good, I'm very glad to hear that. That's really all the questions I have*  
882 *unless, do you have any comment or any extra information you want to give about?*  
883  
884 No, I, I, I actually, actually, one thing I don't know. In Japan, I, one additional thing I'm  
885 saying...  
886  
887 *Sure.*  
888  
889 ...when I enter in Japan, my S-SET professor said, "Ah, you will be staying in Japan for  
890 three years, thus, within this time, in Sendai there will be big earthquake [laughter]."  
891  
892 *[Laughter]*  
893  
894 I thought, "It's really very big?" He said, "Yes. It will be." He said, "Maybe you will  
895 [Note: makes gesture of leaving or going away with hands and laughs]  
896  
897 *[Laughter] Really?*  
898  
899 I don't know how but, eh, still now, I, I, I heard there is some prediction like in Tokyo,  
900 within last three, next three years...  
901  
902 *Yeah.*  
903  
904 ...there will be earthquake in Tokyo region and Ibaraki or something.  
905  
906 *Yeah, yeah.*  
907  
908 Though, the, it's, it was not interesting, but [laughter] some way interesting...  
909  
910 *Yeah.*  
911  
912 ...to me that the prediction is very good...  
913  
914 *Yes.*  
915  
916 ...and, eh, actually, after the prediction, if they knew that situation, why they have not  
917 taken the, eh, necessary, as like, I'm saying about nuclear power plant...  
918  
919 *Yeah.*  
920  
921 ...as like, eh, Pacific or some region, like, there is some wall height, it's, I, I don't want  
922 to talk about this because they said they have 10-metre, 10-feet, the water was 33-feet...  
923  
924 *Yeah.*  
925  
926 ...they could not realize that it would be so high or something, but in power plant area...  
927  
928 *Yeah.*  
929

930 ...because it is around this region, they should, not should, they had to take the, I, I, I,  
 931 don't know still now, why they had not take the, because I gave you example of my S-  
 932 SET professor because he knows, he, he, he knew, that means the peoples, the authority  
 933 knew that there is probability...

934  
 935 *Yeah.*

936  
 937 ...to face this type of situation.

938  
 939 *Yeah.*

940  
 941 Thus, eh, as like, now we, we're hearing that in Iba, in Ibaraki there may be some  
 942 probability for earthquake or after earthquake must be because this, the surrounding is,  
 943 like, Pacific, or something, water, there's, there should be some tsunami or something...

944  
 945 *Yeah.*

946  
 947 ...there is possibility. Thus, they should take necessary steps about this matter.

948  
 949 *Yeah.*

950  
 951 Why, why they will think that it should be not more than 5-metre?

952  
 953 *Yeah.*

954  
 955 Because thinking is one thing, but it's not, earthquake, but radiation is long time effect...

956  
 957 *Absolutely.*

958  
 959 ...they will suffer. Eh, like Japan, they are suffering after Second World War...

960  
 961 *Yes, yes.*

962  
 963 ...till now. Thus, radiation is not matter of jokes.

964  
 965 *Yes, yes.*

966  
 967 Radiation is, this my concern about this, if they know this the real risk area, they should  
 968 stop or they should take hundred percent secure, and, eh, I'm not sure, but I heard there is  
 969 something within Tepco and Japanese government. I heard because I am not part of  
 970 government or I am not part of Tepco, I heard by the by, I heard Tepco is powerful than  
 971 government [laughter].

972  
 973 *[Laughter]*

974  
 975 I heard that. But in the case of security of general people, public, they should take care.

976  
 977 *Yeah.*

978  
 979 Obviously, Tepco can pressure government to do this or the government should do this.  
 980 It's not matter of in general public...

981  
 982 *Yeah.*

983  
 984 ...therefore we should remain in safe situation...

985  
 986 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 987  
 988 ...and, eh, I expect and I believe that Japan will give the, Japanese government will give  
 989 the, in the current situation, they will give the real information to the people. Accident is  
 990 different, I said you that in the case of accident in the instant they said, "This is okay, this  
 991 is okay."  
 992  
 993 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 994  
 995 But if you, now it's two years past...  
 996  
 997 *Yeah.*  
 998  
 999 ...thus, now what is the real situation. If there is real something danger, people should be  
 1000 aware. They will go far from here...  
 1001  
 1002 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1003  
 1004 ...and o, o, obviously for food, we will take sometimes, sometimes we heard that sea,  
 1005 seafood is dangerous, sometimes we say not, seafood is safe...  
 1006  
 1007 *Yeah.*  
 1008  
 1009 ...what we will do? Some people say the food from Miyagi is safe, sometimes I heard  
 1010 that it's unsafe. Still now.  
 1011  
 1012 *Yeah.*  
 1013  
 1014 Still now. Thus the government should give some – it's, it's my opinion – that  
 1015 government should give some directly information to the media or to the, to the people  
 1016 that, eh, what is the real situation, what they really should they will do and something...  
 1017  
 1018 *Yeah.*  
 1019  
 1020 ...and especially for foreign people's they should give, in this severe situation, they  
 1021 should have, because in Japan one is, I'm not criticizing this, but it's my , it's maybe my  
 1022 difficulties, but I, I don't know Japanese, but, eh, I think many peoples don't know  
 1023 Japanese. Foreigner. Thus, I don't know about other city, other city maybe some peoples  
 1024 can, but, eh, Sendai, as far I know, the international city, some people said it's the  
 1025 international city. They should give some information or in Japan TV channel or some  
 1026 media, why they are not sending some message in English. If the channel is Japanese,  
 1027 some part of Japanese some part of English. That would be helpful for us...  
 1028  
 1029 *Yeah.*  
 1030  
 1031 ...because, eh, all the foreigners they depending and asking world, they are search all the  
 1032 times, but we are not getting the real information, this the government, but the local  
 1033 information from Japan as like Miyagi Prefecture. They, they , if they submit report like  
 1034 this, the current situation, this you can do, and in English, and foreign people, there are  
 1035 many foreign peoples...  
 1036  
 1037 *Yeah.*  
 1038  
 1039 ...the language is always [laughter] a big problem in Japan.

1040  
1041 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1042  
1043 Thus, eh, about this thing, otherwise their policies or their handling is very good. That's I  
1044 believe. But, eh, the information gap is still to language sometimes, as like I said you, in  
1045 the camp, there is my friends that translate me but when I am outside now, every day I  
1046 cannot request my friend, what is the situation and what is the situation? Or I hear one of  
1047 my friends said, eh, "You can't, are you taking seafood?" It's completely for dangerous  
1048 or something." I say, "Why?" "This is the situation." Thus, the, what the real situation?  
1049  
1050 *Yeah.*  
1051  
1052 They should give us real, because radiation, I always afraid, afraid, because it's long-time  
1053 effect and, you know, it's even though you absorb the radiation, you are okay, but your  
1054 babies will be affected...  
1055  
1056 *Yeah.*  
1057  
1058 ...it's long time...  
1059  
1060 *Yeah.*  
1061  
1062 ...that's, in this case, if I have opportunity to say the government or the authority, I'll say  
1063 like this.  
1064  
1065 *Yeah, yeah. Thank you so much for sharing your opinions and you experience. It's been*  
1066 *very, very valuable for me. Really, really helpful.*  
1067  
1068 I, it's my pleasure.  
1069  
1070 *I really appreciate your time and your effort and I'm sorry that it was difficult for you,*  
1071 *for you to speak. I hope I haven't increased your, your stress, eh, by, you know, making*  
1072 *you remember difficult times. I hope you feel okay...*  
1073  
1074 [Laughter]  
1075  
1076 *...now. Ehm, not too anxious or not too, too nervous. Em, I, I, this is the final, em,*  
1077 *question that I like to ask people, just to check that now that the interview is finished, do*  
1078 *you feel okay [nervous laughter]? Eh, I, I, please honestly answer, I don't want... [Note:*  
1079 *the participant is thinking before marking his answer on the Likert Scale for stress]*  
1080  
1081 No, after, after the interview...  
1082  
1083 *Okay...*  
1084  
1085 ...I feeling not anxious...  
1086  
1087 *...great, great...*  
1088  
1089 ...[laughter] about this.  
1090  
1091 *...perfect. Because, eh, I, I don't want my research process to cause you more trouble.*  
1092  
1093 No, no, no. I, I, I'm, because after hearing this, I feel, actually I glad to share these things  
1094 with you and it's not a matter of anxiety or something.



1095

1096     *Okay, well, thank you so much. I really appreciate all your time and effort.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/9/26 Interview with Participant 17*

5 *Researcher: Perfect. So that's all of the paperwork, eh, this final point is for after, after*  
6 *the interview. So, the way I've started the interview with everyone I've spoken to is just*  
7 *with a very general question, please tell me what happened to you in the 2011 disaster.*

8  
9 Participant: Well, em, I was in the shopping mall that day. [Laughter]...

10  
11 [Laughter] Okay.

12  
13 ...my school, eh, my school ended at 12:35 and after that time, in fact, at that day I  
14 wanted to go to the sea, but I thought maybe I should just cook first, and I go to the  
15 supermarket, it's just at 12:35, around that, something like that, and at that time the  
16 earthquake happened. [Note: in fact, the earthquake took place at about 2:46, but the  
17 participant has just misremembered the time.] And, the, what I saw is the car, the cars  
18 start shattering up and down, it's like in the movie, in the sea, it's like this wave. So, eh, I  
19 was scared, and I saw the building, it's really, eh, it's very scary. But it just, this, they  
20 don't come down, you know?

21  
22 *Uhuh.*

23  
24 ...so I was amazed. And, eh, you know, Japanese girls are very strong most of the time,  
25 but I saw some girl crying, burst out crying that day. Just, eh, they just sa, sat on the street  
26 and screaming. And, eh, the problem is, eh, eh, I spent ninetee, nineteen years in China  
27 and didn't have any ex, earthquake experience, so I not scared at that time...

28  
29 [Laughter]

30  
31 ...on the contrary [laughter]. I just thought, "Whoa, this one was cool!" ...

32  
33 [Laughter]

34  
35 ...[Laughter] That's all I felt. I, then, I stood at the intersection and, eh, looking at the  
36 house, just, eh, it's very scary but I think, "Whoa, this one was cool!" I don't know how  
37 big the earthquake was and I didn't know the tsunami, I didn't know the nuclear plant. I,  
38 I, yeah, at that time, I knew nothing. And after the earthquake, I tried to get contact with  
39 my friends, but, eh, you know, the, the light turned off, everything was just stay in a  
40 mess, but what especially, eh, in, in my opinion, eh, I felt the, you know, the street, they,  
41 all the, all the cars they just, eh, without the signal, you know, the signal, the signal  
42 lights...

43  
44 *Yeah.*

45  
46 ...because the, so, so, such a big earthquake. But they just, em, move like, you know, I  
47 mean, with or without the signals, they are the same for Japanese [Note: for emphasis,  
48 the participant taps on the table with his fingertips as if playing a piano chord]...

49  
50 [Laughter]

51  
52 ...it seems they have got used to it. So I think it's incredible really...

53

54 [Laughter]  
55  
56 ...especially in a city like Sendai. It's kind of big city, but, eh, well, it works well. So I  
57 was amaz, very much, eh, well, impressed at that time. And, eh, I came back to school,  
58 no, I came back to my house, my, in fact, dormitory exactly. And my teacher are, were  
59 already there, yeah. They came to dormitory immediately. They came with, eh, some  
60 water, they gave me water, and some tissue, yeah. I think they bought it from the su, not  
61 supermarket, from the school...  
62  
63 Ah, uhuh.  
64  
65 ...they have that thing, kind of, stocked in school maybe...  
66  
67 Uhuh, uhuh.  
68  
69 ...and, eh, after that I, it's, it's not like, you know, if you see the data you could  
70 understand, it's not like just the one big earthquake...  
71  
72 Uhm.  
73  
74 ...the earthquake continued all the time, all the time. So we can't, eh, went in to the  
75 house, we can't go anywhere. Just stand in the sq, in the square and, yeah, wait, waiting  
76 for the earthquake to calm down, but it never did. All these day, all those days. And I  
77 went around, with my *jitenasha*, with my bicycle...  
78  
79 [Laughter]  
80  
81 ...to see my friends, and I see everywhere people are all on the street, em, but the  
82 Japanese people are rather calm down after the big earthquake, and, eh, what especially  
83 came into my mind is the helicopter...  
84  
85 [Long intake of breath]  
86  
87 ...yeah, they are all around in the sky...  
88  
89 Uhm.  
90  
91 ...we don't know why there are so many helicopters on the sky, but, eh, when I came,  
92 came back to China, I've been understand. That time the tsunami is flushing the field and,  
93 yeah, taking peoples lives, but at that time we have no idea. So we just think, "Well,  
94 everything is just fine. There are big earthquakes but, eh, the, the, the buildings are still  
95 there. Why there are so many helicopters in the sky?" After that I spent seven days  
96 helping my friend, eh, I mean, the, my friend works in the company, the company is, like,  
97 you know, this bookshelf, just, eh [Note: the participant gestures as if a big nearby  
98 bookshelf had fallen down and books were everywhere] I mean, I helped them, but a,  
99 about three days later people are, em, I mean, getting kind of usual. They started their  
100 shops and serve the customers, so I think it's, eh, well, it's really amazing...  
101  
102 Uhm.  
103  
104 ...how can they do that? But I, until that time, I have no idea of the earth, of the tsunami, I  
105 don't know there are so many people died, yeah? And, eh, as for Chinese, there are many  
106 Chinese students here, we asked how, should we go back to home or just stay in Sendai.  
107 In fact, when the earthquake happened, the second day, some of them has already run into  
108 Tokyo, Tokyo and Osaka, using *shinkansen* [Note: shinkansen means bullet train] but, eh,

109 as for us, eh, I, I think I should stay in Sendai and, eh, look, and, eh, but three days later  
110 when the electricity was on, we see the Fukushima, you know, nuclear accident and my, I  
111 got the telephone from my mum and dad and they said, "You should come back home  
112 just now." I try, at that time, everywhere is people. Even if you go to To, Tokyo, Osaka,  
113 there are people waiting for the plane everywhere, so we just stayed in Sendai to see is  
114 there anything I can do. And at the same time, I can help my friends with their  
115 companies. Eh, well, and after maybe five days, we search the Internet, see in Chinese  
116 website it is said they are sending big buses to Sendai to other big places to, em, take the  
117 Chinese back home. I also know that maybe American, eh, America has sent helicopters  
118 to Sendai [laughter] to help their citizens come back home. And, yeah, something like  
119 that, so after seven days in Sendai, we are picked up and go to Niigata-ken and after  
120 maybe two days waiting there we, eh, went back home. So, it's something like this.

121  
122 *And how long did you stay in China for?*

123  
124 Eh, for about forty days. You know, when I came back to China, eh, my family strongly  
125 against me coming back to Japan again, especially Sendai. Of course, eh, they don't care  
126 about the earthq, of course they worry about the earthquake, but most important thing is  
127 the Fukushima...

128  
129 *Uhm.*

130  
131 ...the nuclear accident. I choose to come back. I have friends here, I have my life here,  
132 and, eh, maybe I was young that time [laughter]...

133  
134 *[Laughter]*

135  
136 ...I'm not old now, but I was rather younger at that time. I think I can do something here.  
137 I don't think that's the end of my life, so I just choose to come back after 40 days.

138  
139 *Uhuh, I see. I see. And for you, when did the disaster finish? If, if it's finished?*

140  
141 Uhm, how do you say, in fact, for me I think it never happened really. Because, eh, when  
142 the earthquake happened, that moment I was, kind of, first scary and then, "Wow, this is  
143 big earthquake," and I'm so happy this kind of experience in my life, because I didn't  
144 know, eh, many people are suffering at that time. When I came back home I was like,  
145 "Oh my god, the Sendai International Airport is gone." I can't believe it because a few  
146 months ago I landed on the airport and I remember thinking it's so beautiful, but it's gone  
147 now and the people there. So I can't believe it. But, eh, em, I mean for, for common  
148 people or for people, you feel something, you really touch something. You feel very  
149 impressed and feel, "Oh, this is disaster." But if, if you don't touch it, it's just like a good  
150 experience, you know? I'm sorry to put it in this way...

151  
152 *Yeah.*

153  
154 ...but it is a fact, really. I just think, well, this disaster is so bad for those who are  
155 suffering, but who does live in the Sendai City, in the metropolitan, they don't feel  
156 anything. When I came back to Sendai after forty days, people are living a better life, I  
157 think, because they think, "Wow, however much money I have, if it's the, the earthquake,  
158 it's just the same." So I just abandon...

159  
160 *Aaahhh.*

161  
162 ...I just enjoy my life. So it's, oh yeah, it's totally different. People elsewhere may think  
163 Chi, eh, Sendai, Japan, this earthquake is so bad, people here are bad hurted, they feel

164 really bad, but the, the fact, those who are suffering are really hard for them, but, as for  
 165 the other people, I think it's just fine. They start to, we start to think what happiness is.  
 166 What should they really, eh, pursue in their life. Yeah...  
 167  
 168 *Uhum.*  
 169  
 170 ...I think that's my experience for disaster.  
 171  
 172 *That's very interesting. Ehm, I'm also very interested obviously in issues of language and*  
 173 *communication...*  
 174  
 175 Yes.  
 176  
 177 *...and so on, so there's some details I'd like to ask you about. Uhm, first of all, if you can*  
 178 *remember...*  
 179  
 180 *Uhum.*  
 181  
 182 *...when you were standing at the intersection...*  
 183  
 184 Uhuh, yeah.  
 185  
 186 *...at the shopping mall when it, when it happened, do you remember any announcements*  
 187 *or any speaker system?*  
 188  
 189 Well, in fact, the, this means you have never experienced the big earthquake [laughter]  
 190 right? If you ever have that kind of experience, if, you not ask like this because the  
 191 earthquake, what happened, it sounds, how to say, it gives, gave out a very big sound.  
 192 You can't hear anything. You can't hear anything. Even the car honking, you can't hear it,  
 193 but, because, eh, first the, when the big earthquake happened, you have, in Japan,  
 194 especially in Japan, em, the population density is very high here, you have nowhere to  
 195 run, in fact. Of course, they have some security place especially for people to come, but  
 196 generally you ha, you have no place to run. You see, you run on the street, there are  
 197 lights, there are that line everywhere. When the earthquake happened, the noise is very  
 198 noisy, so you can't hear anything. Even people screaming, you can't hear. Yeah, so...  
 199  
 200 *That's fascinating.*  
 201  
 202 ...yeah, so, um, even if there is announcement, you are not concentrating on the  
 203 announcement. You are seeing if, yeah, if it can, if it's, I mean, if it's safe to stand here, if  
 204 it's safe to, yeah...  
 205  
 206 *I.*  
 207  
 208 ...when you calm down, you start to think, "Well, who should I listen to?" [laughter]  
 209  
 210 *[Laughter] Uhuh. That's maybe very important information. Thank you for sharing that*  
 211 *with me. Em, then, you realized that there had been an earthquake and you went back to*  
 212 *the dormitory...*  
 213  
 214 Yes.  
 215  
 216 *...ehm, when you went back to the dormitory, did you try to communicate using your*  
 217 *phone or some other? Did you try to get information?*  
 218

219 In fact, I even don't need to try because everyone is saying, "My phone doesn't work  
 220 now." So I, yeah, [laughter] I didn't need to try anything. But one thing I, eh, ma, made  
 221 me feel proud for myself is I just turn off the phone at that time...

222

223 *Uhm?*

224

225 ...I think it's very important because three, two days without electricity, everyone's phone  
 226 is [laughter] [Note: he makes an open-handed sweeping gesture, palms facing down,  
 227 indicating finished or empty of no good]. Yeah, I don't know why, I just turn it off,  
 228 choose to turn it off. I think I should save this kind of energy for the future and, in fact, I  
 229 am right. Because two days later, everyone just rush out of electricity [Note: I think this is  
 230 a slip of the tongue and the participant meant to say 'ran out of'] even if the  
 231 communication goes up, they don't know how to get, communicate with the outside  
 232 world.

233

234 *That's very good advice.*

235

236 I, I, yeah.

237

238 *And you don't know why you thought of?*

239

240 I don't know why but, because, you know, I saw everybody is playing on their iPhone, on  
 241 their phone, because they want to try to contact this, the outside world. But I can see that  
 242 you can't do it. So I just turn it off. And two days later they all come to my place to ask to  
 243 call their families...

244

245 *[Laughter]*

246

247 ...[laughter].

248

249 *Do you know, that's really fascinating to me because one of the things I'm looking for...*

250

251 Uhum.

252

253 *...are simple pieces of advice...*

254

255 Ah yes.

256

257 *...that we can give to foreign people to prepare for another disaster in the future. That's*  
 258 *very simple, but maybe very clever.*

259

260 Okay. Thank you.

261

262 *Thank you for sharing that. I'm, I'm very happy to hear that. Then, ehm, so you are no in*  
 263 *the dormitory...*

264

265 Uhum. Ah, outside the dormitory

266

267 *...ah, outside the dormitory? So you didn't go into the room?*

268

269 No, didn't.

270

271 *So, you are outside the dormitory and people from, your teachers, I think you said...*

272

273 Yeah.

274  
 275 *...came. What could your teachers tell you at that stage? Could they give you any*  
 276 *information and, if so, what language?*  
 277  
 278 Eh, the teacher, they are all Japanese so they use, they used the Japanese to tell us just to  
 279 stay here at the dormitory, outside the dormitory, and wait. That's all.  
 280  
 281 *Okay.*  
 282  
 283 I mean, eh, I don't know Japanese government system, I think this, kind of, like, you just  
 284 cool down, now everything you can do is cool down. There's nothing you can do really.  
 285 Rescue someone, oh, I'll do whatever, like, you can't do anything. You just make sure  
 286 you, you are safe. This is the, yeah, the most important thing at that time, because if you  
 287 are safe, you don't make trouble for e, everybody else.  
 288  
 289 *Ah, I got it, yeah, so by staying calm and staying safe, you're, it's less people to worry*  
 290 *about...*  
 291  
 292 Yes.  
 293  
 294 *...in the future. I see. I understand, I understand. Then, did you think that you should go*  
 295 *to some sort of evacuation centre or?*  
 296  
 297 Yeah, I went to evac, we went to evacuation centre in the night, at night. Eh, but, well, we  
 298 Chinese student get together, got together and went to the evacuation centre, but, eh, you  
 299 see at that time, the Sendai, the city, is black without any light. It's kind of incredible, you  
 300 know, because you can't imagine New York without light [laughter] yeah. It's something  
 301 like that, and we went to evacuation centre, they have nothing at that time. I think they  
 302 have some kind of supplies, but they have to save for the future. The first night anyway  
 303 no one will, eh, I mean die because of the cold or the food because people have  
 304 something on their hand...  
 305  
 306 *Uhm.*  
 307  
 308 ...but they have to save for the future. So even if we went there, there are just people, eh,  
 309 it's very dark outside and just stand on the ground, that's all. Yeah, we don't have  
 310 anything to eat, and, eh, yeah, we don't have light at that time. And, eh, we went there  
 311 maybe around 7 o'clock and at 11 o'clock in the, at night, eh, we just went back home  
 312 and went to sleep...  
 313  
 314 *Okay.*  
 315  
 316 ...but, eh, when we say we got to sleep, we just, eh, sleep near the window. You know,  
 317 the house, eh, inside the house is totally in a mess. Everything totally in a. The, yeah, the  
 318 refrigerator is also down. Everything is in a mess and, eh, just, eh, sleep near the window.  
 319 You know, Japanese window is like, eh, this door [Note: he points to a nearby sliding  
 320 door in the room and the meaning is that many windows in Japanese dwellings are French  
 321 windows which also act as doors]...  
 322  
 323 *Uhuh...*  
 324  
 325 ...so you can run out any time you like...  
 326  
 327 *...uhuh, uhuh, uhuh.*  
 328

329 ...yeah, and I spent the following couple of days in that way.  
 330  
 331 *Alone or with?*  
 332  
 333 Eh, first, eh, the first day I just stayed in my home, but later we stayed together.  
 334  
 335 *We means you and the other Chinese students?*  
 336  
 337 Yes, yes, study together.  
 338  
 339 *I got it, I got it. Eh, just also, just to be clear, how did you know where the evacuation*  
 340 *centre was?*  
 341  
 342 Eh, well, you know, in this, about the evacuation centre, I think Japanese government  
 343 really does a good job. Uhm, you can, how to say, well, if you long enough in Japan, you  
 344 will have that kind of sense where is the evacuation centre. Or the big earthquake  
 345 happened, people are walking that way [laughter]...  
 346  
 347 *[Laughter]*  
 348  
 349 ...so you can understand it's kind of evacuation centre. But, I mean, for example, if you  
 350 live in this area, in the residence area, you will see there is a school. Everyone, body in  
 351 Japan know the school is the evacuation centre, so you can, just, eh, come to the school  
 352 and, yeah, you can find your friends and family there.  
 353  
 354 *So it's a kind of a common sense...*  
 355  
 356 Yes, it's common sense.  
 357  
 358 *...that people who live in Japan...*  
 359  
 360 Uhum.  
 361  
 362 *...have after...*  
 363  
 364 Yes.  
 365  
 366 *....some time.*  
 367  
 368 And I don't know if you know it or not, in Japanese, everywhere, every, eh, school or  
 369 whatever, you have this kind of practice once in a year, where is the evacuation, uation  
 370 centre, what you should do when an earthquake happened. Yeah.  
 371  
 372 *Okay, so, on that topic, how well prepared did you feel?*  
 373  
 374 Uhm, well, in fac, exactly, I don't know, in fact, because it depends on the earthquake...  
 375  
 376 *Ah okay.*  
 377  
 378 ...you, you can sa, [laughter] I think it will never well prepared, I mean, it's never well  
 379 prepared because when the earthquake goes on the 9 level, it's totally different from the 8  
 380 level, so what, how well prepared, you just can say people here can live, can't die, but  
 381 that's all. They can't have enough, eh, *futon*, enough beds, eh, I mean, enough clothes for  
 382 everybody to come, yeah.  
 383



384 *I got it. When were you able to contact the important people in your life?*  
385  
386 Uhm, I think the sec, the third day, the second day I can go through the phone call and I  
387 called my father to say that I'm okay. And after that, I just turn off my phone again...  
388  
389 *[Laughter]*  
390  
391 ...because, eh, we still don't have any electricity.  
392  
393 *One thing I'm interested in is if it was about three days after the earthquake...*  
394  
395 Uhum.  
396  
397 *...maybe, did your family in China have more information about what was happening?*  
398  
399 Of course, yeah, of course, yeah, they have much more information than me about the,  
400 what happened in the earthquake.  
401  
402 *Could they tell you something?*  
403  
404 They can't, they can't. Eh, I mean, even if I called, I just say, "I'm safe now and I will  
405 stay alert and as for the other information whatever it is, just contact later." That's all. I  
406 save the time, I save the power, I save everything. And I'm safe. I just let them know...  
407  
408 So.  
409  
410 ...because they have too ma, too many questions [laughter]...  
411  
412 *[Laughter]*  
413  
414 ...you know, you can't answer them one by one. It's impossible. Yeah.  
415  
416 *So this was just the very short, basic...*  
417  
418 Yes.  
419  
420 *...information you were communicating. Then, when did the Chinese Embassy contact*  
421 *you, or how did the Chinese contact you?*  
422  
423 Uhm, I mean, I mean, as for China, you have to see, this is China custom, we get  
424 together, so if you know something, eh, they send a me, I mean, Chinese government  
425 doesn't tell us, they just write it down on the website or whatever it is, but the Chinese,  
426 eh, I mean, the, my father and mother, parents, they are very worried about us, so they  
427 just checked the Internet. And whoever it is, they would tell their kids they are coming  
428 and you just tell your friends, so it's something like this.  
429  
430 *Ah, so it's a kind of a, like a, a word-of-mouth community.*  
431  
432 Yes, this is a word-of-mouth community, so.  
433  
434 *Ah, that's very interesting.*  
435  
436 So, it's not like you have to trust your government for information, no, it's like we just  
437 solve the problem ourselves.  
438

439 *So does, does that mean you didn't check any websites or anything?*  
440  
441 My friend checked the website to see if the information is correct or not. I don't have the  
442 access, so I didn't check.  
443  
444 *Okay, and that friend who, who, who checked was a Chinese...*  
445  
446 Yes, yes, yes.  
447  
448 *...person? Oh okay. And, so then, you said that, eh, the information came that buses*  
449 *were...*  
450  
451 Uhum...  
452  
453 *...coming to, to...*  
454  
455 *...pick us up, pick us up.*  
456  
457 *...pick you up. Eh, wa, wa, was it some central location or did they, they come to each*  
458 *person's home. How, how did it work? How did the system work?*  
459  
460 They have a central location at the *shiyakusho*, it means the prefecture's place [Note:  
461 *shiyakusho* is often translated as 'city hall' or 'municipal government building'] just in  
462 the middle of the city, and they'd all writt, written on the website, so we checked the  
463 website, we know the place, and we get there.  
464  
465 *Okay, I got it. So, at that time, when you were on the bus, you still didn't know what was*  
466 *happening?*  
467  
468 Yes, I don't know, we, we were thinking, like, "Why are our parents so worried about us?  
469 Why they ask us to come back home? It's okay here. Everything is just fine. Yes, indeed,  
470 the, the supermarket, the convenience store are closed for these two days, but it will soon,  
471 I mean, goes like normal days, so nothing to worry about. Why do we have to come back  
472 home?" At that time. But when I came back home I realized the tel, the television just, eh,  
473 have, broa, just have the video flashing the field, many people are dying, all day long, so  
474 they are much worried about us.  
475  
476 *I see. And when you were, you know, in that period where you are, you know, earthquake*  
477 *happened...*  
478  
479 Uhuh.  
480  
481 *...and then you are on the bus, did you spend all of your time with the Chinese*  
482 *community?*  
483  
484 For me, no, absolutely not. I know maybe most, almost of my friends, or all of the  
485 Chinese, they spend their time with their community, but I'm a little bit different, because  
486 I came here, I have many good friends, Japanese friends. So I came to his company, his,  
487 eh, like, eh, you know, his company and helped him with everything. And I also called {a  
488 professor at the participant's university} to see if I...  
489  
490 Uhum.  
491  
492 *...if there is anything I can help. Because as for students, we don't care about our*  
493 *dormitory...*

494  
 495 *Yeah.*  
 496  
 497 ...whatever it is, we just left. But I know their home, they have to stay there...  
 498  
 499 *Yeah.*  
 500  
 501 ...so I asked them if there's any help.  
 502  
 503 *And could your Japanese friends or {the professor at your university}, could they give*  
 504 *you any information? Did they have any extra information you didn't have?*  
 505  
 506 This is ve, very interesting. In fact, when the earthquake happened, I can tell you  
 507 definitely, our Chinese has much, have much more information than the Japanese. I don't  
 508 know why. Maybe because the Japanese is very, they are very gentle. They just wait for  
 509 the government to say something. If the government don't say anything, they just wait.  
 510 Or they are very strong in this ca, they have experience this before so they are very strong  
 511 in this experience, they just wait or they can save themselves. So it's totally different  
 512 from us. They, I mean, when I went to my Japanese friend's company, they got almost all  
 513 the information from me...  
 514  
 515 *[Laughter]*  
 516  
 517 ...of course, they have their radios, and their radios on all day long, Japanese government  
 518 says this one, that one, but I think that information is far from our life, you see what I  
 519 mean? They say, maybe, the Tokyo is now something like this or the Chiba-ken is very  
 520 bad now, but it's far from Sendai. As for Sendai, all Chinese know, how is like this,  
 521 where to buy some rice, where to buy some drink, yeah. So we have much information  
 522 than the Japanese people.  
 523  
 524 *That's fascinating. So your, kind of, word-of-mouth community...*  
 525  
 526 *Yes.*  
 527  
 528 *...worked very effectively.*  
 529  
 530 Effective. And the interesting thing is, eh, I don't know it's, if this is good to say or not,  
 531 [laughter] is it correct, but when we left Japan, I know some Japanese have much more  
 532 food, eh, Chinese people have much more food than, than the Japanese people, because  
 533 when the earthquake happened, [Note: for emphasis, the participant taps on the table  
 534 with his fingertips as if playing a piano chord] we get together to think, "Well, you three,  
 535 go to supermarket to get the rice, and [laughter] you two do whatever and ever," so, yeah.  
 536 But, eh, so the Japanese, they have family here, so they ha, they have to care about their  
 537 kid, they have to take care of their parents, so.  
 538  
 539 *It's very interesting. That's really fascinating.*  
 540  
 541 On the other hand, what I am trying to say is that, first the community, small community  
 542 is very important, information is very important, but the, eh, the age is very important...  
 543  
 544 *Oooohhh?*  
 545  
 546 ..if you are from 20 to 40, 20 to 40 years, surely you will, yeah, I mean, in the earthquake  
 547 you are at the, this might be, I mean, you are the last one to be suffer, because you have  
 548 more information, you have more energy, yeah.

549  
550 *Yeah, em, that's a very interesting point. That's one of the reasons why I ask people for*  
551 *their age and so on...*  
552  
553 Uhuh, yeah.  
554  
555 *...in the profile information. You're absolutely right. It can have a big impact.*  
556  
557 Yes.  
558  
559 *Em, I'm a little bit interested in the topic of the radio...*  
560  
561 Uhum.  
562  
563 *...because a lot of the reports that I've read said radio was extremely for useful for people*  
564 *in Japan in the disaster...*  
565  
566 Yeah.  
567  
568 *...however, speaking to foreign people...*  
569  
570 Uhum.  
571  
572 *...yourself and other people I've spoken to, they say the radio communication was not so*  
573 *useful.*  
574  
575 It's, I think it's totally different for Japanese than for us. There are a couple of aspects I  
576 will try to say. Well, first one, when you talk about radio, radio, I think for Japanese  
577 people, it means hope. Right? They listen to it, though it got nothing to do with him. I  
578 mean, Sendai, there are, there are some, the news information about Tokyo. But, em,  
579 listening what the government is doing, "Is the government going to save us? Is the  
580 government taking some acts, taking actions?" They very care about that. And they have  
581 the hope their government will save them and they know some day they'll comes to them.  
582 I, I mean something like that. "Well, the road is blocked now, but from Tokyo is, you  
583 know [laughter], one by one they are going to Sendai." Something like this. But as for  
584 foreigners, we care more about ourselves. "Can we just come back home country  
585 tomorrow? What can I eat? I can't, don't have anything to eat." It's more, I mean,  
586 realistic for us. So it's totally different, eh, directions.  
587  
588 *I see, that's very, very interesting.*  
589  
590 And also, eh, from, in my opinion, from my point of view, the Japanese have much faith  
591 in their government. [Laughter] On the contrary, so, Chinese, we don't have much faith in  
592 the government. So we have to save ourselves...  
593  
594 *[Laughter]*  
595  
596 *...that's also very different thing from the very, very beginning, our thinking is different.*  
597  
598 *That's fascinating.*  
599  
600 Also, there are also other problems. Like language problems. Whatever you say, when in  
601 a big, during a big earthquake, can you concentrate on the Japanese language to see that  
602 they are talking about? You can't. You can't. Really, you can't.  
603

604 W, w, why?  
605  
606 I mean, for example, when you are playing soccer, can you just sit down and read a book?  
607 You can't, because in different mood. When you are, are, you are in a big disaster, what  
608 are thinking about is you, your mind is stucked and all your are thinking about is, "What I  
609 can eat? How can I get saved? How can I communicate with the outside? As for the radio,  
610 it got nothing to doing, especially in another language. It's very hard.  
611  
612 *That's extremely interesting.*  
613  
614 So, I mean, what I am trying to say is when it comes to big disaster, something like  
615 you're born with, it's very important, you see, your native language, your native custom,  
616 what you've been doing during the childhood times, it's very important. Not what you  
617 learn. Whatever learn, we are the same facing disaster. Whatever how many language I  
618 speak, I just want to speak my mother tongue at that time. I just want to sp, use my  
619 mother tongue because it's precisely, it's shortly, it can communicate a lot. That's all,  
620 yeah. I mean, when the big disaster happened, you can't think rationally. It's totally in a  
621 mess. It just like an animal [laughter] you go to s, um, yeah, to, sort of, animal place. So,  
622 eh, if, if I, I mean, I, I saw in the earthquake something very interesting, for example. You  
623 can made the big money during the earthquake time, you see, if you are cool enough  
624 [laughter]. Very big money. In many ways you can do it. You can help, you can made  
625 many good friends in, during the big earthquake time if you are rich enough, if you are  
626 cool down enough. But people are very, I mean, panic at that time, so. So, yeah, what I'm  
627 trying to say is when during the big earthquake, everyone is different...  
628  
629 *Uhuh.*  
630  
631 ...it's not uh [laughter] yeah, what, whoever you see in the normal time. It's different.  
632  
633 *It's very interesting that you use the phrase, kind of, going back to animal...*  
634  
635 Yes.  
636  
637 *...sta, o, o, other people I've spoken to in Miyagi Prefecture...*  
638  
639 *Uhum.*  
640  
641 *...have said almost the same...*  
642  
643 Oh really.  
644  
645 *...go back to animal style or go back to caveman style...*  
646  
647 Yeah.  
648  
649 *...that's very, very interesting. That's really fascinating. Em, again, because I'm*  
650 *interested in, especially in, sort of, language and culture, but also in ideas of*  
651 *community...*  
652  
653 *Uhuh.*  
654  
655 *...em, it sounded like because you had some Japanese friends and so on, you were*  
656 *linked...*  
657  
658 Yeah.

659  
 660 *...into the Japanese community. Was that useful in the disaster?*  
 661  
 662 Uhm, well, as I said before, I think, eh, during disasters not useful at all because, because,  
 663 eh, in the, during the disaster what do you have to overcome? What do you have to think  
 664 about? First, the food. Safety, safety. Food. Or, eh, communications and other things. All  
 665 these things, your Japanese links cannot offer you during the disaster.  
 666  
 667 *I got it. I got it.*  
 668  
 669 Yeah.  
 670  
 671 *The reason I ask about things like community is because the recommendations that are*  
 672 *coming from...*  
 673  
 674 Uhm.  
 675  
 676 *...the Japanese government or NPOs are that foreign people should integrate into the...*  
 677  
 678 Aaaahhh.  
 679  
 680 *...Japanese community. But.*  
 681  
 682 You, you, I think, you can think it this way, eh, as for my Japanese friend, he has, eh,  
 683 their, his grandson, granddaughter. [Note: for emphasis, the participant taps on the table  
 684 with his fingertips as if playing a piano chord] He has his relatives, his much big, bigger  
 685 family. I mean, there are so many people he had, have to take care of during the disaster. I  
 686 think the foreigners, you know, in a way is the last one he think of, so you can't depend  
 687 on the Japanese to help you during dis, disaster. On the contrary, you can help the  
 688 Japanese a lot during disaster because you have time, you have energy, you can line up to  
 689 buy things, but they don't have time, Yeah, something like this. As for NPO or Japanese  
 690 government suggestion, it's for those who, how to say, who doesn't have connections at  
 691 all in the daily life...  
 692  
 693 Aaaahhh.  
 694  
 695 ...they need to integrate into the Japanese, yeah. But, I mean, they don't know where to  
 696 buy food, they can't communicate with, eh, eh, they don't have many friends here, just  
 697 like I know one people, he's from Hai, Haiti, I don't know you interview him or not  
 698 [laughter] eh, yeah, he said there's only one Haiti people here in Sendai, so you can  
 699 imagine that kind of circumstance...  
 700  
 701 *Yeah.*  
 702  
 703 ...he has nobody to, yeah, care. So in that, in, in that, about, in that case, maybe, it's better  
 704 to know some Japanese friend.  
 705  
 706 *I understand, yeah.*  
 707  
 708 I think during the disaster, we, we, how to say, eh, you, you say you should integrate into  
 709 the Japanese, you should have some Japanese fr, friends because people tend to think that  
 710 the native people have more information about everything, that native people knows more  
 711 than the foreigners [Note: for emphasis, the participant taps on the table with his  
 712 fingertips as if playing a piano chord] but sometimes it's not. Sometimes. Because they  
 713 have so many things to care about, yeah?

714  
 715 *Yeah, yeah...*  
 716  
 717 *Yeah.*  
 718  
 719 *...and certainly your experience, your Chinese community of friends managed to get a lot*  
 720 *of information...*  
 721  
 722 *Yeah, I think much...*  
 723  
 724 *...and share it, yeah, yeah.*  
 725  
 726 *...much more than the Japanese people.*  
 727  
 728 *Uhm, uh, on, still on the topic of information...*  
 729  
 730 *Uhuh.*  
 731  
 732 *...you went back to China and then you had to make a decision, "Should I come back to...*  
 733  
 734 *Yes, yes.*  
 735  
 736 *...Japan." How did you get the information to make that decision?*  
 737  
 738 *Uhm...*  
 739  
 740 *Or where did you get the information to make that decision?*  
 741  
 742 *...you mean, why do I choose to come back to Japan again?*  
 743  
 744 *Uhm, yeah, not just why, but I'm very interested in topics of information, so I'd like to*  
 745 *know how you made that decision, based on what information.*  
 746  
 747 *Well, how to say, uhm, you see, oh, well, I will put it in this way. When you in Japan,*  
 748 *what you care about is live, safety, food. But when you come back to China, you, I think*  
 749 *for me, I don't care about the information that much, you know. When, when the time I*  
 750 *choose to come back to Japan, I don't know much about Sendai, really, at that time...*  
 751  
 752 *Oh really?*  
 753  
 754 *...I don't know much, yeah. I just call my friend to see it's okay but I don't have pictures,*  
 755 *I don't have everything...*  
 756  
 757 *Okay.*  
 758  
 759 *...I mean, why I choose come back to Japan, why I did choose is, the reason is that I start*  
 760 *to think of my own life. I'm at this age in China, I have nowhere to go. If I go to Senda,*  
 761 *eh, China, eh, in China, I might be laughed at the friends, "You just came to Japan, have*  
 762 *all these spendings." And as for me, I think it's, kind of, yeah, failure in my...*  
 763  
 764 *Uhuh.*  
 765  
 766 *...so that's the reason why I came back to China [Note: I think this is a slip of the tongue*  
 767 *- I think the participant means from China]. Got nothing to do with information at that*  
 768 *time...*

769  
 770 *I see.*  
 771  
 772 ...it's my, eh, circumstance.  
 773  
 774 *Your circumstance?*  
 775  
 776 Yes.  
 777  
 778 *That's right. I understand. Uhm, so that's, yeah, that's interesting to me, so that means*  
 779 *that, say for example the issue about Fukushima...*  
 780  
 781 Yeah.  
 782  
 783 ...that wasn't really in your mind.  
 784  
 785 Yes, in fact, that's it. I know it's a little bit non-responsible for my family, for my parents,  
 786 yeah, but I didn't think much. I just choose to come back.  
 787  
 788 *Has it been in your mind since that time, you know, two, two-and-a-half years have*  
 789 *passed?*  
 790  
 791 No, I never think about it. I think there are so many people living here, and that's my life.  
 792  
 793 *Uhuh, uhuh.*  
 794  
 795 Yeah.  
 796  
 797 *Ehm, the, eh, the other, kind of, topic that I just wanted to touch on a little bit...*  
 798  
 799 Yeah, okay.  
 800  
 801 ...is social media...  
 802  
 803 Uhuh.  
 804  
 805 ...eh, there was a lot of talk in the academic literature about how useful social media was  
 806 in the disaster. Was social media useful for you?  
 807  
 808 Social media? Yes, in a way it's very useful. But, uhm, how to say, but on the other hand,  
 809 it is very, how to say, social media sometimes make a mess, you know...  
 810  
 811 Okay.  
 812  
 813 ...yeah.  
 814  
 815 *Can you tell me more detail about what you mean there, it's useful but it also makes a*  
 816 *mess. H, how is it useful and then how did it make a mess?*  
 817  
 818 Uhm, it's useful is, like, we got everything, information like the bus are coming to pick us  
 819 up, by the Internet or by the media. It is useful sometimes. But, eh, messed up means  
 820 there, there are so many information on the website at that time, you don't know which  
 821 one to believe. I, I don't know why but, like, if you're Sendai, you can tell something  
 822 because you are experienced in this. But if other, maybe other people, they are in New  
 823 York, they, they also make some comment or they say something, but that, you can also



824 search the back stuff and it just pop up, and so I can see, it got, he knows nothing but he  
 825 just, eh, I mean, say whatever he wants to say. This is [laughter] the bad thing because at  
 826 that time people are really very stressed, very terror, so they are easy to, eh, be influenced  
 827 by that kind of news. Yes.  
 828  
 829 *And, may I ask...*  
 830  
 831 Uhm.  
 832  
 833 *...what websites did you use specifically, em, I don't know, Weibo or which?*  
 834  
 835 Uhm, no, at that time I just, eh, I seldom search the Internet at that time...  
 836  
 837 *Ah, okay.*  
 838  
 839 ...but I asked my friend. They have there so many information of stuffs that, some say  
 840 Tokyo is more, I mean, more dangerous than Sendai, some say maybe Hokkaido is more  
 841 danger, dangerous than Sendai, some say it's better to go to Fukushima, eh, no  
 842 Hiroshima, to go back to China, yeah. There are those kind of inform, informations  
 843 everywhere.  
 844  
 845 *I see. So you weren't using, like, Facebook or something like that. You were just mailing*  
 846 *friends...*  
 847  
 848 Yes, mailing friends.  
 849  
 850 *...directly.*  
 851  
 852 Yeah.  
 853  
 854 *I see, I see, I see. Because, em, some people have talked about how, you know, Twitter or*  
 855 *Facebook was useful or not useful but for...*  
 856  
 857 Ah well, we are different. The Chinese, we Chinese don't use Twitter or Facebook...  
 858  
 859 *I see.*  
 860  
 861 ...yeah, I know nothing about Twitter or Facebook at that time. It might works, I think.  
 862  
 863 *And there's no Chinese equivalent...*  
 864  
 865 I mean, the..  
 866  
 867 *...communication tool like Facebook...*  
 868  
 869 Oh yeah, there's.  
 870  
 871 *...you know, there's Mixi in Japan?*  
 872  
 873 Yes, I, I, yeah, we have that kind of thing, um, yeah, and, oh, yeah, we, we used that to  
 874 communicate indeed. It's helpful, I think it is helpful.  
 875  
 876 *Eh, eh, wha, can I ask, what tool is it called?*  
 877

878 Tool?  
879  
880 *Is it famous?*  
881  
882 Do you know, we, you know QQ? [Note: QQ is a Chinese software service that offers  
883 instant messaging, online social games, music, shopping, microblogging, and group and  
884 voice chat, etc.]  
885  
886 *QQ? No, I don't know it.*  
887  
888 You don't know QQ.  
889  
890 *So QQ is like Facebook or like Twitter or a combination or?*  
891  
892 Eh, well, ehm, you know, let me see, WeChat, you don't know WeChat? [WeChat is a  
893 mobile text and voice messaging communication service developed in China by Tencent,  
894 the makers of QQ. It provides text messaging, hold-to-talk voice messaging, broadcast  
895 (one-to-many) messaging, photo/video sharing, location sharing, contact information  
896 exchange, and supports social networking.]...  
897  
898 *Okay.*  
899  
900 Eh, LINE [Note: LINE is an instant messaging application and VoIP platform popular in  
901 Japan]. You know LINE?  
902  
903 *No.*  
904  
905 Yeah iPhone [Note: the participant points to my iPhone lying on the table between us].  
906  
907 *Ah, yes, yes, yes.*  
908  
909 In China, we have WeChat like LINE...  
910  
911 *Ah, okay.*  
912  
913 ...it's exactly the same.  
914  
915 *Right.*  
916  
917 I think we are the copy one [laughter]...  
918  
919 *[Laughter]*  
920  
921 ...but, kind of, it's exactly the same. And we have QQ. QQ is like, QQ is not like  
922 Facebook but QQ is, you can just take it like Twitter...  
923  
924 *Okay.*  
925  
926 ...and we have another website like Facebook...  
927  
928 *Okay.*  
929  
930 ...it's *hotondo* [Note: the participant uses the Japanese word for 'almost'] eh, almost the  
931 same...  
932

933 *I see.*  
 934  
 935 ...so we use that one to communicate. And it is very helpful at that time...  
 936  
 937 *Uhum.*  
 938  
 939 ...it is really helpful.  
 940  
 941 *Because?*  
 942  
 943 Uhm, I mean, because, eh, for example, when you run, you just run. You don't think of  
 944 anything else. But when you, after the run, you are safety. You have to start think, eh,  
 945 about everything: my tuition, my house [laughter]...  
 946  
 947 *[Laughter]*  
 948  
 949 ...everything. And at that time, you already left the Sendai...  
 950  
 951 *Okay.*  
 952  
 953 ...so you use that thing to communicate. It's very helpful...  
 954  
 955 *I got it, I got it.*  
 956  
 957 ...and it, eh, for example, the second day, some of my friends went to Hiroshima to run  
 958 [laughter] to go back to China, and they just, eh, told us, "There are so many Chinese  
 959 there...  
 960  
 961 *[Laughter]*  
 962  
 963 ...you can never get the ticket. Just forget about it." [laughter]...  
 964  
 965 *[Laughter]*  
 966  
 967 ...so, eh, yeah, we just stayed in Sendai...  
 968  
 969 *Yeah.*  
 970  
 971 ...that's it. And some my friends, the day the earthquake happened, they went to Tokyo,  
 972 and said, "Well, Tokyo is," eh, you know, "in a mess."...  
 973  
 974 *[Laughter]*  
 975  
 976 ...You, yeah, more, you see? They have [Note: for emphasis, the participant taps on the  
 977 table with his fingertips as if playing a piano chord] five, eh, hundreds, five-thousand-  
 978 thousand people [Note: the participant likely means five-million people]...  
 979  
 980 *Wow.*  
 981  
 982 ...are walking back home at that day...  
 983  
 984 *Yeah.*  
 985  
 986 ...so, "If you go to Tokyo it's incredible."...  
 987

988 *I see.*  
 989  
 990 ...so we have all that kind of information and we just stayed in Sendai.  
 991  
 992 *And so you were able to share it...*  
 993  
 994 Yes, right, yes.  
 995  
 996 ...among your community of friends. *Ehm, the, the, this is basically nearly the last*  
 997 *question now, as, em, a Chinese student in Japan...*  
 998  
 999 Uhum.  
 1000  
 1001 ...you have to register with...  
 1002  
 1003 Yeah, yes, yeah.  
 1004  
 1005 ...the city office that you are living here and that you are resident. *Did you ever receive*  
 1006 *any contact from Sendai City Office or Miyagi Prefecture Office? Did they contact you?*  
 1007  
 1008 What do you mean by contact?  
 1009  
 1010 *Eh, anything, well, like, after the disaster, did they email, telephone, send a letter, put a*  
 1011 *pamphlet in your door? Did you receive any contact?*  
 1012  
 1013 Uhm, well, in fact, eh, how to say, it's, I, I, I don't know it's polite or not, but I mean,  
 1014 what you want to ask or what your are thinking is totally different from the real  
 1015 circumstance, the real time, because when it happened, the first thing is, like, big  
 1016 problems, the Sendai's, I mean the prefecture may get a thousand calls saying there is  
 1017 tsunami coming and so many people are dying, you see? [Laughter] Really, it's really  
 1018 hard for them to think of us...  
 1019  
 1020 *Uhuh.*  
 1021  
 1022 ...oh maybe they send us a, eh, message, but we never received it, but our school, they in  
 1023 charge of us, so they, just as the teacher came, and, to see if we were safe or not. And as  
 1024 far as I know, the school checked the people and just give it later to the, yeah, to the  
 1025 office...  
 1026  
 1027 *Got it.*  
 1028  
 1029 ...that's all...  
 1030  
 1031 *I understand.*  
 1032  
 1033 ...even if I'm not the officer in the prefecture, I, I think there are so many things on their  
 1034 mind at that time.  
 1035  
 1036 *Oh absolutely, ehm, I've asked this question...*  
 1037  
 1038 Uhum.  
 1039  
 1040 ...to other people...  
 1041  
 1042 *Uhuh.*

1043  
 1044 *...and they have said, "I didn't want to be contacted..."*  
 1045  
 1046 Yes!  
 1047  
 1048 *...I was okay." [laughter]...*  
 1049  
 1050 [Laughter] Oh, I understand.  
 1051  
 1052 *...they wanted the priority...*  
 1053  
 1054 Yes.  
 1055  
 1056 *...energy to go to, you know, the tsunami areas...*  
 1057  
 1058 Yes, right.  
 1059  
 1060 *...or the other, other people. So, the reason I am asking this question is not to criticize...*  
 1061  
 1062 Uhuh, uhuh, uhuh.  
 1063  
 1064 *...I just want to know if there was some communication. Also, I'm interested after 3*  
 1065 *months, after 6 months, after one year, did you get?*  
 1066  
 1067 Eh, I think no.  
 1068  
 1069 No.  
 1070  
 1071 No news from the, eh, yeah, city.  
 1072  
 1073 *Eh, yeah, ehm, this is where there are some differences between, say for example, Miyagi*  
 1074 *and Tokyo...*  
 1075  
 1076 Uhuh.  
 1077  
 1078 *...eh, people in Tokyo maybe got more communication...*  
 1079  
 1080 Yes.  
 1081  
 1082 *...after one month or two months or three months about, "Okay, if a disaster happens,*  
 1083 *please do this, please go here."...*  
 1084  
 1085 Aahh.  
 1086  
 1087 *...but that's a difference between, you know.*  
 1088  
 1089 Yeah, but we have some, eh, intensive, eh, practice after the earthquake in school...  
 1090  
 1091 Uhum.  
 1092  
 1093 ...only in school.  
 1094  
 1095 *It's interesting, because that links to some people have talked about how their company*  
 1096 *was their main contact point, for you, in a way, your school was a, a main.*  
 1097

1098 Yes, yes. I think it's the Japanese style. When something happened, they have their social  
 1099 or their community. They are very, really depend on their communities.  
 1100  
 1101 *I understand.*  
 1102  
 1103 Yeah.  
 1104  
 1105 *I understand. That, as I said, that's pretty much it, again, unless you have some comment*  
 1106 *or something which I haven't talked about that you think is important. Do you have*  
 1107 *anything extra?*  
 1108  
 1109 Well, eh, th, there is only one thing is that I think if anyone who really wants to know  
 1110 what earthquake like or, eh, whatever, doing the, I mean, they have to really, eh, how to  
 1111 say, I mean, when we are safe, it's when we sit here, it's totally different from that time,  
 1112 it's really hard to imagine, it's really hard to imagine...  
 1113  
 1114 *Uhm.*  
 1115  
 1116 ...yeah. And, uhm, for example, I mean, when, when the disaster came, the only thing  
 1117 came on, eh, into our mind is safety and then the drink, the food, so whatever it is, just  
 1118 this, I mean, this is very important because some, sometimes we tend to forget about it  
 1119 when we look back into the disaster. We think of, at that time, is that alright, what about  
 1120 their house, or about their something. There's nothing exists at that time. I just, like, my  
 1121 friend, he's very rich, you, he [laughter] has so many money [Note: for emphasis, the  
 1122 participant taps on the table with his fingertips as if playing a piano chord] The day  
 1123 before the earthquake! But when it happened, it's nothing. Everything is the same. It's  
 1124 incredible. I think it's really incredible.  
 1125  
 1126 *I'm very glad that you said that because I think what's important for me to try to do...*  
 1127  
 1128 Uhum, uhuh.  
 1129  
 1130 *...is when I'm writing about...*  
 1131  
 1132 Uhuh.  
 1133  
 1134 *...my ideas or recommendations that I remember people like you who were really there...*  
 1135  
 1136 Yes, yes.  
 1137  
 1138 *...who really experienced it, and remember your words of advice or your comments...*  
 1139  
 1140 Yes.  
 1141  
 1142 *...that in the real earthquake, you don't think of this, you don't [laughter] it doesn't*  
 1143 *matter. Yeah...*  
 1144  
 1145 I think, yes.  
 1146  
 1147 *...I'm trying, I'm going to try to remember those points.*  
 1148  
 1149 I, I think really it's very precious because when you want to write something out theme,  
 1150 theme, you think about, "What is communication? What is this thing?" But that thing?"  
 1151 But as for us during the earthquake, there's no word like communication, there's no word

1152 like Japanese, there's no word like money. It go, means nothing. The only thing first is  
 1153 safety...  
 1154  
 1155 *Yeah.*  
 1156  
 1157 ...how can I get safety? Second thing is I can eat. That's all for that time.  
 1158  
 1159 *Ho, however one, one point I would add to that which is, eh, very important in the*  
 1160 *disaster literature, is that you have to be careful about when does the disaster begin and*  
 1161 *when does the disaster end...*  
 1162  
 1163 *Aaahhh.*  
 1164  
 1165 ...so what you're talking about is maybe the first early stages, and I agree...  
 1166  
 1167 *Yeah, oh.*  
 1168  
 1169 ...I absolutely agree. There is no communication, there is no information, there is no  
 1170 Japanese in the early stages. However, when things cool down a little bit..  
 1171  
 1172 *Yeah, yeah, yes.*  
 1173  
 1174 ...it's still the disaster...  
 1175  
 1176 *Yes.*  
 1177  
 1178 ...but then when things have cooled down a little bit, then, for example, communication or  
 1179 information or so on is a little bit more important then, I think.  
 1180  
 1181 *Yeah, of course.*  
 1182  
 1183 ...so that's, kind of, one of the issues that I'm going to try to be careful about...  
 1184  
 1185 *Aaahhh, uhuh, I see.*  
 1186  
 1187 ...when I'm talking about my themes. In this stage, forget it [laughter]...  
 1188  
 1189 *Oh yes.*  
 1190  
 1191 ...but maybe, like, say for example, in, in your case, after two or three days, with your  
 1192 Chinese community...  
 1193  
 1194 *Uhuh.*  
 1195  
 1196 ...it was all about communicating: "Go here for this...  
 1197  
 1198 *Yeah.*  
 1199  
 1200 ...eh, shop, and you go and buy rice here."...  
 1201  
 1202 *Yes.*  
 1203  
 1204 ...information did come up then...  
 1205  
 1206 *Yeah.*

1207  
 1208 *...and language did come up then...*  
 1209  
 1210 Yes, yes.  
 1211  
 1212 *...so that's where I'm going to try and be clear...*  
 1213  
 1214 Yes, play.  
 1215  
 1216 *...I'm making a difference. But thank you very much for reminding me...*  
 1217  
 1218 [Laughter] eh no, no, no.  
 1219  
 1220 *...it's important. I wasn't there. I didn't experience...*  
 1221  
 1222 Yeah.  
 1223  
 1224 *...I should try and clearly hear your experiences.*  
 1225  
 1226 Yeah, I'm sorry, maybe I, I have been rude sometimes...  
 1227  
 1228 *No, no, no. It's very important.*  
 1229  
 1230 *...but I'm just showing exactly how I feel.*  
 1231  
 1232 *It's very important, eh, also, as I said, I don't want to forget these things...*  
 1233  
 1234 Yes, yes...  
 1235  
 1236 *...because...*  
 1237  
 1238 *... it's really important...*  
 1239  
 1240 *...yeah, eh.*  
 1241  
 1242 *...eh, I think, yeah, that's really important because when you write something whatever*  
 1243 *you do, you have, how to say, you're subjective, you may think this one is like this, this*  
 1244 *one is like this. But in the real time, it's totally different [laughter]...*  
 1245  
 1246 *Uhum, yeah.*  
 1247  
 1248 *...I forget my da, mum and dad for a couple of days really, yeah, because the only thing I*  
 1249 *focused on [laughter] is safety. I don't know them, [laughter] I don't know anybody*  
 1250 *really. So it's different. And, eh, one point I want to say is only those who are suffering is*  
 1251 *difficult for them, but those who don't suffering, they have, yeah, for one, I mean, for a*  
 1252 *minute, for a moment, they feel sad about all this, but after that, everything is the same...*  
 1253  
 1254 *I see.*  
 1255  
 1256 *...so, in this way, I think the people living in Fukushima is very sad. They, yeah, they*  
 1257 *have to, eh, leave their country [Note: this is a Japanese way of referring to hometown or*  
 1258 *home region. It does not refer to a nation state in this instance.] but for To, for Tokyo, I*  
 1259 *mean the Fukushima have this nuclear plant and give, yeah, the electricity to Tokyo, but*  
 1260 *for Tokyo people, they just think, "It's okay. Well, you're, I'm sorry for you, you, eh, you*



1261 sacrifice a lot.” And that’s okay. That’s just one moment. But tho, for those who are  
 1262 suffering, they’re really suffering...  
 1263  
 1264 *Uhm, yeah.*  
 1265  
 1266 ...that’s all.  
 1267  
 1268 *Okay, well that’s pretty much it. The only final question, and I think you’ve kind of*  
 1269 *answered it now, em, I ask everybody after they’ve spoken to me...*  
 1270  
 1271 Uhum.  
 1272  
 1273 *...if they feel stress or if they feel anxious. So just using a scale, if you could give me an*  
 1274 *idea of your level now...*  
 1275  
 1276 Uhuh.  
 1277  
 1278 *...after talking, how do you feel? [Note: I pass the participant the Likert Scale to fill in]*  
 1279 *Not anxious or extremely anxious. What’s your stress level now?*  
 1280  
 1281 Oh, stress?  
 1282  
 1283 *After speaking.*  
 1284  
 1285 Eh, I think I get just a little bit excited, but I’m not anxious.  
 1286  
 1287 *Okay.*  
 1288  
 1289 So, it’s something like that. [Note: the participant circles 2 out of 10 on the scale]  
 1290 *Perfect, yeah. Ehm, the reason I ask this question...*  
 1291  
 1292 Uhuh.  
 1293  
 1294 *...is because I want to check that my research process isn’t causing some harm or some*  
 1295 *damage...*  
 1296  
 1297 Oh, I see.  
 1298 ‘  
 1299 *...to, to other people. But, yeah, if your answer is so low, everything is okay. [Laughter] I*  
 1300 *didn’t damage you too much.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/2 Interview with Participant 18*

5 *Researcher: Great. So that's all of the, the paper work. Em, really, then I always just*  
6 *start with a very general question. Can you tell me what happened to you in the 2011*  
7 *disaster?*

8  
9 Participant: Okay. Em, so, first of all, I'm, I'm married. Ehm, my wife is Japanese. I've  
10 got three children. Ehm, my daughter, my oldest daughter was born in March 10th, so for  
11 her 7th, 6th? She's 9, so for her 7th birthday we decided to go to Disneyland. Ehm, but  
12 not on the Thursday, which was the 10th, but on the Friday, the 11th. So, em, we were all  
13 in Tokyo, not Disneyland but Disney Sea, because they have two, Disneyland and  
14 Disneysea, so we were all in Tokyo Disney Sea at the time of the disaster. We'd just gone  
15 on, off the, what's it called, not the Ferris Wheel, the, em, the roundabout, what are those  
16 things called with the horses and they go up and down?

17  
18 *Oh, yeah, I think that's, oh no, that's not Ferris Wheel...*

19  
20 No the Ferris Wheel is the...

21  
22 *Yeah, yeah...*

23  
24 ...the vertical, em, the usual one, you know, anyway, where you, you sit on the horse and  
25 then it goes up and then it goes down.

26  
27 *...I know exactly what you mean. [Note: put on the spot, I couldn't remember the term*  
28 *merry-go-round to which the participant was referring.]*

29  
30 So we'd just got, gotten off of that and were just in, I guess, in, eh, the area beside that  
31 when the earthquake happened.

32  
33 *Yeah. What I'm, as you know, looking at are things like communication and information.*  
34 *I'm very interested to know in Disneyland, were there any announcements, for example?*

35  
36 There, I think, I don't know if there was any announcements over the intercoms, to be  
37 honest, I don't remember. But basically I thought they were very, very professional in  
38 what they did. Em, initially when it went off, ehm, nobody, sort of, knew what was  
39 happening so everybody, the Japanese, I think, led everybody and just crouched,  
40 crouched down, ehm, everybody got low. Di, didn't lie down, but they crouched down,  
41 and we were actually beside a fountain and it was, sort of, the, I was looking at that  
42 fountain, and it was a big fountain, and there was, sort of, the, the waves were lapping out  
43 and coming over and that's when I, sort of, realized that it was quite a big earthquake.  
44 Then the Japanese started to crouch, and then I'd say all the non-Japanese, eh, started to  
45 crouch down as well, and a lot of them were beside, started to go in beside, say,  
46 lampposts, you know, and stuff like that. So I was, sort of, keeping an eye, looking at  
47 them, because I, I couldn't figure out how bad it, bad it really was at that time. Em, so at  
48 that time, I don't, sort of, it happened and, you know, whatever five or ten minutes, and  
49 then there was more verbal communicating and the staff. So we actually moved to  
50 another place and within us moving there was an aftershock, within I'd say five or ten  
51 minutes. And we, sort of, stayed in that place for the, the rest of the time, and again,  
52 basically what people in Disneysea were saying was, "You can't leave the theme park.  
53 Stay where you are." Em, I'm not, they said, no, not you can't, "Don't, please don't leave

54 the theme park. Stay where you are. Everybody stay on ground up till things have ca,  
55 calmed down.” And they were going around asking was there anybody feeling sick, and  
56 stuff, because some people were feeling sick. Ehm, Disneysea, I think, is on reclaimed  
57 land, so it would have shaken a lot, so there was people that, sort of, got sick, sort of, a  
58 seasick feeling, and stuff like that. So there was people who were nauseous and stuff like  
59 that. But we, we, I think we moved maybe a couple times after the main one, but then I  
60 think it was the second or third time we got in this one location where we probably spent  
61 the best part of an hour just sitting down on the ground, and there was still tremors were,  
62 were happening, and there was still people were getting upset about it, but my wife and  
63 the kids were, sort of, I guess, too young to, sort of, understand, so they were, sort of,  
64 okay with, o, okay with the whole thing. Ehm, but we, we sat down and, em, I think they  
65 were, I’m not sure were they distributing stuff, but they were standing up, you could see  
66 them, they were communicating themselves within each other, and, em, there was a lot of  
67 the staff there, and it seemed to be well coordinated from, from my point of view. But, I  
68 mean, everybody was nervous, of course. But, the, eh, my point of view, they di, did tend  
69 to do a very good job. Em, after about, I’d say, I don’t know, an hour-and-a-half, they  
70 started saying you could now leave the theme park if you wanted to, or you could stay.  
71 Now, I think a lot of people stayed because they were also telling us that, if you leave,  
72 there’s no trains, the roads have been shut down, there’s no way to basically, unless you  
73 walk or were staying in some of the nearby hotels, so they were giving information,  
74 which was useful information, especially if you were there with young kids, and there’s a  
75 lot of people there who said, “Well, if I get out, what am I going to do?” Ehm, and I was  
76 told later, we actually left the park - I’ll get back to that but - ehm, the people that stayed,  
77 em, they opened up their facilities for them, they gave out blankets and stuff and I believe  
78 they, they obviously fed the people that did stay in, in, in the, in the theme park. They did  
79 a controlled evacuation of the the theme park, ehm, so we were allowed move to certain  
80 section where you had to wait, so there was a big crowd of people, and so you were all, I  
81 mean, you could sort of, you were, there was a lot of, I guess, ehm, confusion and some  
82 people were getting angry I noticed, especially some non-Japanese, some Koreans and  
83 Chinese were annoyed why they wouldn’t, they weren’t being left out of the park. Ehm,  
84 because what they were trying to do was they couldn’t have everybody leave, leave the  
85 park, eh, immediately because it would either cause panic or the, you get too many people  
86 trying to get into an area and with, because a theme park can be narrow in certain areas,  
87 the, that, so they actually control it. So, eh, we went to, I think, about two or three  
88 checkpoints where they stopped us and said, “Please wait. Please wait. Please wait.  
89 Please wait.” And then left us go. “Please wait. Please wait. Please wait.” Left us go.  
90 “Please wait. Please wait.” And go. And there was some, but I thought, to be honest, I  
91 thought they did a really, ehm, you know, I wasn’t too worried about the, the, the whole  
92 thing. I didn’t, we didn’t actually understand how serious it was for some reason. Ehm,  
93 but, ehm, you know, I think Disneyland, Disneysea did a, did a, did a good job. I  
94 remember standing up, [Note: participant clears throat] they did have a language issue  
95 because I remember standing at one of the checkpoints, I was up near the front, and there  
96 was a Kore, I think was a Korean or Chinese guy saying, “Go out, go out. We want to go  
97 out.” And the girl saying, trying to say in English that we couldn’t, they can’t, and, and,  
98 giving a reason, and she said, “You have to wait.” And he goes, “How long?” And she  
99 was trying to say, but it wasn’t communicating well, so I, I, I, sort of, stepped in and says,  
100 “Look, they’re, they’re holding, eh, up because of they can’t let everybody leave the  
101 theme park, so you just need to be patient for a little bit.” So that seemed to be, he seemed  
102 to be okay with that. But as we were also leaving, I think it started to rain, and, ehm, was  
103 it it started to rain or started to get cold? But they started to give out these sheet covers to  
104 start to cover people, ehm, that were outside as well, so I, I think they did, they did a good  
105 job...

106  
107 *Yeah.*  
108

109 ...in Disneyland and then Disneysea.  
110  
111 *That's great. I mean, obviously, as I said, I'm interested in, sort of, the language*  
112 *aspects...*  
113  
114 Yeah.  
115  
116 *...in particular...*  
117  
118 Yeah.  
119  
120 *...so to hear that even, you know, a very famous tourist attraction in Japan had some*  
121 *difficulty with the communication...*  
122  
123 Yeah, yeah.  
124  
125 *...is interesting...*  
126  
127 Yeah, yeah.  
128  
129 *...but overall, like, that was face-to-face communication...*  
130  
131 It was.  
132  
133 *...the staff coming over, so...*  
134  
135 Yeah.  
136  
137 *...it would depend on each staff member's...*  
138  
139 Exactly, exactly. And it's tough, I mean, they would have, whatever, a couple of thousand  
140 staff there...  
141  
142 *Oh yeah.*  
143  
144 ...the difficulty of them, have them versed in, you know, ehm, emergencies, emergencies  
145 like that.  
146  
147 *Absolutely.*  
148  
149 Yeah.  
150  
151 *Ehm, I know as well from the geography that Disney, Disneyland and Disneysea are both*  
152 *by the coast, do, do you remember any tsunami warnings coming?*  
153  
154 No, no. Ehm, no tsunami warnings. I was lucky, we were lucky, ehm, I had actually  
155 booked into the Hilton that night [Note: participant clears throat] so we were going to do  
156 Disneyland the following or some of Disneyland...  
157  
158 *Yeah.*  
159  
160 ...ehm, so it was just a bit too much for me to go there in the one day with the kids...  
161  
162 *Yeah.*  
163

164 ...so I said I, I, I'd stay overnight. Ehm, so that's why I left the park and I went back to  
 165 the, the Hilton, but obviously the trains and everything, even the local train that would  
 166 have taken me back, the Disney Mickey Mouse train was shut down, [Note: participant  
 167 clears throat] ehm, but we did actually walk by the coast, ehm, by the sea, and there were  
 168 these banks up, and I remember us walking along the banks and looking out to sea, and it  
 169 was a big walk, it took us about a good 45 minutes to get back to the hotel. We probably  
 170 took a bit of a, I mean, we probably didn't go the, the, the fastest way, but we did, I  
 171 remember walking, my kids and me walking up on the bank looking out to sea and  
 172 unbeknownst to what has, had happened at all, where the earthquake was, em, we still  
 173 didn't know anything at that point, ehm, and when I got back and realized later I was like,  
 174 "Fuck!"...  
 175  
 176 *[Sharp intake of breath]*  
 177  
 178 ...I, I says that was a, that was, that was a lesson learned for me, anyway. Ehm, but, em,  
 179 walking back anyway I did notice, em, because it was on reclaimed land, a lot of the  
 180 [Note: participant clears throat] the, the, the land was, the water came up, so I remember  
 181 pushing the baby car through, m, sort of, mud and slush and stuff like that, and I did,  
 182 some of the roads were, sort of, moved up as well, and stuff like that.  
 183  
 184 *Yeah. I know that part was quite badly affected...*  
 185  
 186 Yeah.  
 187  
 188 *...in, in places. Eh, one of my co-workers lived just at Disneysea...*  
 189  
 190 Okay.  
 191  
 192 *...well, you know, that area...*  
 193  
 194 Yeah, yeah.  
 195  
 196 *...and her whole house was completely destroyed.*  
 197  
 198 Really, yeah?  
 199  
 200 Yeah.  
 201  
 202 Yeah, yeah. That was, that area was badly, badly...  
 203  
 204 *Yeah, as you said, probably because it's reclaimed...*  
 205  
 206 Yeah, yeah.  
 207  
 208 *...reclaimed land.*  
 209  
 210 And I don't think they opened up Disneyland or Disneysea for another two, two, three  
 211 months after, after it.  
 212  
 213 *That's huge.*  
 214  
 215 Yeah.  
 216  
 217 *That's huge.*  
 218

219 Ehm, but ehm, just, on the language I, eh, I, I, I felt there, the communication between the  
 220 Japanese and the organizing Disneyland, I felt was very good...  
 221  
 222 *That's great to hear.*  
 223  
 224 ...ehm, but, obviously, you can't cover every aspect [laughter]...  
 225  
 226 *Yeah, I know...*  
 227  
 228 so.  
 229  
 230 *...and what, as I said, what I am interested in are things like the automated warnings or*  
 231 *things over, em, loudspeakers which I wonder...*  
 232  
 233 *Yeah.*  
 234  
 235 *...if, if you don't remember them, it doesn't necessarily mean they didn't happen but...*  
 236  
 237 *Yeah.*  
 238  
 239 *...in pragmatic terms, if you don't remember them they, they weren't working.*  
 240  
 241 *Yeah.*  
 242  
 243 *[Laughter]*  
 244  
 245 *Yeah, I mean, yeah, they don't, I don't, to be honest I'd say they were working...*  
 246  
 247 *Yeah.*  
 248  
 249 *...but they just didn't sink in with me at the time and the reason was I don't think the, the*  
 250 *earthquake was bad enough to have knocked off the electricity...*  
 251  
 252 *Yeah.*  
 253  
 254 *...in Disneysea, and it didn't...*  
 255  
 256 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 257  
 258 *...em, the electricity wasn't down. So I'd say they were, eh, but just because of what,*  
 259 *everything, I just...*  
 260  
 261 *Oh no, but that's also an interesting point for me...*  
 262  
 263 *Uhum.*  
 264  
 265 *...and one of my colleague's is working on the, sort of, the, the language used in warnings*  
 266 *and, eh...*  
 267  
 268 *Yeah, okay.*  
 269  
 270 *...you know, it might have just been that the way they distributed the warnings wasn't,*  
 271 *you know...*  
 272  
 273 *Yeah, yeah.*

274  
 275 *...effective for getting the message across.*  
 276  
 277 Yeah, yeah.  
 278  
 279 *What I'm also really interested in now is you, you've mentioned one or two times that you*  
 280 *didn't realize how serious things were. How did you find out what was going on?*  
 281  
 282 So, I went, we went back to the hotel, the TVs were still on, and we were looking up at  
 283 the TVs and then the news was, sort of, coming in, eh, from various aspects. Now, I don't  
 284 know, I know there were, the first image was actually something, ehm, there was a gas  
 285 facility that had caught fire in Tokyo and I remember that was my first image of it, but  
 286 then, it had moved and it was actually saying that the earthquake had actually happened  
 287 in north-east, eh, Japan and it, and it actually started showing the initial shots of that,  
 288 ehm, but not of the tsunami at that time. Ehm, it was, and my, my wife's family is from  
 289 that area and my wife talked to her brother, ehm, after the earthquake and he says, "Yeah,  
 290 there, we're, we're fine." And he also said that their mum, ehm, had, ehm, they were  
 291 asked to evacuate because there some tsunami warnings coming in and they were asked  
 292 to evacuate. so they, he said, "Yeah, she's been evacuated to, to a centre." Ehm, so they  
 293 were okay. Ehm, but then the tsunami came in after the call, and she, sort of, lost  
 294 communications with them. But, just sorry, just to, to ask your question, so I was there  
 295 with my wife and we were looking up all, the, the screens, the hotel was mobbed  
 296 [laughter]. Everybody, especially, there was people lining to check in who had  
 297 reservations...  
 298  
 299 *[Laughter]*  
 300  
 301 ...there was people that didn't have, who thought, "Okay, come on, let's get out of the  
 302 park and see if there's a vacancy in the, in, in the Hilton." And, ehm, but, it was just the  
 303 TVs were on and we were just sitting down just, sort of, flabbergasted looking at the  
 304 whole thing.  
 305  
 306 *And, again, I know this a, a difficult question to ask. Can you remember, in a hotel chain*  
 307 *like the Hilton, were the TVs switched to Japanese channels?*  
 308  
 309 Yeah, yeah. They were Japanese channels, Japanese channels. Did they have CNN? You  
 310 know what, actually, I think they might have had, em, an English channel on as well...  
 311  
 312 *Uhm.*  
 313  
 314 ...because I do remember the, yeah, I, but I'm also thinking if they did, the news probably  
 315 wouldn't have had, because this was, well, maybe, this was, well, I guess they would  
 316 because this was, I guess, two hours after by the time it happened...  
 317  
 318 *Uhm.*  
 319  
 320 ...we were kept in the park, and left home. Em, I do know they had different views and I  
 321 think they, I think actually they did have them on...  
 322  
 323 *Uhm.*  
 324  
 325 ...and I actually remember at that time I started, I had a Blackberry at the time and, ehm,  
 326 my Blackberry was receiving texts but it wasn't, it wasn't, did I have? Yeah, I did have a  
 327 Blackberry, ehm, but I couldn't send emails, but for some reason I was receiving texts, so  
 328 it had obviously gotten on the international news, because people were, were, were

329     texting me and saying, “Listen, are you alright?” But I couldn’t reply back to them  
330     because it wouldn’t send [laughter].  
331  
332     *[Laughter] Yeah, em, that’s another sort of interesting point for me is, eh, I know there*  
333     *was a lot of talk after the disaster about how social media were used. Did you use any*  
334     *social media at that time?*  
335  
336     Em, I wasn’t. I’m not, the, I’ve only really started to use social media myself recently so,  
337     ehm, it was just text and emails, to be honest, were the only, only thing, em, I actually  
338     used, so, em, no, I didn’t, I didn’t use any social media.  
339  
340     *Yeah.*  
341  
342     But, em, I will now [laughter].  
343  
344     *[Laughter] Well, this is the thing, yeah, I mean, to be honest with you, so far I would say*  
345     *my findings are pretty, pretty mixed about social media. It really depended on where you*  
346     *were.*  
347  
348     Right.  
349  
350     *Em, it was useful, possibly, for people, say, here in To, Tokyo but...*  
351  
352     *Yeah.*  
353  
354     ...up further maybe not so much.  
355  
356     Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
357  
358     *Your, your wife also was communicating with her family through text and?*  
359  
360     No, no, she was, she talked to her brother initially directly after the earthquake...  
361  
362     *Uhm.*  
363  
364     ...but then she lost communication with her family for the best part of, eh, five days, six  
365     days, yeah...  
366  
367     *Crikey.*  
368  
369     ...so she didn’t, she didn’t know...  
370  
371     *Oh, crikey.*  
372  
373     ...what was going on with her, with her mother and father or brother, but she knew that  
374     they had gotten out, so she had that, em, reassurance anyway...  
375  
376     *Yeah.*  
377  
378     ...that they were evacuated...  
379  
380     *Yeah.*  
381



382 ...eh, and in Japan, there's a special, I forget the number, you might know it actually, that  
 383 you can dial and leave a message [Note: the participant is referring to NTT's 171  
 384 Emergency dial-in messaging system...  
 385  
 386 *Yeah.*  
 387  
 388 ...and then people can dial into it, so she was doing that, eh, that didn't, I don't think they  
 389 actually communicated. I think, at the end of the day, her brother got, got in contact with  
 390 her and said that, em, everybody was, everybody was safe...  
 391  
 392 *Yeah.*  
 393  
 394 ...but her direct mother, her mother and father survived, but...  
 395  
 396 *Yeah.*  
 397  
 398 ...some relatives didn't, but that's, em, that's...  
 399  
 400 *Yeah.*  
 401  
 402 ...that's not in the, the language issue.  
 403  
 404 *Yeah, exactly, as I said, I'm, I'm, I'm, I don't want to interfere in your personal*  
 405 *circumstances...*  
 406  
 407 *Yeah.*  
 408  
 409 *...I really am just looking for the, the language, eh, eh, issues.*  
 410  
 411 *Yeah.*  
 412  
 413 *Eh, one thing that I am interested in trying to figure out from, from this, this questioning*  
 414 *is, whe, when did the disaster end for you? If, if indeed it has?*  
 415  
 416 It was, I think, it was a bit elongated for me because we had, eh, that's why I said, my,  
 417 my experience was a little bit unique because I had my wife, right? So, from my view,  
 418 when you talk about Fukushima. Fukushima didn't affect us at all, right? We were, we  
 419 were worrying about, I was, I was worrying a little bit about Fukushima, but I couldn't  
 420 even bring Fukushima into the picture because my, my wife, at the time, was still  
 421 wondering how her mother and father was doing, okay? So Fukushima didn't really, sort  
 422 of, affect us at all. Ehm, the disaster didn't end, I'd say, the, the problem was, I think  
 423 post-three months, six months, and, and you were here yourself, Tokyo was very, very  
 424 quiet, you know, dark, everybody was nervous, the stations were, the lighting was down,  
 425 em, so it really, and there was still a lot of after-tremors as well, ehm, so, I mean, I don't  
 426 think the, the, the, for me, it didn't really end, I guess, until six to nine months after it,  
 427 when I felt that this is, sort of, you know, it's gone and it's over with now. Ehm, but the,  
 428 the, the exact disaster itself, I mean, would have stopped, would have been a couple of  
 429 weeks, ehm, you know, up to the point when my, my parents, ehm, my, ehm, my parents-  
 430 in-law, until she knew they were okay, but then, she didn't know her relations were okay,  
 431 and then the news started filtering in that a couple of her relations had been hit by the  
 432 tsunami, they had lost their houses and then she started, you know, collecting stuff, ehm,  
 433 like clothes and nappies and stuff like that that she could se, send up, so she, sort of, got  
 434 into that and our whole house was...  
 435  
 436 *[Laughter]*

437  
 438 ...full of boxes for, you know, a month, and I'm, sort of, saying, you know, "It's about, I,  
 439 I mean, everyone, I mean, everybody, the Red Cross is taking care of it now...  
 440  
 441 *[Laughter]*  
 442  
 443 ...like, you know, the, the immediate response, like, but...  
 444  
 445 *Yeah.*  
 446  
 447 ...we sort of need to bring an end to it as well." Ehm, but I'd say, you know, I'd say, you  
 448 know, a good six weeks after it, em, before things started to a little bit relax, but then, I  
 449 guess, six months before I, sort of, felt comfortable...  
 450  
 451 *Yeah.*  
 452  
 453 ...and I, I felt things, sort of, were starting to get back to normal in, in, in Tokyo. Up  
 454 there was another story.  
 455  
 456 *And, I know that even here in Tokyo, communication wasn't so easy for a, for a while,*  
 457 *how about things like with, with work, and that? H, h, how did you manage to*  
 458 *communicate at that time?*  
 459  
 460 So, so, em, communication was okay. The phone lines, I'm not sure how long they, they  
 461 were down, but I didn't get back into Tokyo until the following day because I stayed in  
 462 the Hilton and I came back in and, eh, so {a mutual acquaintance of the participant and  
 463 the researcher} was texting me and, em, she was mailing Ireland so, em, I, I think the  
 464 problem initially with phone lines was everybody started to use them and the system got,  
 465 especially it just got overcrowded as opposed to them actually going down, em, so I think  
 466 communications between Tokyo and the outside world were okay. Em, the biggest  
 467 difference, you know, in, in or difference in communications I thought was the reporting  
 468 of the foreign media as to what was going on, compared to the reporting of the Japanese  
 469 media. It was like as if you were living in two different, and I would be more on the side  
 470 of the Japanese media. Maybe it's a, a mentality about the Japanese, being with their  
 471 stoicism and stuff like that. But also, you know, the sign of CNN saying like, they want to  
 472 get people, you know, glued to their TV sets, so, sort of, bringing it out of proportion. So  
 473 there was that, there was a huge difference there. There was very mixed messages within  
 474 the foreign community because {redacted} our embassy was very calm about the whole  
 475 thing. A couple of other embassies weren't so calm. Our ambassador went to Sendai  
 476 because he had permission to get on the road, because there were one or two people that  
 477 were still unaccounted for. So he was very proactive, went on, went on the road, and was  
 478 telling people, you know, "Calm down," em, "relax." Em, people were asking him what  
 479 to do, Irish people, "What should we do?" And he was saying, "Well, ehm, the message  
 480 is, from the Japanese government is this." But he was then, sort of, he had to pick a  
 481 country. If you were listening to the French, then, Jesus Christ...  
 482  
 483 *[Laughter]*  
 484  
 485 ...we all had to get airlifted out of the country immediately. Em, but the UK were a little  
 486 bit more calm and {the Irish Embassy's} closest relationship with the, with the UK  
 487 Embassy, so {the Irish Embassy} were, sort of, following their advice. But he was  
 488 basically saying, "Look, it's safe. Tokyo is safe. Em, but if you really want to, feel that  
 489 you need to leave, please leave. We are not advising you to leave. We are not advising  
 490 you to stay. We are saying it's safe in Tokyo. Please make the decision." Which is all  
 491 really he could do, ehm, given, given the situation. Ehm, so Fukushima was happening as

492 well, and, em, it was, I don't know who was, I think again it was the French, but I'll bad-  
493 mouth the French, but they got a little bit paranoid so we all got iodine pills. Eh, have you  
494 heard that story, the, the? [Note: I had heard this story already but I wanted to hear it in  
495 the participant's words so I just made a gesture of not knowing without saying anything  
496 that might break the participant's flow.] So basically if it did come to Tokyo, what  
497 happens is there's iodine in the radiation and that gets into your thyroid and that's what  
498 causes the damage. But if you take these pills, em, the pills are full of iodine and it's  
499 these, these iodine that fills up your thyroid and its a different isotope of iodine. This is a  
500 safe one. So, if the bad iodine comes in, your thyroid is already filled up with the good  
501 thyroid [Note: this is a slip of the tongue and the participant meant to say iodine] and it  
502 helps, eh, so we all got these iodine, so I got iodine pills, and my, the, to be honest, I  
503 think the ambassador felt that that was a little bit going overboard because, I mean, it was  
504 all the foreign nationals, you know, the, the, the, em, the embassies were distributing  
505 them to their, you know, nationals and, you know, their relatives as well, and, em, but,  
506 obviously, the Japanese weren't doing that because they didn't think that it was, it was an  
507 issue at the time. So really, within the foreign community, you know, people really  
508 didn't, I think there was a huge confusion. Eh, and I'm, and I, it's, I'm very laid back  
509 about this, this sort of stuff, and again, I wasn't worried about the radiation thing. I could  
510 have been naive, like, I could have been completely wrong and, em, I wasn't panicking, I  
511 wasn't taking my family out. I, I suggested to my wife, and she nearly bit my head off...

512  
513 [Laughter]

514  
515 ...she says, "How can we go to Osaka when we don't know if my parents are?" So I, sort  
516 of, had to, you know, sort of, you know, swallow that, which was, which was, in  
517 hindsight, I think she was right as well. Em, but I mean there was some companies, like,  
518 were evacuating the whole, the company and their, I think the French moved their  
519 embassy to Osaka temporarily, and none of that helped the foreign community, and, em,  
520 but, again, they were listening to the, the CNN news so the foreigners that really couldn't  
521 communicate on the Japanese, they were communicating from CNN and BBC or some of  
522 the local embassies who would have got their information probably from, you know,  
523 BBC and, and, and CNN then as well, so I, I, I felt that, I don't think they had the correct  
524 information about, especially about the earthquake, em, anyway, I think in hindsight  
525 nobody knew, even the Japanese government didn't know what was happening in  
526 Fukushima and what they did know, I think, they were telling what they did know, but  
527 the fact is they didn't really know what was happening, ehm, so.

528  
529 *It's, that's a really interesting point that you've mentioned about the, the difference*  
530 *between the foreigners who could access, let's say, the domestic Japanese media and the*  
531 *foreigners who couldn't. I think that was a very significant point...*

532  
533 Right.

534  
535 ...ehm, I've, I've spoken to people, as you saw [Note: the researcher pointed to the profile  
536 data sheets that the participant had just filled out] I was like...

537  
538 Yeah.

539  
540 ...getting people's Japanese and English ability. Some people had no Japanese and they  
541 were dependent on...

542  
543 Exactly, yeah.

544  
545 ...these outside sources...

546

547 Yeah, yeah. But, em, yeah, no, so I thought that was, sort of, the biggest, eh, so I felt the  
 548 foreigners could get, and I mean the, and I remember talking to the ambassador about it  
 549 as well and he basically says that the information we are getting from the Japanese is  
 550 actually quite little as well...

551  
 552 *Yeah.*

553  
 554 ...Ehm, and it was mainly at that time, I guess, it's mainly about Fukushima, really...

555  
 556 *Yeah.*

557  
 558 ...and they were getting minimal information because the Japanese government didn't  
 559 know. So it basically left, and then you had all these experts from Chernobyl and the US  
 560 saying, "Look, if this had happened, then this is, this, this, and this." And then they were  
 561 extrapolating on that...

562  
 563 *Yeah.*

564  
 565 ...and, but I mean, I, I, I, I think there was people who were, sort of, you know, predicting  
 566 the worst case scenario...

567  
 568 *Yeah.*

569  
 570 ...they were arguing from both, two heads at the, at the time.

571  
 572 *Eh, did you feel, when things, sort of, settled down or calmed down a bit and some sort of*  
 573 *normality returned, was there any sort of lasting impact in terms of the, I suppose, the*  
 574 *view of foreigners or the view of the foreign community?*

575  
 576 I've heard, em, I, em, yeah, so I've heard, sort of, two stories. I've heard some people -  
 577 but I don't think this would be a general statement, because I don't think a lot of the  
 578 Japanese would have known what the foreign community did - but I did know some  
 579 people felt that the foreigner community abandoned them to a certain extent, but I  
 580 wouldn't put that as a general statement. Ehm, eh, but also, I mean, the amount of support  
 581 that the foreign community did give, ehm, more from, you know, countries donating, you  
 582 know, aid to the Red Cross, or whatever, ehm, they were extremely appreciate,  
 583 appreciative of that and they did recognize that. And, em, you know, also, for example, I  
 584 felt our ambassador really did very well as well. He got in his car, got on the highway, he  
 585 could get on, even though the highway was closed to public, he could get on it, ehm, and  
 586 he drove all the way to, to Sendai to find people and he got them out, em, of, of, of  
 587 Sendai. I think if you were there, then you were in a different world, then you'd probably  
 588 want to get out as soon as possible...

589  
 590 *Yeah.*

591  
 592 ...and he went up and did that and, em, you know, people have passed comments on how  
 593 good Ireland was in that, in that respect.

594  
 595 *Yeah, and I've spoken to, to people with a lot of different nationalities and the embassies*  
 596 *reacted extremely differently and...*

597  
 598 Okay.

599  
 600 *...I think the two which have come out with the most praise...*

601

602 Uhm.  
603  
604 *...are Ireland and the UK...*  
605  
606 Okay.  
607  
608 *...for their, for their response.*  
609  
610 Yeah, I, I, I did feel, I mean, the, the ambassador was, sort of, saying he, the UK seemed  
611 to be more calm and rational about it and the French just seemed to be extremely panicky  
612 about it as well.  
613  
614 *Yeah, I have spoken to some people, Fr, French nationals, and, eh, there's certainly now*  
615 *with two years, sort of...*  
616  
617 Yeah.  
618  
619 *...hindsight, there's some quite negative...*  
620  
621 Yeah.  
622  
623 *...eh feeling towards the, the, the reaction. But it was, I think a lot of it was based on a*  
624 *lack of information or misinformation...*  
625  
626 Yeah, yeah.  
627  
628 *On that topic, I know that you, obviously, got information from the Embassy and from the*  
629 *media, did you go anywhere else looking for information at the time?*  
630  
631 I didn't go anywhere else, em, I, I guess, you know, just my Japa, I guess, you know,  
632 talking, talking to friends and emails and, and, and stuff like that, ehm, and I eventually  
633 went up, my wife actually went up, em, because he parents' house got hit by the tsunami  
634 as well but it didn't get destroyed, it just, sort of, it came in, came up to the first floor and  
635 came out again ,so she just, she, she wanted to go up and help, so, em, by the time I got  
636 up there, it was, I guess, I guess, six weeks or two months, maybe a little bit more, eh, by  
637 the time I, probably three months actually, by the time I got up there as well. And that  
638 was another source of input for me, but, but as far as, you know, Tokyo was concerned, it  
639 was just the embassy and the newspapers and emails and chatting to people and TV and  
640 newspapers and that's it...  
641  
642 *Yeah.*  
643  
644 *...because I just had to, sort of, em, and then again, you know, the feeling of, of stuff,*  
645 *ehm, I did, I did side on some of the, I mean, I have, I have a car, so I said I'd queue up in*  
646 *the queues because there was huge queues for, for petrol, so I queued up. I made sure my*  
647 *car was full just in case we did need to, to evacuate and I made sure that all the water*  
648 *supplies and everything was, was stocked up as well. Em, and there was a certain*  
649 *vigilance. You could go, when I'd take the kids to the park, you could see the parents on*  
650 *their emails and, e, e, even today they do as well, like, em, but it wasn't more texting*  
651 *people, I think it was more at that time just checking, I think everybody was just*  
652 *completely nervous at this stage about Fukushima...*  
653  
654 *Yeah.*  
655  
656 *...whether anything would come into Tokyo, yeah.*

657  
658 *Yeah, yeah. And ha, has that lasted now, your, the changes you've made to your lifestyle*  
659 *about, say, keeping your car full of petrol or that or?*  
660  
661 Ehm, yeah, I don't keep it full but I don't let it go down too much and we were always  
662 pretty good with the emergency supplies and stuff, but, em, but I think that, you know,  
663 that may be because we've got three kids, so that's five, and they say you're supposed to,  
664 what is it, three litres per person per day? So that's fifteen litres per day and, just, you're  
665 supposed to keep three days, that's forty-five [laughter]...  
666  
667 *[Laughter]*  
668  
669 ...that's a lot of water. Living in a small Japanese house, it's very...  
670  
671 *Yeah, where are you supposed to [laughter]? Where do you put that?*  
672  
673 ...and that's just for three days and you have to look at, my god, three days would be  
674 about, if there was a major, because, you know, you know the way the water supply place  
675 is, but there's 36 million people here, like, I would say, so, we've a little bit more, we've  
676 close to sixty litres...  
677  
678 *Yeah.*  
679  
680 ...but still, I'm sure I wouldn't be, I'd be rationing water...  
681  
682 *Yeah.*  
683  
684 ...I'd have everybody drinking maybe a liter...  
685  
686 *Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah yeah.*  
687  
688 ...a day, I, I'd be the type with, make sure I've stocked in beer as well [laughter]...  
689  
690 *[Laughter]*  
691  
692 ...you know?  
693  
694 *Absolutely, yeah.*  
695  
696 But, ehm, it has, yeah. I mean, yeah, there'd always be enough petrol and, eh, we would  
697 be fairly, and my wife is really good as well. We, sort of, said, like, I mean, where would  
698 we go and we've discussed it, but I've, sort of, forgotten, we haven't really sat down as a  
699 family yet, but it's, sort of, on the cards...  
700  
701 *Yeah.*  
702  
703 ...eh, to do it as well, like. So if I'm here and she's there, who does what...  
704  
705 *Uhm.*  
706  
707 ...but I mean, to be honest, I think it's a little bit more fut, I think it's a little bit futile  
708 because I don't think you can predict every scenario. I think you can just predict the main  
709 scenarios. "I'm here." [Note: the participant points on the table as if it were a map and  
710 implying here in his office in Tokyo] - I'm not going to say if I, you know, [Note: the  
711 participant clears his throat] but I could be, I guess in Osaka but, I mean - "If I'm here,"

712 [Note: the participant points on the table as if it were a map] “and, or if I’m somewhere in  
713 Tokyo.”...  
714  
715 *Yeah.*  
716  
717 ...you can’t say if you’re where in Tokyo, that’s a waste...  
718  
719 *Yeah, yeah.*  
720  
721 ...so it would just probably be the, the main couple of scenarios where one, eh, one child  
722 is in kindergarten, the other is in, the other two are in primary, and she’s at home and I’m  
723 here and what we’d do.  
724  
725 *Yeah, some of the things that people have mentioned to me have been really fascinating.*  
726 *Just very simple advice. Like, for example, one of the people who was in Sendai said, for*  
727 *whatever reason, when the earthquake happened, he switched off his phone, when he*  
728 *realized he couldn’t get any calls, and that was actually a really clever idea...*  
729  
730 That was a wise thing to have done.  
731  
732 ...because it saved his battery...  
733  
734 *Yeah.*  
735  
736 ...so he had battery power when, eh, the, the power or when the connectivity came back,  
737 whereas all his, you know, fellow people and friends, they all ran out of battery by, sort  
738 of...  
739  
740 *Ooohhh.*  
741  
742 ...and it’s something I would have done, too: keep trying, keep trying, keep trying...  
743  
744 *Yeah.*  
745  
746 ...and he, for whatever reason, he very coolly switched off his phone and then people  
747 were coming to him. I, I was just fascinated by that...  
748  
749 *Yeah.*  
750  
751 ...it was a very simple tip but it’s something...  
752  
753 I agree with you, yeah, yeah.  
754  
755 ...to, to think of, you know.  
756  
757 What I did actually get in, now that you mention it, was I did actually get in solar  
758 power...  
759  
760 *Aaahhh.*  
761  
762 ...not for that particular reason, now. I, sort of, always a little bit interested in it from a  
763 business perspective...  
764  
765 *[Laughter]*  
766

767 ...and also from, I guess, from an environment perspective, but also a little bit from a  
768 disaster...  
769  
770 *Uhm.*  
771  
772 ...perspective because it is DC, em, and if an earthquake did happen and it didn't get  
773 damaged and it was a, a sunny day or somewhat of a sunny day...  
774  
775 *Yeah, yeah.*  
776  
777 ...you could actually use the solar panels to, to, people's, so I could, like, put a, run a  
778 cable and I could have a kilowatt of, and which is enough to charge a couple of phones...  
779  
780 *There you go.*  
781  
782 ...so that was, sort of, a factor in it as well...  
783  
784 *Yeah.*  
785  
786 ...which probably, in my decision, in putting in solar power, which I probably wouldn't  
787 have done, so.  
788  
789 *Yeah, yeah. There's just one other topic I'd like to quickly touch on. Some*  
790 *recommendations that various, you know, local authorities and NPOs have been coming*  
791 *up with for, for the foreign community is that foreigners need to be more integrated into*  
792 *their local communities. This is what they say. I just wanted your opinion on that. Do you*  
793 *think that would have any impact on disaster?*  
794  
795 Yes, of course, yeah. Em, Ja, Japan is a complete, it is a community, right, I mean they  
796 work in communities. If you ever look at the way they put the rubbish together, especially  
797 up in, in, in the, like, in the regions or in the, in the countryside as well, em, so it is very  
798 important to be involved in the community because at the end of the day, you, they can't,  
799 I don't think it's practical to, to have scenarios for, like, if, if, if there's a major in Tokyo,  
800 right, the most important thing is that they help injured people and get water and supplies  
801 to everybody, right. It doesn't matter who they are, where they are. I don't think they can  
802 be worried about, I don't think they can plan for how do I tell this guy, Irish guy who  
803 lives in {a suburb of Tokyo} who doesn't speak a word of Japanese what's going on and  
804 what's, em, what's, em, where to go for water, right? He should know that, okay, if  
805 you're, if you've come to live in, this doesn't apply just for Japan, if you go to live in any  
806 country, and because it is Japan, you should know that there is a possibility of an  
807 earthquake happening or a typhoon or a tsunami, eh, and you should basically know if  
808 that happens where to go and what to do, and you should, it's up to you, and you  
809 shouldn't rely on the government to do it, so, the communication channels, I think, they  
810 should, they should be aware of this number thing and they should also have within the  
811 community itself, you know, a couple of people that they know, and I know it's very  
812 tough to do that in Japan but, for, a couple of people that they are fairly, I won't say, you  
813 know, drinking-term bu, bu, buddies, like, but they say good morning and good night and  
814 they might go over and say it's a nice day and stuff, and I know, em, that's tough to do as  
815 well, but, I mean, I think they, they, they, they should, and I, and I think Japanese,  
816 especially Tokyo, I think, is a little bit more difficult to get involved in the community  
817 because it's a big city, people are little bit more, they keep to themselves. But I know,  
818 because when they do their, their, you know, their *matsuris* [Note: this means festivals]  
819 and stuff, especially up in, you know, outside, and in, some, some of the suburbs, they  
820 like to involve the *gaijin* [Note: this means foreigners] in, in, in that as well. So I think  
821 they're very good at bringing people in at that. I think it's a little bit more difficult in



822 Tokyo because, so if I, if you were to ask me "Where is my community?" I'd go, "Wow.  
 823 It's like, where the borders of my community? Em, I wouldn't know." But if I'm a single,  
 824 if I'm a girl or a guy who's living in an apartment block in somewhere and say, "Well,  
 825 where is my community here?" I would say it's your ward office, where, you should  
 826 know where your ward office is and they'll have information in English and they'll have  
 827 basic information of what to do in an emergency, but on the day of it itself, you basically  
 828 need to know that, "Okay, what do I do? Ehm, where's the local evacuation place if I do  
 829 need to evacuate? Do I have my supplies in place and, eh, is there any local Japanese  
 830 person I can go and talk to that's going to help me?" But I think that's, ehm, something,  
 831 so I would agree with, sorry [laughter] so I would agree with what the Japanese person  
 832 was saying. Ehm, but I also think from a, from a foreigner's perspective, especially if you  
 833 are a single person, ehm, where do you start in getting involved in the community? I think  
 834 that's something that the Japanese need to help with.  
 835  
 836 *Yeah, and I also think that there is, just as you said, the element of, never mind Japan, but*  
 837 *just big city life, it's hard to get to, integrated...*  
 838  
 839 Yeah.  
 840  
 841 *...into a community, so it's, it's a problem in general...*  
 842  
 843 Yeah, absolutely.  
 844  
 845 *...how to, to build those links, but, em, I think that's certainly something I want to think*  
 846 *about a bit more...*  
 847  
 848 Yeah, yeah.  
 849  
 850 *...in, in the coming, kind of, months and, and, and, as part of this, this, this thesis. Just,*  
 851 *very quickly, you mentioned about co, communications say from the ward office, af, after*  
 852 *the disaster, do you remember getting any communication from, from them?*  
 853  
 854 No. Not in English, anyway, no. Ehm, but, ehm, I do know that when I have occasion to  
 855 go there that they do have quite a lot of information on, on what to do in an earthquake  
 856 and they have a bulletin and they are pretty, em, there is information there on, if you want  
 857 to go, I have never gone on their homepage, I'm sure there is an English homepage telling  
 858 you about upcoming events and *matsuris* and, you know, international exchange and  
 859 stuff. So they do that, that, that quite well. Ehm, but it doesn't come to you. It's  
 860 something you, sort of, have to, well, which I think, I think is, is, is fair enough, if you are  
 861 interested to get more involved in the community.  
 862  
 863 *Ehm, I absolutely think, in terms of the community, I agree with everything that you say*  
 864 *for residents. Absolutely. The other issue I have is with the people who are short-term*  
 865 *visitors...*  
 866  
 867 Uhm.  
 868  
 869 *...that's where I think I'm going to have to divide, when I say foreign people, foreign*  
 870 *nationals in Japan, I'm going to have to talk about the different between residents and*  
 871 *short-term visitors.*  
 872  
 873 Yeah. So, so you mean as in two weeks on business?  
 874  
 875 *Yeah, say if you were just here for business, yeah. I mean, you'd have no links with your*  
 876 *community because you don't have a community, you're not resident...*

877  
878 Yeah.  
879  
880 *...and you'd have probably not mot, motivation for speaking Japanese...*  
881  
882 Yeah, yeah.  
883  
884 *...it's, kind of, I'm interested in both groups, but I think I'm going to have to treat them*  
885 *quite differently.*  
886  
887 Yeah, I, I think so, em, I guess, you know, if they're, and again you can't, you can't  
888 consider every case, but you, sort of, have to predict that, or you'd have to, you know,  
889 assume that the hotel would, would bear responsibility for the time that they are there and  
890 are booked in there. And hopefully that would be up until their flight. Now, what happens  
891 after that, I mean, if they can't leave. There's no flights from Japan and they're, they're,  
892 but what happens post their staying in the hotel. I mean, you would imagine or assume  
893 that the hotel, em...  
894  
895 Yeah.  
896  
897 *...and you would imagine that they're not taking any new bookings, right. But then again*  
898 *you don't know. So that's, that's, that's an issue. Em, but again then, I think embassies*  
899 *then play a part...*  
900  
901 *Uhuh, yeah.*  
902  
903 *...em, they would be, sort of, responsible again for the, for the upkeep of the person, not*  
904 *the upkeep, but for finding the person somewhere to stay temporarily...*  
905  
906 Yeah.  
907  
908 *...ehm, and again, everybody, in my book anyway, anybody if you travel to any country -*  
909 *now having said that, I don't do it myself - say, for example, I was in China this year, I*  
910 *really have no idea if they have earthquakes or not...*  
911  
912 Yeah, yeah.  
913  
914 *...I don't think they do, but if they did, like, I mean, again it's, sort of, but anybody*  
915 *travelling to Japan should be aware of, eh, the basics, ehm, you know, what happens...*  
916  
917 Yeah.  
918  
919 *...what you do, and stuff. Especially if you're, you know, out in the street, and stuff, then*  
920 *everybody starts panicking, "Well, what, what do we bloody do?" And, "How am I*  
921 *supposed to get back to my hotel?" and stuff like that. Eh.*  
922  
923 *And, to be honest, that's why a couple of times I've asked about things like the PA system*  
924 *and, eh, that kind of thing...*  
925  
926 Yeah.  
927  
928 *...because it's something which, I don't, nobody I've talked to has mentioned that they*  
929 *heard any useful...*  
930  
931 Yeah.

932  
 933 ... *PA announcements, which really surprised me...*  
 934  
 935 Yeah.  
 936  
 937 ...*because you hear PA announcements all day every day...*  
 938  
 939 Yeah, yeah, yeah. Em, I would say, so you never hear English announcements...  
 940  
 941 *Never.*  
 942  
 943 ...or any other language announcements, but obviously hear, you hear Japanese...  
 944  
 945 *Yeah.*  
 946  
 947 ...I suppose, but, it's, it's an interesting point because, I mean, so, I mean, you can go to  
 948 the Japanese and they go, "Yes, we know it's an issue." But it's one of a thousand issues  
 949 as well and how do they solve, but I, but the problem with the PA system as well is, is it  
 950 going to work on the day, right...  
 951  
 952 *There you go*  
 953  
 954 ...itself, I mean, is going to, I mean, even if you put a battery, a rechargeable battery on it,  
 955 I mean, the thing could still get knocked down and fall over, so you can't be 100% reliant  
 956 on, on it, as well. Em, but if they do at some point say, "Okay, let's move away from  
 957 where it's connected to the mains. Let's move away to, it's, eh, connected to, you  
 958 know, a battery, a rechargeable battery, or a battery supply that kicks in...  
 959  
 960 *Yeah.*  
 961  
 962 ...if the mains cut off, then there's no harm, if that happens, then they lose the  
 963 communication, presume that they've lost the communication as well...  
 964  
 965 *Yeah.*  
 966  
 967 ...so then, something needs to be on replay and at that point, I mean, it makes sense that if  
 968 they're going to do it in Japanese, they could do it in English as well. But if you got, you  
 969 know Satoh [Note: this is a common Japanese surname and might be like saying 'Smith'  
 970 or 'Murphy' in Ireland], seventy-year old Satoh-san sitting in the ward office and it's his  
 971 job to, you know, give it and he goes, so, "How do I say...  
 972  
 973 *[Laughter]*  
 974  
 975 ...'Please go to such-and-such a place' in English, Korean, Chinese? That's not, eh, I  
 976 don't think that's, eh, realistic...  
 977  
 978 *Yeah.*  
 979  
 980 ...for a person to.  
 981  
 982 *Ver, very interested or very, it's a coincidence that you mentioned, like, the seventy-year*  
 983 *old Satoh sitting in the ward office because I went up to Tokai-mura where they have the*  
 984 *nuclear facility, as you know...*  
 985  
 986 Eh, okay.

987  
 988 *...so tha, that would have been, you know, after the disaster...*  
 989  
 990 Yeah.  
 991  
 992 *...that would have been one of the few places that did have a PA system that was working,*  
 993 *but the accent of, of the person making the announcement in English was so heavy...*  
 994  
 995 Yeah.  
 996  
 997 *...it was incomprehensible...*  
 998  
 999 Yeah, yeah.  
 1000  
 1001 *...so there are so many issues to, as you said, you know, having multiple languages*  
 1002 *available is one of a thousand priorities that they have, but, you know, one of the things*  
 1003 *I'm going to be touching on is with the 2020 Olympics coming up...*  
 1004  
 1005 Absolutely, yeah.  
 1006  
 1007 *...it's something that maybe might move the language and communication a little higher*  
 1008 *in the priority list.*  
 1009  
 1010 I think it will, I think it will. I think you're correct in your thinking there because, if they  
 1011 happen, and they will believe me, the Japanese, they look at security, they will look if  
 1012 there's an earthquake during the Olympics...  
 1013  
 1014 Yeah.  
 1015  
 1016 *...they will look at it and that'll, and, I mean, with Abe and his 'three arrows' which*  
 1017 *you're sick of hearing about a this stage as I am [Note: Abe was Prime Minister of Japan*  
 1018 *at the time of interview and his 'three arrows' were and economic policy of fiscal*  
 1019 *stimulus, monetary easing and structural reforms] you know, structural reform, spending*  
 1020 *loads of money [Note: the participant clears his throat] sorry, so it's the second arrow,*  
 1021 *well, a bit both, both, you know, spending money on infrastructure and stuff looking*  
 1022 *toward the Olympics that has to be it, how do you communicate, em, so they will be, they*  
 1023 *will be, and they need to look at automation as well, ehm, and, you know, with linguistics*  
 1024 *as well, so the person is speaking Japanese, can that automatically be translated into*  
 1025 *English? [Note: the participant clears his throat] I don't know, I mean, the people who are*  
 1026 *into, {redacted} I'd be always, I'd be a bit of a critic, I don't think you can actually speak*  
 1027 *Japanese and have that translated correctly, eh, into English. I don't think it's doable,*  
 1028 *autom, at, at this point in time. But the key messages that you would want to give, they*  
 1029 *can be, you know, pre-, pre-, prepared...*  
 1030  
 1031 Yeah.  
 1032  
 1033 *...and once you get that out.*  
 1034  
 1035 *Eh, and you also mentioned earlier Chinese and Korean, I mean, English is going to be*  
 1036 *just one of the, the...*  
 1037  
 1038 Yeah, exactly, yeah.  
 1039  
 1040 *...sort of, languages that's going to be needed...*  
 1041

1042 Yeah, yeah.  
1043  
1044 ...and, you know, even say in the Tohoku area. I mean, even if there had been English,  
1045 many of the foreign people living there didn't speak it...  
1046  
1047 Yeah, yeah.  
1048  
1049 ...they were Chinese or Korean or, you know, speak Brazilian Portuguese or something  
1050 like that...  
1051  
1052 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1053  
1054 ...so there's a whole bunch of issues. That's pretty much all the questions I've had. I've  
1055 gone on a bit longer than I, I intended...  
1056  
1057 That's fine.  
1058  
1059 ...to, if that's okay with you...  
1060  
1061 No, that's no problem, as long as you.  
1062  
1063 ...just, finally, just is there anything else in terms of, like, language or communication that  
1064 I haven't touched on that you think might have been relevant or?  
1065  
1066 Eh, [Note: the participant clears his throat] no, no. Just, sort of, thinking. [Note: the  
1067 participant pauses for quite a while as he think] Yeah, no, no. The, ag, again, I, I, I  
1068 probably haven't been too much, ehm, useful to you because of the fact that I can speak  
1069 Japanese and I had a link into the Japanese, so I wasn't, and I had, you know, people  
1070 asking me, I mean, there was a guy here, and he said, "My wife is freaking out about this,  
1071 this nuclear thing." And he was an ex-pat, just here, and, and, em, eventually, she left and  
1072 he left then, it was just, it was just too much. So for me, the language wasn't, ehm, such,  
1073 such an issue, but for the people here, it, it was.  
1074  
1075 Well, it's funny you should say that. That actually is extremely interesting to me because  
1076 you were acting as a mediator for people because of your language abilities.  
1077  
1078 But for the people that knew, that knew me, right? Ehm, ehm, and I wouldn't have, there  
1079 wouldn't be a huge amount of people that do know me, em, you know, I think when  
1080 you're young and single, when you have the, the, great friends, loads, thousands of  
1081 friends, but I'm here such a long time now, over time they'd leave and I, you get married  
1082 and then there's a family, I mean, that's, then so you're around your community with  
1083 your school and blah, blah, blah, so the people that I know, and I didn't use Facebook,  
1084 and I think it would have been different now today people would have asked me more,  
1085 ehm, on, on, on Facebook, but there was a couple of people that asked me what did I  
1086 think, and so, but I was very, and, I mean, I think the nuclear thing could have gone two  
1087 ways. It could have been a huge disaster, but I was just, I guess, going on the side of em,  
1088 em, you know, taking it, em, "Ah sure it will be grand."  
1089  
1090 [Laughter]  
1091  
1092 [Laughter] Because, I mean, how can you, you have to go in to, you'd need to be a  
1093 nuclear scientist, scientist to explain it, right? Ehm, like I said, it was very difficult to get,  
1094 from anybody, em, you know, here are just some of the, some of the simple basic facts.  
1095 Ehm, and there was some stuff out like, "Look, the amount of radiation that is getting in  
1096 Tokyo," so I mean, they, they, so this is a good example, right, ehm, they advised the

1097 amount of radiation one day that got in to Tokyo, you'll remember this, the water supply  
 1098 is high, and they said, "Please don't give water to infants, to babies." Right? But for  
 1099 everybody else it's fine. So every convenience shop you went, everybody was sold out of  
 1100 bottled water. This was a couple of months now after where, you know, initially after the  
 1101 earthquake, you know, all the convenience stores were cleaned out of everything, right,  
 1102 but then as the stocks, it was, it was grand. I mean, it might have been rationed but  
 1103 everybody went out and bought, bought, em, bottled water. Not just the foreigners but the  
 1104 Japanese as well because they were concerned because the, what was it, microsieverts or  
 1105 whatever they are...  
 1106  
 1107 *Yeah.*  
 1108  
 1109 ...had gone up from five to two, two-thousand which is twenty times above the  
 1110 recommended level but still the same amount that you get in an X-ray...  
 1111  
 1112 *Yeah.*  
 1113  
 1114 ...but still it would have been just probably for an infant, it's probably too much...  
 1115  
 1116 *Yeah.*  
 1117  
 1118 ...and that was the, the message but still. And it was a clear message, right? I don't know  
 1119 if it's, if it's correct, or if it was, I don't know, you have to trust what they're saying is  
 1120 correct, ehm, and, ehm, was it, yeah, I remember {a mutual acquaintance of the  
 1121 participant and the researcher} coming in here and I asked {him}, and I gave him a glass  
 1122 of water and he said would I get him a glass of water and normally we'd serve water in  
 1123 glasses out of big bottles...  
 1124  
 1125 *Yeah.*  
 1126  
 1127 ...ehm, sometimes, so I gave him a glass of water [laughter] and I says, "{redacted}  
 1128 That's tap water. You okay with that?" And he goes, "Yeah, no, I'm grand then."  
 1129 [Laughter] He wouldn't drink it. It wasn't tap water, it was, I wouldn't serve tap water,  
 1130 the taste, the taste of it [laughter] wouldn't drink it. I'd drink it, and I have...  
 1131  
 1132 *Yeah.*  
 1133  
 1134 ...because sometimes I was going for a run around the, the, the palace there and I'd stop  
 1135 and have water, eh, so I, maybe I'm just too trusting in, eh, in nature, but some people  
 1136 weren't but.  
 1137  
 1138 *I know, you're absolutely, like, the, the, a lot of what you're saying tallies with my own*  
 1139 *experiences...*  
 1140  
 1141 *Yeah.*  
 1142  
 1143 *...I was, I think I was pretty much, like, "Sure, believe what they say until I know better."*  
 1144  
 1145 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1146  
 1147 *I mean, now I have spoken to more people, obviously, directly experiencing, you know,*  
 1148 *things quite near the, eh, where, the, the nuclear fallout area and they had very different*  
 1149 *opinions on it...*  
 1150  
 1151 *Yeah.*

1152  
 1153 *...so, you know, I was only in Tokyo so...*  
 1154  
 1155 Yeah, yeah.  
 1156  
 1157 *...I thought I was grand. I think it's a very, very murky area, I mean, as, as you said at*  
 1158 *one point, you know, the Japanese people probably didn't have the information, the*  
 1159 *Japanese government didn't have the information, so I, I, I, I'm not sure...*  
 1160  
 1161 Everybody was in, you know, speculating...  
 1162  
 1163 Yeah...  
 1164  
 1165 ...and then speculation breeds.  
 1166  
 1167 *...so, and I think we still are to a certain extent...*  
 1168  
 1169 [Laughter]  
 1170  
 1171 *...I really don't think...*  
 1172  
 1173 Yeah.  
 1174  
 1175 *...just my, my, my assessment would be that, like, be, be positive, be optimistic...*  
 1176  
 1177 Uhm.  
 1178  
 1179 *...until you're really got a reason not to be.*  
 1180  
 1181 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And maybe just have a backup plan...  
 1182  
 1183 *Yeah, have a backup plan [laughter]...*  
 1184  
 1185 ...[laughter] just in case.  
 1186  
 1187 *...well, you know, I mean, you, you, you've mentioned as well, like, you can only plan for*  
 1188 *so many eventualities, right? Ehm, I think it's hard to plan for everything so I mean, you*  
 1189 *know, if you start becoming kind of obsessed with it...*  
 1190  
 1191 Yeah, yeah.  
 1192  
 1193 *...there's no point in living here. It, it wouldn't be practical.*  
 1194  
 1195 I would agree.  
 1196  
 1197 *Yeah. But having said that, I know that, you know, there were times where I did get*  
 1198 *paranoid about things...*  
 1199  
 1200 Yeah, yeah.  
 1201  
 1202 *...I remember [laughter] one, I don't know why this, I had my washing, my laundry out on*  
 1203 *my balcony [laughter] the first couple of days after it, and for whatever reason, I got*  
 1204 *really obsessed that my clothes were covered in radiation [laughter]. I mean, I knew*  
 1205 *nothing about radiation. I still don't really, to be honest...*  
 1206

1207 Yeah, yeah.  
1208  
1209 ...*with you. But I tried to learn more...*  
1210  
1211 Yeah, yeah.  
1212  
1213 ...*as, as the time went by, but you know. I think, yeah.*  
1214  
1215 [Note: the researcher switched off the audio more abruptly than normal, but the  
1216 conversation ended just a few sentences after this.]



1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/2 Interview with Participant 19*

5 [While filling out the profile data, the participant asked me a question about my  
6 experience of the disaster, so it has been included here in the transcript- this was the first  
7 participant to do so. So, in contrast to other transcripts, the first person to speak here is the  
8 participant.]  
9

10 Participant: Ehm, am I allowed to ask where you were?  
11

12 *Researcher: Eh, you can, absolutely. Ask any questions you like. I have no, no...*  
13

14 Oh fantastic.  
15

16 *...secrets what...*  
17

18 I, I thought more the fact that maybe you didn't want to, eh, set it up with, eh, your own  
19 story, eh, okay.  
20

21 *...eh, yeah, no, I'm, eh, as I said, I'm completely involved in the whole thing...*  
22

23 Right.  
24

25 *...so I was in Nihonbashi...*  
26

27 *Yeah, yes...*  
28

29 *...where I both lived and worked, in Nihonbashi...*  
30

31 Yes.  
32

33 *...so I lived, I was very lucky, I was a ten-minute walk from my, eh, like, my apartment*  
34 *was a ten-minute walk from my company, so I had no problems getting home, which a lot*  
35 *of people in the Tokyo area did, as you know. Ehm, and I was on the fifth floor of my*  
36 *building, so I didn't get too much shaking, but I did feel it...*  
37

38 Right, right, right, right.  
39

40 *...definitely did feel it [laughter]. And, ehm, so, you know the way everyone who tells their*  
41 *story, there's always something, kind of, you focus on, I focused on, {redacted}*  
42

43 Oh!  
44

45 *...{a new colleague} had just arrived [laughter]...*  
46

47 Oh my goodness!  
48

49 *...he was at the desk beside me working and, at the time - I, I don't know why I said this -*  
50 *I, I just kept saying, you know, "Daijobu, daijobu", it's okay...*  
51

52 Yeah, yeah.  
53

54 ...I don't know why I was speaking to him in Japanese, we were both {English  
 55 speakers}...  
 56  
 57 Yes, yes, yes.  
 58  
 59 ...I just kept saying, "Daijobu, daijobu". And I thought that was, kind of, being helpful or  
 60 something. I've since spoken to him and he was like, "That was one of the worst things I  
 61 could have done."  
 62  
 63 Right?  
 64  
 65 He said by me saying, "It's okay, it's okay," it actually made him worry more because he  
 66 didn't believe me.  
 67  
 68 Right, right, right, right, interesting.  
 69  
 70 And when I think, when I think back on it, I was probably saying it for myself...  
 71  
 72 Yeah, right, right, right, right.  
 73  
 74 ...I don't think I was saying it for him. I thought I was saying it for him at the time...  
 75  
 76 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 77  
 78 ...and he was, but it just goes to show that you don't know that what you're doing is  
 79 useful or...  
 80  
 81 Yes, yes.  
 82  
 83 ...I thought I was helping but, you know, it's, it's just fascinating. And I don't know why I  
 84 was speaking to him in Japanese. I can't remember why...  
 85  
 86 That is so...  
 87  
 88 ...it's just the strange...  
 89  
 90 ...funny.  
 91  
 92 ...like, you just, I suppose I was just a bit thrown...  
 93  
 94 Uhm, yes.  
 95  
 96 ...that's all I can think of. I was just maybe, I was just maybe saying it more to myself.  
 97 [Laughter] One of our bucho [Note: this means a 'senior manager' in a Japanese  
 98 company] at one point, kind of, shouted over, "Daijobu ja nai yo" [Note: this means 'it's  
 99 really not okay' in Japanese] [laughter] like, I was like, "Okay!"  
 100  
 101 Ah, man, that's, that is [laughter].  
 102  
 103 Yeah, I don't know where that came from.  
 104  
 105 Yeah, yeah. Oh that is hilarious.  
 106  
 107 I, I didn't have any extreme, eh, experiences, you know, eh...  
 108

109 Yes, yes, yes.  
 110  
 111 *...as I said, I was lucky in the sense that I could get home and I, my building went, I*  
 112 *moved into a new building a few months...*  
 113  
 114 Yes.  
 115  
 116 *...before the disaster, so it was well earthquake-proofed and, kind of, all that thing...*  
 117  
 118 Yes, yes.  
 119  
 120 *...like, I had actually no damage. The only thing that happened is my gas shut off and one*  
 121 *drawer opened...*  
 122  
 123 Right, right, right, right...  
 124  
 125 *...that was about it...*  
 126  
 127 ...yes.  
 128  
 129 *...like, really I was very, very lucky. But, but having said that, long-term, I do think it had*  
 130 *an effect on me, absolutely. It, it made me want to go back and start this.*  
 131  
 132 Right. That's, that's very interesting, yeah.  
 133  
 134 *I thought I was a, you know, a seishain [Note: means 'permanent employee' in Japanese]*  
 135 *and paying the pension and all the very, sort of, I was here forever, I thought, but it, it did*  
 136 *change the course of, of my career and my life.*  
 137  
 138 Yeah.  
 139  
 140 *[I referred to the question the participant was filling in on the profile sheet in order to try*  
 141 *to wrap up my anecdote and take the focus back off me] Ehm, the reason I'm asking for*  
 142 *the citizenship as well is because some foreigners have taken a Japanese passport, right?*  
 143  
 144 Sure, sure, sure.  
 145  
 146 *So that's why I've divided it in two.*  
 147  
 148 Absolutely, yeah.  
 149  
 150 *[Referring to further questions on the profile data questionnaire being filled out by the*  
 151 *participant] It's, if it's, like, fifty-fifty, or if you use multiple languages, you know it really*  
 152 *is just, kind of, a guideline. The, the questions about this, this, the native one, I'll explain*  
 153 *them later on, then. So, just on the next sheet, because I'm talking to people...*  
 154  
 155 Uhum.  
 156  
 157 *...who are not necessarily native speakers of English...*  
 158  
 159 Yes, yes, yes.  
 160  
 161 *...I'm asking everyone to just rate their level of confidence for speaking, listening,*  
 162 *reading and writing in both English and then it's exactly the same scales for Japanese.*  
 163

164 Oh right, sure.  
165  
166 *Just so I have a kind of an idea for how people speak.*  
167  
168 Right, right, okay. So I'm a hundred percent confident in all my English. Is that what you  
169 want? It's not about your public speaking or anything like that.  
170  
171 *No, no...*  
172  
173 Right.  
174  
175 *...it really is just, it's just so I can get some sort of an idea of what information sources*  
176 *might or might not have been available.*  
177  
178 Sure, right, right, okay.  
179  
180 *And then, just the final two very short questions there, this one is just about prior*  
181 *experience of natural disasters, if you have any. You mentioned the Kobe earthquake, for*  
182 *example.*  
183  
184 Right, that's true.  
185  
186 *It's really up to you. There's no right answer. Whatever you want to put down.*  
187  
188 Okay, ehm.  
189  
190 *Also, some people I am talking to are from New Zealand or from, like, the Western side of*  
191 *the United States.*  
192  
193 Okay, I'm going to go right down the scale and say two, okay. I've, I've been, I was in  
194 Japan during the Jan. 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake in Kobe. It didn't affect me at all.  
195 Em, I've been in Australia where there were massive bushfires, ehm, but again, didn't  
196 affect me personally.  
197  
198 *No, perfect. That's exactly the type of thing I'm looking for. And then, just have you done*  
199 *any other, like, research...*  
200  
201 No.  
202  
203 *... it's just to show the university...*  
204  
205 Yes.  
206  
207 *...that I'm not, kind of, flogging a dead horse.*  
208  
209 Sure. Okay.  
210  
211 *That's it.*  
212  
213 Wonderful.  
214  
215 *So basically, the, the way I ask everybody is just a very general question...*  
216  
217 Uhum.  
218

219 ...can you, can you tell me what happened to you...  
 220  
 221 Right.  
 222  
 223 ...in the disaster?  
 224  
 225 Right, right. I was, eh, heading towards, I, I was doing a pitch towards a client, and it  
 226 was, eh, so, in, in advertising you actually, you go to a client and you pitch your, your  
 227 wares, em, and they ask you to do the job or not do the job, whatever. And so we'd set  
 228 this up for three o'clock, we, we head out to {an area in central Tokyo}, which is a, eh, a  
 229 kind of central business area, eh, and I was coming out, there was myself - and this is  
 230 important who I was with - there was myself, my boss, who was the vice-president of the  
 231 company, a senior guy, maybe mid-fifties, ehm, and an, a, kind of, old school sales guy  
 232 who was probably, again, in his early fifties. The, the three of us head out to do this pitch  
 233 and, ehm, we got off the train in {a central subway station} and, eh, as we were coming  
 234 through the turnstiles, eh, the earthquake hit. And my first reaction was that I had vertigo.  
 235 I, I thought that I was getting, getting dizzy and about to fall down. So, ehm, and, I  
 236 thought, "Hang on, I didn't drink the night before," and that this is, kind of, unusual.  
 237 Ehm, but, em, that's exactly what I thought it was. And then I looked around and I could  
 238 see some people were squatting down and, kind of, like, "Uh, uh, uh." [Note: the  
 239 participant gestures looking worriedly above his head] You know, "*Jishin da!*", like,  
 240 earth, "it's an earthquake!" And, ehm, with that, I thought, "Whoa! I'm in the subway.  
 241 The, I'm, I want to get out of the subway." So, through the turnstile, I looked around at  
 242 my boss, I said, you know, "Let's go." And, ehm, this older gu, older gentleman, my, my  
 243 boss, ehm, put his hand on my shoulder, and he said, "No, let's wait here. It's safer to be  
 244 here." And I, kind of, just, just because he was so decisive, I thought that was a good  
 245 thing. He said that to me in English, by the way. I just, I'm remembering now. Then, so  
 246 everyone was squatting down and then it started to get more and more severe, and one of  
 247 the things that struck me was, not physically struck me [laughter]...  
 248  
 249 [Laughter]  
 250  
 251 ...one of the things that, that I realized was that in, in the train station, because I've had  
 252 lots of other earthquakes in Japan, maybe I need to change that actually [Note: the  
 253 participant here is referring to his answer to the question on the profile data questionnaire  
 254 about previous experience of natural disasters] but it's not a disaster...  
 255  
 256 No, okay, yeah, yeah...  
 257  
 258 ...no, that's alright, that's alright...  
 259  
 260 exactly.  
 261  
 262 ...yep. So lots of earthquake in Japan, ehm, and you can feel, you become very aware of,  
 263 of the structure of the building that you're in, and you think, how, you know, we deceive,  
 264 we deceive ourselves that this room and that room are completely separate but actually  
 265 they're all part of one structure, and you see that when the front of a building falls off and  
 266 it's like, "All those people live side by side," [laughter]...  
 267  
 268 [Laughter]  
 269  
 270 ...so, you do, you get very aware of how the, the crea, how the walls creak and that kind  
 271 of thing. The interesting thing was being in the subway it felt like it was in a, a secure  
 272 capsule, that there was no, the right angles stayed right angles all the way, so it felt like,  
 273 I'm sorry I have to do this physical, with my hand, but it felt like it was floating around

274 like that [Note: the participant gestures keeping an unmoving distance between his hands  
 275 while moving around his arms in front of him], not like that [Note: the participant  
 276 gestures both hands and arms moving at the same time in different directions].  
 277  
 278 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 279  
 280 And so, it, and you must have heard this, eh, before when people say it felt like that they  
 281 were riding on a ship or something like that...  
 282  
 283 *Yeah.*  
 284  
 285 ...well, that's what it was like, but the other thing that I felt that, it, I felt so secure, to be  
 286 quite honest. Because I thought, this is the best place to be in Tokyo. I thought, if this  
 287 goes down, then, eh, everywhere else outside of the place has gone down and I would  
 288 recommend it to anyone. If you're in the subway, stay there...  
 289  
 290 *Yeah.*  
 291  
 292 ...so that was good. Then, then, ehm, we, we, it kind of stopped. I can't, honestly I can't  
 293 remember how long it went for, but it stopped, we stood up, ehm, and then as a, a fun  
 294 little memory was these two foreigners who were obviously visitors Japan, to Japan,  
 295 came screaming out of the, out of the, eh, station, jumped over the turnstiles, and raced  
 296 out of the building kind of screaming, and, ehm, all the Japanese salarymen who were,  
 297 like, squatting down had a laugh...  
 298  
 299 *[Laughter]*  
 300  
 301 ...[laughter] and it was a really nice moment, it was a really nice moment. But anyway,  
 302 so, we came out, we came out and, em, made our way to, to where our appointment was  
 303 at three o'clock. And, we, by now, it was ten to three or something, we got closer and  
 304 closer, and we found the building. The elevator's not working. So we decided to go up  
 305 the stairs - it's on the seventh floor. So we, we're, we're climbing the stairs, and we're all  
 306 a little bit rattled but also a little bit excited, and the, the people was, kind of, like, like,  
 307 "Woo, ooh, ooh, ohh." Em, a little, a few people were, kind of, out on the streets saying,  
 308 "Oh, what, that was pretty hairy scary." But we walk up the seven flights of stairs and  
 309 there was plaster in the stairwell...  
 310  
 311 *Oohhh.*  
 312  
 313 ...where you could see big cracks had come down from, from this building. It was quite a  
 314 modern building. Ehm, and then when we got up to the floor, ehm, the company was {a  
 315 foreign online business}, ehm, so they were kind of modern but also very young. Ehm,  
 316 but they had propped open the doors and they had some emergency supplies out and  
 317 things so I thought. "Oh, these guys have got their act together." And so we made our  
 318 way in there and we called the guy up and we said, "Oh, hi, you know, this is us from,  
 319 from {redacted} and we've come for the three o'clock meeting." And [laughter] he was  
 320 like, "What? You came?" And he said, we said, "Yes, yes." And he said, "Oh well, if  
 321 you're here, let's, let's do it."  
 322  
 323 *[Laughter]*  
 324  
 325 So he invited us in and we went into the meeting room and, eh, of course, for the first ten  
 326 minutes we were, we were just in awe about what had just happened and, "Wow, that  
 327 was, how was this building?" And anyway, we got over that and then we got straight  
 328 down to business, and it was business as usual. Then the second wave hit, the second

329 earthquake hit. Eh, that was, I believe, weaker in intensity but because of the closeness to  
 330 Tokyo, we felt it more...

331

332 *Right.*

333

334 ...and, ehm, it was, that was really scary, because suddenly my, my whole idea of me  
 335 being in this safe little cocoon, this engineering marvel, was out the window because I  
 336 was in this building that I'd already seen had cracks in the stairwell and anyway, so,  
 337 shaking around and we're doing the presentation, and, em, we, it just got more and more  
 338 severe, and, eh, going through my head, I was looking out the window at some other  
 339 buildings that were, were shaking across the street, and they were much older than the  
 340 building I was in. I thought, "Okay, if they go down, then, I'm out of here."

341

342 *Yeah.*

343

344 So, and, and, and, I'm not sure if this will feature again in, in our conversation, but a few  
 345 times, I always, I set these kind of, eh, bars or like criteria that if this happens then I'm  
 346 going to do this. If this happens, that was a way that I negotiated a lot of it, even, even the  
 347 mo, the weeks and months afterwards. Then, it got so severe at one stage we got under  
 348 the table in the meeting room. We got under the table and I love to tell this story that my  
 349 boss went under the table, pulls out the presentation, and he's like, "I was saying, we  
 350 were founded in 19..." [laughter]

351

352 [*Laughter*]

353

354 ...seriously, the client on the other side of the table said, said, you know, "*Wakatta,*  
 355 *wakatta.*" "I get it." [laughter]...

356

357 [*Laughter*]

358

359 "You get the job, you get the job." [Laughter]...

360

361 [*Laughter*]

362

363 ...and, eh, any, anyway, so, we laughed at the fact that, that he would do, continue with  
 364 this. And I'm not exactly sure how good my memory is of that incident, but that was  
 365 certainly the atmosphere. But that's, and, em, that he was, he was an absolute, this boss  
 366 was a real samurai in the face of that danger and, cut a long story short, it got more and  
 367 more, ehm, dramatic and when it, when it calmed down we thought, "Okay, let's not be  
 368 stupid. Let's get out of here." So we cancelled the meeting, we came down the emergen,  
 369 emergency stairway. The lovely young people in the {foreign online business} gave us  
 370 some water as we were leaving, and said, "Hang on to these. You just don't know what's  
 371 going to be." So that was a lovely thing to do. Got back down, the older sales guy, not my  
 372 boss, the older sales guy was, was freaked out and, em, basically, eh, it was, the moment  
 373 when we knew, by the time we came out there were lots of people out on the street. Em,  
 374 some of the financial companies, there were English guys, I remember they were English,  
 375 and they were out in front of their buildings with pots of beer [laughter]...

376

377 [*Laughter*]

378

379 ...and so, and so, so there was a bit of that, and there was a bit of a, to be quite honest, a  
 380 festive atmosphere. It was like, "What a shake up!" We were all out on the streets...

381

382 *Yeah.*

383

384 ...people were not panicked by any means. Ehm, then, but, but, the sales guy was a bit  
385 freaked out so he said, "I'm going home." And so, he went and my boss said, "I'm going  
386 back to the office." And I'm thinking, "Okay, earthquake, tidal waves, we're heading  
387 back to the office," which is, as you can see where we are now, we're on the edge of  
388 Tokyo Bay...

389

390 *Yeah.*

391

392 ...I thought, "That's an interesting thing." And I thought, "You know, like, I've got  
393 nothing to lose. I'm, I'm a single guy, no family." I thought, "Alright, I'll go back." Ehm,  
394 not that I was being so much of a martyr, but it was more that, em, there was no, eh,  
395 reason to think that there's anything worse than, it was like, what else was I going to do?  
396 So, and if he was going to go back. So we came back together, got to this building, we,  
397 the, our office is on the 40th floor, ehm, and the elevators were shut down...

398

399 *[Laughter]*

400

401 ...So then came the moment of truth...

402

403 *[Laughter]*

404

405 ...ehm, he decided to hike up the forty floors, and I said, "I'm going to wait it out down  
406 here."...

407

408 *[Laughter]*

409

410 ...so I just, I pulled up at a little room there [Note: the participant pointed to an area of the  
411 lobby near the elevators for his tower in the complex], ehm, couldn't use my phone. Ehm,  
412 I have two phones actually. Eh, I'll show you. I have the, like, the iPhone, the regular,  
413 em, cellular phone...

414

415 *Yeah.*

416

417 ..and this is a PHS, which is, em, a, a format that - it may be only unique to Japan now -  
418 but it's, it's actually, I, I believe that the technology is similar to a walkie-talkie. So the  
419 further away you get from the antenna, the weaker it gets. But it worked. And so I was,  
420 kind of, sharing it round and, and, but I couldn't, it couldn't make a call internationally on  
421 this [Note: pointing to the PHS phone] eh, so, got back here, went into this kind of loungey  
422 area in the, in the bottom of my building. And they had wifi going, and so, and you may  
423 have heard this story, I, I fired that up and I found that I couldn't, ehm, contact a lot of  
424 websites, I think, or maybe I just went straight to Twitter. Anyway, Twitter was the way  
425 to go. I found that I was, I was talking to people on Twitter all the time, and, ehm, I  
426 managed to get a phone call through to, to my mum, ehm, back in Australia. Said, "Hi  
427 mum, ah, there's, there's been a, a really big earthquake but I'm okay." And she said,  
428 "Oh, that's nice dear. Thanks for the call. Bye."

429

430 *[Laughter]*

431

432 And then, of course, flipping to that side of the world, that half of the world, you know,  
433 an hour later, they start seeing the images on TV and she freaks out and then can't get  
434 through. But, yeah, and, so, I was on Twitter and that started something because, em, as I  
435 said to you before, I have been a journalist before so all my Twitter feeds were, just, news  
436 feeds from all, all over the world. Ehm, some Japanese, mostly in English. A lot of, eh,  
437 Eng, English-language journalists who were here in Japan, so I have all their feeds, had  
438 them all up and going, and they were recommending other sites, and things like that, so



439 that was, I was just adding them, getting all this information, ehm, and then, it was  
440 probably about that time I got my first email or Tweet from a friend of mine in Japan, a  
441 guy that I knew in Japan that doesn't speak Japanese. And he said, he said,  
442 "{participant's name}, ehm, what's going on?" And I said, I told him what I knew and he  
443 was saying, "Okay, this is what we're seeing, eh, in the foreign press, what are the  
444 Japanese media saying." And, em, you know, I, I, I do read Japanese, ehm, but I found  
445 myself more often than not, in, in that, that panicked time, I was looking at the English,  
446 eh, for the context, then going to the, to the Japanese to compare. So I was looking for  
447 key words, things like that. Eh, the, the Associated Press had mentioned something about,  
448 ehm, radiation or, like, a, a, this was much later in the day piece, so then I was looking to  
449 those articles and things like that. And I have, em, eh, I have some Korean family in  
450 Japan and they were getting the worst information from Korea. They, they, they were  
451 hearing that Kanto [Note: Kanto is the central region of the Japanese main island of  
452 Honshu in which Tokyo is located] had broken off from Honshu...

453  
454 *Oh my goodness.*

455  
456 ...and was drifting out in the ocean. So everyone was freaking out and, and the Koreans in  
457 the, who were like working in restaurants that my, my Korean family owns and they just,  
458 they ran out and never came back...

459  
460 *Wow.*

461  
462 ...yeah, yeah. They left Japan, basically ran out of the restaurant, went to the airport or got  
463 to the other side of Niigata and got on a ferry or something and just never came back. It  
464 was a disaster.

465  
466 *[Laughter]*

467  
468 But em, yeah, so there was a lot of rumour-mongering in the non-English-speaking  
469 foreign communities, best way to describe, where I found the English-speaking  
470 community was much more relaxed, ehm, and then, as I mentioned to you before, two  
471 things happened: one is that, eh, I had a, eh, eh, there was a British TV crew that flew in  
472 to Japan that night, and my friend was here and she was, like, a freelance cameraman,  
473 they picked her up and they told her to go, and she had one of these super-duper satellite  
474 phones, and so, at about midnight, she was like halfway to Sendai...

475  
476 *Oh crikey.*

477  
478 ...yeah, yeah, and where all the roads were, were blocked off, and they were, like,  
479 borrowing gasoline and stuff to get through, and they were, they were, like, they were  
480 ahead of the first responders. But she was calling me up and she was saying, "Listen, we  
481 think we're here," and so I'm looking at the map and trying to give some remote-control  
482 directions, but, em, they were basically, oh, oh, actually, I shouldn't aggrandize my, my  
483 role in that, ehm, but what happened, when it really struck home, when she called me up,  
484 she said, "Listen, we've been told by the British Embassy to evacuate." Ehm, and I said,  
485 "What, what do you mean? Get out of the area?" She said, "Yes." No, she, no, she said,  
486 "Get out of Japan. That's what the British Embassy have told us. And then, so we're  
487 trying to push back on that," and she's saying, like, "What do you know?" Because they  
488 were, they were, they had no contact with any media or anything. And, and, it was all  
489 about the, em, the, the nuclear...

490  
491 *Yeah.*

492

493 ...the nu, nuclear, eh, explosion and, em, the leakage. And so I was trying to get as much  
494 information as possible and I've, I've got a person that I care about who's, who's out  
495 there, and, and, so, I, I'm saying, "Listen, nobody is saying it here, and they're, they're  
496 recommending people not come to Japan, and stuff like that, but nobody's making a  
497 directive like that just yet." And then a few countries started to, like France, I think, and,  
498 ehm, then she called me back again and she said, "Ah, we've, we've been cut off. We  
499 have to, have to leave. It's, you don't even have to answer this anymore." Ehm, and so,  
500 that was that, and they got out of wherever they were, and they went up to Akita [Note: a  
501 prefecture in the far north of Japan's main island] ready to fly out, and by the time they  
502 had got there, they got another message saying, "You're fine." So, so, I've actually  
503 skipped ahead a couple of days here, but they were up there all that time, but there were a  
504 couple - because of my background in journalism - people were contacting me from  
505 outside of Japan, ehm, for comments, ehm, but I found myself really, really, em,  
506 stretching my Japanese to find out as much information as I possibly could. And it ended  
507 up being that, em, the, I found, and I said, said, that the foreign media was better, was  
508 more accurate, more, ehm, unbiased, I, I think that there would have been, the, working  
509 for a Japanese publication, I know that you don't have the government in your  
510 backpocket, or certainly it was never in my backpocket saying don't write articles about  
511 this because, that, you're going to damage our reputation, but I did think they would have  
512 been a lot more cautious about cre, creating a panic...

513  
514 *Okay.*

515  
516 ...like, if you tell people in Tokyo there's a nuclear meltdown going on, get out, there  
517 would be more injuries and death and carnage and chaos than certainly anything that, that  
518 happened. So, I think that, even if they had the information, they would just be much,  
519 much more careful about checking its accuracy...

520  
521 *Uhm.*

522  
523 ...and, and the implications of "Do we release this now?" Ehm, the newsworthiness  
524 against, you know, the, the public good. I don't know, I don't know. But, it was the  
525 Japanese, the foreign press didn't have that because they, they weren't on the ground, so  
526 just get it out. So, let, let me, is that?...

527  
528 *Oh, it is, absolutely. No wherever you want to, where, where, whatever you want to talk*  
529 *about.*

530  
531 ...oh, well, because there's all these different little tangents and things like that...

532  
533 *Yeah.*

534  
535 ...and the, eh, the, the thing that, eh, I mentioned to you about the, the, the suspension  
536 piece between the, the, the buildings [Note: the participant is referring to a kind of an  
537 elevated walkway or enclosed corridor many, many floors up joining two towers of the  
538 building complex we were in that he had pointed out to me on the way to the cafe] the  
539 other thing, too, is that, em, I just have to check - that's good, yeah [Note: the participant  
540 looked at the clock on his phone on the table to make sure he was not running late for his  
541 appointment] a conference call at three o'clock...

542  
543 *Oh, okay, yeah, no you, really, you stop whenever.*

544  
545 Okay, thank, thank you. One of the things when I got back here, eh, with my boss who  
546 went back to work, ehm, when we came in, the ground, the ground had liquified and so  
547 there were parts of the - because we're actually on reclaimed land...

548  
549 *Yeah, yeah.*  
550  
551 ...{redacted}. So it's landfill, basically. Ehm, they, they've done a wonderful job of, like,  
552 compressing, but, but not, not the way that nature does it over billions of years...  
553  
554 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
555  
556 ...so, ehm, there were, there were parts of the, the, that were pushed up like that [Note: the  
557 participant gestured a vertical position with his hands] there was, like, unnatural fluids  
558 coming out of them...  
559  
560 *Yeah, yeah.*  
561  
562 ...and things like that. And, that was, that was a bizarre thing to see.  
563  
564 *Crikey. You know the way that you were kind of saying you were saying that you were,*  
565 *kind of, stretching your Japanese...*  
566  
567 Yes.  
568  
569 ...to get information, did you go to like government websites or?  
570  
571 Yes.  
572  
573 *Oh, you did.*  
574  
575 Yes, I did. I did. I did. I did. I went to government websites, ehm, I went to Tepco  
576 website, that was, of course, later...  
577  
578 *Yeah.*  
579  
580 ...ehm, so, I'm sorry if I'm getting the chronology mixed up here, but, ehm, that's what I  
581 did. Ehm...  
582  
583 *And that would have been all Japanese language...*  
584  
585 Yes.  
586  
587 ...they didn't have any translation at that point.  
588  
589 Eh, no, no. Not initially, no. All, they would have some, some really basic thing saying,  
590 you know, ehm, "The situation is under control." Or actually, I can't remember but, I  
591 can't remember but I, it was, that, I was only, I was probably only looking at the  
592 Japanese, and then I got my English-language information from the English press, and,  
593 and other people that were sharing stuff, you know, things that they had heard. Ehm, I  
594 also knew other very good non-native Japanese speakers that, eh, were, were sharing  
595 information that they knew, ehm, and, there was this, we, we jump, there are all these  
596 protocols that started to get set up between people like let's not rumour-monger, ehm,  
597 let's, let's, kind of, cite where we've, where we've heard that information, ehm, so people  
598 can take it in context of, you know, who said that kind-of-thing, and, ehm, and things got  
599 very heated on Facebook where, eh, you know, some foreign families were, they, they  
600 decided to leave, and they said, you know, "Well, I just don't want to take the risk with  
601 my children." And then the other foreign families that didn't want to leave would be like,  
602 "What, do you don't think we care about our children?"...

603  
604 *[Intake of breath]*  
605  
606 ...And it was, it got, it got nasty at some times. And I tried to stay out of it. But there were  
607 a couple of times I, kind of, panicked and, and, eh, and I, I was, I set this thing up to  
608 myself, a, after everything, this was days down the track, I said, "Do you leave Japan or  
609 do you not leave Japan?" And I set the bar that if the US military pulls out of Yokosuka  
610 [Note: a major naval base of the US military in Japan near Tokyo] I will pull out of  
611 Japan. That was my big thing. And at one stage they, they moved their warships offshore  
612 and, eh, I thought, "Wow, that is scary." And I, I'm not sure if I learned this after the fact  
613 or I, I have a friend, eh, who works, who's a high-ranking military official in the  
614 embassy, in the American Embassy, and, ehm, I spoke to him, and it was more, he said,  
615 "That's, that's just about the sensitivity of the, the machines and that, and there," so he  
616 said, "yeah, it's probably not, they just don't want the, their machines damaged by even  
617 slight radiation." So, I thought, "Okay, I kind of believe you." [laughter]...  
618  
619 *[Laughter]*  
620  
621 ...he, he didn't move, he stayed here too, so, yeah.  
622  
623 *This is one thing that, that a lot of people have talked about how in the, let's say, non-*  
624 *Japanese community, some people felt better served because they, kind of, didn't have,*  
625 *say, like, the government line to rely on. They just found information from each other and*  
626 *used it to make their, their decisions. So some people I've spoken to said they felt they*  
627 *were better off than their Japanese friends in some way...*  
628  
629 Yeah, yes, yes, yes, yes.  
630  
631 *...because they, kind of, didn't feel they could rely on the, I guess, the standard sources,*  
632 *so they came up with their own sources to make their decisions.*  
633  
634 I had Japanese friends asking me, eh, "Seriously, what is the rest of the world saying?"  
635 And, and they were saying it in a very genuine, you know, intelligent Japanese that were  
636 thinking, "We don't," yeah, he said, "We don't know what the, the, what the line is that  
637 the government is towing or what Tepco is saying, or that kind of thing. So what, what,"  
638 eh, especially because, we're, we're, we're get, we're talking specifically now about the  
639 radiation, em, because it's so easy to detect, you know, from, from, from outside of the  
640 city, you know, they can see what's going on there, but eh.  
641  
642 *Yeah, that's an issue, I'm, I'm not even sure I'm going to be able to handle it but, like,*  
643 *translating in a disaster, ...*  
644  
645 Yes.  
646  
647 *...of course, means for the foreign nationals that are here...*  
648  
649 Yes.  
650  
651 *...but also could mean for the Japanese people...*  
652  
653 It was...  
654  
655 *...who want to see.*  
656

657 ...it was, it was a, definitely a real thing and, em, and I had that a lot from, from friends  
658 and even from, ehm, former colleagues and, and media people that, eh, I remember going  
659 to a dinner with these people who were, who were, you know, heads of, I won't say  
660 heads, but they were, were very senior people in, like, a TV, eh, network here, another  
661 guy in a, in a newspaper, like a, a director-level position, and they were asking me, they  
662 were saying, "What are the things that you are hearing?" And they just wanted to see if  
663 there were pieces of information that were just, eh, that were just missing from anything.  
664  
665 *There's just one thing I would like to ask if you can remember. Do you remember when*  
666 *you were in the subway...*  
667  
668 Yes.  
669  
670 *...were there any announcements...*  
671  
672 Yes.  
673  
674 *...and if there were, were there in other languages?*  
675  
676 No, they were all in Japanese. That's a good point.  
677  
678 *The reason I'm asking is you said that there was two obvious foreign people running out*  
679 *screaming...*  
680  
681 Yes, yes.  
682  
683 *...I'm just wondering were there any announcements in English or Chinese or Korean or?*  
684  
685 Ehm, I remember specifically, ehm, after my boss told me, "Wait here. It's safer to be in  
686 the station." Almost, almost seconds after said that, they had a, they had a big  
687 announcement that was, not a recorded, the guy was actually, you know, he got on the  
688 P.A. and he said, he said, you know, "Everybody, there's been a major earthquake. Please  
689 stay within the station. Eh, it's the safest place to be. You will go outside and things will  
690 drop on your head." That was all in Japanese. All in Japanese.  
691  
692 *That's really interesting.*  
693  
694 Ehm, and, just reflecting back on the two foreign guys that jumped the turnstiles, ehm,  
695 just the situation itself and the tone of voice, of the panicked tone of voice of this guy, eh,  
696 eh, giving the announcement would have been enough to, you know, to scare the hell out  
697 of you...  
698  
699 *Yeah, yeah.*  
700  
701 *..."What's he actually saying?"*  
702  
703 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And the other, the final thing that I just want to ask you about is*  
704 *for you, when did the disaster end? If it has?*  
705  
706 Right, right. A very good point. Ehm, it, yeah, interesting. I, it, it almost, it ended, I  
707 would probably say, ehm, maybe a month later, yeah, yeah. It's an interesting thing. I'm  
708 just trying to think, eh, how am I actually judging that for myself. And I'm just thinking  
709 was it my sense of alertness or my, my flight or fight reaction, and I think it was, that  
710 would have been, eh, ehm, and I was, I was furiously tweeting and, and sharing  
711 information back and forth with all these people non-stop for about that period and then,

712 then things got back to normal, ehm, and the reason that I stopped to, to think about that  
 713 is that in the months after that, ehm, there, a lot of things changed in terms of companies  
 714 pulling out of Japan, ehm, some of my best friends with their families moving back home,  
 715 so, for me, it really marked the end of an era, and, em, there was, em, yeah, who decided  
 716 to pick up and leave, ehm, it, I think there was a kind of a sense among Japanese here that  
 717 it was like, "Oh, you guys, you really, you weren't in it for the long haul." And for the  
 718 foreigners who stayed, there was, eh, there was a period of six months to a year when it  
 719 was like, you know, I just got the feeling of, the, the, respect and, like, em, "We thank  
 720 you so much for, for sticking with us." Not that I was actually looking for that, eh, at all.  
 721 But, em, it was a very, very interesting thing. Some, like, I did get some that said, "Why  
 722 are you staying?" It was like, if the tables were turned, had no family here, up and go  
 723 home straight away...  
 724  
 725 *Yeah.*  
 726  
 727 ...there's, there's nothing to be, yeah, but for me it was, em, I had invested so much time,  
 728 I thought, "Okay, when the chips are down," you know?  
 729  
 730 *Oh, it's a tough, tough call, I mean, I, I, each circumstance is so different...*  
 731  
 732 That's right, that's right.  
 733  
 734 *...it's so different. It's very, but I felt what you mentioned about, amongst friends even,*  
 735 *and amongst people in the, let's say, foreign community..*  
 736  
 737 Uhum.  
 738  
 739 *...there was tension...*  
 740  
 741 There was.  
 742  
 743 *...about whether to stay, whether to go...*  
 744  
 745 That's right.  
 746  
 747 *...when people came back.*  
 748  
 749 And, of course, there's the notorious *fly-jin* [Note: a derogatory term for foreigners who  
 750 left Japan during the disaster].  
 751  
 752 .  
 753  
 754 *[Laughter]*  
 755  
 756 Yes, that's right. Ehm, and that, I'm sorry, I have to go, but I do need to tell you about  
 757 one very quick, little thing...  
 758  
 759 *Yeah.*  
 760  
 761 ...is that, em, immediately after it happened we had a, our colleagues around the world,  
 762 em, reached out to us and they said, there was an outpouring of sympathy and, and  
 763 support and these guys somewhere, I can't even remember what it was but it was, like,  
 764 some, one team in the {North America}, one team in {South East Asia}, they quickly set  
 765 up this website where people could send in messages of support to, eh, the people of  
 766 Japan, and, ehm, sorry, this is, this what you actually wanted to talk about, and, em,

767 basically you sent the message and then somehow it was wrapped into, like, an origami  
768 crane and so the, and so it would go up on to this thing, and so if you clicked on the crane  
769 it would unwrap again and you could see the message written inside. It was a really  
770 lovely thing. And they put this up in some amazing, it was, like, 24 hours, 48 hours, or  
771 something...

772  
773 *Yeah.*

774  
775 {redacted}

776  
777 ...and at that point we had all these amazing messages coming out, ehm, but of course  
778 they were all in English or Spanish or German. Mo, most of them were, and we had  
779 thousands of these messages coming through just short little tweets...

780  
781 *Yeah, yeah.*

782  
783 ...and I thought, so we were actually dealing with other stuff, it was, it wasn't a priority,  
784 but, ehm, and that's when I contacted {the person who had introduced the participant to  
785 the researcher} and I said, "Listen, we've got this thing going, would your guys be  
786 interested in translating these messages?" And, em, they were so quick to, to get back on,  
787 they, they asked around and every translator on their books said yes they'd love to do that  
788 for free, absolutely. And, em, I was a little bit conscious, too, was that, that, even though  
789 it was a lovely thing to do, it was cert, it was well and truly branded as {our company}  
790 doing this kind of thing and I, I just, I, it was a little bit weird and then I thought, "Okay,  
791 who cares. It is a business. We're doing this kind of thing and those sentiments are, are  
792 real. So let's put it together." And Google had that wonderful thing going as well. I  
793 thought, "Well, it's got the Google logo on it and people, yeah." So anyway, the end of  
794 the story was that, ehm, the, the technical side of, of getting the translators, to put the  
795 translations in there, it suddenly turned it into a major operation, and the two teams that  
796 had dedicated time to do that, they said, "We don't have any more time." And, eh, so  
797 yeah, that was that.

798  
799 *But that's absolutely, that's the sort of thing where I know there are technological*  
800 *solutions that could be put in place to make that kind of automated...*

801  
802 *Yes, yes.*

803  
804 *...process easier. I know it's terrible to, sort of, be thinking about the next time, but, as*  
805 *you know yourself, unfortunately in Japan, it's a land where...*

806  
807 *Yes, yes, yes, yes.*

808  
809 *...it's really likely there will be, you know, another significant disaster in not such a long*  
810 *period of time so it's the sort of thing that could be put in place, not necessarily just for*  
811 *messages of hope...*

812  
813 *Yes, right.*

814  
815 *...but for other purposes as well.*

816  
817 *Yes, that's right. I did volunteer my services somewhere, it may, I think it was on the*  
818 *Google site, ehm, when they were asking for help with translators and things like that...*

819  
820 *Yeah.*

821

822 ...so I did that, eh, but I, I think they had people much more qualified than me already,  
 823 and I think they also got enough outpouring of support. That might be something, I think  
 824 they set t  
 825 that up for, did they set that up for the Tohoku earthquake?  
 826  
 827 *Yes, I think as far as I'm aware it was done, kind of, on the fly..*  
 828  
 829 So which one? The Haiti?  
 830  
 831 *...so the Haiti, there, there absolutely, there were things...*  
 832  
 833 Yeah, yeah, yes.  
 834  
 835 *...so they had begun this, kind of, Google Crisis Response in Haiti.*  
 836  
 837 And that was before the?  
 838  
 839 *Exactly, that was before...*  
 840  
 841 Sorry, I thought it was afterward.  
 842  
 843 *...about a year before and it was a, kind of, a skeleton effort, I suppose, if you like...*  
 844  
 845 Uhm, that's right.  
 846  
 847 *...and then for the New Zealand / Christchurch earthquakes...*  
 848  
 849 Yes, yes.  
 850  
 851 *...they developed it slightly more...*  
 852  
 853 Uhm.  
 854  
 855 *...which again was just before, as you know, the...*  
 856  
 857 Yes, that's right.  
 858  
 859 *...Japan earthquake. So they built on that slightly again...*  
 860  
 861 Uhm.  
 862  
 863 *...and then for the, eh, Japan earthquake, the, the, they had, I guess, enough, eh,*  
 864 *systems stuff in place that they could...*  
 865  
 866 Uhm, right.  
 867  
 868 *...quite quickly, they really had it up in, in a very short time...*  
 869  
 870 It was amazing, that's right.  
 871  
 872 *...and there was huge, eh, work done on that.*  
 873  
 874 And people taking photographs of the lists of names, oh, that was amazing.  
 875



876 *And, you know, it's important, I think, as well, in terms of, like, non-Japanese people, you*  
 877 *want to be able to make a contribution to...*  
 878  
 879 Yes, yes.  
 880  
 881 *...so that's another way that translation could play a part: it allows people without maybe*  
 882 *the Japanese skills...*  
 883  
 884 Uhm, uhm, uhm.  
 885  
 886 *...to contribute, which is something I know that a lot of people have said they were glad to*  
 887 *do.*  
 888  
 889 Right, right, yes.  
 890  
 891 *And I will definitely look up on the {Irish news} sites [Note: the participant had*  
 892 *mentioned that there may be archives of him being interviewed at the time of the disaster*  
 893 *for Irish news] ...*  
 894  
 895 Yes.  
 896  
 897 *...to see if I can find that, eh, eh, interview...*  
 898  
 899 And I'll see...  
 900  
 901 *...that would be fascinating.*  
 902  
 903 *... if I can find the guy, I can't remember his name, but, but I'm sure if I look at my*  
 904 *Google G-mail...*  
 905  
 906 *Yeah.*  
 907  
 908 *...that he would have been there. I probably have some, some contact details...*  
 909  
 910 *Yeah.*  
 911  
 912 *...and I could even put you in contact with him.*  
 913  
 914 *That would be amazing if you can. But just to say thank you so much...*  
 915  
 916 Right.  
 917  
 918 *...for giving me your time today...*  
 919  
 920 Oh, no. Pleasure, pleasure.  
 921  
 922 *...it's been really fascinating to hear your experiences. I appreciate it very, very much.*  
 923  
 924 And I'm very sorry, I would love to spend a little bit more time with you, but I do have to  
 925 dash.  
 926  
 927 *No problem at all. I completely understand.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/2 Interview with Participant 20*

5 *Researcher: Okay, so that's pretty much it, ehm, then, if you could just tell me...*

6  
7 Participant: Yeah.

8  
9 *...generally what happened to you in the 2011 disaster.*

10  
11 Ehm, in terms of language or just generally.

12  
13 *Just, whatever, yeah, whatever happened...*

14  
15 Okay.

16  
17 *...and I mean, if there are language elements.*

18  
19 Ehm, well I suppose we were in the office here, ehm, so there was a fair amount of  
20 shaking. Our office is on the, a relatively high floor in the building so, em, these buildings  
21 are really, I think, designed to sway in the actual event of an earthquake. So the building  
22 started swaying back and forth. It was, sort of, accelerating from one side to another. It  
23 was pretty dramatic and, em, my desk is actually relatively close to a window and so, eh,  
24 once that started, you, kind of, got a sense that it was something bigger than we had had  
25 previously. Obviously living in Tokyo you get a number of small shakes, em, but this was  
26 obviously something a little bit bigger, em, and it, sort of, continued on for some time. I  
27 actually had a, a meeting, em, that I had to go to at a client's, em, that was, sort of,  
28 coming up. So I was actually slated to leave the office, go to this meeting with a  
29 colleague, and so I, sort of, worked my way from my desk towards the middle of the  
30 room and we were, sort of, swaying back and forth like on the deck of a ship, and my  
31 colleague was actually still working try, through the whole thing, trying to get the work  
32 done. And, em, I actually filmed some of him doing that...

33  
34 *[Laughter]*

35  
36 ...because I was just like, "He's crazy." And, eh, and, and he, and I was like, "{redacted},  
37 you know, what are you doing?" And he was, he was just like, "Aw, I just want to get this  
38 thing done so I can get the hell out of here." So I was like, "All right." So the shaking  
39 finished. We decided at that point that, "All right that's it, we're going to go". Because  
40 not only did we have a meeting but also clearly I didn't want to stay in the building. Em,  
41 although I know technically you are supposed to remain in the building. Em,  
42 announcements were being made through the building and so on, ehm, you know, but  
43 {my colleague} and I, em, sort of, made our way down the stairs in the stairwell, and in  
44 the stairwell you could see the cracks in the drywall and so on, that had, that happened,  
45 Again, em, nothing really damaged, em, I think one of the things I remember about the  
46 earthquake was the, we have, em, filing cabinets along the walls of our office that are on,  
47 eh, rails just to save space, so they sort of slide back and forth, you can get to a second  
48 railing. And I just remember in the course of that swaying back and forth, all of the filing  
49 cabinets swaying to one side, slamming against each other, and then swinging back and  
50 slamming. So I just remember, and the force of that, kind of, just, that noise that they,  
51 they were making as they would, kind of, pack into each other. Ehm, but then going down  
52 through the, the stairwell was the first sign of actually seeing damage, em, with sort of -  
53 and it's all been fixed now obviously but, but, em - seeing cracks in the drywall, seeing,

54 em, problems. We got down onto the ground floor fairly quickly. Ehm, we hopped in a  
55 taxi at that time. I think, it, it, sort of, again nobody really knew what was going on, news  
56 hadn't, sort of, come. This was probably, you know, almost immediately after the  
57 earthquake so we were almost immediately in a taxi. Ehm and then we were heading  
58 towards our client's, which was in {central Tokyo}. So we, eh, got in the taxi and started  
59 driving and, you know, we, we saw more and more people coming out of buildings,  
60 around us there were people standing on the street looking around. Em, I'm not quite sure  
61 if I remember traffic lights - no, traffic lights were still working, electricity was still on.  
62 But, em, definitely there was a sort of sense of people looking around trying to figure out  
63 what's going on. Ehm we'd, sort of, gotten a couple of blocks away from the office, then  
64 a big aftershock hit, and I remember seeing the, the buildings from down on the street  
65 level looking up now and seeing them swaying and realising what we had just gone  
66 through. We were like, "Wow, that was, that was pretty crazy." Eh, we, sort of, started  
67 driving towards the client site from our office and, eh, it's probably about a thirty-minute  
68 drive and after about 10 minutes obviously traffic was getting really bad, nobody knew  
69 what was going on, and we were like, "Okay, forget it. This is, this meeting isn't going to  
70 happen." This is, the, this was obviously something more severe, something  
71 unprecedented. So we decided, "All right, forget it. We'll just go home. And since we  
72 actually had a taxi, em, which I think got increasingly difficult to get into fairly, sort of,  
73 we were like, "All right, well, em," and I was living at the time in {a central area of  
74 Tokyo}, em, my wife was working, em, in {a famous office building in that area} - so I  
75 decided to go to {there} and I'd get out there and my colleague then took the taxi the rest  
76 of the way. Ehm, {redacted} got to my wife's office and they weren't letting anyone out  
77 of the building, ehm, for security reasons, so she works for a bank and their security  
78 people had decided the safest place to stay until they knew what was going on would be  
79 the building. So she was essentially locked down. Ehm, I was able to call up to her from  
80 the, eh, lobby and she was okay. And I was like, "All right, well I'm going to go home  
81 and check on the kids." So I went home. Just walked home. Met up with the kids. We had  
82 a couple of kids at the time. We have three now. But two at the time. Fairly young. And  
83 the, eh, the nanny had, sort of, you know, taken them under a desk, and, and they were  
84 okay. Ehm, and then I sat and just, kind of, hung out with them and then tried to figure  
85 out what was going on. Ehm, and I think at that time, em, you know, the phone networks  
86 were all pretty overloaded. It was very difficult to call people and find out what was  
87 going on. The Internet, though, seemed to be working, fair, reasonably well and was  
88 stable. That was kind of surprising but it was relatively easy to get on to news sites, get  
89 on to, em, Twitter, and, and things like that and, and start to try to decipher what, what  
90 had happened. Ehm, and then I think, ehm, you know, for me, I, I'm not a fluent Japanese  
91 speaker, ehm, so. And, and, actually we don't even have a television. Ehm, I don't, don't  
92 actually have a, you know, we don't, eh, consume Japanese media really at all. Eh, so,  
93 em, you know, social media, so, eh, Internet sites, things like that became a pretty big  
94 source of information. Also, em, you know, calling, or, SMSing people or, or, or trying to  
95 email people or, or trying to get information like that, em, even fairly quickly trying to  
96 get back in touch with the office to, sort of, check that everyone was okay and, and, and  
97 so on, em, try to arrange for people to be able to get home, em, you now, there were,  
98 there were issues. Obvious, it was a little bit awkward because we, sort of, ended up out  
99 of the office because of this meeting. Ehm, it was a, it was a bit awkward and, but, you  
100 know, so we were able to, sort of, talk to people like, "Okay" - because I live not super  
101 far away from the office certainly compared to a lot of my Japanese colleagues...

102  
103 *Yeah.*

104  
105 ...em, you know, I was, sort of, like, "Hey, if anyone wants a place to stay, they can crash  
106 at my place, they don't have to walk home tonight..."

107  
108 *Yeah.*

109  
110 ...and so on, if there's hotels that you can book at, or so on. Ehm, I remember reading  
111 about a colleague or a former client who actually, em, did something rather smart after  
112 that and I think in retrospect I would probably would do something like that too which is  
113 just immediately after the earthquake he went to the ATM and, em, and, sort of, basically  
114 got, maxed, the maximum amount of cash out of his account, em, because he knew that  
115 he was going to be needing cash...  
116  
117 *Ah, that's a good idea.*  
118  
119 ...which I thought was, em, which I thought was a good idea. You now, the infrastructure  
120 surprisingly really held up okay. So, you know, there wasn't a problem, there wasn't a  
121 period where I remember, like, not being able to use a credit card or, or like any kind of  
122 real break down in, sort of, em, basic, you know, shopping or necessities or anything like  
123 that, so, em, there was never that sense of, kind of, desperation or whatever. And  
124 certainly, you know, when you started to realise, em, what, what had happened in  
125 northern Japan, then you, kind of, realised, "Oh my god, that really was, em, disastrous,  
126 relatively speaking." It was almost like guilty. You just, kind of, feel like, like, you were  
127 like, "Wow, well, we were really lucky." Eh, and so, that, that entire period for, you  
128 know, a month or so afterwards, or even a couple of months, there was a funny kind of  
129 guilt, I think, about, em, you know, everything is still working, the supermarkets are fine.  
130 There's produce, there's milk, and, and, you know, all this kind of stuff is there and, and  
131 meanwhile these people up north were going through so much trouble...  
132  
133 *Yeah.*  
134  
135 ...hardship, and so many people had been killed. So, eh, it was difficult. Ehm, I, I, I think,  
136 you know, em, the focus fairly quickly after about 24 hours shifted from being, "Oh my  
137 God, that was a terrible disaster that happened" to be "What's going on with  
138 Fukushima?" Ehm, so, ehm, and then it became a lot of information searching and, and so  
139 on. And, and, em, trying to get a sense of what are the official reports, what are the  
140 unofficial reports? I think I remember at the time the Japanese government, em, started  
141 kind of doing things in English, kind of. Ehm, I remember they, they held a press  
142 briefing, I think, or they tried to open up a Twitter account where they would tweet and,  
143 em, initially in Japanese but then also trying to tweet in English as well. Em, in all  
144 honesty, I didn't, I don't think that ever really, I, I, the official records never really, em,  
145 became part of that, em, information flow. I think, eh, at the time, eh, my wife was  
146 working at this, this institution, and, and, ehm, I think it was on Saturday, Saturday  
147 evening we went out for dinner - and again, this funny kind of strange, em, period  
148 where, em, things were very quiet, em, but everything was okay - and, and so it was a  
149 funny sort of feeling going out for dinner that night, but my wife and I decided we needed  
150 to talk and figure out what to do and we had a couple of young children. I think,  
151 probably, em, you know, so, we were trying to figure out what, how should we react to  
152 this? What should we do? What would we consider? Ehm, and because I think my wife  
153 had actually started hearing that some people were starting to leave. Ehm, and, we were  
154 like, "Well, should we think about that?" Ehm, you know, I remember having  
155 conversations with colleagues and talking about, "Maybe we should rent a car and just  
156 hold on to the car, just in case." Because again, not a lot of people own cars...  
157  
158 *Uhm, uhm.*  
159  
160 ...but, you know, maybe you need that or, or what's kind of your plan to get out of Tokyo  
161 if there's a decision to evacuate Tokyo. Ehm, so all these kinds of considerations, ehm,  
162 were sort of, you know people were emailing each other, people were talking to each  
163 other, ehm, you know, trying to figure out what to do. My wife, ehm, eh, we had dinner,

164 we had talked about it, and then she was like, “Okay, well, maybe, maybe I’ll just call  
 165 my boss and see what she’s doing and so we called her boss and then there was all this  
 166 noise in the background of the call when we called her, and, eh, eh, she was like, “Oh,  
 167 well, actually, we’re in Tokyo Station now and we’re about to get on the *shinkansen*  
 168 [Note: Japanese Bullet Train] for Osaka...  
 169  
 170 *[Laughter]*  
 171  
 172 And, and so it was like...  
 173  
 174 *Okay!*  
 175  
 176 ...”Okay!” [Laughter] So there was a bit of that kind of sense of like, “Wow! People are  
 177 getting out of here.” And, and it wasn’t, and, you know, we, we have a, a nanny now that  
 178 helps us and she worked for a French, em, family and they just split...  
 179  
 180 *[Laughter]*  
 181  
 182 ...like, I mean, there was no, kind of, left no note on the door or anything, and the nanny  
 183 showed up for work one day and, you know, was just looking in the windows trying to  
 184 figure out what happened and the landlord was there trying to figure out where they had  
 185 gone and it, it was really, yeah, pretty quick [laughter].  
 186  
 187 *[Laughter]*  
 188  
 189 Ehm, so, so Saturday night they were shipping out, ehm, eh, you know, Sunday came  
 190 around and my wife and I decided well maybe it was best if, if she and the kids got out. I  
 191 felt I couldn’t go because I, I have some responsibility at the company and there’s people  
 192 that report to me and so on, so I didn’t feel that that was something that I could do. But  
 193 my wife’s position and, and she works for a much more international, kind of, eh,  
 194 company. It does more international work, she doesn’t need to be based in Tokyo, so the  
 195 idea was why doesn’t she just get out of Tokyo, take the kids, actually get down to Osaka,  
 196 and then from Osaka. So on Sunday afternoon she and the kids left for Osaka, eh, and  
 197 then they flew on to Hong Kong, em, and then lived in Hong Kong for about three or four  
 198 weeks before coming back to Japan. Eh, so I, I remained. Ehm, went to a meeting on  
 199 Monday morning at the company. Sort of emergency kind of a meeting. We, we, sort of,  
 200 I, I think a lot of the communication at the time was done through email. I, I think, I, you  
 201 know, I think by that point the phone lines were fine...  
 202  
 203 *Yeah.*  
 204  
 205 ... and everything was okay, but the company was trying to keep in touch through email.  
 206 I, I mean, speaking honestly, things like infrastructure became a real issue. Em, we have a  
 207 network system which, due for security reasons, you can’t access when you’re physically  
 208 not on site. Eh, we don’t have off-site backups. Ehm, you know, there’s all those kinds of  
 209 problems that, hon, honestly, had something really happened the building or had it been  
 210 impossible to get in, our, we would have been done, like, we couldn’t do our jobs.  
 211  
 212 *Yeah.*  
 213  
 214 Ehm, you know, that being said I think there is a real Japanese, kind of, spirit thing. And,  
 215 you know, guys were at their desk, you know, 8.30 in the morning ready to go.  
 216  
 217 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 218

219 Ehm, and, you know, I, I found that, that was a challenge culturally, ehm, especially by  
 220 that point, em, I think I was starting to see SMSs or e-mails from friends, French friends,  
 221 who were like, "We're leaving. The embassy said to leave. You should leave, too." Ehm,  
 222 you know, and, and at that time, things were moving very quickly. Em, I do remember  
 223 that, em, you know, that the French evacuated, the Germans evacuated, eh, the British  
 224 were somewhat hedging their bet, if I remember correctly. Ehm, the Canadians, eh, didn't  
 225 really, em, commit one way or another. I think eventually the Canadians decided to  
 226 charter a bus where they got some people out of northern, em, Japan and, and moved  
 227 them down to Tokyo and then further south. But there was never really an official, kind  
 228 of, "This is a problem." Ehm, yeah, I, I think, you know, in the subsequent period, well I  
 229 just remember that Monday morning meeting, and we had, sort of, em, a moment of  
 230 silence for what had happened and, and it was everybody around a boardroom table, all  
 231 the senior people reporting, and then 9:05 big aftershock. And then I just remember, sort  
 232 of, sitting there in that building there again [laughter]...  
 233  
 234 [Laughter]  
 235  
 236 ...swaying back and forth thinking, "That was so stupid!" We took,...  
 237  
 238 [Laughter]  
 239  
 240 ...we took all the senior leadership of our company, put them in the same room together,  
 241 ehm, on the top floor of this stupid building and now we're all going to die [laughter] and  
 242 that was just dumb. And, and, so, you know, and, and really, you know, I think  
 243 contingency planning for this kind of stuff was not particularly deep. So I, you know, I, I  
 244 contrast it to some of the other firms that, that I have some knowledge of, there's a lot  
 245 more, there's some, but I was such a, unusual event...  
 246  
 247 Yeah.  
 248  
 249 ...that I think it really caught a lot of people by surprise, the scale of it. Ehm, anyway, so,  
 250 you know, in the, in the subsequent period my family was gone, em, the office was, kind  
 251 of, operating in a weird kind of half limbo kind of state where I think some, some people  
 252 thought it was our duty to show up and continue working even though there was nothing  
 253 to do. Ehm, you know, culturally I thought it was an interesting time. I mean I know it's  
 254 not the focus of your study but I, I think the idea of, em, eh, you know, I had individual  
 255 Japanese reporting to me, sort of, saying, "I don't understand, we're still scheduling client  
 256 meetings." [Laughter] Ehm, you know, th, they were trying to make deadlines and clearly  
 257 the world had changed, clearly everything was out the window, but there were people that  
 258 were forcing this, kind of, sense of normalcy that "Well, no. We promised we were going  
 259 to deliver that report on Thursday. We're going to deliver it on Thursday." And it, there  
 260 were some people that were just like, "This is crazy."  
 261  
 262 [Laughter]  
 263  
 264 So, eventually things, kind of, I think even those people recognized [laughter]...  
 265  
 266 [Laughter]  
 267  
 268 ...that things were really different. Ehm, so, eh, you know, eventually the, the company  
 269 shut down for a couple of days, and so on. Em, in that period, it was, it was interesting,  
 270 obviously met with a number of my foreign friends, the people that were still here, eh I  
 271 remember going to, eh, you know, some pubs and bars and stuff like that and, kind of,  
 272 sharing this strange experience through the friend who - not entirely sure if it's entirely  
 273 accurate but - he maintains the reason he stayed was because of his dog. He couldn't, he

274 couldn't figure out what to do with his dog, so he was going to stay there while his wife  
 275 and kids got out. Ehm, you know, chatting over beers trying to find out what's going on.  
 276 I, I think there was a lot of distrust of official records. Ehm, you know, I think anyone  
 277 who has been in Japan for a while kind of understands the press (indistinct) system, kind  
 278 of understands the connections between the press and the government and, and, so I think  
 279 anything official coming out - and particularly because things were so vague - I don't  
 280 think the government had any idea what was going on. Ehm, you know, so they couldn't  
 281 report one thing or another and, you know, subsequently you, sort of, realise how  
 282 fractured that entire structure was, but it was kind of obvious at the time, that it wasn't  
 283 working. Ehm, so there became a lot of speculation. There became a lot of, em, of  
 284 different, eh, ways to try to figure out and piece together these clues about what was  
 285 going on.  
 286  
 287 *Yeah.*  
 288  
 289 Ehm, I remember, you know, it was an interesting time. There was, em, I remember, you  
 290 know, Western press, I remember seeing a, a Fox News reporter who had flown in to  
 291 Japan, em, on top of a building in Osaka wearing a gas mask...  
 292  
 293 *[Laughter]*  
 294  
 295 ...[laughter] on the top of a building...  
 296  
 297 *[Laughter]*  
 298  
 299 ...em, [laughter] reporting this thing, like, over there, you know, and you know, fairly  
 300 quickly on, I think, you now, immediately on the day, em, you know, seeing that kind of -  
 301 ah I forget - Shibuya Egg what, whatever the reactor name [Note: this refers to an  
 302 infamous Fox News report that showed a map listing a Shibuya nightclub called  
 303 'Eggman' as one of Japan's nuclear reactors]...  
 304  
 305 *Yes, yeah, yeah.*  
 306  
 307 ...and all this sort of misinformation started pouring out...  
 308  
 309 *Yeah.*  
 310  
 311 ...so it was a very strange time. Ehm, you know, I, I remember looking at these trying to  
 312 piece it together for yourself and, and with people that you trusted, you relied on the  
 313 judgment of people that kind of knew what they were talking about, ehm, a little bit. So I  
 314 think there was em, eh, you know, when it, when it came to stuff like, em, you, sort of,  
 315 got, kind of, angry when you see these reporters, kind of, talking about the danger and  
 316 holding a geiger counter up in the air in Osaka, and you were like, "You have got to be  
 317 kidding me." [laughter]...  
 318  
 319 *[Laughter]*  
 320  
 321 ...like, it's just, it, you know, and, and I remember there was a famous picture that went  
 322 around, I think in the AP, which was, em, when the Japanese started using helicopters to  
 323 drop water on to the reactors, ehm, which I think originally was, eh, when my wife saw  
 324 that picture in Hong Kong she was pretty bowed by that because she was like, "Okay,  
 325 they clearly have completely lost control."...  
 326  
 327 *Control, yeah.*  
 328

329 ...em, whereas I had actually, sort of, I don't remember where I heard it or where I read  
 330 about it but, clearly I heard about it I was concerned, but then people were saying, "Well,  
 331 this is actually a positive sign." That actually they are finding ways to cool, the, they are,  
 332 they are moving forward with this...

333  
 334 *Yeah.*  
 335

336 ...so it, it's actually not a, a, a desperate measure, and I do remember, I think the, I took a  
 337 screenshot of it, I can't remember, but I think the Guardian or maybe, I think, I have a  
 338 feeling the Post Online used the same picture and they just had such dramatically  
 339 different headlines, and I remember one was 'Japanese Step Up Nuclear Cooling  
 340 Operation' and then the other one something about 'Desperate Last Stand' [laughter].  
 341

342 *[Laughter]*  
 343

344 You know, and, and, then people started showing up in the Daily Mail and things like that  
 345 where you sort of had, "Oh, I need to evacuate out of Japan and I need to get \$20,000..."  
 346

347 *[Laughter]*  
 348

349 ...to get my ticket paid for." And showing up on media talking about all the terrible things  
 350 that were happening, and, and there was this real sense of disconnect when your life when  
 351 you went to work and you went to the supermarket and you bought groceries and nothing  
 352 in Tokyo changed. Everything was fine. There were no buildings that were damaged.  
 353 Everything seemed to be fine. The infrastructure was working. The phone service was  
 354 okay. There was this terrible refugee problem, em, up in Northern Japan and very strange  
 355 nuclear situation going on. Ehm, but, ehm, there was nothing in your experience that,  
 356 kind of, reflected these strange reports that you were seeing, particularly in the foreign  
 357 press which I think were somewhat sensationalist in, in how they treated it. Even, even  
 358 papers like the New York Times and things like that. I remember, I forget, there again it  
 359 was, sort of, a headline that was very, oh I remember actually, there was something about,  
 360 em, an article about people in Los Angeles being screened for radiation getting off  
 361 airplanes that were flying from Japan, em, and being, and there was radiation found on  
 362 the plane or something like that. And then, you know, buried, sort of, eight paragraphs  
 363 down in the article was, kind of, but that's actually what normally happens...  
 364

365 *[Laughter]*  
 366

367 ...basic solar radiation, so there's nothing to worry about. But, but, you know, the, the  
 368 headline and the first seven paragraphs are all about Fukushima and the disaster and then  
 369 the eighth is actually saying, "Yeah, but this actually has nothing to do with that." And,  
 370 and so there was a real, kind of, 'If it bleeds, it leads' kind of mentality so again you, you,  
 371 sort of, had to be skeptical about that. Em, I know personally there was a couple of  
 372 resources which became very valuable to me. Em, you know, Twitter became valuable,  
 373 and, and, and I think, em, there was a, a real small foreign community - and, you know,  
 374 I'm sure you'd probably be able to track them down even by just going back through  
 375 Twitter - ...  
 376

377 *Yeah.*  
 378

379 ...ehm, of people that were translating stuff, that were actually, you know, live-tweeting  
 380 press conferences, that were, sort of, eh, a group of people became, kind of, sort of, little  
 381 experts, I think, almost very quickly, ehm, and, and, sort of, were, almost saw it, I think,  
 382 as a kind of a service that they were doing to, kind of, let people know what was going  
 383 on. I don't think it was necessarily done for the foreign population in Japan or as specific



384 as that, but I think it was kind of, a sense of expression, it was, kind of, letting the world  
 385 know what was going on so, you know, they would be live-tweeting press conferences or  
 386 were doing, sort of, basic translations on what the latest announcement was or what the  
 387 news was saying, ehm, so fairly quickly I built a Twitter stream or I built a group that I  
 388 followed, em, that, sort of, became an important kind of barometer broadly, em, for “Are  
 389 things getting better or are things getting worse?” And that, kind of, became the, em, em,  
 390 the, the thing. I think there were, sort of, official events that some of the embassies put  
 391 on. I think the Tokyo American Club did something. And those were all generally quite  
 392 open so it was publicized so, “Hey if you want to hear this specialist talk about things,”  
 393 then, then you could go and listen. And again I think [laughter] I think, again just talking  
 394 about, sort of, trying to decipher for yourself what things meant, I, I remember, eh, one of  
 395 the, eh, the aircraft carriers from the US came to, to assist in the clean up and it, kind of,  
 396 came and it, sort of, was going closer to the Fukushima Plant and then decided to leave  
 397 [laughter]...  
 398  
 399 *Yeah [laughter].*  
 400  
 401 ...and drive to the other side of the island and park there. And I just remember that  
 402 moment was like, “Okay!” [laughter]...  
 403  
 404 *Okay [laughter].*  
 405  
 406 ...“That’s probably not a good sign that they don’t want to park there.” And, you know,  
 407 I’m sure, abundance of caution and so on...  
 408  
 409 *Yeah.*  
 410  
 411 ...but, yeah, things that were visible like that, and, and again there was, you know, a good  
 412 degree of skepticism about, em, the official Japanese report, and, and I think there is  
 413 something culturally in Jap, Japan which is, sort of, this *shoganai* [Note: a very  
 414 commonly used Japanese expression meaning ‘It can’t be helped’ or ‘There’s no use (in  
 415 doing something)’] kind of...  
 416  
 417 *Yeah.*  
 418  
 419 ...we’re going to, well, “They’d tell us if something was wrong.” Whereas, I think, em, I  
 420 have a friend who’s married to a Japanese woman and they had, eh, a lot of  
 421 disagreements at the time where he was like, “We’ve got to go.” And she was like, “No.  
 422 We’re not going anywhere. It’s fine. The government would tell us if there was a  
 423 problem. We’re going to stay here.” And she was like, and he was like, “We’ve got kids.  
 424 We’re leaving.” And she was like, “No!” And so it became this real, sort of, eh, bone of  
 425 contention, I think, amongst them, and, I think, where there is a kind of “We’re going to,  
 426 we’re going to see this through” kind of mindset which I think makes it a little bit  
 427 different than I think the react, if you had, eh, an event like this which happened in  
 428 Canada or if it happened in Britain or if it happened in other places where I think people  
 429 are maybe a little bit more individualistic and more skeptical of official lines, so anyway.  
 430 Or, or, maybe people here are actually are skeptical and do realise but at the same time  
 431 there is, kind of, a sense of, “Well, we can’t do anything about it.” So there’s, sort of, a  
 432 bit more of a, eh, resignation, I think, and it’s, there’s a resilience in that. But I think there  
 433 is also, kind of, a lack of action sometimes which I can Westerners can, can tend to see as  
 434 an issue. Ehm, anyway, so, Twitter became a big thing. There’s actually a website, em,  
 435 forums and things like that, em, I have, eh, an interest in technology, so there’s a couple  
 436 of English-language technology websites that I’ve, eh, that I’ve, eh, em, sort of,  
 437 subscribed to, or part of these little communities...  
 438

439 *Yeah.*

440

441 ...and a lot of these guys are people that have been in Japan for a long time and have  
442 educational backgrounds - they're, they're sort of, professionals but not necessarily, kind  
443 of, expats, but, but people that are, em, that are, are, are quite, you know, they're all  
444 fluent in Japanese or, or so on, but we have a shared interest in technology or something.  
445 Em, so, on one of those sites, one of the, and again, one of the guys was a, was a  
446 professional translator and he actually does a lot of technical translations, em, and a lot of  
447 the people did. So, em, and it happened that this guy actually had done some of the  
448 technical translations for, I believe, G.E. when they were building the reactors  
449 [laughter]...

450

451 *Okay [laughter].*

452

453 ...so his background was also in sciences and there was another guy who was a Todai guy  
454 [Note: this means a graduate of Tokyo University, Japan's most prestigious academic  
455 institution] so there, there was a lot of, there was a lot of, sort of, experts, and, and there  
456 was some very active discussion on the these boards about 'how do you see this?' or  
457 'what do you think about this?' and 'what about this?' or 'I read this thing. What do you  
458 think about that?'. And, you know, broadly speaking, I think we all, kind of, maybe we  
459 are like-minded which is why we are, sort of, in the group already, but I think there was,  
460 kind of, a steadying influence about that. You know, there's a, a colleague that I work  
461 with who has a background - well, while he works in advertising - he has a background  
462 in, in nuclear physics, so yeah, like, his, you know, Undergraduate slash PhD/Masters  
463 kind of understanding of stuff just became, kind of, one of those people that you went to,  
464 "So what is a millisievert exactly?" and, and, "So how am I supposed to interpret this?"  
465 Ehm, you know, and, and I think the, the thing that made the nuclear situation so odd,  
466 again compared to if there was a wildfires in the hills or whatever...

467

468 *Yeah.*

469

470 ...radiation, you can't see it, em, you can't feel it, you don't know, and, and it's such an  
471 unusual problem that, em, you know, it, it's the kind of thing that gets people very scared,  
472 eh, very quickly. Eh, you know, I think people get run over by buses and knocked down  
473 by cars and killed in car accidents at a far greater pace but it's, kind of, routine and  
474 regular, so people, kind of, just accept that as part of just, "That's life." Ehm, but, you  
475 know, the idea of a nuclear reactor doing something and not being able to see what's  
476 happening, em, really makes people very anxious. Ehm, and, eh, I was hearing stories  
477 about, em, from friends in China who were, em, reacting, you know, they, their nannies,  
478 you know, fairly uneducated, em, very well meaning but, you know, somewhat  
479 uneducated women from the Chinese countryside were wrapping scarves around the kids'  
480 necks and things like that to keep them safe from the Fukushima radiation. I mean that  
481 was in Shanghai...

482

483 *Yeah.*

484

485 ...ehm, you know, and then, and, and so you really do end up reading a lot of intention to,  
486 sort of, so, "What are the government saying? What are they doing?" I, I mean I had  
487 heard subsequently that the Japanese government was really putting a lot of pressure on  
488 the American government at the time not to evacuate its citizens. Em, again, this is all  
489 subsequent, but they felt that had they actually, had the Americans actually said, "Okay,  
490 everybody get out," then that would have been a, a sign of, then, then people would have  
491 been interpreting that,...

492

493 *Yeah.*

494  
 495 ...”Okay, right, got to go.” Ehm, and as long as the Americans said, “Look, if you don’t  
 496 have, non-essential staff go, but if you have to be there, it’s still okay.” Em, and, you  
 497 know, I think there was a lot of diplomatic negotiations on that because the Japanese  
 498 government I think realised that people were reading the situation for what, what’s going  
 499 on. Em, so I think that kind of management of the message was really happening. Ehm,  
 500 you know, generally speaking, I think when it comes to, em, looking at Fukushima even  
 501 today immediately in those months afterwards, you, sort of, get a sense of, you know, if  
 502 the website or, you know, if the article published is from Dr Stephens on New Economist  
 503 Platform dot org dot jp, you’re just like, “Whatever. Who is this?”  
 504  
 505 *Yeah [laughter].*  
 506  
 507 And, and, so, you know, fairly quickly you, sort of, get, you get a sniff for, kind of,  
 508 “What’s this? What axe is this guy grinding? What is going on?” And at the same time  
 509 you want to take it in, em, and certainly in those early days, em, I think immediately what  
 510 happened was just you throw the floodgates open, and you just wanted as much  
 511 information as you could get, and then you start to parse it for yourself and figure out  
 512 what’s going on and rely on the people that you trust for, you know, who might not  
 513 [laughter] frankly be really great arbiters of, of nuclear radi, radiation and understanding  
 514 what’s going on with that. But at least you, sort of, rely on them in a social context...  
 515  
 516 *Yeah.*  
 517  
 518 ...and, and, and so you would be able to sit down and drink and talk about different  
 519 things...  
 520  
 521 *Yeah.*  
 522  
 523 ...and see what, em, works. So, I, I think that was, you know, largely how we  
 524 interpreted...  
 525  
 526 *Yeah.*  
 527  
 528 ...the stuff. Ehm, you know, I think from the technology point of view so, you know,  
 529 again this web forum became a very important, em, place for me to, sort of, get  
 530 information and, and sort of share links ..  
 531  
 532 *Yeah.*  
 533  
 534 ...and, kind of, “What do you think about this?” And that was more of a closed  
 535 community. Ehm, not, not really closed. I mean, it was open but it was sort, it was a  
 536 member, it was a club essentially...  
 537  
 538 *Yeah.*  
 539  
 540 ...and everything was open if, if, so there were, if you had someone that you wanted to,  
 541 you could forward a link and they could check a forum, it was all open, but again you,  
 542 sort of, know each other...  
 543  
 544 *Uhum.*  
 545  
 546 ...so that’s, sort of, there’s a certain amount of trust, I think, Twitter was more, em, eh, a  
 547 vacuum for information just, em, anything and then I think over the course of, you know,  
 548 a couple of weeks, eh, it, kind of, became evident that certain people were contributing

549 quite a lot and you ended up following those people. Em, I don't quite remember at this  
550 point, I think, you know, I think Jean Snow, em, was a Canadian, em, kind of, has an art  
551 background and stuff and culture, kind of, or the, the, the, eh, the Dyson, em, the, or the,  
552 em, the architecture guys that are behind (indistinct) and some of the, so. I think there  
553 was, em, you know, there's certain people that, kind of, rose and, and I don't think  
554 deliberately, but just, kind of, they were commenting a lot on it or they were contributing  
555 a lot, I think Jake Adelstein, the, eh, the author...

556  
557 *Yeah.*

558  
559 ...who's written some, you know, and again, and so, and then people like Hiroki Tabuchi,  
560 Hiroko, Hiroko Tabuchi...

561  
562 *Yeah.*

563  
564 ...the New York Times reporter [*Note: the reporter's name is Hiroko*]...

565  
566 *Yeah, yeah.*

567  
568 ...em, and I, I think some of those people, also I think there was someone at the Wall  
569 Street Journal, too, and, and, and, you know, and then just also just people in the course  
570 of their day who would be translating things and stuff so that became, em, kind of, a more  
571 of a collection kind of place for information. I think, eh, you know fairly quickly, I think  
572 the international reports weren't very useful...

573  
574 *Yeah.*

575  
576 ....em, they either, you know, were playing up the disaster or didn't really have any better  
577 insight into what was going on because the Japanese government wasn't really sharing  
578 information, and I think the Japanese government didn't have the information. Em, but,  
579 em, you know, so they would fly these reporters in and they would stand on top of  
580 buildings and try to say something for five minutes but they didn't know what was going  
581 on and, eh, em, so, you know, it wasn't much use to pay attention to CNN or BBC. I  
582 think there were some, I remember one time there was some kind of a report or  
583 something and there was some, you know, 'you can't view this from the country in which  
584 you are based' kind of, like, eh, DRM kind of a thing where, em, I think it might have  
585 been the BBC or maybe ITV or someone had prepared a, you know, 'here's a review of  
586 the thing' and I really wanted to watch it and it was just kind of, eh, 'you can't view this  
587 because you're not in our territory...

588  
589 *Right.*

590  
591 ...and for the advertising reasons, we can't serve you (indistinct).' And that was just like,  
592 "Okay guys, that's, that's," em, you know, I, I think some, some, some organis, I think,  
593 you know, Google reacted fairly quickly. Ehm, I think they had put in place a person-  
594 finder thing ..

595  
596 *Yeah, yeah.*

597  
598 ...in Haiti. And then they quickly, kind of, deployed it in Japan. Very simple to access...

599  
600 *Yeah.*

601  
602 ...ehm, you know, so I don't really remember Google doing anything in, in the way of  
603 information or frankly really any technology company officially doing anything in the

604 way of 'here we're going to provide these services' but, em, that was something. I think,  
605 the was, I don't know, {the participant's colleague whom I also interviewed} might have  
606 mentioned it but there was a, a company {that provided a technical platform to coordinate  
607 the translation of messages of support}...

608  
609 *Oh, yes, yeah. He did mention it, yeah.*

610  
611 So, em, I mean it's an interesting service. Like, had they been more established now, I  
612 wonder if they would actually play a larger role in a time like that?

613  
614 *Yeah, yeah.*

615  
616 Em, possibly. Em, you know, so, at the time, though, I, I think the official response to  
617 these things, em, was still somewhat official and, you know, again the odd, the oddness  
618 about being in Tokyo at the time, not really having a problem...

619  
620 *Yeah.*

621  
622 ...like not actually seeing...

623  
624 *Yeah.*

625  
626 ...a real issue. I, I think that might have also contributed to, sort of, a lack of, em, directed  
627 action. And, and again, I think because there was so much concern about how, eh, things  
628 could be perceived, you know, by official companies...

629  
630 *Yeah.*

631  
632 ...if they started doing this stuff. I'm sure, I mean, and no exaggeration, I'm sure they  
633 would get a call...

634  
635 *Yeah.*

636  
637 ...pretty quickly about, "Oh, you're making this worse." Or you know, you know, you  
638 know "Please back up." Or "Try not to say." So I, I, you know, I, I suspect there was  
639 probably quite a bit of that, em, management...

640  
641 *Yeah.*

642  
643 ...of, of the crisis kind of thing going on.

644  
645 *How, how did you feel about, say, the Canadian Embassy or the British Embassy in their*  
646 *contacts with you? How, how did they contact you, for example? [Note: this participant*  
647 *has both Canadian and British passports]*

648  
649 *Ehm...*

650  
651 *Via emails or?*

652  
653 ...I'm trying to remember. I, I mean, I think, you know, officially registered with the  
654 embassy as a resident and so on. I, you know, again, I, I kind of, em, I, I, you know,  
655 more my emb, my em, my connection was with the Canadian Embassy...

656  
657 *Okay.*

658

659 Em, I, I think, em, it, I, I think what you end up spending a lot of time trying to figure out  
 660 was like what is the discrepancy here between what the French are doing, what the  
 661 Germans are doing...

662

663 *Uhum.*

664

665 ...what the Europeans broadly are up to...

666

667 *Uhum.*

668

669 ...em, chartering airplanes, flying out nationals and, em, the North Americans. And, and,  
 670 em, you know, I think the Canadians were taking a very prudent kind of stand. I mean  
 671 fairly, I can't remember how, maybe a couple of weeks, maybe a week, I, I, it's hard to  
 672 remember how fast things went...

673

674 *Of course, yeah.*

675

676 ...because at that time things were moving very quickly...

677

678 *Yeah.*

679

680 ...em, and, eh, the Canadian Embassy arranged for, em, a lecture, eh, where they had, sort  
 681 of, an open discussion and they invited people to come to the embassy and they had an  
 682 expert on nuclear radiation and what was going on. Ehm, I think it was, it was  
 683 challenging because I went, I went to one of those at the Canadian Embassy and, and it  
 684 was a guy that had, sort of, you know, again, I think there's a lot of these nuclear experts  
 685 and, and, they, kind of, came to Japan looking for something to do. And, and, and I don't  
 686 mean that in the sense of trying to earn a fee for speaking or anything...

687

688 *Yeah, yeah.*

689

690 ...but I mean, like, trying to help...

691

692 *Help.*

693

694 ...but then ultimately not really being allowed to go close...

695

696 *Yeah.*

697

698 ...ehm, and then, or maybe on the periphery for, for a week and then, "Okay, that's all  
 699 we're going to do."...

700

701 *Yeah.*

702

703 ...and then coming back and then, sort of, essentially reporting back to the community.  
 704 "Well, here is what we saw, here is what's going on." You know, I think most of the  
 705 experts, kind of, said, "Look, it seems like things are at least not getting worse, em, you  
 706 know, and, and, you know, here's why, here's why, here's why. These are not bad things,  
 707 you know, em, you know, so I, I think there was a lot of misunderstanding about  
 708 something like that. It seemed that their role was more to, kind of, help educate people  
 709 broadly...

710

711 *Yeah.*

712

713 ...about radiation and what that means, and what's a dangerous level, and what's a safe  
 714 level, and what's okay, and how much radiation is in a banana and all those sort of  
 715 stuff...  
 716  
 717 *[Laughter] yeah.*  
 718  
 719 ...em, but, eh, you know, I, I think the Canadian Embassy tried to hold some educational  
 720 kind of things...  
 721  
 722 *Okay.*  
 723  
 724 ...I, I still think there was a lot of skepticism...  
 725  
 726 *Yeah.*  
 727  
 728 ...em, I remember there was an open thing at the Tokyo American Club again where an  
 729 expert had come in and talked about things and then started to get pressed fairly hard  
 730 from the audience like, "Well, you know, I understand this from an academic point of  
 731 view, understand what you're saying, I understand what you're saying about millisieverts  
 732 and dah, dah, dah, dah, dah, but if you had kids here, what would you do?"  
 733  
 734 *Yeah.*  
 735  
 736 And, and, I think that was always very difficult for those guys because to be honest with  
 737 you I did get the sense that they were essentially trying to be responsible...  
 738  
 739 *Yeah.*  
 740  
 741 ...and also, I mean I'm not sure officially, but it did feel that they were trying to send a  
 742 message...  
 743  
 744 *Yeah.*  
 745  
 746 ...a bit that they didn't want to start having a real open, personal discussion...  
 747  
 748 *Yeah.*  
 749  
 750 ...it was, they were there as experts, they were going to report the expert, em, you know, I  
 751 remember my wife's bank fairly quickly on had a, a conference call that people could dial  
 752 into and, and, again listen to a, an expert, em, you know, talking from the US about,  
 753 "Well, here's what we know, here's what's going on."  
 754  
 755 *Yeah.*  
 756  
 757 And, and that was actually pretty quick. I mean, I think those things happened fairly  
 758 quickly...  
 759  
 760 *Yeah.*  
 761  
 762 ...so there were some conference calls and, em, information sessions where you could go,  
 763 and now that I think about it that's actually where I think that I heard that the dropping of  
 764 the water...  
 765  
 766 *Oh yes, yeah, yeah.*  
 767

768 ...was actually a positive sign for this guy, because it meant that there was something...  
769  
770 *Which is useful.*  
771  
772 ...so yeah, I mean, he gave context...  
773  
774 *Yeah.*  
775  
776 ...to some of these things.  
777  
778 *I know you also mentioned that you lived in {redacted}...*  
779  
780 *Yeah.*  
781  
782 ...which is in {a central ward of Tokyo}...  
783  
784 *Uhum.*  
785  
786 ...which, you know, there's a large foreign population.  
787  
788 *True.*  
789  
790 *Did you get any contact from {the} Ward Office or?*  
791  
792 *I don't believe I did, I, I.*  
793  
794 *In general about the disaster? Not necessarily about the nuclear stuff but just in general*  
795 *after the disaster?*  
796  
797 *I don't think so. I mean, there very well might have been a letter or something like that*  
798 *[laughter], or some sort of a form or, or something. I don't remember, em, ever having a*  
799 *knock on the door...*  
800  
801 *Yeah, yeah.*  
802  
803 ...or whatever, I mean, but, you know, to be honest with you the challenge of that was that  
804 I was at work, like, so, it wasn't like, em, you know, I think maybe for a week, the week  
805 afterwards, we were, kind of, sitting in trying to figure out what was going on but after  
806 that everything was back to normal...  
807  
808 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
809  
810 ...so, it, it, there very well could have been people going around, em, but, you know, both  
811 my wife and I work. We're not home during the day...  
812  
813 *Yeah, of course.*  
814  
815 ...so I'm here and my wife is at her office and, you know, the kids have the nanny...  
816  
817 *Yeah.*  
818  
819 ...and that's, sort of, what happens, so it wasn't really, em, it wasn't really, eh, very well  
820 they could have sent somebody around. And I suspect they might have. I, I, know from  
821 our experience of having children here, em, you know, I think, the *kus* [Note: wards or  
822 cities in Metropolitan Tokyo] are pretty responsible about trying to send, em, nurses by to



823 just, kind of, check, “How are things going?” And it’s sort of an official service. Ehm,  
 824 you know, that being said, they’re organized. Right? They know how to do that...  
 825  
 826 *Yeah.*  
 827  
 828 ...I think when things are a little bit more chaotic, then there’s a lot more, “What do we  
 829 do?”  
 830  
 831 *Yeah.*  
 832  
 833 Em, but, em, but, yeah, I, I don’t, I don’t remember having any specific.  
 834  
 835 *You don’t remember anything. Yeah, the reason I ask is because I have spoken to other*  
 836 *people who were in {the same ward as you} and they said that they didn’t, didn’t receive*  
 837 *anything so...*  
 838  
 839 No, I don’t think so.  
 840  
 841 *...they don’t remember. Jus, just the reason I ask is that some of the local authorities are*  
 842 *trying to come up with recommendations for how to help people in the future...*  
 843  
 844 Right.  
 845  
 846 *...and some of them say, you know, foreign people need to be more integrated into their*  
 847 *local...*  
 848  
 849 Yeah  
 850  
 851 *...community. Did you feel part of the {redacted} ward community before the disaster?*  
 852  
 853 I mean, to be honest, yeah, I, em, probably not. Em, I mean not in the sense of, eh, you  
 854 know, I think being a foreigner in Japan, you maintain a certain separation. Em, you  
 855 know, I know people that have lived here for twenty years and they still get in a taxi and  
 856 they say where they’re going and the guy is like, “Wow, nihongo wa jozu desu ne!”  
 857 [Note: this means ‘Your Japanese is great, isn’t it!']  
 858  
 859 *[Laughter]*  
 860  
 861 An, and, you know, I, I think that never goes away. Em, there’s always a, a separation  
 862 and, and I think, frankly, you can say they need to integrate more, but I don’t think it’s  
 863 ever going to happen. I, I think you’re not Japanese, you’re not Japanese. I, I remember,  
 864 you know, reading a story about, em, eh, a *ku* [Note: means ward or city] where they  
 865 were talking about their, em, diversity and, and how they’re trying to develop this and  
 866 encourage integration, encourage more people to participate and they, they had a, a, they  
 867 held up an example which was a, a foreign guy who was, em, in charge of one of the,  
 868 em, large, academic, em, schools, I think, in the area, and actually might have been  
 869 responsible, a sort of superintendent kind of a thing...  
 870  
 871 *Okay.*  
 872  
 873 ...for a number of schools. Like, you know, look how open we are. We, we allow this,  
 874 this, you know, person is very integrated, they are doing great, and all the rest of it. The  
 875 guy is third generation Korean.  
 876  
 877 *[Laughter]*

878  
879 Right? Like his dad was born here, he was born here [laughter], you know, his  
880 grandfather came here and, and, I mean the fact that that is still held up as a symbol of  
881 diversity is just a sign, like, Japan is not integrated. It's just not. Em, you know, that  
882 being said, it's, it's very pleasant...  
883  
884 *Uhum.*  
885  
886 ...and, and I think people care about each other...  
887  
888 *Yeah.*  
889  
890 ...and I remember reading a Tweet actually after, em, the earth, the earthquake happened,  
891 and, ehm, it was, eh, from a, it was in Japanese, it was a guy that was walking home on  
892 the train tracks and, you know, I think at that time, right around that time, I think, was  
893 when China surpassed Japan for GDP, size of the economy, so Japan went to number 3,  
894 and I think there was a little bit of handwringing, not a lot ...  
895  
896 *Yeah.*  
897  
898 ...because everyone, sort of, saw it as inevitable...  
899  
900 *Yeah.*  
901  
902 ...but it was, kind of, official that it had happened, and I remember this guy tweeted  
903 something like, you know, "I'm walking home on the tracks. All these doors are open  
904 along the way. People are coming out with water, letting people go to the bathroom. You  
905 know, I don't, who cares what the GDP ranking is!" You know, and, and, you know, I  
906 think Japanese do really pull together...  
907  
908 *Yeah, yeah.*  
909  
910 ...but, you know, speaking honestly, there is a, kind of, 'this is how we pull together'.  
911 And, and, 'this is how we're going to do it'. And, you know, foreigners don't always fit  
912 into that. You know, I think, one of the ways I've, kind of, thought about it a little bit is,  
913 em, it's, it's, em, it's, there's so many forms, kind of, ways of doing things in Japan. Em,  
914 it's a bit like a play, right? So when you go to the bank, and you stand in line, it's almost  
915 like in my head at times the curtain opens and it's like, you know, this is Mariko, she is  
916 going to be playing the role of the bank teller...  
917  
918 *[Laughter]*  
919  
920 ...[laughter] you, and you start going through this pattern which is entirely predictable  
921 and entirely understood, everyone will play their role very, very well. But, you know,  
922 speaking honestly, I think Westerners are improvisors who don't follow the script. Like,  
923 we value, kind of, "Well, I don't know if I would do it like that."  
924  
925 *Yeah.*  
926  
927 And, and that freaks out a lot of people because, and any, any foreigner who has lived in  
928 Japan has dealt with a bank, at some point there's been a time where you're like, "Could I  
929 get an extra copy of that, please?" [laughter]  
930  
931 *[Laughter]*  
932

933 And, and they're just, "No. I can't give you, I can't print out another copy of that."  
 934 [laughter]...  
 935  
 936 [*Laughter*]  
 937  
 938 ..."Why not?" "I don't know."  
 939  
 940 [*Laughter*]  
 941  
 942 "Okay, but I'd really like to." "Okay, but could you?" "No."  
 943  
 944 [*Laughter*]  
 945  
 946 "Okay, okay." And you just end up in this crazy, kind of, Kafkaesque situation, so you  
 947 know I, I can imagine well-intentioned, wanting to reach out...  
 948  
 949 *Yeah.*  
 950  
 951 ...and wanting to have that kind of integration. Em, I know there are some social groups  
 952 at my son's school, em, there's a, actually, they're having an event, I think, next week,  
 953 where there's, an earthquake preparation thing where they're handing out essentially for  
 954 real newbies to Japan...  
 955  
 956 *Yeah.*  
 957  
 958 ...here's a one page key phrases, phone numbers...  
 959  
 960 *Yeah.*  
 961  
 962 ...here's how the emergency contact system works with NTT, em, you know, and then  
 963 they're actually going to take people to Tokyu Hands [Note: a chain of shops in Japan  
 964 selling mainly household goods where evacuation packs and emergency supplies can  
 965 easily be bought] or something...  
 966  
 967 *Okay.*  
 968  
 969 ...and go shopping...  
 970  
 971 *Yeah.*  
 972  
 973 ...here's the kind of stuff you need to happen...  
 974  
 975 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 976  
 977 ...and, and so, I think there is a recognition that foreigners might need a bit more...  
 978  
 979 *Yeah.*  
 980  
 981 ...preparation...  
 982  
 983 *Yeah.*  
 984  
 985 ...for this kind of thing. Ehm, but no, I, I don't think, I didn't look to {the ward}, you  
 986 know, so...  
 987

988 *Yeah. And it's really fascinating that you said about, kind of, how there might be one*  
 989 *particular way to pull together...*  
 990  
 991 Uhm.  
 992  
 993 *...because that's actually come up...*  
 994  
 995 Uhm, yeah.  
 996  
 997 *...that there's one way things need to be done and outside of that box is not possible and*  
 998 *that can be really difficult culturally for...*  
 999  
 1000 Yeah, I mean, I can imagine, a, you know, I hope I never, knock on wood, have to see  
 1001 something, but, but if there was a, em, a real event in Tokyo...  
 1002  
 1003 *Yeah.*  
 1004  
 1005 ...a real problem, I [laughter], intellectually it would be very interesting...  
 1006  
 1007 *Yeah.*  
 1008  
 1009 ...to see what would happen...  
 1010  
 1011 *Yeah.*  
 1012  
 1013 ...em, because I, you know, you read about Osaka, you read about Kansai...  
 1014  
 1015 *Yeah.*  
 1016  
 1017 ...you read about people walking to work in the morning, and so on, but, but, you know,  
 1018 that, kind of, delay in official response...  
 1019  
 1020 *Yeah.*  
 1021  
 1022 ...you know, while people are, kind of, under rubble...  
 1023  
 1024 *Yeah.*  
 1025  
 1026 ...you know, I think the, the instinct, it's probably not a good instinct, but it's to jump in  
 1027 just start doing something...  
 1028  
 1029 *Yeah.*  
 1030  
 1031 ...ehm, you know, maybe it's still dangerous...  
 1032  
 1033 *Yeah.*  
 1034  
 1035 ...maybe you can't be doing it.  
 1036  
 1037 *Well, yeah, but, I don't know whether it's good or bad, but it's certainly different and it*  
 1038 *means people may be coming with different frames of reference...*  
 1039  
 1040 Uhum.  
 1041

1042 ...which can, can, like certainly in my whole project what has come strongly through is  
 1043 that language is one part but really culture...  
 1044  
 1045 Yeah...  
 1046  
 1047 ...has been a bigger barrier than language in many ways.  
 1048  
 1049 ...I think, I think so. I mean, you can get information, you know, and, I mean, with,  
 1050 provided that the infrastructure is supported, I mean, had the infrastructure been  
 1051 damaged...  
 1052  
 1053 Yeah.  
 1054  
 1055 ...then that would have been a very different thing. Like, if the Internet had been knocked  
 1056 out...  
 1057  
 1058 Yeah.  
 1059  
 1060 ...for a month...  
 1061  
 1062 Yeah.  
 1063  
 1064 ..then I, I, you know, realistically, I probably wouldn't have stayed...  
 1065  
 1066 Yeah.  
 1067  
 1068 ...realistically...  
 1069  
 1070 I understand.  
 1071  
 1072 ...if you don't, I think it was, it was the information and the community...  
 1073  
 1074 Yeah.  
 1075  
 1076 ...that kept me here and, sort of, was able to, sort of, assuage some of the concerns...  
 1077  
 1078 Yeah.  
 1079  
 1080 ...feel I was being prudent but not reckless...  
 1081  
 1082 Yeah, yeah.  
 1083  
 1084 ...em, you know, and then still be able to play the role that I, you know, my minor goal  
 1085 here...  
 1086  
 1087 Yeah.  
 1088  
 1089 ...so I, I think, em, but if you had no information, em, then I think it would have just been,  
 1090 "I don't know what's going on. I'm very uncomfortable."...  
 1091  
 1092 Yeah.  
 1093  
 1094 ...so, you know, so I think that, that would have happened. Ehm.  
 1095  
 1096 A, as a, as a just a final quick question...

1097  
 1098 Uhum.  
 1099  
 1100 *...I'm interested from everyone I've spoken to to know when they think the disaster*  
 1101 *ended?*  
 1102  
 1103 Well, I don't think it has. And, and, I mean, I, I suspect that most people think that?  
 1104  
 1105 *Yeah.*  
 1106  
 1107 Em, I mean, again it was such a, it was an unusual disaster because it never really started.  
 1108 I, I mean, there was an earthquake [laughter] and there was a tsunami, and then there was  
 1109 a period of grey...  
 1110  
 1111 *[Laughter]*  
 1112  
 1113 ...and it's still there and, and you still read, I, I think I became less, I, I do remember  
 1114 maybe a couple of weeks, I forget, but I do distinctly remember, "Okay, I'm not checking  
 1115 Twitter every minute." Like, I am not actually worried about I am going to go to the  
 1116 bathroom or something. Or, I am going to go to sleep and then wake up six hours later  
 1117 and then instantly get back to Twitter to find out...  
 1118  
 1119 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1120  
 1121 ...what I missed. There was definitely a period where it did feel like that kind of hourly  
 1122 quickness of the information was very important...  
 1123  
 1124 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1125  
 1126 ...em, and there was a period where it became, "Okay, I can just check this at the end of  
 1127 the day." Or I can just, you know, or some, "Oh, did you see this?" But it was, like, that,  
 1128 it wasn't, sort of, I need to stay on top of this. And that was probably a couple of weeks  
 1129 after...  
 1130  
 1131 *Yeah.*  
 1132  
 1133 ...so I mean the, that voracious appetite for information, I think, started to peel off...  
 1134  
 1135 *Yeah.*  
 1136  
 1137 ...I just don't think you could sustain it that long.  
 1138  
 1139 *Yeah.*  
 1140  
 1141 But eventually it became, "Okay, I think things are settling into some kind of a period of,  
 1142 of not equilibrium but at least some sort of sense of, em, balance for now...  
 1143  
 1144 *Yeah.*  
 1145  
 1146 ...em, where you know, we'll see if things are going to tip up...  
 1147  
 1148 *Yeah.*  
 1149  
 1150 ...if things are going to go down, but, em, and we're still in that period. Like, I don't  
 1151 think.

1152  
 1153 *Oh, yeah, you're absolutely right. Many people that I've spoken to...*  
 1154  
 1155 *Yeah.*  
 1156  
 1157 *...have said that for them it's not really over yet. I mean.*  
 1158  
 1159 No, I had, I had breakfast this morning with a colleague of mine at another company and,  
 1160 you know, he has got a kid on the way, his wife is almost pregnant, or his wife is almost  
 1161 delivering, about a month away, and, you know, his plan is to go to Singapore, like, and,  
 1162 and, you know, I was asking him, like, "How are you managing?" And he said, like,  
 1163 "We're being really careful, reading the labels, checking all that kind of stuff." And I, I  
 1164 don't think Japan fully recognises, I think, the, the perception of the world towards this  
 1165 thing, and, and how damaging it is, or the amount of talent that has left. Now,  
 1166 realistically, I don't know if Japan relies on that but, but, if they really do want to think  
 1167 about integration, if they do want to think about this, there's a lot of people that have left.  
 1168 And there's a lot of people that are still leaving...  
 1169  
 1170 *Yeah.*  
 1171  
 1172  
 1173 ...and, there's not the same people coming back, so, you know, it's, my, my child goes,  
 1174 one of the older guys goes to an international school and it's interesting because all the  
 1175 finance people have left, they're all gone. Ehm the healthcare people, the chem, the  
 1176 pharmaceutical base seems to have come in a bit...  
 1177  
 1178 *Yeah.*  
 1179  
 1180 ...so, eh, there's, sort of, a new group of, sort of, expatty, kind of people...  
 1181  
 1182 *Yeah.*  
 1183  
 1184 ...from a very different background and, again, I don't get a sense of, they're not really  
 1185 lifers...  
 1186  
 1187 *Yeah.*  
 1188  
 1189 ...they're here for a couple of years, a year, okay, and then...  
 1190  
 1191 *Yeah.*  
 1192  
 1193 ...but, you know, I don't know, and I'm not sure I think there was a, there was a window,  
 1194 sort of, in that period right after the crisis where there was a big question mark, is this  
 1195 going to be, ultimately a, you know, disaster, but is it somehow going to be a positive  
 1196 catalyst for something...  
 1197  
 1198 *Yeah.*  
 1199  
 1200 ...at least. You, you know it was a terrible disaster but at least can something good come  
 1201 out of this in the way of more openness, transparency, speed of information distributing,  
 1202 you know, and, and, there was a sort of sense of, jar Japan a little bit, more it toward  
 1203 something more positive in the future or is it going to go the other way. Is it going to  
 1204 become more reactionary? Is it going to be more of that, "Who the fuck cares what the  
 1205 rest of the world thinks? We're going to take care of each other." And I don't know, I'm,  
 1206 if anything, I don't know if it has gone forward or back but I think there is, sort of, a

1207 sense of, em, it's not over by a longshot and, and, you know, I still think, you know,  
 1208 there's occasional article that pop in my, that get forwarded by parents or forwarded by  
 1209 colleagues overseas...

1210  
 1211 *Yeah.*  
 1212

1213 ...and, "Hey did you see this?" And my god, the, you know, the Pacific radiation levels of  
 1214 cesium in the sea and they still don't, they still haven't, they still don't know how to, I  
 1215 mean, they're just going to have to pour concrete over the whole fucking thing and seal it,  
 1216 just put it under a big fuckin' dome, like, that's it! Like, there's no way they can move  
 1217 anything from there. But they have got to figure out how do they stop the fission and I  
 1218 think it's still going on...

1219  
 1220 *Yeah.*  
 1221

1222 ...in the, in those buildings so it's, it's a real, it's a three-hundred year problem...

1223  
 1224 *Yeah.*  
 1225

1226 ...and that's never going to stop...

1227  
 1228 *Yeah.*  
 1229

1230 ...em, and, you know, particularly in that region, I think it is really dangerous. I, I can live  
 1231 here and feel okay...

1232  
 1233 *Yeah.*  
 1234

1235 ...em, you know, we always have options to move to China or to go overseas. But you  
 1236 know, frankly, I look at China, and I look at food safety, and I look at these other issues  
 1237 and I, I don't think it's any safer...

1238  
 1239 *Uhum.*  
 1240

1241 ...em, but it's such a different kind of problem...

1242  
 1243 *Yeah.*  
 1244

1245 ...so, so every place has those, those issues, but I think, you know, not being a bilingual,  
 1246 fluent Japanese speaker, em, yeah, I mean, I think information was still accessible. I think  
 1247 the Internet played a big role. I think Twitter played a big role. Personal connections and  
 1248 connecting with those people through digital technology was important. Ehm, so I didn't,  
 1249 I didn't feel I'm not, because and also maybe because I was discounting the official word,  
 1250 I didn't feel like, "Oh I'm not listening directly to this. That's not a problem." Ehm, and  
 1251 again, I would, sort of, get it filtered through people that, whose opinion I trusted...

1252  
 1253 *Yeah.*  
 1254

1255 ...so it was, it was okay. Em, but yeah, certainly culturally when it comes to how to react,  
 1256 em, and, and if there was a real disaster, if, if you had buildings knocked down, if you  
 1257 had people trapped under rubble, if you had that kind of stuff, I, I think there would be,  
 1258 you know, I'm not sure, you know, I'd take care of my family, eh, but, yeah, I, I think,  
 1259 eh, I think that would be the focus then just get out.

1260  
 1261 *This, this is absolutely what, it has come through quite strongly that...*



1262  
 1263 Um.  
 1264  
 1265 *...maybe the local authorities or the people who are making these recommendations are*  
 1266 *seeing it from a, a Japanese perspective culturally...*  
 1267  
 1268 Yeah.  
 1269  
 1270 *...and, eh, there may be some issues that they are not taking into account, the fact that*  
 1271 *people from other countries may just have a different way of responding.*  
 1272  
 1273 Well, I think so, and I mean, even, even with, eh, with certain events where there was, eh,  
 1274 you know, I, you know, I had, it's, it's very Japanese, right, so, you know, the official  
 1275 policy in the company was, if you want to take the time off and you want to spend time  
 1276 with your family, it's fine, you can do that. Em, you don't have to go to work, em, but,  
 1277 you know, you have to make the decision. If that's the policy, everyone comes to work...  
 1278  
 1279 Yeah.  
 1280  
 1281 ... because you can't shirk the responsibility and you can't not show up...  
 1282  
 1283 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1284  
 1285 ...if everybody else is going to show up. But, you know, I had people that reached out to  
 1286 me privately that were, sort of, like, "I'm really uncomfortable being here. I want to go to  
 1287 Kyoto. I want to get to Osaka...  
 1288  
 1289 Yeah.  
 1290  
 1291 ...I have family there." Or I have people that I know there, whatever. And, and, but they  
 1292 couldn't say it and they couldn't tell Japanese people...  
 1293  
 1294 Yeah.  
 1295  
 1296 ...em, but, you know, the company, our company changed the policy to be, sort of,  
 1297 "Okay, officially you have to get permission to come in, as opposed to the...  
 1298  
 1299 Okay.  
 1300  
 1301 ...and, you know, so, as soon as that happened, everybody left.  
 1302  
 1303 Yeah, yeah.  
 1304  
 1305 But, you know, I think there are those kind of societal bonds that, kind of, keep people in  
 1306 place...  
 1307  
 1308 Yeah.  
 1309  
 1310 ...em, and, it's really hard for Japanese to subvert those...  
 1311  
 1312 Yeah.  
 1313  
 1314 ...they can't step out of that line...  
 1315  
 1316 Yeah.

1317  
 1318 ...and it's, it's tricky, so.  
 1319  
 1320 *Yeah, so well, because as you said, not just in times of disaster, but just going to the bank*  
 1321 *every day or the post office or anything, you're in these sort of...*  
 1322  
 1323 Yeah, there's There's a book about...  
 1324  
 1325 ...sort of, performances.  
 1326  
 1327 ...that this guy has a theory that essentially it's all about *kata* [Note: forms]. That to  
 1328 understand Japan, it's all about different forms of behaviour...  
 1329  
 1330 *Yeah.*  
 1331  
 1332 ...there's *kata* for everything...  
 1333  
 1334 *Yeah.*  
 1335  
 1336 ...and, and, so once you understand the underlying forms and the expectations, then  
 1337 people just are rolling through those...  
 1338  
 1339 *Yeah.*  
 1340  
 1341 ...despite internally how they might really feel...  
 1342  
 1343 *Yeah, yeah, that's.*  
 1344  
 1345 ...they just feel obliged...  
 1346  
 1347 *Uhum.*  
 1348  
 1349 ...and they have to carry this through. And, you know, I think there's a tremendous  
 1350 strength, and there's something that I admire in that at times...  
 1351  
 1352 *Yeah.*  
 1353  
 1354 ... ehm, but, you know, at, at times when things are kind of, I, I mean, to be honest with  
 1355 you, I, I think about, I don't know, I mean, it's not a fair comparison really, but, you  
 1356 know, New Orleans or Katrina or something like that and the breakdown of order...  
 1357  
 1358 *Yeah.*  
 1359  
 1360 ...and the, and the, you know, the people shooting each other on bridges...  
 1361  
 1362 *Yeah.*  
 1363  
 1364 ...and, and police going through and shoot-to-kill on rioters and looters and, I mean, none  
 1365 of that happened in Japan, you know, and, and, so, there, and, it does seem to me the US  
 1366 always seems to be on a knife's edge where they, kind of, believe that as soon as the  
 1367 power goes out...  
 1368  
 1369 *[Laughter]*  
 1370

1371 ...[laughter] everyone is going to start shooting each other and fighting, and, and you  
 1372 know people have bunkers and they have their protected compounds. They're just waiting  
 1373 for the zombie apocalypse.  
 1374  
 1375 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1376  
 1377 And, and I don't think that, that, that social con, the cohesion, it just isn't there.  
 1378  
 1379 *Yeah.*  
 1380  
 1381 In Japan, it's here, so there is a real sense of resilience. Communities pull together and  
 1382 take care of each other. But, but, in a time when there is no order, in a time where  
 1383 everyone is looking around, kind of, "Well, what will we do?"...  
 1384  
 1385 *Yeah.*  
 1386  
 1387 ...em, I don't know, I think there's probably going to be, I don't know the best, you know,  
 1388 I mean, they talk about if after the earthquake, you know, just stay in the building because  
 1389 you could get hit by something...  
 1390  
 1391 *Yeah.*  
 1392  
 1393 ...falling off a building so, you know, it's more dangerous to be outside than inside.  
 1394  
 1395 *Yeah.*  
 1396  
 1397 That goes against every instinct I had after that earthquake. I was like, "I'm getting the  
 1398 fuck out of this building." And, and, I know that's not right, but, you know, and also,  
 1399 because I had this sort of excuse that I had a client meeting, it was like, "All right, I am  
 1400 going to make this meeting."  
 1401  
 1402 *[Laughter]*  
 1403  
 1404 So,em, you know, speaking honestly, I think it was a combination of those two things,  
 1405 but I was not fighting it, so like, "Well, they said stay in the building."  
 1406  
 1407 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1408  
 1409 Em, I was like, "No, I am going to do this. I am going to make it." So, em, you know, we  
 1410 left. And, and so I think that, I, yeah, I, I, I think, ehm, probably foreigners, I, it probably  
 1411 depends on how you are here, too. Like, I mean, if you are part of the, you know, where  
 1412 you're living, what community, are you a student...  
 1413  
 1414 *Yeah.*  
 1415  
 1416 ...are you working, or you know, the different, you know, how, like, like, my wife's  
 1417 company, they have, em, pretty serious, em, security, kind of, evacuation protocols...  
 1418  
 1419 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1420  
 1421 ...that, you know, if things got bad, they would pretty quickly, you know, "Here's the  
 1422 rally point," kind of...  
 1423  
 1424 *Where you go, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1425

1426 ...”get there and then we’ll take care of you.” So I would really end up relying more on  
 1427 those...  
 1428  
 1429 *Yeah.*  
 1430  
 1431 ...than I would frankly that, sort of, the official {ward} representative that’s going to  
 1432 come by.  
 1433  
 1434 *Yeah.*  
 1435  
 1436 Ehm, and, and, you know, I think that’s just, so in that sense I don’t think I would ever  
 1437 fully integrate. Em, but, you know, that being said, and I remember there was the whole,  
 1438 em, *fly-jin* [Note: a derogatory term for foreigners who left Japan in the disaster] kind of  
 1439 thing and I suspect a lot of Japanese left, too. Like, I suspect there was a lot [laughter] of  
 1440 wealthy people...  
 1441  
 1442 *Yeah.*  
 1443  
 1444 ...Japanese in Tokyo that split...  
 1445  
 1446 *Yeah.*  
 1447  
 1448 ...and it just doesn’t get highlighted and it doesn’t make for a nice story and, and certainly  
 1449 nobody, it’s in nobody’s interests, eh, in the establishment to talk about that...  
 1450  
 1451 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1452  
 1453 ...I am really certain that there were, there was nobody in the neighbourhoods [laughter]  
 1454 where I was walking around in Roppongi and Azabu Juban [Note: known for being  
 1455 wealthy neighbourhoods in Tokyo]...  
 1456  
 1457 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1458  
 1459 ...it was not just foreigners...  
 1460  
 1461 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1462  
 1463 ...there were nobody. And, and, so, em, the idea that we’re all hanging in this together, I  
 1464 think it is a bit of a myth and I think it might be maybe more class, more  
 1465 socioeconomic...  
 1466  
 1467 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1468  
 1469 ...if you’ve got the resources, people got on planes, and, em, I mean, I think, yeah, it was,  
 1470 it was a strange, you know, I felt staying was the appropriate thing to do...  
 1471  
 1472 *Yeah.*  
 1473  
 1474 ...em, and that was good, but, eh, but, but certainly I don’t think it was just foreigners  
 1475 getting on planes and getting out. I think they were visible...  
 1476  
 1477 *Yeah.*  
 1478  
 1479 ...em, and certainly once official, kind of, notices went up, it became, kind of, but, and,  
 1480 you know, I, I think also, you know, I’ve spoken to people who, who had colleagues that

1481 really resented that, em, that, you know, people were like, "I can't work with you  
 1482 anymore," kind of thing, "I can't trust you."  
 1483  
 1484 *Yeah.*  
 1485  
 1486 Em, so in a, in an odd sense, I think I actually gained, I gained something at my company  
 1487 by staying. But, em, you know, I've seen the opposite...  
 1488  
 1489 *Yeah.*  
 1490  
 1491 ... where, you know, people left for very good reasons...  
 1492  
 1493 *Yeah.*  
 1494  
 1495 ...em, sensible, in a way, you know one thing that I did think about - I probably should  
 1496 head back upstairs [Note: we had now been talking for an hour]  
 1497  
 1498 *Yeah, I'm sorry to take so much of your time, I really appreciate it.*  
 1499  
 1500 No, no. It's okay, No. I think, em, you know, one thing that did go through my mind  
 1501 [laughter] at the time which is kind of a grim thought, but, you know, when you see,  
 1502 when you read history and you read about certain events in history that were coming or,  
 1503 you think, you, sort of, wonder, "Well, why didn't people just react to that. Why didn't  
 1504 they, you know, I mean, people must have seen the rise of Nazism, people must have  
 1505 thought about that and thought maybe I don't want to be in Germany or Austria at this  
 1506 time, maybe I should be," you know, maybe there shouldn't, maybe there was not as  
 1507 much mobility at that time...  
 1508  
 1509 *Yeah.*  
 1510  
 1511 ...but, you know, but whose, and you know, and, and you know, persecuted minorities  
 1512 that are, that are, sort of, like, "No, we're going to stay."  
 1513  
 1514 *Yeah.*  
 1515  
 1516 And, and that was definitely something in my head at that time where I was like, "Is this  
 1517 one of those situations [laughter]...  
 1518  
 1519 *[Laughter]*  
 1520  
 1521 ...where, you know, with the benefit of hindsight people are going to be like, "Why the  
 1522 fuck [laughter]...  
 1523  
 1524 *[Laughter]*  
 1525  
 1526 ...did, you know, 10,000 people not leave?  
 1527  
 1528 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1529  
 1530 You know, because I, I mean, I do, I really do think it's a knife's edge thing...  
 1531  
 1532 *Yeah.*  
 1533  
 1534 ...Like it could have tipped one - is it Schroedinger...  
 1535

1536 *Oh, yeah.*  
 1537  
 1538 ...it's a Schroedinger's Cat thing or whatever where it's, kind of, they opened the box.  
 1539 the cat was alive so it was okay. We were fine, but if it was dead then we're all stupid.  
 1540  
 1541 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1542  
 1543 So, I don't know. Like, I don't know, I don't know what's the right way to react in those  
 1544 situations. Ehm, certainly the Japanese way is we all hang together or you know, and  
 1545 that's just what we're going to do. Em, but yeah, I, you know, I think, ehm, I think, eh,  
 1546 from a communications point of view...  
 1547  
 1548 *Yeah.*  
 1549  
 1550 ...from a technology point of view, I think, you know, certainly things like Twitter, the  
 1551 Forums...  
 1552  
 1553 *Yeah.*  
 1554  
 1555 ...the Internet, had I not had that, my experience would have been very different.  
 1556  
 1557 *Yeah, yeah. That's one thing I'm definitely taking away from, from, from speaking to you,*  
 1558 *for sure, that, and it tallies with what a lot of other people have said to me...*  
 1559  
 1560 Sure...  
 1561  
 1562 ...*very much, so.*  
 1563  
 1564 ...it was good.  
 1565  
 1566 *Well, listen, thank you so much for that.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.  
4

5 **Note:** the weekend before this interview took place, the researcher had participated in  
6 some volunteer activities in the disaster zone along with the participant.

7 *2013/10/3 Interview with Participant 21*

8 *Researcher: So the, the way I start every, the way I start, [Note: the researcher dropped a*  
9 *piece of paper that he was taking from the participant] sorry about that, the way I start*  
10 *every interview is just very generally, tell me what happened to you...*  
11

12 Participant: Alright...

13  
14 *...in the 2011 disaster.*

15  
16 *...sure. [Note: the participant gestures to the audio recorder on the table in front of here] Is*  
17 *this thing on?*

18  
19 *Yep. It's on.*  
20

21 Alright. So actually, I was {redacted} at my office. Ehm, so I'm on the fourth floor of the  
22 building that I found out later was built in the 19, 1986, so it was after the earthquake  
23 codes came in. Ehm, so I was sitting at my desk, earthquake started happening. Eh, I  
24 turned to my friend {redacted}, who you met...

25  
26 *Yeah.*  
27

28 *...eh, and eh, we were like, "Whoa, this is kind of interesting." And then it got worse*  
29 *[laughter]. And I work with a lot of international people, a lot of people ran out of the*  
30 *building. Like, em, so, anybody that was Japanese immediately went under their desk.*  
31 *And then everybody else just took off out the door. So I just kind of stood there next to*  
32 *the main pillar [laughter], watched the clock swinging, you know, like, one of the clocks,*  
33 *like, the round clocks just swinging, like, wildly [Note: the participant makes a swinging*  
34 *gesture with her hands] and realized that something like that could fly off and hit me in*  
35 *the head, and then got under my desk [laughter].*  
36

37 *Yeah.*  
38

39 So, ehm, then of course there was the, you know, everything was, kind of, like, "Wow,  
40 that was intense." And people came back in the building, and, he, so we were all kind of  
41 trading stories and there were some comical ones...

42  
43 *Yeah.*  
44

45 *...of, like, one person was on the phone and, eh, so basically my job is sales, so he was*  
46 *closing the sale, and so he's on the phone, and you can hear him going, "Oh, no, no, no, I*  
47 *don't feel that..."*  
48

49 *[Laughter]*  
50

51 *...I don't." [Laughter] And, like, still talking, still talking, still talking. He hangs up the*  
52 *phone and runs out of the building. [Laughter]*  
53

54 [Laughter]  
55  
56 So...  
57  
58 *Close, close, close.*  
59  
60 ...yeah. [Laughter] Ehm, and then the aftershock, actually, that was pretty nasty as well...  
61  
62 *Yeah.*  
63  
64 ...ehm, and at that point, it kind of went from like, "Whoa, I've actually experienced  
65 something," to, "This is, like." I was on the fourth floor, and the building across from  
66 mine is, like, eh, it looks kind of like brick concrete. My building is more concrete, you  
67 know, the bathroom tile look...  
68  
69 *Yeah, yeah.*  
70  
71 ...that a lot of buildings have, right? And we were swaying ever so slightly. And even on  
72 the fourth floor you could see both the buildings swaying, and that's kind of freaky...  
73  
74 *Yeah.*  
75  
76 ...something higher up, you expect that, but I wasn't expecting that on the fourth...  
77  
78 *Fourth...*  
79  
80 ...floor...  
81  
82 ...yeah.  
83  
84 ...just, to, you could literally see us moving just ever so slightly. And at that point, I was  
85 like, "Okay. Now, I'm getting kind of like, 'okay, I'm over it!'" [Laughter]...  
86  
87 [Laughter]  
88  
89 ...this is enough for one day. Ehm, and so {my colleague} and I were watching, oh, we  
90 were clicking during that hour, because the aftershock was like an hour later, we were,  
91 kind of, clicking on, ehm, because nobody knew what to do, em, the *shacho* [Note: means  
92 company president] of my company was in a taxi near the office going to a meeting near  
93 our office, and so the second it happened the taxi pulled over, she got out, ehm, and  
94 actually I think she was in a taxi, they were in it and they came back to the office, and  
95 basically told everybody to go home...  
96  
97 *Oh right, okay.*  
98  
99 ...because some people want to leave, nobody knew what to do, and so basically the  
100 official decision was you can keep working if you want, but, like, because some people  
101 were like, "I need to get home to my family, and I live really far away."...  
102  
103 *Yeah.*  
104  
105 ...and hopefully everybody is working until six [laughter]...  
106  
107 [Laughter]  
108



109 ...you know? So, my sis, it was only, I didn't find out until later, my sister and I always  
 110 had this, like, contact method plan where if anything serious, either, happened to either of  
 111 us, we'd get word to each other and they would, then we'd inform our parents, the other  
 112 one...

113  
 114 *Okay.*

115  
 116 ...ehm, so I'd left a message for my sister, like, but I just got voice mail so I, kind of, said,  
 117 "Okay, everything's fine. I'm fine. Tokyo's fine." Ehm, and then, like, maybe it's, kind  
 118 of, we're, like, {my colleague} and I are, kind of, watching CNN and we're watching the  
 119 news rankings of stories, and, eh, like, at the time Charlie Sheen was, like, the one  
 120 [laughter]...

121  
 122 *[Laughter]*

123  
 124 ...for his, like, idiotness, so he was ranked the highest for his, like, comments and things  
 125 like that...

126  
 127 *Yeah.*

128  
 129 ...so, and then, we were kind of watching and, you know, we were refreshing and we  
 130 were watching Japan go higher and higher on the ranking, and then we knocked out  
 131 Charlie Sheen [laughter]...

132  
 133 *[Laughter]*

134  
 135 ...so in between the aftershocks and everything, em, a friend of, I work in consumer and a  
 136 friend of mine works in Asahi so I had sample beers, so we were, like, cracking them  
 137 open and, ehm, emails started coming in from, I used to live in Hong Kong, so I got, like,  
 138 eh, messages from my two best friends in Hong Kong. So I replied back, yeah, oh yeah,  
 139 "I'm sitting at my desk with a beer open, that obviously means I'm okay." [Laughter]...

140  
 141 *[Laughter]*

142  
 143 ...so that went, it sent. "Alright, she's fine." Ehm, and then as, kind of, time went on, like,  
 144 it was getting, like, it was maybe what three p.m. then, kind of, four p.m., we were, kind  
 145 of, watching the news and then the, there was reports, because, of course, there were all  
 146 these different reports, kind of, coming in. There was reports that, like, eh, Fuji building,  
 147 the Fuji Television studio in Odaiba was that, like, the ball that's in there [Note: this is a  
 148 distinctive landmark building in Tokyo - the building's structure is made up of a huge  
 149 sphere surrounded on all sides by a square office block] had fallen down and was on fire.  
 150 Another one was about the Budokan [Note: a famous large stadium in Tokyo]. So one of  
 151 my colleagues who has a motorcycle, actually, like, went out because we had heard it had  
 152 collapsed entirely. So he got on his motorcycle and went out to check it out, came back to  
 153 the office and said, "Yeah, I couldn't get close enough." [laughter] So, it wasn't exactly  
 154 the nicest, it wasn't, you know, sensitive reactions.

155  
 156 *How, how did you hear those stories about, like, say Fuji or the Budokan? Was it?*

157  
 158 Ehm, Fuji came from a friend of mine, and so his friend was at Odaiba, so it was coming  
 159 through email messages...

160  
 161 *Okay.*

162  
 163 ...eh, and then the news, it was, not quite sure what was going on in the news.

164  
165 *Right.*  
166  
167 And then.  
168  
169 *And that would have been CNN or, or?*  
170  
171 Well, we didn't, we can't really stream very well in our office, like, I think they in,  
172 intentionally [laughter]...  
173  
174 *[Laughter]*  
175  
176 ...like, Youtube's blocked, ehm, so the Internet wasn't great...  
177  
178 *Yeah.*  
179  
180 ...I mean, it was fine, but we usually don't stream news anyway...  
181  
182 *Right.*  
183  
184 ...ehm, so that wasn't really an issue. We weren't getting anything that way...  
185  
186 *Yeah.*  
187  
188 ...it was, kind of, more rumours and stories...  
189  
190 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
191  
192 ...all through various sources. I mean, nothing official...  
193  
194 *Yeah.*  
195  
196 ...and then, ehm, {my colleague} just usually reads CNN, so then he was checking and  
197 checking and checking and, and so then we overtook Charlie Sheen...  
198  
199 *[Laughter]*  
200  
201 ...[Laughter] I'm pretty proud of that...  
202  
203 *Moment of pride.*  
204  
205 ...you know, we had a *kampai* of our drinks [Note: the expression means 'cheers' in  
206 Japanese] and that. And, em, personally, eh, there's one friend who, because some of the  
207 people took off, and then the staff had, kind of, done a headcount, and then I realized one  
208 of my friends wasn't accounted for, and so he was out at a meeting, and it was maybe like  
209 an hour, an hour-and-a-half after, about four thirty, five thirty, about...  
210  
211 *Yeah.*  
212  
213 ...it was before five o'clock, and so I was like, "Screw it." And I just called him, because  
214 I figured a desk phone is going to work better than, so I kind of stayed in the office a little  
215 bit, not sure...  
216  
217 *Yeah.*  
218

219 ...so I, kind of, I just called him on his, em, from my desk phone and it got through. So he  
 220 was like, "Actually, I'm fine. I'm on my way back to the office. I'm pretty close by."  
 221 "Okay." Click. [Laughter]...  
 222  
 223 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 224  
 225 ...ehm, and, and so, it was still, kind of, not quick, nothing had sunk in, and I was like,  
 226 "Okay, I need to," like, I didn't feel right that I had called and only left a message for my  
 227 sister because, eh, I will probably get into this more, but she was in 9/11, okay? So she, I  
 228 mean, I'll get more into that probably, depending on your questions, but.  
 229  
 230 *It's, it's up to you.*  
 231  
 232 Eh, kind of, her reaction to that and how that affected me, eh, it will probably come out.  
 233 We'll, we'll talk about that...  
 234  
 235 *Yeah.*  
 236  
 237 ...Ehm, but I felt, I felt, kind of, like, "Okay, I need to speak to somebody." Ehm, and so I  
 238 called my parents and it was, like, three in the morning...  
 239  
 240 *Crikey.*  
 241  
 242 ...that was the east coast...  
 243  
 244 *Yeah.*  
 245  
 246 ...so three in the morning, and literally the phone rings, like, 'ring ring, ring ring' and my  
 247 dad answers [laughter]. And typically, my dad can be home and lets in ring for like  
 248 twenty minutes [laughter]...  
 249  
 250 *[Laughter]*  
 251  
 252 ...and it was like, "Isn't he asleep?" Like, it was really strange...  
 253  
 254 *Yeah.*  
 255  
 256 ...and he was like, "Oh, you want to talk to your mother?" And I was like, "Actually, I,  
 257 I'm okay." And then suddenly you hear my, I was like, "I'm okay, I'm okay." And then  
 258 you hear, I can hear my mother going, "What's happening? What's going on?" And then,  
 259 eh, so she get on the phone, and she was, like, dead asleep, and I was like, "Don't turn on  
 260 the TV. Don't listen to any of this crap. I'm alright. Tokyo's fine. Everything." "What do  
 261 you mean, like, aaaahhh?" [laughter] Like, "Don't turn on the TV and don't listen to that  
 262 crap." Like, "I'm fine. Everything's fine. Everything's fine." And then, of course, she  
 263 goes and turns on the TV. And she said, she was like, I mean, and then, eh, after I hung  
 264 up the phone, I felt kind of bad in a way, because she sounded so terrified. Like, I had, I'd  
 265 woken them up in the middle of the night, and they sounded like, my mother sounded  
 266 absolutely terrified. She was like, "Well, what do you mean 'don't turn on the TV'?" I  
 267 was like, "There's been a massive earthquake. I'm fine. Tokyo's fine. Everybody I know  
 268 is fine." "I think that everybody I know is fine," you know?  
 269  
 270 *Yeah.*  
 271  
 272 You know, "Everybody is fine. So go back to bed."  
 273

274 *Yeah.*  
 275  
 276 And then, eh, the horror in her voice kind of, like, haunted me a little bit. Eh, which is  
 277 natural.  
 278  
 279 *Oh, absolutely.*  
 280  
 281 Ehm, and turns out it was good, because when she went to work the next day, and  
 282 everybody knew her daughter was in Japan, so she already had an answer.  
 283  
 284 *She was prepared.*  
 285  
 286 Yeah, so but that, kind of, rattling my mother like that did, because afterwards I was like,  
 287 “Oh my God,” like, I hated making her feel like that, right? And then I was like, “Well, I  
 288 think, knowing my mother, she’s going to get paranoid about it no matter what.” So she  
 289 spoke to me, and I was like, “I’m drinking a beer at my desk.” [Laughter]...  
 290  
 291 [Laughter]  
 292  
 293 ...so everybody knows I’m okay, popping, I’ve cracked open a beer [laughter]...  
 294  
 295 [Laughter]  
 296  
 297 ...ehm, after that, we didn’t really know what to do, em, so a bunch of us, kind of,  
 298 wandered out, went to a bar that’s just down there...  
 299  
 300 *Uhum.*  
 301  
 302 ...if you want to go there after? [laughter] I’ll probably go back to work then.  
 303  
 304 *It’s the place to go [laughter].*  
 305  
 306 Yeah, eh, if you’re interested for a drink after. Ehm, and on the way there, eh, so by this  
 307 point, it was probably about five thirty, and so everybody was starting to walk home.  
 308 And, the streets were getting crowded and, just by chance, a former colleague was  
 309 walking down the street, he’s this tall, you know, Swedish dude, pretty easy to  
 310 recognize...  
 311  
 312 [Laughter]  
 313  
 314 ...we were like, “Oh, we’re going for a beer at this place. Want to come?”...  
 315  
 316 *Yeah.*  
 317  
 318 ...and we went there, and then the staff and everybody were completely freaked out.  
 319 There were, of course, people drinking and they were playing the videos, so it was the  
 320 first time we’ve seen basically, like, rice fields, and nothing sunk in. And, em, so we were  
 321 supposed to go out for a friend’s birthday that night because it was a Friday, and  
 322 Australian friend of mine was like, “Yeah we’re,” you know, “we have to power on for  
 323 {that friend}.”...  
 324  
 325 *Yeah.*  
 326

327 ...ehm [coughs] so even though we couldn't get a hold of anybody on phones, everybody  
 328 knew we'd be down at {a pub popular with foreign nationals} drinking. So I knew if we  
 329 just wandered down there, we'd run into everybody...

330

331 *Yeah.*

332

333 ...and he lived around there so, it'd be easy, it'd be easy to track him down...

334

335 *Yeah.*

336

337 ...even without a phone. So we go down there, we go to karaoke at, like, seven, and then  
 338 everybody starts cracking, and that was really, really interesting to watch because half of  
 339 the room, or four, no, about a third of the room were Japanese, and the rest were  
 340 foreigners, and, ehm, so basically, the guy whose birthday, like, he and his boyfriend, his  
 341 boyfriend was, em, was, I think part-time he was working at Disney, so he kind of here  
 342 and away sometimes, so it's not really his country...

343

344 *Yeah.*

345

346 ...and so he didn't really care, and then, like, basically, our other good friend, like, she  
 347 was just like, "I need a charger, I need a phone charger." And she started, like, really  
 348 freaking out and then, basically, like, got a phone charger from the karaoke place and,  
 349 like, plugged it into the wall and just sat there, like, chatting, eh, talking to her mother...

350

351 *Yeah.*

352

353 ...different things like that, and I was like, "Oh god, she's freaking out."...

354

355 *Yeah.*

356

357 ...and then there were two other girls who were just, like, not really drinking...

358

359 *Yeah.*

360

361 ...and so you could just see everybody slowly cracking and then, you know, the, the main  
 362 organizer is like, "No, no, no. We need to have fun. We need to have fun." And like,  
 363 really trying to have like, eh...

364

365 *Yeah, yeah.*

366

367 ...and, and then, you just see everybody keep cracking, and then it, kind of, started  
 368 washing over the rest of them, because I started breaking, and I was like, "Ah." And,  
 369 we're in this, like, huge karaoke room where they have this mini-stage, because, you  
 370 know, it was for his birthday, so it was all special, and then we had, like, these chandelier  
 371 things, chandeliers were smacking the ceiling, like, there was a tremor and then like,  
 372 [Note; the participant makes several sharp intakes of breath to indicate fear] and it was  
 373 just like, "We have to call this quits." Like, "This is getting ridiculous." So most of the  
 374 people went home. Because I think there was about ten of, there was supposed to be  
 375 twenty but, of course, some people hadn't made it or cancelled or, you know, they knew  
 376 where we'd be, eh, if they wanted to join, so, so basically the, the friend who was the  
 377 organizer, he was an expat here, so he had a, a nice, nice apartment...

378

379 *Yeah.*

380

381 ...in {central Tokyo}, so he wanted everybody to come and stay with him, so, and I  
 382 remember, I was like, "Okay, well, you know, I live in {a more suburban area of  
 383 Tokyo}." - so I walked home from work for fun...  
 384  
 385 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 386  
 387 ...so it takes about a little over an hour, and so it's kind of nice, you know, beer and  
 388 walking - maybe this time there would be more people walking [laughter] but I was, you  
 389 know, fine with that. And so I was like, "It's okay. I'm going to go." And he was like,  
 390 "Okay, but I'm, I'm going to go with you." So basically, these three or four other people  
 391 went back to his place, ehm, and this was probably about, like, getting late, like nine  
 392 o'clock at night, or something like that. And I was like, "Alright, let's stop a bit. Let's  
 393 have a beer for the road." So we stopped back in {the pub we had been to earlier} again  
 394 and are watching it and, kind of, talking and then, like, "Okay, you don't need to walk me  
 395 home." And he was like, "Yeah, I do." And I was like, "No, you don't." "Yeah, you do."  
 396 [Note: this is probably a slip of the tongue and the participant means 'Yeah, I do.'] And  
 397 we start walking and we get to the end of the street, and I turned to him and I was like,  
 398 "You don't want to be alone." And he was like, "Yea, yeah." And I was like, "Well, if  
 399 you put it that way, I don't need to go home."...  
 400  
 401 *[Laughter] Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 402  
 403 ...but he never would say that. And he was like, I was like, "You want everybody around  
 404 you so you know that the people you care about are safe." And he was like, "Yes. You  
 405 could say that." [Laughter]  
 406  
 407 *[Laughter]*  
 408  
 409 "Okay, let's turn around. Let's go back."...  
 410  
 411 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 412  
 413 ...ehm, and then we, kind of, kept drinking and went to bed.  
 414  
 415 *And all of the aftershocks were still, kind of, going on through the night and that?*  
 416  
 417 Yeah. I mean, his apartment is on the twenty-fifth floor, and we didn't really notice  
 418 them...  
 419  
 420 *Okay.*  
 421  
 422 ...like, I, I think there were, but, the, I don't know the, like, phantom earthquakes and  
 423 stuff like, there was just so much that you just didn't notice them. Slept through the night  
 424 pretty peacefully.  
 425  
 426 *Did any of you get, you know, that early warning thing on your phone? The, the, the*  
 427 *mobile phone system?*  
 428  
 429 No. I think everybody did later. [Laughter]  
 430  
 431 *Yeah, I think it came in much, much more. I don't think, most of the people I've talked to*  
 432 *didn't have it...*  
 433  
 434 No.  
 435

436 ...and if they did, they didn't know they...  
 437  
 438 No...  
 439  
 440 ...had it.  
 441  
 442 ...yeah, exactly. Or.  
 443  
 444 *It was definitely more on the Japanese phones, like I had a work phone which was a*  
 445 *Japanese one. It went off all the time...*  
 446  
 447 Oh right.  
 448  
 449 ...yeah, but it was only in Japanese and it was, like...  
 450  
 451 [Note: the participant mimics a shrill, digital alarm sound]  
 452  
 453 ...it was, like, as I said, it was a work phone, it wasn't...  
 454  
 455 Yeah.  
 456  
 457 ...like I, my phone was old, but my iPhone didn't do any of that...  
 458  
 459 Yeah.  
 460  
 461 ...at all, afterwards I found out how to do it [laughter].  
 462  
 463 I had one of the, like, old phones as well, so it didn't have anything [laughter].  
 464  
 465 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 466  
 467 After it was, like, "Ooh, I want that. I want that alarm to go on my phone, too."  
 468  
 469 *So, at that stage, so you decided you guys wanted to, kind of, s, stay together that night.*  
 470 *How much would you say you knew at that stage of what was going on in general?*  
 471  
 472 Ehm, we were watching CNN at his place. I think, I'm pretty sure it was CNN because he  
 473 had cable. Em, and, I mean, there were, there were, there were, the imagery was, of  
 474 course, the tsunami...  
 475  
 476 Yeah.  
 477  
 478 ...ehm, the famous ones of it going over the fields and then, like, coming right up to the  
 479 side of a car or, you know, em, I think the one we were, we did see at work was basically  
 480 just, like, a bridge and then the water rising. I think, em, like, eh, I think when we were at  
 481 the office maybe we did get some images like that, but it didn't look like anything...  
 482  
 483 Yeah.  
 484  
 485 ...and then you, kind of, see a boat, like, pass...  
 486  
 487 Yeah. [laughter].  
 488  
 489 ...and you were like, "Wait. What the?" Like, so, like, when we were at the bar before  
 490 then you could definitely see, like, the, or at least from my memory of, like, the most

491 classic images of, like, eh, eh, Chiba on fire, like the gas that was on fire, ehm, and then  
 492 the tsunami coming in. And you could tell the difference, em, because it happened in the  
 493 afternoon, and what was shot [clears throat] before and after, because daylight and  
 494 everything, so you knew what was happening now and what wasn't...  
 495  
 496 *Yeah.*  
 497  
 498 ...by the, if it's dark...  
 499  
 500 *Yeah.*  
 501  
 502 ...[laughter] it's not happening this instant...  
 503  
 504 *Yeah, exactly.*  
 505  
 506 ...and a lot of the places, I'd never heard of...  
 507  
 508 *Yeah.*  
 509  
 510 ...like I, I'd never been to, I, I had been to Sendai, but I, in, like, Mats, Matsushima, but I  
 511 hadn't been to any like, Ishinomaki or anywhere like that, so I'd never heard of any of  
 512 these places [clears throat].  
 513  
 514 *Yeah. And I know that you have mentioned email...*  
 515  
 516 *Yeah.*  
 517  
 518 ...as a way of, kind of, communicating and stuff, did any of you use social media at all?  
 519  
 520 [Note: the participant makes a deep intake of breath] I'm not a huge Facebook fan. So I  
 521 wasn't, I actually intentionally stayed off it. Ehm, [clears throat] and when we were at my  
 522 friend's place, I remember my friends were posting some stuff and I was just like, "God,"  
 523 I was like, "God, they're going out of control on the news. Like, they're already, like,  
 524 really going out of control on the news." So I was already, like, pissed off at that. So, and  
 525 then there was a lot of, em, like, people writing stuff and then, trying to figure out if that's  
 526 sensitive enough. And, so like, any, any time some, like, my friend was writing on  
 527 Facebook, and then it was, kind of, like, "Well, like, I can't say everything's fine, but  
 528 everything's fine for me. But that doesn't mean everything's fine." Like, so...  
 529  
 530 *I got it.*  
 531  
 532 ...what, is that sensitive enough, in a way?  
 533  
 534 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 535  
 536 But I'm not a huge social networker [laughter] so.  
 537  
 538 *Oh, you, no, em, the reason I ask about that is because there was so much research done*  
 539 *afterwards about how often social media was used, and I'm not convinced because when*  
 540 *I've talked to people...*  
 541  
 542 *Uhm.*  
 543  
 544 ...a lot of people have said like you: 'I didn't use it.' 'I wasn't, I avoided it.'  
 545



546 Yeah. Ehm, I think if that was your only way to communicate, and you wouldn't, that's  
 547 more of a mass audience, and it's something intimate, in a way, em, after the fact, maybe  
 548 like a week later or something like that, my sister was like, who doesn't use Facebook  
 549 either, was kind of telling me, insisting that I had to post something that I'm alright, and I  
 550 was like, "No, I don't." Because a lot of the people were connected to our hometown or  
 551 different things like that. And she was like, "Well, yeah, but by not posting things, people  
 552 see things, people think nothing's." It's like, well, just because I live in Japan doesn't  
 553 mean that [clears throat] you know, like, that I need to say I'm okay, in a way. I'm not  
 554 going to feed into having to say that I'm okay. Because things are not great, but they're  
 555 fine. So why?" And then she was like, "Yeah, but people have been, kind of, asking me."  
 556 And it's like, "That's fine. They're asking you. You can say I'm fine." [Laughter]...  
 557  
 558 [Laughter]  
 559  
 560 ...but I'm not going to put out a bold statement that says, you know, ""Everything is fine  
 561 here," and, you know, stuff, and "Thank you for your caring." And like, "Thoughts and  
 562 wishes go out to people." No! Like, I'm fine.  
 563  
 564 *It's interesting, though, that you mentioned there about how things are not, not great, but*  
 565 *they're okay. You mean, for you in Tokyo, right?...*  
 566  
 567 Yeah.  
 568  
 569 ...is that, that was the kind of...  
 570  
 571 Yeah.  
 572  
 573 ...because what a lot of people have talked about is disconnect between what, say, was  
 574 being portrayed on CNN versus their experience as someone in Tokyo.  
 575  
 576 God, god, yeah, this was, this is a whole other can of worms [laughter]...  
 577  
 578 [Laughter]  
 579  
 580 ...that we're talking about. Em, [clears throat] I'm pretty disillusioned with the media in  
 581 general, ehm, I'm extremely liberal [laughter] and, eh, especially in the US with, the  
 582 country's very divided, eh, I guess the conservative and liberal, liberal views, em, [clears  
 583 throat] I st, really stopped just trusting most news sources, ehm, even the, you know, the  
 584 conservatives say, you know, they say a lot of the media outlets in the US are liberal. I  
 585 don't think they're liberal, ehm, and I think it was, what 2005, 4? When did the Iraq War  
 586 start?  
 587  
 588 *Yeah, 2004, I think. [Note: in fact it started in 2003]*  
 589  
 590 2004...  
 591  
 592 Yeah.  
 593  
 594 ...ehm, there was a massive parade in protest of going to war, and right down, right in  
 595 New York City, that not even the New York Times had. So a hundred, you know, like,  
 596 ten thousand people march in front of their office building and they don't cover it, and so  
 597 that broke my illusion with, of what is, what people report. And so, I think it's all  
 598 entertainment. So since 2004 I haven't - even something like the New York Times, which  
 599 is supposed to be super liberal and trustworthy - no! If it's, if a parade is going past your

600 office and you're not writing about it, ehm, [clears throat] clearly something is going on  
 601 where somebody has been told not to write about it...

602

603 *Yeah.*

604

605 ...and there's a huge hush up and there's huge, like, bas, basically from that moment, I  
 606 didn't trust any of them, so I'm, though you miss stuff, it just completely cemented it in  
 607 my mind. You cannot trust anybody. And the entertainment value is all the time, that's  
 608 the only part of the news that's ever, in the way that they, and, of course, their replaying  
 609 of images, and even on CNN, this is what was horrible, they didn't even have a  
 610 correspondent here. They were reporting from Hong Kong. And asking everybody to  
 611 send them their images. So it's like, "Okay, here's a global news source that doesn't have  
 612 one single person in Japan begging us who have portable, you know, cameras to send that  
 613 stuff." And I'm like, "Okay, this is reporting?" Of course, now, it's, this is, you know, a  
 614 lot more common now, or...

615

616 *Uhm.*

617

618 ...this is how a lot of news stories get their images and, because everybody, because it's a  
 619 lot easier to get them that way, but come on! They had nothing...

620

621 *Yeah.*

622

623 ...they had, like, a map...

624

625 *[Laughter]*

626

627 ...like, literally, except for what the Japanese news was broadcasting, they had very little.  
 628 And they were begging, begging, like, every few minutes, "Oh, if you have anything,  
 629 send it to us. If you have anything, send it to us." Ehm, my sister's favourite story is, eh, I  
 630 think it was on Fox, and hopefully you can still find this...

631

632 *[Laughter]*

633

634 ...they had a map of Japan, and, eh, they had [laughter] like, so basically they had, like,  
 635 Tokyo, but of course, like, even they were basically like, Tohoku [Note: the region of  
 636 Japan where the worst of the disaster struck] and then also on the map when they zoomed  
 637 in a little bit, there was one place that was in Tokyo called Shibuya-egg-man [laughter]...

638

639 *[Laughter]*

640

641 ...all one word, which apparently is, like, a nightclub [laughter]...

642

643 *[Laughter]*

644

645 ...or some, like, some sort of a club, and they had it on Fox News...

646

647 *As a place!*

648

649 ...as Shibuya Nightclub as, like, a part of Tokyo...

650

651 *Oh my god.*

652

653 ...so I mean, it is also what, whatever time in the morning and they are throwing together,  
 654 like, graphics packets...

655  
 656 *Yeah.*  
 657  
 658 ...but come on!...  
 659  
 660 *Yeah.*  
 661  
 662 ...like that is ridiculous. [clears throat] And the difference between re, reporting from  
 663 Tokyo and reporting from the area...  
 664  
 665 *Yeah.*  
 666  
 667 ...because I was like, "If people don't understand that then, let them watch this  
 668 entertainment crap."  
 669  
 670 *Yeah, yeah. Because obviously the experience in Tohoku versus the experience in Tokyo*  
 671 *was like...*  
 672  
 673 Oh god...  
 674  
 675 ...two different worlds...  
 676  
 677 ...yeah...  
 678  
 679 ...right? I mean.  
 680  
 681 ...I don't know if you get to talk to people but, like, it didn't, I mean, I wouldn't even chat  
 682 that I was upset by stuff after listening to what really happened.  
 683  
 684 *Well, I've had some interesting, like, experiences where I, I've talked to people who were*  
 685 *in the tsunami-hit areas...*  
 686  
 687 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 688  
 689 ...and who actually, like, had really tough experiences, and I've talked to people in  
 690 Tokyo...  
 691  
 692 Uhm.  
 693  
 694 ...and one person in Tokyo described it to me as - I, I try to ask everyone 'so for you when  
 695 did the disaster end?' - and this person said, "Hmm, I don't think it ever began." For  
 696 them, for them. But then, his answer also involved, "Well, having said that, I don't think  
 697 it really has ended because of Fukushima."...  
 698  
 699 *Yeah.*  
 700  
 701 ...so it's like tricky because I agree absolutely that in Tokyo, materially, we were barely,  
 702 we were inconvenienced...  
 703  
 704 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 705  
 706 ...right? I mean, maybe we couldn't get home for a night or we had to line up for some  
 707 water or something like that. We were inconvenienced. However, what some people in  
 708 Tokyo have talked about is the Fukushima...  
 709

710 Yeah.  
 711  
 712 *...element. Did that impact on your life?*  
 713  
 714 Oh, that's, that's Day Two.  
 715  
 716 *Oh, okay [laughter]. Okay.*  
 717  
 718 That's Day Two.  
 719  
 720 *So, moving to the next scene [laughter].*  
 721  
 722 [Laughter] This is what I can talk about, not that CNN stuff [laughter]...  
 723  
 724 *[Laughter]*  
 725  
 726 ...because the next morning we wake up, em, so there's, I think, five or six of us that slept  
 727 over, and my sister and I do this thing where we usually, I mean, the nice thing about  
 728 Skype is it's not like you're paying for it, so you can just keep it running...  
 729  
 730 Yeah.  
 731  
 732 ...you can, kind of, like, watch a movie together...  
 733  
 734 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 735  
 736 ...which apparently other people think is kind of weird, but when you're, I'm really, you  
 737 don't have to worry about, so we'll sometimes, just to let you know, like half-watch a  
 738 movie together, like, we'll talk for an hour-and-a-half, and then we'll, like, put something  
 739 on and watch it...  
 740  
 741 Yeah.  
 742  
 743 ...and you know, "Okay, it's time for bed."...  
 744  
 745 *[Laughter]*  
 746  
 747 ...or, like, you know, we'll, we'll get drunk together in different time zones [laughter]...  
 748  
 749 *[Laughter]*  
 750  
 751 ...or, you know, well, you know, because time, you know, all we have to do is synch up  
 752 times and...  
 753  
 754 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 755  
 756 ...it's kind of like you can hang out...  
 757  
 758 *Yeah, hang out.*  
 759  
 760 ...so [Note: participant lets out a sigh] she was on the last train out of New York when,  
 761 eh, the second plane hit, so she wasn't in Manhattan through most of it, and, so she was,  
 762 kind of, watching from afar, and then a lot of the television transmitters were on top of  
 763 the World Trade Centre, so then they were kind of in a news blackout as well, so a lot of  
 764 what was coming in, em, and so, and then she talked about, like, eh, the dust and

765 everything from the building that settled all over her neighbourhood, so there was, like,  
 766 basically, like, ash everywhere, like, so she was living in, like, Brooklyn at the time, and  
 767 there was the anthrax scare and then...

768

769 *Yeah, yeah.*

770

771 ...there was an engine fell out on, like, a plane...

772

773 *Yeah.*

774

775 ...and it went down and, like, it was all these weird things, kind of, snowballing and, eh,  
 776 basically she was working in, she was working in, like, the, in film, eh, as, like, a film  
 777 archivist, it was a really low-paying job, and that's when she, kind of, decided, "I'm  
 778 going to go and get a Masters." And moved to California and so she's been there for ten  
 779 years. But it's still, like, it's still a trauma for her...

780

781 *Yeah.*

782

783 ...even though nobody in our family died or anything like that...

784

785 *Yeah.*

786

787 ...or everybody, but it still was, kind of, a trauma, so we wake up the next morning, and  
 788 she's been up all night watching the, everything...

789

790 *Uhum.*

791

792 ...like, going to town on everything. [clears throat] So we, kind of, Skype, I introduce her  
 793 to my friends on Skype, so we're, kind of, talking and other people are on the phone to  
 794 other people. So she's, kind of, sitting there watching us watch CNN [laughter]. So she's  
 795 basically sitting there watching us hearing the news about Fukushima, so she's, like,  
 796 fascinated by the fact that she's in another country, and even though we're in that  
 797 country, and we're just hearing about this now, even though we're there, and she knows  
 798 more than us, even though she's in California, and it's like, I was like [Note: participant  
 799 rolls her eyes]...

800

801 *[Laughter]*

802

803 ...like, "You've been awake all night, like, [laughter] you're going to have to go to bed.  
 804 This is our day, like, like, it was almost like a vic, like, really satisfying having her watch  
 805 us for the first time hear about Fukushima, which, I don't know everybody has got their  
 806 own stuff, and like [laughter]...

807

808 *That was her little experiment [laughter].*

809

810 Yeah, yeah. Oh well, I'll tell you more about the experiment later. Ehm, and so she was,  
 811 so we're kind of watching it, and it was just, kind of, like, "The what?" The, like, none of  
 812 it made sense. It was just like, kind of like another shock and then the video on top of  
 813 that, it was just like, "What the hell is that all about?" Like, "The hell?" And [clears  
 814 throat] eh, so we're, and then, so, like, we're talking with my sister, and then, eh, what I  
 815 really remember is that my sister is, like, talking more about, because we were kind of  
 816 like, "Whoa, that's crazy that, like, the reactor is having problems." And then, thankfully  
 817 the computer was facing towards me, because then my sister starts going all nutso and  
 818 being all like, "Do you understand about meltdowns? Do you understand about, you  
 819 know, like, em, China Syndrome?" What is it, what is the...

820  
 821 *Oh yeah...*  
 822  
 823 ...one where?  
 824  
 825 ...*the one where it melts into the core, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 826  
 827 Into the core, right? What is that called? Like, China Syndrome?  
 828  
 829 *China Syndrome, I think.*  
 830  
 831 Yeah, yeah. So she's like, "Oh, I have this website open right now and I can tell you all  
 832 about China Syndrome." [laughter]...  
 833  
 834 *[Laughter]*  
 835  
 836 ...it's like, slash nerdy, slash, like, you've really been looking into this quite a lot [clears  
 837 throat] and then, like [Note: participants swirls the ice in her drink as she thinks] I think  
 838 she was, I don't know if she was trying to shock us or educate us or both or, but it was  
 839 really, that was definitely a very big memory of her, of like, and thank, thank god  
 840 everyone else wasn't paying attention, because she was, like, ready to go way into that...  
 841  
 842 *Yeah...*  
 843  
 844 ....like, meltdown of the plant...  
 845  
 846 ...*yeah, uhm.*  
 847  
 848 ...which, at the time, I was like, "Yeah, tell me about it." And she was like, "Do you  
 849 really want to hear about this? Do you really want to hear one of the possibilities that  
 850 they're talking about now on the news?" "Yeah, go on." [laughter]...  
 851  
 852 *[Laughter]*  
 853  
 854 ...like, "Yeah. I'm just going to let you freak out for a little while. Interesting."  
 855 [laughter]...  
 856  
 857 *[Laughter]*  
 858  
 859 ...then, in terms of Fukushima, em, so my friend, my Japanese friend who I said was  
 860 talking about the charger...  
 861  
 862 *Yeah.*  
 863  
 864 ...em, {redacted}, we take the same train, so we walked back, em, to {a major station in  
 865 Tokyo}, and then, on Saturday, so like noonish, one, twelve-thirty or, we were, kind of,  
 866 like, "I think the train..." because we didn't want to rush back...  
 867  
 868 *Yeah.*  
 869  
 870 ...there was no need to rush back, so if the trains are running, we checked that the trains  
 871 are running, so, then again, it might be really crowded...  
 872  
 873 *Yeah.*  
 874

875 ...so, okay, well, I guess noonish, it was just like, we're not in a rush, and, ehm, actually  
876 that night, a lot of people had different plans, so, kind of, the group broke up...  
877  
878 *Yeah.*  
879  
880 ...[clears throat] and so {this Japanese friend} and I headed home, [clears throat] the  
881 trains were running, but slowly...  
882  
883 *Yeah.*  
884  
885 ...so we're like, "Okay, we don't have to walk." [laughter]...  
886  
887 *[Laughter]*  
888  
889 ...and she lives in {a suburb of Tokyo}, so she was like, "Alright."...  
890  
891 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
892  
893 ...I don't have to walk. I'm happy...  
894  
895 *Yeah.*  
896  
897 ...and I got home, so as I said, I think I got home around one-ish or something like that,  
898 and, like, literally, like, find the plug for my TV and plug in my TV [laughter]...  
899  
900 *[Laughter]*  
901  
902 ...like, I never used my TV...  
903  
904 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
905  
906 ...and plugged in my TV and, you know, was watching it, and so then the reactor  
907 exploded [Note: participant sighs deeply] and so that's when, eh, that's when I, kind of,  
908 realized, this is probably where the translation stuff comes in, that's when I realized I was  
909 completely alone, and listening to Japanese news and had no idea what was going on,  
910 like, none at all. So it was like, "What? The building just exploded?" And then they're,  
911 like, showing it in slow mo, and they're showing everything, and I was like, that's when I  
912 was, sort of, like, "Oh crap!" [clears throat]. So then my sister wants to keep Skyping, so  
913 I, you know, turn on the computer and just have her, kind of, she was just, kind of,  
914 running in the background the whole time, and, like, I emailed {the Japanese friend I just  
915 mentioned}, and I'm, like, [Note: making a funny voice indicating someone who was  
916 completely ignorant of something] "Em, what the hell was that?" [laughter]...  
917  
918 *[Laughter]*  
919  
920 ...And then she was like, "I don't know."...  
921  
922 *Yeah.*  
923  
924 ...and the one thing that I could pick up through that, kind of, afternoon, that time, I mean  
925 my sister was telling me things already like, [Note: the participant uses an extreme tone  
926 of voice indicating that what her sister was saying was a strong (even too extreme)  
927 reaction] "Go home and fill your bathtub full of water, like, just in case, like, all the  
928 water's contaminated, so at least you have your bathtub full."...  
929

930 [Laughter]  
 931  
 932 ...and I'm like, [Note: the participant rolls her eyes mimicking exasperation] "Okay, I'll  
 933 do it, just so you [laughter]...  
 934  
 935 Yeah.  
 936  
 937 ...[Note: the participant briefly covers her hands with her face] just to make her happy...  
 938  
 939 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 940  
 941 ...ehm, and, eh, and so {my Japanese friend is} like, "I have no idea." And then, they  
 942 were saying, "Okay, we're going to make an announcement at seven." And so, just  
 943 listening to, like, and then trying to figure out, like, "Microsieverts? Wh, what is that in  
 944 English?" And then looking up radiation scales, and then realizing that, like, "I can't even  
 945 find sievert in English? And how do you spell it? And why is Google not coming up with  
 946 it? Sea-bert? [Note: this indicates the problem of transfer between Japanese renderings of  
 947 foreign words - the phonetic system in Japanese does not map perfectly on to English  
 948 phonetics and so 'sievert' could be rendered something like 'sea-bert'.]  
 949  
 950 *Exactly. This was a big problem I had as well because when it's in katakana [Note: one*  
 951 *of the Japanese writing systems, often used to render foreign words in Japanese script] it*  
 952 *doesn't make any sense, necessarily. It doesn't correspond.*  
 953  
 954 So I'm, like, "Sea-ba?, seee-baa-ru-to?"..  
 955  
 956 Yeah.  
 957  
 958 ..."I don't know how to do it." And trying to, kind of, like, that was, for me, if, if you  
 959 want to talk about translation...  
 960  
 961 Yeah.  
 962  
 963 ...that was the most frustrating. Because there is, there, apparently, now there's a more  
 964 standardized, international radiation levels and detection levels. After! Now I know what  
 965 a microsievert is. Now I can, now there's a Wikipedia page on it [laughter]...  
 966  
 967 Yeah.  
 968  
 969 ...so that side of it was like, "Well is that a lot? Is that a little? Is that a lot?" And then it's  
 970 like, "Okay, Fukushima is, like, what, like, a hundred kilo, a hundred, two-hundred miles  
 971 away? Like, blurrgh." [laughter]...  
 972  
 973 [Laughter] Yeah.  
 974  
 975 ..."What the hell does any of this mean? And some, like, my friend was hosting that  
 976 party, he went out on a date in {a neighbouring prefecture} em, the other friend whose  
 977 birthday it was, they were having, like, a romantic dinner, like, {my Japanese friend} and  
 978 I were at home, like, watching the news [laughter]...  
 979  
 980 [Laughter]  
 981  
 982 ...ehm, another friend of mine, I think his hometown is, in his hometown there's a reactor  
 983 [clears throat] so, eh, actually part of school is they go and visit it and they talk about...  
 984



985 *Aaahh.*  
 986  
 987 ...safety levels and I think he even said that in between his town it overlaps in a way, em,  
 988 so he was, kind of, in the cover, in the range of two reactors...  
 989  
 990 *Wow...*  
 991  
 992 ...em.  
 993  
 994 ...this, this is a Japanese friend now?  
 995  
 996 No, no. This is a Canadian.  
 997  
 998 *Canadian. Ah.*  
 999  
 1000 If you want to talk to him, I don't know if you have time, he's, he's pretty interesting to  
 1001 talk [laughter]...  
 1002  
 1003 *[Laughter]*  
 1004  
 1005 ...because he, because he knows about radiation...  
 1006  
 1007 *Yeah.*  
 1008  
 1009 ...and so he was talking about, he was just like, "Calm the hell down." Like, "What is  
 1010 your problem?" Like, like, "Come out drinking." And I was kind of, like, "I don't even  
 1011 want to leave the house." Like, "I don't know what the hell is out there. I don't think  
 1012 being safe, I don't think it's safer inside, but I don't want to go outside. That's all I  
 1013 know."...  
 1014  
 1015 *Yeah.*  
 1016  
 1017 ...and then my sister is on the Skype like, [Note: mimicking a panicked tone of voice]  
 1018 "Go shopping. Go shopping." [laughter]...  
 1019  
 1020 *[Laughter]*  
 1021  
 1022 ... "You need enough food to last for twenty days." Fucking [laughter].  
 1023  
 1024 *[Laughter] Oh goodness. That's hilarious how technology has allowed these sort of*  
 1025 *interactions. [laughter].*  
 1026  
 1027 Yeah [laughter] so, like, and so I run out, and so I leave Skype on, I go out and I get food,  
 1028 and my friends are like, "Yeah, what the hell is your problem? Like, come out drinking  
 1029 with us. There's a bunch of us, like, eh, another, another friend, his friends that are in a  
 1030 band are in town, so, like, we're, we're in {downtown Tokyo} getting drunk." And I was  
 1031 like, "Okay. {That part of Tokyo is} not far, but I don't feel like leaving."...  
 1032  
 1033 *Uhm.*  
 1034  
 1035 ... "I just don't feel like it." And then the announcement was supposed to be at seven.  
 1036 That's one thing I did understand. They were, they were going to tell, tell us what  
 1037 happened at seven. Seven-thirty, there's still nothing [laughter]...  
 1038  
 1039 *[Note: the researcher makes a deep intake of breath]*

1040  
 1041 ...em, and then they announce it, and most of what I understood, because a lot of, I didn't  
 1042 know *genpatsu* [Note: means nuclear], I didn't know *houshasen* [Note: means radiation],  
 1043 I didn't know any of these words. Most of what I got was the word explosion [laughter],  
 1044 like, *Fukushima*, like *Daiichi*, like *Daiichi*, *ni-go*, *san-go*, like...  
 1045  
 1046 *[Laughter] All the good stuff.*  
 1047  
 1048 ...yeah, so I'm like, "Yeah, I, I, I know there was an explosion." [laughter]...  
 1049  
 1050 *[Laughter]*  
 1051  
 1052 ...and then everybody, after they made the announcement, I think people were clapping or  
 1053 there was, like, a, people were happy...  
 1054  
 1055 *Uhm.*  
 1056  
 1057 ...so I was, like, "Okay. Something good happened." And I was, because, kind of, like,  
 1058 watching my phone, waiting for {my Japanese friend}...  
 1059  
 1060 *Yeah.*  
 1061  
 1062 ...she, she said that she'd update me...  
 1063  
 1064 *Yeah.*  
 1065  
 1066 ...and, eh, kind of waiting, and I'm like, "Okay, what else did they say?" It was like,  
 1067 "Okay, well I still don't know what a microsievert is." So I start looking into that or, you  
 1068 know, so like, "Okay, I understand there was an explosion." [laughter]...  
 1069  
 1070 *[Laughter] This much has been established.*  
 1071  
 1072 ...Yeah, right. Found that on TV! [laughter] I think if I hadn't seen that on TV I probably  
 1073 would have gone out.  
 1074  
 1075 *One thing that a lot of people have talked about is how images played such an important*  
 1076 *role for them. Like, pictures and images actually ended up being really useful...*  
 1077  
 1078 *Yeah.*  
 1079  
 1080 *...especially when the topic is complex...*  
 1081  
 1082 *Yeah.*  
 1083  
 1084 *...even in English...*  
 1085  
 1086 *Yeah.*  
 1087  
 1088 *...what I found is when I translated these things, I still didn't know what a sievert was*  
 1089 *[laughter] even then, so.*  
 1090  
 1091 *Yeah. It's, like, layers upon layers of words people don't know anyway...*  
 1092  
 1093 *Yeah. So images, but, the power of the image, then, is that it can also freak you out.*  
 1094

1095 Yeah. So, eh, definitely for me, I, if I hadn't just arrived home and then seen that, I  
 1096 probably would have gone out, if I'd seen it later, but it was literally, like, watching the  
 1097 news and then they were freaking out. "What's happening?"...  
 1098  
 1099 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1100  
 1101 ...and then, well, they did the zoom in thing...  
 1102  
 1103 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1104  
 1105 ...because it was a really far away one...  
 1106  
 1107 *Yeah.*  
 1108  
 1109 ...and then you hear the news announcers getting freaked out...  
 1110  
 1111 *Yeah.*  
 1112  
 1113 ...and so I was here also during 9/11, I was in Japan, and so it was, it happened on the  
 1114 NHK English broadcast time, and, ehm, the English translator stopped talking, like, she  
 1115 got so freaked out, the translator stopped talking. So it was like, "Okay, I understand that  
 1116 [laughter]...  
 1117  
 1118 *Something bad is happening.*  
 1119  
 1120 ...and then they were, like, dubbing over, they had like, in the, like, for 9/11, they had the  
 1121 English broadcasts and then dubbed over it in Japanese, so we were, like, desperately  
 1122 trying to hear over the English [Note: I think this is a slip of the tongue and the  
 1123 participant means 'over the Japanese']...  
 1124  
 1125 *Oh yeah.*  
 1126  
 1127 ...and then, like, then, like, [clears throat] then had, like, NHK [Note: Japanese national  
 1128 broadcaster] eh, then we'd switch to NHK and there'd be the English, and the translator  
 1129 started translating and then, like, broke down...  
 1130  
 1131 *Oh, crikey.*  
 1132  
 1133 ...so I was like, "Okay, I'm not really expecting any translation services after this sort of  
 1134 stuff."  
 1135  
 1136 *You know, your, you've had that experience, yeah.*  
 1137  
 1138 Ehm, and then, you know, I get an email from {my Japanese friend} that's like,  
 1139 "Everything is okay. It exploded, but that was a good thing. Like, it released the  
 1140 pressure." And I was like, "Okay?" [laughter]  
 1141  
 1142 *[Laughter]*  
 1143  
 1144 ... "What the hell?"...  
 1145  
 1146 *Who'd have thought, yeah!*  
 1147

1148 ...yeah, and so I just, kind of, [clears throat] for the rest of that day, I just, kind of, yeah,  
 1149 em, went out, I got my emergency pack of food, and different stuff like that, which, of  
 1150 course, involves a lot of wine...  
 1151  
 1152 *[Laughter]*  
 1153  
 1154 ...because my, my sister, eh, because in San Diego they sometimes have wildfires, and  
 1155 then one year the university was evacuated, and so, like, basically she and her, like, other  
 1156 professor buddy, like, they, they had their emergency packs and had, like, eight bottles of  
 1157 wine [laughter]...  
 1158  
 1159 *[Laughter]*  
 1160  
 1161 ...between the two of them [laughter].  
 1162  
 1163 *If you're going to go, go happy [laughter].*  
 1164  
 1165 Yeah [laughter], em, so I was, like, I definitely need in my emergency pack some wine...  
 1166  
 1167 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1168  
 1169 ...and I think all the food has now expired from it [laughter]...  
 1170  
 1171 *Oh, of course, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1172  
 1173 ...em, and so, I think that was basically, and then Sunday, we were, a bunch of us were  
 1174 planning to meet up again, and we just got shitfaced, just completely shitfaced, and it was  
 1175 just, like, that stress relief, and it was probably one of the most hilarious nights I've had  
 1176 in Japan...  
 1177  
 1178 *[Laughter]*  
 1179  
 1180 ...just, like, we were, we were laughing so much at just, like, stupid things and doing  
 1181 stupid things, and talking and making jokes and, like, to a point where, ehm, one friend  
 1182 that, like, [laughter] one guy told a joke, and he, like, spat all over the floor [laughter]  
 1183 like, laughing. So like, you know, that kind of stress relief.  
 1184  
 1185 *Oh that was a reaction, I'd say, yeah. You needed to let it out.*  
 1186  
 1187 Yeah, and we were just having so much fun and getting trashed and...  
 1188  
 1189 *Yeah.*  
 1190  
 1191 ...I think we all went, and this is, like, the Sunday night, I went home at, like, I think it  
 1192 was, it was actually in my neighbourhood, so I don't think I made it home, I made it  
 1193 home at, like, midnight...  
 1194  
 1195 *[Laughter]*  
 1196  
 1197 ...so everybody else was much later than that [laughter]. And then, the next day, Monday,  
 1198 was horrible because I was horribly hungover and, em, so we basically had flex-time to  
 1199 get in before 11, or you call in, and, em, so I had taken the train and everything and then  
 1200 the blackout, so I show up to my station and I'm on a blackout, so my train is not  
 1201 running, so I'm like, "I don't even know how the hell do I even get to work? Like, it was  
 1202 running over the weekend? Why?" So, em, so I found, so I figured out that there was a

1203 bus that I could take to get closer to, and then I show up at work and there's nobody. I  
 1204 mean, do you want to call somebody up and ask them to change their job [Note: the  
 1205 participant worked as a headhunter]. And after the radiation stuff, like, we didn't know if  
 1206 foreign companies were leaving Japan, so, do you really want to say, "Oh, why don't you  
 1207 change your job to this great company that [laughter] might abandon...  
 1208  
 1209 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 1210  
 1211 ...might have abandoned Japan over the weekend [laughter]. Ehm, but as I said before,  
 1212 my office is pretty international, em, there was one German guy that just took off on the  
 1213 Saturday, and he never came back. Didn't even notify the company. So about half of the  
 1214 people didn't even show up to work on that Monday. Ehm, half of the people didn't even,  
 1215 or I think for, like, all of that, there was at least twenty percent that didn't even, like,  
 1216 bother contacting the company, and, I mean, nobody knows how to react and, but there's  
 1217 no leadership from management or anything, so we, kind of, just, like, left astray...  
 1218  
 1219 *Yeah.*  
 1220  
 1221 ...and so it was just like, "Oh we ended up listening to all the things about the radiation,  
 1222 ah, and it's going to be blowing up this way on Tuesday." And, and, ehm, then all the  
 1223 media stuff, so basically I was getting bombarded by everybody overseas...  
 1224  
 1225 *Yeah.*  
 1226  
 1227 ...and that was driving me crazy. So in the end, my friend in Hong Kong and my sister  
 1228 bought me a ticket, a one-way ticket to Hong Kong...  
 1229  
 1230 *[Laughter]*  
 1231  
 1232 ...because there was nothing to do at work, and, like, literally I would show up to work  
 1233 for two hours, not know what the hell to do, ehm, okay, reschedule the meetings, I didn't  
 1234 want to go out on the Tuesday...  
 1235  
 1236 *Yeah.*  
 1237  
 1238 ...when the radi, when the wind was blowing south...  
 1239  
 1240 *Yeah.*  
 1241  
 1242 ...ehm, and then you see everybody kind of back to work but kind of not...  
 1243  
 1244 *Yeah.*  
 1245  
 1246 ...and, eh, the lights don't work, the lights are, you know, the power, everything is  
 1247 powered down, ehm, like, subways are dark, everything is dark, the windows are open on  
 1248 the, the, because I take, like, the J, JRs [Note: one of the train lines in Tokyo that go both  
 1249 above and below ground]...  
 1250  
 1251 *Uhum.*  
 1252  
 1253 ...like, the windows are down and the lights are off during the day. Ehm, and then the  
 1254 news is just going around the bend about Fukushima. Completely out of control. And  
 1255 then there are aftershocks and different things like that, so. And then, like, ehm, my one  
 1256 friend I was talking about, eh, who was the expat, like, he actually had a business trip to

1257 Korea, so he and {my Japanese friend} were in Korea, so and then, like, my friends and I  
 1258 were kind of, like, "Well, there's nothing to do."...  
 1259  
 1260 *Yeah.*  
 1261  
 1262 ...so we work for two hours and go to the bar and get drunk and then try and head home  
 1263 before rush hour...  
 1264  
 1265 *Yeah.*  
 1266  
 1267 ...because the trains were not quite running and you don't really want to take them when  
 1268 they're not quite running...  
 1269  
 1270 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1271  
 1272 ...and thousands of people are going home. So, and then, so basically my friend just said,  
 1273 "I'll buy you one on my mileage points." And then my sister sent him money, and like,  
 1274 one way ticket to Hong Kong, and I was like, "Alright." So, took off on Thursday and,  
 1275 ehm, I was planning to come back on the Tuesday, and I said, and he was like, "No, no,  
 1276 no. Please stay longer." I was like, "If you can get me tickets to the Rugby 7, [laughter]...  
 1277  
 1278 *[Laughter]*  
 1279  
 1280 ...on the weekend, I'll stay longer." [laughter] And so he got to work...  
 1281  
 1282 *Yeah.*  
 1283  
 1284 ...it wasn't until Friday night, of, like, the, like, a week later, that Friday night, when we  
 1285 were out, I was out to dinner with, eh, my friend and his roommate that I realized I had  
 1286 actually relaxed. Like, I didn't, I didn't actually realize that I was, kind of, in a  
 1287 shellshock, so they picked me up on Thursday night, and I didn't even think to, like, I  
 1288 wasn't totally at the bar when I thought to email, like, eh, use my friend's phone and  
 1289 email, ehm, basically my parents and my sister, and they were fuming that I didn't do it  
 1290 the second I landed. I'm like, "What's the difference two hours from, for you?"...  
 1291  
 1292 *Yeah.*  
 1293  
 1294 ...like, I, I'm, like, basically, shocked so, and I'm just, kind of, like, standing there, and  
 1295 everybody's talking around me, and I'm just like, [Note: mimes taking a drink] drink!  
 1296 [laughter]...  
 1297  
 1298 *[Laughter]*  
 1299  
 1300 ...and it wasn't until twenty-four hours after that when I realized, because my friend at the  
 1301 time, he was working for {a real estate company}, which is like temporary offices, so he  
 1302 says, "We're, we can put you up in the nicest office. I can put you up on the 97th floor of  
 1303 a building in a really nice office." And I'm like, "You think I'm going to go ninety-some  
 1304 floors up? Are you fucking mad? No fucking way!"...  
 1305  
 1306 *[Laughter]*  
 1307  
 1308 ... "Put me in the basement somewhere." [laughter] "No fucking way! No fucking way!"  
 1309 But, you know, that's not what he's thinking. He's not thinking about, I'm thinking  
 1310 about, it occurred to me that the ground's not shaking.  
 1311

1312 *Because it had been, right?...*  
 1313  
 1314 Yeah.  
 1315  
 1316 *...I mean, even if you were continuing your daily life, I mean, it was still, just, I, I can't*  
 1317 *even, there was hundreds, like...*  
 1318  
 1319 Yeah.  
 1320  
 1321 *...there was hundreds and hundreds of aftershocks so...*  
 1322  
 1323 Yeah.  
 1324  
 1325 *...even here in Tokyo, that did disorient you, right? But you had to leave to notice.*  
 1326  
 1327 Yeah.  
 1328  
 1329 *Yeah.*  
 1330  
 1331 So it wasn't really until Friday when I realized I was relaxed...  
 1332  
 1333 *Yeah. And you could kind of.*  
 1334  
 1335 *...ehm, and the worst thing, I don't remember what, it was, like, a UK newspaper, I'm, I*  
 1336 *don't know if you remember, it wasn't The Sun, but it was one of those, eh, really trashy,*  
 1337 *trashy ones, and it was on, you've been to Hong Kong, right?*  
 1338  
 1339 *Yeah.*  
 1340  
 1341 You know the Airport Express?  
 1342  
 1343 *Yeah.*  
 1344  
 1345 So you know how they have the news flashing, and so basically, like, so my friends pick  
 1346 me up and they're hugging me, and we're on the way back, and they have on the news, it  
 1347 wasn't, wasn't The Sun, it was another trashy...  
 1348  
 1349 *Something like that.*  
 1350  
 1351 *...and it just says, like, 'Meltdown Japan'. And I was like, "What the fuck?" Like, and I*  
 1352 *was like, "This is the reason why I'm fucking here."...*  
 1353  
 1354 *Yeah.*  
 1355  
 1356 *...And they were like, "Why?" And I was like, "It's not that fucking bad."...*  
 1357  
 1358 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1359  
 1360 *... "Look, this is the shit."...*  
 1361  
 1362 *[Laughter]*  
 1363  
 1364 *... "This is the fucking shit." So I was getting very angry at the media coverage, and then*  
 1365 *it was like, and then talking to people, and they were like, "Oh." Because I was, I was*  
 1366 *like, "Oh yeah, I'm a refugee." and [laughter] you know, I thought that was a good joke.*

1367 [Note: mimicking an exaggerated, overly concerned tone of voice] “Oh my God, how is  
 1368 it?” I’m like, “Yeah, it’s fine.” And they were like, “Well, why are you here?” And I was  
 1369 just like, “They gave me a free flight ticket.” [laughter]...  
 1370  
 1371 *[Laughter]*  
 1372  
 1373 ...Well, free ticket?  
 1374  
 1375 *Nice, nice holiday, yeah [laughter].*  
 1376  
 1377 I was like, “There’s nothing to do at work, so.” And eh, [clears throat] okay so I went  
 1378 back, that’s, I would say, the majority of, and then, like, the, the news coverage was just,  
 1379 like, appalling...  
 1380  
 1381 *Yeah.*  
 1382  
 1383 ...and then, ehm, seeing, when you mentioned, like, social media, like, a colleague of  
 1384 mine, he posted, I was looking at, I was actually checking my Facebook when I was in  
 1385 Hong Kong, because I was like, “Nothing to do.”...  
 1386  
 1387 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1388  
 1389 ...and, eh, he posted a five-minute long video of him walking around Tokyo, and it was,  
 1390 like, him looking in the windows of bread stores where there was plenty of bread, and  
 1391 walking around and people are going around normally...  
 1392  
 1393 *Yeah.*  
 1394  
 1395 ...and it was literally like a ten-minute long that just says [Note: banging lightly on the  
 1396 table for emphasis as she speaks the next phrase] ‘Things are fine here. Stop listening to  
 1397 the press.’ And then, ehm, so I sent to my mother, for example, photos of the grocery  
 1398 store near my, like on Saturday, near my house, and the, ehm, so most of the perishable  
 1399 goods were gone...  
 1400  
 1401 *Yeah.*  
 1402  
 1403 ...ehm, but there was still some bread...  
 1404  
 1405 *Yeah.*  
 1406  
 1407 ...but, like, yoghurt was gone...  
 1408  
 1409 *Yeah.*  
 1410  
 1411 ...milk was mainly gone, so things like that...  
 1412  
 1413 *Yeah.*  
 1414  
 1415 ...and it was literally, like, some of the shelves are cleared and then the ones next to it are  
 1416 full...  
 1417  
 1418 *Yeah.*  
 1419  
 1420 ...and so I was taking photos of both, so I was like, “Actually, what, if you see images  
 1421 like this, they’re choosing to cut out the fact that there’s plenty.”



1422  
 1423 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1424  
 1425 And that pissed me off as well, because all you see circulating are these, like, ‘Shelves  
 1426 Bare’...  
 1427  
 1428 *Yeah.*  
 1429  
 1430 ...it’s like, “Yeah, because they need to restock.” [laughter]...  
 1431  
 1432 *[Laughter]*  
 1433  
 1434 ...like, “The, the stocking supplies are stuck.” Like, “That might be coming from  
 1435 Tohoku,”...  
 1436  
 1437 *Yeah.*  
 1438  
 1439 ... “the supply system is messed up.”...  
 1440  
 1441 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1442  
 1443 ...it doesn’t mean that, like...  
 1444  
 1445 *On the verge of, yeah...*  
 1446  
 1447 ...we’re over.  
 1448  
 1449 ...*Yeah, no, I think that that’s a huge, that’s definitely going to be a theme that I am going*  
 1450 *to have to talk about because many, many people have mentioned it, li, like yourself with*  
 1451 *kind of anger, actually, that they feel it was just, you know, counterproductive this, sort*  
 1452 *of, sensationalization or.*  
 1453  
 1454 *Yeah. And then, I mean, peop, we’re the ones sending these images...*  
 1455  
 1456 *Yeah.*  
 1457  
 1458 ...we’re the ones putting them on Facebook, and so that’s why I took quite long shots of,  
 1459 “Hey look, here’s a, here’s the, here’s the empty section, here’s the rest that are full.”  
 1460  
 1461 *Yeah, and it shows how, like, now the, kind of, the citizen journalist can counteract some*  
 1462 *of the, the hype but, you know, it depends on how wide your network reaches, right? But*  
 1463 *at least with your family or your loved ones or that, they can get...*  
 1464  
 1465 *Yeah.*  
 1466  
 1467 ...*you know, a little bit of relief maybe.*  
 1468  
 1469 I remember when I came back, eh, from Hong Kong, my mother was like, “Would you,“  
 1470 - you know, very motherly - “do you want me to send you toilet paper?” [laughter]...  
 1471  
 1472 *[Laughter]*  
 1473  
 1474 ... “I heard toilet paper is out of stock.” I went, went back to the store, [Note: gestures  
 1475 taking a photo]...  
 1476

1477 *Click.*  
 1478  
 1479 ...they're not sold out, completely full, and then did a close up on the sign that said, eh,  
 1480 'Please take one per customer.'...  
 1481  
 1482 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1483  
 1484 ...and in fact how quickly they had the beeping thing when you bought too much water...  
 1485  
 1486 *Oh yes, yeah.*  
 1487  
 1488 ...how did they implement that so quickly?  
 1489  
 1490 *That was incredible.*  
 1491  
 1492 Everywhere. That amazed me.  
 1493  
 1494 *I'd forgotten about that. I'm glad you reminded me. I'd forgotten all about that.*  
 1495  
 1496 And how fine everybody was with it...  
 1497  
 1498 *Yeah.*  
 1499  
 1500 ...everybody was fine with, like, and you see, I mean, like, of course people may be under  
 1501 the surface they're freaking the shit out...  
 1502  
 1503 *Uhm.*  
 1504  
 1505 ...but it made me like Japan more. That's one, kind of, longer term thing is that I'd been  
 1506 here five years, I was, kind of, planning to leave, and then seeing how over  
 1507 sensationalized it was, vers, the reality versus the way the people in Japan actually  
 1508 handled it, and how, like, because I, I work, I recruit for, mainly find Japanese people,  
 1509 how many people reached out to me and said, "Do you need help with anything?" Ehm,  
 1510 there's a woman, I don't know like, in her forties, that, like, emailed me out-of-the-blue  
 1511 and was like, "Oh do you need help with translation or anything?" Or like [clears throat]  
 1512 you know, people that I didn't, weren't close friends or anything, but reaching out, you  
 1513 know, like, "Okay, I know you're alone in Tokyo, like, do you need any help? Do you  
 1514 need translation? Is there?" Like, and so that's the reaction I got. So the, I'm kind of, like,  
 1515 all of this overblown shit just makes me pissed off...  
 1516  
 1517 *Yeah.*  
 1518  
 1519 ...and the way people actually did react, and there wasn't vandalising...  
 1520  
 1521 *Yeah.*  
 1522  
 1523 ...people didn't burn down places or...  
 1524  
 1525 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1526  
 1527 ...like, it is one of those things maybe in Japan, but it actually went to show how bad the  
 1528 media is at finding those few people...  
 1529  
 1530 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1531

1532 ...that want to cry hysterically on camera to sell, what, advertizing space?  
1533  
1534 *Yeah. I know that some people I've talked to from, from different nationalities have had*  
1535 *comments about their embassies...*  
1536  
1537 Uhm...  
1538  
1539 ...*what did you feel was the, sort of...*  
1540  
1541 ...[clears throat] so...  
1542  
1543 ...*your relationship with the US Embassy?*  
1544  
1545 ...so, eh, [clears throat] I think it was maybe on the Tuesday, I think it was on the  
1546 Wednesday when I booked my ticket the next day, ehm, eh, to go to Hong Kong, and on  
1547 Tuesday they had made announcements at, I think, the French Embassy, because there  
1548 was a lot of international people I worked with...  
1549  
1550 *Yeah.*  
1551  
1552 ...so they made announcements at the French Embassy that, em, women and children of  
1553 French nationals, the women and children are allowed, you know, there's a flight, ehm, or  
1554 like pregnant women, and so I was like, "Okay, I need to find a Frenchman now, now."  
1555 [laughter]...  
1556  
1557 *[Laughter]*  
1558  
1559 ... "Now! Come on." Ehm, and the US, I didn't contact the embassy, the US doesn't give  
1560 a shit about, like, there's too many of us...  
1561  
1562 *Uhm.*  
1563  
1564 ...and I'm sure I couldn't even get through, and what am I going to say? "I'm fine." Like,  
1565 I mean, there's like, Americans are, like, the largest population here, like, how many,  
1566 how many 'we're fines' are you going to get? I've never registered at the embassy other  
1567 than, like, getting passports or so they're too big to handle that many, so I'm, I'm pretty  
1568 indifferent to that embassy stuff...  
1569  
1570 *Yeah.*  
1571  
1572 ...and then I did hear on the Thursday there was, if you lined up in Shinjuku, there was a  
1573 flight you could take, and then actually retroactively they charged you for it...  
1574  
1575 *Wow.*  
1576  
1577 ...as it turned out, it wasn't a huge disaster...  
1578  
1579 *Ouch.*  
1580  
1581 ...and Americans didn't need to be evacuated...  
1582  
1583 *Ouch.*  
1584  
1585 ...there is, actually, my old boss, ehm, he'd resigned maybe like, a, it turned out to be two  
1586 or three weeks before the earthquake and, ehm, he's from Israel and he speaks very good

1587 Japanese and, eh, I already had my plane ticket by this point, but he went around and was  
 1588 contacting all of us to leave, and so he'd actually gone up with NBC as a translator, and  
 1589 so they were, kind of, going around and he was riding around in a van, so his stories are  
 1590 pretty interesting, ehm, he was riding around in a van with, em, basically one of the guys  
 1591 from GE who was the advisor when they built Fukushima, so he was this retired guy, and  
 1592 he told, he told, he told everybody, he said, like, "I don't think it's safe." And so this was  
 1593 on, like, Thurs, Wednesday, the Wednesday after, and he's up in Fukushima, he's up,  
 1594 like, they're up in Tohoku, they're up in, like, they were on, like, he was part of the, eh,  
 1595 animal retrieval, and all these different things, going with different news crews, ehm,  
 1596 getting scanned for radiation any time he was allowed in any facility, [clears throat] but I  
 1597 mean the GE guy that helped advise building it was saying 'Get out.' So [clears throat]  
 1598 and they were up in, so basically, they said to him as well, "Come with us." And so, he  
 1599 was gathering his stuff, and they were at, they were on their way to the airport and  
 1600 basically two or three of the news people were like, "The story's here." And so, like,  
 1601 ninety percent of them went back, but a handful of them stayed on, so he stayed on to  
 1602 translate with them...  
 1603  
 1604 *Okay.*  
 1605  
 1606 ...because they were like, "Come on, the story's here. We can't report this from  
 1607 Hawaii."...  
 1608  
 1609 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1610  
 1611 ...so I did have some respect for them. [laughter]...  
 1612  
 1613 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1614  
 1615 ...that they actually stayed and were up there and were covering the story and not running  
 1616 away...  
 1617  
 1618 *Yeah.*  
 1619  
 1620 ...yeah, but I mean, kind of, non-essential. Yeah  
 1621  
 1622 *Yeah, it, it just goes to show that actually what I've, what I've discovered is that a lot of*  
 1623 *the people who were translating for, say, media...*  
 1624  
 1625 Uhm.  
 1626  
 1627 *...or reporters or that were just, em, volun, either volunteers or non-professionals, just*  
 1628 *people who happened to, usually through a friend or network...*  
 1629  
 1630 *Yeah, yeah...*  
 1631  
 1632 *...or something, like, it's kind of interesting.*  
 1633  
 1634 *..."Can anybody translate? We need somebody now."*  
 1635  
 1636 *Yeah. There's a lot of pressure for somebody though, as well, like, em, if it's, you, you*  
 1637 *don't know what you're signing up for.*  
 1638  
 1639 No. He talked about one time, I think it was the following week and, eh [clears throat]  
 1640 they went to the milit, US military base to do some sort of interview or to, to film or

1641 whatever and, em, they scanned them down several times, they cleaned them up, like,  
 1642 they cleaned them all...  
 1643  
 1644 *Yeah.*  
 1645  
 1646 ...and then, the, and they were waiting for, like, five hours and in the end they said, "No."  
 1647 Wouldn't let them in. And so, like, basically, the, kind of, taxi driver, I don't, he was tax,  
 1648 he was, like, a hired driver, he was like, "Oh, actually, there's a Japanese military base  
 1649 within twenty minutes from here. Let's go there." And they were like, "Eh, we've just  
 1650 been kicked out of the US one." [laughter]...  
 1651  
 1652 *[Laughter]*  
 1653  
 1654 ... "Will the Japanese let us in?" So they drive up there and so my friend basically goes up  
 1655 and explains, like, "Okay, I'm here with a US news crew, and we wanted to kind of, kind  
 1656 of, come in and film and talk to you guys." And then the guy was like, in English, he was  
 1657 like, "Wait a minute." Shuts the door, and, like, so they're waiting there. Five minutes  
 1658 later, the highest person from the base comes out, and he's like, "Welcome."  
 1659  
 1660 *Wow, wow.*  
 1661  
 1662 *[Laughter]* So the, I mean, the US military just didn't want any...  
 1663  
 1664 *It's the diff, yeah, it's just diff, they've different.*  
 1665  
 1666 ...and they came around, they gave them tours, instructed everybody to please be nice and  
 1667 respectful to the news crew...  
 1668  
 1669 *Wow.*  
 1670  
 1671 ...and he was like, "Yeah, do you think the American base would do that?"...  
 1672  
 1673 *Yeah, yeah...*  
 1674  
 1675 ... "No way."  
 1676  
 1677 *...one of the tricky things that some people have talked about, I, I spoke to somebody who*  
 1678 *was a translator, was the, sort of, the legal situation afterwards...*  
 1679  
 1680 *Uhm.*  
 1681  
 1682 *...because it was all so ad-hoc that they didn't know what they were translating what they*  
 1683 *were talking about and, you know the way, often if it's a sensitive matter, you'd have to*  
 1684 *sign a nondisclosure agreement...*  
 1685  
 1686 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1687  
 1688 *...there was nothing...*  
 1689  
 1690 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1691  
 1692 *...so now they're like, "Can, can I say what I know...*  
 1693  
 1694 *What happened.*  
 1695

1696 ...or am I not allowed to or...

1697

1698 Yeah.

1699

1700 ...you know, especially the people who were up around Fukushima area...

1701

1702 Yeah.

1703

1704 ...they're, they don't know, they don't know what to say, or, I don't know, I didn't push it,

1705 because...

1706

1707 [Laughter]...

1708

1709 ...I don't want to get anyone in trouble but...

1710

1711 ...[Note: mimicking an interrogator] "Tell me everything."

1712

1713 ...yeah, yeah, no, like, it's, it's an issue...

1714

1715 Uhm.

1716

1717 ...though that, like, in these disaster situations because it's volunteers or just anybody...

1718

1719 Yeah.

1720

1721 ...maybe they don't, they, you wouldn't think about these kind of things, but later on that

1722 could become really important.

1723

1724 Yeah, twenty years from now...

1725

1726 Yeah?

1727

1728 ...we're all just going to come bleeding out.

1729

1730 Oh yeah. Well, the, one of the people I spoke to said, em, this thing is going to be counted

1731 in terms of, like, decades, not in terms of years, like it's thirty years, forty years...

1732

1733 Yeah.

1734

1735 ...some people said, like, hundreds of years...

1736

1737 Yeah.

1738

1739 ....and I was like, "Oh, man!"

1740

1741 To kind of answer your question about when did you feel like it ended in a way, ehm, at

1742 least for me in terms of, like, the panic and all that stuff...

1743

1744 Yeah.

1745

1746 ...ehm, it was going back to the CNN thing, and so, {my colleague} and I also cheered

1747 and had a beer the second Japan wasn't the top news story [laughter]...

1748

1749 [Laughter]

1750

1751 ...and it was like a month later.  
 1752  
 1753 *Closed the circle very nicely [laughter].*  
 1754  
 1755 I would say, if, if you had the, you know, of course, I have more poetic things I could say,  
 1756 but that was definitely...  
 1757  
 1758 *That's when it, uh.*  
 1759  
 1760 ...like, that's when it came full circle...  
 1761  
 1762 *Yeah, but that's a way of...*  
 1763  
 1764 ...it was a fucking month later!  
 1765  
 1766 *...yeah, but that's a way of marking it, though. Absolutely, when it starts slipping out of*  
 1767 *the, certainly the international news, yeah.*  
 1768  
 1769 We're number two on CNN, but we were like [Note: mimicking excited screaming]  
 1770 "We're number two!" Because we were also cheering the fact that we were excited that  
 1771 we were number one. So it was like, "Oh god, I didn't think it would take a month for us  
 1772 to drop off the top news story."  
 1773  
 1774 *Yeah, yeah. That shows, I mean, it was something that, kind of, just kept. And, you know,*  
 1775 *periodically, it has come back in again, I mean, now, it's, every now and then, especially*  
 1776 *because of Fukushima, it comes back in.*  
 1777  
 1778 Yeah. Well, I mean, I think, I think legal action should go, you know, Tepco [Note: the  
 1779 company that operates the nuclear power plants in Fukushima] should be sued, and, you  
 1780 know, do you realize they've, like, raised our electricity bills?  
 1781  
 1782 *[Laughter]*  
 1783  
 1784 Have you heard this?  
 1785  
 1786 *No. Oh, what a kick in the teeth.*  
 1787  
 1788 They've actually gone through and raised people in Tokyo's electricity bills to help pay  
 1789 for it.  
 1790  
 1791 *What a kick in the teeth. Oh, I wouldn't trust that company as far as I could throw it.*  
 1792  
 1793 And, oh, it's wonderful how they show their houses that they still have in, like, Kamakura  
 1794 on the beach that are still owned by Tepco. I mean, and Japanese journalism doesn't  
 1795 really poke really deep...  
 1796  
 1797 *Yeah.*  
 1798  
 1799 ...and if they're picking up on that, and they're showing these wonderful estates that  
 1800 Tepco still owns...  
 1801  
 1802 *You know something's not right.*  
 1803  
 1804 ...so [clears throat].  
 1805

1806 *The only other thing I, kind of, wanted to touch on with you, again more from just a*  
 1807 *language point of view...*  
 1808  
 1809 Uhum.  
 1810  
 1811 *...not for any other particular reason, was about the volunteering and the helping out in*  
 1812 *Tohoku...*  
 1813  
 1814 Uhm.  
 1815  
 1816 *...did you find that, like, language was ever an issue in that?...*  
 1817  
 1818 Ehm.  
 1819  
 1820 *...because I know how involved you were...*  
 1821  
 1822 Yeah.  
 1823  
 1824 *...did it, did it ever come up?*  
 1825  
 1826 When I started, you know, in the beginning, eh, going to Tohoku, it was literally [clears  
 1827 throat] everything was so overwhelming. Like, when I first went it was May, em, the  
 1828 roads were only military vehicles and large trucks, em, there was just debris everywhere,  
 1829 it was, like, it smelled horrible. That's when everything started rotting...  
 1830  
 1831 *Yeah.*  
 1832  
 1833 *...ehm, it smelled horrible, like, it just terrifying, it was completely terrifying [clears*  
 1834 *throat] and we were mainly clearing out the tsunami sludge, like the hedorō [Note: means*  
 1835 *sludge] from houses for the first, I'd say like six months or so, ehm, and only doing that,*  
 1836 *and it's heavy, and it's sticky and it's smelly, and it's toxic, and it covers everything and*  
 1837 *you smell like it, and, like, we'd go for onsen [Note: communal hot spring baths found in*  
 1838 *many, many places throughout Japan] but we'd have to drive, like, an hour outside, ehm*  
 1839 *[clears throat] and the first time I went, we were staying past Sendai, because all the areas*  
 1840 *are filled with, all areas at that time were filled with rescue workers, so there's no*  
 1841 *hotels...*  
 1842  
 1843 *Yeah.*  
 1844  
 1845 *...so we had to drive like an hour-and-a-half, we had to, kind of, get the bus there and the*  
 1846 *bus back...*  
 1847  
 1848 *Yeah.*  
 1849  
 1850 *...ehm, and what we were doing at that time, it's like, it was very much manual labour, so*  
 1851 *I didn't have any problems, ehm, initially, because it was, like, pull out mud...*  
 1852  
 1853 *[Nervous laughter]*  
 1854  
 1855 *...because, like, there'd be, there'd be somebody talking to them, say, "Okay," you know,*  
 1856 *"pull out," you know, "pull out the floor, pull out the mud. Don't touch the walls yet,*  
 1857 *[clears throat] and then see how long." And then it would take two to three weeks to pull*  
 1858 *out all the mud. And then, "Do you want us to keep going? Do you want us to pull out*  
 1859 *this?" Or, and so, it was mainly, it didn't matter who you were, like, I think {the slogan*



1860 of the volunteer group she worked with} was like, ‘Hands don’t have nationalities.’  
 1861 Because literally it was just moving, like...  
 1862  
 1863 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1864  
 1865 ...it was just keep, keep digging out this crap until you can’t. And it, like, I remember,  
 1866 like, carrying bags of it and just, like, my, like, muscles were shot, because there was just  
 1867 so much going out. There was so much crap [clears throat] and then every, everywhere  
 1868 you worked, it was just terrifying, it was spooky, and like, all of it was overwhelming and  
 1869 especially the first time you go up it’s horribly shocking, and then after that, it becomes,  
 1870 not normal, but it, it’s not as, like [clears throat] intense, and so that’s another thing that I  
 1871 liked about going multiple times is you see it getting better and better and better...  
 1872  
 1873 *Uhm.*  
 1874  
 1875 ...you see the, kind of, the city transforming. I had one colleague who came up in the  
 1876 summer in June and then came up maybe the following year in Ju, maybe, like, when,  
 1877 you know, it wasn’t as hot [laughter]...  
 1878  
 1879 *[Laughter]*  
 1880  
 1881 ...[clears throat] and so I asked him, you know, “What’s the difference in a year?” [clears  
 1882 throat] and he said, “People are smiling.”  
 1883  
 1884 *Wow.*  
 1885  
 1886 That was the biggest difference, like, people are, kind of, smiling, and it’s not that. So  
 1887 when I was taking on more of a leadership role, that’s when I, kind of, wanted to, that’s  
 1888 when I started taking Japanese again so I could actually communicate in some sort of way  
 1889 or figure out something or ask questions or follow the conversation because it’s, like, I  
 1890 know *gareki* [Note: means rubble] and all these [laughter] like, but, like, ‘where does this  
 1891 go?’ or just ‘put it there’ or like...  
 1892  
 1893 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1894  
 1895 ...so now that part’s [laughter] so that was one of my motivations to start studying  
 1896 Japanese again was so that I could communicate so that when people were talking about  
 1897 the experiences [clears throat] I, you know, people understand so I could ask them later, I  
 1898 could follow, like, em, I don’t know if you, did you meet {a certain resident of  
 1899 Ishinomaki that had been present at the recent volunteer activity}?  
 1900  
 1901 *Yes.*  
 1902  
 1903 [clears throat] So he, he was, he explains to me after, like, two or three months ago, I  
 1904 hadn’t even heard this story, because we were at his factory on Saturday when we were  
 1905 cleaning [clears throat] and so we had worked on it maybe two or three months before  
 1906 that, and, eh, he was trapped at the top of his factory, [clears throat] and so the tsunami,  
 1907 and this is, like, he’s standing there pointing to it, so it’s, like, probably two, two-and-a-  
 1908 half, maybe three storeys high, and he was inside, and the roof was like this [Note: the  
 1909 participant gestures an extreme angle] and he was basically trapped here [Note: pointing  
 1910 to an imaginary tip of the roof] when the water started going down again. [clears throat]  
 1911 So you, and he’s, you know, happy, jolly man...  
 1912  
 1913 *Yeah. Oh you wouldn’t have ever guessed.*  
 1914

1915 ...yeah, and so it was, like, even more disturbing listening to him, because I, like, came  
 1916 back and I was like, “Was that him?” Because he never said who, you know, in Ja,  
 1917 Japanese you never say [laughter] so what I was wondering was was that him, like, and I  
 1918 also came in later, and so I was like, “Okay, my Japanese is getting better,” because I  
 1919 could understand all of it...  
 1920  
 1921 *Yeah.*  
 1922  
 1923 ...and then he, like, swam back and, like, stayed on the second floor; “Oh yeah, of that  
 1924 building there,” and so when you are hearing stories like that, first-hand, you want to  
 1925 know what’s, it’s like, I don’t need to get everything, but [clears throat] and I, the, when  
 1926 it occurred to me that I needed to speak, like, better Japanese, we were at the *onsen* [Note:  
 1927 Japanese communal hot spring bath], and I was smoking a cigarette, and the, and of  
 1928 course, any time they see a bunch of white people or people that aren’t local...  
 1929  
 1930 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 1931  
 1932 ...they were like, “Ah, you must be a volunteer.” And I was like, so it was like, this one  
 1933 guy is smoking [Note: mimicking a rough, macho voice], “Hey, where are you from?”  
 1934 You know, “America.” “Are you a volunteer?” “Yeah, yeah.” He was like, “Yeah, yeah,  
 1935 my house was flooded, like, to here.” [Note: the participant gestures above her head]  
 1936 And, and I was like, “*Ah, taihen desu ne.* [Note: means how awful] And then it was like,  
 1937 afterwards it was like, I even went up to {a mutual friend of ours} and I was like, she was  
 1938 with her friend, and I was like, “Is that the right thing to say?” [laughter]...  
 1939  
 1940 *[Laughter]*  
 1941  
 1942 ...like, “Yes!” [Note: the participant makes a gesture with her arm indicating great  
 1943 satisfaction at succeeding]  
 1944  
 1945 *I hope I didn’t insult him or anything.*  
 1946  
 1947 Yeah, yeah. Like, “*Ah, sou desu ne.*” [Note: means ‘Yes, that’s so’ and is a common way  
 1948 to indicate empathetic listening in Japanese]  
 1949  
 1950 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1951  
 1952 And she was like, they were like, “Perfect.” But I, like, it just, kind of, came off really  
 1953 fast...  
 1954  
 1955 *That, that shows. That’s the learning, isn’t it, though?*  
 1956  
 1957 *Yeah.*  
 1958  
 1959 *That the fact that, em, that’s that real contextual stuff, like, you just knew that in that*  
 1960 *situation that was what came out.*  
 1961  
 1962 [clears throat] And thank god it was the right thing to say...  
 1963  
 1964 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1965  
 1966 ...but I’d say when it comes to communication, it’s stuff like that...  
 1967  
 1968 *Yeah.*  
 1969

1970 ...like, I'm glad I nailed that...

1971

1972 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

1973

1974 ...because that's important.

1975

1976 *Yeah, because that actually, like, links to what a lot of people have talked about in terms*

1977 *of, like, the future, they were, like, how important community is. So like, it's these kind of*

1978 *things. Being able to interact, hear people's stories...*

1979

1980 *Yeah.*

1981

1982 *...be, show compassion. Those kind of things help build, build some sort of a community,*

1983 *right?*

1984

1985 *Yeah.*

1986

1987 *Like, what I'm interested in knowing, if, if you can remember back to the time of the*

1988 *disaster, because it may be different now, at that time...*

1989

1990 *Uhm.*

1991

1992 *...for you as a person living here, did you feel part of your local community or did you*

1993 *feel part of 'a' community?*

1994

1995 *Well, if I was part of a community, it was definitely a foreign community...*

1996

1997 *Okay.*

1998

1999 *...[clears throat] ehm, but I, I'd see that as a positive thing, and what I mean by that is*

2000 *people reached out to me to see if I needed anything...*

2001

2002 *Yeah.*

2003

2004 *...to see if I needed help, if I was okay, if, and like I said, this was a woman that I, like,*

2005 *[clears throat] a woman in her forties that I talked with, like, I think I, like, kind of, it was*

2006 *like, interviewed her for, like, an hour, and, like, she didn't end up getting the job, but,*

2007 *like, we didn't even keep in contact [laughter]...*

2008

2009 *[Laughter]*

2010

2011 *...so it was just like, [Note: makes a facial expression indicating surprise and maybe a*

2012 *little confusion]...*

2013

2014 *Really came out of the woodwork.*

2015

2016 *...yeah, so, and, and she's the one, because she was really cool, so I really liked her a lot,*

2017 *and so, I was like, "{this person}" emailed me. Oh, what a sweetheart!" But they were,*

2018 *like, a lot of the people I was talking to at the time as well were, they, they weren't*

2019 *concerned about their jobs or what's going on with the...*

2020

2021 *Yeah.*

2022

2023 *...application, they were, they were concerned about me. Ehm, and actually, when the*

2024 *earthquake hit, I was, I'd just finished a *kampai* lunch [Note: a lunch to congratulate a*

2025 client on being placed in a new job] with somebody, and she was supposed to start on  
 2026 Monday, and so, like, and I called her several times, and then, like, I emailed her, like, I  
 2027 took her email home...  
 2028  
 2029 *Yeah.*  
 2030  
 2031 ...and was just, kind of, like, "Just send me a note that you're okay." Because she was on  
 2032 the subway when it happened...  
 2033  
 2034 *Yeah.*  
 2035  
 2036 ...and like, yeah, she was like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," like, "thank god, HR contacted me and  
 2037 said don't come in." [laughter]...  
 2038  
 2039 *[Laughter]*  
 2040  
 2041 ... "Oh, I know it's your first day, but,"...  
 2042  
 2043 *We don't need you!*  
 2044  
 2045 ... "but, you have a week holiday."  
 2046  
 2047 *Uhm, uhm.*  
 2048  
 2049 Ehm, so I remember on Monday that's what I was most concerned about...  
 2050  
 2051 *Yeah.*  
 2052  
 2053 ...because I hadn't heard back from her...  
 2054  
 2055 *Yeah.*  
 2056  
 2057 ...and then, ehm, and then she sent me a note on Monday. It was like, "Oh yeah, actually,  
 2058 he, the main guy contacted me." And, like, yeah, like, it was kind of, like, it was freaky  
 2059 [laughter]...  
 2060  
 2061 *[Laughter]*  
 2062  
 2063 ...she was like, yeah, I was like, she said, she was most of the way home. She was, like,  
 2064 maybe only twenty minutes away, and so she was, like, I think she could get off one or  
 2065 two stations from her house and walk, so...  
 2066  
 2067 *Yeah.*  
 2068  
 2069 ...she was fine. But she was more like, I just remember seeing her off on the subway and  
 2070 then, "Shit."  
 2071  
 2072 *Crikey, yeah. That's crazy.*  
 2073  
 2074 *Yeah.*  
 2075  
 2076 *I understand what you mean about, well, a lot of people have mentioned that, cer,*  
 2077 *certainly the people who lived in, in Tokyo or Sendai or the, sort of, the bigger cities said*  
 2078 *that they were part of a, a community of mostly foreigners...*  
 2079

2080 Uhm.  
 2081  
 2082 *...but, but certainly people who didn't have the same links, like, in terms of family or that*  
 2083 *to, to Japan...*  
 2084  
 2085 Yeah.  
 2086  
 2087 *...would, would you say you feel a part of the community up in Tohoku [Note: the region*  
 2088 *of Japan where the worst of the disaster struck]?*  
 2089  
 2090 I would say yes and no. Em, they definitely know me, eh, I'm not as vocal as a lot of  
 2091 other people, ehm, so when it comes to, like, finding jobs and things like that, I'm not,  
 2092 I'm not fluent enough...  
 2093  
 2094 Yeah.  
 2095  
 2096 *...but they know me [laughter]. So for example, we went to the little matsuri [Note:*  
 2097 *means festival] that they were having, and everybody was like, "Oh hi." Like, they see*  
 2098 *me every month, so, so I would say yes. Ehm, they know me as {the name of the*  
 2099 *volunteer organization she works with}...*  
 2100  
 2101 Yeah.  
 2102  
 2103 *...but I'm, I'm. I'm not the, like, I'm not the main person they talk to a lot or...*  
 2104  
 2105 Yeah, yeah.  
 2106  
 2107 *...they come over and complain or [laughter]...*  
 2108  
 2109 [Laughter]  
 2110  
 2111 *...I can't avoid the bitching [laughter].*  
 2112  
 2113 [Laughter] Yeah, because the reason I, that community, I think, has come up so many  
 2114 times in disaster studies is because they say if a big earthquake were to happen, the first  
 2115 people who are going to help you are your neighbours or, like, the people around you...  
 2116  
 2117 Yeah.  
 2118  
 2119 *...so, if foreigners can be in some way integrated into...*  
 2120  
 2121 Uhm.  
 2122  
 2123 *...a community...*  
 2124  
 2125 Yeah.  
 2126  
 2127 *...it's more likely that there will be people there looking out for them...*  
 2128  
 2129 Yeah, yeah.  
 2130  
 2131 *...I guess, so from what I understand from your story, you just had tonnes of people who*  
 2132 *would have been looking out for you...*  
 2133  
 2134 Yeah.

2135  
 2136 *...but I guess the worry is that there would be some foreigners who come over to Japan*  
 2137 *and they don't have those links...*  
 2138  
 2139 Yeah.  
 2140  
 2141 *...and they just get left behind.*  
 2142  
 2143 I would say, it, I think that would come down to what kind of job you are doing...  
 2144  
 2145 Ah.  
 2146  
 2147 *...if you are in an office setting, people in the office will take care of you, em, just*  
 2148 *because you are an employee...*  
 2149  
 2150 *A company kind of...*  
 2151  
 2152 *...even if you are like...*  
 2153  
 2154 *...systems thing, yeah.*  
 2155  
 2156 *...gaishikei [Note: means a foreign, not Japanese, company] you are part of that old*  
 2157 *school identity of that group...*  
 2158  
 2159 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2160  
 2161 *...but if you are, like, an independent contractor, then you might get left behind...*  
 2162  
 2163 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2164  
 2165 *...if you were working from home, you would get left behind.*  
 2166  
 2167 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, like, I know that, say, in translation, freelance translators, they often,*  
 2168 *they're at home at their laptop and they never see anybody and all of their clients are*  
 2169 *done by email.*  
 2170  
 2171 Uhm, so if they were going to put in some sort of protocol, they would, the community  
 2172 would have to make an effort for people that worked from home.  
 2173  
 2174 *Did you ever get contacted by, ehm, like by the war, city office or, or*  
 2175  
 2176 [Note: the participant answers by shaking her head so I verbalize her response]  
 2177  
 2178 *No. I, I think.*  
 2179  
 2180 Yeah, I don't think so. Not at all, no. Because {the city I live in} has a lot of foreigners.  
 2181  
 2182 *That's what I would have wondered, yeah, I wondered if you might have gotten a letter*  
 2183 *through your door or something.*  
 2184  
 2185 I'm sure there was a pamphlet or, at the ward office now. I, I hate that place and  
 2186 everybody in there [laughter].  
 2187  
 2188 [Laughter] Can I ask why?  
 2189

2190 It's, it's just Japanese bureaucracy in everything, and...  
 2191  
 2192 *I understand your feelings. I understand your feelings. Bureaucracy can be a killer.*  
 2193  
 2194 ...and, and I would say it's like you go to immigration, you really feel like you're in a  
 2195 fourth-world country [laughter].  
 2196  
 2197 *[Laughter] Yeah. That, you see, this is what, like, when I read about all this, you know,*  
 2198 *community, community, community, I was like, "Uh, okay, but how?" Like, how do you*  
 2199 *do it? It, it sounds really nice, but...*  
 2200  
 2201 Yeah.  
 2202  
 2203 ...I've, I've, I lived here for eight years, and I was like, I don't know, I don't think I ever  
 2204 felt part of the, I felt part of the, like, a community of friends...  
 2205  
 2206 Yeah.  
 2207  
 2208 ...or maybe related to the company, but I can't say I, I didn't know my neighbours, I  
 2209 wasn't involved in the.  
 2210  
 2211 Yeah, I mean my neighbours, my neighbours are all, like, in their, like, twenties to  
 2212 thirties, and they're all, like, kind of *friitaa* types [Note: means a kind of job-hopping  
 2213 part-time worker - the opposite of a permanent, pensioned employee]...  
 2214  
 2215 Yeah.  
 2216  
 2217 ...so they were like, but they weren't, they weren't, like, "Ah, *daijobu* {redacted}?"  
 2218 [Note: means are you okay, {redacted}] like...  
 2219  
 2220 *Uhm, uhm, uhm.*  
 2221  
 2222 ...because everyone was just, like, "What the hell?"  
 2223  
 2224 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, no, it's just it's an interesting one to me. I think it sounds*  
 2225 *like a great idea, but I don't know how they make it happen, how they, I, I also think*  
 2226 *there's a problem with big cities, like...*  
 2227  
 2228 Yeah.  
 2229  
 2230 ...you know, I'm sure if you lived in New York, it would be hard to integrate into the local  
 2231 community, right?  
 2232  
 2233 You don't know your neighbours. You don't know your neighbour and you might not  
 2234 want to. You know that, you know that they listen to music loud [laughter].  
 2235  
 2236 *Yeah, so, it's a tough one. It's a tough one.*  
 2237  
 2238 Uhm.  
 2239  
 2240 *But I'm really glad to hear so many of the people that I've talked to, talked about, they,*  
 2241 *they, they had their support networks...*  
 2242  
 2243 Yeah.  
 2244

2245 ...like you...  
 2246  
 2247 Yeah.  
 2248  
 2249 ...it mightn't have been the community in the sense of their little, I don't know,  
 2250 neighbourhood association, but it was absolutely a group of people they had who were  
 2251 looking out for them...  
 2252  
 2253 Yeah, yeah.  
 2254  
 2255 ...so I think that's enough, maybe.  
 2256  
 2257 Yeah, I think so. Ehm...  
 2258  
 2259 Especially.  
 2260  
 2261 ...because nobody really goes to, goes to something local like that at the end of the day.  
 2262  
 2263 And, like, what I found is, say, just because I'm always coming back to language and stuff  
 2264 like that...  
 2265  
 2266 Uhm.  
 2267  
 2268 ...that often in these networks there would have been at least one person who was, like,  
 2269 really good at Japanese or something like that, and they would pass the information on,  
 2270 or there would be a Japanese person in that network...  
 2271  
 2272 Yeah.  
 2273  
 2274 ...who was really good at English or Chinese or something...  
 2275  
 2276 Yeah.  
 2277  
 2278 ...I think maybe that kind of...  
 2279  
 2280 Yeah.  
 2281  
 2282 ...even if, unf, informal kind of stuff is probably enough.  
 2283  
 2284 Yeah, so for example, my {Japanese friend who I mentioned several times previously},  
 2285 it's not like I asked her to help me translate, she is just the type of person that would,  
 2286 looks out for people...  
 2287  
 2288 Yeah.  
 2289  
 2290 ...like she, she, it's just that kind of Japanese character...  
 2291  
 2292 Yeah.  
 2293  
 2294 ...and so I, like, em, we were discussing in my Japanese class about, this is before the  
 2295 Olympics were decided, and she was kind of, like, "Do you think Tokyo is the right  
 2296 place?" And we were like, "Yeah, why are Japanese people down about it?...  
 2297  
 2298 Yeah.  
 2299



2300 ...and, like, so we were trying to explain and defend it in Japanese, and she kept, she  
 2301 basically said, ehm, “But aren’t you scared of earthquakes?” Like, “There are earthquakes  
 2302 in Turkey.”...  
 2303  
 2304 *[Laughter] A very good point.*  
 2305  
 2306 ... “Where the hell do you want the Olympics? Because an earthquake in Tokyo versus  
 2307 an earthquake in Turkey?”...  
 2308  
 2309 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2310  
 2311 ... “Come on. Come on. That is so much safer.” [clears throat]  
 2312  
 2313 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That was one thing that I felt, certainly about, just the whole*  
 2314 *thing like, if it had only been the earthquake, I’m not, I mean, I wouldn’t be here...*  
 2315  
 2316 *Yeah. And I would say...*  
 2317  
 2318 *...I, I think it would have been a miracle.*  
 2319  
 2320 ...it’s the earthquake, and it’s the tsunami, and then, the, meltdown. And then it’s like,  
 2321 “Okay, it there a volcano going to explode and Godzilla shows up?” Like...  
 2322  
 2323 *[Laughter] That’s kind of like the next.*  
 2324  
 2325 ...oh no, because we were joking about that. We were like, “Okay, a volcano, as long as a  
 2326 volcano doesn’t explode, because then if a volcano explodes, then Godzilla shows up.”  
 2327  
 2328 *[Laughter] But, you know, that was, people were starting to, I remember that kind of*  
 2329 *crazy stuff, they were like, “Fuji is going to go.” [Note: a large volcano located near the*  
 2330 *greater Tokyo area] This is the next thing that...*  
 2331  
 2332 *Oh yeah.*  
 2333  
 2334 *...that’s, that’s coming.*  
 2335  
 2336 But I wanted to show you this photo. Eh, so now I am okay with radiation. This is in, eh,  
 2337 you met {another person involved in the volunteer organization}...  
 2338  
 2339 *Yes, yeah.*  
 2340  
 2341 ...so we built this playground [Note: the participant shows a photo on her phone of a  
 2342 playground]  
 2343  
 2344 *Oh wow.*  
 2345  
 2346 ...this is Shinchu which is near, like, Minamisoma [Note: an area of Fukushima, the  
 2347 prefecture in which the nuclear meltdown took place]...  
 2348  
 2349 *Uhuh.*  
 2350  
 2351 ...it’s just, kind of, out of the radius, outside of the radius [Note: the 30-km radius  
 2352 exclusion zone enforced around the damaged nuclear power plant] and these kids were  
 2353 just, eh, hanging out nearby, so this is actually at, like, a preschool, but the kids were just,  
 2354 kind of, hanging out nearby and they were like, “Oh, what are you doing?” “Oh, building

2355 a playground. It will be open tomorrow.” And they were like, “Oh, cool, cool.” So they  
 2356 came by, eh, like, eh...  
 2357  
 2358 *That’s so cool.*  
 2359  
 2360 ...ehm, so, I just thought the photo was really cool. We were at the police station. But so  
 2361 this is {the other volunteer} and I at the school, [Note: the participant then shows a photo  
 2362 of the radiation measuring device outside the school].  
 2363  
 2364 *And so that’s the measure.*  
 2365  
 2366 Yeah.  
 2367  
 2368 *Oh my goodness.*  
 2369  
 2370 And then, of course, I’m smoking but didn’t, you know...  
 2371  
 2372 *No fears, no worries.*  
 2373  
 2374 ...because I mean, it was actually lower, Tokyo was higher that day.  
 2375  
 2376 *That, yeah, that’s what a lot of, that came up a lot in the aftermath, that, you know.*  
 2377  
 2378 And of course, I sent that article to my, to my parents when, that Hong Kong has higher  
 2379 levels of radia...  
 2380  
 2381 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...*  
 2382  
 2383 ...I was like, [Note: mimics pressing a button] ‘Send.’  
 2384  
 2385 *...it needed to be balanced, right? I mean, I, don’t get me wrong, it’s a scary thing...*  
 2386  
 2387 Yeah.  
 2388  
 2389 *...it’s a scary thing because it’s unknown, and I’m sure there is an element of we don’t,*  
 2390 *we still don’t know what, what’s going on too much...*  
 2391  
 2392 Yeah.  
 2393  
 2394 *...but it was blown out of a lot of proportion. And I really don’t think that helped the*  
 2395 *mental health of the people who, who stayed here.*  
 2396  
 2397 Yeah, yeah. Ehm, so there is actually something that, kind of, it, it’s less and less now,  
 2398 but in terms of recruitment, maybe before, like after, after the earthquake, of course, that,  
 2399 like, quarter, business was really slow, ehm, but then everything kind of went back to  
 2400 normal. I work in, like, you know, consumer retail...  
 2401  
 2402 *Yeah.*  
 2403  
 2404 ...so sales were, basically died and then came back up...  
 2405  
 2406 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2407  
 2408 ...a few months later. So people were out and about and going on with their lives...  
 2409

2410 *Shopping, yeah.*  
 2411  
 2412 ...ehm, actually, people were, the complaints that some companies was that the *gaishikei*  
 2413 [Note: means foreign, not Japanese] companies were closed on that Saturday, and the  
 2414 Japanese ones were open...  
 2415  
 2416 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2417  
 2418 ...like, so it was like, “Oh, you missed a business chance.” It’s like, “Fuck off.” [Note:  
 2419 using a sarcastic tone of voice] “Yeah, what the fuck, I’m on a plane out of here.” Ehm,  
 2420 but one, one woman I introduced to a company, and, ehm, so basically, he, the, the  
 2421 company that she is working at now, the president is French, and, em, he, he really, he, he  
 2422 knew, he wanted her and had been trying to get her for a year, so I, kind of, like,  
 2423 approached her a couple of times...  
 2424  
 2425 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2426  
 2427 ...and so he said, “Any, any way you can ever, ever get her.” And then, there were  
 2428 rumours that she was having problems, like, at that company, and then there was, like,  
 2429 power struggles, management cuts...  
 2430  
 2431 *Uhum, uhum.*  
 2432  
 2433 ...and all that, and he goes, “Okay, I heard this. Can you contact her again and tell her I  
 2434 stayed during the earthquake?”  
 2435  
 2436 *Ahhhh. Like a badge of honour or something.*  
 2437  
 2438 So, it became, especially in retail in a way, especially if there was a foreign president,  
 2439 because the, like, most companies I recruit for are big companies...  
 2440  
 2441 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2442  
 2443 ...and they have, they have stores in Sendai...  
 2444  
 2445 *Yeah.*  
 2446  
 2447 ...they don’t necessarily have them in, like, Kesennuma [Note: one of the worst-hit small  
 2448 villages in Miyagi] but they have them in Sendai...  
 2449  
 2450 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2451  
 2452 ...and so a lot of the foreign bosses didn’t leave and didn’t, like, they didn’t go anywhere  
 2453 because their staff were...  
 2454  
 2455 *Yeah.*  
 2456  
 2457 ...they needed to make sure their staff was okay and they wanted to be there for their  
 2458 staff...  
 2459  
 2460 *Yeah.*  
 2461  
 2462 ...so it actually became, kind of, a selling point to people about the character of who their  
 2463 boss is.  
 2464

2465 *And is that story getting out there now?*  
 2466  
 2467 Not so much now...  
 2468  
 2469 *Uhm.*  
 2470  
 2471 ...but when people ask me, like, what type of person is he...  
 2472  
 2473 *Uhuh.*  
 2474  
 2475 ...it's like, okay, you know, when you explain, it's, kind of, okay, well, you know, people,  
 2476 he's from this nationality so you can guess he is probably this temperament or...  
 2477  
 2478 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2479  
 2480 ...usually because people have worked with foreigners before. And if, you know, he's the  
 2481 type of person who was here during the earthquake, eh, one company that packed  
 2482 everybody up, em, moved them to Osaka and then during that week there was even talk  
 2483 of relocating the entire office to, like, Shanghai...  
 2484  
 2485 *Okay.*  
 2486  
 2487 ...and, ehm, and with that, so basically the girl I introduced to that company, she was  
 2488 living with her mother and her fiance, and they paid for the, her mother and her fiance to  
 2489 come down to Osaka as well and stay with them...  
 2490  
 2491 *Wow.*  
 2492  
 2493 ...and, if they had moved to China or something like that, they were going to relocate the  
 2494 entire family...  
 2495  
 2496 *Wow, okay.*  
 2497  
 2498 ...I mean, not every company does things like that [clears throat]...  
 2499  
 2500 *No, no, that's, that's pretty, that's pretty special.*  
 2501  
 2502 ...but usually when people talk about, "Okay what type of company is it." It's like, okay,  
 2503 well it's the atmosphere, what's beyond the surface. I tell stories like that...  
 2504  
 2505 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2506  
 2507 ...because, you know, somebody might, it's not a huge company, people don't know that,  
 2508 but this is how they treat their employees...  
 2509  
 2510 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2511  
 2512 ...and it's like, "Did your company do that?" And most people are like [Note: participant  
 2513 shakes head] [Laughter].  
 2514  
 2515 *No [laughter].*  
 2516  
 2517 [Note: in a mock-disappointed tone] "I had to go to work on Monday."  
 2518  
 2519 *Yeah, there you go.*

2520  
 2521 “And half the people weren’t there?” “Yeah exactly.” “And was your, was your  
 2522 management there?” “No.”  
 2523  
 2524 *That’s fascinating. Because, like, a lot of people I’ve talked to mentioned, you know, this*  
 2525 *fly-jin [Note: a derogatory term for foreigners who were seen to flee Japan during the*  
 2526 *disaster] story, and.*  
 2527  
 2528 Uhm, yeah, I try not to classify myself as a *fly-jin* because it was paid for [laughter].  
 2529  
 2530 *Ah, yeah, no, yeah.*  
 2531  
 2532 But I mean, on the other side of that, there was absolutely nothing to do...  
 2533  
 2534 *Yeah.*  
 2535  
 2536 ...I didn’t know if the companies I was recruiting for existed...  
 2537  
 2538 *Existed, and, yeah.*  
 2539  
 2540 ...and what are you going to do in an office? Like, I mean, I, there was literally answering  
 2541 emails and people reaching out...  
 2542  
 2543 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2544  
 2545 ...[clears throat] and I think I have one meeting that I rescheduled on the Tuesday...  
 2546  
 2547 *Oh well, yeah.*  
 2548  
 2549 ...because I was like, [Note: in a mock-whining tone] “I don’t want to leave the office.”  
 2550 [laughter]...  
 2551  
 2552 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2553  
 2554 ...and I remember taking the subway and, nobody...  
 2555  
 2556 *Nobody, yeah.*  
 2557  
 2558 ...like.  
 2559  
 2560 *Oh, it was, I think as well, like, from the people I have talked to, the, amongst the, the*  
 2561 *foreigners even of course there was this, like, fly-jin term or whatever, but amongst*  
 2562 *Japanese people, too. There was, ehm, some tensions...*  
 2563  
 2564 *Yeah.*  
 2565  
 2566 *...which maybe isn’t talked about so much.*  
 2567  
 2568 And then people would go like to Osaka even or...  
 2569  
 2570 *Yeah, like, I think...*  
 2571  
 2572 ...it wasn’t just.  
 2573

2574 *...it wasn't just the foreign people, ehm, there was, I, I, I know, this is, now, you know,*  
 2575 *particularly in relation to Fukushima...*  
 2576  
 2577 Uhm.  
 2578  
 2579 *...that, let's say, people who, who left and came back, there is now tensions...*  
 2580  
 2581 Oh, yeah.  
 2582  
 2583 *...in the community...*  
 2584  
 2585 Oh, definitely.  
 2586  
 2587 *...that, like, "Oh, you're," kind of, "back again," sort of thing.*  
 2588  
 2589 Oh, now it's.  
 2590  
 2591 *Yeah, "Now it's okay?" or...*  
 2592  
 2593 Yeah.  
 2594  
 2595 *...so it's, it's, it's, it's a more complex issue than, like, the, the, I know people have*  
 2596 *mentioned the fly-jin because it was a headline and it got...*  
 2597  
 2598 Yeah, yeah.  
 2599  
 2600 *...you know, through the mill a lot...*  
 2601  
 2602 Yeah.  
 2603  
 2604 *...but I think it's a much more complex issue than that, and...*  
 2605  
 2606 Yeah.  
 2607  
 2608 *...I don't think there's one right or one wrong. It's not a black and white issue, you know?*  
 2609  
 2610 [Laughter] Luckily, working in recruitment you get to hear wonderful stories from  
 2611 different industries...  
 2612  
 2613 [Laughter]  
 2614  
 2615 *...so one, one guy in our finance, he was a finance recruiter, one guy told him, because,*  
 2616 *like, Mizuho Bank was in the World Trade Centre, right?*  
 2617  
 2618 *Yeah, oh, yeah.*  
 2619  
 2620 *...and he said, eh, that this one, eh, this Japanese, you know, Japanese guy in banking,*  
 2621 *kind of, asked, "Oh yeah, did you leave Japan?" And he said, "Actually, no." And he*  
 2622 *goes, "Why not?" Because this is the thing that was getting promoted a lot as well...*  
 2623  
 2624 *Yeah, "why not?"*  
 2625  
 2626 *...and, em, and he was like, "Oh, you know, my wife is here and, you know, I can't, like,*  
 2627 *pack up and leave."...*  
 2628

2629 *Yeah.*  
 2630  
 2631 ...[clears throat] and he was like, “9, 9/12 [laughter] 2011 [Note: this is a slip of the  
 2632 tongue and the participant meant to say 2001] if you went to JFK, every Japanese person  
 2633 was at the airport. [laughter]...  
 2634  
 2635 *Very true.*  
 2636  
 2637 ...it is not your country...  
 2638  
 2639 *Very true.*  
 2640  
 2641 ...come on! Everybody left...  
 2642  
 2643 *Yes...*  
 2644  
 2645 ...New York.  
 2646  
 2647 *...em, who was it? I can't remember. One of the people I spoke to has a similar story like*  
 2648 *that where they got into a bit of an altercation and said something like, “Okay, so you are*  
 2649 *a Japanese family in, posted to China, and some nuclear reactor has gone off a hundred*  
 2650 *miles up the road. What do you do?” And like, it was, kind of, when, when the tables were*  
 2651 *turned then the Japanese person, sort of, went a little bit like, “Oh, okay.”*  
 2652  
 2653 *Yeah, because this guy was like, “Well, I would have, I know I was at JFK and there*  
 2654 *tonnes of other Japanese people there,”...*  
 2655  
 2656 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2657  
 2658 ...”there were tonnes of people like me just, like.”  
 2659  
 2660 *No, I wouldn't, absolutely, would hate to ever be thought of as critical of people who had*  
 2661 *made the choice to leave because...*  
 2662  
 2663 *Yeah [clear throat]*  
 2664  
 2665 *...it, it was, you were working with such dodgy information as well, I mean, how can you*  
 2666 *make a decision when you really had no idea what you were working with.*  
 2667  
 2668 *I mean, a couple of people did leave my office and move away. Em, the craziest story I*  
 2669 *heard...*  
 2670  
 2671 *[Laughter]*  
 2672  
 2673 *...was, eh, he's, he's, he's pretty well-to-do, eh, and, ehm, actually his wife, like, they are*  
 2674 *in Singapore now, his wife, eh, I think her grandfather is still under the ‘Missing’...*  
 2675  
 2676 *Oh.*  
 2677  
 2678 *...and so, she react, she was pretty high-strung anyway, and she completely, like, eh, and*  
 2679 *they had a newborn...*  
 2680  
 2681 *Oh.*  
 2682  
 2683 *...so, I mean, he went to, he went to Osaka for, he went to work, they moved to Osaka...*

2684  
 2685 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2686  
 2687 ...for a little while, so there was a little more trauma behind all of that...  
 2688  
 2689 *Yeah.*  
 2690  
 2691 ...but, eh, she was even bathing that child in bottled-water [laughter]...  
 2692  
 2693 *[Laughter]*  
 2694  
 2695 ...so not just like drinking or anything like that...  
 2696  
 2697 *Oh my goodness.*  
 2698  
 2699 ...and when they did the survey on Tokyo tap water, em, I checked the location because,  
 2700 I don't know, I'm one of those people [laughter]...  
 2701  
 2702 *Interested.*  
 2703  
 2704 ...auditing the information, and it was, eh, they tested the water, like, not, like, one *chome*  
 2705 [Note: means a subdivision of land similar to saying one 'block' away from my house]...  
 2706  
 2707 *[Laughter]*  
 2708  
 2709 ...so it was like, "Alright!" [laughter]...  
 2710  
 2711 *Good to go, yeah.*  
 2712  
 2713 ...yeah. Screw that.  
 2714  
 2715 *But again, that's like, that shows, you know, there, it's a difficult balance because if you*  
 2716 *watch the news too much, you go nuts, but if you don't have enough information, you go*  
 2717 *nuts. How do you find the information that works for you?*  
 2718  
 2719 So another thing, this is maybe another end to my story, I didn't Skype with my sister for  
 2720 another few months after that. Like, she kept wanting to, I did not, even when I was in  
 2721 Hong Kong, I did not. Because I was like, this bitch has made me, she's winding me up,  
 2722 like, I let her get out her stress and it made me, it freaked me the shit out...  
 2723  
 2724 *It made it, yeah, worse for you.*  
 2725  
 2726 ...and so, like, you know, I emailed...  
 2727  
 2728 *Yeah.*  
 2729  
 2730 ...I emailed, but I would not Skype.  
 2731  
 2732 *That's, well, you closed the circle very nicely there [laughter]. Very, very nice.*  
 2733  
 2734 {redacted}  
 2735  
 2736 [Note: the participant begins showing me some photos on her phone] Oh yeah, here's  
 2737 Shinjuku Station coming back [Note: the participant is showing a photo of the tonnes of



2738 people taking trains after the disaster], so this is to get on the train - I think you can't  
 2739 really see it - and this is Shinjuku and it's completely out the door, like, all the way...  
 2740  
 2741 *Oh my goodness, oh my goodness.*  
 2742  
 2743 ...like, that was pretty, I got off the train, they wouldn't even let any people into the  
 2744 station...  
 2745  
 2746 *Yeah.*  
 2747  
 2748 ...there were so many people going home. I was like, "Uhh." {redacted} Here, look  
 2749 [Note: showing a screenshot of a news headline from the disaster] Guardian "Japan  
 2750 Nuclear Meltdown Fukushima Reactor" [laughter]...  
 2751  
 2752 *Oh. But you see, like, that's the Guardian...*  
 2753  
 2754 The Guardian.  
 2755  
 2756 ...supposed to be, pretty much, [Note: the participant is now looking through her phone  
 2757 data for more disaster-related images] you kept a pretty good record of all these things.  
 2758  
 2759 Ah, it's all, mainly on gmail so [laughter]. {redacted} [Note the participant finds a photo  
 2760 that shows a screenshot of live interpretation of Japanese news into English] Yeah,  
 2761 because this was basically some guy who was, eh, translating...  
 2762  
 2763 *I think I remember this, this Yokosonews was really famous actually...*  
 2764  
 2765 *Yeah...*  
 2766  
 2767 ...he did an amazing.  
 2768  
 2769 ...yeah, so she was watching that, yeah, yeah, yeah, Yokosonews, yeah.  
 2770  
 2771 *Yeah, he, like, just sat there, he sat in front of Japanese TV and just chaku, chaku, chaku*  
 2772 *[Note: researcher makes sound of something being produced by a machine, implying that*  
 2773 *the interpreter worked really hard, fast and long interpreting] and then streamed it.*  
 2774  
 2775 And then, when there was nothing interesting, he was reading off the Twitter stuff...  
 2776  
 2777 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. {redacted} But, you know, the one thing I have absolutely learned is*  
 2778 *that people react very, very differently in the same situation, the same circumstance...*  
 2779  
 2780 And, I think...  
 2781  
 2782 ...you can't, each, each one is valid...  
 2783  
 2784 ...yeah, I feel the same way, because you can't, you can't judge...  
 2785  
 2786 ...like, what works for you, won't necessarily work for the other person.  
 2787  
 2788 ...if people take off and they never leave Japan, and they never come back to Japan again,  
 2789 that's how you reacted to it.  
 2790  
 2791 *Yeah. And a lot of it is based, you just make your decisions based on what you have in*  
 2792 *front of you at the time and maybe your past stuff as well.*

2793  
 2794 Yeah. [clears throat] So my friend that I was talking about, the Canadian guy who grew  
 2795 up in between two reactors...  
 2796  
 2797 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 2798  
 2799 ...I mean, he hasn't pulled it off yet, but, eh, he said that my overreaction to the  
 2800 radiation inspired him to do something, eh, so if you Google 'Bikini Lines', em, [clears  
 2801 throat] there is basically the cactus dome that you can see from, like, like, Google Maps  
 2802 from space...  
 2803  
 2804 *Yeah.*  
 2805  
 2806 ...and it's basically the atomic tests in the South Pacific and he even has permission from  
 2807 the tribe elders to paint the dome. So basically the idea is to make a very loud, a very  
 2808 large, the world's largest mural that's crowdsourced that you can basically see from  
 2809 Google Maps...  
 2810  
 2811 *Wow, yeah.*  
 2812  
 2813 ...and it's basically a statement against how terrifying radiation is...  
 2814  
 2815 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2816  
 2817 ...because all these people fly out and paint like a square, like, this big [Note: the  
 2818 participant gestures about a third-of-a-metre-squared with her hands]...  
 2819  
 2820 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2821  
 2822 ...he still doesn't have the fi, financing for it...  
 2823  
 2824 *That's fascinating.*  
 2825  
 2826 ...so, 'Bikini Lines'.  
 2827  
 2828 *I'll definitely, I'll look that up.*  
 2829  
 2830 Probably, he hasn't really worked on it in a while...  
 2831  
 2832 *Yeah. But as a statement it's very, very interesting.*  
 2833  
 2834 ...so I don't know, if you guys, if you want to donate or anything like that, em...  
 2835  
 2836 *That's really interesting.*  
 2837  
 2838 ...because he still would, he, he was kind of upset that it didn't take off, he's kind of an  
 2839 entrepreneur, so he has a lot of plans that don't...  
 2840  
 2841 *Yeah...*  
 2842  
 2843 ...that fizzle out.  
 2844  
 2845 ...but, you know, you mentioned about, like, the radiation, it's a touch button issue for a  
 2846 lot of people. I'm not so surprised it didn't take off in a, in a way...  
 2847

2848 Yeah.  
 2849  
 2850 *...because it's one of those things that you mention and you can't judge how people will*  
 2851 *react.*  
 2852  
 2853 So there was a, like, eh, the guy I was talking about who was, like, closing on the phone,  
 2854 he's, eh, Polish, and so, of course, like, Chernobyl and dahdahdah, they fucking hate the  
 2855 Russians...  
 2856  
 2857 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 2858  
 2859 ...ehm, there was a Romanian guy, you know the stuff, the, the, thyroid...  
 2860  
 2861 *Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, the.*  
 2862  
 2863 ...so he came around and he was passing it out to everybody to drink, and then it's like,  
 2864 "Don't drink this stuff." [laughter]...  
 2865  
 2866 *[Laughter] Oh yeah, it was terrible.*  
 2867  
 2868 ...of course, five minutes later, like, "Don't drink this." So I mean, because he was like,  
 2869 "What? You think I fucking trust, trust the Russians? You think I trust the Japanese?"  
 2870 [laughter]...  
 2871  
 2872 *[Laughter] Oh dear.*  
 2873  
 2874 ...and it was like, "Okay, maybe I, maybe I should go to Hong Kong." [laughter] "If this  
 2875 is my office?"  
 2876  
 2877 *Yeah, exactly, if these are people who normally you would just be, like, interacting with,*  
 2878 *like, work colleagues, and they're freaking out.*  
 2879  
 2880 But I would say it's definitely the Eastern Europeans were, they didn't trust Russia,  
 2881 communist angst, and Chernobyl, it brings back all of that mem, memories of cover up  
 2882 and.  
 2883  
 2884 *Yeah, you see, like, just to bring it a bit closer, I interviewed some people in Ibaraki. So*  
 2885 *you know Tokaimura, the, em, Tokai nuclear plant had a fairly serious accident in two-*  
 2886 *thousand-and, oh I forget, you know it was over ten years ago something like that [Note:*  
 2887 *the accident occurred in 1999] and, ehm, they were there for the...*  
 2888  
 2889 Uhm.  
 2890  
 2891 *...nuclear accident in, you know, {redacted} they worked in the nuclear plant so...*  
 2892  
 2893 Yeah.  
 2894  
 2895 *...these were foreigners, and, em, they have that memory of it and the memory of, sort of,*  
 2896 *the misinformation and cover up...*  
 2897  
 2898 Yeah.  
 2899  
 2900 *...and so on, so, like, over the ten years, like, they were told this, but it's like this, and so*  
 2901 *they had a very different view on Fukushima just in general. They were like, "Nah, don't*  
 2902 *believe a word, don't believe a word."...*

2903  
 2904 Yeah. Don't believe a word. I don't believe a word.  
 2905  
 2906 *You know, they say it's this, they don't know. They can't have gotten in there. It was*  
 2907 *really, like, it was real complex for them because, I think, as I said, they had that bad*  
 2908 *experience, like...*  
 2909  
 2910 Yeah.  
 2911  
 2912 *...they were like...*  
 2913  
 2914 "Nah."  
 2915  
 2916 *... "We believed them then, and then X, Y, Z." but, I mean, they're still living in {the*  
 2917 *same prefecture as the power plant}...*  
 2918  
 2919 Yeah. I completely don't believe any of the shit. I mean, I don't believe it. I mean, two-  
 2920 and-a-half years later, "Oh yeah, it's actually still leaking."...  
 2921  
 2922 *Yeah.*  
 2923  
 2924 *...and then you hear people talk about not eating, like, eh, Fukushima produce...*  
 2925  
 2926 *Yeah.*  
 2927  
 2928 *...or different, like, I usually will eat it, I'll buy some and eat it and, ehm, then you help*  
 2929 *out fisherman and you talk about, and you're talking to them, and they're explaining how*  
 2930 *they, how are they ever going to recover because nobody will buy their fish...*  
 2931  
 2932 *Buy their fish.*  
 2933  
 2934 *...it's like, and here you are cleaning his fucking house, it's like, and my friend is from*  
 2935 *Fukushima, and he said he will overhear people joking. It's becoming like, eh...*  
 2936  
 2937 *Oh, you see, that, eh, about that much time has passed that it, kind of, has moved into the.*  
 2938  
 2939 *...and so, eh, I told him any time if, like, another table is talking about or dissing*  
 2940 *Fukushima or making fun of something from Fukushima...*  
 2941  
 2942 *Yeah.*  
 2943  
 2944 *...tell me who it is, and I will just go up and be like, "Fuck you." [laughter]...*  
 2945  
 2946 *[Laughter]*  
 2947  
 2948 *...like, he, he'd understand, because I will just go over and tell them off. I was like, "Next*  
 2949 *time it happens, tell me...*  
 2950  
 2951 *Tell you.*  
 2952  
 2953 *...tell me and I'll just scare the shit out of them."*  
 2954  
 2955 *Because probably, yeah, like, two, two-and-a-half years is probably that sort of time, like,*  
 2956 *you know, in 9/11 people started maybe making dark jokes about it probably a couple of*  
 2957 *years after...*

2958  
 2959 Yeah.  
 2960  
 2961 *...I suppose it's that sort of time period has passed where it's not...*  
 2962  
 2963 Yeah, but it's also, like, because Fukushima has become a bad stigma.  
 2964  
 2965 *Yeah, well, I mean, you saw how with the Olympics, Fukushima was brought up in a lot*  
 2966 *of the foreign press about it...*  
 2967  
 2968 Oh yeah.  
 2969  
 2970 *...like, in very insensitive ways...*  
 2971  
 2972 Oh yeah, yeah...  
 2973  
 2974 *...the, the Tokyo Olympics.*  
 2975  
 2976 *...and actually my reaction to, like, eh, the three-armed sumo wrestler or whatever, I*  
 2977 *thought, I thought, "That's not original." [laughter]...*  
 2978  
 2979 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 2980  
 2981 *...[Note: in a sarcastic tone] "Come on, let's insult them on another level of, beyond the*  
 2982 *insensitivity." Like, this isn't even amusing...*  
 2983  
 2984 *Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I think, it seems to me that you have a very, you have so many more*  
 2985 *levels of perspectives on the whole thing by having the experience in Tokyo but by having*  
 2986 *been so involved in Tohoku. I think that gave you...*  
 2987  
 2988 Yeah [clears throat].  
 2989  
 2990 *...just different layers of experience.*  
 2991  
 2992 And that's another reason why I thought with talking to you, if you could come up, and  
 2993 see, like, I mean, a lot of people, but if you do research, yeah, of course you go, but to be  
 2994 a part of {that volunteer organization}, I think you get a feel for the people and what  
 2995 you're doing and, if it, if it wasn't that group of people, I probably wouldn't have kept  
 2996 doing it, and then they actually said that the, like, after about a year, they kind of said,  
 2997 well, the issue is, they need help with recruitment because people are, I mean, there was,  
 2998 like, a thousand people at one of the first, like,...  
 2999  
 3000 *Yeah, to keep it going.*  
 3001  
 3002 *...and then it's like, they still need help...*  
 3003  
 3004 *Yeah.*  
 3005  
 3006 *...and now we're, kind of, at a point where what we're doing isn't necessarily official, but*  
 3007 *we're coming up...*  
 3008  
 3009 *Yeah.*  
 3010  
 3011 *...and so we'll probably, we're still helping out the community in different ways, but...*  
 3012

3013 *Yeah, yeah.*  
3014  
3015 ...ehm, and going up and seeing it, and like, because people, people, some, one guy said  
3016 to me, "Oh yeah, I wouldn't go up to Fukushima." Like, eh, "I don't have kids and it  
3017 might affect my sperm." And this guy's an idiot and I don't really care what he says.  
3018 And, eh, I was like, "Actually, maybe you should because I don't want you to..."  
3019  
3020 *Perpetuate [laughter].*  
3021  
3022 ...I don't, I don't want you to reproduce." [laughter] Ehm, but you hear stupid shit like  
3023 that and it's like, eh, the way I describe it to, like, Americans is it's like, "Okay, the  
3024 Kentucky Nuclear Power Plant exploded. Do you not go to Kentucky? Do you not go to  
3025 KFC?"...  
3026  
3027 *Ooohhh, uhuh, uhuh.*  
3028  
3029 ...like, it's a large fucking place...  
3030  
3031 *Yeah, yeah.*  
3032  
3033 ...do you, do you not eat KFC now because it's contaminated?  
3034  
3035 *Yeah, that's a good way of looking at it. Oh going up was fantast, eh, it was an amazing*  
3036 *experience. It really, really was...*  
3037  
3038 *Yeah.*  
3039  
3040 *...as you said, what it gave me in particular was obviously a view of you know, the, the*  
3041 *Ishinomaki people, but the {volunteer organization} spirit was very clear to see...*  
3042  
3043 *Yeah.*  
3044  
3045 *...and the bonds that you guys have created with each other and with the community...*  
3046  
3047 *Yeah.*  
3048  
3049 *...it was clear, clear to see. And that, you continued for two-and-a-half years, nearly three*  
3050 *years, that's...*  
3051  
3052 *Yeah.*  
3053  
3054 *...incredible, because I, I know. What they always talk about in all of the, sort of, post-*  
3055 *disaster literature is how you get a bunch of volunteers for the first month, two months*  
3056 *and then...*  
3057  
3058 *Nothing.*  
3059  
3060 *...nothing. And that's often when it's more needed in the, the...*  
3061  
3062 *Yeah.*  
3063  
3064 *...the six months, one year, two years, so...*  
3065  
3066 *Yeah.*  
3067

3068 ...for you guys to have kept it up for so long, it's, it's...  
 3069  
 3070 And the thing is...  
 3071  
 3072 ...a real testament.  
 3073  
 3074 ...we're just at a stage now where we decided we're not reaching out, but if they contact  
 3075 us, we go again...  
 3076  
 3077 Yeah.  
 3078  
 3079 ...but the, like, eh, one *matsuri* [Note: means festival] we helped out, like, two years in a  
 3080 row, they had, it was, like, it had been canceled, it was the first time in a hundred years it  
 3081 had been cancelled, and then, like, basically the community was, like, "I don't even really  
 3082 know if we want to do it."...  
 3083  
 3084 Yeah.  
 3085  
 3086 ...and so then we came in and, you know, helped out...  
 3087  
 3088 Yeah.  
 3089  
 3090 ...we cleaned up the place...  
 3091  
 3092 Yeah.  
 3093  
 3094 ...like, and then we went again this year, but it was more, like, unless they ask us, we  
 3095 won't go...  
 3096  
 3097 Yeah, yeah.  
 3098  
 3099 ...but we might, you know, if we are in the neigh, we might drive up and do a tour  
 3100 ourselves...  
 3101  
 3102 Yeah, yeah, yeah...  
 3103  
 3104 ...pop in and say hi.  
 3105  
 3106 ...because you have, you've built those bonds, like.  
 3107  
 3108 But it's, like, the fact that one little community now has a *matsuri* [Note: means festival]  
 3109 back...  
 3110  
 3111 Yeah.  
 3112  
 3113 ...and because they were just, kind of, depressed and didn't know if they wanted to do it.  
 3114  
 3115 Yeah. You were a bit of a shot in the arm kind of thing.  
 3116  
 3117 Yeah, it was like, yeah, I don't know, "Well, you need this place cleaned up? Alright,  
 3118 well." We literally, like, {a mutual friend} was there, literally like picking up, like, little  
 3119 sharp bits [Note: exaggeratedly gesturing going over a piece of ground with a fine-tooth  
 3120 comb] "But what if a child falls over."...  
 3121  
 3122 [Laughter]

3123  
 3124 ...”Fucking hell. How many times do you want us to go over this?”  
 3125  
 3126 *That counts.*  
 3127  
 3128 But now, I mean, you can tell {our mutual friend}, now they don’t need to do it.  
 3129  
 3130 *She’ll be happy to hear that, she’ll be happy to hear that.*  
 3131  
 3132 Yeah, because she was, like, “Fuckin’ fuck. Yeah, whatever.”  
 3133  
 3134 *[Laughter] She’ll be happy to hear that. Listen, I have taken so much of your time. I am*  
 3135 *really sorry. I didn’t intend it to go this long, but thank you for sharing everything. It was*  
 3136 *really, really interesting. Ehm, this is the last [Note: the researcher passes the Likert*  
 3137 *Scale about post-interview stress to the participant]...*  
 3138  
 3139 Alright.  
 3140  
 3141 *...this is just to make sure that I haven’t made you feel worse.*  
 3142  
 3143 [Laughter] Okay. [Note: she quickly writes minus one on the scale (the scale only went  
 3144 from zero to ten) without hesitation.  
 3145  
 3146 *Cool. Ehm, [laughter] because I’ve asked everyone to do this. Most people are very*  
 3147 *similar but some people haven’t talked about the memories...*  
 3148  
 3149 Yeah. I mean it was, it was, yeah.  
 3150  
 3151 *...and they didn’t feel so great afterwards, and just one of the things that the university*  
 3152 *helped me to put in place is we have counsellors set up so that we could, that if somebody*  
 3153 *just looked like they weren’t doing that well or certainly stated that they weren’t doing*  
 3154 *that well, that we’d...*  
 3155  
 3156 Oh that’s great.  
 3157  
 3158 *...put professional...*  
 3159  
 3160 Yeah.  
 3161  
 3162 *...assistance in place, so...*  
 3163  
 3164 Yeah, that’s wonderful.  
 3165  
 3166 *...but luckily.*  
 3167  
 3168 Oh yeah, I mean I think as a foreigner, any time, like, you went home, you had to talk  
 3169 about it...  
 3170  
 3171 *Uhum.*  
 3172  
 3173 *...ehm, my friend that I, my colleague that I was mentioning who went up, like, a year*  
 3174 *later and he talked about the difference, ehm, he’s from Tunisia, and, eh, he is somebody,*  
 3175 *his, his grandfather, somebody close in his family died, and this was maybe in, like, April*  
 3176 *in 2011, and they are at the funeral and everybody is asking him about Japan...*  
 3177



3178 *Oh crikey.*  
3179  
3180 ...like, [clears throat] that's what people wanted to talk about...  
3181  
3182 *Oh wow.*  
3183  
3184 ...and it was like, "Well, okay. Maybe later." [laughter]...  
3185  
3186 *[Laughter] There's a funeral going on here. [laughter]*  
3187  
3188 ...like...  
3189  
3190 *Yeah.*  
3191  
3192 ...we should be paying respects, ehm...  
3193  
3194 *Yeah, but of course...*  
3195  
3196 ...but I think as a foreigner, you have to talk.  
3197  
3198 *...in April, of course, it would have still been, like you were saying, you were still number*  
3199 *one in the [laughter].*  
3200  
3201 *Yeah, we were ranked number one. Goodbye Charlie Sheen.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.  
4

5 **Note:** we began this interview over lunch, so I tried to talk more than I normally would at  
6 the start to give the participant time to eat, and I did not follow the order of first questions  
7 that I had established in other interviews. The disaster related conversation begins about  
8 1,500 words into the transcript. (I have put the first passage of this conversation in bold  
9 print.)

10 *2013/10/4 Interview with Participant 22*

11 *Researcher: I thought with the disaster they would be more eager to encourage, you*  
12 *know, non-nationals to, to come in, but if the vis, you know the visa is always the first*  
13 *step, right? That's always the first wall to, to climb and, if people are only getting one*  
14 *year contracts, eh, sorry, one year visas, it means they're pro, as you said, only getting*  
15 *one year contracts, they're not feeling very...*  
16

17 Participant: No...

18  
19 *...stable in their careers and.*  
20

21 *...and it probably will put them off a little, sort of, investing too much into the language,*  
22 *and thus integrating, thus being able to understand a bit better, thus being able to, to*  
23 *function better...*  
24

25 *Yeah.*  
26

27 *...to be more productive in whatever...*  
28

29 *Yeah.*  
30

31 *...it is they are doing. No, I think, I mean, in, in fact, I don't think it has much to do with*  
32 *the disaster at all. It may...*  
33

34 *Yeah.*  
35

36 *...my impression is rather that this country, especially with Abe [Note: the Japanese prime*  
37 *minister at the time of interview] is going in a direction that most people in the west have*  
38 *absolutely no idea. Abenomics, if people know it abroad, that's just, it's not his main*  
39 *thing. His main thing is changing the constitution, getting rid of Article 9 [Note: the*  
40 *article outlawing war as a means to settle international disputes], he is changing the*  
41 *schoolbooks getting rid of the apologies [Note: apologies for various Japanese*  
42 *aggressions in the Imperial and wartime periods]...*  
43

44 *Yeah.*  
45

46 *...kind of, em, and, em, although I'm employed in a project that's kind of*  
47 *guroobarujinzaiikuseisuishinjigyou [Note: means project to promote the growth in global*  
48 *human resources] that is just still a, a remnant...*  
49

50 *Uhm.*  
51

52 *...I think five, five years down the road there's no, not going to be any such, the*  
53 *relationship to Korea is worse...*

54  
55 *Uhm.*  
56  
57 ...of course, to China. I think this country is heading in a, in a very, very funny direction  
58 and it has very little to do with going more international...  
59  
60 *Yeah.*  
61  
62 ...now that doesn't mean that people are all going to disappear, but ehm, ehm, it's very  
63 strange.  
64  
65 *You're absolutely not the first person to, eh, talk about things in those terms. Ehm, I know*  
66 *as well, I spoke to one person who really wanted to point out how Japan seems, to this*  
67 *person anyway, as it is closing in on itself...*  
68  
69 *Yeah.*  
70  
71 *...again, you know, a, as it has done in it, it, its history in the past, and one of the things*  
72 *that he talked about was how young people are travelling abroad less and less...*  
73  
74 That sounds stupid.  
75  
76 *...yeah, so, like, it is one thing if the old generations are, you know, maybe feeling a*  
77 *tendency to close off, but if the, the, the younger, sort of, let's say, student, student level*  
78 *are also doing that, that's, that's, I mean, it's something which...*  
79  
80 *Uhm.*  
81  
82 *...you know, will absolutely inhibit any sort of globalization...*  
83  
84 *Yeah.*  
85  
86 *...or internationalization.*  
87  
88 I mean, right now I'm in a project that is supposed to promote going abroad. I mean, we  
89 have a very ambitious goal. 60% of all students in the *gaikokugogakubu* [Means:  
90 department of foreign languages] will be going abroad, which is not going to happen,  
91 because we do not have the spaces and they are not being very flexible in their, I, I've  
92 dug up quite a few opportunities, because, like, with the German, they have two  
93 exchanges, usually they send three, three, I suppose we could talk them into taking five  
94 for a few years, but I mean, that, out of a cohort of, say, fifty-five to sixty students per  
95 year...  
96  
97 *Yeah.*  
98  
99 ...that is still nowhere near sixty. That is 10%...  
100  
101 *Yeah.*  
102  
103 ...so, but, eh, we're working on it...  
104  
105 *Yeah.*  
106  
107 ...and I think at that university, they're still doing a lot of good. And it's good because,  
108 eh, it's, it's not a bad university for languages and those students are getting keener

109 because if you're being offered options, you're, kind of, being told, "Okay, this, you can  
 110 grant money, you can get support, ehm, you can get support throughout your stay," ehm,  
 111 it, it does help, but I mean, I've met at other universities, I've met students who are  
 112 studying a language, I mean, it's not even that were pretty proud of it, although they were  
 113 fourth year...  
 114  
 115 *Yeah.*  
 116  
 117 ...that's not the, the main thing, although that is also slightly worrying...  
 118  
 119 *Uhm.*  
 120  
 121 ...if you can get a degree in a language and you basically don't speak it at all, and you  
 122 speak it less than I now speak Japanese, well, ehm, but it was the, the, the complete and  
 123 utter disinterest in actually going there. So if you actually do the language and, the, I  
 124 mean, token gesture, you could, you could tell me, "Oh, I want to see Neuschwanstein, I  
 125 want to see this." And you don't ever have to go. But just in the pretend. Be flexible in  
 126 your mind. Be somewhat creative up there [Note: the participant points to his own head]  
 127 and just, kind of, say, "Oh I'd really love to. I've got some places I'd love to go." And  
 128 most of them never have gone anywhere before...  
 129  
 130 *Yeah.*  
 131  
 132 ...but, ehm, so that's weird.  
 133  
 134 *Yeah, it's interesting that you mentioned about, say, grant money or support or*  
 135 *something, this, this person who is, as I said, who had, you know, very similar views was*  
 136 *so shocked that people would get offered full scholarships to go somewhere and still not*  
 137 *go. Ehm, I don't know whether it comes down to fear, or the, disinterest or what it is, but,*  
 138 *you know, as he, very generous financial support...*  
 139  
 140 *Uhm.*  
 141  
 142 *...so that, you know, at least money would not have been as issue...*  
 143  
 144 *Uhm.*  
 145  
 146 *...for not going and, eh, yeah, they, they didn't go. So.*  
 147  
 148 Well, I mean, I'm, I'm not an authority on this, but from talking to people about this, and  
 149 I've been reading in English about it, it seems that going abroad for a lot of Japanese  
 150 companies is not an asset at all, but rather a, maybe, disadvantage, so if you want to get  
 151 signed by one of the big companies, if you want to go Sony or Toyota and you have been  
 152 international, it's not, I mean, maybe later on if you, kind of, if you move up the ranks,  
 153 they might send you to America...  
 154  
 155 *Yeah.*  
 156  
 157 ...but not before because I mean the, the, the inherent danger is that you will become un-  
 158 Japanese...  
 159  
 160 *Yeah.*  
 161  
 162 ...that will have become, eh, like me, threatening the, sort of, coherence of the system...  
 163

164 *Uhum, uhum.*  
165  
166 ...because I just work differently, but then this is interesting because, I mean, my, the  
167 project is called, you know, Global Promotion...  
168  
169 *Yeah.*  
170  
171 ...it's a bit of weird title in English, but never mind that, ehm, and I also, you can't push  
172 too much, but I said, "Right, you know, you've got to go a bit more, of course, I'm  
173 working here for you and this is your university, it's your country," but actually it's not  
174 your university, it's the students', "and you've got to show a bit of, sort of, willingness to,  
175 sort of, say, 'Right, okay, we're employed eight, six foreigners and, sort of, we've got to  
176 deal with them' as well."...  
177  
178 *Uhm.*  
179  
180 ...so you can't expect them to, because if you just want people who are, can't speak the  
181 language but do some interesting research in, in German theatre, then employ Japanese  
182 people by all means...  
183  
184 *Yeah.*  
185  
186 ...talk at the students in Japanese about topics that they are probably knowledgeable at the  
187 end, but who can't do the language and are definitely not prepared to go abroad.  
188  
189 *Yeah, yeah, ehm, that sounds very similar to my own experience of, that compromise*  
190 *always went, I had to compromise in every situation in, in these, sort of, globalization*  
191 *issues, which, you know, if you are working and being employed is fair enough, but...*  
192  
193 *Uhm.*  
194  
195 *...there is absolutely, it does need to go a little bit both ways, I think, for it to work well...*  
196  
197 *Uhum.*  
198  
199 *...for it to work well because otherwise, I think, you can end up feeling antagonized. I felt*  
200 *very cosmetic. That I was employed just to say, "We employed some foreigners."...*  
201  
202 *Uhm.*  
203  
204 *...without actually doing anything...*  
205  
206 *Uhm.*  
207  
208 *...concrete towards, you know, becoming an international company.*  
209  
210 *Yeah, well, in, in my case, it's obviously, they do, of course, they take me, they took us in*  
211 *for the language teaching...*  
212  
213 *Uhum.*  
214  
215 ...and I think all of us are well qualified to that well and being somewhat more  
216 communicative than most Japanese and even some other candidates. {redacted}  
217

218 *So anyway, to, to, kind of, get back to the disaster, how, how did it actually, like, what*  
 219 *happened to you in, in 2011?*  
 220  
 221 Oh, it, it was very calm. We were at a cafe in {fashionable suburb of Tokyo} having  
 222 some cake, yeah, gateau, maybe...  
 223  
 224 *[Laughter]*  
 225  
 226 ...and then, oh, because it, I mean, there had been earthquakes weeks...  
 227  
 228 *Yeah.*  
 229  
 230 ...weeks before and, eh, it was, kind of, I don't know, I mean I never had earthquakes  
 231 before ever, but at some point I, kind of, got to liking them. It was, kind of, it was a bit  
 232 funny. It's like surfing...  
 233  
 234 *Uuuhhhmmm?*  
 235  
 236 ...it was like, [Note: the participant spreads his arms and gestures a surfing motion]  
 237 "Whoa, haha, haha, it's moving. Look at this. Haha." And as long as it goes, eh, sort of,  
 238 horizontal...  
 239  
 240 *Yeah.*  
 241  
 242 ...they're not so, apparently not that bad...  
 243  
 244 *Yeah.*  
 245  
 246 ...it's only once it starts moving, sort of [Note: the participant gestures a vertical, jumping  
 247 motion with his hands], and I think that happened in very few instances (indistinct), so  
 248 we, kind of, got used to it, and then it was just, kind of, it was just a bit, but you did, we  
 249 did realize this was longer, pretty long, I don't know how many minutes, three, four, five?  
 250  
 251 *Yeah, something like that, yeah.*  
 252  
 253 Ehm, at some point, eh, people were, some people were, kind of, going, were going out,  
 254 but then I thought with all these pylons and all these, sort of, eh, cables, I think it's safer  
 255 inside. At the very end, we, kind of, actually went under the table, but that was a bit of a,  
 256 I didn't quite fit.  
 257  
 258 *[Laughter] Of course, {that suburb} is, like, eh.*  
 259  
 260 Well, no, it was, the table was small. I don't know, it was just not high enough. I just  
 261 couldn't really fit under the table...  
 262  
 263 *Yeah.*  
 264  
 265 ...but it, it, and stuff started shaking in the kitchen and then it was over. So we had no  
 266 idea. We were two stops away from home, and we, well, I pretty much decided I was  
 267 going to walk anyway. It was a nice day...  
 268  
 269 *Yeah.*  
 270  
 271 ...so, we did. So we, of course, we saw that trains were not running...  
 272

273 *Yeah.*  
 274  
 275 ...but, eh, the magnitude of it, we had no idea. So we came home, and we did have a telly  
 276 but we were never watching television. And even now, we don't. I think I should start.  
 277 I'm just always, eh, appalled by the abysmal quality of Japanese television, but I think I  
 278 will just have to swallow that. But ehm, I mean both, {redacted} my wife, is better but  
 279 nowhere near good enough. So we just, eh, had to go online. I mean, Internet, luckily was  
 280 working...  
 281  
 282 *Yeah.*  
 283  
 284 ...ehm, and, ehm, it was, and then I, I went to NHK, the English channel, but what you  
 285 could see there was some pictures and you, all of a sudden, towards the evening it was  
 286 becoming apparent that the problem was not actually the earthquake that much...  
 287  
 288 *Yeah.*  
 289  
 290 ...but rather the tsunami...  
 291  
 292 *Yeah.*  
 293  
 294 ...and obviously by that stage, nobody knew what kind of magnitude of an impact it  
 295 would have. I don't think it involved, we never got it at all, I mean, I've never been up in  
 296 the area, I've never seen it so...  
 297  
 298 *Yeah.*  
 299  
 300 ...but it was pretty repetitive and then, of course, these, sort of, eh, also when you go on to  
 301 the BBC World page you can look at some videos, but it's not live, so it just loops, and  
 302 there it was something like, it was a loop, but it was always the same kind of information.  
 303 We were pretty calm. I mean, like, in our flat, it was the ground floor, it was like the, the  
 304 honey fell down...  
 305  
 306 *[Laughter]*  
 307  
 308 ...from the, the, eh, the fridge, eh, the Ikea mirror that was kind of leaning against the wall  
 309 kind of moved a bit, but I was preparing for my Japanese test on Monday [Note: the  
 310 earthquake took place on a Friday]...  
 311  
 312 *Oh [laughter]. [Note: as the participant was still trying to finish his desert, I began to*  
 313 *speak here, even though under normal conditions I would not have intervened yet at this*  
 314 *stage of the interview] This is, this is what's really interesting to me that in Tokyo, life*  
 315 *pretty much went on. You had to think about what you were going to do the next day. If*  
 316 *you had an appointment or, yeah.*  
 317  
 318 I mean, I was going to some really very expensive and shitty language school, and I  
 319 probably wouldn't have passed, but I had this stuff I, so I was studying, I mean, of course,  
 320 once it, kind of, Saturday came, Sunday came, I was thinking, "Well, maybe this is not  
 321 going happen."....  
 322  
 323 *Yeah.*  
 324  
 325 ...eventually there was an email, even though it was the weekend, from the school, "Oh,  
 326 no, no, no. We'll, it's going to be cancelled." And then, slowly but surely, ehm, eh, yeah,  
 327 the whole, eh, Fukushima Daiichi thing started...

328  
 329 *Yeah.*  
 330  
 331 ...and then, that was the point when the Germans went totally mental. If there, if there, if  
 332 there's anything that is like a red piece of cloth for a, what do you call? Spanish, in  
 333 Spain?  
 334  
 335 *Oh, the bull?*  
 336  
 337 Bull! Germans, it's nuclear. Germans go absolutely, well, by and large...  
 338  
 339 *Yeah.*  
 340  
 341 ...they go paranoia mode once it's anything to do with nuclear. I mean, they are freaking  
 342 out, and people were freaking out...  
 343  
 344 *Yeah.*  
 345  
 346 ...on say Facebook, ehm, phone calls, and so since I had that ticket for the 15th [Note: the  
 347 participant had talked about having a ticket home to Germany before I had switched on  
 348 the audio recorder], I was thinking, "Okay, well, what are we going to do?" So we  
 349 booked a flight for {my wife} which was with Emirates, but that was in the evening of  
 350 the Monday. So we decided, "Okay, we're both going during the day and then she can  
 351 take her flight and I will take mine in the morning." Now, but that was the Monday when  
 352 everything shut down...  
 353  
 354 *Yeah.*  
 355  
 356 ...there was no trains anymore...  
 357  
 358 *Yeah.*  
 359  
 360 ...we were at a hotel in Shibuya and, eh, we were pretty early, I mean, it was like,  
 361 probably, ten in the morning, and they run buses, so the limousine buses [Note: an airport  
 362 shuttle service] but there was no buses and they said there was no drivers. So we made  
 363 our way to some central bus stop in Tokyo which I think is on the Hanzomon line, which  
 364 was actually pretty calm, I mean, you, the Hanzomon line was running...  
 365  
 366 *Yeah.*  
 367  
 368 ...and, eh, it was just the connection to the airport, and that was to me, to my mind, it was  
 369 absolutely crazy. I mean, how can you, eh, I mean, no matter whether people want to  
 370 leave because of that, but you can't shut up [Note: I think this was a slip of the tongue  
 371 and the participant meant shut off] the, the airport commuters...  
 372  
 373 *Yeah.*  
 374  
 375 ...so why not have the airport trains running or even more of them...  
 376  
 377 *Yeah.*  
 378  
 379 ...because people may be coming in to help the disaster. I don't know, it was just, and  
 380 then once we got there, of course we were at different terminals at Narita [Note: the main  
 381 airport serving Tokyo - the two terminals of which are a bus or train-ride apart]...  
 382



383 *Oh, yeah.*  
384  
385 ...ehm, and then my wife was listening to, I think, announcements in, in Japanese, and she  
386 realized that they actually did say that from 6 o'clock that afternoon, that evening, there  
387 would be no more flights because people can't get there. What kind of a logic is that? So,  
388 you're not flying the people who are there out because the peop, the other people can't  
389 get there? Ehm, so I said to her, "Okay, well, hang on. I'll check with Lufthansa."  
390 Because by that stage, eh, I mean, on the Sunday the, the in-laws had been pretty frantic,  
391 right?  
392  
393 *Yeah.*  
394  
395 I rang them, and they said, "You've got to, no, just get a ticket." So I said, "Okay.  
396 Lufthansa, what have you got?" And they said to me, "Oh, do you want to go on the  
397 Munich flight today?" And that happened to be the last flight out of Narita for a good  
398 four, five, six weeks for Lufthansa. I said, "Yeah, sure." And then I was, told my wife the  
399 amount, because there were all these, sort of, things about outrageous, ehm, amounts of  
400 money...  
401  
402 *Right.*  
403  
404 ...now, of course, it was more expensive, it was about a thousand for, eh, Euros, for one  
405 way. So that's, kind of, double...  
406  
407 *Yeah.*  
408  
409 ...what you.  
410  
411 *Well, yeah, it's, it's not too bad, actually, yeah.*  
412  
413 It's more. Exactly. So I felt not hard done by...  
414  
415 *Yeah.*  
416  
417 ...then, eh, the plane wasn't anywhere near full, but I think that's probably because of the,  
418 the issue with the, the...  
419  
420 *Commuting, yeah.*  
421  
422 ...commuting. And then, she didn't have a re-entry visa [Note: a former immigration  
423 necessity - residents of Japan needed to have paid for a special seal in their passport  
424 before leaving the country to be allowed back in].  
425  
426 *Aaaahhhh!*  
427  
428 I did. A re-entry permit.  
429  
430 *Permit. Yeah, that was back when the system was still in place.*  
431  
432 So, we, well, it's not like we were both missing it, but that was stressful, that was very  
433 stressful, yeah.  
434  
435 *Oh, crikey. Di, did you realize that before you left that?*  
436  
437 *Yeah, we knew...*

438  
 439 *Oh, you knew. Okay so.*  
 440  
 441 ...but we had no, there was no time and no chance to go...  
 442  
 443 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, what can you do...*  
 444  
 445 ...to, to.  
 446  
 447 ...yeah, what could you have done? Because, I mean, basically, that thing is just a tax,  
 448 right, I mean, that's all it has ever been but it really is enforced...  
 449  
 450 Yeah.  
 451  
 452 ...you absolutely had to have it, you had to have that stamp in your, your passport...  
 453  
 454 Yeah.  
 455  
 456 ...and without that you're not going to, you can leave, but they won't let you back in.  
 457  
 458 Well, not on the visa.  
 459  
 460 *Yeah, well, yeah. You had to get a new visa [exasperated laughter]. Oh crikey.*  
 461  
 462 Yeah, and, ehm.  
 463  
 464 *So you had this, kind of, in the back of your minds as you were leaving that, eh, this was*  
 465 *possibly going to be a bit of a, a pain.*  
 466  
 467 Well, I never, I never thought it was, I mean, I'm not very, ehm, eh, prone to be,  
 468 developing paranoia about nuclear things. I, even now, I don't, I mean, you can't, eh,  
 469 after we came back, I couldn't read enough to really deter, you know, determine where it  
 470 was wrong, and to be perfectly honest, I wasn't really too fussed. I mean, who knows?  
 471 Ehm, but as we say in German, *leben ist lebensgefährlich*, so life is dangerous, you know.  
 472  
 473 *[Laughter]*  
 474  
 475 It's what it is, I mean.  
 476  
 477 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 478  
 479 I think, too, young children or maybe pregnant women, fair enough...  
 480  
 481 *Yeah.*  
 482  
 483 ...and going to Fukushima and the university [Note: the participant had told me before the  
 484 audio recorder was switched on that he had been about to start a job at a university just  
 485 outside Fukushima] being sort of, two stops on a commuter train outside Fukushima, she,  
 486 so basically towards south-east, which is exactly where the fallout was...  
 487  
 488 *Yeah.*  
 489  
 490 ...that, to me and mostly to my family just didn't sound like a very good idea at all. Of  
 491 course, I could have been very popular, not just, kind of, going back because I hadn't  
 492 even.

493  
 494 *You hadn't even started, right? Yeah.*  
 495  
 496 That's the thing, and that's why, what made it a bit easier for me to say, you know, of  
 497 course, if you have family there or if you're from wherever, and all, you, you, you're not  
 498 going to leave people alone. And there was the reverse, I mean, there was a Japanese  
 499 from Germany going back and sort of...  
 500  
 501 *Yeah.*  
 502  
 503 ...to see their families, see that they're well...  
 504  
 505 *Yeah.*  
 506  
 507 ...ehm, but, eh that kind of made it not really easy, I mean, I still have a, a bit of a sense of  
 508 guilt towards the university...  
 509  
 510 *Yeah.*  
 511  
 512 ...because they got me the first visa and all that...  
 513  
 514 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 515  
 516 ...but it just, in the end, it wasn't on the menu.  
 517  
 518 *How was the situation with contacting them at the time when all of this was going on?*  
 519 *Because I know Tokyo, contact was pretty smooth, but parts of Fukushima had a lot of*  
 520 *difficulty with their communication systems...*  
 521  
 522 *Uhuh.*  
 523  
 524 *...were you able to, kind of, contact the university easily or?*  
 525  
 526 *Email, email.*  
 527  
 528 *Ah, email. Okay.*  
 529  
 530 *No, we did email. I just said, "Okay, ehm, I have my flight scheduled on this, now,*  
 531 *alright...*  
 532  
 533 *Yeah.*  
 534  
 535 ...and I should be back as expected but, eh, let's, you know, kind of, see what's going to  
 536 happen."  
 537  
 538 *Yeah.*  
 539  
 540 *Then, ehm, yeah, my, ehm, but while I was away, while I was a fly-jin [Note: a*  
 541 *derogatory term for foreigners who left Japan during the disaster]...*  
 542  
 543 *[Laughter]*  
 544  
 545 ...yeah, I mean, you get all sorts of attitudes. I thought *fly-jin* was maybe a bit harsh, ehm,  
 546 of course, the Germans, well, the French, I mean, they even chartered flights to get their  
 547 people out. The Germans just expect you to pay...

548  
549 [Laughter]  
550  
551 ...eh, actually, what I said about news, there wasn't that much, but at the same time,  
552 sometimes when it's too much, it's too much. So if you have too many points of view, if  
553 you have too many different hair dryers to choose from or television sets, it's too much.  
554 So maybe news at all wasn't that, wasn't the problem. The problem was more on social  
555 media, people on Facebook all going like, "Ah, are you still there?" So that kind of thing.  
556 And the German Embassy did abysmally. They were so bad because all of their posts,  
557 they had been, I think on the Friday, they were on the *shinkansen* [Note: Japanese bullet  
558 train] to Osaka. So it was just the Japanese staff, some volunteers and young people who  
559 were still there. Ehm, I got one email about eight, nine times. So somebody, kind of,  
560 being, thinking that this hasn't been sent off, which wasn't informative at all, at all. They  
561 even had to call, sort of, town hall meetings later on in May. I did go to one, not because I  
562 was particularly worried, but, and the entire community, the schools, they fucked up  
563 badly. The, the *Goethe Institut*, they, they lost almost half of their students, so they were,  
564 like, on twelve-hundred and they were a year later seven-hundred...  
565  
566 Wow.  
567  
568 ...because they fucked up so badly...  
569  
570 Yeah.  
571  
572 ...because they just did not communicate, the school, German school in, in Yokohama,  
573 they have lost people because they, they only took care of, and this is very German, only  
574 took care of the cohort that is, sort of, the highest, eh, *Gymnasium*, and the *Realschule* in  
575 German [Note: types of secondary school] they were flown out, flown out to Cologne, to,  
576 you know...  
577  
578 Yeah.  
579  
580 ...get their *Abitur*, their Leaving Cert, but, eh, the others weren't, they just.  
581  
582 They were just left to do their own thing or?  
583  
584 Well, no, it's like, classes didn't happen because *Goethe Institut* is, sort of, state-funded.  
585 They could officially not open until they had given the okay, had been given the okay. So  
586 the people were there. Most of the teachers were there, the Japanese were definitely there,  
587 they were just, kind of, I don't know, doing stuff, rolling thumbs [Note: the participant  
588 makes a gesture of folding his hands and twiddling his thumbs] drinking coffee. Ehm,  
589 but, so, and, and I really thought, I mean, of course, these, these embassy folks, they're,  
590 they're, they're smug, but I thought, I mean, I, well, I, I understand people with kids and  
591 they were enraged about schools, but I really thought, "This, the smugness." And they  
592 fucked up, and they really fucked up, and they didn't admit it one bit. They said, "Oh  
593 yeah, well, you know, we dealt with it in, within reason in the situation." No, you didn't.  
594 You just did very, very, very badly. And telling people they have no money to spend.  
595 "Yeah, you've got to save more if you live in a country like Japan." [Note: participant  
596 rolls eyes]  
597  
598 [Laughter] Wow.  
599  
600 Yeah.  
601

602 *Eh, you're not the first person to have a negative opinion of their embassy. A lot of the*  
 603 *nationalities I have spoken to have had quite negative comments about the way their*  
 604 *embassies reacted. And mostly, as you said, in terms of things like information and*  
 605 *communication...*  
 606  
 607 Yeah, it was none!  
 608  
 609 ...yeah.  
 610  
 611 There was nothing. And, eh, I think you can't blame the, most of, a lot of the Japanese  
 612 staff can't speak German...  
 613  
 614 Yeah.  
 615  
 616 ...eh, and only leaving the young people in charge, so whenever it's about the party and,  
 617 eh, getting to the funds, it's the high, eh, the big-wigs, and then once it's, like, shitty in  
 618 Japan, they piss off and the others are left behind. I know some people who really they  
 619 helped out because, like, say half-Japanese, half-German...  
 620  
 621 Yeah.  
 622  
 623 ...volunteers, and they had, they helped, and a, a, at no stage did I feel the urge to call  
 624 them...  
 625  
 626 Yeah.  
 627  
 628 ...but just, I mean, even that email, I mean, I was just like, "This is no new, this is no new  
 629 information. You send it to me eight times or sixteen times or something ridiculous. And  
 630 it's the same email, and after that, for three weeks nothing?" Not a single, at least. At  
 631 least three weeks...  
 632  
 633 Uuuuhhhmmmm.  
 634  
 635 ...not a single email, and I mean, I had been registered so I, you know...  
 636  
 637 Yeah.  
 638  
 639 ...I get a, I get a reminder every three months, 'Please update your information'...  
 640  
 641 Yeah.  
 642  
 643 ...and I had been doing this...  
 644  
 645 Yeah.  
 646  
 647 ...so.  
 648  
 649 That's very unsatisfactory.  
 650  
 651 Uhuh.  
 652  
 653 And you also mentioned about, like, social media being, kind of, not that useful to you  
 654 really, in, in fact it might have been counterproductive...  
 655  
 656 Oh, counterproductive because the people on Facebook was kind of going crazy.

657  
658 *And when you say the people on Facebook, were they people that you knew here in*  
659 *Japan? Were they?*  
660  
661 No, no, no, mostly friends or not necessarily people very close but rather, well, I mean,  
662 it's always like this, "Oh, something happened in Japan. Oh my god. I think my  
663 neighbour's daughter-in-law's, eh, son is currently there, so we need to check." Fair  
664 enough, I mean, that's, so people I have had no contact with for ten years, fifteen years or  
665 so, I mean, all of a sudden, they come on, "Oh, are you still in Japan?"...  
666  
667 *Yeah.*  
668  
669 ...and, eh, I think that is a positive because it's like, "Oh, right, great. They, they actually  
670 do care although you're not best friends or whatever. But after a, a, because Germans are  
671 so paranoid about nuclear things. Nuclear is really, that's the, the, everything goes into  
672 irrational mode...  
673  
674 *Okay.*  
675  
676 ...really it does go into irrational mode...  
677  
678 *Yeah.*  
679  
680 ...ehm, and I have a lot of friends here who have been here, long-timers in Japan who are  
681 active in the, sort of, anti-nuclear power, sort of, very small scene that was bigger right  
682 after but, eh...  
683  
684 *Yeah.*  
685  
686 ...and, actually I have problems with, not, not with, they are friends of mine, but I have,  
687 eh, yeah, it's a kind of, it's a very, I think it's very narrow-minded...  
688  
689 *Their thinking.*  
690  
691 ...yeah, I mean, Germany has no nuclear power any more, but they buy lots of nuclear  
692 power from France and from Czech...  
693  
694 *Yeah.*  
695  
696 ...and possibly even Poland, so they can have the risk and the danger...  
697  
698 *Yeah.*  
699  
700 ...but we can't. I mean come on...  
701  
702 *Yeah.*  
703  
704 ...so.  
705  
706 *It's a bit of a double standard.*  
707  
708 Yeah, and, but, em, no, I think that was more, I mean, especially in terms of my wife  
709 because she didn't want to come, she wasn't particularly, I mean, it's not that she didn't  
710 think at all, but she wasn't particularly scared...  
711

712 *Yeah.*  
713  
714 ...and there was one person on her scholarship who did the complete reverse. I mean, he  
715 was a bit of a funny character, he also was on, on shows and television, so television  
716 shows and he, kind of, I think they, got himself an agent and, but he was doing the  
717 reverse, he was going out, he was partying the nights away, em, on purpose...  
718  
719 *Okay.*  
720  
721 ...because it was pretty empty and people, even the Japanese at some point weren't doing  
722 so much and, of course, once we returned, I mean, there was a bit of a, I don't think there  
723 was a shortage, but it was just not everything in the supermarkets...  
724  
725 *Uhm, yeah, yeah.*  
726  
727 ...mostly water and rice and stuff...  
728  
729 *Yeah, yeah.*  
730  
731 ...but I mean, of course, some of the Japanese, most people tend to have small living  
732 spaces, but must be terrible hoarders, I mean, where would you put all that water? I mean,  
733 fill the bathtub with water? Okay, yeah, for the loo.  
734  
735 *Yeah, yeah. You know the way as well, just to quickly go back to something else you, you*  
736 *mentioned right back at the start when you were trying to find out about things, you, you*  
737 *mentioned going online...*  
738  
739 *Uhum.*  
740  
741 *...and you mentioned a few websites like, eh, for example, eh, like the BBC or NHK. Did*  
742 *you notice any difference between the various nationalities' media? Like, your experience*  
743 *of Japanese media or German media or other countries' media?*  
744  
745 Actually not so much, but I think you may have heard this, I think in this particular case,  
746 although I don't think the UK is prone to being very paranoid, em, the BBC was pretty  
747 similar there. They were pretty, I, uh, no nowhere near the German newspapers but, ehm,  
748 NHK then in contrast almost, I'm not, I'm not saying it was so positive, but it was almost  
749 somewhat positively calm...  
750  
751 *Uhm, uhm*  
752  
753 ...because there was some stuff, well they downplayed it, I mean, always, you know,  
754 every day now you have another, "Oh, we have another leak in Fukushima." Well, it's  
755 probably been there for six weeks or whatever...  
756  
757 *[Laughter]*  
758  
759  
760 ...who knows?  
761  
762 *Yeah.*  
763  
764 (indistinct) Then again no-one knows, it's in its own way a very corrupt society. I mean,  
765 if you are, sit on the right committee in the, in parliament, of course the, so, *yakuza* [Note:  
766 Japanese mafia] or the building conglomerates are going to pay you very handsomely,

767 probably double what you receive by the state, if you only call the right decisions. It's  
 768 not, it's not a mystery...

769

770 *Yeah.*

771

772 ...even if I don't understand Japanese well enough, I can read about it and I can, kind of,  
 773 suss it out, eh, I mean, that's another thing, of course, I could not go out and talk to  
 774 people about it unless they have English, em, I could not access the, well, did not access  
 775 the Japanese websites because it wouldn't have been, you know, any help and  
 776 newspapers, and I thought, "Well, newspapers are newspapers." They come out once a  
 777 day, but television, eh, seemed the more straightforward choice. Ehm, but, and also, I  
 778 mean, as I said, the media, I think, what's the problem there is that, eh, well to put it very,  
 779 very direct, excuse my French, opinions are like arseholes, everybody's got one...

780

781 *[Laughter]*

782

783 ...and, mind you, there was lots of opinions about anything and everything online, eh, and  
 784 at some point, you couldn't keep from not, eh, I mean, as, as, as long as we, kind of, were  
 785 on the way to the airport and we weren't quite sure what was going to happen, of course,  
 786 I did, I was really, kind of, on it. Then, once we were in Germany, of course, I didn't have  
 787 the, eh, the contracts, you know, I couldn't, I couldn't use my phone, and I even lost a job  
 788 through not answering my phone in the middle of the night because they were offering  
 789 me something {redacted}...

790

791 *Ah, okay.*

792

793 ...but because I hadn't answered the phone, they had rang, they rung someone else, so, of  
 794 course, it wasn't full time, but it would have been something else...

795

796 *It would have been a job, yeah.*

797

798 ...ehm, but at some point I felt really I can, I do not want to watch any news any more, I  
 799 did not want to even open up Facebook, I'm actually quite happy watching silly German  
 800 TV shows or reading a book or just going for a walk, because, of course, the media was  
 801 all so existential because I wasn't really going to go to Fukushima, although I was  
 802 thinking about it for a while, but that meant, and that was, what it meant was that I would  
 803 have to start again from scratch, clawing, and luckily I had made some contacts, and there  
 804 was a language school and that was the first thing, and then, slowly but, I mean, I think I,  
 805 and people have been telling me that it happened rather quickly, I was teaching last year  
 806 at some pretty good universities {redacted}...

807

808 *Yeah, yeah, wow, wow...*

809

810 ...so I got into English...

811

812 ...yeah, yeah.

813

814 ...but I have been networking and, eh, I do think, at least in terms of teaching, and I think  
 815 I'm skilled enough...

816

817 *Yeah.*

818

819 ...I mean, I don't all do, don't always do the right thing and the best...

820

821 *[Laughter]*



822  
823 ...it's not always the most exciting teaching, but I am making an effort...  
824  
825 *Yeah, yeah.*  
826  
827 ...and, eh, so, eh, yeah, but right then, it was like, "Okay." I could have said, "Well, I've  
828 got nothing here, I've got nothing anywhere else, so I might as well stick around." But  
829 somehow for me Japan has always been a challenge. Now I'm not up to certain  
830 challenges in terms of mentality sometimes, I just can't, can't be, it's too much, and I  
831 just, I don't need this really, but, eh, it's always been a language issue...  
832  
833 *Yeah.*  
834  
835 ...and I'm never going to get very good, and I speak what I, Japanese call *yabanjin*  
836 *nihongo* [Note: means speaking Japanese like a savage, i.e., not refined Japanese]...  
837  
838 *[Laughter]*  
839  
840 ...I basically ignore most of the particles and I'm pretty much all over the place when it  
841 comes to *desu, masu*, plain form, eh, other things. I'm trying. It's getting a bit better.  
842 Eh, also, although I have a bit of a problem, now I can communicate with my personal  
843 trainer or the karaoke guys, because they have no English. But it's difficult, sort of,  
844 constructions...  
845  
846 *Yeah.*  
847  
848 ...like, I have a few relative things, but it's just getting a bit better...  
849  
850 *Yeah.*  
851  
852 ...but that's the thing, I want to keep getting better...  
853  
854 *Yeah.*  
855  
856 ...I want to just do something. And at the same time, I know I am not going to dedicate  
857 anything full time in terms of just like proper studies...  
858  
859 *Yeah.*  
860  
861 ...or even I can't and I don't want to take six months out and go to some language school  
862 because I have my share of experience there and I think six months there could even be  
863 just giving them a lot of money, eh, not necessarily benefitting very much from the way  
864 they teach...  
865  
866 *It's possible, yeah.*  
867  
868 ...so I think if you are a skilled professional whose language ability is, I mean, because  
869 I'm always doing it right, but I know, I know what works for me...  
870  
871 *How to learn, yeah.*  
872  
873 ...for me...  
874  
875 *Yeah.*  
876

877 ...and I definitely don't want, what I don't, I don't need people telling me, "Oh, you  
 878 weren't here. Why haven't you done your homework?" "I paid you fucking two-hundred  
 879 thousand yen. Shut up."  
 880  
 881 *[Laughter]*  
 882  
 883 It's my prerogative. If I don't homework, I don't do homework. Leave me the fuck alone.  
 884  
 885 *Yeah [laughter]. I understand...*  
 886  
 887 So that's the...  
 888  
 889 *...I understand.*  
 890  
 891 ...and, ehm, I mean, I've had some good, I had a good teacher, look, she's in Tokyo, right,  
 892 even I like *kanji* [Note: Chinese characters], I somehow enjoy them...  
 893  
 894 *Yeah.*  
 895  
 896 ...even though I know nothing about the, sort of, on the left or top right and [Note: an  
 897 example of some of the conventions for how Chinese characters are written]...  
 898  
 899 *[Laughter]*  
 900  
 901 ...I know it's there, but I don't know how to interpret them...  
 902  
 903 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 904  
 905 ...and I also tend to know, I think I'm at that stage where I rather know sound than  
 906 meaning...  
 907  
 908 *Right.*  
 909  
 910 ...so I can have a guess at sound, but I am not really sure of the meaning...  
 911  
 912 *I see, I see.*  
 913  
 914 ...but it's, but it's part of the experience of being here. Of course, the intercultural,  
 915 everyday, but I mean, that kind of thing is helpful definitely...  
 916  
 917 *Uhm.*  
 918  
 919 ...to know Japanese on a normal way, in a normal situation...  
 920  
 921 *Yeah, yeah, uhum.*  
 922  
 923 ...but I think even then because we, we, of course, I didn't ask many things, just, "Why is  
 924 the bus not coming?" and then okay well, "You've got to go to this spot and then take the  
 925 bus." And there were so many buses running there, so that was no, I mean, it was hectic, I  
 926 mean, Japanese, they, they sometimes, especially women, they like to run, don't they, on  
 927 the last two-hundred metres to the station, it's like [Note: makes a gesture of running  
 928 awkwardly]...  
 929  
 930 *[Laughter]*  
 931

932 ...it makes no sense, but fair enough. But you are showing that you, kind of, it's a bit like  
 933 the poor *kuroneko* guys [Note: a Japanese logistics/delivery company like DHL] who are  
 934 supposed to run just to show dedication...  
 935  
 936 *Yeah.*  
 937  
 938 ...poor guys, I mean, their job is hard enough.  
 939  
 940 *In, in the humid, humidity and, eh, thirty-something degrees.*  
 941  
 942 And wearing that, sort of, super plasticky uniform...  
 943  
 944 *[Laughter]*  
 945  
 946 ...which I'm sure has no heat-tech or whatever it's called...  
 947  
 948 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's a thought. So it, like, was it, was it, it doesn't sound then that it was*  
 949 *a tough decision for you to come back.*  
 950  
 951 No, no, it wasn't. I wasn't finished.  
 952  
 953 *Yeah, you had this challenge still remaining. And for your wife as well, she felt the same*  
 954 *way?*  
 955  
 956 Uhm, not quite so much because, well, she was very pissed off at the German institution  
 957 that sent her there. I think that they didn't deal with it that badly. Nothing compared to,  
 958 and they, they, they paid everything in the end. They paid that flight, they paid certain  
 959 expenses, but some people, but they allowed people to quit within, and I suppose, like,  
 960 maybe about a third actually did quit, so that's the magnitude of people's, sort of, how  
 961 crazy they got. Ehm, she didn't, but it was mostly, I said, "Well, we haven't really  
 962 achieved, you know, we have hardly even been there." And, eh, I, I'd been doing a lot of  
 963 networking...  
 964  
 965 *Yeah.*  
 966  
 967 ...and I just, I wasn't sure but I start, I started to get somewhere. Of course, at that stage,  
 968 we could have disappeared. I think if we disappeared now, it would probably be more  
 969 stupid. But, ehm, at the same time, after three years, you could, you might also be able to  
 970 say, "This doesn't really work." And I, like, if anything came out, like she's unemployed  
 971 right now, and she has, would probably say, "Okay, well, fair enough, the earliest stage  
 972 that I can make, let's go somewhere else."  
 973  
 974 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 975  
 976 But I still Japanese tugging at me a little bit, so...  
 977  
 978 *Yeah.*  
 979  
 980 ...I don't want to...  
 981  
 982 *That was the motivating, one of the motivating factors anyway.*  
 983  
 984 Uhm.  
 985

986 *Then, one thing I have been asking everybody is for, for each person, when did the*  
 987 *disaster end, if, if it did end?*  
 988  
 989 Uhm, I think for me, once I, I secured two days in a language school in Tokyo, back in  
 990 Tokyo. Because that was, like, a sign for me. It might have been early in May.  
 991  
 992 *Okay, so March, April, May, about three months? Less, slightly less?*  
 993  
 994 It was kind of this thing for me of, "Okay there is a, a bit of future here and it, it's  
 995 probably going to, it's going to take time...  
 996  
 997 *Uhum.*  
 998  
 999 ...but it's looking good. I can even somehow benefit from some people having  
 1000 disappeared entirely. That was very, for a short period only, I think. Uhm, what other? I  
 1001 mean, of course, where there is disaster for some, there is always opportunity, but  
 1002 sometimes unfortunately in that its come to people just making money off people. But say  
 1003 the labour law, the new one...  
 1004  
 1005 *Yes.*  
 1006  
 1007 ...have you heard about that, the university thing?  
 1008  
 1009 *Yes.*  
 1010  
 1011 I'm going to go, actually I don't know that much about it, but, eh, I'm going to go  
 1012 tomorrow, no Sunday, my union has a little, you know, session, but I mean, it sounds so  
 1013 funny to me. I'm not planning to really be around then...  
 1014  
 1015 *Yeah.*  
 1016  
 1017 ...but, ehm, no, it's the, in five years time, well, yeah, from now on, in four years time in  
 1018 theory, everyone, all the university, the entire university market, definitely language  
 1019 teaching is going to go absolutely mental because all the people who have been on  
 1020 *hijokinkoushi* contracts [Note: part-time teaching contracts] forever, five years, seven  
 1021 years, whatever, fifteen years, twenty-two years, they are going to lose them because the  
 1022 universities cannot offer them new contracts, so even all the good jobs at Waseda, Kyodai  
 1023 [Note: major Japanese universities] for *hijokinkoushi*...  
 1024  
 1025 *Yeah.*  
 1026  
 1027 ...but also for fixed-term stuff...  
 1028  
 1029 *Yeah.*  
 1030  
 1031 ...like what I've got now, they are all going to be out in the open and it is going to be  
 1032 madness, it is going to be absolute and utter madness because I think, in some respects, in  
 1033 terms of some teaching, and that is more Japanese nationals but also some foreigners who  
 1034 have gotten really, well, maybe they speak really good Japanese by now, but they do the  
 1035 same as Japanese do teaching at students in Japanese about something...  
 1036  
 1037 *Yeah.*  
 1038  
 1039 ...it's maybe not such a bad thing, I know a colleague or friend who, before I moved here,  
 1040 would have had quite a bit of a changeover, but, eh, I clawed my way into {a certain

1041 university in Tokyo} for English, ehm, eh, then {a university outside Tokyo} for German,  
 1042 {another university in Tokyo} two days for English...

1043

1044 *Oh wow.*

1045

1046 ...now the {university outside Tokyo}, my, my friend and colleague there, and I mean, he  
 1047 is so unhappy with some of the part-timers because that's the thing here with part-timers,  
 1048 they just waste, waste people's breath, like, if I look at their German students, even if they  
 1049 make a lot of progress, they cannot read and translate Kafka in Year 2. They just cannot  
 1050 or they can but they don't benefit at all. And then in third year, it's social theories...

1051

1052 *[Laughter]*

1053

1054 ...and that is because nobody really knows what they are doing. They have got contracts,  
 1055 and they probably have been getting them forever and it's basically, 90% is hot air and  
 1056 not helping and benefiting anybody, and now it will be maybe a little bit of a good thing,  
 1057 but unfortunately I think it is just going to mean a lot of things are just not going to be put  
 1058 out at all...

1059

1060 *Yeah.*

1061

1062 ...and they are going to go like, em, the dean of the economics, business and economics  
 1063 faculty at {one university in Tokyo} said, "Oh let's get rid of the natives. We don't need  
 1064 our students to speak. They are okay with reading and writing, aren't they?"

1065

1066 *[Researcher sharply inhales]*

1067

1068 And this is probably what is also going to happen...

1069

1070 *Yeah.*

1071

1072 ...so I think for more people than not, it's going to mean that the market share is going to  
 1073 be even smaller. It's just going to, especially if it's moving towards less internationality.

1074

1075 *Yeah, this, this ties in very strongly into all of those trends we were talking about where it*  
 1076 *really does seem to be a kind of a closing in again...*

1077

1078 *Uhm.*

1079

1080 *...it's, perhaps, eh, eh, partly the earthquake but I think there were other things in motion*  
 1081 *even before that and maybe just the earthquake spurred some things on.*

1082

1083 *Uhm. And I mean, I really can't judge that but from, of course I've, I'm aware now that*  
 1084 *Japanese, sort of, coherence with, within systems in Japan seems to be very, very, very*  
 1085 *different and I will probably never understand it, and I think in my environment, I can*  
 1086 *probably get away breaching some of it as long as I put, as I not just perform but maybe*  
 1087 *rather put in a bit of an extra effort...*

1088

1089 *Yeah, yeah.*

1090

1091 ...and create something for someone. So I may be destroying something here [Note:  
 1092 gestures with hands to one side of the table] but I am also building something else...

1093

1094 *Yeah.*

1095

1096 ...now, of course, if you are a company, that kind of an approach may not work at all, it,  
 1097 you know, if you get a format, as a position in, and they are just going to create havoc,  
 1098 maybe their reasoning is, "Okay, we, actually it went really well for us when the, we were  
 1099 rebuilding and we did it the Japanese way."...

1100  
 1101 *Uhm.*  
 1102

1103 ...because sometimes I know that they're not, not that creative but they have been taught  
 1104 not to, and I sometimes wonder how are Japanese actually creative, how did they do this,  
 1105 how does Sony still do? Though all those companies have all been going down...

1106  
 1107 *Yeah.*  
 1108

1109 ...downhill a little bit...

1110  
 1111 *Yeah.*  
 1112

1113 ...but I think Sony is probably still strongest in some markets...

1114  
 1115 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1116

1117 ...ehm, well, a car or something they're still...

1118  
 1119 *Yeah.*  
 1120

1121 ...and, eh, yeah, maybe we foreigners in, in certain areas are det, maybe, I don't know,  
 1122 maybe we are detrimental...

1123  
 1124 *Yeah.*  
 1125

1126 ...so you know, the, the thoughts and, sort of, creativity processes that need to be there...

1127  
 1128 *Yeah.*  
 1129

1130 ...ehm but, at the same time, I come from a very universist background, background, and I  
 1131 would also say there are lots of Japanese who think lots of different things and there are  
 1132 so many who, who volunteered and wanted to help and wanted to help foreigners and, I  
 1133 mean, there's so many, I mean, I have never been to a country with so many free or  
 1134 virtually free language classes. Of course, a lot of the people have no idea what they are  
 1135 doing but they're, they mean well. So there are all these people out there and, eh, I think  
 1136 it's, you know, just, maybe they are only ten, fifteen percent, maybe they are twenty or  
 1137 twenty-five, but just, eh, just having that future for them that they would have to, kind of,  
 1138 go quiet again and disappear into not being seen because now is the new uniformity  
 1139 again...

1140  
 1141 *Yeah.*  
 1142

1143 ...ehm, I don't know. I think once you reach a certain level of enlightenment in, in, in,  
 1144 doesn't matter whether it is science or those sorts of things, once you know about  
 1145 something, it is thus making you much more happy and thus maybe more productive, not  
 1146 just productive but also more productive in your relationships. You can't go back...

1147  
 1148 *Yeah.*  
 1149

1150 ...you can't close the door again. You can't just, I mean, but then, then again, I mean, a  
 1151 lot of the, sort of, Muslim world is doing it. They're just kind of saying, "Oh well, we  
 1152 don't care." North Korea is doing it...

1153

1154 *Yeah, yeah.*

1155

1156 ..."Huh, human rights?" "And Poles, by the west, oh, we never liked them." [Note: this  
 1157 prior sentence was said with great sarcasm]...

1158

1159 *Yeah, yeah.*

1160

1161 ...our judiciary, I mean, we traditionally, like, that's what Abe says, traditionally we have  
 1162 no concept of the people in power being, being, kind of, subject to the third, the third  
 1163 power. "No. Why would we want that?" So, I think it's difficult. But maybe to some  
 1164 extent we are a factor of interest...

1165

1166 *Yeah, yeah.*

1167

1168 ...it could be.

1169

1170 *Yeah, I, I'm, I do want to pick up on the volunteer stuff you mentioned. Em, a lot of the*  
 1171 *people I've talked to have mentioned that there were, there were lots of Japanese people*  
 1172 *who supported them after the earthquake in terms of just giving advice or offering*  
 1173 *translation, offering assistance. Did you and your wife have enough time to get any?*

1174

1175 *Yeah, well, I mean we had friends, eh, who mostly remotely, sort of, did help. Ehm, not*  
 1176 *necessarily with any kind of super, em, life, but rather with general problems that had to*  
 1177 *do with, most of it could have been normal lifetime situ, or normal life situations...*

1178

1179 *Yeah.*

1180

1181 ...in Japan, mostly they were under the auspices of some kind of bigger, grander sort of  
 1182 scenario, eh, but those were people, like, we'd known before, kind of, friends...

1183

1184 *Yeah.*

1185

1186 ...ehm, and it was mostly to them, em, I did have some encounters in the gym where  
 1187 before I had never spoken to anybody really and I wasn't keen necessarily...

1188

1189 *Yeah.*

1190

1191 ...but then people started expressing more of an interest, "Oh, you're still here?" Some  
 1192 old man in the sauna, or you hear a sort of a, "Where are you from?" and eh, eh, that, that  
 1193 wasn't about help...

1194

1195 *Yeah.*

1196

1197 ...but, em, I think there was a, I think there was a some slight, yeah, you could feel a bit of  
 1198 a welcoming, so, they, because people were talking, and they've been used now to  
 1199 foreigners for thirty, forty years, so lots of, quite a lot of them, and, eh, especially once  
 1200 you tell them, if you tell them that you are not American...

1201

1202 *Yeah [laughter].*

1203

1204 ...if you are German, it is a bit like in Ireland, they are rather more happy...

1205  
1206 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1207  
1208 ...un, unless they tell you that, "Next time, we do it without the Italians." And they buy  
1209 you lots of sake...  
1210  
1211 *[Laughter]*  
1212  
1213 ...which didn't happen to me, but some people on my wife's scholarship they met this  
1214 person for lunch, this old geezer, I just had it in Galway in a pub once, he was like, "Oh,  
1215 when are you going to bomb the Brits again?" "Yeah, right, I'm just having my pint here  
1216 actually sort of, yeah, fair enough."...  
1217  
1218 *[Laughter]*  
1219  
1220 ...no, there wasn't, there wasn't an air of, sort of, general more welcomeness. I think you,  
1221 maybe you really had that if you, well, if you had stayed like the whole...  
1222  
1223 *Yeah.*  
1224  
1225 ...sort of, ehm, people I have been talking to there, they have been saying, "Yeah, people  
1226 would almost literally walk up to you on the streets and thank you that you were still  
1227 around." Ehm, and that's also why I think it sh, it can't go the way they are closing up.  
1228  
1229 *Yeah, there are people who want to, to...*  
1230  
1231 *Yeah.*  
1232  
1233 *...and did you get any support, you or your wife get any support from, like, I don't know,*  
1234 *like they city office or the ward office or anything like that, because obviously you have to*  
1235 *register when you arrive in Japan?*  
1236  
1237 *No.*  
1238  
1239 *No.*  
1240  
1241 *No, we just dealt with them and that was not in my, one of my friends who, kind of, oh*  
1242 *and sometimes I paid my, my, my teacher later on to accompany to, sort of, to, to, in case*  
1243 *something would go a little bit funny.*  
1244  
1245 *But they, like, didn't send you any information about disasters or anything or?*  
1246  
1247 *Well, prior, yes, of course, no, we, we got the general {ward} brochure and that was in*  
1248 *English about, my wife had training because they went to, they, kind of, went to a, an*  
1249 *earthquake centre, but that was part of the work, but nothing out of the ordinary, nothing*  
1250 *that was specifically after the, the earthquake. No.*  
1251  
1252 *Ehm, the reason I ask about that is because one of the recommendations that keeps, kind*  
1253 *of, coming up from local authorities and NPOs and that is that in order to support*  
1254 *foreigners in the next disaster...*  
1255  
1256 *Uhm.*  
1257  
1258 *...foreigners need to be integrated into the local community. Eh, but, I don't know how*  
1259 *realistic that is as a, as a recommendation or as an aspiration even.*



1260  
 1261 Yeah, that's a good question. Ehm, I accidentally joined the neighbourhood whatever it is  
 1262 at my *danchi* [Note: means a housing estate or apartment complex]...  
 1263  
 1264 *Yeah.*  
 1265  
 1266 ...and it was, kind of, I think she threatened me, she had two little kids with her, and it  
 1267 was a lot easier paying eighteen-hundred yen then, and I had no idea what I was getting  
 1268 into. Well, now I am just getting this thing once a month and I have got to sign or I  
 1269 haven't got a stamp [Note: personal seals are the official way of notarizing documents in  
 1270 Japan but many non-Japanese do not have a seal and use a signature instead]...  
 1271  
 1272 *Yeah.*  
 1273  
 1274 ...so I, kind of, refuse to, well not, super refuse, but I haven't got one, and then I think the  
 1275 last time I made, I made a real mistake, I can't read that stuff, I can, kind of, glance at it  
 1276 and say, and I think I filled something in when I wasn't supposed to, and I said I could do  
 1277 it, and they were starting to ask me, and I was like, "Jesus Christ." One month I was  
 1278 supposed to hand things out and collect them, and, em, that is not desirable at all. And my  
 1279 wife, kind of, goes, "Yeah, why did you even join?" And I say, "Well, at that moment, it  
 1280 seemed like a good idea and it seemed like the, em, eh, the, the, the path of the least  
 1281 resistance...  
 1282  
 1283 [*Laughter*]  
 1284  
 1285 ...ehm, I don't know, I really don't know. I mean, to some extent, I think offering people,  
 1286 all they can do is offer. Ehm, but I have to admit, whenever this stuff comes from, comes  
 1287 from institutions, it can, it tends to be a bit, eh, stiff. It tends to be, "Oh, I don't really  
 1288 want to go there." Ehm, festivals or parties are probably a good idea...  
 1289  
 1290 *Uhm.*  
 1291  
 1292 ...to just, kind of, "Okay, well, let's do something." And there is lots of stuff. Like, the  
 1293 weekend when we're not here but they have this sort of 'One World' or not one world but  
 1294 'Globalness' Festival in, in, in {a famous park in the city}...  
 1295  
 1296 *Yeah.*  
 1297  
 1298 ...ehm, give people the option, offer them stuff they can read in, in whatever language is  
 1299 closest to...  
 1300  
 1301 *Yeah.*  
 1302  
 1303 ...don't always just assume that everybody has English, eh, most Westerners do but some  
 1304 people don't. Ehm, and don't go overboard, because I mean, personally, the, the way  
 1305 Japanese explain things, even though you have been to a place many, many times, and  
 1306 this, and maybe especially because you are a regular, they make you aware of that little  
 1307 step that there is every single time, and that to me is almost an insult because they are sort  
 1308 of, "He's stupid. I need to tell him." Of course, it's meant completely the other way  
 1309 around, but it, can, it can register as something, I mean, a lot of things that Japanese need  
 1310 little pictures for, to me they are common sense. And if, I {redacted} I mean my wife is  
 1311 even worse, she has no patience for that kind of silliness whatsoever. Ehm, I sometimes  
 1312 play along and sometimes I don't understand and that, kind of, is, not, is, is well then in  
 1313 that situation...  
 1314

1315     *Yeah.*  
1316  
1317     ...but I don't think I could, eh, kind of, spend, like, an earthquake training with Japanese,  
1318     eh, without either, eh, starting to swear a lot, and then go into a swearing fit, or laughing  
1319     my head off.  
1320  
1321     *[Laughter] Because of the different cultural approaches?*  
1322  
1323     Well, because of the, to me, there would be silliness. All the sort of things that tell you  
1324     would be utter silliness. I am not a child and I just, "Okay, give me the information. And,  
1325     eh, give me the recommendations and then I'll make my choices."...  
1326  
1327     *Yeah.*  
1328  
1329     ...And I think that's why, em, necessarily, the, the aim cannot, I don't think, can't be, and  
1330     I think they should be realistic there, "They all have to do the same and do it in a  
1331     Japanese way," because that then wouldn't, there is always a question: what is  
1332     integration? And that's, that's, I don't think that is integrating at all, that is rather, em,  
1333     em, disenfranchising. It's, it's, it, kind of, can make things worse, and I could see why  
1334     that could be true for a lot of communities, not just the Western communities...  
1335  
1336     *Uhm.*  
1337  
1338     ...eh, ehm, so I think offering choices, maybe, kind of, giving people an opportunity to  
1339     somehow join in, eh, but more on the sort of level, "Okay, well, there's some nice people  
1340     there and they, oh I would be, I would really like to be in this, eh, eh, group of people  
1341     carrying around this shrine," what's it called again?...  
1342  
1343     *Oh, the omikoshi. [Note: a Japanese portable shrine that is carried around local streets*  
1344     *during certain festivals]*  
1345  
1346     *Omikoshi.* "Oh, yeah, that looks like a bit of fun, and, eh, probably get seriously drunk  
1347     when doing that."  
1348  
1349     *[Laughter]*  
1350  
1351     Could do that.  
1352  
1353     *Yeah.*  
1354  
1355     So, like, I mean, you know...  
1356  
1357     *That would be.*  
1358  
1359     ...that kind of thing...  
1360  
1361     *Yeah.*  
1362  
1363     ...but, em, and, and, I think one other way would be, sort of, to, eh, I mean, of course,  
1364     they can't control it, but, em, eh, work much more closer with, eh, the embassies, kind of,  
1365     because you, they may know a bit better how to address their folks, if they do a good job.  
1366  
1367     *But this is, this is the thing, yeah, I think there's, there's a need for the embassies to, to be*  
1368     *here [laughter] if there is a disaster. One, one of the things that a lot of people have*

1369 *mentioned is how the embassy staff, the senior embassy staff, just like you were saying,*  
1370 *so...*  
1371  
1372 *Yeah.*  
1373  
1374 *...the response systems didn't get, there were plenty of plans in place, but they didn't get*  
1375 *carried out.*  
1376  
1377 *And also, I mean, of course, that probably for poor countries or small countries is maybe*  
1378 *even worse, but, eh, if you compare the embassy plus, I think, five consulate generals that*  
1379 *Japan has in Germany and here they only have, okay for me it was not far away...*  
1380  
1381 *Yeah.*  
1382  
1383 *...but they have Tokyo, the embassy, and they have the consulate general in Osaka...*  
1384  
1385 *And that's it.*  
1386  
1387 *...and in a country that is a lot bigger than Germany...*  
1388  
1389 *Yeah.*  
1390  
1391 *...and has a lot more inhabitants...*  
1392  
1393 *Yeah.*  
1394  
1395 *...so people are, can live in the, in the remotest areas...*  
1396  
1397 *Yeah.*  
1398  
1399 *...of the country, ehm, and also I, I, I personally, I don't see how, I think there's more*  
1400 *Germans well, maybe not in total, but I think percentage-wise, there should be, probably*  
1401 *would be more take an interest, express an interest in Japan and Japanese, in going to*  
1402 *Japan, ehm, and the other way round is largely, okay, ehm, the romantic...*  
1403  
1404 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
1405  
1406 *...sort of route down there, and there's a 'tick-the-box', "Okay, that's it, I have been to*  
1407 *Germany. I have had some sausage." And so, it is, kind of...*  
1408  
1409 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1410  
1411 *...logically it doesn't make sense, for them to have that many consulate generals...*  
1412  
1413 *Yeah, why do, why do they need it?*  
1414  
1415 *...uhm, and I think they, you know, countries like Germany can afford it, they should*  
1416 *rethink...*  
1417  
1418 *Yeah.*  
1419  
1420 *...maybe having something in Kyushu...*  
1421  
1422 *Yeah.*  
1423

1424 ...maybe having something in the North...

1425

1426 *Yeah.*

1427

1428 ...sort of, Aomori or.

1429

1430 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, I think, one, one of the things that is clear to me is that this topic is*

1431 *like, it is like I have been peeling an onion, there are so many different layers. I am only*

1432 *going to be able to talk about one small part...*

1433

1434 *Uhm.*

1435

1436 *...but it's extremely interesting to hear all of these, these other things. That, that's pretty*

1437 *much all I have unless there is anything you think about, like, language or culture or how*

1438 *you communicated or how you got information that you think might be relevant that I*

1439 *haven't, kind of, touched upon in any way?*

1440

1441 *Uhm, well, not, not really, the only thing, because I think in a situation of crisis, people*

1442 *refer to the, kind of, the behaviour or patterns that they, they feel most secure with and*

1443 *they know best, ehm, saying that, having said that, I don't think, the Japanese weren't*

1444 *very Japanese, the ones I was in contact with on, just in the situation where we, kind of,*

1445 *asked for help or advice, now then again, these are people with multiple language skills*

1446 *and who, who spent time abroad or maybe for a lot longer, ehm, so I think, actually, that*

1447 *worked rather well, but I mean, I think that's also an interhuman, usually these kind of*

1448 *things, they transcend even boundaries of not having a common language, if, if, if you are*

1449 *in that situation for, more often than not, I think, it's more along the, sort of, societal,*

1450 *slightly overarching administrative level, and that's what's, where they worry much, but*

1451 *they always need procedures, they need plans, and that need that everywhere...*

1452

1453 *Yeah.*

1454

1455 ...and I don't think that's the answer...

1456

1457 *Yeah.*

1458

1459 ...uhm, and I mean, some of the things we cannot, because they are policy and, and, and

1460 politics, we cannot influence at all, I mean...

1461

1462 *Yeah.*

1463

1464 ...of course, we can say, "I'd like them not to have nuclear energy."

1465

1466 *[Laughter]*

1467

1468 Is it going to happen? Ehm, I think language isn't really so much of an issue there...

1469

1470 *Yeah.*

1471

1472 ...ehm, and, you know, I think the, I'm pretty sure the NHK news in English were, at

1473 least, slightly shorter, but I don't think in essence that they were very different. I thought

1474 it was just their policy to, in Japanese, and say, "Okay, let's not have people panic, so we

1475 don't broadcast the worst, worst pictures." But then, of course, I mean, are you going to

1476 show, I mean, I just recently watched a film about photographers in South Africa, ehm -

1477 well worth watching, actually, The Bang Bang Club - and, eh, they were, you know, re-

1478 enacting some scenes that sh, seriously, probably should not be in a newspaper, when you

1479 have a mutilated body that is burned and beaten to death and both, and a bit of  
 1480 everything. Of course, every newsagency, television station, they, they do censor, they do  
 1481 say, "Okay, we pick this picture over another." Ehm, and we, we portray something in  
 1482 such a fashion rather than in another...

1483  
 1484 *Yeah.*  
 1485

1486 ...and we make, we do that on purpose. Whether it is political or because we have a  
 1487 certain philosophy. Ehm, so I think, I really don't think language is such a big, eh, a big,  
 1488 big issue in there. Ehm, but then again, I think I was very surf, I think I had very surface  
 1489 connections and I think that was maybe an asset. Maybe if you have kids in school and,  
 1490 eh, your wife is doing everything all the time, and you have too little Japanese, and, es,  
 1491 especially in Tokyo, there's, I think, well, even I know people in Fukushima who don't  
 1492 have much Japanese, but if that is the situation and you have your entire life there, and  
 1493 you have got serious pragmatic, practical problems that will arise from this and this and  
 1494 this, and for the kids, they are not going to play outside, and so on, especially if they are  
 1495 young, you can't explain it to them...

1496  
 1497 *Yeah.*  
 1498

1499 ...ehm, and there, not getting the information, there, not, sort of, being really able to, eh,  
 1500 and that was partly my decis, why I decided not to go up to Fukushima because I thought,  
 1501 "If something happens, even if they drive with an announcement, those are not going to  
 1502 be in English." And there, language would have been an issue. Ehm, so I would be totally  
 1503 reliant on others ringing me, thinking of me, ehm, "Oh, he's ringing, he's ringing because  
 1504 something has happened." And that's, so, I wasn't in a very vulnerable situation, at least  
 1505 not in every respect, but I also chose not to put myself in a situation where I would have  
 1506 been worse, at least that was my reasoning.

1507  
 1508 *Yeah, that's, that's really, that's, as I said, that tallies with what a lot of other people*  
 1509 *have said to me, and a lot of it is geographic...*  
 1510

1511 *Uhm.*  
 1512

1513 *...the, this, one of the reasons why I tried to speak to people from a variety of different*  
 1514 *places, where you were based and the, sort of, the threats you were exposed to, whether*  
 1515 *they were real or not, the threats you felt exposed to...*  
 1516

1517 *Uhm.*  
 1518

1519 *...had a huge impact on your information needs and on, by relationship to that, your, your*  
 1520 *language needs.*  
 1521

1522 I think in that, in that respect, Tokyo is, is, more, is, is better now to those not being  
 1523 particularly skilled in Japanese because, although some things may break down, but you  
 1524 can still get to the airport somehow...

1525  
 1526 *Yeah.*  
 1527

1528 ...or you can, you could, could even pay a taxi, of course, you would need a lot, a lot of  
 1529 money but, ehm, it is, somehow it is possible, somehow it is, it is well connected and you  
 1530 are, it's not like being stuck in, in, in a car or on a bus somewhere on the motorway not  
 1531 knowing when you can go, so I think, and that's, of course, it's also another, you know,  
 1532 that's why companies go there, because the infrastructure is best and, eh, but, ehm, I  
 1533 mean, now I see the benefits of somewhere that, it's not Tokyo, but still, of course, it is

1534 *inaka* [Note: means rural with a slight derogatory nuance in this context] compared to  
 1535 Tokyo...  
 1536  
 1537 *Yeah.*  
 1538  
 1539 ...but, eh, I'm pretty thankful, appreciative of being here. I am learning a bit more,  
 1540 although my world is still largely German and English...  
 1541  
 1542 *Yeah.*  
 1543  
 1544 ...at work, but, eh, it's just the necessity is, is a bit bigger...  
 1545  
 1546 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1547  
 1548 ...and eh, I really don't get people, you can't live in a community, just you cannot live in  
 1549 a country for fifteen years plus and not be able to speak the language. That is just, you  
 1550 can speak it very badly, fine, but if, unless you have no interest, and no, none whatsoever,  
 1551 that's not going to happen...  
 1552  
 1553 *Yeah.*  
 1554  
 1555 ...so I think bottom line is they, they really don't care, just, they, they could be on Mars...  
 1556  
 1557 *Yeah...*  
 1558  
 1559 ...and they...  
 1560  
 1561 *...they live in this kind of bubble of...*  
 1562  
 1563 *Yeah.*  
 1564  
 1565 *...whatever they make.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/6 Interview with Participant 23*

5 *Researcher: And then, like, really the way I start the interview is just very generally tell*  
6 *me what happened to you in the 2011 disaster [laughter].*

7  
8 Participant: Ehm, right so, I was, I lived in a dorm in with, eh, Japanese college students,  
9 actually, and a few people who went to university with me when we were studying in {a  
10 well-known university in Tokyo}. Ehm, and they were mostly French so, em, we spoke  
11 English and, I didn't write it down, but we did speak a bit of French as well. Em, but,  
12 myself and another girl had joined the *kyudo* club, archery club, so we were actually on  
13 our way back from morning practice. And we were in, we were about three or four flights  
14 underground inside {a subway station in central Tokyo}, em, and suddenly there was this,  
15 just, blaring alarm, and we were looking at each other going, "What's going on?" And  
16 everyone downstairs waiting for the train, em, started going crazy, like, you know,  
17 running up the stairs and, em, and then it started to shake, em, it was a bit, it was a bit  
18 surreal because, ehm, all the stones seemed to be grating off each other. It was very, em,  
19 we were, we were quite deep underground. So then, I suppose we did panic a bit, but we  
20 tried to, we kept it together and walk up the stairs, like - there were old people, like,  
21 pushing other people out of the way, so that was very, em - we stopped to help a woman  
22 with a buggy, ehm, so we carried the buggy up for her while she, she carried the, her  
23 child up the stairs. Em, and then, we, we just, everyone was, kind of, standing around  
24 upstairs and just watching all the, the buildings shaking, and there was a big rollercoaster  
25 {nearby}, and just everything was shaking and, eh, there was no phone reception, also,  
26 obviously, so we didn't know what we were, eh, what we should do. So, we hung around  
27 probably for about half-an-hour to an hour, em, and then decided that, em, we would  
28 walk home, em, because, eh, initially, at first, it was very, we couldn't get any  
29 information, em, and, I'm not sure it was because of the language aspect, I think it was  
30 because everyone was asking, everyone was asking the guards the, who worked in the  
31 station where we were. They were not able to answer, like, when will the train come  
32 back, what's happening, so we started to walk the, usually about a two-hour walk from  
33 there to our dorm, but the streets were packed, the, just, it was, like, a, just, a sea of  
34 people, so probably took about three to four hours. Ehm, and we, just, we walked back  
35 and, like, the a, the afterquakes were happening, em, - the aftershocks, sorry - and, em,  
36 we still had no idea about the tsunami, and we were walking past, eh, I think a car  
37 dealer's, every shop on that road had their televisions turned out to face the windows so  
38 that people could see what was happening, and that was the first time that we saw, em,  
39 anything, but then again, like, we, kind of, we, we weren't really getting that much  
40 information because all these headlines were in Japanese and *kanji* [Note: the Chinese  
41 characters used in the Japanese writing system] and, just, em, yeah, em, so we, just, kind  
42 of, walked and we stopped at every station and we were like, "Are the trains working?"  
43 "No, not yet." "Okay."

44  
45 *[Laughter]*

46  
47 So, we did eventually get back, em, and we saw some really amazing things along the  
48 way, though, like, not, em, people with injuries and stuff being, like, escorted by the  
49 police and, em, obviously the buildings are earthquake, eh, proof but, eh, some have, like,  
50 bricks then on the facade and the earthquake, obviously, shakes the bricks loose so they  
51 fall and, I suppose, hit people and, em, buildings, scaff, we walked under some  
52 scaffolding, like the geniuses that we are...

53

54 [Laughter]  
55  
56 ...and the next thing we heard this massive, just, clanging noise and we realized why the,  
57 they wear helmets. Em, we didn't do that again. Ehm, yeah, that was, that was basically  
58 it. We just walked home.  
59  
60 *And then, once you got home...*  
61  
62 Yeah.  
63  
64 ...what did you do? What was, because you said there was no phone reception, right?  
65  
66 Yeah.  
67  
68 *So what was, what was your first, kind of...*  
69  
70 Ehm...  
71  
72 ...goal once you got home?  
73  
74 ...ehm, Internet. Well, check to make sure nothing was broken in the house, eh, the, the  
75 gas was all right and stuff like that and, yeah, just get the, get my computer on, get, em,  
76 checking seeing what was happening, em, online, have a look at, yeah, and go around  
77 knocking on my neighbour's door, "Are you okay?"  
78  
79 [Laughter]  
80  
81 It was great. Yeah. Em.  
82  
83 *And, wh, can you remember what sort of websites or what online did you actually look at*  
84 *to get information?*  
85  
86 Em, for news, I was sticking to, really actually at first it was just anything you could get,  
87 you ju, you di, I didn't really have much head for, "Is this reliable or not?" I was just like,  
88 "What's happening?" Ehm, probably BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera...  
89  
90 Okay.  
91  
92 ...ehm, eh, my dad is a bit of a nut about, em, reliable news sources. So.  
93  
94 *So you felt it was important for you to, kind of, compare different news sources? Is that*  
95 *what you mean or?*  
96  
97 Em, because, yeah. em, I was having a look at some of the Japanese as well, but I wasn't  
98 satisfied at all with what I was getting from it, so, and, I don't, I don't know why, I  
99 suppose it's just natural that you, you do look at more than one, ehm, so, then I was  
100 seeing that there was differences in figures and stuff, so, em, I said I would stick to, em,  
101 probably what I felt was more reliable. Em, Facebook, not, not for news, but Facebook  
102 for contacting people, making it. A lot of people actually got in contact with me to check  
103 that I was all right so I, em, I replied as well, just.  
104  
105 *I see. And just to go back, you said that you weren't satisfied with the, the Japanese.*  
106 *Could you expand on that a bit more?*  
107



108 Em, well, okay, first, first of all, I wasn't satisfied with my own level of Japanese to  
 109 understand the stuff, so I felt like I might be missing things. I was, obviously, very  
 110 stressed out so, you know, not able to process it properly. Em, also, just, em, I don't, it  
 111 was slow, it, it was really slow. The TV, had the TV on, em, was the one thing, em, and  
 112 I, I ne, I had a TV, but I never turned it on...

113

114 *[Laughter]*

115

116 ...not in the year I was there. So the TV was on, em, but the TV was really just replaying  
 117 footage of the tsunami and saying, you know, so, "We don't know how many are dead,"  
 118 basically. And no-one knew but I felt more, I felt more comfortable in hearing that in  
 119 English than *[laughter]* I did in Japanese. So.

120

121 *It's very funny that you should say, you know, "I had a TV but I never switched it on."*  
 122 *I've heard that so many times *[laughter]*. People like, "Does this plug even work?"*  
 123 **[laughter]* "How do I get this, how do I switch this thing on?"*

124

125 "They changed, they changed to digital maybe." *[laughter]*

126

127 *[Laughter]*

128

129 Yeah.

130

131 *It's, but it's interesting that in such a situation, you go to the TV, I mean. Do you - uh,*  
 132 *this is really not, not necessarily arranged, it's just something that's coming to me - do*  
 133 *you know why you went for TV or? Was there, was there something about it or?*

134

135 Eh, it was, just felt secure as well, and just to have the TV on. I was, I think I was still  
 136 checking the Internet but the TV was on as well, em, yeah.

137

138 *Oh, eh, just to, to let you know, that's what most people have said, that they were using*  
 139 *both, like, they'd have the, kind of, online and looking at the, the TV, if they, if they had*  
 140 *power and if they had a connection and all that kind of thing, they were looking at the TV*  
 141 *the whole time. It's interesting that you should say that, kind of, feeling of, your, I'm still*  
 142 *just trying to figure out, because I did the same, I went straight to the TV but I'm not*  
 143 *sure why. Like, I didn't go to the radio. [Note: On recollection, I did use the radio, in*  
 144 *fact, but only after using TV and Internet first.]*

145

146 Yeah.

147

148 *Did you think of that or did you use that or?*

149

150 I didn't have, I didn't actually have a radio, em, no it was, it was very, like, "What,  
 151 what's, what can I get to now?" So...

152

153 Yeah.

154

155 ..just turn it on, em, yeah.

156

157 *And, of course, I'm fascinated by the Facebook thing because it's very mixed. Some*  
 158 *people have said it was great...*

159

160 Yeah.

161

162 ...some people have said it was a nuisance. I, I, I don't know, y, y, you, it seems, for you,  
 163 was it useful?  
 164

165 Yes, yeah. Definitely. Ehm, em, eh, if not necessarily for me, definitely for other people  
 166 to get in contact with me. Ehm, em, I, I think other people were actually more - this is  
 167 going to sound bad - I think other people were more scared about it than I was. Em,  
 168 {redacted}, my, my friend who I was with at the time, she's, eh, French, but she's, she  
 169 had been studying in Canada for a long time, so, em, I don't know, I feel like she had had  
 170 some, maybe, some experience with, eh, earthquakes or disasters, I'm not sure, but she,  
 171 she was panicking when we were underground and I was looking at her, kind of, going,  
 172 "It's fine. It's okay. It'll be fine. It'll be fine." And I was holding her hand saying, "It's,  
 173 it's fine." Em, I, I, you see, it didn't hit me for a while, for a good while until, like, yeah,  
 174 until after, I, I suppose, the, the, the, the death toll came in, like.  
 175

176 *Oh, that's absolutely, that tallies with what a lot of people have said that different people*  
 177 *reacted in different ways and at different times, like, some people were very panicked on*  
 178 *the day and then got, kind of, better and better as things went on, and some people were,*  
 179 *you know, outwardly fine on the day and then got more nervous as the, the disaster*  
 180 *progressed, so I think there's no such thing as one, sort of, normal reaction in that, that,*  
 181 *kind of, like, a natural disaster circumstance. I'm really interested in the alarm going off*  
 182 *in the subway.*  
 183

184 Yeah.  
 185

186 *Can you remember - again I know it's asking a lot to think back, but - was, was there any*  
 187 *announcement?*  
 188

189 This is the thing, it's, it's a little bit blurry now. I think what it was, was, was it was  
 190 someone, I think before even an alarm went off it was some, some man, you know, the,  
 191 the standard old man train voice saying something, but, he, he sounded, he sounded a bit,  
 192 a bit, not panicked, I suppose, but, em, eh, he wasn't that, it was difficult enough to catch  
 193 it, like, it's all, I used to find it, like, very difficult to catch things the first time round on  
 194 the PA system at the train stations. Em, and then, of course, everyone panicked so there  
 195 was no chance of, of hearing it really, em, and then there was like, eh, I think there was  
 196 siren kind of noise, but, and then, not too long afterwards everywhere started shaking.  
 197 But, ehm, the alarm, yeah, I'm pretty sure there was a PA announcement because a lot  
 198 of, people started panicking before the siren even started going off, so.  
 199

200 *I suspect that that's the case because I've spoken to people who were in the metro at the*  
 201 *time and they've s, said much the same thing as you. There was a station guard or*  
 202 *somebody came on in Japanese, you know, with a panicked voice...*  
 203

204 Yeah.  
 205

206 *...or somewhat panicked or strange voice and, like, no other languages even though, you*  
 207 *know...*  
 208

209 Yeah.  
 210

211 *...I'm interested always in the language aspect...*  
 212

213 Yeah.  
 214

215 *...I'm a little bit surprised, I thought there might be, sort of, recorded messages or*  
 216 *something that they might have but not, not.*

217  
 218 I don't, I don't think they do at all, yeah. I probably would have caught it if it was in  
 219 English, I'd say.  
 220  
 221 *Well, yeah, I, but this is the thing, we're talking about, kind of, ifs and buts now at this*  
 222 *stage so we, who knows, I really agree with what you said about something like the, kind*  
 223 *of, comforting nature or hearing something in your own language. Like, you might have*  
 224 *understood things in Japanese, but even if you understand it, when you're stressed...*  
 225  
 226 Yeah.  
 227  
 228 *...like I was stressed, I, I'd lived in Japan eight years - uh, no, that's not right because at*  
 229 *that time - I'd lived in Japan six, eh, six-and-a-half years or seven years at that stage so I*  
 230 *could speak Japanese...*  
 231  
 232 Yeah.  
 233  
 234 *...I could read Japanese but I wanted information in English just...*  
 235  
 236 Yeah.  
 237  
 238 *...for that comfort feeling because I was desperately stressed. I was definitely, I, I wasn't*  
 239 *sure I was catching things in Japanese...*  
 240  
 241 Yeah.  
 242  
 243 *...and then it changed to the nuclear story...*  
 244  
 245 Yeah.  
 246  
 247 *...and I couldn't understand the Japanese of that...*  
 248  
 249 Yeah.  
 250  
 251 *...I, kind of, like, I'd like to, sort of, move into so, maybe, the next day, what was? So the*  
 252 *Friday was the day the earthquake hit...*  
 253  
 254 Yeah.  
 255  
 256 *...you were back in your dorm, kind of, catching up with the other neighbours...*  
 257  
 258 Yeah.  
 259  
 260 *...maybe contacting people at home. Then, what happened as, as it moved into, kind of,*  
 261 *Saturday and Sunday?*  
 262  
 263 Well, em, you could start to see, like, that there were very, ehm, I suppose very different,  
 264 em, mentalities that different people had. Ehm, like, amongst the, the, the foreign  
 265 students, anyway, because we, kind of, did, we, kind of, did stick together the, the foreign  
 266 students, and everyone, and the Japanese people in their groups, because a lot of the, the  
 267 people also had, they had family in northern Japan so, em, a lot of people left the dorm,  
 268 even by the next day. Em, some people, some of the foreign students were, eh, being  
 269 advised to go back to their country already at that stage before the...  
 270  
 271 Wow.

272  
 273 ...em, or, em, just, yeah, didn't feel safe because they, this is such a bad, em, shock after  
 274 the earthquake. Em, this wou, could have been towards the evening of the next day. Em,  
 275 I'm not completely sure what I did the next day. I think I made, hmm, the, because the  
 276 powerplant stuff came out the next day, didn't it?  
 277  
 278 *Yeah.*  
 279  
 280 So, em, I think the, uhm, yeah, some people were being told that they should go home. So  
 281 some people said, "That's it. I'm, I'm going to, I'm going to get a ticket and leave." And,  
 282 eh, a French girl, eh, a different French girl...  
 283  
 284 *[Laughter]*  
 285  
 286 ...there was a, a few of them [laughter] em, in the dorm and I decided, we didn't, we  
 287 didn't want to leave yet, but we didn't want to be in Tokyo because it was a bit too close  
 288 so we decided we would go to Okinawa [laughter]. [Note: this is a Japanese prefecture  
 289 made up of Pacific Islands about 2,000km from Tokyo.]  
 290  
 291 *[Laughter]*  
 292  
 293 Stress sends you, I think, do crazy things. So, we, [laughter] night bus tickets to  
 294 Hiroshima and then another night bus ticket for the next night to Fukuoka, or two nights  
 295 later - we were going to spend two days in Hiroshima. Who would go to Hiroshima when  
 296 there is a possible nuclear? My, everyone thought I was, I was, yeah, we were, I suppose  
 297 we were a little bit out of touch with, em, reality [laughter]. And we bought plane tickets  
 298 to Okinawa, em, so, we spent the day, kind of, discussing that and, and I suppose just  
 299 talking to people at home. Ehm, I went to the supermarket. Nothing in the supermarket. I  
 300 have, I have photographs actually of empty shelves, like, em, no, no water first of all. No  
 301 bottled water. Em, because they told us not to drink the tap water. Em, not bottles of tea.  
 302 No, no Coca Cola. There was n, n, no form of liquid. Ehm, no food, really, like, no fresh  
 303 food obviously. A lot, very little dry food. No nappies...  
 304  
 305 *[Laughter]*  
 306  
 307 ...ehm, the supermarket was, was scarily empty, there was, there was nothing there. It was  
 308 so low. It was, also, that was part of the reason we decided we needed to get away  
 309 because we needed to go somewhere where we wouldn't have to worry about where we  
 310 were going to get food. Ehm, eh, so, yeah. That was, for that night that I think, that we  
 311 were going to, or the night after, maybe? And, and we did. We got on the, we did get on a  
 312 night bus...  
 313  
 314 *Yeah.*  
 315  
 316 ...and we went to Hiroshima and we met up with some other foreign students from, who  
 317 had studied at {the same university as the participant} who were currently, they were  
 318 touring Japan at the time and they had been in Osaka at the time of the earthquake and  
 319 they said they were, they were actually at Spa World...  
 320  
 321 *[Laughter]*  
 322  
 323 ...they felt, they felt nothing, they said, not even a, a, a tremor. So that was, we did, we  
 324 actually felt a little bit relieved when we heard that. We were, "So that's not so bad."  
 325  
 326 *Yeah.*

327  
328 Ehm, but that same morning when we arrived and went to the hostel and met up with  
329 them, we were all going to go to Miyajima, ehm, they got a phone call from their  
330 university, em, {a university in the US}, ehm, I can't remember which one but, em, they  
331 were being told they had to come back because of the nuclear, em, so they had to go back  
332 to Tokyo because of the nuclear thing. Ehm, and, of course, some idiot put out that, em,  
333 fake warning about the, the cloud of radioactive something going to the Philippines and  
334 one of the girls is half-Filipina and she was, she was in tears, she was, like, distraught I  
335 think, like because didn't BBC pick it up or something? Em, eh, so that got, I was still, I  
336 was still, like, "We'll just go to Okinawa [laughter]..."  
337  
338 [Laughter]  
339  
340 ...and it'll be fine. We'll just go to Okinawa and we'll wait there. I just don't, I don't want  
341 to go home." Because I felt like if I went back to {my university in Ireland} they might  
342 not let me come back to Japan. Ehm, and, I'm a bit stubborn.  
343  
344 [Laughter]  
345  
346 But my, my French friend then started to panic when we were all together and the people  
347 from {the US} seemed to know and did know so much more about it than we did because  
348 of, em, because of the, their university sends a huge amount of foreign students and  
349 they're responsible for their foreign students. Ehm, so, they, they had heard all this stuff  
350 about the nuclear disaster because we had been travelling through the night so we hadn't  
351 really checked the news in a while. Em, so then she panicked and she said, you know,  
352 "I'm going to, I'm actually just going to go back to Tokyo with them and I'm going to,  
353 eh, go back to France, I think." So, em, so then we all ended up going back to Tokyo  
354 [laughter]...  
355  
356 [Laughter]  
357  
358 ...that night after arriving on the night bus that morning...  
359  
360 *Oh dear.*  
361  
362 ...em, yeah. Em, it was very subdued, it was, em, the shinkan, the *shinkansen* [Note:  
363 Japanese bullet train] stat, the shinkansen part of the train stations were so crowded, and  
364 they were like, "We're never going to get a seat." Em, and we realized that everyone was  
365 leaving Tokyo [laughter] so the train was empty going to Tokyo, em, and, yeah, eh, just,  
366 kind of, got off there. We all wandered back to our respective homes. We said goodbye  
367 and then wandered back to our respective homes and, em, that was, kind of, when I was  
368 talking to my parents and I said I would leave Japan. Oh, I talked to {my university in  
369 Ireland} first and then made them promise that if I left I could come back [laughter].  
370  
371 [Laughter]  
372  
373 Em, and, yea, I, and, to be honest, it was, it was, quite, quite a lot of it was not being able  
374 to get information. Em, I mean, I had the Internet source but just not being able to talk to  
375 anyone about it as well because all of my friends were leaving. I said I would leave  
376 because I didn't want to be alone at the dorm, em, in, I suppose, the state that I was in at  
377 the time because, em, eh, yeah, what was it? My, so my dad had got on, my dad actually  
378 is a diplomat so he was in {a country in Europe} working at the embassy and he said why  
379 didn't I, em, fly out to him instead so he got, he organised everything, got the ticket  
380 booked and, em, he told me to go to the embassy the next day to get, em, because I had  
381 registered for the embassy mailing list...

382  
 383 Uhuh.  
 384  
 385 ...but I think it didn't get, because I was picking up a package as well at the time from the  
 386 embassy and I think it didn't get, it didn't go through, it didn't get processed properly  
 387 because I didn't get any communication from the embassy. So my dad sent me in anyway  
 388 to get the iodine tablets they were giving out in case of a nuclear meltdown which I went  
 389 and I got when I was at home. Em, and subsequently found out that the Japanese  
 390 government didn't tell anyone that there was a meltdown so I had this iodine tablet  
 391 [laughter]...  
 392  
 393 [Laughter]  
 394  
 395 ...and I was going, "Look, I'm going to take it and see if I'm fine now." [laughter]  
 396  
 397 [Laughter]  
 398  
 399 Should have just taken it and seen, like.  
 400  
 401 [Laughter] But, em, it's interesting about the communication from the embassy, em, this  
 402 is something that has varied very much from nationality to nationality, em, some  
 403 embassies gave a lot of communication, some embassies didn't give so much. But, as you  
 404 said, if, if your registration hadn't properly worked then the Irish embassy may have been  
 405 trying to get in contact with people but just you weren't on the.  
 406  
 407 I think, you see, I think they did contact people, ehm, I think, because I had never gotten  
 408 the, em, subsequently to filling in the form and handing it in, I had actually never gotten  
 409 any emails, so I figured that it was, em, that it was, eh, a no-go, that, that...  
 410  
 411 Yeah.  
 412  
 413 ...it just hadn't been processed. To be honest, em, I only registered for the mailing list  
 414 because my dad is a diplomat and he was like, "Register. Go in and register with the  
 415 embassy."  
 416  
 417 [Laughter]  
 418  
 419 "Register with the embassy. None of your friends have done it. Go register." So I  
 420 registered. Ehm.  
 421  
 422 As it turns out it didn't [laughter] it didn't do too much good, but I think, in principle,  
 423 would you say you changed any of your behaviours...  
 424  
 425 Yeah.  
 426  
 427 ...since the, em?  
 428  
 429 Well, I definitely registered this time [laughter]. [Note: after the earthquake, the  
 430 participant had returned home to Ireland, graduated, and then returned to Japan to take up  
 431 employment]  
 432  
 433 [Laughter]  
 434  
 435 Eh, yeah, em, yeah, I, I heard the Irish embassy was pretty good actually. That, I didn't  
 436 get the email, but that being said, em, the person who knew that I was studying in Japan

437 in the Irish Embassy in Tokyo, em, because he knew my father, did email my father  
 438 straight away and say, "Is she alright?" And my dad said, "Yeah, she's fine." So.  
 439  
 440 *Okay, so from that, kind of, other network...*  
 441  
 442 Yeah.  
 443  
 444 *...they would have.*  
 445  
 446 ...I'm sure even if, em, if, I'm sure he would have, the embassy would have made an  
 447 effort to get in touch with me even though I wasn't registered properly. Em, it's because  
 448 they knew I was in Tokyo, so.  
 449  
 450 *Yeah. So, em, you said {your university in Ireland} like, you contacted them first or did*  
 451 *they contact you first?*  
 452  
 453 They contacted me first. They, em, they were pretty great. They contacted.  
 454  
 455 *Can you remember how?*  
 456  
 457 Email.  
 458  
 459 *Ah, email. Okay.*  
 460  
 461 Em, there, they probably would have tried to call, like, but there were no phones, so.  
 462  
 463 *That's the thing, yeah. Yeah. This is one thing that a lot of people have said that they*  
 464 *were, kind of, dependent on online communication...*  
 465  
 466 Yeah.  
 467  
 468 *...certainly at the early stages, and if they hadn't had that, it would have been a very*  
 469 *different...*  
 470  
 471 Yeah, it would have been very...  
 472  
 473 *...situation.*  
 474  
 475 *...very hard.*  
 476  
 477 *Yeah. Em, so you're in {the country in Europe where your father was based}, then...*  
 478  
 479 Yeah.  
 480  
 481 *...what I'm interested in asking about - I've asked this, I think, to everyone - for you,*  
 482 *when did the disaster end...*  
 483  
 484 Eh...  
 485  
 486 *...if it did end?*  
 487  
 488 ...uhm, I think I was in *{that country in Europe}* for about three weeks, three-and-a-half,  
 489 and I went back to Japan but, em, I feel like, there wasn't really, I mean, there was clearly  
 490 a start point for me, but there was never really and end point because, because it just took

491 so long to sink in, what was happening. Em, maybe, probably about the time that I, I  
 492 negotiated with my parents to let me go back [laughter].  
 493  
 494 *[Laughter]*  
 495  
 496 Ehm, so about three weeks, three weeks later, I'd say.  
 497  
 498 *Yeah.*  
 499  
 500 Ehm, because, because my, obviously my parents did not want me to go back at all, em,  
 501 and a bit selfish, em, I realize now. At the time I didn't realize I was being selfish, but I, I  
 502 really did want to go back. Em, I was worried about really stupid things like my stuff  
 503 was, it was there, what am I going to do without my things [laughter]...  
 504  
 505 *[Laughter]*  
 506  
 507 ...they're probably going to throw it on the road.  
 508  
 509 *But these things become important to you, you know. And, how, how did you get the*  
 510 *information to make that decision to go back?*  
 511  
 512 Ehm...  
 513  
 514 *Or did you get information to decide to go back [laughter]?*  
 515  
 516 ...it was totally backed up by research. No. I, I think I just, we, we were keeping an eye  
 517 on, eh, yeah, em, BBC, CNN, and things. My dad really wasn't keen on me going, to go  
 518 back and I think he might have actually had, em, other sources but he didn't want to tell  
 519 me because he didn't want to worry me. Ehm, for example, like, em, eh, the embassy in,  
 520 in Tokyo, I feel like they had more information about people and the, the American  
 521 Embassy in Tokyo as well, and, and different places. So he wasn't keen on me going  
 522 back because he knew that there was, em, the nuclear pollution? - is that, is that a -  
 523 radiation! Nuclear pollution? [Note: the participant briefly covered her face with her  
 524 hands in mock embarrassment]  
 525  
 526 *[Laughter]*  
 527  
 528 He knew there was radiation issues, ehm, but I was, I was, kind of, at this point it was, it  
 529 wasn't really relying on the most, the most reliable sources, I was going for the source  
 530 that was backed on what I wanted to believe. It was totally like, "I'm going back."  
 531  
 532 *Eh, the, but, I think from what a lot of people have said to me, there were places you*  
 533 *could get information but some of it was contradictory and some of it wasn't very clear,*  
 534 *so a lot of people just took what they could get and made their own call, made their own*  
 535 *decision, so. Like, one of the things that I'm struggling with is whether language really*  
 536 *did make a difference at all in people's decisions. I'm not so sure it did. I don't know, in*  
 537 *your case, do you feel language was a factor in your decision-making processes?*  
 538  
 539 Eh, uh, I feel like, maybe, to, to some extent. Eh, where language chipped in more was  
 540 probably, ehm, the fact that the Japanese, the Japanese sources were giving, eh, or, the  
 541 'reliable' [Note: at this point the participant made an air quotes gesture around the word  
 542 reliable] - I don't want to use...  
 543  
 544 *Air quotes [laughter]!*  
 545



546 ...air quotes on a, on a tape but the 'reliable' Japanese sources were just so different from  
547 all the Eng, the English-language sources. Em, so, it, that was probably the only thing  
548 that, that really, that probably gave me pause more than the negative reports did. The,  
549 kind of, the Japanese, it, they did seem to be lying about it, because, em, the, the  
550 information was so different and that actually worried me more than hearing that the  
551 situation was bad from English sources. Em, so if anything, that probably made it, that's  
552 probably what kept me away for about three, three-and-a-half weeks. Yeah.

553  
554 *Yeah, I think, the, the that seems to be a lot of the people who've talked about, like,*  
555 *language as an issue, it has been to do with their interaction with media...*  
556

557 Yeah.

558  
559 *...that seems to have been one of the main things. You, you mentioned Facebook, I know,*  
560 *did you use any other social media in the, in the disaster?*  
561

562 Ehm, no I don't, em, I don't think so. Eh, I, I was, the, chiefly I think just to  
563 communicate, communicate with people. I didn't, wasn't really in the mood to be on, like,  
564 on Twitter hashtag earthquake. Eh, it was, em, [laughter] it was, I was, just, just to talk to  
565 people, let people know I was alright, em, see what other people were doing. I was very, I  
566 was very reliant on, em, I wanted to know, I was probably just so annoying, I was like,  
567 "What are you doing? Tell me your plans. I'm going to base my decisions off what you  
568 decide to do." Em, one of those people. I suppose I was just looking for someone to  
569 reassure me and, if you weren't reassuring me, so I was getting more like, "Aahhh!"  
570

571 *Very, very interesting that you should say that because, em, a lot of the, sort of, local*  
572 *government associations in Japan or NPOs or that, they're saying that in a disaster,*  
573 *people need community. One of their recommendations for future disaster preparations is*  
574 *that foreign residents should be more part of their communities. So it's just like there*  
575 *what you were talking about there about...*  
576

577 Yeah.

578  
579 *...reassurance or what are you going to do or what's your plan?*  
580

581 Yeah.

582  
583 *At the time of the March 11th disaster, did you feel part of you local community?*  
584

585 No. [Laughter] No. Em, I, I'd say most, at least in m, my case and I think for most of the,  
586 the foreign stude, the exchange students in my dorm, we barely, kind of, felt part of the  
587 dorm community...

588  
589 *[Laughter]*  
590

591 ...nevermind the, the, eh, the local community, yeah. Em, I'd say probably the only time  
592 we went to any local office is when we went to {the ward office} to, to register for our,  
593 register our domicile, or address.  
594

595 *And why do you think that was that you didn't feel part of even the, the dorm or the?*  
596

597 It was, it was the language definitely. For sure, yeah, em, the, the dorm manager? - I sup,  
598 the, the person in charge of looking after the dorm - was, kind of, a middle-aged Japanese  
599 man, he was very nice but, em, terrified of us. Just, Eng, terrified of English and just that  
600 we couldn't speak Japanese and I think he was expecting, like, that we would be able to

601 speak Japanese and it was, we were the first, it was the first year there had ever been non-  
602 Japanese people in the dorm, so it was a bit of a shock for him as well because, em, they,  
603 they all, like, after the earthquake, though, they all, like, where they were like, "Are you  
604 okay?" Just trying to communicate, I mean, it was still in Japanese, it was still a struggle,  
605 but they really, they did try and, em, afterwards when I went back, there was, there were  
606 only two exchange students who went back. Ehm, and the, the other girl was, kind of, off  
607 away and, like, kind of, doing her own thing, em, but the, the, this, the dorm manager?,  
608 the guy made a, like, made a real effort to introduce me to, because they had a new batch  
609 then of Japanese students come in who were starting first year in university, so, he was  
610 trying to get me to socialize [laughter]. Yeah, it was.

611  
612 *In a way, it sounds like you might have been more part of the community after...*

613  
614 Yeah.

615  
616 *...the disaster [laughter] in a way.*

617  
618 For sure, yeah. Em, I, I got to know the Japanese girls, I used to eat dinner with them  
619 every night then, em, yeah.

620  
621 *That's interesting. That's very interesting. Did, did you feel any reactions towards you*  
622 *from the Japanese people in your life based on what you did during the disaster?*

623  
624 Ehm, well, I, I got one "Oh, thank you for staying in Japan" [laughter], you know,  
625 because, I think because so many people left and it was, it was, like, it was actually off an  
626 old woman who I, I didn't, I had never met before on a train and she was like, "Thank  
627 you for being in Japan." And I was like, "Okay. You're welcome." Em, eh, yeah, people  
628 were, I feel like people were a) surprised, because I had one girl - now this is, em, eh, {a  
629 well-known Tokyo university}, so they, em, are big in English, em, Faculty of Liberal  
630 Arts, they call it, all their lectures are in English and they're basically, it's the place to go,  
631 I think, in Japan if you want to learn English, em, study English in university, so they all  
632 had some kind of experience abroad, being in contact with a lot of exchange students in  
633 my faculty, but - she said, "I don't know why, why you're here. If I could get my family  
634 to, I, I could leave and go live with, with my aunt, but I couldn't get my family to leave  
635 and that's the only reason that I'm still here."

636  
637 *That's interesting.*

638  
639 I heard that off one girl and other people agreed with her. They thought if they could  
640 move their entire family somewhere else, somewhere safe, they would have. Em, so,  
641 yeah, kind of, half, I suppose, half of people were surprised, there was a lot of grate,  
642 grateful, is that? I was like...

643  
644 *Uhm.*

645  
646 *...but it was, kind of, I was just selfish, I didn't want to leave.*

647  
648 *[Laughter] Yeah, but, I, I think, em, that rings true for a lot of the, the people who did*  
649 *stay in, in Japan. They felt it was, kind of, almost like a badge of honour, in a certain*  
650 *way. Em, I know some people I have spoken to have talked about it as almost, like, a*  
651 *business benefit or something, that they did better afterwards or...*

652  
653 Yeah.

654  
655 *...they'd be introduced as so-and-so, she stayed.*

656  
 657 Yeah, yeah. Em, that, that did happen, em, jobs. Got a lot of job offers for Eng, teaching  
 658 English because...  
 659  
 660 *[Laughter]*  
 661  
 662 ...ehm, obviously, a lot of the teachers in Tokyo left, em...  
 663  
 664 *Never even thought of that.*  
 665  
 666 {redacted}  
 667  
 668 *But, these are other, these are other, kind of, consequences of the disaster which I am*  
 669 *also interested in. I think it is fascinating how there were lots of, obviously, hugely*  
 670 *dangerous things to focus on but the were, not necessarily positive things, but just*  
 671 *unexpected kind of things.*  
 672  
 673 Yeah, yeah.  
 674  
 675 *Um. Ehm, I'm also interested, I know you mentioned how {your university in Ireland}*  
 676 *contacted you, did you get contact from {your Japanese host university} after the*  
 677 *disaster?*  
 678  
 679 I, I don't actually think so. I might have gotten contact, like, a few, eh, that's a hard one.  
 680 I'm not sure, I don't think so. If I did, I didn't reply [laughter].  
 681  
 682 *[Laughter]*  
 683  
 684 Ehm, I think we got contact about that, a couple of days later that the university would be  
 685 closed on certain days and stuff. It was all very, like, I feel like it was administrative stuff  
 686 more than, "Hello, are you alright?" Ehm, I suppose they, they leave it up to the home...  
 687  
 688 *Yeah...*  
 689  
 690 ...university.  
 691  
 692 *...maybe it's not their job, you know.*  
 693  
 694 Yeah.  
 695  
 696 *In a similar vein, did you get any contact from {your} ward or?*  
 697  
 698 I don't think so, no. Ehm, maybe they contacted the dorm and made sure the dorm would  
 699 check that everyone was okay. That could have been it. Ehm, I might have gotten some,  
 700 kind of, like, flyer, a Japanese flyer or something in my mailbox but, em, eh, it could  
 701 have come in, also, the period of time where I was gone afterwards, so if it had been three  
 702 or four days before I got anything there was a, a good chance, but, em, the, the dorm  
 703 manager probably thought, "Oh, you're not coming back." It was, like [laughter]...  
 704  
 705 *[Laughter]*  
 706  
 707 ...I don't know, yeah.  
 708

709 *Yeah. But, I mean, you know, some people have talked to me, you know, "Oh, yeah, I*  
 710 *might have gotten some Japanese pamphlet or something but I probably threw it away or*  
 711 *something."*  
 712  
 713 *Yeah.*  
 714  
 715 *I'm not sure that the way they communicate in the ward offices is a way to really get the*  
 716 *message across yet.*  
 717  
 718 *Yeah, no. Especially not when they know that you're, em, that you're, you're registered*  
 719 *as not being a Japanese per, you're registered as a, coming to Japan to study, em, and*  
 720 *that's, I mean, nine times out of ten, that's studying Japanese...*  
 721  
 722 *Yeah.*  
 723  
 724 *...so it is a bit crazy to send someone a, a flyer in all Japanese, yeah, em.*  
 725  
 726 *I, I think it very much depends on the ward as well, like, from what I understood from*  
 727 *talking to different offices and that is if, if they have money...*  
 728  
 729 *Mmm.*  
 730  
 731 *...and usually volunteers they'll put it in multiple languages...*  
 732  
 733 *Yeah.*  
 734  
 735 *...or Easy Japanese.*  
 736  
 737 *Yeah.*  
 738  
 739 *Have you ever come across that Easy Japanese? Have you heard of it or?*  
 740  
 741 *No, is it?*  
 742  
 743 *Eh, basically what it is, so instead of giving you all of the, you know, kanji [Note: the*  
 744 *Chinese characters used in the Japanese writing system] and so on, they give you the*  
 745 *kanji but also, like, the furigana [Note: another Japanese script inserted specifically to*  
 746 *aid the reading of Chinese characters] or...*  
 747  
 748 *Um.*  
 749  
 750 *...you know, on, on, overhead...*  
 751  
 752 *Yeah.*  
 753  
 754 *...or they avoid using technical terms and using easier...*  
 755  
 756 *Yeah.*  
 757  
 758 *...basic terms and stuff like that. Em, a lot of the, the international, kind of, associations*  
 759 *are focusing on it now because they're not sure that English is an effective language to*  
 760 *do the communicating with foreigners in...*  
 761  
 762 *Yeah.*  
 763

764 ...which, you know, maybe that's a good argument because depending on where you  
 765 are...  
 766  
 767 Yeah.  
 768  
 769 ...maybe Korean or Chinese or Portuguese would be more. [Note: the waitress comes  
 770 over to the table at this point and excuses herself in Japanese as she takes away our  
 771 empty coffee cups.]  
 772  
 773 I would say, especially, in, in, in {a town in West Japan near where the participant now  
 774 lives} you see a lot of Portuguese because there's a huge Brazilian population. Em,  
 775 Filipina as well but they, em, they're usually pretty good at English [laughter]...  
 776  
 777 Yeah.  
 778  
 779 ...so, yeah, but.  
 780  
 781 Yeah, it's just a consideration because they can't translate into everything...  
 782  
 783 Yeah.  
 784  
 785 ...like, they can't accommodate for everybody, em, maybe it's very, em, in a way it's, kind  
 786 of, presumptuous of people...  
 787  
 788 Yeah.  
 789  
 790 ...you know, like me coming from the West, you think, oh you must put it in English. It's,  
 791 you know, maybe that's not the best way...  
 792  
 793 Yeah.  
 794  
 795 ...I'm still not tot, so sure about Easy Japanese either.  
 796  
 797 Yeah.  
 798  
 799 I'm not sure how useful that might be because even with furigana and, you know, that,  
 800 kind of, basic, more basic language, but I still think that might be quite challenging for  
 801 some people.  
 802  
 803 Yeah.  
 804  
 805 I don't know. I don't know whether that's really the way to go. Kind of, the last question I  
 806 have is, kind of, going back to the community thing again. If you wanted to, to become  
 807 more part of the community, how would you go about it?  
 808  
 809 Eh.  
 810  
 811 Is there a way? Like, what do you think works?  
 812  
 813 Ehm...  
 814  
 815 Or would work?  
 816  
 817 ...yeah, I, I would say what, kind of, works is, em, going queuing outside the city office  
 818 [laughter]...

819  
820 *[Laughter]*  
821  
822 ...no, em, if you, it does require a certain level of Japanese, em, you, you can go, I know  
823 now, you can go and you can talk to people and you can find out, they do activities or  
824 things and participate and volunteer, but at the time, I, I was clueless. I had no, I didn't  
825 know if that was a thing. Everyone talks about Japanese communities but at least when I  
826 was in, in Tokyo, em, I didn't, I didn't really experience that much, I didn't see it that  
827 much. Ehm, so.  
828  
829 *So when you were in Tokyo, what was your community?*  
830  
831 Probably, em, people from school and people from, yeah, em, foreign students at the  
832 dorm and some old friends that I had made in {my university in Ireland}, Japanese  
833 friends. Em, so that was, and, eh, other friends from {my university in Ireland} studying  
834 in different universities and their friends, that kind of, yeah.  
835  
836 *Yeah.*  
837  
838 We had some Japanese friends because there was an interna, there was an international  
839 society at, eh, {my Japanese host university} but we, we didn't really participate in it that  
840 much because it was, it was very much a "Let's speak English" club...  
841  
842 *[Laughter]*  
843  
844 ...em, but there was a, I have a good friend, {redacted}, from that group who, eh, she and  
845 a couple of her friends threw together a Wikipedia, like a Wiki, Wikia, of all the, the  
846 information and they did their best to translate it after the earthquake in fact. It's gone  
847 now. I was, I was trying to find it for you, em, a couple of days ago, but, eh, obviously,  
848 it's come down in the...  
849  
850 *That's really interesting.*  
851  
852 ...yeah.  
853  
854 *That's actually something that quite a few people have talked about how, you know,*  
855 *maybe I've, I've said or asked them, "Oh, did you have any experience of translation?"*  
856 *And they'd be like, "No." And then when they think about it, they'd be like, "Oh well, but*  
857 *my friend did do such-and-such." So, like, they were just basically as Japanese people,*  
858 *they were taking?*  
859  
860 Taking, em, ah, I think, eh, just the Japanese government sources, I suppose. The, em,  
861 and the news, newspaper, just, headlines, articles, anything I suppose they could get their  
862 hands on, just translating it, em, safety information and...  
863  
864 *Yeah.*  
865  
866 ...em, and these were, these were just college students...  
867  
868 *Yeah.*  
869  
870 ...they were just, kind of, doing their best to, because they were part of this international  
871 club and because they had a lot of friends, it was really nice.  
872

873 *Oh yeah, it's. it's come up again and again, as I said. Just, you just reminded me and I*  
874 *was nearly going to forget to ask you, but did you check any government websites*  
875 *yourself?*  
876  
877 Eh, MOFA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had  
878 some stuff in English but it was, it was pretty poor. Not, not great anyway, from what I  
879 can remember. It was all, it was stuff that you could get anywhere else really. Em, I, I had  
880 a go at, do you know it had those emergency, the, the pages up with the information and  
881 the picture of Japan, like the little colourful, I don't know, the earthquake epicentre and  
882 the little rings of earthquakes, but I was just like, it was all in Japanese, I was like, "I  
883 can't do this, I'm, I'm too." I was too stressed, I think to, to, to make sense of it so.  
884  
885 *You're actually, no, I'm really interested in this topic actually now because out of 23*  
886 *people, you're the first person to say they checked a government website. I'm wondering*  
887 *why.*  
888  
889 Eh, yeah, I felt like they would know what they were talking about.  
890  
891 *[Laughter]*  
892  
893 It was like, I don't, I, that's a good question actually, because who knows, if, if something  
894 happened in Ireland, I doubt the government would be, "Let's update our website."  
895 *[Laughter]* Em, yeah, I don't know, it's just that, it just, I thought it would be a good, I  
896 thought they would have, like, good information and it would be up-to-date and, em,  
897 yeah.  
898  
899 *And so you said, "I thought they would have good information." What was your final*  
900 *assessment of the?*  
901  
902 Ehm, it was, it was hard to interpret, it was, they did have quite a lot of information but I  
903 couldn't really, I couldn't really understand it and then the English information that they  
904 had, the, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ehm, was just the, not a lot, there was a lot in  
905 the Japanese, there was not a lot in the English but the Japanese was very dense, em, I  
906 was just having a lot of tr, trouble, like, figuring it out, yeah.  
907  
908 *I'm so glad [laughter] I asked you about that now because I could have gone thinking*  
909 *that nobody ever checked a, a website. Em, because actually quite a lot of the ministries*  
910 *did do some sort of, eh, an English language...*  
911  
912 Yeah.  
913  
914 *...or Chinese language, or Korean language, or Portuguese language translation but, just*  
915 *like you said, if you compared the Japanese, let's say, source and the, the translated*  
916 *version, it was a fraction...*  
917  
918 Yeah.  
919  
920 *...similarly, it also took quite a lot of time for them to get their websites up and running,*  
921 *some of them are still up there...*  
922  
923 Yeah.  
924  
925 *...so I have been able to see what day they got uploaded and some of them were up to*  
926 *three weeks after...*  
927

928 Yeah.  
 929  
 930 *...so, you know, for somebody like you, you were already on the way back nearly*  
 931 *[laughter]...*  
 932  
 933 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 934  
 935 *...at that stage, never mind anything else. But I'm really glad I asked you that now*  
 936 *because, em, like, it was something that I had been, kind of, interested, interested in. I*  
 937 *wonder, would your family background have made any difference, do you think?*  
 938  
 939 Definitely, ehm, I'd say so, because my, because both my parents are civil servants,  
 940 actually. Em, and, yeah, I suppose, my dad also is, em, he loves web design and he loves,  
 941 he loves the Internet, well, he loves computers, so I'd, I probably have this, kind of,  
 942 feeling that, you know, government websites are, should be very together, well run, em,  
 943 so, yeah, and especially when I saw the Ministry of Foreign Affairs one, I, I was like,  
 944 "Aw, this will, this will be, this will be good, this will be." I was a bit disappointed then,  
 945 but, em, yeah, that was...  
 946  
 947 *[Laughter]*  
 948  
 949 ...because, em, I'd say because my dad is a, a diplomat as well, em, like, I was checking  
 950 the Irish, actually, when I think about it, I was checking the Irish Embassy websites as  
 951 well, but, em, nothing, em, I know the, the, there was a little bit of information about the  
 952 St Patrick's Day Parade being cancelled...  
 953  
 954 *[Laughter]*  
 955  
 956 ...ehm, em, I had been in Harajuku a few days before and they had the, the little, they had  
 957 the little, they had little Irish flags and Japanese flags...  
 958  
 959 Yeah, yeah.  
 960  
 961 ...all along Omotesando, so that was cancelled. Em, but mostly it just, kind of, the, I think  
 962 there was something on the, the embassy website about "Please get in contact with us,"  
 963 you know, "Are you okay? If you're in, eh, some kind of situation where you can't get in  
 964 contact with people." And, but, em, yeah, there was just not a lot of information going  
 965 around...  
 966  
 967 Yeah.  
 968  
 969 ...em, and I found out, I think that was how I found out that the Irish Embassy in Tokyo's  
 970 website was just very infrequently updated [laughter]. I was like, "Uhh." [Note: she made  
 971 an exasperated gesture raising her hands above her head] This was updated 2008...  
 972  
 973 *[Laughter]*  
 974  
 975 ...what? Uh, yeah, em.  
 976  
 977 *But I think, like, what you said a little bit earlier on, em, a lot of the reason why there was*  
 978 *n, no information from the, sort of, foreign side is because the Japanese side didn't have*  
 979 *it either...*  
 980  
 981 Yeah.  
 982



983 ...or weren't giving it or, you know, I think there was just generally a lack of information,  
 984 especially, ah, I mean, certainly about the nuclear issue...  
 985  
 986 Yeah.  
 987  
 988 ...em, but possibly even about, say...  
 989  
 990 Yeah.  
 991  
 992 ...figures for deaths and stuff. It took a long time...  
 993  
 994 Yeah.  
 995  
 996 ...for all of that to really start to filter through. I think that's pretty much all I have unless  
 997 there's anything you think I haven't covered that might be relevant in terms of how you  
 998 gathered information or how you communicated with people.  
 999  
 1000 No, I, yeah, I think that's pretty much it.  
 1001  
 1002 *Yeah, it was really interesting to hear because, as I said, some of what you said really*  
 1003 *tallied with, like many, many other people but then one or two of your interesting points*  
 1004 *which thankfully I didn't forget because I would have been raging with myself now.*  
 1005 *Because, as I said, you're the first person who thought to, to check*  
 1006  
 1007  
 1008 **The following is my recollection of some conversation that took place with the**  
 1009 **participant just after I had switched off the audio recorder and just before we**  
 1010 **parted.**  
 1011  
 1012 The participant said that she felt foreigners actually did better in terms of information  
 1013 than the Japanese because they had access to other viewpoints and sources. She had  
 1014 Japanese people coming up and asking her what she knew. Especially when Japanese  
 1015 heard the foreigners were leaving, an element of them were like what do you know that  
 1016 we don't. She also said that even if the information in Japanese had been translated for her  
 1017 she might not have considered it because she had lost trust in the official Japanese line  
 1018 and just did not believe what official sources were saying.  
 1019  
 1020 **The following section was added by the participant after member checking.**  
 1021  
 1022 "The only thing I thought of that I might have mentioned to you was that, looking back  
 1023 now in hindsight and with a deeper understanding of English learning in Japan, I do find  
 1024 it odd that there wasn't more information out there in English from Japanese sources; and  
 1025 that there wasn't more support from the university in Tokyo I was studying at. As I said  
 1026 before, I wouldn't have necessarily implicitly trusted Japanese sources even through  
 1027 English, but the lack of them was ominous and perhaps did impact my feelings of  
 1028 isolation and danger after my other foreign friends had left Japan. Now that I know that  
 1029 most Japanese people have at least a certain level of English, the course of events is more  
 1030 shocking to me."

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/7 Interview with Participant 24*

5 *Researcher: So that's it for the paperwork. In terms of the actual interview stuff, I usually*  
6 *start every interview with pretty much the same basic general question. I just ask people*  
7 *to tell me what happened to them in the 2011 Disaster, so just start there and we'll work*  
8 *from there.*

9  
10 Participant: Should I give my background and how I started and all that.

11  
12 *Yeah, wherever you want to start.*

13  
14 Okay, so I arrived in Japan on the JET Program [Note: a government-run scheme to  
15 employ foreign teaching and cultural-exchange staff in Japan - Japan Exchange and  
16 Teaching] in 2007 in August and one of the first things I guess that our supervisors said  
17 to us is that you have to be ready for a big earthquake because in Miyagi Prefecture it  
18 happens about every 20 years. So that was one of the first things I remember about  
19 moving to Sendai. I didn't know where Sendai was when I arrived in Japan, well before I  
20 was given the placement, em, but, em, yeah that was one of the first memories I have  
21 about going to Miyagi is that there was going to be a big earthquake. So that was in 2007.  
22 Em, we had had small earthquakes throughout and I think from the start at orientation in  
23 Sendai we, em, had this earthquake simulator called Gurada that we all went on to see  
24 what, you know, what an earthquake was like because obviously, em, back home we're  
25 on the Richter Scale and here they're on like the, the scale that lots of people don't  
26 understand. So we're like, "Okay." We're getting in there and it's like '5 kyo', like a 5  
27 and strong one and, em, we're like, "Okay, that's alright," and then it went up to 7, so we  
28 all got to try and see but we were all seatbelted in so we were all just like, "Okay, so if a  
29 big earthquake is going to happen, this is what it'll be like." So that started off at  
30 orientation, em, every year throughout Sendai there would be specific orientations and  
31 times for people to learn what to do in, in a disaster. So from the start we went on the  
32 Gurada but at Sendai Orientation as well we were told to make a disaster prevention bag,  
33 so in case of an earthquake we needed these specific things in a bag and you put it in your  
34 *genkan* [Note: the space just inside your front door] so that if an earthquake happens you  
35 grab it and you run out and, em, go to. In Sendai, because we knew this was going to  
36 happen, a big earthquake was going to happen, we were all split into specific groups, em,  
37 there were 70 of us living in Sendai and depending on where you lived you were placed  
38 in a specific group. If you. For example, I lived in a group with, let's say, 10-12 other  
39 people. If a disaster happened, we were supposed to meet at a central location in our  
40 neighbourhood, and then the 12 of us would meet. One person. We would all bring our,  
41 our bags with us and then one person would be the leader and they were the ones to  
42 contact the Board of Education. Now during an earthquake obviously everyone uses the  
43 phone, right? So only one person was allowed to make a call. Em, and they would contact  
44 the BOE, the Board of Education and leave a message saying these 12 people are safe.  
45 Em, so that's what, everyone knew what to do if a, if a disaster was to happen, but  
46 through, throughout my time in Sendai up until 2011 we didn't. Every year we would go  
47 over the same things. Em, but we didn't really need to use it, so a lot of people would  
48 forget to make the bag or forget to, ehm, put more food in, that type of thing. But  
49 everyone had, like, photocopies of their passport, photocopies of, em, important  
50 documents and put in waterproof bags, ehm, they had the 10 yen coins because we know  
51 that if there's a disaster you can only use, well, you need 10 yen coins to use the phones.  
52 Ehm, okay, so that was for the JET Program side. For work personally, I worked at {an  
53 office of the Sendai government}. {It} also did those types of orientations for foreigners

54 in Sendai because lots of foreigners that move to Japan don't necessarily know what an  
 55 earthquake is or have experienced an earthquake. So {the office} would help foreigners  
 56 in the city with that type of information. And so, not only did I do orientation with the  
 57 ALTs in Sendai [Note: Assistant Language Teachers working on the JET Program] I also  
 58 did a lot of them with foreigners in Sendai that don't speak Japanese. I did translate into  
 59 English a lot because there are a whole bunch of, em, students in, em, Sendai. Sendai is  
 60 well-known as a, em, I guess a university city. So, em, a lot of foreign students are in the  
 61 city and so they would come to, em, the disaster prevention days, and we would teach  
 62 them, em, how to, em, like use a fire extinguisher to, you know, going on the Gurada and,  
 63 em, so, yeah, that's the main experience. I think, I think it was two days, oh yeah, so in  
 64 2011 February 22nd, if I'm correct, there was the earthquake in Christchurch, so from,  
 65 from that day a group of my coworkers and myself put together a group so that we could  
 66 fundraise for Christchurch because we wanted to help people in my hometown and  
 67 maybe send money home from Japan. So we had formed a group, we had put together a  
 68 few days where we were going to go out in the city and ask for donations and two days  
 69 before March 11th, so March 9th, there was a really big earthquake. I think it was 6.5 to 7  
 70 on the Richter Scale, I think. Em, and we were all sitting at our desk and it didn't last for  
 71 very long but it was the worst earthquake I'd felt and everyone was, like, looking around  
 72 and I didn't quite know what to do, but I was like, "Should I get under my desk?" because  
 73 most of the time I would be the only one looking around when earthquakes happened  
 74 because my co-workers were still on the phones when, when it was shaking so much, so,  
 75 em, during those times when I worked at {the Sendai government office} we had a plan  
 76 that if there were customers inside the {redacted} centre we had to make sure everyone  
 77 was okay, so even though it was, it didn't last very long, we had to go and make sure that  
 78 everyone was okay, evacuate the building, make sure that everyone was fine, and then  
 79 allow everyone to go back in. Em, so, on that day I remember thinking, em, well I will  
 80 need some type of insurance in case something big happens. Like I didn't really have  
 81 house, like, contents insurance, so I had been looking at that on the day of March 11th.  
 82 Now, the same, the next day, we were supposed to go out to Sendai City to ask for  
 83 donations so we had a lot planned and then obviously the Great East Japan Earthquake  
 84 happened on March 11th and then we, I think, we were very lucky in Sendai because we  
 85 knew what to do and straight away after the earthquake, I mean it went on for such a long  
 86 time, I was actually preparing a photoboard of the Christchurch Earthquake for the next  
 87 day so that we could go out and get donations, so that work actually stayed on that table  
 88 for a month and like going back into the same room, because we used the room for the  
 89 next month, but going in there and seeing that on the table, yeah, so that, that was quite a  
 90 lasting memory as well, but, em, yeah, so, I was in a room with one of my best friends in  
 91 Sendai and he was helping me make the photoboard. Started shaking and he was like,  
 92 "It's okay, it's going to stop." And it didn't stop, so I was just like, I actually couldn't  
 93 really speak or breathe because I honestly thought the building was going to fall down on  
 94 us because what happened in Christchurch, all the buildings fell down, so I was waiting  
 95 for the buildings to fall down and then it didn't and then he took a seat - he's about 60 to  
 96 70, I think - but he took a seat and he, he was like, "It's okay. It's going to stop. It's going  
 97 to stop." So I was just standing there and I was like, "It's not going to stop. So we need to  
 98 get out of here." We, we went out of the room and everyone else was kind of screaming  
 99 and freaking out, and, em, we went and hid under, like, a desk, but the computer fell  
 100 down on him, so we were just trying to make sure that everyone was okay and then it still  
 101 kept going and going and going. It seemed like forever and then, finally once it kind of  
 102 died down, we all evacuated outside. Now it was really cold on that day and it actually  
 103 started snowing, em, for like thirty minutes after the earthquake and we were all in, like,  
 104 short-sleeve shirts and what not, but we all went outside and we had to make sure that  
 105 everyone evac, had evacuated the building, and there were a lot of, em, meetings on,  
 106 going on and conferences at the {redacted} centre, so. Because everyone was outside and  
 107 then everyone got on their phones and we were all kind of like, "Okay, that was a really  
 108 big earthquake," but I don't think in anyone's mind we kind of thought, "Okay, what's

109 going to happen next.” We were just like, “Okay, that happened. It stopped. There was no  
110 major damage. You know, the building didn’t fall down. Em, now what do we do?” kind  
111 of thing. Em, and then people were looking on their phones and we just started hearing  
112 about, like, the tsunami, about people, about lots of people being. I remember one source  
113 of news was, like, lots of people being washed up on a beach and we were just kind of  
114 like, “What?” We were all standing outside there thinking what was going on. So, I knew  
115 once that had finished, we had to get information out. As the job, as, my job {redacted}  
116 was to support foreigners in Sendai, so we were taken straight to the radio station because  
117 we had to start, em, translating into English. So, eh, every month they would do, how to  
118 prepare for a big earthquake or what to do if such a disaster happened, so we did it in  
119 Japanese, Chinese, Korean, English, and I think they did do it in Easy Japanese or the  
120 Easy Japanese ended up happening a lot later once they realised that it should have been  
121 done in Easy Japanese. Well, the Japanese that they did use, they tried to make it easy but  
122 I think they really made it a lot easier for, em, those who had just come to Japan. So,  
123 yeah, we spent the, like, a good three or four hours at the radio station, just constantly  
124 giving out the information. Now, my family found out that I was okay because the ALTs  
125 in Sendai heard me on the radio, because I think, during, the earthquake happened during  
126 school time so no-one could go to their, em, designated refuge area. They were all at  
127 school so, em, if they didn’t take the day off, then we knew that they were at the schools  
128 and they were fine. So I was at the radio station, and a few of the ALTs, we all know that  
129 if an earthquake happens, turn on the TV or turn on your radio. And a lot of the ALTs in  
130 Sendai were given, like, wind-up torches, radios, chargers, so they were all listening to  
131 the radio station and so they were hearing the English announcements and that’s how my  
132 family found out that I was okay because the ALTs found out and then they were using  
133 Facebook to get that information out. Em, I didn’t, I didn’t really use Facebook before the  
134 earthquake and I didn’t realize how important it was going to be because it was just so  
135 easy to get information out. Em, so , em, so yeah, I was at the, em, radio station. We  
136 finished up there, went home, everything, like you know, we had no power, it was cold,  
137 em, everything was everywhere. Couldn’t stay there so we had to stay at a refuge centre,  
138 em, and I think it was, oh, there were so many people. I mean, we couldn’t even lie down.  
139 You were all just sitting there trying to figure out was going to happen next, because all  
140 you, you would hear a lot of stories coming through. Em, and I think we were lucky to be  
141 in the central part of the city because, yeah it was a really big earthquake, but. Yes there  
142 was damage, but it wasn’t as big of damage as what it could have been, and I think it’s  
143 because they were prepared for it, because there was a big, big earthquake a long, long,  
144 time ago that, you know, I guess they learned from, from that, so, em, yeah, stayed at  
145 refuge centre and then it was back to the {redacted} centre and that’s where I spent most  
146 of my time. Long, long, long, time, actually. It was just getting information out to  
147 foreigners, especially from Japanese to English, but we had a group of, say, 20 foreign  
148 students that worked closely with the {redacted} centre and they all spoke different  
149 languages so we were all placed together. The Japanese would be given to us and we  
150 would all start translating right then and there and then getting that information out. Em,  
151 as long as it was understandable, that was the good thing, but there was just so much  
152 information coming out that obviously it was really important to have it in English the  
153 most because a lot of, say, French speakers or German speakers can also understand  
154 English or some of them can, so it was good to have the information in English. So, yeah,  
155 a lot of the time was translating, we were also getting calls from overseas to, to see if we  
156 knew of people that were okay. Em, a lot of those calls were in English, em, and then,  
157 yeah, just providing information for the consulates, the embassies, and, em, I think a lot  
158 of the foreigners that know of the {redacted} centre, they would come for information,  
159 so we just had all the information available whether it be through radio. {redacted} I  
160 used to go to three to four radio programs anyway, and a couple of them were specifically  
161 about em, like if, like if there was a big disaster. So, em, having, like, that there already, I  
162 guess that information helped them, so we would go to those radio stations and, eh, and  
163 then a few others to make sure that the information was getting out. And then they would

164 just keep playing it. Em, and so, we would have the radio on at, at work to make sure, you  
 165 know, that the information was correct. But we had to keep updating it. It lasted a long  
 166 time. We were going to the radio station every day, em, because the information needed  
 167 to get, to get out there, em, and I can't even remember how long it went on for but most  
 168 foreigners in Sendai, I guess, left to go home or went to a different part of Japan. Ehm,  
 169 my co-workers were like, "You should go home. You should go home." But I was like,  
 170 "Well, what am I going home to? I am going home to the same thing." [Note: remember,  
 171 this participant's hometown was Christchurch] "You know, my parents don't have  
 172 anything either."  
 173  
 174 *[Laughter]*  
 175  
 176 So I was, like, I wanted to stay and help because I was, after the earthquake in  
 177 Christchurch my co-workers were so helpful, and they'd actually given a whole bunch of  
 178 money to my family because my dad's house was, em, quite badly damaged in the  
 179 earthquake there. So even though they had been affected by a big earthquake themselves,  
 180 they didn't want the money back, they wanted to support my family, so I wanted to stay  
 181 in Sendai and help. And just because it was fourth year on the JET Program so I had  
 182 made so many friends and I was really good with my co-workers, so I wanted to stay and  
 183 help them out and yeah. Where should I go from here? [laughter]  
 184  
 185 *Oh no, I mean, it's, it's really it's up to you. There's, there's a couple of things I'd like to,*  
 186 *to just focus in on a bit just to make sure I've understood correctly.*  
 187  
 188 Uhum.  
 189  
 190 *So, when, ehm, the earthquake happened and you guys pretty much evacuated the*  
 191 *building...*  
 192  
 193 Uhum.  
 194  
 195 *...em, you said that you sort of started checking for information. So that means, was, on*  
 196 *your mobile phones?*  
 197  
 198 We all tried on our phones, so some could get through, some couldn't. But a lot of my  
 199 Japanese co-workers were looking on the Internet or looking at news websites. Em, I  
 200 didn't even think to look at my phone. I, I was just like straight away, I can't use my  
 201 phone. So, em, yeah, I just remember standing there waiting for information from, from  
 202 them, but they were all getting information through. I think people were trying to call  
 203 people. I just knew that it was probably going to be impossible so, em, at that time, yeah,  
 204 I didn't really use my phone. It wasn't until that night when. I had my, em, my wind-up  
 205 re-charger, so...  
 206  
 207 *Yeah.*  
 208  
 209 ...I charged my phone and rang home and thankfully got through. So...  
 210  
 211 *I got it.*  
 212  
 213 ...em, so, I was able to talk to my family the same night.  
 214  
 215 *That's quite unusual, actually, for some of the people I've been speaking to but as you*  
 216 *said, your family already knew you were okay because of the radio.*  
 217  
 218 Right. And I think, yeah, because of the radio and people using Facebook.

219  
 220 *Okay. Yeah. If you could talk a bit more about that. I'm, I wasn't a big Facebook user*  
 221 *before the event either...*  
 222  
 223 Uhum.  
 224  
 225 *..I don't know that I'd still be a big user now, but definitely I see its usefulness.*  
 226  
 227 Yeah, I didn't use Facebook for work purposes because I would get questions on  
 228 Facebook from people where I wanted it directed to, like, my email. So I refused to use  
 229 Facebook but I did have a page.  
 230  
 231 *Yeah.*  
 232  
 233 So after the earthquake, well once it had passed and I looked through all my comments  
 234 and that I saw that a lot of my friends back home would be writing to see if I was okay.  
 235 And I didn't even realise that they knew where I lived.  
 236  
 237 *[Laughter]*  
 238  
 239 I, I just thought that knew I lived in Japan...  
 240  
 241 *Yeah.*  
 242  
 243 ...I didn't realise that they knew I lived in Sendai so, em, a lot of people that knew that I  
 244 was okay would write on there to say that "{the participant} was okay, I've heard him on  
 245 the radio." And then, obviously, my friends would be like, "Oh, thanks for commenting, "  
 246 and what not, so after the earthquake I think a lot of people started using Facebook. I  
 247 mean, in Sendai because there is 70 of us, we had all g-mail addresses so we could all, we  
 248 were, we had a e-mail, a g-mail group where we could mail each other as well. So we  
 249 would either use Facebook or the g-mail, em, accounts to get information through to each  
 250 other.  
 251  
 252 *Yeah, that's one thing I was going to kind of ask you about because from talking to the*  
 253 *various people I've talked to, it seems to me like there's two ways that social media was*  
 254 *used. It was used to, kind of, communicate with your network or it was used to gather*  
 255 *information. Sometimes it was used for both.*  
 256  
 257 Uhum,  
 258  
 259 *Ehm, for you which was the more useful aspect?*  
 260  
 261 I think gathering information...  
 262  
 263 *Okay.*  
 264  
 265 ...because after the earthquake we did a lot of volunteering and we, a lot of the ALTs  
 266 didn't speak Japanese, so the only way to make sure that we knew where to go, what to  
 267 bring and, like, what time to be there was through g-mail...  
 268  
 269 *...that group, okay...*  
 270  
 271 ...and everyone sent mails telling, you know, "They need volunteers here, this is how you  
 272 volunteer." A lot of the, I mean, I translated application forms because you had to apply  
 273 to volunteer as well, so just having that information available for everyone I think made it

274 a lot easier. Em, I know that a lot of people wanted to evacuate through Yamagata. So we  
 275 had a lot of help from Yamagata who translated a lot of documents from Japanese to  
 276 English to make sure that people knew routes to get to Yamagata to get out.  
 277  
 278 *Right.*  
 279  
 280 Em, because a lot of people at that time were wanting to evacuate as well.  
 281  
 282 *Yeah.*  
 283  
 284 Em, so, yeah, I think information-wise. And it just continued, through Facebook and  
 285 through, em, the e-mail accounts, but em...  
 286  
 287 *Yeah.*  
 288  
 289 ...yeah getting information out, and where to go for, like, water and what stores are open,  
 290 whether people need, like, to, like. I had, em, at my house - you either have city gas or  
 291 you have a private company. If you had a private company, you could get your gas on a  
 292 lot sooner than city gas so I was, I thankfully had an apartment with, em, the private  
 293 company, so I had gas pretty much the next week, like, so which means I could have hot  
 294 showers...  
 295  
 296 *Yeah.*  
 297  
 298 ...so giving that information away, kind of thing, allowed people to, you know. Because  
 299 some people had city gas, so they didn't have hot water for a very long time.  
 300  
 301 *Yeah.*  
 302  
 303 So, em, I think just sharing that type of information. And we were a very tight-knit group.  
 304 So I think we were luckier than maybe some of the foreign students because we were in a  
 305 group. We knew where to get that information from and we knew who to go to. Whereas  
 306 maybe a lot of the foreign students or, em, especially the ones that, em, didn't speak  
 307 Japanese, I think it would have been more difficult for them to get information unless  
 308 they had someone that they knew in, their, their, I guess, group. Because in Sendai what  
 309 they try and do is if you're Brazilian they try and have a Brazilian leader in the  
 310 neighbourhood so that if something happens that they have the information to  
 311 disseminate. The same with the Filipinos. Em, the same with Chinese and Korean. So I  
 312 think they have used that a lot more since the earthquake, em, because we needed to  
 313 know what communities were where. With the international centre we would go around  
 314 each designated refuge area to see if there were foreigners there and what support we  
 315 could give them. Most people went to the designated refuge area but then there were a lot  
 316 of people that - we found out afterwards - decided not to go because: one, they just  
 317 thought it would be easier for them to stay at home; two, they didn't really speak Japanese  
 318 and so there was, they didn't really want to go for that reason; and then three, they just  
 319 didn't want to burden anyone, you know, I think they may have thought they were okay  
 320 with food at home so, em, they could leave the food for other people, but I think for  
 321 Japanese people, they know that if there's a disaster, whether you're okay or not, you still  
 322 go to the refuge area. So a lot more people went to the refuge area. I had friends that  
 323 stayed at home during the first two nights just because they didn't want to go to the  
 324 refuge area. Actually the night that we went to a refuge area, we were looking for those  
 325 people in our neighbourhood. There was no-one there so we thought either they are at  
 326 school and they were safe or they decided to stay at home or they are at another refuge  
 327 area...  
 328

329 [Laughter]  
 330  
 331 ...so we went knocking around people's doors. They weren't home so we assumed they  
 332 were at school which is where they were and they ended up staying at school and helping  
 333 the school for the next week or so. Em, and some of them were at, they were at schools  
 334 quite far away. They had no way to get home, so they were at the school the whole time.  
 335  
 336 *It's really interesting that you brought up the aspect of the refuge centre because a, kind*  
 337 *of, a theme which has emerged from talking to a variety of different people is there may*  
 338 *be some cultural differences going on here about group action versus, kind of,*  
 339 *independent action.*  
 340  
 341 Uhum.  
 342  
 343 *Ehm, some of the people I have talked to have mentioned how they wanted to get*  
 344 *information but then they wanted to make their own decisions based on that information.*  
 345 *So that might have been one of the reasons why some of the people I spoke to avoided*  
 346 *maybe, like, the refuge centres or the other more group-oriented...*  
 347  
 348 Uhum.  
 349  
 350 ...places, but then as you said, too, you mentioned language might be an issue...  
 351  
 352 Uhum.  
 353  
 354 ...distance, other practical things. I don't think it's as simple as just saying culture is the  
 355 reason.  
 356  
 357 I mean, I didn't necessarily want to go to a refuge area, and I knew that we were all going  
 358 to be just sitting there together anyway. But then again in my apartment I couldn't walk  
 359 anywhere. Everything was everywhere. So I didn't really have a choice but I guess I felt  
 360 comfortable there because I was with another person [Note: I think the implication here is  
 361 another foreign national] and we both spoke Japanese, so I think we were also lucky in  
 362 that respect as well. Em, culturally, I do think that that is the difference between why  
 363 Japanese and foreigners went. I think the {centre the participant worked for} had asked if  
 364 that was some of the reasons why people decided not to, and I think, especially we got  
 365 from, em, those that, em, maybe don't eat meat or don't, em, they want to pray but they  
 366 don't, to pray it was just best for, I think they decided to stay home for those specific  
 367 reasons. Especially if you, like, em, you are a Muslim, you need halal foods, so I think a  
 368 lot of them were just like, "No, I can't eat any of the food anyway." So it's just that, ehm.  
 369  
 370 *Yeah. I think, certainly, the people that I spoke to didn't mean it in a critical way of the*  
 371 *refuge centres because they recognised it was a disaster and, as you said, often they had*  
 372 *stuff at home. But I do think there were, yeah, like that, maybe, lifestyle reasons or, you*  
 373 *know, other cultural reasons that may have prevented people. It's a very interesting topic.*  
 374 *I had never really thought about it before, but definitely for some of the people mentioned*  
 375 *language was an issue, too. They felt they would go to a refuge centre if there was*  
 376 *somebody in their community...*  
 377  
 378 Yes.  
 379  
 380 ..or group who could speak Japanese.  
 381  
 382 Okay, okay. Because we had, if a foreigner went to a refuge centre they were given, we  
 383 had a range of information in different languages for that reason. So, if they spoke



384 French, then they would get the French application. They could fill it all out. And then  
 385 when, the, the {centre the participant worked for} went around, because they would go  
 386 around daily to find out what new foreigners at that specific one so that we knew what  
 387 specific support to give that specific, em, refuge centre with those foreigners. But yeah,  
 388 like you said, they may have, even if they did get information, they may have wanted to  
 389 make their own decisions on what they did from then on out.

390  
 391 *Yeah.*

392  
 393 A lot of my foreign friends were told to go home so they went home.

394  
 395 *Yeah. One other thing that also maybe was specific to this disaster is I feel about the*  
 396 *nuclear, eh, situation.*

397  
 398 Uhum.

399  
 400 *I think that that...*

401  
 402 [Laughter] I didn't even bring that up!

403  
 404 *No, no, but I think that that changed some of the cultural things that were going on at the*  
 405 *time as well based on information. Ehm, I. From the people I've spoken to so far, a lot of*  
 406 *them talked about how there was a big disconnect in the information they were getting on*  
 407 *the Japanese side and on, let's say, their home country's side or on overseas media. Did*  
 408 *that impact on you in any way?*

409  
 410 Honestly, no. No matter what, I mean, because a lot of my coworkers said to me like,  
 411 "Where are you," like, "You can go home. Where are we going to go?" And I was just  
 412 like, I felt so bad for that, I was just like, "I don't know where you're going to go."  
 413 Because I never really thought of leaving at all and I know that there was that information  
 414 coming from overseas and from Japan. I trusted in the New Zealand Embassy. I knew  
 415 that if they wanted me out of Japan, they would tell me to leave. So, I, if something, if I  
 416 was going to be told to leave then I was willing to go if the New Zealand Embassy was to  
 417 tell us that but they said that we were, were safe, so I was willing to go by that. And my  
 418 parents were okay to have me in Japan helping out so, em, no, I, even though there were  
 419 the, was the information coming from overseas which - I don't know where they were  
 420 getting that information from because I didn't even realise that that's what was going on  
 421 until I had people like, "You have to leave, you have to leave." But a lot of people in  
 422 Sendai I knew decided to leave based on that information...

423  
 424 *Yeah.*

425  
 426 ...so, em, I mean, I guess I will find out later on if I'm going to be affected, right? So,  
 427  
 428 *Oh, yeah, em, I think, you know, one of the things that's come, become clearer and*  
 429 *clearer to me is that there was neither, neither side seemed to do it very well. Like, the*  
 430 *Japanese side. some people in the, of the foreigners that I've spoken to have criticised the*  
 431 *Japanese, say, information, for being maybe an underreaction...*

432  
 433 Uhum.

434  
 435 *...and then those very same people have criticised their, their national media, let's say, or*  
 436 *the overseas information as an overreaction...*

437  
 438 Uhuh.

439  
 440 *...so these people felt that neither side was serving them very well.*  
 441  
 442 Right. Well, I was in, I would constantly be looking at the homepage for the US Embassy  
 443 because New Zealand was following what the US Embassy was doing, so that's where I  
 444 got my information from. Em, I know that even though there were a lot of people that  
 445 still got that information, they were still concerned and so they decided to go, em, like, to  
 446 a close country like Taiwan or Hong Kong or down south to Osaka. Em, but, a few  
 447 people who went to, like, Hong Kong and what not, I had to tell them, like, the rates there  
 448 and here, it was higher there so, it was kind of like, well, I mean they were doing it for  
 449 themselves and they were doing it for their families, and I do understand that. At the same  
 450 time, I was like, "Well, I don't know whether this is going to affect me in the future." But  
 451 I was still willing to stay and help out, so I didn't really think about that at all...  
 452  
 453 *Yeah.*  
 454  
 455 *...and, yeah, I totally forgot about it, that I didn't even bring it up.*  
 456  
 457 *Yeah, no, that's interesting. The, the, that's why...*  
 458  
 459 *...didn't factor it.*  
 460  
 461 *...no, em, but this is also another reason, if you remember, why I said I prefer to speak to*  
 462 *people one-to-one...*  
 463  
 464 Right.  
 465  
 466 *...if possible, because sometimes what you focus on is really your experience, so that tells*  
 467 *me an awful lot that you didn't even, by yourself, you didn't even bring up the...*  
 468  
 469 *Yeah, right.*  
 470  
 471 *...nuclear issue at all. It's fascinating. Whereas some other have almost led with that.*  
 472  
 473 *Yeah, I mean, it was there, but, like I said, the New Zealand Embassy sent all of the New*  
 474 *Zealanders in the Tohoku Region io, iodine tablets...*  
 475  
 476 *Okay.*  
 477  
 478 *...so we were, we were notified of what to do if we were to be evacuated, em, but, yeah, I,*  
 479 *it never really crossed my mind on leaving, I just really wanted to make sure that*  
 480 *everything was fine in Sendai and to help out as much as possible and then think about it*  
 481 *later. Em, I had planned a trip home in June, I think it was. I think it was around June.*  
 482 *Ehm, this was even before the earthquake...*  
 483  
 484 *Yeah.*  
 485  
 486 *...and so I, I knew that if I was going to go home, I would be going home in June and so I*  
 487 *was willing to wait it out. Plus, I was actually looking after one of my co-workers who*  
 488 *was in hospital as well so that happened throughout the whole process. So it was just a*  
 489 *whole bunch of, you know like all things at once and, em.*  
 490  
 491 *Just in terms of the embassy, how did they communicate with you? Ehm.*  
 492

493 We got, we were lucky, the New Zealanders were lucky. We got phone calls and I got  
 494 phone calls from a number of people. Like, I was surprised at how many people were  
 495 ringing to see if we were okay. Because there were only. In Sendai City that I know out  
 496 of all the Kiwis, there was only around 13 of us in the city.  
 497  
 498 *Wow.*  
 499  
 500 Yeah, but, I think three, three of us, four of us stayed behind. So they wanted to know  
 501 who was in the country, em, and if we were okay and I think, em, going back to the  
 502 Facebook, saying that I was okay. There was also the Google Finder...  
 503  
 504 *Uhuh.*  
 505  
 506 ...I think that also helped out a lot and that's how people would know people were fine as  
 507 well. Em, but, yeah, I was rung by the Embassy a lot and they were just keeping us posted  
 508 with information. I knew that there were buses leaving from Sendai to go to Tokyo, and,  
 509 so, they wanted us on the bus. But they had a bus for the New Zealanders, but the  
 510 Canadians didn't get one so the Canadians were all on, well the Canadians that we knew  
 511 were on our bus because their embassy did not do a good job in providing them  
 512 information. I mean, they were told to fly out of Fukushima, first of all. And then they  
 513 were told to, em, fly out of Sendai [Note: Sendai Airport was completely washed away in  
 514 the tsunami and this was a major news story even at the very early stages of the disaster]  
 515 and so I, I think the Canadians that I knew weren't happy at all with the information that  
 516 they were given, but, em, yeah, I guess the New Zealanders were lucky because they  
 517 made sure that we were there, and so that's why I guess I has trusted them, that if they  
 518 wanted us to leave that I would be notified to, to leave, so, yeah.  
 519  
 520 *Ehm, it seems to me that the, the relationship with the embassy is a pretty important one*  
 521 *after a disaster because I have spoken to people from 12 different countries at this stage*  
 522 *and it's been a huge difference. Some people have been very satisfied and some people*  
 523 *have really not been satisfied with the way their embassy, especially, gave them*  
 524 *information.*  
 525  
 526 *Uhum.* When we first came on the JET Program we had an embassy night and at that  
 527 night we were asked if we would sign up at the embassy. So that's how they had our  
 528 information...  
 529  
 530 *Yeah.*  
 531  
 532 ..but I think, oh, I mean I hadn't been there for, like, in my fourth or fifth year...  
 533  
 534 *Yeah.*  
 535  
 536 ...so, I think they may have had old information or something but it was people that they  
 537 knew in the city...  
 538  
 539 *Yeah.*  
 540  
 541 ...which is how they knew who was going, because when I was rung they were like, "Do  
 542 you know any other Kiwis in the city?" And I guess because we are a small population  
 543 we kind of do know...  
 544  
 545 *Yeah.*  
 546

547 ...who's going to be there or not. So, em, I think that's how they found out numbers as  
548 well.  
549  
550 *I think you might have hit on an interesting point there because I'm from Ireland, and*  
551 *Ireland, Irish people are a small community in Japan as well, and most of the Irish*  
552 *people I spoke to were fairly happy with the way the embassy worked, possibly because*  
553 *the numbers were fewer and it's just easier to do that kind of, you know, networking and*  
554 *finding, finding people whereas maybe people from Canada or the States or Australia*  
555 *were not very happy.*  
556  
557 Yeah, I think the people from the, the States, they had to pay for their bus down to Tokyo,  
558 I think. I'm not quite sure how that worked, but, em...  
559  
560 *[Laughter]*  
561  
562 ...they also all went through Niigata all the way down to Tokyo so it took a long time  
563 whereas the New Zealand bus just went straight through Fukushima, they were just like,  
564 "You know, we're going to get you to Tokyo." So, em.  
565  
566 *Yeah, I think, you know, with this sort of a situation there's probably no right and now*  
567 *wrong...*  
568  
569 Right.  
570  
571 *...there's just what's kind of maybe what's less, less wrong or whatever, you know. It's*  
572 *always tough.*  
573  
574 Yeah. Hopefully we can all learn from the experience which is what I think happened  
575 after the earthquake, especially in terms of working in the {redacted} centre and also {the  
576 Sendai government}. I think they kind of knew what they should do during the  
577 earthquake and then they realised maybe that there was something that they could have  
578 worked on. Getting information out was a key thing but, I don't know whether it could  
579 have been faster. I mean, there was so much information going out, and so making sure  
580 that it was always up to date...  
581  
582 *Yeah.*  
583  
584 ...because it was constant, so, em. And we would have to get information from City Hall  
585 which would be in Japanese, sent to the {redacted} centre, and then they would have to  
586 be like, "Okay, time to translate it all." And then all of that had to go up on the, the  
587 website. And, so that everyone had that information available, and then to the radio  
588 station, ehm, and then it would all be printed out and put on boards so that people coming  
589 to the information centre had that information. But it would be forever changing, like...  
590  
591 *Yeah.*  
592  
593 ...where to get water from, like what to do if you don't have gas, like that type of stuff, so,  
594 ehm.  
595  
596 *That's what I was kind of going to ask you about because obviously I'm, my main focus is*  
597 *in translation and you were one of the key people in this process of translating the*  
598 *information. First of all, I'm interested in the idea of, you were the translator, but you*  
599 *were also, kind of, a victim in a certain - I don't want to use that negative word, but - you*  
600 *were also one of the people very interested in the content of the information.*  
601

602 Right.  
603  
604 *Did, did that pose any difficulties for you?*  
605  
606 I was, I guess I'm lucky, then, because once I got the information in Japanese, I knew the  
607 information so I could give it to whoever I wanted to, and that was the most important  
608 thing was getting the information out to people. Like I said, in the group of seventy, all I  
609 had to do was read the information and I could send an email out to those seventy people.  
610 So, we were okay with the information, it was getting it out to everyone else and we're  
611 not quite sure how we got the information out and who it got to, but we are hoping. I  
612 think most people knew of the {redacted} centre anyway who was living in Sendai, so if  
613 they did have a problem, and they didn't get it from their Japanese friends or their friends  
614 that speak the same language as them, then they knew to probably come to the {redacted}  
615 centre. Ehm, yeah, so, yeah, I guess I was lucky getting the information first-hand and  
616 then getting it out there. It was just getting the correct information. That was also key.  
617 Ehm, because, you know, I'm not a 'translator' translator so you just had to make sure  
618 what the, the information you were giving is correct as well.  
619  
620 *How did you do that?*  
621  
622 Working with my coworkers and having good communication with them, I think, helped.  
623 They all, Japanese people say they don't speak English but they understand a lot, so it  
624 was always making sure, and checking with them, and checking the Japanese against the  
625 English because it came to us - and all those other languages - and some of those foreign  
626 students had been in Japan way longer than I had so obviously their Japanese was, was  
627 really good, but, ehm, yeah, we could translate and what not, but we don't know who the  
628 information got to. I think that is the main thing. I think they tried to do questionnaires  
629 after the earthquake or a bit further down in like, to see who did get that type of  
630 information, and I think they sat down and had meetings with those specific groups, like I  
631 said...  
632  
633 *Uhum.*  
634  
635 ...em, we're classed as an easy group because we know that if we want them to have  
636 information it just comes from one person and is sent to all of them, so I think we had a  
637 meeting with the {redacted} centre and they asked about the experience...  
638  
639 *Yeah.*  
640  
641 ...and what could have been done better but I think when it comes to, like, the Brazilian  
642 group, the Filipino group, I think we all had different needs, and maybe that's another  
643 reason why people didn't go to, ehm, the refuge centres because as foreigners they group  
644 you as one whereas we're completely different, you know, in culture, so, what one  
645 country may need another may not, and that type of thing, so, ehm, yeah.  
646  
647 *That's absolutely fascinating. Eh, you're not the first person to have said that, actually,*  
648 *that, you know, foreigners are grouped all as one but sometimes there can be more in*  
649 *common between the Japanese and a certain foreign group than between the foreigners...*  
650  
651 Right...  
652  
653 *...the so-called foreigners.*  
654

655 ...because a lot of Japanese people would say to me, “Oh, you were there in 2011, you  
656 must never have been through an earthquake before.” I’m like, “No, I’m from New  
657 Zealand, so”...

658

659 *[Laughter]*

660

661 ...like I, I didn’t, didn’t, but that’s, they were still, like, “You must have never felt  
662 something like that.” But I didn’t, but I was also well prepared...

663

664 *Yeah.*

665

666 ...so, you know, I did have my bag at home...

667

668 *Yeah.*

669

670 ...em, and it had the food and that, and we had to take all of that stuff, too, to the refuge  
671 centre that night, so, em, it did do as well, and I had photocopies of everything, like my  
672 passport and that, and I had my ten-yen coins...

673

674 *Yeah, that’s the thing...*

675

676 ...at the end of the day, all the phone boxes were free...

677

678 *Yeah. [Laughter]*

679

680 ...so, we didn’t need the coins any more. But I did find that people would leave the ten-  
681 yen coin at the box if you did have to pay, and it just goes to show how nice Japan is, and  
682 how much they thought about everyone else, because I did feel like I was part of one  
683 rather than being a foreigner on the outside. I was included because I chose to stay here,  
684 and to this day my co-workers will say that to me, they can’t believe that I stayed on  
685 (indistinct). I don’t think it’s that big. I just chose to stay on because I wanted to help. But  
686 they think it’s something really big and they would say that to me up until I left and be  
687 like, “We’re thankful that you stayed to help out.” But I don’t really think it’s that much  
688 of a big deal.

689

690 *Yeah.*

691

692 *Yeah, em, yeah.*

693

694 *Ehm, just also we were talking about how, like, foreigners are grouped all as one, one*  
695 *other thing which I’m kind of struggling with a little bit is I think I can’t, when I’m doing*  
696 *my thesis, I don’t think I can talk about foreigners all as one in another way, either. For*  
697 *example, I think there’s a huge difference between a resident and a short-term visitor,*  
698 *like, if someone was in Sendai just on a business trip, or a tourist, I mean, it’s a big*  
699 *tourist, well, Miyagi anyway would be, was a big tourist location in, in Japan. At the*  
700 *{redacted} centre, did you have any experience of people who weren’t residents?*

701

702 We had to have had tourists as well, but I’m assuming with tourists the, I think their first,  
703 main important thing is to leave. And I think provide, if we, because we had an English  
704 hotline, so I’m hoping that people knew of that hotline and they would ring up, because it  
705 was just asking for information: “How do I get out of here?” And it was through  
706 Yamagata or going up to Akita Prefecture and flying out from there, so, ehm, tourists?  
707 There’s a lot to be, because if you reside in that place, you, you know where things are,  
708 you know who is going to help you. If you are a tourist then you just trust in where you  
709 are staying...

710  
 711 *Yeah.*  
 712  
 713 ...or, yeah, I guess that's the main thing. Or, an international centre...  
 714  
 715 *Yeah.*  
 716  
 717 ...I, I guess. But I don't know if everyone knows where it, or if there's an international  
 718 centre so, I'm guessing a lot of the tourists, they would want to leave straight away...  
 719  
 720 *Yeah.*  
 721  
 722 ...so they were, em, because I know on the night of the earthquake, em, people were  
 723 getting in taxis and taxiing to Tokyo because they knew what was, like, the impact it was  
 724 going to have, so we were just trying to get a taxi down the road, kind of thing, and they  
 725 were like, "No, we have to take people to Tokyo," so, em, "you can't catch a taxi."  
 726  
 727 *[Laughter]*  
 728  
 729 So we were walking down the streets...  
 730  
 731 *Yeah.*  
 732  
 733 ...with our torches, em, yeah, so, I'm guessing if they were a tourist in Sendai, they, they  
 734 were just looking to, to leave as soon as, as soon as possible.  
 735  
 736 *And probably, as you said, maybe, through where they were staying. Like, their hotel or,*  
 737 *like, the embassy. But I don't know. The embassy might not know that they were there, so*  
 738 *that is tricky.*  
 739  
 740 Yeah, that is actually a very good question. I didn't come across any, but I know that at  
 741 the {redacted} centre we had the, the US Embassy. They would bring in a team so that  
 742 they could make sure that the Americans in the city that they knew of were okay and also  
 743 giving away information. Em, a lot of countries decided to have buses to send people out.  
 744 So, em, yeah, I remember New Zealand sent a group of, em, people from the Ministry of  
 745 Foreign Affairs to come and, and see us after the earthquake, but we were grouped with  
 746 Australians, so the Australian Embassy was there first, so we all met with Australians and  
 747 New Zealanders and they were giving the same information to both countries, so we kind  
 748 of knew what was going to happen if people chose to leave, em, and they used to, I think  
 749 they expected everyone to leave, I think, but, em, people stayed, stayed behind for their  
 750 own reasons.  
 751  
 752 *Yeah, yeah, of course. Actually, that's kind of linked to, em, something which I was*  
 753 *hoping to ask you about. Ehm, so that, you know, the earthquake happened, and then the*  
 754 *tsunami happened, and then the nuclear disaster happened and some people chose to*  
 755 *leave and some people chose to stay, and a lot of stuff went on...*  
 756  
 757 Uhum.  
 758  
 759 *...what I am asking everyone is to try and tell me when did the disaster end?*  
 760  
 761 Oh, that's a good question, because I was trying to figure out how long we were  
 762 providing the information, but I went home in June, and I guess the main part of, like, I  
 763 won't say main part because we were still volunteering when I got back, em, and I was  
 764 still trying to provide information when we got back because, if you had a partially-

765 damaged house or if you had a fully-damaged house, you need a specific certificate, so it  
 766 was, it went from that type of information to providing information afterwards, and some  
 767 people may not have had gas at that time, so I was also updating people on when the gas  
 768 may come and if you receive a notice on your door what does this notice mean...  
 769  
 770 *Of course, yeah.*  
 771  
 772 ...like that type of information, so I, I finished up {my job with that government office} in  
 773 August 2012. We were still getting information out, and I think to the, towards the start of  
 774 2012, or one year after, I think it became, "Let's start preparing, or using the experience  
 775 to make things stronger and better in terms of getting information out there." Because it  
 776 was one of the most important things, and we are, we were still a bit unsure on who got  
 777 the information other than the groups that we know of.  
 778  
 779 *Yeah, yeah, your own, kind of, networks or whatever.*  
 780  
 781 ...yeah, so, we, I think we knew that it was important for the networks. In terms of the  
 782 ALTs, we knew that Facebook was a lifesaver, also that Google Finder and Twitter. So  
 783 on the Sendai JETs website they have like a, the, they link the Twitter to the homepage so  
 784 that if anything like it goes on again, em, we can Tweet to say, "This person is fine." And  
 785 so, they were supposed to let their families know of the homepage so that if anything  
 786 happens, then they can check that. Em, we also have a Facebook page, but it's only for  
 787 Sendai JETs, so I guess for families, they are directed to the website...  
 788  
 789 *Yeah.*  
 790  
 791 ...em, but for the Facebook page, it's also the same thing. I am still on that because I am,  
 792 was a, was a Sendai JET, but if there is, em, an earthquake there, people will be like, "Did  
 793 you feel that one? Is everyone okay?" So, people are still sharing.  
 794  
 795 *It's kind of a community.*  
 796  
 797 Right, and then there is the gmail group...  
 798  
 799 *Yeah.*  
 800  
 801 ...em, that they use all the time, em, so that was one way for them to get their information  
 802 out.  
 803  
 804 *I definitely understand what you mean about the, there's a need to know who got the*  
 805 *information and how it went out, but as, you know, again, coming back to the idea of*  
 806 *translation, I'm interested for you personally doing this job that you did where you were*  
 807 *taking Japanese information and translating it into English, what could have made your*  
 808 *job easier?*  
 809  
 810 Uhm, what could have made it easier? I would say having more people but I actually  
 811 don't think that that is actually a good answer, because if you're the one that's translating,  
 812 you know what you have translated and you know to keep the information and how to  
 813 match it and how to keep it the same, because we had, when I wasn't there, if I was at a  
 814 radio station, we had other, exchange students translating on my behalf, but their first  
 815 language wasn't English. So, yes, it would be put into English, but it may not have been,  
 816 it definitely wouldn't have been how I would have translated it exactly, and it, I don't  
 817 know if it would have gotten the meaning across, but it was in English so if they needed  
 818 to explain it, they could explain it, and if a phone call came through, they could explain it,  
 819 but when you are reading something and it is about, like, a certificate that you need, this



820 specific thing, like, it needs to be, like, perfect English, I guess, and as long as, I won't  
 821 say perfect, as long as it is understandable, but I guess sometimes there is little things that  
 822 don't come across, I, I, I guess. Yeah, so I would say it would be nice to have a team of  
 823 translators or, if you did have a team, to separate them into doing specific translations.  
 824 Ehm, because {my co-worker and I}, we were the only two native speakers that worked  
 825 at the {redacted} centre, so all of the information usually came through us and so it was  
 826 easy for us to get that information out. When other people had to take over for us, we  
 827 would still have to come back and check that English and then it would have to go up  
 828 again, so it was just, it really depended on what information they want to get out there. If  
 829 they, if they don't, if it's in English and they don't mind, then that's perfectly fine, and I  
 830 guess you can only do so much, so, em, having the information in English is better than  
 831 not having it in English, but at the same time, if you get something wrong, then that's  
 832 when problems start to occur.  
 833  
 834 *I don't want to put words in your mouth...*  
 835  
 836 Um,  
 837  
 838 *...just tell me if I'm wrong, but what I was maybe hearing from you there is that*  
 839 *consistency was a difficulty when there were a lot of people involved in the process. Is*  
 840 *that what you meant, or am I interpreting that wrong?*  
 841  
 842 Yeah, now I'm trying to think about that, yeah, whether there's, that's what I was saying,  
 843 because I do believe having a group of people would make things easier, but at the same  
 844 time you can get mixed up, so, I guess, yeah, the consistency in, in getting information  
 845 out there, I think, is important. But I also think that having the information in English  
 846 whether it is right or not is also important as well, so. I mean, I couldn't be there every  
 847 single minute of the day...  
 848  
 849 *Of course not.*  
 850  
 851 ...to do everything. So, I guess, having the information in English whether I liked it or I  
 852 didn't...  
 853  
 854 *[Laughter]*  
 855  
 856 ...is still, it was still there. And they would take over for me at the radio station as well...  
 857  
 858 *Yeah.*  
 859  
 860 ...and their, their spoken English was perfect, so that was perfectly fine. It's just, you  
 861 know, written and speaking is completely different, so I think consistency is important.  
 862  
 863 *Em, also, em, you've kind of touched on something I wanted to ask you about. There was*  
 864 *a lot of pressure on you and your colleagues...*  
 865  
 866 *Yeah.*  
 867  
 868 *...in terms of just the amount of work that you had to do, how did you cope with that*  
 869 *pressure or de, deal with that pressure?*  
 870  
 871 It was stressful, I'm not going to lie. I think the fact that I didn't die and my family didn't  
 872 die. To this day, I, I realise, like, now that, before 2011, I would always think that I'm  
 873 like stressed over nothing. I think once that happened I was like, "Look, my family could  
 874 have died, and I really, I could have died." I mean, I was just lucky to be in the city. So,

875 em, and there were people on the JET program that did, there were two of them, em, that  
 876 passed away in the tsunami, so, em, I think knowing that and also knowing the fact that I  
 877 was helping in some way, em, and it is one of the reasons why I was sent to Sendai was to  
 878 help out and forge that, that relationship between my country and Japan, but not only that,  
 879 just being a foreigner living in Japan as well, so, em. Stress-wise, eh, yeah, I'm not going  
 880 to lie, it was really stressful. I lost a lot of weight, em, and it was just crazy busy but I  
 881 think speaking of family, and speaking to others that were there during the earthquake,  
 882 and also volunteering. I am passionate about volunteering so I think that was a way for  
 883 me to, you know, give back as well and help out in some way. Em, but there was a lot of  
 884 pressure. There were times, like, for example, where I had to, em, on the spur of the  
 885 moment - I wasn't given any notice - but I had to go and interpret for the mayor that was  
 886 talking to the US Army, and I don't know, like, words, like the specific words that are  
 887 going to come up and the vocab that they are going to use, so, em, I cringe thinking about  
 888 that now because it was one of the - {in the job I did}, you're not fluent at Japanese so  
 889 there is no way you are going to be able to do anything like a hundred-percent perfect, but  
 890 you do your best, but they were all in their army suits and she was dressed in her nice,  
 891 like, and I'm just in casual jeans and what not, so I just cringe about that because {in that  
 892 job}, it was, it was like the worst possible situation to be in, but I got it done and it was  
 893 finished with but, em, lots of pressure to make sure that things were correct, but I mean,  
 894 em, yeah, and stress. Stress, stress, stress, stress. Yeah, but I guess knowing I was going  
 895 to see family as well, that helped. Em, because I hadn't really processed, em, the  
 896 Christchurch Earthquake. Because I was completely, like, heartbroken when I saw that on  
 897 the Internet, so, em, I hadn't really processed that, and going home didn't really help  
 898 because everything was completely, like, closed off...

899  
 900 *[Laughter] Yeah.*

901  
 902 ...in Christchurch. And I think if you do go back there now, you will be surprised at how  
 903 slow they have been. Yeah, I mean, I have been home - once the earth, once, after the  
 904 earthquake, I realised how important family is, so I had only been home once during my  
 905 five years, and now I have been home, like, two to three times a year, yeah, so, and I've  
 906 seen the, what they've done in Christchurch and it's just taking a lot, I mean they have to,  
 907 to completely destroy everything and then rebuild, so, em, ten, give it ten years.

908  
 909 *It is clear that you had a very different set of circumstances because a lot of people that I*  
 910 *have spoken to went home, like, they maybe had the holiday booked or something like*  
 911 *yourself, or they chose to, to go home for a period of time...*

912  
 913 Uhum.

914  
 915 *...and for them, going home maybe meant relaxing. In, in an Irish person's case, going*  
 916 *home to a completely peaceful environment where everything was kind of normal and it*  
 917 *was like a pause. But unfortunately in Christchurch...*

918  
 919 Right.

920  
 921 *...it was going from one disaster setting to another.*

922  
 923 To another. Yeah, so, I think the main reason I wanted to go home is that I had not let any  
 924 emotion out and I just wanted to go home and cry. That's what I said to my family. I was  
 925 like, "I'm probably going to go home and I'm probably going to bawl my eyes out," but  
 926 that's, I just need to get it all out because I didn't really want to show that here because I  
 927 didn't lose any family members and, em, I didn't lose my house, and that type of thing,  
 928 and when you meet people like that, and they were really thankful, like, once they found  
 929 out where I was from, they were really thankful that I was there volunteering. But I was

930 just like, "I don't, oh, you don't need to thank me because, like, you lost everything." And  
 931 so, em, yeah, that. Looking back on that type of stuff was not, was not nice.  
 932  
 933 *Ehm, in terms of volunteering, do you think language in any way acts as a barrier to*  
 934 *foreigners volunteering in Japan after a disaster?*  
 935  
 936 Yes and no. For the ALTs in the group that I was a part of, no. Because we made sure  
 937 that we had all of the information given out so that they could go by themselves if they  
 938 wanted to and give all of the information together with the English and the Japanese. A  
 939 lot of the volunteer plac, places were starting to have the information in English because  
 940 they knew how many foreigners wanted to come and volunteer but, em, yeah, we made  
 941 sure that we provided information. I think it was a barrier for specific people, but I know  
 942 friends that don't speak any Japanese, but they don't let that get the best of them, and  
 943 they made sure they went out there, and they were one of the main people at giving  
 944 information out and making sure that every person knew what you do when you go there  
 945 and you fill out these forms and you get all of this information and you wait for them to  
 946 call out the jobs and put your hand up and if they chose you, you go and do that job. So I  
 947 think knowing step-by-step, and also we would always go as a group. Em, and we knew  
 948 where the buses left and we knew what time to be there, and I think being with other  
 949 people also helped. But we would meet a lot of, em, foreigners from throughout Japan  
 950 always coming. And I think one of the most surprising things when we would go out to,  
 951 like, Ishinomaki or Kesennuma or Nattori [Note: some of the worst affected towns] they  
 952 would always be surprised that we, from Sendai, that we would be going from Sendai to  
 953 volunteer because they would be just like, "Why are you?" because...  
 954  
 955 *[Laughter]*  
 956  
 957 ...most of the other people were from like, Kyoto or Osaka or...  
 958  
 959 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 960  
 961 ...Nagoya. They were all coming up to volunteer. But they were like, "Why are you  
 962 helping out? You're from Sendai."  
 963  
 964 *[Laughter]*  
 965  
 966 But, I don't know, we just didn't really think about that because I guess being on the JET  
 967 Program, we want to give back to the community, so I think that's why a lot of people  
 968 from the JET Program wanted to, to help out. Because we got given so much and it's one  
 969 way, because of the language barrier, it's one way we can give back without having to  
 970 speak. But then again you do have to do all the, the procedural stuff beforehand to be able  
 971 to...  
 972  
 973 *Yeah, but then the actual physical work...*  
 974  
 975 Right.  
 976  
 977 *...or some of that sort of thing. I mean, if you have a pair of hands that's...*  
 978  
 979 Right.  
 980  
 981 *...kind of enough.*  
 982  
 983 I think a lot of people come here and maybe live here and they let language get the best of  
 984 them. But you don't actually have to speak that much. You can still communicate with

985 someone through gestures and what not. But it's just whether you chose to do that or not,  
 986 and so, yeah, the people that I know that don't speak Japanese that well did volunteer a  
 987 lot and was able, were able to get a lot of information. Yeah, that's, when I think about  
 988 that question. I just look at them, and well it wasn't a problem for them and it really  
 989 shouldn't be a problem for most people but I guess some people did have problems with  
 990 not knowing the language.  
 991  
 992 *Yeah. Basically the last question I have for you, it's just to pick up on a word you've used*  
 993 *a couple of times now in different settings. You've talked about community...*  
 994  
 995 Okay.  
 996  
 997 *...different types of community and community of, you know, JETs, community with the*  
 998 *local community, community of Japan...*  
 999  
 1000 Uhum.  
 1001  
 1002 *...and, before the disaster, so before 3.11, did you feel part of your local community?*  
 1003  
 1004 With, ehm, preparing for a disaster, we're told to get to know your neighbours. In case of  
 1005 a disaster, you, I think in Kobe, a lot of the time it was neighbours helping other  
 1006 neighbours just to pull them out of the rubble and what not. I didn't know my neighbours,  
 1007 em, and I think most of my friends didn't know their neighbours. Although I will say,  
 1008 after the earthquake, random people were very friendly, so they did help out, but in my  
 1009 local community, the people I knew were my foreign friends and the places I would ca,  
 1010 like, always go to. So the people, those were the people I would speak to. Other than that,  
 1011 no I didn't, I wouldn't say I had a very strong local community, but that's just in my  
 1012 neighbourhood, yeah? My, I guess, my coworkers would have been my next, like, stron,  
 1013 strong bond other than my foreign friends, but em, yeah, in saying that though, like when  
 1014 we'd go, like when I stayed at, like, the refuge centre, we'd be given food from, I mean,  
 1015 we stand out, right? As foreigners, so, em, yeah, people were really friendly, wanting to  
 1016 give us food, wanting to help in some way, but, yeah, I guess, in my local community, I  
 1017 didn't, I guess I wasn't a part. Well, I didn't have strong bonds, yeah.  
 1018  
 1019 *Well, the reason I ask is because it comes up in the Disaster Studies literature all the time*  
 1020 *and, exactly just what you said there about Kobe, you know, a lot of the first emergency*  
 1021 *assistance providers tend to be the people you live near or people passing by. But I'm just*  
 1022 *not completely convinced that community means your neighbours in all cases. It could*  
 1023 *mean, like you said, your coworkers because, you know, you're spending 8,9,10 hours...*  
 1024  
 1025 That's...  
 1026  
 1027 *...a day with them.*  
 1028  
 1029 ...that's true because if I did need anything or I did have questions or I needed  
 1030 information, I would go to them because they were my closest source. Like, I just moved  
 1031 to Tokyo two months ago and you're supposed to say hello to your neighbours and give  
 1032 presents...  
 1033  
 1034 *[Laughter]*  
 1035  
 1036 ...I don't know who my neighbours are, so if an earthquake happened here, it's actually  
 1037 the reason why, when we moved to Tokyo, most people live like an hour away, it's the  
 1038 reason why I chose to, I actually can walk home from here [Note: the cafe we met at was  
 1039 just by his office]. The reason why was because if a big earthquake happens here, then I

1040 need to get home. Because I remember after the earthquake in Sendai, I, you can walk  
1041 anywhere in Sendai, so I could walk home. Sure, everything was everywhere in my room,  
1042 but the next day when it was light I went home and cleaned everything up, and then I  
1043 could stay at home from then on out. But, yeah, that was the reason why I kind of live  
1044 down the road, because I, I just, if I had to go through that experience again, yeah, I want  
1045 to be prepared, and I know that everyone lives so far away, people are going to need  
1046 somewhere to go to if they, like, want a shower and what not. So, em, yeah.

1047  
1048 *So you have, kind of, changed some of your behaviours based on the experience?*  
1049

1050 I think a lo, I think, after the earthquake, I changed a lot. Because I just saw the bigger  
1051 picture of things. Now I try and not worry about the small things, because at the end of  
1052 the day, like, I don't die. I mean, "I'm not going to die over it." I just keep trying to tell  
1053 myself that. "I'm not going to die if it happens."

1054  
1055 *[Laughter]*  
1056

1057 Ehm, yeah. I think seeing the broader picture. Also, you do have to be prepared for it  
1058 because I spent a year after the JET Program {working in another role where} my job  
1059 was to get information to those 70 JETs. And part of that was putting them in the disaster  
1060 groups, em, making sure they had the information, making sure they go their bags  
1061 prepared, what to put in there, and just also giving, I mean, even though it's a year, two  
1062 years out, they still want to know about that because it happened in Sendai. A lot of  
1063 people say it's not going to happen for a long, long, long, long time, em, but it could  
1064 happen in Shizuoka, it could happen in Tokyo. So I guess moving to Tokyo, I'm aware  
1065 that that's happened and that's also why I don't want to catch the subway or the trains,  
1066 you know. I'd rather bike to work which is why I also live close, too. Em, yeah, you just  
1067 have to be prepared. But I guess you never know when it's going to happen and, I mean,  
1068 in Christchurch, we never thought that a big earthquake was going to hit there. We  
1069 always thought that Wellington was going to be hit. Like, ever since I was a child when  
1070 we'd get small tremors and just go back to sleep. But we always were told that  
1071 Wellington was going to be the one that was going to be hit by the earthquake, so then  
1072 when, I think, it was one in September, I think there was a big earthquake September the  
1073 year before. So 2010 in September. And I was called from one of my good friends and  
1074 she said, "Look, there was an earthquake in Christchurch. You need to ring home and see  
1075 if everything is okay." My family were like, "Yeah, we're perfectly fine. It shook a lot  
1076 but it's okay." And then the one happened in February and not being able to contact my  
1077 dad, yeah, I panicked big time because I, I didn't get in contact with my dad for two or  
1078 three days. Yeah, so I thought something had gone wrong but I contacted my mum and  
1079 my sister the first day, so I knew that they were fine. It was just getting in contact with  
1080 my dad. And not being able to contact someone, yeah, that's (indistinct) it's horrible.

1081  
1082 *Christ, I can, I can only imagine. I can only imagine. But I totally see what you mean. It's*  
1083 *not an exact science. I mean, they said the same about Kobe. They said an earthquake*  
1084 *would never happen in Kobe, like, that was supposedly the safe part of Japan. So you just*  
1085 *don't know, but.*

1086  
1087 Walking down the streets in Sendai though you will, after the earthquake, it was, there  
1088 was damage but there wasn't major damage so they were prepared for that.

1089  
1090 *Yeah.*  
1091

1092 And I guess they had had a very big earthquake previous to that so I guess that's what  
1093 they had learned from.

1094

1095 *Yeah, and if there hadn't been the tsunami, I, I wouldn't be here for a start. I mean, I*  
 1096 *think.*  
 1097  
 1098 I didn't really touch on the tsunami either, did I?  
 1099  
 1100 *Yeah, well, but, again, this is why I like to let people just tell their, their own stories, you*  
 1101 *know, because for you, you were very focused on information. Like, that was your job,*  
 1102 *that was what kept you going. I mean, do you want to talk about the tsunami? Is it*  
 1103 *something that?*  
 1104  
 1105 I don't, I don't know because the earthquake affected me, and, but, the tsunami affected a  
 1106 lot of my co-workers and a lot of my friends and so, I've never really talked about it  
 1107 because I don't, I, I don't know what to say to them, you know, like, they lost family  
 1108 members and what not. So, em, yeah, we haven't really talked about the tsunami and.  
 1109 Because when I went to volunteer, I went out to the sea and, em, heard stories of, like,  
 1110 people having to carry people on their backs out and what not. I mean, I had a friend who  
 1111 had to, em, be evacuated by helicopter. But because I personally wasn't there, I guess,  
 1112 maybe, that's why I didn't really discuss that, and also with, em, Fukushima, I didn't  
 1113 really discuss that because it wasn't really a factor, so yeah the earthquake, I guess, was  
 1114 the thing that affected me the most, yeah.  
 1115  
 1116 *Oh, absolutely. I think that that's why, as I said when I was talking to you earlier on, like,*  
 1117 *in such a big disaster, different people focus on different things because they experience*  
 1118 *different things. That's why it can be kind of hard to bring people together to talk about it*  
 1119 *because, you know, you would talk about the earthquake and another person would be*  
 1120 *like, "Why are we talking about the earthquake? It was all about the tsunami?"*  
 1121  
 1122 Actually, we tried to do that with the group of 70. We all tried, we would have ALT  
 1123 meetings every month so one of the meetings, it was long after the earthquake but we, we  
 1124 brought in a counselor in case people wanted to talk about their feelings but I think most  
 1125 people by the time were just like, "Um, yeah, we all had different experiences. We can't  
 1126 express that because we're going to take away from someone el, we don't want to take  
 1127 away from someone else's experience." Because, yeah, there were a few people that  
 1128 were, like, stuck at their school with, like, the water coming up to the purple level [Note:  
 1129 in Japanese tsunami warnings, purple is used to denote the largest possible tsunami  
 1130 waves] and what not, and so their experiences way outweigh...  
 1131  
 1132 *Yeah.*  
 1133  
 1134 ...what we went through, so I think a lot of people felt that so they didn't want to speak  
 1135 about it at all, yeah.  
 1136  
 1137 *Yeah, I a, I ag, having said that, I do think that every person's experience is valid and,*  
 1138 *you know, based on your own circumstances, you could be more terrified by an*  
 1139 *earthquake than another person by the tsunami. It's, it's a very difficult issue. But I do*  
 1140 *think that that group kind of thing can be a bit tricky. That's pretty much all I have. Just*  
 1141 *in case there's anything you think I haven't touched on that might be relevant in terms of*  
 1142 *especially translation or language, culture, that kind of thing?*  
 1143  
 1144 Um, translation? No, I think. I mean if you have any questions or anything.  
 1145  
 1146 *No, you see, yeah, no, I really, like, em, the way I've been trying to, to do it is to let*  
 1147 *people tell what they want to tell, and usually by doing that, it ends up that you talk about*  
 1148 *all the things I want to hear anyway...*  
 1149

1150 Alright.  
 1151  
 1152 *...so you pretty much did...*  
 1153  
 1154 Oh yeah? Cool.  
 1155  
 1156 *...ehm, like, you don't, like, say you or another person, you don't tell it in the same way,*  
 1157 *and you don't get there in the same direction but a lot of the things you mentioned, other*  
 1158 *people have talked about in a quite a similar way and like, obviously, I'm particularly*  
 1159 *interested in you as a person because you were one of the people doing the work of the*  
 1160 *translator, you know, or the work of the interpreter.*  
 1161  
 1162 Yeah, we, we lucky at {the Sendai government}. They have two Japanese workers that  
 1163 had studied overseas. So their jobs were to translate into English. So, not only did we  
 1164 have the native speakers we also had them as well and they would be translating a lot for  
 1165 City Hall, so it was a lot of the technical English...  
 1166  
 1167 *Yeah.*  
 1168  
 1169 ...and, em, and we would also check their English. But, em, I guess we were lucky to  
 1170 have that help as well. Because City Hall is completely different, because once the  
 1171 earthquake had kind of, like, had been 6 months to 7 months, that's when the information  
 1172 on how you go about getting, like, subsidies and...  
 1173  
 1174 *Yeah, very technical stuff yeah.*  
 1175  
 1176 ...that type of stuff. So it's not stuff that, like, we could ask exchange students to do, but  
 1177 like the information for the radio station, yeah, it could come from the, eh, exchange  
 1178 students.  
 1179  
 1180 *In City Hall or in the {redacted} centre do you have any, kind of, specialised translation*  
 1181 *technologies? You may not know of these things but just I'm wondering did you, they*  
 1182 *have things, for example, called translation memories?*  
 1183  
 1184 Okay.  
 1185  
 1186 *It's a type of computer software where say you as a person make a translation. So you as*  
 1187 *a human you write in, "Okay, well this type of subsidy, I'll translate it as blah, blah,*  
 1188 *blah." And then another person can come along, and the next time they see that Japanese*  
 1189 *word, your previous translation pops up.*  
 1190  
 1191 I wish! Okay, so I think that's where we may have had difficulties because what one  
 1192 person translates doesn't necessarily mean that another person will use those specific  
 1193 words. So, coming from a British-English background especially when we're supposed to  
 1194 have an American-English or use American English at City Hall was difficult {being}  
 1195 from New Zealand, so we knew what we grew up with using, and I found out that the  
 1196 English that I do use is a lot different to what Americans use. So, em, we were lucky to  
 1197 have the two translators at City Hall that had both studied in America. So sometimes we  
 1198 would argue about certain things...  
 1199  
 1200 *[Laughter]*  
 1201  
 1202 ...because I just didn't know what the American English or British English because...  
 1203  
 1204 *You were used to,*

1205  
1206 ...yeah, so, em, we didn't have kind of technology but it would be good because what we  
1207 realised is specific terms had to be kept the same, so if one translator, and one of us did  
1208 one translation and then they did another translation, then we'd have to go through to  
1209 make sure that it was the same words. And those words did come up like, oh I can't even  
1210 think of it now, but, like, one of the subsidies...  
1211  
1212 *Yeah.*  
1213  
1214 ...had to, like we just had to keep it.  
1215  
1216 *You see, I didn't want to be putting words in your mouth, but when I mentioned*  
1217 *consistency, that's one of the things that translation studies specialises in. This, there's*  
1218 *all sorts of technology - some of it is free on the Internet, like...*  
1219  
1220 *Uhum.*  
1221  
1222 *...there's a, a translation memory software called Omega-t which you can download for*  
1223 *free and that will store things for you and help you reuse them and...*  
1224  
1225 *Oh, I wish we had known that!*  
1226  
1227 *...yeah. [Laughter] Similarly, I don't know did you use any machine translation like*  
1228 *Google Translate or?*  
1229  
1230 *No. We, I, I don't even know why we didn't even think to use that type of stuff. We were*  
1231 *just, yeah. Based off our own knowledge and using a denshi jisho [Note: 'electronic*  
1232 *dictionary*  
1233 *- widely used in Japan], yeah, and our co-workers because if it came to context, we just*  
1234 *asked them to explain to us what they meant and then we would write something out and*  
1235 *they'd be like, "Yeah, that's what I was meaning," kind of thing. So it was like working*  
1236 *together with another person, but, yeah, like, talking about specific words we used for the*  
1237 *earthquake, after myself and the other New Zealander had left, they replaced us with*  
1238 *Americans. So I worked with one of the Americans for a year and a lot of the times he*  
1239 *would be like, "Why is this English being used?" And I also found the same thing, like,*  
1240 *em, with the American before me had used all of these earthquake-related words and I*  
1241 *would be like, "No. I want to change it." And he would also be like, "No. I want to*  
1242 *change it to what I want it to be." But they were all, specific words were already set, so*  
1243 *they had to keep it whether they liked it or not, and that will continue.*  
1244  
1245 *Yeah.*  
1246  
1247 *So, em, you do have to be really careful in how you translate things. I was, em, I*  
1248 *remember. And it's not just based on English speakers, it's based on what the Japanese*  
1249 *higher-ups think of your English, because I remember, I had to translate something. It, I*  
1250 *can't remember the Japanese, it was something like, in English it was "Moving Forward*  
1251 *as one Sendai", but I didn't like that, and I didn't want it to be that, but the higher-ups*  
1252 *didn't like my first one that I had said. You know, maybe it could be less, like, they*  
1253 *wanted it to be something that they thought sounded good, and yes they may have had an*  
1254 *English background, and now that I do look at it, I'm like "Yeah, it does translate what*  
1255 *they were trying to get across," but at the same time I was like, "It could have been*  
1256 *changed to something else." Yeah, so, em.*  
1257  
1258 *Oh, this is, that's very interesting because there's a whole, like, theory behind all that*  
1259 *kind of, those decisions...*



1260  
 1261 Uhum  
 1262  
 1263 *...like, how you take one language and map it onto another and, yeah, maybe that's what*  
 1264 *they, sort of, that's how it maps, but that's not, sort of, not the feeling, or.*  
 1265  
 1266 But then again, even if, em, they knew about translation, my other coworker, {redacted},  
 1267 but I think we were both, had completely different translation skills so, em, we would use  
 1268 different English and so it was best to keep one person doing specific translations and  
 1269 another doing the same thing so you didn't mix it...  
 1270  
 1271 *Yeah.*  
 1272  
 1273 *...because once it got mixed, you could tell. My friend used to say you could tell my*  
 1274 *writing style...*  
 1275  
 1276 *[Laughter]*  
 1277  
 1278 *...so they knew if it was me or not...*  
 1279  
 1280 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1281  
 1282 *...em, but I guess that is the hard thing about translation.*  
 1283  
 1284 *Yeah.*  
 1285  
 1286 *Yeah.*  
 1287  
 1288 *I think, also, the, just the other thing you mentioned, there's definitely ways that time*  
 1289 *could be saved. Like say, you said that there was certain words that kept coming up that*  
 1290 *you would have to use again and again, some of those software systems, they plug it right*  
 1291 *in there for you, you just hit and it pops up and, like, you just hit enter and you...*  
 1292  
 1293 *Because we...*  
 1294  
 1295 *...type away.*  
 1296  
 1297 *...we fell back on the two that worked at City Hall. They had worked there for a very long*  
 1298 *time, so they knew, when it came to translations, if there was a new translation that came*  
 1299 *up, if they had seen it before, they knew where to get it from. So we relied heavily on*  
 1300 *them because we hadn't been there that long and we didn't know where everything was*  
 1301 *stored so, em, yeah, that experience, but if they lost them two, I don't know where, they*  
 1302 *would have all of the information but it's nice to know that you can fall back on someone*  
 1303 *with experience, so when they look at one thing, they know what the word is straight*  
 1304 *away.*  
 1305  
 1306 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1307  
 1308 *Yeah, but, yeah, if we did use that technology, it would have been great, but, it's hard*  
 1309 *working for, like, em, {the local government} and, and they had specific rules about, em,*  
 1310 *privacy, and that type of thing. Like, not being able to, some schools they can't access*  
 1311 *gmail, so that cuts them right out of, like, getting the information from the email, so they*  
 1312 *have to check it when they get home. So that's why, em - I didn't say this at the start, but*  
 1313 *- everyone is told to get a Softbank phone [Note: a major mobile carrier in Japan - in*

1314 2011 their phones tended not to be smartphones] in Sendai because through Softbank we  
 1315 can call each other for free. We can also message for free.  
 1316  
 1317 *Yeah.*  
 1318  
 1319 Em, but, after the earthquake we started telling people, “You should get a smartphone.”  
 1320 Because you can access Facebook, you can access e-mails. Em, and, yeah, eh, you may  
 1321 not be able to use your phone after a disaster, but at least you have it there so when you  
 1322 can, because I would be trying to send through messages just all the time, and you didn’t  
 1323 even know if it was going to send through or not. So, em, we tried to get more people on,  
 1324 buying smartphones.  
 1325  
 1326 *Em, one thing that several people have said to me, especially in Tokyo, but also in some*  
 1327 *other areas, if they didn’t have Internet in the disaster, like, if they hadn’t been able to get*  
 1328 *some sort of a Net connection, they might not have stayed in Japan when they did.*  
 1329  
 1330 It’s true, yeah, because they only other way was through TV, but I don’t know if you’ve  
 1331 seen the TV if, when there’s been an earthquake and it comes up on the screen, and if you  
 1332 don’t understand Japanese you’re like, “Okay, that’s a map of Japan, that’s all coloured.  
 1333 And you don’t know what’s going on, there’s, kind of, numbers on the screen.” Yeah,  
 1334 em, but now, I don’t, phones have this terrible ring to it...  
 1335  
 1336 *[Sharp intake of breath]*  
 1337  
 1338 ...yeah, it totally freaks people out when they all start going...  
 1339  
 1340 *Oh [Laughter].*  
 1341  
 1342 ...and you’re like, “okay.” So, em, yeah. I mean, it is good to have, I think, they have  
 1343 been learning from it, so they’re updating and what not...  
 1344  
 1345 *Yeah.*  
 1346  
 1347 ...I mean it can only be, be good...  
 1348  
 1349 *Yeah.*  
 1350  
 1351 ...but, they’re going to, yeah, they’re going to need it in the future in case something like  
 1352 that happens again.  
 1353  
 1354 *I’ve spoken to a few people about this, about the, I think I’m traumatised by that early-*  
 1355 *warning alarm. It’s the most terrifying sound. I think I’m more scared of it than I am of*  
 1356 *an earthquake.*  
 1357  
 1358 Yeah, because you’re waiting for it.  
 1359  
 1360 *Oh, it’s an awful feeling [Laughter].*  
 1361  
 1362 I’ve only had, since the earthquake, we’ve only had, like, a couple of really big ones. And  
 1363 one of them was when, yeah, the alarms...  
 1364  
 1365 *[Mimics alarm sound]...*  
 1366  
 1367 ...everyone’s alarm went off...  
 1368

1369 ...oh, that gives me chills.  
1370  
1371 ...and I was in the office, and we're on the second floor. I was the only one with my bag  
1372 on my shoulders ready to run out. Yeah. Everyone else was just going about their work  
1373 and yeah, just.  
1374  
1375 *I don't know how they do it, I don't know how they do it. I, I, I kind of, the most traumatic*  
1376 *feeling that, as you said it's kind of, "Okay, what's coming?" [Laughter]*  
1377  
1378 Brace yourself and get ready for...  
1379  
1380 ...yeah, yeah, yeah...  
1381  
1382 ...something bad to happen.  
1383  
1384 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. But, I had a really interesting suggestion from one person I spoke to*  
1385 *that - I don't know how technologically this is, might be way out there - you know when*  
1386 *they send out those, em, early warnings, like, it says in now English or whatever, you*  
1387 *know, "You should prepare," you know, "an earthquake is coming." Or, "Earthquake*  
1388 *centred on this place's seismic intensity." He was suggesting why don't you put a link to,*  
1389 *let's say, {some} information centre in that la, like, that warning. So, like, go to*  
1390 *[www.blahblahblah...](http://www.blahblahblah...)*  
1391  
1392 Yeah, there's the, after the earthquake a lot of people would check the link, the [Note: the  
1393 participant thinks to himself]. What is it? The meteorological...  
1394  
1395 *Oh the.*  
1396  
1397 ...Japan site, or the, I don't know what it's called, but, em, that has all the key information  
1398 in English so we made sure to send that...  
1399  
1400 *Just go to that.*  
1401  
1402 ...so if they needed to know more information...  
1403  
1404 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1405  
1406 ...em, yeah, otherwise Facebook [laughter].  
1407  
1408 *Yeah, yeah, no, but, em, it's, it's been absolutely fascinating talking to you because,*  
1409 *again as I said, every, you know, 24 people now, in many ways everyone is completely*  
1410 *different, but there are some things, there are some themes which are definitely emerging*  
1411 *for sure...*  
1412  
1413 Uhum.  
1414  
1415 *...and you're, you're one of the people I've spoken to who really was translating in the*  
1416 *disaster. I spoke to one interpreter who was up in some of the worst-hit areas interpreting*  
1417 *officially...*  
1418  
1419 Uhum.  
1420  
1421 *...and, like, you know, this, this person is a professional interpreter and talked about how*  
1422 *difficult the, the, the job was, so for someone who wasn't trained professionally, I think*  
1423 *it's amazing work that you did, and I don't know how you kept it up for so long...*

1424  
 1425 Um...  
 1426  
 1427 ...*I, that's...*  
 1428  
 1429 ...I don't actually know either...  
 1430  
 1431 ...*yeah, but...*  
 1432  
 1433 ...I just got through it.  
 1434  
 1435 ...*you got through it. Yeah, you just did it, I suppose. You know, there are some people*  
 1436 *who are like that, like, you just...*  
 1437  
 1438 It's definitely life-changing...  
 1439  
 1440 ...*kind of, put your nose forward.*  
 1441  
 1442 ...like, I can tell you that, definitely life-changing, but, I guess, when I try to explain it to  
 1443 my friends and family back home, they don't, just don't understand because they just  
 1444 weren't there so it's difficult to explain, explain what was going on. Yeah.  
 1445  
 1446 *Well, I didn't, as I told you, I didn't have a dramatic experience, as I said, my company*  
 1447 *did...*  
 1448  
 1449 Uhum.  
 1450  
 1451 ...*I was involved in that but, like, me personally, I didn't lose anyone, I didn't have any*  
 1452 *drama or anything in my, my life, but one thing that really hit home with what you said is*  
 1453 *I realized the importance of family to me...*  
 1454  
 1455 Yeah.  
 1456  
 1457 ...*I didn't think my - this sounds really awful, actually, me saying this, but - before, I*  
 1458 *didn't think my family was that important. Like, I, I love them and thought they were*  
 1459 *important to me...*  
 1460  
 1461 Yeah.  
 1462  
 1463 ...*but like, I'd lived away from home for a long time. Not just, just in Japan. I was like,*  
 1464 *well, "I'm never going back to Ireland," kind of thing, just, "I'll see them when I see*  
 1465 *them."*  
 1466  
 1467 Yeah.  
 1468  
 1469 *And it just changed. I, I, I actually, I stayed for a year-and-a-half after the earthquake but*  
 1470 *then moved home...*  
 1471  
 1472 Oh.  
 1473  
 1474 ...*and now I live five minutes away from them [laughter].*  
 1475  
 1476 [Laughter]  
 1477

1478 *That may be too much. I've gone the other extreme. But it really hit home when you said*  
 1479 *how family, you realized how family was.*  
 1480  
 1481 Yeah and I guess you do realize the people close to you that are li, - even if they're not  
 1482 your family - how close they've become. Because my co-workers became so close, and  
 1483 even up until now, they're still fundraising and trying to, like, make an exchange kind of  
 1484 program between New Zealand and Sendai, because, yeah, I, I'm really happy that it's  
 1485 continued. I mean, it's difficult to do. We all have full-time jobs, so for them to keep it  
 1486 going, and I don't live in Sendai any more, so for them to keep it going, and trying to  
 1487 make sure that the New Zealand name is out there, because {the foreign staff now} are  
 1488 American, so for that reason, you know, it could be lost there...  
 1489  
 1490 *Yeah. It changes the dynamic. {Well} I am really grateful to you.*  
 1491  
 1492 No, no, no. You're welcome.  
 1493  
 1494 *Just, just the final thing is, you, you know, em, I hope I haven't dragged up any difficult*  
 1495 *memories or anything for you and you're not feeling any...*  
 1496  
 1497 No I think...  
 1498  
 1499 ...extra stress.  
 1500  
 1501 ...after the earthquake it was, em, I had a chance to talk about it, so I think leaving as it is,  
 1502 I mean it's still, I have friends that are still affected by it, but, yeah, I'm, I'm, I mean, I  
 1503 don't know, not moved on but, yeah, I'm not as affected. Because I was heavily affected  
 1504 and it took a while to process everything and get back on to like, em. One random thing  
 1505 that I did from the earthquake, I used to cook every day before the earthquake. I still  
 1506 haven't cooked since the earthquake. Isn't that really random? And I don't know why.  
 1507 Food was a big thing that we did not have for the longest time. And I think, yeah, we  
 1508 didn't have electricity or water, but food was a major, like. When, I also won't, I don't  
 1509 waste food now at all, and I will sit there even if I am going to be sick and I will eat other  
 1510 people's food and they are like, "You don't have to do that. We paid for it," and that type  
 1511 of thing. But I don't know, I just kept that from the earthquake. I was like, "I had no  
 1512 food." And, yeah, and you don't waste food anymore, because I would just, you know,  
 1513 leave food there, you know, paid for it, whatever, it's going to go in the bin. But not  
 1514 having food, this sucks big time. And having to, like, last on, like, I mean sure,  
 1515 emergency food is not going to be the tastiest food, right? But having to live on that,  
 1516 yeah, [laughter]...  
 1517  
 1518 *[Laughter]*  
 1519  
 1520 ...it wasn't fun. It was not fun at all. So, em, yeah, it's almost been two year, two, no it's  
 1521 been more than two years, hasn't it?  
 1522  
 1523 *Yeah, two-and-a-half.*  
 1524  
 1525 And I haven't cooked...  
 1526  
 1527 *That's very interesting.*  
 1528  
 1529 ...I don't know why, but I'm sure it's something psychological or something. But, em,  
 1530 yeah, I don't know, I haven't cooked. I'm sure I could just go home and cook now...  
 1531  
 1532 *Yeah.*

1533  
 1534 ...but just, like, I don't know. Yeah. So, em, yeah, I don't think I'm as affected as I was,  
 1535 but, yeah, everyone was affected in their own way.  
 1536  
 1537 *Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. Em, one of the things the university was really strong about was*  
 1538 *making sure that we had counsellors in place in case anyone...*  
 1539  
 1540 Okay...  
 1541  
 1542 *...did feel.*  
 1543  
 1544 ...I actually did, have spoken to a counsellor.  
 1545  
 1546 *Ah, okay.*  
 1547  
 1548 We all, we, we were all made to, em, to go and talk to counsellors, and I think that was,  
 1549 when I went and talked to the counsellor, mine wasn't even speaking about the  
 1550 earthquake, mine was talking about work, the Christchurch Earthquake - because I was  
 1551 still, it was the Christchurch Earthquake...  
 1552  
 1553 *You hadn't processed that.*  
 1554  
 1555 ...yeah, so mine was focused on that, so I think having it all together as one wasn't so  
 1556 great, but having it all as one I could process it faster maybe.  
 1557  
 1558 *Yeah.*  
 1559  
 1560 So, em, yeah, but one of the first things I wanted to talk to them about was the  
 1561 Christchurch Earthquake because I was like fully heartbroken just watching it on, because  
 1562 I would go to work and for the first three or four days I wouldn't do any work, because  
 1563 I'm just sitting there watching the news trying to figure out, "Okay, well, what's going on  
 1564 back home?" But, em, yeah.  
 1565  
 1566 *So, yeah...*  
 1567  
 1568 [Laughter]  
 1569  
 1570 *...yeah, no, this is a really clumsy like, I really actually have grown to dislike this*  
 1571 *question intensely...*  
 1572  
 1573 Okay.  
 1574  
 1575 *...it's just the way I worked it is just after speaking to me I wanted to make sure people*  
 1576 *weren't feeling extra stress because of me...*  
 1577  
 1578 Okay, okay, okay.  
 1579  
 1580 *...em, I'm not a counsellor...*  
 1581  
 1582 [Laughter]  
 1583  
 1584 *...so I'm not sure I can tell people are feeling extra stress so I thought beforehand, "Well,*  
 1585 *I'll just ask them...*  
 1586  
 1587 Yeah, right, right, right.

1588  
1589 *...to tell me." But now I've come across it, it's an awful question, but if there is some way*  
1590 *you could, sort of, say how you're feeling now in terms of having spoken to me. Basically*  
1591 *the agreement I made was that if a person circled a certain number or above we'd*  
1592 *introduce...*  
1593  
1594 Okay.  
1595  
1596 *...the counsellor. But like that's.*  
1597  
1598 I'm in, yeah, I'm not anxious. Em, because I guess part of my job I have to kind of  
1599 counsel...  
1600  
1601 Okay.  
1602  
1603 ...a lot of the people that went through it and you know, you have, we learned techniques  
1604 on how to counsel people, but how do you go about that when they've been through all  
1605 really different experiences, so, em, yeah, I don't really talk about my experience as a  
1606 whole because I don't think it's, like, that important when it , when I know...  
1607  
1608 Yeah.  
1609  
1610 ...what my friends have been through, so, em, yeah, I didn't really speak about it. So when  
1611 it came to that one where I'm online with that group, it, I was supposed to be there to  
1612 translate for these Japanese students, and then they found out I was from Christchurch  
1613 and then they found out that I was there, so they, instead of asking the students, they were  
1614 asking me...  
1615  
1616 [Laughter]  
1617  
1618 ...and then afterwards they were just like, "Can you say that again?" and...  
1619  
1620 [Laughter]  
1621  
1622 ...I'm, I'm on the freaking radio...  
1623  
1624 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
1625  
1626 ...so I was like, "Ah!" Because I didn't realize it was going, like, all out on air, but, I  
1627 mean, all I was talking about was Facebook and Twitter so, yeah.  
1628  
1629 Yeah. Oh I'm hugely grateful to those people [laughter] because that's how I found you  
1630 so it was, eh, it was absolutely...  
1631  
1632 [Laughter] I know...  
1633  
1634 *...a lucky chance for me. [Note: this participant was not introduced to me. I found his*  
1635 *name and contact details online and cold called him.]*  
1636  
1637 ...because it comes up all the time and that picture of me holding the...  
1638  
1639 I know, I know.  
1640  
1641 ..the sign.  
1642

1643 *It's a little bit scary, isn't it, how, like, the Internet now is a way of finding people*  
 1644 *halfway across the world and.*  
 1645  
 1646 *If it's a good thing [laughter] then it's great, right?*  
 1647  
 1648 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1649  
 1650 *But like I have a, I don't know, I have this, em, essay that I wrote when I got a*  
 1651 *scholarship way back when when I was an exchange student here in Tokyo, and my*  
 1652 *friends now they're just so like, "Oh, remember that time?"...*  
 1653  
 1654 *[Laughter]*  
 1655  
 1656 *...and I was like, "You didn't have to say that. So obviously you googled me." [laughter]*  
 1657  
 1658 *Oh dear, yeah, I, I know that certainly I'm more cautious about what I put up under my*  
 1659 *own name and...*  
 1660  
 1661 *Uhum.*  
 1662  
 1663 *...and I would have, kind of, prided myself on having a fairly tight control of what's going*  
 1664 *out there. But even when you, you think you do, like random stuff comes up, and I*  
 1665 *remember one of my friends telling me - I've since managed to take it down - "There's*  
 1666 *this awful photo of you on the Internet." And I was like, "How? What? I didn't put it up."*  
 1667 *Somebody else had put it up and put my name on it and I was like, "That's, that's the*  
 1668 *danger."*  
 1669  
 1670 *It's getting it down, though, right?*  
 1671  
 1672 *You can't always, even, I was quite lucky, like, because I knew the person who had put it*  
 1673 *up so I was able to say, "Look, you have to take that down." Em, but sometimes, you*  
 1674 *know, it could be out of your control or whatever. But then, you know, you mentioned say*  
 1675 *the privacy laws in Japan. That's a whole other bundle of issues, like, I think - I mean,*  
 1676 *this is nothing to do with my, my thesis now but - having spoken to some people in*  
 1677 *different situations, the privacy laws actually acted as a real barrier to the response in*  
 1678 *some cases. Ehm, there was information that, say, this office had, that they weren't*  
 1679 *legally allowed to share it with another office. It could have helped in the response.*  
 1680  
 1681 *It's quite sad, isn't it? They could have all shared the information but because, yeah, I*  
 1682 *mean...*  
 1683  
 1684 *Well.*  
 1685  
 1686 *...I think that's, when it comes to foreigners living here, we tend to share information*  
 1687 *anyway...*  
 1688  
 1689 *Yeah.*  
 1690  
 1691 *...but just don't use it in that way, but at least know of that sort of stuff.*  
 1692  
 1693 *And, and one thing I also feel is, you know, we may be brought up in a more, like, "Look,*  
 1694 *I'll share it, but I'll take responsibility for it" kind of environment. So we maybe will*  
 1695 *make that call in a disaster, "Look, I know this is against the rules, but you know, I as,*  
 1696 *let's say XYZ manager, I'll put my head on the line for it." Whereas maybe in certain*  
 1697 *institutional circumstances in Japan that culture isn't there so they have difficulty in*



1698 saying, you know, "Let's go ahead and just do it anyway even though it's not the  
 1699 procedure or the rule." So, but I mean, it's always easy for me as somebody two-and-a-  
 1700 half years down the line coming in and saying, "Oh, you should have done this, you  
 1701 should have done that."  
 1702  
 1703 [Laughter]  
 1704  
 1705 I really want to avoid that in my thesis because at the time it's a disaster...  
 1706  
 1707 Um.  
 1708  
 1709 ...I mean, people are dying, people are floating out to, to sea, you know. You do what you  
 1710 can. You do the best you can. And I think Japan did an amazing job...  
 1711  
 1712 They did.  
 1713  
 1714 {redacted} Like, I think one thing I am still working through in the whole thing is it may  
 1715 come around that some of the preconceptions that I had about say "You must translate  
 1716 this," or "This needs to be done" might not be, might not hold true. Em, we didn't talk  
 1717 about it at all because it just didn't come up but a lot of people have talked about how  
 1718 important pictures and diagrams were, especially in relation to the nuclear disaster.  
 1719 That, you know, these were people who could speak both, both languages very fluently,  
 1720 but even when they translated microsievverts into, into English, they still didn't know what  
 1721 it meant [laughter] so in that kind of a situation, you know, translation is one layer but  
 1722 then actually explaining the information is another layer and then a lot of people talked  
 1723 about images and, so maybe rather than, you know, translating into multiple languages  
 1724 or putting everything in Easy Japanese, it might be good to just have better images to, to  
 1725 communicate certain information.  
 1726  
 1727 That's just what I was going to say. That's one thing {the centre I worked for} started  
 1728 doing after the earthquake, there is a lecturer in - this is probably not right, but - Iwate  
 1729 Prefecture, I think. He - no, it's not Iwate. It's somewhere, sorry - he focuses on how to  
 1730 get information out in Easy Japanese, so I think {the centre} took a couple of courses  
 1731 with him and the information that they give out now is not in Japanese but Easy Japanese  
 1732 or it's given in Japanese and Easy Japanese as well.  
 1733  
 1734 He's not in Hirosaki by any chance, is he?  
 1735  
 1736 Oh, yeah, yeah, that's it.  
 1737  
 1738 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 1739  
 1740 So, em, he's, he went and spoke, because I think after the earthquake they realised it's  
 1741 great to put it in Japanese but not everyone understands those specific words, so I've seen  
 1742 Easy Japanese and I think it's great because there are a lot of people that have lived in  
 1743 Japan that don't necessarily use that type, those types of words. They use easy  
 1744 Japanese...  
 1745  
 1746 Yeah.  
 1747  
 1748 ...and they may be really good at speaking the language but they may not know what that  
 1749 word means.  
 1750  
 1751 Exactly.  
 1752

1753 Yeah, so.  
 1754  
 1755 *Exactly. It's a really interesting topic and I know that one of the motivations behind it is,*  
 1756 *like, is it fair to translate things into English in an area where most of the people, let's*  
 1757 *say, speak Portuguese or, you know, Chinese or Korean or something like that...*  
 1758  
 1759 Uhum.  
 1760  
 1761 *...so like the Easy Japanese may be just more kind of a balanced way of providing*  
 1762 *information.*  
 1763  
 1764 In Sendai, I don't know if this is like other, oh yeah I guess it is other parts, we knew how  
 1765 many of that specific, you know, country was in Sendai so I think for them, because they  
 1766 knew of those specific people it was easy to find them. You know, like, "We're looking  
 1767 for that person..."  
 1768  
 1769 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1770  
 1771 *...from that country. Anyone know?"*  
 1772  
 1773 *Yeah.*  
 1774  
 1775 Okay, so, em, I think the harder ones were Koreans and Chinese because there were a lot  
 1776 in Miyagi Prefecture and Sendai City that are married to Japanese that have been here for  
 1777 a long time...  
 1778  
 1779 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1780  
 1781 *...so getting information to them unless they are in a community of Chinese or Koreans*  
 1782 *because they, I don't think, they probably get their information in Japanese, yeah, so.*  
 1783  
 1784 *Yeah. Oh, em, that's, that's a huge issue for me. How am I going to define what is a*  
 1785 *foreigner in Japan? That's, I'm already struggling with that because, you know, for*  
 1786 *example I had that question on the other sheet about your nationality and your*  
 1787 *citizenship...*  
 1788  
 1789 Uhum.  
 1790  
 1791 *...if some of the people - and some of the people I have spoken to were born in one*  
 1792 *country but now have a Japanese passport that means the government recognises them as*  
 1793 *Japanese...*  
 1794  
 1795 Right.  
 1796  
 1797 *...so should I? But they self-identify as foreign.*  
 1798  
 1799 Yes...  
 1800  
 1801 *So, I don't know [laughter].*  
 1802  
 1803 *... well, I, if I had Japanese citizenship, I would still be a New Zealander...*  
 1804  
 1805 *You see, so this is really the tricky thing...*  
 1806  
 1807 *...I would never consider myself as Japanese.*

1808  
1809 *...how, I don't know how I'm going to do it. Em, I think it's, there's going to be no perfect*  
1810 *way. I'm just going to have to draw a line in the sand and say for my study, yeah, a*  
1811 *foreigner means blahblahblah, or whatever. But it's something I never even thought*  
1812 *about, like, what I'm finding is the more, the deeper I get in, like, you know, you said*  
1813 *about how foreigners were all classed together but you know for you, you know, maybe*  
1814 *you had less in common with some of the other foreign groups or they had less in*  
1815 *common with you than with you and the Japanese so that's a tricky one as well, and then*  
1816 *also as I said, like, the short and long term...*  
1817  
1818 Yeah.  
1819  
1820 *...that's a huge difference. But it's terrible, you know the way, like, people find humour in*  
1821 *things, eh, about, a story about the subway where long-term foreign residents were in the*  
1822 *subway, and an announcement was made in Japanese, and the station announcer was so*  
1823 *panicked in his voice that some obviously tourists ran and jumped over the turnstiles and,*  
1824 *like, ran screaming from the subway...*  
1825  
1826 Woah!  
1827  
1828 *...and, like, the long-term residents laughed a little bit because it was so comical but it*  
1829 *was just they couldn't understand, there was this man making a very panicked-sounding*  
1830 *announcement in Japanese and they knew nothing about it. And then an alarm happened*  
1831 *and then, you know, the shaking happened, so.*  
1832  
1833 Well, that's like even my friends that don't speak Japanese that well now, they'll post on  
1834 Facebook, they'll be like, "What just happened?" Like, I suppose one of my friends in  
1835 Osaka does that actually. He's like, "Okay, there's lots of police around, what's going  
1836 on?"  
1837  
1838 [Laughter]  
1839  
1840 And I'm like, I just like, "Did anyone feel that? Like, where is it? Where was it located?  
1841 But yeah, you should try to find that information from Facebook, so.  
1842  
1843 *Facebook's a fascinating one. It's a fascinating one. Ehm, I came in a little bit suspicious*  
1844 *of social media because there had been lots and lots of talk about it in all manner of*  
1845 *disasters like Haiti and, you know, the Christchurch Earthquake and various disasters*  
1846 *and I was starting to feel a bit, "Hmm, is it really that helpful?" And now from talking to*  
1847 *people most people, em, it's not completely set, some people didn't have a good*  
1848 *impression of the panic-mongering kind of, em, the false information that could easily*  
1849 *spread but overall most people seemed to find it pretty useful.*  
1850  
1851 Yeah, I guess, we, we had the same thing. There may have been, like, panic emails to  
1852 everyone but, I guess, people were like, "Okay, hold up. You have to step back, look at  
1853 this information and this information. You can't just say those types of things." So, I  
1854 guess, most people knew what was happening, so they were just trying to make sure that,  
1855 you know, we didn't have everyone panicking over it, so, yeah, in that context I guess,  
1856 we, we, I think we were really lucky but I know that there's seventy of us. I don't know  
1857 everyone that well...  
1858  
1859 Yeah.  
1860  
1861 So there would have been other communities that were way stronger than our community  
1862 but we got the information out to us, so.

1863  
1864 *Yeah, I think there is something about a, kind of, a critical mass of, like, community as*  
1865 *well, like, there's maybe thirty or forty people who you can sort of know and trust and*  
1866 *they form, like, the core of your information sharing or information gathering, and then*  
1867 *the other sort of outer stuff you, kind of, make an assessment on case by case...*  
1868  
1869 Right.  
1870  
1871 *...kind of thing. Because a lot of people have talked about how now the social media let*  
1872 *you kind of rank the groups you are in like circles or whatever so that okay this is my*  
1873 *group that I really trust or so, it's, it's, I mean I could write probably a thesis on just that*  
1874 *topic alone. I'm going to have to...*  
1875  
1876 It sounds really interesting. I can't wait to read it.  
1877  
1878 *...I'm fascinated by it. I'm fascinated by it, but the problem is it's a bit of a Pandora's*  
1879 *Box, like, there's so many things I want to talk about but I'll only be able to talk about a*  
1880 *little part but that's why I said I didn't want to destroy the*  
1881  
1882 [Note: the interview recording finally ends here but we went on to talk for another hour  
1883 just chatting about other topics not related to the research project.]

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/9 Interview with Participant 25*

5 *Researcher: So basically, the, the way I start every interview is just to ask people in*  
6 *general tell me what happened to you in, in the disaster and...*

7  
8 Participant: Okay...

9  
10 ...whatever you want to say.

11  
12 ...ehm, so, in the disaster I was at work across the road, and it was two, yeah, just after  
13 lunch, two thirty or so, and, just that week, we, we had been having quite a few  
14 earthquakes and quite a few long ones...

15  
16 *Yeah.*

17  
18 ...and then this one started, and there weren't many people in the office, there were three  
19 back office ladies, one assistant, me, one sales guy, my boss, and I said to the girl, kind  
20 of, sitting opposite me, I said, "Get under the table." And I went under the table. She and  
21 I went under the table and then my boss came out and said, "We've got to leave." And  
22 then we ran down the stairs and this, which I don't think you're supposed to do.

23  
24 *[Laughter]*

25  
26 *[Laughter]* Ehm, and the stairs are quite, the rail is quite flimsy and it was moving and I  
27 was just swearing my head off. I just remember going, *[Note: the participant mouths]*  
28 "Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck." ...

29  
30 *[Laughter]*

31  
32 ...and my boss was like, "Calm down." *[Laughter]* And then we ran out to the, ehm,  
33 what's it called, so, safety area which is a school play, eh, a sports field near our office.  
34 And people were just line, on the street, ehm, standing in the middle of the road. Yeah,  
35 watching buildings, I suppose...

36  
37 *Yeah.*

38  
39 ...yeah.

40  
41 *And, like, you had been in Japan for some time at that stage...*

42  
43 Uhm.

44  
45 ...why was it that this earthquake, kind of, got that reaction from you?

46  
47 It was really long. Normally, you know, you just sit at your desk and just hope it, kind of,  
48 calms down a little bit...

49  
50 *[Laughter]*

51  
52 ...but it didn't. Just got worse and worse, and things were moving, things were falling  
53 over, and, ehm, stuff was falling out of cabinets and then, so we went, that's when we

54 went, and my boss came out and said, "Let's leave." And that's, like, you know, if your  
 55 boss is saying that, and the boss is supposed to be the calm person, yeah.  
 56  
 57 *It's a sign [laughter].*  
 58  
 59 It's a sign, yeah.  
 60  
 61 *And so, as I mentioned at the, at the start, what I'm really interested in is how people*  
 62 *communicated or how they got information so, you know, by the time you had gotten to*  
 63 *the, to the, sort of, evacuation area, had you communicated with anyone at that stage?*  
 64  
 65 No. No, not at all. We were in the evacuation area and we were looking up at our  
 66 building, there was someone still in that building who had been in the toilet, so we could  
 67 see him and we were, kind of, waving at him to come down, but that was the only kind of  
 68 communication. There was no, nothing else. And then I went, when we were back in to  
 69 the office, even at that time, no-one, we were all on the field and there were, eh, you  
 70 know, heaps of other people from the surrounding offices. No-one was, we were just,  
 71 kind of, sitting on the ground and looking around, looking up at {a very, large modern,  
 72 skyscraper that dominates the nearby skyline that was} going like this [Note: the  
 73 participant gestures a strong, side-to-side swaying motion with her hand] and there were  
 74 people in the top, the very top glass windows, and it was really scary to watch that. But,  
 75 no, we didn't even communicate with people from other offices who were on the same  
 76 sports ground. We were just in our group. I think that's what happens in Japan, you just,  
 77 kind of, stay in your group. And that's what we did, when we walked out, and then we  
 78 couldn't use our phones...  
 79  
 80 *Ah.*  
 81  
 82 ...so, one person, ehm, the, one, the sales guy who was there, who wasn't in the toilet, he  
 83 was in the office, was trying to call people, because at that time, I, we had {business  
 84 associates}, or we had a {business associate} here who was out in Saitama, I think. So we  
 85 were trying to call them. And just trying to, he was trying to call people, our sales team.  
 86  
 87 *So, when you say you had a {business associate} over, does that, mean, like somebody*  
 88 *from Australia?*  
 89  
 90 No, an Italian guy...  
 91  
 92 *Italian?*  
 93  
 94 ...was over, but he was completely calm about the whole thing, apparently. [Laughter]  
 95  
 96 *[Laughter]*  
 97  
 98 Normally you imagine Italians would be like, "Hey, what's going on?" But, I know they  
 99 took a while to get back. But, em, we couldn't communicate, we couldn't, well there was  
 100 no phone, no phone lines were...  
 101  
 102 *Yeah.*  
 103  
 104 ...working. So, em, we went back to the office and decided to go home because the office  
 105 was still, it was still moving. The ground was still shaking, and there were still  
 106 aftershocks, and I called my sister in Australia from the landline...  
 107  
 108 *Aaaahhh.*

109  
110 ...and I said to her, “Just to let you know, we’re okay.” [laughter] and she was like, “What  
111 are you talking about?” [laughter] And this was probably, oh, em, I can’t remember what  
112 time, it wasn’t straight after, it was perhaps, eh, it would have been, there would have  
113 been half-an-hour’s time difference and they, it was a Friday and they were getting, they  
114 were at a pub, they were getting ready to go the pub for Friday night drinks. So, maybe it  
115 was 4:30, I don’t know, I can’t, I can’t remember, but around...  
116  
117 *A little later on, anyway.*  
118  
119 ...later on, yeah. And then, she said, “Oh, okay then. Good.” And then she turned on the  
120 television and she was like, “Oh my god! Are you okay?” And I was like, “Yeah. I’m  
121 going to walk home now.” And then on the way home, trying to call my, em, husband,  
122 who wasn’t my husband at the time [Note: the participant’s voice cracks and her eyes  
123 water slightly] I couldn’t get through, and then text messages started coming through, and  
124 maybe this was about 4:30, text messages were coming through, like, ‘2:38 Are you  
125 okay? Are you okay? Dahdahdahdah.’  
126  
127 *So everything was blocked up?*  
128  
129 Yeah.  
130  
131 *The whole, the whole system was blocked up.*  
132  
133 Yeah.  
134  
135 *I’m really interested in when you said, so, you were on the phone to your sister in*  
136 *Australia and she was the one who turned on the Australian TV...*  
137  
138 Yeah.  
139  
140 *...was that the first time you had, sort of, I don’t know, come into contact with the bigger*  
141 *picture, like?*  
142  
143 Yeah, yeah. I mean, I didn’t realize how big it was at that point...  
144  
145 Yeah.  
146  
147 ...she was just like, “Oh, there’s been an earthquake,” obviously she’s watching it on TV  
148 but, it wasn’t until I went home, walked home and, em, people were like [Note: the  
149 participant stops and begins to shed tears] oh, god, sorry, I’m sorry. I don’t know. Why is  
150 that happening all of a sudden? Sorry. There were so many people, and I couldn’t, I  
151 couldn’t, em, I couldn’t call anyone. And it didn’t get to and then I finally got that  
152 message, and I was like, “Ah, okay.” Fuck, I’m sorry, Patrick.  
153  
154 *No, don’t apologize...*  
155  
156 [Laughter]  
157  
158 ...please.  
159  
160 So anyway, em, then there was just stream, people streaming out on the street, and I live  
161 in a very central area, I live in {redacted}. And I am never going to move out of {that}  
162 ward because it’s the ward that, if, if there’s an emergency, it’s where the, the Diet [Note:  
163 the Japanese parliament building] and everything is, so we’ll be inside! [laughter]...

164  
 165 *[Laughter]*  
 166  
 167 ...but, em, so I was just worried about is my TV on, off the wall, on my bed...  
 168  
 169 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 170  
 171 ...what's broken. You know, no-one, it was, it, it was a worry because I couldn't get  
 172 through to my husband who was, em, working in a restaurant on the 35th floor of a  
 173 building in {central Tokyo}. And, and, the next day, well I was thinking that the next day  
 174 I had a, a {work event} in Yokohama, and would I be able to get there? Just ridiculous  
 175 things like that. I, we, no-one had any idea and people were trying to use their phones,  
 176 and I think you could see people walking and talking, but, it, yeah, people were just, eh,  
 177 and I, I've never seen that many people out at once on the streets walking along. So,  
 178 yeah, at that time, no idea of what was going on. And then I went home and my friend  
 179 Skyped me and the, the, my building was shaking the whole time and but she was talking  
 180 and telling me stupid stories about what was going on, so just to, kind of, take my mind  
 181 off it, because {my boyfriend-now-husband} wasn't home. I went to the shops, shops, the  
 182 closest supermarket, heaps of stuff had fallen off the shelves. I went to the convenience  
 183 store. Most people had obviously bought something for, going on the way home, and  
 184 then, ehm, I didn't, I think I turned the television on, but I, I can't remember what was  
 185 being shown. And I don't think we, I, I think maybe there was tsunami stuff, but not  
 186 much, and, eh, eh, there was just a map, I think, perhaps just a map of Japan with, you  
 187 know, the constant of, em, eh, message coming up on screen, like, there's an aft, there's  
 188 been an aftershock here and and earthquake here and nothing, no footage of actual  
 189 tsunami, from what I remember.  
 190  
 191 *So that channel you would have been watching, what channel?*  
 192  
 193 I think it was NHK, yeah.  
 194  
 195 *NHK, so a Japanese language, eh, channel.*  
 196  
 197 Yeah. And I don't, I don't have, em, BBC or anything like that. I've only got just normal  
 198 Japanese TV. And I know you can put it on, the news, you can put on to English version,  
 199 but I was just watching the Japanese one.  
 200  
 201 *Yeah, and actually, I'm not so sure, em, that origi, initially all of that translation was*  
 202 *available anyway, because it was such a fast-moving...*  
 203  
 204 Yeah, yeah, perhaps it wouldn't have been.  
 205  
 206 *...thing. I think it took a while. What they were doing, from what I understand was, ehm,*  
 207 *they were doing a sort of a, like a broadcast in English every, sort of, half hour...*  
 208  
 209 Oh, right.  
 210  
 211 *...but it was only, kind of, a summary thing...*  
 212  
 213 Right.  
 214  
 215 *...they weren't, like, simultaneously translating. So then, the next day, like, you would*  
 216 *have woken up and started again, did you end up going to the, the {work event}?*  
 217



218 No, I [laughter]. No. Next day, I went online and I checked, I was just watching, eh, yeah,  
 219 online the rail routes if there was any disruption, and there was disruption, and I, I didn't  
 220 want to go, so I was just looking, trying to find information that said you don't have to go  
 221 [laughter]...  
 222  
 223 *[Laughter]*  
 224  
 225 ...basically, so I was checking and they [laughter], and I thought my {items to present}  
 226 probably didn't end up there anyway...  
 227  
 228 *Yeah [laughter].*  
 229  
 230 ...because I sent them the, like, there was, like, no way they ended up there and, and then  
 231 finally I find the information saying, ah, it's been cancelled. But, even then, I didn't, I  
 232 don't think I knew, I was so concerned about the {work event}, I didn't, I don't even  
 233 think I, the, I mustn't have, there mustn't have been news about, eh, what was going on in  
 234 Tohoku because why would there be a {work event of this casual nature} if that had just  
 235 happened. I was concerned about the trains and being able to get back. My friend had a  
 236 birthday party dinner organized, and I said, I hate doing, like, last minute cancellation,  
 237 but I said, "I don't know if I can come back home." Because there were so many  
 238 disruptions, but she ended up going to her, but I mean, she'd booked it, it was near her  
 239 house, and she could walk home, or whatever. So she ended up going with some friends,  
 240 but I didn't go...  
 241  
 242 *Yeah.*  
 243  
 244 ... but, em, I, I think the main news items were just news presenters saying there's been  
 245 an aftershake, aftershake, aftershake? Is that right?  
 246  
 247 *Yeah, aftershock.*  
 248  
 249 Maybe I should change my thing [laughter] [Note: the participant is referring to the self-  
 250 assessed English ability score she had given me at the beginning of the interview.]  
 251  
 252 *[Laughter] It's going down!*  
 253  
 254 Oh, jeez! Ehm, yeah, so, ehm, yeah, I, I think there wasn't much, and those, em, AC  
 255 commercials. And, like, warnings and the map of Japan and, you know, spots where there  
 256 had...  
 257  
 258 *Yeah.*  
 259  
 260 ...they had an earthquake or an aftershock...  
 261  
 262 *Yeah.*  
 263  
 264 ...yeah, so that was about it.  
 265  
 266 *It was pretty, like, the information wasn't really that useful to you as someone in Tokyo?*  
 267  
 268 Ehm, not all, em, I mean, the information was where there was an aftershock and that was  
 269 it...  
 270  
 271 *Yeah.*  
 272

273 ...I don't, I mean, any other information - oh, rail information came up, too, perhaps -  
 274 yeah, I think that came up but, em, I don't think anything but the train, really. I slept in  
 275 my clothes for what might have been two weeks. I slept with shoe, jeans and shoes on. So  
 276 I could run out and my husband was "Don't," he was so calm and relaxed...  
 277  
 278 *[Laughter]*  
 279  
 280 ...he was like, "Don't be ridiculous." And had, had the world's quickest showers all the  
 281 time...  
 282  
 283 *Yeah.*  
 284  
 285 ...it was just, super quick with everything in case I had to escape.  
 286  
 287 *Oh, I've, I felt exactly the same way as you...*  
 288  
 289 *Yeah.*  
 290  
 291 *...em, I had been in Japan, you know, not, not as long as you, but a fair amount of time,*  
 292 *and I'd had a fair amount of experience of earthquakes, but I did the same thing. It was*  
 293 *quick showers and, I think because of the aftershocks, were so many...*  
 294  
 295 *Yeah.*  
 296  
 297 *...in a, you know, that two-week period, let's say, after, there was a lot of aftershocks...*  
 298  
 299 *Yeah.*  
 300  
 301 *...and you just, kind of, never knew...*  
 302  
 303 *That's right.*  
 304  
 305 *...is this next one going to be another big one?*  
 306  
 307 *Yeah, exactly, exactly.*  
 308  
 309 *Yeah. And different people react differently...*  
 310  
 311 *Yeah.*  
 312  
 313 *...that's one thing I've really noticed.*  
 314  
 315 *Yeah, like he was super calm. I mean, some people were, my friend, {redacted}, went*  
 316 *home to Canada. And my sister was like, "You've got to come home. Bring {your*  
 317 *boyfriend-now-husband} home." And I was like, "I can't go, go home and what? Worry*  
 318 *about everything?" Because seeing more stuff that's going on, like, thank god the*  
 319 *Japanese networks didn't broadcast half the stuff that was going on. Thank god.*  
 320 *Otherwise it would have been terrible. You know, that, in that sense, information we got,*  
 321 *I think we got so much information from overseas about what was actually going on that*  
 322 *it was scary. But if they had broadcast footage of the tsunami over and over, like, it would*  
 323 *have been terrible, I think. Ehm, but, yeah, I mean for two weeks, yeah, I slept in my*  
 324 *clothes, I walked to work, walked to and from work, I didn't have a bicycle at the time,*  
 325 *and peop, our office was pretty much half shut because we had people living in Chiba...*  
 326  
 327 *That's far.*

328  
329 ...I mean, I could walk...  
330  
331 *Yeah.*  
332  
333 ...so that's no problem but even, you know, the, it's brand, our office is brand new, so, of  
334 course, it was moving like this [Note: the participant gestures a swaying motion with her  
335 hand] all the time...  
336  
337 *Oh, yeah.*  
338  
339 ...so that was annoying.  
340  
341 *I'm really interested in that idea of the difference between what was reported in the*  
342 *Japanese media and what was reported in overseas media...*  
343  
344 *Uhm.*  
345  
346 *...because I think that's one thing that foreign nationals kind of had that the Japanese*  
347 *people maybe didn't have...*  
348  
349 *Yeah.*  
350  
351 *...this access to the two different, I guess, ways of...*  
352  
353 *Yeah.*  
354  
355 *...telling the story. Ehm, you, you were saying that you were glad that the Japanese side*  
356 *wasn't showing so...*  
357  
358 *So much, yeah.*  
359  
360 *...yeah, were, were you watching Australian media or?*  
361  
362 *Em, I was going online or, em, yeah, going online and just reading the Sydney Morning*  
363 *Herald or something like or sometimes watching, ehm, CNN or that kind of thing. So,*  
364 *and, my mum would send me articles about Australians, of Australians interviewed,*  
365 *Australians in Japan interviewed, and there was one where this sensible girl who, ehm,*  
366 *gave an interview and - a girl I know actually, at the time I didn't know her, but - em, she*  
367 *gave a really sensible interview and I remember reading online about this woman who*  
368 *said she hadn't had food and it was chaos and it was just ridiculous, so, you know, at one*  
369 *point, you know, people were, Australians or people overseas were emailing me and*  
370 *sending me messages on Facebook, like, "Are you okay? What's happened? Do you have*  
371 *food? Are you going to come home?" Because they were, in, they were shown, I suppose,*  
372 *real live footage of what happened but then, I suppose, the foreign press did make it a*  
373 *more juicy story, with interviewing idiots who'd be like, "Yeah, we've only got one rice*  
374 *ball, rice ball." And it was, it was just, like, that was ridiculous. In that sense, [Note: the*  
375 *participant uses her hands to show one place on an imaginary scale] they had a kind of*  
376 *skewed view of what happened, and then [Note: the participant uses her hands to show*  
377 *the opposite end of the same imaginary scale] we had this kind of this [laughter] view, so*  
378 *I, that used to make me angry. So I wouldn't, I'd get really annoyed reading foreign*  
379 *reports of what was going on so I tended to just try and just read some stuff and try and*  
380 *not get angry and watch Japanese news.*  
381  
382 *I got it.*

383  
384 Yeah.  
385  
386 *Then, as an Australian, how do you feel your embassy dealt with...*  
387  
388 It was, it was...  
389  
390 *...the situation?*  
391  
392 ...quite good. Ehm, they rang my sister actually and said, because I've nev, I don't think  
393 I've ever signed up for anything, and this was before I was involved in {a certain  
394 Australian group in Japan}, or no, I, I was a member but not on the committee thing and,  
395 em, I, they called my sister and said, you know, "{your sister} is in Tokyo. She should  
396 sign up with this safe traveller thing." [Note: the participant is probably referring to  
397 <http://smartraveller.gov.au/>] So I did. I, we got, em, updates...  
398  
399 Okay.  
400  
401 ...ehm, and people, so I got updates through them, and...  
402  
403 *By, by email or?*  
404  
405 ...yeah, email, yeah. Yeah, ehm, and I got updates through people who had networks in  
406 Japan, ehm, people who had been here for a long time and, I don't know what they were  
407 doing, they got involved with, em, got together and, kind of shared information so people  
408 who I knew were, well, one guy I know who has been here forever, American guy, he  
409 doesn't speak Japanese but he had a whole heap of information from other people, so he  
410 was sending out email every day, like, "I have water, if you need this, if you need that, let  
411 me know," and...  
412  
413 *Uhm.*  
414  
415 ...yeah. But then again, I didn't know, because a lot of the foreigners who organized these  
416 volunteer things were just people trying to help, but not Japanese speakers, so that's  
417 where I thought, you know, how, how much of this is completely true or do you have a  
418 complete grasp of the situation or that kind of thing.  
419  
420 *That's a really interesting point for me. Obviously, as someone who's interested in, like,*  
421 *the language aspect of it all, these people are trying to give you information...*  
422  
423 Yeah.  
424  
425 *...but can you...*  
426  
427 Exactly...  
428  
429 *...rely on it.*  
430  
431 ...yeah, exactly. So this network of peop, yeah, and a, another guy I know who was, ehm,  
432 heavily involved - [Note; the participant speaks to herself trying to remember something]  
433 he started a foreign, em, can't remember what it was called, foreign aid, or something like  
434 that - some group that was sending, em, the main guy in this group, actually, could speak  
435 Japanese and he runs a beer import company here. So he was organizing stuff with this  
436 other English guy who I know can't speak Japanese. This English guy was organizing a  
437 lot of things. And that's when I thought, "Hmm. Are you, is this the right information and

438 are you doing the right thing?" Because you can't just bowl into somewhere and be a  
 439 non-native speaker, or a non-Japanese speaker and, I mean, if, if, your hearts in the right  
 440 place but you've got to be able to be able to communicate with the people and you don't  
 441 want to get in people's way. Do you know what I mean?  
 442  
 443 *Oh, I absolutely know what you mean, em, I know that the people I've spoken to, the most*  
 444 *successful, kind of, volunteer efforts or aid efforts were the ones who partnered with...*  
 445  
 446 Yeah.  
 447  
 448 *...local organizations...*  
 449  
 450 Yeah.  
 451  
 452 *...and that's actually, they talk about that in all disasters, like, not just Japan. The best*  
 453 *way to help is to partner with somebody on the ground...*  
 454  
 455 Yeah.  
 456  
 457 *...that knows the language, who knows the lie of the land...*  
 458  
 459 Yeah.  
 460  
 461 *...because you're absolutely right...*  
 462  
 463 Yeah, you can't just bowl in there.  
 464  
 465 *...you could go in and cause more trouble.*  
 466  
 467 Yeah, yeah. And the last thing they need is for all these foreign people hiring trucks and  
 468 rocking up with water and, you know, and just being, just, not having enough information  
 469 and being misinformed and going in and, kind of, disturbing the balance of what was  
 470 going on.  
 471  
 472 *For you personally, what did you feel was, what information was lacking for you now*  
 473 *that you look back on the disaster?*  
 474  
 475 Ehm...  
 476  
 477 *If, if there was any information lacking.*  
 478  
 479 ...I don't think there was, uh, I think, ehm, I'm not sure, I think there, the, one girl, I  
 480 went to dinner with one girl after and she said just, like, pretty much a month after that  
 481 happened and she said, she complained that people, em, were saying that we ran out of  
 482 water in Tokyo, dahdahdah, and she said, "You do realize that's because the water bottle  
 483 comp, company, main water bottle company was in Tohoku and that got bowled over and  
 484 that's why."  
 485  
 486 *[Laughter]*  
 487  
 488 And so, but that, you know, we didn't know, and I wish we had have known because, I  
 489 mean, I thought there was no, no that there was no water, but it was just because people  
 490 were buying stuff and keeping it at home. I mean, we didn't do that, just because I  
 491 thought that's, that's greedy and you can't just, I live in a tiny apartment [laughter]...  
 492

493 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 494  
 495 ...like, you can't just buy water and what are you going to do...  
 496  
 497 *Yeah.*  
 498  
 499 ...if you get crushed with, [Note: the participant gestures with her hands to show a high  
 500 pile] water's there...  
 501  
 502 *[Laughter]*  
 503  
 504 ...and there was [laughter], you know, you'd get it from somewhere...  
 505  
 506 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 507  
 508 ...ehm, so I thought if people had known, if, like, the foreign community had known that,  
 509 maybe they would have, em, kind of, spread the word to others in Australia or whatever  
 510 that, "Oh, well, you know, we're fine. This happened." Or, I, I, it's stuff, it's stuff like  
 511 that, or what kind of, you know, we saw devastation, we saw lots of old people and some  
 512 schools washed away but to what extent, how big is, is the area, and what, em, what  
 513 companies, eh, what factories were affected and, because, you know, down the track you  
 514 hear, "Oh, Toyota couldn't make something because they had." "Oh I didn't know there  
 515 was even a factory in Tohoku." You know? That kind of stuff. Not just, you know, I  
 516 mean, not just, not just people but what else was destroyed, because people just see a  
 517 bunch of old people sitting around going, "We've lost our home." Okay, but how else has  
 518 this affected Japan? Were whole factories wiped out? You know?  
 519  
 520 *And that would have helped explain...*  
 521  
 522 *Yeah...*  
 523  
 524 *...a lot of other stuff for you? Yeah.*  
 525  
 526 ...I think so, I think so. So in that, was lacking, I think.  
 527  
 528 *And just to confirm, that woman you had dinner with who told you about the bottle*  
 529 *factory, was she also a foreigner?*  
 530  
 531 *She's Japanese.*  
 532  
 533 *Oh, she's Japanese.*  
 534  
 535 *Yeah, yeah, Japanese.*  
 536  
 537 *Ah, okay, so in other words...*  
 538  
 539 *Yeah, sorry, so she had information from somewhere...*  
 540  
 541 *Right, right, right.*  
 542  
 543 ...and I don't know how she got that information but I suppose someone told her.  
 544  
 545 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Ehm, one question which I've asked everybody is, for you, when*  
 546 *did the disaster end?*  
 547

548 Oh, when did it end? Good question.  
 549  
 550 *[Laughter]*  
 551  
 552 I don't think it has.  
 553  
 554 *Okay, yeah.*  
 555  
 556 Yeah...  
 557  
 558 *That's interesting...*  
 559  
 560 I don't think it has.  
 561  
 562 *...you're not the only person to say that.*  
 563  
 564 Ehm, i, it, yeah, it's still, ehm, I mean I still think about it all the time, and things that  
 565 have happened in my life from then have, are, like, pre-earthquake and post-earthquake,  
 566 and, you know, "Oh, we did that after the earthquake," or, you know, that was, "My  
 567 business went like that after." You know? Or people say when you meet people the first  
 568 time, ehm, you ten, you talk about it, like, ehm, people will say - I also have another thing  
 569 which I do {where women get together and have lunch every month} it's around the  
 570 world and I organize it here, I, I took over organizing it last year. So new people come  
 571 and it's a nice way to meet, ehm, new people and, you know, sort of, share information,  
 572 that kind of thing. So when new members join up, someone introduces a new member,  
 573 you know, they say who, you know, how, were you here for the earthquake?...  
 574  
 575 *[Laughter]*  
 576  
 577 ...[laughter] People ask that...  
 578  
 579 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 580  
 581 ...and, "Oh, I came after the earthquake," or "I went home," or, you know, "We did this."  
 582 People will, you, you still talk about it.  
 583  
 584 *It's kind of a defining.*  
 585  
 586 Yeah, exactly. And there are still efforts, you know, charity efforts still going on, and  
 587 you, you still see, you know, boxes by the till in shops, you know, 'Please put your  
 588 change in here and we'll send it to Tohoku.'  
 589  
 590 *Uhuh, uhuh.*  
 591  
 592 Or, ehm, the charities this year that we picked for the {the group I am involved in}, we do  
 593 events and we raise money - and the two charities are TELL, Tokyo English Life Line...  
 594  
 595 *Oh yes, yeah.*  
 596  
 597 ...which has, you know, after the earthquake just not only English speakers, but, you  
 598 know, they need speakers of all sorts of languages now, and, and, they were, what, I think  
 599 they were, they really need help because I'm sure their, em, resources are just  
 600 overstretched. People are still, you know, I suppose have, kind of, post-traumatic stress  
 601 disorder, or something like that, I don't know. But, em, and, eh, a Fukushima, eh,

602 abandoned dog, or animal charity that ca, cares for abandoned, well, not even abandoned,  
 603 you know, animals whose family, parents [laughter] have died or...  
 604  
 605 *Yeah, yeah*  
 606  
 607 ...whatever, so they're directly related to the earthquake, I think, those, aren't they?  
 608  
 609 *Yeah, yeah. One thing I'm interested in, em, you haven't mentioned Fukushima or the*  
 610 *nuclear issue...*  
 611  
 612 No.  
 613  
 614 *...at all. Is there a reason for that?*  
 615  
 616 Ehm, I, I don, don't worry about that. Ehm, what can I do about that? You know? That's,  
 617 I've never been one of those people to forward information on Facebook or, you know,  
 618 ehm, forward horror stories, because I, that's not the way, that's not helping. Ehm, and, I  
 619 do, I'm really, ehm, one thing I do though is I'm very conservative with my electricity  
 620 use [laughter]...  
 621  
 622 *Aaaahhhh [laughter].*  
 623  
 624 ...since then. And I, I went and looked at a, em, house, a, a mansion [Note: this means a  
 625 high-spec apartment in a Japanese context] that's not up yet, but, like, a model room in,  
 626 em, Toyosu area and one side overlooks Tepco building [Note: Tepco is the power  
 627 company that runs the Fukushima nuclear plant] and I said I did not want to look at a  
 628 freaking Tepco building...  
 629  
 630 *[Laughter]*  
 631  
 632 ...that's the last thing I want to look at, like, Tepco are a disgusting company. But, I don't,  
 633 not I don't care, but I don't concern, I'm not concerned with radiation levels. I mean,  
 634 radiation levels, you cannot escape radiation in the world. And it's Japan. I'm sure if it  
 635 were China or somewhere like that, I'd be out of there, but I, and maybe this is silly in a  
 636 way, but I think in Japan - I mean a lot of things have been covered up, and whatever, but  
 637 - people do their job, except Tepco people, people...  
 638  
 639 *[Laughter]*  
 640  
 641 ... [laughter] but people, you know, I have faith in the people trying, doing their best to,  
 642 em, you know deal with that situation and, yeah, I, I'm not into sharing horror stories  
 643 about what's going on. I bought Fukushima peaches, I didn't, and this was just after the  
 644 earthquake, I didn't tell my dad that, eh, my dad and mum were visiting me. It was very  
 645 difficult then to fly over actually, that's another story, but I bought Fukushima peaches,  
 646 so that's what we had to eat...  
 647  
 648 *[Laughter]*  
 649  
 650 ...[laughter] and I, I don't, I don't think, "Oh shit, that's Fukushima." I think, "Okay."  
 651 And maybe that's stupid but I, I think, ehm, they're, you know, bloody let Japan get on  
 652 with it, stop getting stuck in [laughter] to the government and just let them get on with it  
 653 and deal with it and stop spreading horror stories is my opinion on that.  
 654  
 655 *Yeah, em, I think, you're, you're not the only person to have, eh, that sort of opinion. I*  
 656 *was just interested why you hadn't brought it up, brought it up at all, but that's, that's*



657 *really clear now. The last, kind of, topic that I wanted to talk about is a lot of*  
658 *recommendations that say, like, the government, local governmental authorities or NPOs*  
659 *or that are making for future disasters involve the idea of community...*  
660  
661 Yeah.  
662  
663 *...they say that in order for foreign residents or foreign people to be better supported in*  
664 *future disaster, they need to be part of their local communities. I just wanted to know, at*  
665 *the time of the 2011 disaster, did you feel a part of your local community?*  
666  
667 Ehm, yes. Because I live in a building, em, a small, it's six stories, em, and there are three  
668 rooms on each floor. And the f, what, ground floor is a small *izakaya* [Note: this is a  
669 Japanese-style pub] on one side and the other side is a *soba* restaurant [Note: this is  
670 traditional noodle restaurant] and the *izakaya*, the lady who, em, runs the *izakaya*, the  
671 *izakaya* is tiny, like half this room [Note: the size she means by this is only about 20  
672 metres squared]...  
673  
674 Yeah.  
675  
676 ...but she is, ehm, {redacted} she is part of that community, and she, ehm, is very, eh,  
677 she's been in the neighbourhood for ages. Her daughter lives there, and she, kind of, sees  
678 me as her special, kind of, Australian daughter living in the building. So at that time, my  
679 boyfriend wasn't living with me, but he moved in in April just after that, yeah, but she,  
680 but he was staying with me during, after this earthquake period...  
681  
682 Uhuh.  
683  
684 ...ehm, but she was really, eh, concerned with, people were concerned with how I was  
685 going as a foreign person in Japan, and that was a really, quite a lovely thing. People I  
686 didn't really know in my community, I would just have passed, you know, we'd nod or  
687 whatever, would say, "Oh, are your parents worried? Are you going to go back home or  
688 are you okay? And she was like, "If you ever need rice or dahdahdahdahdah, please let  
689 me know." So I felt part of the community. Em, and I really think, eh, having been here  
690 and having Japanese language, Japanese language ability really was so helpful, because I,  
691 yeah, I, em, I can't imagine people living in areas where there's only foreigners who, you  
692 know, expat housing and all that kind of thing, I suppo, I can't imagine what they would  
693 have been doing at the time, but yeah, I felt really part of the community. A small  
694 community. I mean, my area is really, there's a lot of businesses and whatever around  
695 that area but, you know, people did live there, or around.  
696  
697 *Do you think, would you have been able to make that link with the, the owner of the*  
698 *izakaya if you didn't speak Japanese?*  
699  
700 Oh yeah, I think she would have just barked at me in Japanese and given me something  
701 [laughter]...  
702  
703 [Laughter]  
704  
705 ...or [laughter] you know, I think...  
706  
707 *It's just her character.*  
708  
709 ...it's her character, yeah, yeah. But em, no, and my, even my office, ehm, not, i, in, that's  
710 a different community, say, that, we bonded a lot more. Before I was the, the foreign  
711 person who'd come in, even I'd been at that company for three, three year, or almost

712 three years at that point, and, you know, everyone gets along fine, but it was, ehm, peop,  
 713 my boss was like, "Do you want to go home?" And other people were like, "Do you want  
 714 to go home? Are your parents worried?" And so people were really concerned and we  
 715 really bonded a lot, I think.  
 716  
 717 *Yeah. I think some really good stuff came out of...*  
 718  
 719 Yeah.  
 720  
 721 *...such a negative...*  
 722  
 723 Yeah.  
 724  
 725 *...terrible...*  
 726  
 727 It did, yeah, yeah.  
 728  
 729 *...disaster, for a lot of people and it's important sometimes to focus on those good*  
 730 *things...*  
 731  
 732 Yeah.  
 733  
 734 *...as well which is why it's nice to, you know, when you're talking about what, how to*  
 735 *prepare for the, maybe the next possible...*  
 736  
 737 Uhm.  
 738  
 739 *...disaster, it's nice to think of the good stuff as well.*  
 740  
 741 Yeah, I think so. And I think Japan, even though when I was walking home, ehm, after  
 742 the earthquake and people, kind of, single-minded, doing, trying to view their phones, or  
 743 whatever and, ehm, I didn't feel completely alone. I, I don't know. Maybe because there  
 744 was so many people on the street. I'm not sure. But I, you know, it was like we were all  
 745 in the same boat and we all, no-one knew what was going on, it was an earthquake, that's  
 746 it, and, "Right, we have to walk home. There's no trains. So, you know, off you go."  
 747 type-of-thing. Uhm.  
 748  
 749 *That's pretty much all I have...*  
 750  
 751 Ah, okay.  
 752  
 753 *...unless there's anything else that might be relevant...*  
 754  
 755 Ehm...  
 756  
 757 *...in terms of language or culture or?*  
 758  
 759 ...well, I think in this case that things like the { Australian group I am involved in } and  
 760 those kind of groups were really important in, ehm, keeping people up-to-date with  
 761 information, but I, also, the divide in, and it wasn't just Australia, I went to the Border,  
 762 no, Immigration, I had to get my pa, eh, visa renewed and I was pretty much the only one  
 763 [laughter] getting a visa renewed. There was a huge line up of people, mos, mostly Asian  
 764 faces in the crowd, Chinese, I imagine, getting, em, eh, re-entry permits - this is when you  
 765 needed re-entry permits - ehm, yeah, that was massive, and there were, the building was

766 shaking, and there was a loudspeaker, someone on the loudspeaker saying, "Please stay  
 767 calm and stay where you are." In English and in Japanese.  
 768  
 769 *In English and Japanese?*  
 770  
 771 Yeah. Ehm, at the ward off, ehm, ehm...  
 772  
 773 *Immigration.*  
 774  
 775 Immigration. Yeah, but, eh, I can't imagine how, what people would have been feeling  
 776 being new to Japan or, em, not understanding anything. But I think sometimes, in that  
 777 sense, people were just like, "Oh," and just get on with life. I know some people who did  
 778 that. They were going out every night, you know, walking past their local restaurants  
 779 seeing no-one going out, and then people who were like, "Oh my god, I'm leaving." So...  
 780  
 781 *Yeah.*  
 782  
 783 ...and, yeah, so perhaps sometimes ignorance is bliss.  
 784  
 785 *Yeah, well, I'm also interested, say, in the case of how you mentioned, like, you had a*  
 786 *{business associate} over from Italy. He seemed to be calm...*  
 787  
 788 *Yeah.*  
 789  
 790 *...perhaps he was calm because he just had no reference.*  
 791  
 792 Yeah, I think so. And, em, he was, I, I, I think because he's probably been in situations  
 793 where, you know, something's gone on, he travels around the world, {redacted} I'm not  
 794 sure of his role, but doing something, but, em, he travels around the world, so I'm sure  
 795 he's been somewhere where...  
 796  
 797 *[Laughter]*  
 798  
 799 ...something's happened before, so he's probably like, "Oh yeah, what are you going to  
 800 do? Panic?" Yeah.  
 801  
 802 *And I think there's a difference i, if you are over, maybe, with people who are there to*  
 803 *help you, like, you know, contacts in your own company or that, versus being completely,*  
 804 *like, a tourist or something...*  
 805  
 806 *Yeah.*  
 807  
 808 *...where you'd have no...*  
 809  
 810 *Yeah.*  
 811  
 812 *...maybe no contacts at all in the country...*  
 813  
 814 *Yeah...*  
 815  
 816 *...that could be tough.*  
 817  
 818 ...I think so, but I think again perhaps the, the calming influence of having the AC  
 819 commercials and no tsunami footage made the, the Japanese people calm, which kept the  
 820 people not knowing any language calm, because if you, if you were there not being able

821 to speak any language and everyone's going nuts, that would have been a disaster. If  
822 people around you are calm and going on about, you know, their daily routine, their daily  
823 job, well, and my, my mum and dad came over at the end of March...

824

825 *That's quite soon.*

826

827 ...yeah, well they had, they had booked to come because like, I was engaged but my  
828 fiance was going to ask my dad if we could get married. My dad didn't know...

829

830 *[Laughter]*

831

832 ...and my mum wasn't going to say. So he was, like, "We can't go, This is happening, this  
833 is happening." And so he was, he's a complete worry-wart about everything like, "Come  
834 home. What are you doing?" And my mum was like, "Don't be stupid. We have to go  
835 there." And Qantas weren't flying in...

836

837 *Oh crikey.*

838

839 ...but Qantas, but, it was ridiculous because Qantas staff were handing out let, ehm, letters  
840 to people saying 'because of the devastation in Tokyo dahdahdahdah', and I was like,  
841 "What devastation?" And they came. They were like, "What devastation?" And I said,  
842 [laughter] "Well, Disneyland, ...

843

844 *[Laughter]*

845

846 ...Disneyland's not open these days and that's about it. That's the only devastation in  
847 Tokyo." There was, it was just bullshit. And that made me really angry because people  
848 were like, "Oh my god, yeah, Qantas isn't flying because it's unsafe." And I'm like, "No.  
849 It's not, it's, un, you know, you are flying in a plane. But you're worried about coming to  
850 Tokyo? Eh, doesn't make sense." Anyway, they came via Singapore and all these weird  
851 places and, but, I was so glad that they could come to see what was actually going on, not  
852 what they were being shown: radiation levels, all that bullshit and people, ridiculous  
853 people being interviewed and devastation. Nothing.

854

855 *Yeah, I, I don't know if this will be, end up being a focus for my project but I'm really*  
856 *interested in, I may try and do something else on the, the way the news was so wi, wildly*  
857 *different...*

858

859 Yeah.

860

861 *...like completely framed up the, a completely different way.*

862

863 Well, people were saying to my parents, "What are you doing letting your daughter stay  
864 in Tokyo?" And they were like, "That's where she lives." And they, like, basically, "Are  
865 you nuts?" Or "Why are you even going there?" And they were like, "Okay." [Laughter]  
866 You know, because of just the, what they were being fed: radiation and  
867 dahdahdahdah...

868

869 *Yeah.*

870

871 ...and they had no idea.

872

873 *There was a huge disconnect I think...*

874

875 Yeah.

876  
 877 *...between what was, what people were experiencing here in Tokyo and what was being*  
 878 *reported. Not just by Australia, of course...*  
 879  
 880 Oh yeah.  
 881  
 882 *...but by pretty much every...*  
 883  
 884 Everyone, uhm.  
 885  
 886 *...foreign source, I think...*  
 887  
 888 Yeah  
 889  
 890 *...em, from, I've spoken to people from twelve different countries and that's mostly the*  
 891 *same story...*  
 892  
 893 Uhm, uhm.  
 894  
 895 *...that everyone has talked about. And, actually, like with yourself, there's a little bit of*  
 896 *anger.*  
 897  
 898 Yeah, it, I, it, that, it's, it did make me angry. And, ehm, I went home in Christmas, must  
 899 have been 2011, and we had our engagement party at my parents' house and, em, I made,  
 900 you know, I made a bit of a speech, my dad made a speech and I said, "Please come to  
 901 Japan and see." Because people even then were going, you know, "What's happening,  
 902 and I said, you know, "It's fine. Please come. Please come spend your money. Japanese  
 903 people want to see foreign faces, you know, please come." And a lot, twenty-five people  
 904 came, actually [laughter]...  
 905  
 906 *Okay, wow...*  
 907  
 908 *...to my wedding last year...*  
 909  
 910 *...great, great.*  
 911  
 912 *...yeah. And it was, that was just wonderful. It really was, because, because of that, just,*  
 913 *huge gap in what the actual situation was and what was being broadcast. Ehm, but, eh,*  
 914 *yeah, I, I think in terms of, em, what was going on, I mean, you can't, you've just got to*  
 915 *get on with your life and, at that point, we were just getting up and going to work and*  
 916 *going about our day, thinking, you know, information was going around and, but then*  
 917 *again, as I said, it was these foreign people doing stuff, so, "Yeah, okay, you're telling me*  
 918 *this but I'm in my office at work doing stuff, so, em, you know, glad you've got all this*  
 919 *water to take up to Tohoku but I've got to get on with my job. And I got in trouble, I sent*  
 920 *out an email saying, ehm, like, a mail magazine to my customers, em, in, not straight*  
 921 *after, straight after, I sent an email saying, with messages, you know, from our*  
 922 *{suppliers} and tweeted the, you know, relief efforts, you know, {redacted} it's not just*  
 923 *people who've been devastated but people who, em, I mean, there's different ways,*  
 924 *you've got to channel the money in different ways, and, em, so, you know, we gave out a,*  
 925 *a lot of information about what we were doing in that respect and, you know, looking*  
 926 *after our, em, industry, I suppose, {redacted} and I wrote and said, "It's spring," or*  
 927 *something, and, you know, "we've got to get out and go and have dinner somewhere and*  
 928 *have a bottle of wine and get on with things." And someone wrote and said, "How can*  
 929 *you be so insensitive? What about Tohoku?" And I said, "Well, I'm shocked that you've*  
 930 *written that." This guy is actually a really good friend of mine now and he said, "I didn't*

931 expect a reply.” And I was like, “Well, how could I not reply to that?” So it was a, and  
 932 the, his response was, I suppose he didn’t really think about, he just wrote it, and I  
 933 thought, I was really careful in what I wrote, because you know, we were, people were  
 934 being, it was just really sad watching business people, businesses, like, closing and  
 935 people not going out and, for me, that’s really important. Get on with the job, spend  
 936 money, pay tax, get moving. Not just stand there and feel sorry for people because that’s  
 937 not going to do anything to help anyone and so that was the aim of that, but then, you  
 938 know, that’s a, I suppose, a communication problem in itself, too, isn’t it?  
 939  
 940 *Yeah, but, em, similarly, you know, I think you can’t lump all foreigners together.*  
 941 *Different people have different ways...*  
 942  
 943 Yeah.  
 944  
 945 *...of, of behaving and I think it’s really valid what you’re saying that one way of*  
 946 *responding to a big thing like this is get back on track...*  
 947  
 948 Yeah, get back to work, yeah, exactly.  
 949  
 950 *...get back doing, as you said, paying taxes and...*  
 951  
 952 Yeah.  
 953  
 954 *...if everything stops, nothing moves...*  
 955  
 956 Where does that leave you? Exactly.  
 957  
 958 *...on then and, yeah, so, I mean, I think because you, definitely you were in a situation*  
 959 *where you felt Tokyo was safe and relatively normal, maybe apart from the aftershocks, it*  
 960 *was a valid decision...*  
 961  
 962 Yeah.  
 963  
 964 *... to go and just start...*  
 965  
 966 Exactly.  
 967  
 968 *...living your life again. Yeah.*  
 969  
 970 And it was just sad. I was trying my hardest to go out and have dinner and [laughter] you  
 971 know, these people were standing there, staff at, in empty shops, and, and even in, you’d  
 972 go to Mituskoshi [Note: a big department store chain in Tokyo] and, you know, ten  
 973 people were standing there...  
 974  
 975 *Yeah, which would never be the case, right, usually it’s, I mean, certainly the centre of*  
 976 *town is active all the time...*  
 977  
 978 Yeah, exactly, so.  
 979  
 980 *...but I think it’s come back now. Do, do you?*  
 981  
 982 Yeah, a lot, it really has, there’s a huge difference...  
 983  
 984 Yeah.  
 985

986 ...and you could see that after a year and after two years, just lights on...  
987  
988 *Yeah.*  
989  
990 ..they came back. The amount of foreign people, like, just visiting...  
991  
992 *Yeah.*  
993  
994 ...or people coming back, people who, my, my membership have, of {the foreign groups  
995 I'm involved in}, increased...  
996  
997 *Yeah.*  
998  
999 ...and you see that, people coming back, and its really changed.  
1000  
1001 *I think it took about a year or at least a year from what I feel...*  
1002  
1003 *Yeah.*  
1004  
1005 *...anyway to, to, it wasn't that quick but...*  
1006  
1007 No but, em, no it wasn't.  
1008  
1009 *...yeah now two, two, two-and-a-half year's have passed so.*  
1010  
1011 *Yeah.*  
1012  
1013 *Well, really thank you so much...*  
1014  
1015 Ah, sorry, sorry, sorry  
1016  
1017 *...I've taken much more of your time than I intended to, no, I really appreciate it.*

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/9 Interview with Participant 26*

5 *Researcher: So thank you, that's all the paperwork [laughter] that's all the hard, eh,*  
6 *hard stuff out of the way. Ehm, the way I start every interview is just very generally, tell*  
7 *me what happened to you in the 2011 disaster. That's it [laughter].*  
8

9 Participant: [Laughter] Okay, well, ehm, so I, I came to Japan in 2004, September of  
10 2004, and, ehm, well, at first I was working in an Irish company for two years, ehm, and  
11 then I joined, ehm, an American company, ehm, which, which went bankrupt, and it got  
12 bought over by a Japanese company. So, eh, I, I'd been working there since about, well, I  
13 guess the bankruptcy was in 2008, eh, September, so I'd been working at that company  
14 for almost three years, ehm, and at the time I was working in {an area of central Tokyo}  
15 we have an office building there. {redacted} I work as an IT engineer {redacted}, ehm,  
16 and, yeah, at the time of the earthquake I was, well, normally I work on the eighth floor in  
17 that building, eh, and at the time of the earthquake, ehm, I was in the convenience store  
18 on the ground floor [laughter], and I was just shopping for snacks. Ehm, and I was just  
19 walking around the aisles and I noticed people were, you know, stopped in a weird way,  
20 and I, I didn't really understand why. I tried to keep shopping, and people were, kind of,  
21 in the way [laughter]...

22  
23 *[Laughter]*  
24

25 ...I didn't really know why. Then I stopped for a second and I realized that the ground  
26 was shaking and there was an earthquake. Ehm, and it was pretty strong even on the  
27 ground floor. Eh, and looking out the window, we could see that the buildings in front of  
28 us, they were shaking. Ehm, and our building is, is a huge building made of glass...

29  
30 *Ooohhh.*  
31

32 ...ehm, and the convenience store, well, it's, the exit is right outside, like, in front of the  
33 glass. Ehm, and so I was a bit worried that, that the glass would be crashing down or, I  
34 don't know, that, that something would break and crush us or something [laughter]...

35  
36 *Yeah.*  
37

38 ...ehm, and there was a woman outside, and she was standing in front of the, the  
39 convenience store, and she didn't really know what to do. She was kind of looking up at  
40 the buildings and stuff, and, well, I was kind of worried that, that a big glass would,  
41 would break and, and kill her, and well, the, the other Japanese people in, in the store also  
42 had, thought the same thing, so, so they called her over and told her to come into the  
43 store, eh so she did. Ehm, and, yeah, well, so, eh, at that point, it felt, I knew it was a very  
44 strong, unusually strong earthquake, ehm, and I, I thought that if, if this wasn't the  
45 epicentre, then, wherever the epicentre was, if it was far from Tokyo, they would be  
46 screwed. That was my feeling...

47  
48 *Yeah.*  
49

50 ...ehm, and, so eh, I wasn't sure what to do, eh, I figured I, I shouldn't go back up to the  
51 office, maybe I should, maybe the lifts are not working or something, and so I went  
52 outside, ehm, the building, outside the front entrance, ehm, and a lot of my coworkers  
53 started coming down. And I think that they did take the stairs down...



54  
55 *Wow, yeah.*  
56  
57 ...ehm, and, well, we, we all gathered and just stood around and didn't really know what  
58 to do. Ehm, so after about maybe half-an-hour or an hour, ehm, well, we, we decided to,  
59 to go back upstairs...  
60  
61 *Okay.*  
62  
63 ...and so, so we went back upstairs, ehm, I think the lifts weren't working so I think I had  
64 to walk. I'm not sure about that actually. And then, eh, in the floor of the office, we, we  
65 have flatscreen TVs, eh, and someone switched on the news, and we could see the, the  
66 live pictures of the tsunami, ehm, so it was incredible. We were seeing the, the live  
67 pictures of, of, eh, the north of Japan getting destroyed, eh, taken from a helicopter. Ehm,  
68 it was bit surreal. Ehm, yeah, I suppose, maybe one of the first things I did was, ehm, I  
69 checked, eh, on Yahoo. I usually use Yahoo to, to check what earth, earthquakes there  
70 were and how strong they were. Ehm, actually, before that I probably called, eh, my  
71 girlfriend. Ehm, but, eh, I think mobile phones didn't really work at the time, so, eh, I  
72 couldn't reach her. So, well, I think, I tried checking with Yahoo, the Yahoo site, but, eh,  
73 I can't remember if it was working at that time, so, eh, well, there were so many people  
74 checking, I think. Ehm, and, yeah, well, using the, the mobile phone didn't really work,  
75 ehm, I think I had better luck using the office phone. Ehm, I'm not sure what phone, I  
76 think it's probably Docomo [Note: a major Japanese carrier], like, internally it's, like,  
77 Cisco IP phones, but, eh, I'm not sure how it connects outside...  
78  
79 *Uhum.*  
80  
81 ...ehm, but, yeah, I, I called my family in Spain...  
82  
83 *Okay.*  
84  
85 ...eh, and well, I told them that there was a really big earthquake, but I was okay. Ehm,  
86 they weren't too concerned. They didn't really understand about the scale of it. I suppose  
87 I didn't either. Ehm, and eventually I was able to reach my, my girlfriend, em, and she  
88 was in her family house {near Tokyo}. She was okay. I think some, some fell, fell on the  
89 floor, eh, fell off the shelves and so on. Ehm, and although I think it took a while before I  
90 could reach her, a few hours. Ehm, I also called, eh, my girlfriend's parents, and  
91 eventually I was able to reach them, and they were stuck on a train on their way {home}.  
92 Ehm, so, eh, I think they were stuck on the train four hours and eventually they, they had  
93 to walk...  
94  
95 *Oh.*  
96  
97 ...out of the train and walk, ehm, home. Ehm, so yeah, they were trapped four hours. And,  
98 yeah, I can't remember who I was able to reach first. Maybe I talked to the parents first  
99 and then eventually I was able to reach my girlfriend and I told her that her parents were  
100 okay. Ehm, and [laughter] coincidentally, ehm, that day my girlfriend had taken my, my  
101 house key...  
102  
103 *[Laughter]*  
104  
105 ...[laughter] and she was stuck in, in {her family home outside Tokyo} because  
106 obviously the train service wasn't working...  
107  
108 *Ooohhh.*

109  
 110 ...ehm, so, well, [laughter] there was no way I could get into my house, ehm, so I, I called  
 111 the, my building maintenance and they have, like, a 24/7 service, and, well, I spoke to  
 112 them in Japanese and I told them I didn't have my key and if they had a spare key they  
 113 could give, or if they could, could open the door for me...  
 114  
 115 *Yeah.*  
 116  
 117 ...and they said, ehm, well, it was, it wouldn't be possible, their, their computer was shut  
 118 down at the moment because of the earthquake, and after that I tried asking them where  
 119 their office is, if I can drop by and pick up a key or something, eh, but they, they said no,  
 120 nothing could happen today, that their computer had shut down, ehm, it's not going to  
 121 happen, and they said a lot of people have to sleep at their offices and stuff, so, I mean,  
 122 it's a disaster, that's what you have to do, I guess [laughter]. Or it's stay in a hotel or  
 123 whatever.  
 124  
 125 *And that was all in Japanese that you spoke to them?*  
 126  
 127 Yes, that was all in Japanese. Ehm, and so, well, so I talked to a friend from work, ehm,  
 128 and he said I could sleep in, in his house, ehm, so I decided to do that instead. So maybe  
 129 later in the evening at around six or seven p.m., ehm, we started walking to his house, eh,  
 130 he lives in {downtown Tokyo}. Ehm, so we thought about having a drink in, in {his  
 131 neighbourhood}, but it was pretty dead, ehm, there was no-one really out. Ehm so, we  
 132 just went to his house and, ehm, yeah, I can't remember what we ate, but, ehm, I was able  
 133 to stay on his, on his sofa. And then, I think the next day, [clears throat] trains were  
 134 running again. Ehm, was it the next day? But eventually I, I was able to, to meet my  
 135 girlfriend and get my key back [laughter]...  
 136  
 137 *[Laughter]*  
 138  
 139 ...get home. Ehm, yeah, and walking to my friend's house it was pretty surreal because  
 140 there were so many cars stopped because of the traffic and, and, and thousands of people  
 141 walking home...  
 142  
 143 *Yeah.*  
 144  
 145 ...no, it was pretty surreal, yeah, it was like a zombie apocalypse or something like that...  
 146  
 147 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 148  
 149 ...ehm, so that's what happened during most of the first day, eh, I guess language-wise,  
 150 well, the news on TV was in Japanese, ehm, I didn't really understand much of the audio  
 151 or the text, ehm, eh, but well, the pictures spoke for themselves mostly. Ehm, and, well, I  
 152 checked, well, checking the, the websites online, ehm, I think I, I mostly checked the  
 153 Yahoo one and maybe also tenki.ne.jp, ehm, and yeah, well, that's, that's where I got  
 154 some of the information. Ehm, I'm not sure how long it took them to, to figure out the  
 155 magnitude of the earthquake and so on, but, yeah, ehm, yeah, well, I guess online, the  
 156 Internet seemed to work fine...  
 157  
 158 *Yeah.*  
 159  
 160 ...except for some websites. Ehm, but yeah, that was a good thing, I guess. Ehm, well,  
 161 that pretty much covers the first day, I think.  
 162  
 163 *Yeah.*

164  
 165 Do you have any questions or anything?  
 166  
 167 *Eh, no, eh, like, what I am really interested in is where you felt you had enough*  
 168 *information or where you felt information was lacking...*  
 169  
 170 Uhm.  
 171  
 172 *...so in terms of the first day, it seems to me like you had enough information. Am I right*  
 173 *in saying that or?*  
 174  
 175 Ehm, yes [Note: the participant said this yes in very long drawn out way indicating he  
 176 was not sure he wanted to say yes] well, I suppose, the, some, I had some questions  
 177 around whether trains were running and when, when trains would start and so on, eh,  
 178 I'm not sure if I had enough information around that. I think the general impression was  
 179 that trains wouldn't start that day, eh, but I, I'm not sure where, where I got that  
 180 information.  
 181  
 182 *Yeah, that's what I was about, just about to ask...*  
 183  
 184 [Laughter]  
 185  
 186 *...how did you? Did you check websites or did you ask colleagues or?*  
 187  
 188 Yeah, I think it was more of a word-of-mouth thing, eh, other colleagues probably  
 189 checked somehow, maybe Japanese-speaking colleagues. Ehm, and I guess the  
 190 conclusion was the trains weren't running and they weren't going to start any time soon.  
 191  
 192 *Yeah.*  
 193  
 194 Ehm, maybe also people speaking to their relatives over the phones, and so on. Ehm, so,  
 195 eh, that's one thing.  
 196  
 197 *When you went back to your friend's apartment {redacted} did you look for any more*  
 198 *information at that stage or did you just, you know, call it quits for the night?*  
 199  
 200 Ehm, I probably checked things online a bit. Ehm, and I, I think I messaged a lot of  
 201 people, eh, I think I communicated over emails and maybe Google Talk and things like  
 202 that. Ehm, yeah, like, for example, I had a friend who injured his leg, eh, maybe one or  
 203 two months prior and he was in a hospital in Japan. Actually that might be a good person  
 204 to talk to...  
 205  
 206 *Wow, yeah. [Laughter] That would be some experience, I could imagine.*  
 207  
 208 *...and, well, so he experienced the earthquake in the hospital, but his Japanese is pretty*  
 209 *much non-existent, so he didn't really know what was going on and he couldn't really*  
 210 *reach anyone to tell him. He was stuck in a hospital bed without really knowing anything*  
 211 *so...*  
 212  
 213 *Oh my goodness [Note: the researcher covers his mouth with his hands]*  
 214  
 215 *...I chatted to him a bit, eh, yeah, he was, was a French guy I work with, eh, and,*  
 216 *yeah, I don't really remember exactly what we chatted about, like, I guess, actually I*  
 217 *think I chatted to him a bit later about Fukushima and so on...*  
 218

219 *Uhm.*  
 220  
 221 ...maybe one or two days later, but I think we were in touch.  
 222  
 223 *On that topic, how did you start to find out information about things like Fukushima or*  
 224 *the scale of the disaster?*  
 225  
 226 *Uhm. Ehm, actually, what day was the earthquake on?*  
 227  
 228 *So, it was a Friday when it happened, so you have would have had the Saturday and*  
 229 *Sunday probably off work, I imagine?*  
 230  
 231 *Uhm. Ehm, yeah, I think I had Friday and Saturday off [Note: this is a slip of the tongue,*  
 232 *I imagine, as the participant had clearly stated that he was in work on the day of the*  
 233 *earthquake, Friday] Ehm, I'm not sure how long it took for the Fukushima stuff to, to*  
 234 *come to light, but, ehm, well, eh, maybe I was talking to, to my girlfriend about that,*  
 235 *well, she, she's Japanese so, ehm, she was able to check, eh, local news sources. Ehm,*  
 236 *well, I think I was checking, eh, overseas news sources maybe, and well, looking at the*  
 237 *overseas news sources, the, the picture looked pretty grim. Ehm, while luckily in Japan,*  
 238 *ehm, I think, well, I think Tepco [Note: the company that runs the damaged power plant]*  
 239 *was denying or was lowering the, the sever, I mean, they were making it appear a lot less*  
 240 *severe than it really was, and maybe the government was doing that, too. And, maybe be*  
 241 *the news sources were, ehm, ehm, well, writing about, in, in that fashion also. Ehm, but,*  
 242 *for example, different embassies started telling their citizens to, to go back home, ehm,*  
 243 *and at some point a few days later, ehm, I decided that I should also go back home, partly*  
 244 *because, well, I'm here on my German passport so I, I, kind of, pretend to be German*  
 245 *here [laughter]...*  
 246  
 247 *[Laughter]*  
 248  
 249 ...so my, my German embassy told everybody to, to return no, or to leave Japan. Ehm, so  
 250 that is something I was, and also my, my family, em, was very concerned. They had been  
 251 reading the local news and, well, European news, and which, well, it expressed a big  
 252 concern over the possible radiation leaks. Ehm, and we, we had some, eh, discussions  
 253 inside of the company, ehm, with, with senior management, ehm, and they said they, they  
 254 understood concerns and they said, ehm, they understood if people wanted to, to leave the  
 255 country, ehm, especially people with families and so on. Ehm, so, eh, I talked to my  
 256 manager and he said it's probably okay if you leave, ehm, I, I can do most of the, I can do  
 257 all of my job remotely, pretty much, so I, I thought that shouldn't be a problem really...  
 258  
 259 *Uhm.*  
 260  
 261 ...ehm, I suppose it's good to be in Japan in case the, the links to outside of Japan break  
 262 down, then, well, you can't really work remotely...  
 263  
 264 *Yeah.*  
 265  
 266 ...ehm, I asked my manager where I could go, if I should go to Korea or somewhere  
 267 nearby and he said it, it didn't really matter. Ehm, so I decided to go back to Spain to my  
 268 family. Ehm, ehm, yeah, so I did that. Ehm, before I went back, I think I had work on, on  
 269 Monday, ehm, and, eh, I went into the office. Ehm, and one, one thing I remember which  
 270 is a bit weird, ehm, and, yeah, ehm, basically, I remember, eh, standing at the window of  
 271 my office and looking outside. It was a sunny day, ehm, and well, eh, I suppose allegedly  
 272 a radiation cloud was, was over Tokyo, but, eh, even before I read that, em, I, I could  
 273 kind of feel in my lips, like, I was getting sunburnt. I think my, my lips are a bit sensitive,

274 like, when I, if there's strong sun, I, I can feel maybe something like I'm getting sunburn.  
 275 Just looking outside the window not in direct sunlight, I got that feeling. I thought, well,  
 276 that's kind of strange. And later on I read about the possible radiation cloud over Tokyo,  
 277 so, eh, I'm not sure if I somehow sensed the radiation...  
 278  
 279 Wow.  
 280  
 281 ...ehm, I think I am slightly hyp, hypochondriac though...  
 282  
 283 *[Laughter]*  
 284  
 285 ...I'm not sure what happened there but, I think maybe, maybe I sensed something.  
 286  
 287 *Interesting. Yeah. I'm interest, very interested to know, then, where did you read about*  
 288 *the radiation cloud after you had had that experience. Where was that information*  
 289 *coming from?*  
 290  
 291 Okay...  
 292  
 293 *If you, if you can remember.*  
 294  
 295 ...ehm, well, my, my favourite news source, I guess, is BBC News. I think at the time I  
 296 was probably also checking BBC News. Ehm, a few days later, ehm, Tepco [Note: the  
 297 company which runs the damaged nuclear power plants] and the Japanese government,  
 298 they, they set up websites, em, with very specific information on, ehm, what radiation  
 299 levels were being measured in different parts of Japan, ehm, so that's something I  
 300 followed pretty much every day...  
 301  
 302 *I see.*  
 303  
 304 ...ehm, I don't remember the address of those websites. Do you know them?  
 305  
 306 *Yeah, yeah, I, I absolutely do, ehm, however I know that they, they were translated, eh,*  
 307 *into Eng, so you were looking at the English?*  
 308  
 309 Well, ehm, I looked at both versions. I think the Japanese version was more up-to-date,  
 310 ehm, so I was also checking, so I was probably checking that more. But, eh, I think the  
 311 English version was also quite up-to-date. Maybe the English version was, was missing  
 312 some very specific regions, like smaller locations around Fukushima. Ehm, so I, I was  
 313 looking at that in Japanese. Ehm, yeah, I think there was two main websites I was  
 314 checking. Maybe one was run by the government and maybe the other one was run by  
 315 Tepco. I'm not sure.  
 316  
 317 *I believe that's the, the websites that most people would have accessed. [Note: the*  
 318 *websites I was thinking of were run by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture,*  
 319 *Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)*  
 320 *[http://www.mext.go.jp/english/radioactivity\\_level/detail/1303962.htm](http://www.mext.go.jp/english/radioactivity_level/detail/1303962.htm), which has since*  
 321 *been taken down and the Fukushima Prefectural government [fukushima-radioactivity.jp/](http://www.fukushima-radioactivity.jp/),*  
 322 *which is still up and has been made perfectly bilinugal. The IAEA website was also*  
 323 *regularly consulted <http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/tsunamiupdate01.html>]*  
 324  
 325 Okay. Do you know the address?  
 326  
 327 *Ehm, I have it in my records. I can't remember what it is offhand. Yeah.*  
 328

329 Yeah, I thought, well that was very interesting and, well, I thought that that, that was very  
330 useful information to have and, ehm, maybe even for years to come people would need to  
331 live around the radiation and, and really watch, eh, where, where it's spreading to and,  
332 and what kind of, eh, food or drinks could be affected...

333  
334 *Uhm.*

335  
336 ...ehm, and, yeah, well, I, I thought maybe there's not enough resources in English and, so  
337 most of the stuff I do is making websites, so I also had the thought of, of making, of using  
338 that information provided by the government and Tepco and, eh, displaying it in a useful  
339 way to, to, so, so people can consume it, eh, in a more useful way. Well, eventually I  
340 didn't do anything with that, ehm, and, I suppose, once I left Japan, I, I was less worried  
341 about, ehm, the radiation. I was worried for my girlfriend and her family and my friends  
342 who had stayed, em, but, my, my girlfriend at the time, she had to fly to the US, so she  
343 was in the US, for a few weeks, I think. Maybe two weeks. Ehm, but yeah, so, so I was  
344 following things from overseas. I was in Spain for maybe around a month and, eh, yeah,  
345 eventually it sounded like, eh, my company wasn't too happy with people being overseas,  
346 yeah. So I decided to come back. Ehm, yeah, yeah, so most of the people in my company  
347 also came back around the same time. Ehm, I, I had been working from Spain, ehm, I, I  
348 tried to almost keep Japanese hours with the work so it was pretty tough to, to work, ehm,  
349 so I was working some strange hours...

350  
351 *Yeah.*

352  
353 ...ehm, ehm, but well eventually I came back because, well, it sounded like the company  
354 wasn't happy and maybe things were a bit more under control. The, the impact was  
355 understood much better, and I guess it looked like people were actively checking for  
356 radiation. Ehm, ehm, but one thing that happened was that my, my company was giving  
357 out the, the yearly bonuses at around that time and they decided not to give bonuses to  
358 people who left the country and I was pretty upset about that. I'm pretty bitter. I still am a  
359 bit bitter about that, I think, because I feel like I worked hard and, and I feel like I got the  
360 okay from the company to leave and well the embassy was telling us to leave and, ehm,  
361 well I think I could work happily with most people, ehm, and well even senior people  
362 were sending their family away. If the same stuff had have happened again, I think I  
363 would have made the same decision because with the information that we had at that  
364 moment in time, I think it was the correct choice. Ehm, so I'm a bit bitter that they  
365 decided to punish me and the others because of that, even though, I mean, it wasn't a  
366 good year for bonuses, but, but giving us zero is, is an extra insult, I think.

367  
368 *Yeah, in addition to the bonus, did you feel any other reaction from people about your*  
369 *decision to go back?*

370  
371 Ehm, I think people that stayed were probably a bit unhappy that, that other people left.  
372 For example, my, my boss is Japanese and he decided to stay, em, but, yeah, I think he,  
373 he wasn't too pleased that I had left, but he, he understood it. Ehm, so I, I guess maybe  
374 we were seen as traitors, em, by, by people who stayed. Ehm, maybe some people didn't  
375 really care either way, but maybe people who were really dedicated to the company, em,  
376 they were not happy that, that we had left and well, I suppose, in gen, in general, em,  
377 maybe there was a feeling that, like, all the foreigners suddenly left and they were, I don't  
378 know, they were jumping ship, eh, when they didn't need to, and, yeah, reading online, I  
379 think they called them *fly-jin* [Note: a derogatory term used for foreigners who left Japan  
380 during the earthquake]...

381  
382 *[Laughter]*

383

384 ...yeah [laughter]...

385

386 *Oh wow.*

387

388 ...yeah, and yeah, so, eh, there was, eh, but I, I didn't really regret it and I didn't really

389 care too much because I, I felt it was the right decision.

390

391 *Ehm, one of the elements in your decision I think to, to go back was the information you*

392 *received from the embassy. Eh, what is your opinion of the German embassy's*

393 *behaviour?*

394

395 Ehm, that's hard to say, eh, I think recommending that, that people leave the country

396 seems like a last-ditch call, eh, eh, and it is something that shouldn't be done lightly,

397 eh, but maybe having the information that, eh, they had at the time, eh, well, I, I think

398 I understand the decision, and maybe with that information, maybe it was the right

399 decision. Ehm, I think the potential fallout could have been really big...

400

401 *Yeah.*

402

403 ...and it was hard to understand the, the real fallout, the potential fallout...

404

405 *Yeah, yeah.*

406

407 ...and even at that point, I think the, the general feeling by foreign, the foreign

408 community was that the government, the Japanese government wasn't telling the truth

409 and maybe Tepco [Note: the company that runs the damaged nuclear power plants]

410 wasn't telling the truth because, well, both sides of the story seemed to be so different. I

411 mean, maybe both sides are not telling the truth, but I don't know, it's good to be on the

412 safer side, I think. Ehm.

413

414 *I'm, I'm very interested in that point you said that members of the foreign community felt*

415 *that Tepco wasn't telling the truth or the government wasn't telling the truth...*

416

417 *Yeah.*

418

419 *...why do you think the foreign community felt that particularly?*

420

421 Ehm, well, I think they, they probably followed the foreign news, eh, outlets and also

422 have contact with relatives outside of Japan who also watched television and used their,

423 their local news sources, and I think that that greatly influenced, em, the foreign

424 community. Em, I, I think, I feel that my family was a bit too, eh, panicky...

425

426 *Ah, right.*

427

428 ...ehm, but, eh, well, I suppose I understood their concern, and maybe my feeling was

429 leaning towards, well, leaving the country and, and I was worried about future fallout,

430 and so on. Ehm, so yeah, I guess I took the side of the, the foreign community.

431

432 *Yeah. Ehm, you also mentioned checking various websites. Em, I'm interested to know*

433 *did you check any Japanese government websites?*

434

435 Ehm, I think I did. Ehm, I think the government had a disaster website with different,

436 with a few different links, eh, but I don't remember very well, but I think that's one

437 thing that I checked.

438

439 Can you remember what language you would have checked that in?  
 440  
 441 Ehm, well, I probably would have, eh, clicked on English links if I saw them, but I may  
 442 also have made an effort to, to understand the Japanese, ehm.  
 443  
 444 *Yeah, that's another element that I'm interested in in your experience. It seems that you,*  
 445 *you tended to, maybe, go to the foreign sources first, but you did also go to...*  
 446  
 447 Yeah.  
 448  
 449 ...to Japanese sources.  
 450  
 451 Yeah, yeah. Especially the radiation levels websites. That, that was very interesting and,  
 452 well, maybe some foreign sources maybe had that information somewhere but, eh, I  
 453 think, well, it was most live and up-to-date on the Japanese news sources.  
 454  
 455 *Was your Japanese level sufficient to understand that information about radiation in, in*  
 456 *Japanese?*  
 457  
 458 Ehm, I think it was, ehm, the, the main language aspects in there were the name of the  
 459 location which, eh, I mostly understand. Ehm, well, I, I guess I understand all of the  
 460 major locations in Japan, eh, I can read those...  
 461  
 462 Yeah.  
 463  
 464 ...ehm, and, well, in particular, I cared about Tokyo so I can read that...  
 465  
 466 *You know all of those, yeah, yeah [laughter].*  
 467  
 468 ...[laughter] well, yeah, the different wards of Tokyo and that was fine. And then, well,  
 469 the other information was the radiation levels. Ehm, which, well, it's just a number, so I  
 470 can understand it, ehm, and well, the, the unit of measurement, I think it was something  
 471 in *katakana* [Note: one of the phonetic syllabaries used in the Japanese writing system,  
 472 often used to write words of foreign origin] so something starting with 'b' I think, em, but  
 473 I can't...  
 474  
 475 Yeah.  
 476  
 477 ...but those were the main things, ehm, on those sites...  
 478  
 479 Yeah.  
 480  
 481 ...and I was okay with that. And, well, and I, I think my level of Japanese goes a bit  
 482 beyond that. Ehm, at the time I could probably around, maybe, five-hundred *kanji* [Note:  
 483 the Chinese characters used in the Japanese writing system, about two-thousand would be  
 484 needed to read a newspaper, for example] ehm, and I, I wasn't actively studying Japanese  
 485 but, em, I passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test Level 3 [Note: a standardized  
 486 ability test composed of five levels with Level N5 being the easiest and N1 the hardest -  
 487 when the participant took the test, there were only four level, 4,3,2,1, with Level 4 being  
 488 the easiest] I think in 2006 or so...  
 489  
 490 Yeah.  
 491  
 492 ...before they, they changed it to five levels, but since then I didn't really study. Ehm, I  
 493 studied a bit for Level 2 but, eh, I never really went ahead and did it. So my Japanese



494 wasn't terribly bad. Ehm, and I also used, eh, language tools online to, ehm, understand  
 495 things better. So for example, one tool I, I really like is, em, eh, Jim Breen's Language  
 496 Tools. Ehm, there's several mirrors of that website, ehm, and, eh, for example with the  
 497 text glossing feature, you can just copy and paste a paragraph of text and for the *kanji*  
 498 [Note: Chinese characters] you don't understand it, it gives you an explanation of what it  
 499 is. Em, eh, so, so that's something very useful. I still use it today sometimes. Ehm, I also  
 500 liked using the Excite's Japanese-to-English translation. You can translate URLs there.  
 501 And also the Google Translate, eh, ehm, tools. I've only started using the Google  
 502 Translate stuff in the last few years. I'm not sure what I was using mostly at the point of  
 503 the earthquake, but, yeah, I think the Google Translate stuff is, is really good. Ehm, and  
 504 also I think I was using Firefox and they have a plug-in called *rikai-chan* [Note: a popup  
 505 dictionary] where, that lets you mouse over, eh, Japanese characters and it, it takes  
 506 information from J-DIC which I think is the same source that Jim Breen's site uses, ehm,  
 507 so it, it's very useful to, to understand things better. Ehm, so yeah, those, those were the  
 508 tools that I used to, to understand Japanese sites.  
 509  
 510 *Those kind of tools are really, really useful. Ehm, I'm interested to know also, when you*  
 511 *were in Spain, did you continue to check Japanese sources as well as, ehm, English-*  
 512 *language or other language sources?*  
 513  
 514 Yeah. The, the main stuff I checked, I think, was the radiation levels. Ehm, for, for news,  
 515 I think, I, I don't have enough level to read Japanese news, and using those tools doesn't  
 516 really give good results sometimes. Well, I, I guess you could go *kanji* by *kanji* [Note:  
 517 means Chinese character by character] but it would take a long time with my level of  
 518 Japanese so I didn't really bother reading Japanese news. I may have looked at English  
 519 Japanese sites like, ehm, what is it, Japan Today, ehm, and Japan Times, I think. Ehm,  
 520 yeah, but I was looking, for, for general news, I, I usually check BBC news or other  
 521 sites...  
 522  
 523 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 524  
 525 ...and maybe I checked things like Independent.ie...  
 526  
 527 *Okay.*  
 528  
 529 ...maybe because my mother checks that a lot [laughter].  
 530  
 531 *[Laughter] You want to be on the same page.*  
 532  
 533 Yeah, yeah.  
 534  
 535 *I'm interested to know as well, and I have been asking everybody this. Generally people*  
 536 *have quite different answers. For you, when did the disaster end? If it has ended.*  
 537  
 538 Ehm, I don't think it has ended. Ehm, I'm still worried about possible radiation  
 539 poisoning. Ehm, I think that it, it's un, unlikely that, ehm, my health is seriously affected  
 540 by the radiation, but I think in my mind all it takes is one radioactive element to be  
 541 consumed and that to, to decay inside your body, and that to make a change to your DNA,  
 542 and that's the cause cancer. Ehm, maybe because I am slightly hypochondriac  
 543 [laughter]...  
 544  
 545 *[Laughter]*  
 546  
 547 ...but, ehm, I am a bit worried about that, so even if the, the leaks are mostly controlled,  
 548 there are still radioactive elements, well, all over earth especially in Japan, em, and so I

549 think there is a higher chance that you could get some kind of disease, well, maybe cancer  
550 specifically because of that. Ehm, I have an Irish friend who in 2012, I believe, or maybe  
551 end of 2011, em, he started getting strong pains in his joints and he went to the hospital in  
552 Japan and they, they said they had to do extensive tests which needed him to be in the  
553 hospital for one or two weeks, so he decided to do that in Ireland, eh, so he went to  
554 Ireland, and he was diagnosed with leukemia, ehm, so, and, well, he, he's being treated  
555 for that. His, his type of leukemia was very rare, ehm, at the time, there was some very  
556 special medicine that he would taking which would counteract the effects of the  
557 leukemia, and taking this medicine, he was able to completely get rid of the symptoms,  
558 and so he was able to come back to Japan. Well, he was teaching English at the time and  
559 he was able to, to continue teaching English. Ehm, but eventually, ehm, the medicine  
560 stopped working for him, so he had to go back to Ireland and, well, some of his  
561 symptoms got worse and he had to go through chemotherapy, em, and, well, I don't  
562 know, his health, it was quite up and down, but at, at the moment, ehm, he doesn't have  
563 any symptoms, but the doctors are worried that it will come back, ehm, he is going to  
564 have a bone marrow transplant in one or two weeks, ehm, and so hopefully that, that will  
565 help. But anyway, ehm, one, one thought in, in my mind and maybe in people's mind  
566 was, ehm, it's possible that his leukemia was caused by the Fukushima incident. I think  
567 his doctors, well, I'm not, I can't really remember what they said, maybe they said it's a  
568 possibility or they said it's, it's unlikely, I'm not too sure. Ehm, but, I think in his case, it  
569 wasn't hereditary. It was a mutation in his DNA, so I think there, there's a chance, ehm, it  
570 was caused by Fukushima. Ehm, but well, eh, maybe it's, you can't really know. You'll  
571 never know.

572  
573 *Di, did he have some reason, like, was he par, living particularly near Fukushima at the*  
574 *time or?*

575  
576 No, he was living in Tokyo...

577  
578 *Tokyo.*

579  
580 ...ehm, yeah, I don't he, he's the most healthy guy. He doesn't do much sport, any sports,  
581 ehm, eh, and maybe doesn't eat super healthy...

582  
583 *Okay.*

584  
585 ...ehm, I guess that, that goes for me too [laughter]...

586  
587 *[Laughter]*

588  
589 ...yeah.

590  
591 *Well, like you say, it's, it's very difficult to know whether these things are...*

592  
593 *Yeah, uhm.*

594  
595 *...are, are related in some way or another. Have you changed your behaviours in any way*  
596 *based on the disaster?*

597  
598 Ehm, yes, well, a, after the incident, ehm, I think especially sushi and, well, fish in  
599 general, ehm, was a concern. Ehm, I think I read that it, it's more likely to be  
600 contaminated. Ehm, so I, I stopped eating for sushi for some time, ehm, also when, when  
601 buying stuff, I, I try to read the, the origin of it, ehm, it, in Japan, well, it's all written in  
602 Japanese, ehm, so, eh, I think it was a bit limited what I could read. Ehm, maybe my main  
603 concerns were Fukushima and maybe Iwate. Ehm, I remember one time, eh,

604 coincidentally maybe after a month, after the incident, once I came back to Japan, we  
605 went to, to a chicken place near work and my co-worker asked the, the staff where was  
606 the chicken from, and he said it's from Iwate, eh, actually this, this was several months  
607 after the incident, ehm, and, well, we never went to that place again [laughter]. Ehm, I  
608 think my co-worker was more worried than I was, but, and I don't think that's the only  
609 reason we didn't go back again, like, eventually we changed location, the office changed  
610 location, so that's one, so maybe it was just, well, we just happened not to go again, but,  
611 ehm, yeah, I guess me and my co-workers, we had concerns about the origin of food, and  
612 well, if it was contaminated or not. I, I considered buying some kind of device to measure  
613 radiation...

614  
615 *Oh really?*

616  
617 ...ehm, but eventually I decided not to. Ehm, I think, I saw people, other people had  
618 bought such a device and, well, maybe it wasn't that useful, I mean. Even if, if there's  
619 traces of radiation, they are, they are so small, maybe, maybe you can't really make a  
620 useful detection and, well, there's a lot of background radiation anyway, so...

621  
622 *That's true, right.*

623  
624 ...but yeah, I don't know how you'd solve that.

625  
626 *Ehm, also one of the other kind of aspects which I'm interested in, like, we talked about*  
627 *how the embassy behaved, as a foreigner, you have to register with your city office when*  
628 *you, when you come to Japan. Did you receive any communication during or following*  
629 *the disaster from where you lived?*

630  
631 Ehm, well, at some point, I decided to register with my embassy, ehm, I don't think they  
632 had my information before that. I think I probably saw on their website that you could  
633 register, and, and I followed the steps online. Other than, well, I think my company  
634 compiled some, some news, ehm, especially directly following the incident, ehm, to  
635 distri, distribute to all employees. Ehm, other than that, ehm...

636  
637 *Like, the local government or the ward office or those. Did they ever contact you?*

638  
639 [Note: the participant shakes his head so I verbalize his response for the recording]

640  
641 *You don't think so.*

642  
643 I, I can't remember. They, they might have delivered some flyer on evacuation zones and  
644 stuff, but, well, they do that anyway, every so often, em, so I, I don't remember exactly if  
645 they did something following the, the earthquake, yeah.

646  
647 *Was that information useful to you?*

648  
649 Ehm, well, I suppose, ehm, I was slightly nervous being in Japan for some time, ehm, so I  
650 made sure to read about evacuation zones and actually I think at work we got a special,  
651 ehm, like a small booklet with information on, on, on what do you and readiness for  
652 earthquakes and so on. Ehm, so I, I maybe my main interests were, well, where is my  
653 evacuation zone and, ehm, yeah, so at work we have a, an emergency kit, em, but it, it  
654 doesn't really contain many things. I think it is just like one or two things. It is a tiny bag,  
655 ehm, I'm not sure if we got that following the earthquake, we might have had it all  
656 along...

657  
658 *[Laughter]*

659  
 660 ...[laughter] yeah sorry.  
 661  
 662 *Yeah, oh no, sometimes I know as well in, in my office we had, like, a backpack, eh, kind*  
 663 *of on the back of our seat...*  
 664  
 665 Yeah.  
 666  
 667 *...yeah, but when, when the earthquake happened we all looked in the backpack and*  
 668 *everything was out of date, the food was gone past, even, you know, the long-life water*  
 669 *was past its date [laughter] and everything so...*  
 670  
 671 Yeah, yeah.  
 672  
 673 *...it's more, yeah, I'm sure they are much more cautious now, but at the time of the*  
 674 *earthquake, I think a lot of those procedures had gotten a bit fuzzy.*  
 675  
 676 Yeah, yeah. At my previous company, eh, before it went bankrupt, we had a backpack, it  
 677 had all that stuff...  
 678  
 679 Yeah.  
 680  
 681 ...like water and food and the, a cool device that you could wind with your hand and, and  
 682 charge, use to charge your phone, and use as a radio and a flashlight, ehm, so well, some  
 683 time after the company went bankrupt, ehm, they were selling those, those bags, so I  
 684 bought two of them at the time, ehm, so, I made sure to keep one at the office and one at  
 685 home, ehm, and well, that I think that was something good to have, eh, in case, well, I  
 686 needed it.  
 687  
 688 *Did you ever use radio as a communication tool?*  
 689  
 690 No, no. Ehm, because all, all the radio is in Japanese, well, there might be English  
 691 stations, but, ehm, well, eh, I think I used my smartphone Internet access, em, rather than  
 692 radio and maybe TV sometimes. Ehm.  
 693  
 694 *I, I know you also mentioned websites. Did you use any social media?*  
 695  
 696 Ehm, I think I used Facebook. Ehm, I don't post a lot of things on Facebook, but, eh, I, I  
 697 look at what everybody else is up to and, ehm, I, I think people sent me messages and  
 698 posted on my wall checking if, if I was safe [laughter]. Ehm, so yeah, Facebook. Ehm, I  
 699 don't use Twitter or any other social media.  
 700  
 701 *What was your opinion of Facebook at the time?*  
 702  
 703 Well, I think it's, it's a useful way to, to keep in touch with, with everybody. You could  
 704 easily check, well, everybody's status. Ehm, and well, yeah, maybe it's a good way for  
 705 family and , and acquaintances from overseas who maybe you haven't talked to recently,  
 706 but, they, they know you live in Japan and they, they want to know if you are okay. It's a  
 707 good way to advertise the fact that, that you are alive...  
 708  
 709 [Laughter]  
 710  
 711 ...without having to put too much effort into it.  
 712

713 *Right, right, I understand. Ehm, the last thing I, I want to talk about is just based on some*  
 714 *of the recommendations that have been coming out from the local government or from*  
 715 *various NPOS, they say that, in preparation for the next disaster...*  
 716  
 717 *Yeah.*  
 718  
 719 *...to help support foreign residents that the foreign residents need to be integrated into*  
 720 *their local communities. Did you feel integrated into your local community before or at*  
 721 *the time of the 2011 disaster?*  
 722  
 723 *Ehm, I, I guess not completely. Well, maybe partly. Ehm, I don't really have much*  
 724 *contact or any contact with the neighbours in my building, for example, ehm, but, well, I*  
 725 *live in {a part of Tokyo known for having a high population of foreign residents}, and I, I*  
 726 *did live there at the time and still do so, and they, whenever they give out documents, I*  
 727 *think they, they always do it in both languages, in English and in Japanese, ehm, so, even*  
 728 *like for earthquake readi, readiness things, they give it out in English, so that, that was*  
 729 *one good thing, and I, I use the community support centre sometimes, ehm, so, maybe*  
 730 *that, that makes me feel slightly more part of the community. Ehm, but, I mean, there,*  
 731 *there, there's always a big gap, ehm, well language-wise, and, and being a foreigner,*  
 732 *well, you, you're always seen as different, and it's a bit hard to, to really integrate with,*  
 733 *with Japanese people. Ehm, maybe it, it's my own fault for not really speaking Japanese*  
 734 *well enough, but, ehm, yeah, I definitely wasn't completely integrated. But, well, there*  
 735 *was some feeling of integration, maybe because of, well, the things I've mentioned. Ehm,*  
 736 *actually another interesting thing that happened to me was that maybe at around March,*  
 737 *well, my, my lease for my house was, on my apartment was due to expire in, em, April I*  
 738 *think, so I wanted to, to move to a different place before it expired. Ehm, so I had been*  
 739 *looking at this apartment, and I had pretty much decided to move there. Ehm, I had talked*  
 740 *to the real estate people at my company. They, they spoke English and I was using a real*  
 741 *estate agent who, who didn't really speak English, but who was a friend of my girlfriend.*  
 742 *And I think my Japanese was good enough to, to, eh, talk to him about, well, which place*  
 743 *to move into, and so on. Ehm, and, and he was talking to, to the actual apartment owners*  
 744 *that I wanted to, to move into. Ehm, and well, as we were finalizing everything, ehm,*  
 745 *ehm, the earthquake happened and I had to decide, well, I hadn't signed anything yet, so I*  
 746 *had to decide in the next few days if, if I wanted to move in or not...*  
 747  
 748 *Uhm.*  
 749  
 750 *...and in the end I decided not to move, ehm, so, yeah, it was a really nice place, but yeah*  
 751 *[laughter], I missed out on that, I guess. Ehm, I guess, my concern was that the radiation*  
 752 *thing would become something big and, ehm, maybe also a bit pess, pessimistic, I had*  
 753 *some doomsday scenarios in my head...*  
 754  
 755 *[nervous laughter]*  
 756  
 757 *...that people would eventually need to evacuate Tokyo...*  
 758  
 759 *Yeah.*  
 760  
 761 *...and, and property would go down a lot, well, the value of it. Ehm, and the place was a*  
 762 *bit expensive...*  
 763  
 764 *Yeah.*  
 765  
 766 *...ehm, slightly over what I was comfortable paying...*  
 767

768 *Yeah.*  
769  
770 ...so I thought, “I don’t want to get stuck with an expensive place, ehm, if suddenly  
771 everything collapses,” and because I was going to be in a foreign country. Ehm, if I had  
772 to stay in Spain for months then there was no point in, in renting out an expensive  
773 place...  
774  
775 *Right, yeah.*  
776  
777 ...so I, I decided to cancel, ehm, my move and pay the, ehm, contract renewal fee for my  
778 current apartment...  
779  
780 *Yeah.*  
781  
782 ...which was much cheaper. And, yeah, so.  
783  
784 *Well, you mentioned about the possibility of, ehm, Tokyo being evacuated. I mean, now,*  
785 *several years later, we know that that was realistically on the cards at some, some parts*  
786 *of the, the story...*  
787  
788 *Uhm.*  
789  
790 *...I mean, governments have to think like that...*  
791  
792 *Yeah.*  
793  
794 *...they have to prepare for slightly doomsday scenarios, so I was never surprised to hear*  
795 *that they were forming a plan of, kind of, what if...*  
796  
797 *Yeah.*  
798  
799 *...and I was glad to hear that they were...*  
800  
801 *Yeah.*  
802  
803 *...doing so, but if it had gotten to that, my goodness...*  
804  
805 *Yeah.*  
806  
807 *...I can’t imagine what it would have been like.*  
808  
809 *Yeah. I guess, it’s, it’s a bit strange. Like, when the earthquake happened, ehm, and*  
810 *everything that followed, it’s like if a war starts or, or something, it’s a massive thing*  
811 *that’s happening and it’s something you, you don’t expect and it really changes your,*  
812 *your perspective on things sometimes. Ehm, like, you see a lot of things happening on*  
813 *TV, but well, I never feel its something that’s going to happen to me, and then when it*  
814 *does happen, it’s, like, I’m a bit disoriented, I guess, and surprised. Eh, like, when, when*  
815 *my company went bankrupt in 2008, ehm, that, that was very shocking and I {redacted} I*  
816 *wasn’t really expecting bankruptcy, ehm and, yeah, it happened just in a few days, really,*  
817 *and me and my co-workers were, were left standing there and wondering, like, [laughter]*  
818 *what to do and what will ha, happen to our jobs, and so on. Ehm, so I, I think that maybe*  
819 *it, it’s not a na, natural disaster, but, em, it helps me realize, it helped me realize that,*  
820 *well, I mean, shit happens, and sometimes, well, unexpected things happen, em, and*  
821 *yeah, for example, if a war breaks out with North Korea or, or with China, I think it’s, it’s*

822 a possibility, em, and, yeah, I guess, I, I don't want to be mentally unprepared if those  
823 things happen. Ehm, so yeah, I think the earthquake was a bit like that too.  
824  
825 *Yeah, that's fascinating. I'm wondering, is there any, is there any possibility that your*  
826 *experience {of the bankruptcy} influenced your decision making in the earthquake?*  
827 *Would, would you say that was possible?*  
828  
829 Ehm, well, I think, well, like I said, it's, it's maybe it helped me mentally prepare for it,  
830 em, ehm, yeah, it was a big change that, that had happened suddenly and maybe, I mean,  
831 losing a job is not a big deal, but it felt like something really big and, maybe, part of  
832 history, ehm, and so, so maybe it, it did, I think it did, maybe, mentally help me to, ehm,  
833 well, when the earthquake happened, to better accept what had happened.  
834  
835 *That's really interesting because, as an outsider looking at your experience, I would have*  
836 *wondered, oh, did it maybe make you more pessimistic.*  
837  
838 Yes, I think it did.  
839  
840 *Oh, you do? [laughter]*  
841  
842 [Laughter]  
843  
844 *[Laughter] that's kind of the opposite [laughter]*  
845  
846 Oh, you think it would make you optimistic?  
847  
848 *Well, no, but, eh, you were saying that it kind of helped you be mentally prepared...*  
849  
850 Well...  
851  
852 *...that sounds like you're kind of tough, toughened up by it.*  
853  
854 ...well, yeah, but, I mean, well, I, I think I'm pessimistic by nature...  
855  
856 *Okay [laughter].*  
857  
858 ...[laughter] and, but it makes it easier to imagine, like, doomsday scenarios...  
859  
860 *Okay, right, right, right, I see what you mean.*  
861  
862 ...and, and instead of thinking, "Oh, that's never going to happen to me. That's going to  
863 happen to someone else," ehm, maybe I more think that, "Oh, that could happen to  
864 anyone. That could happen to me."  
865  
866 *Yeah.*  
867  
868 Yeah, my life could completely change tomorrow. I might have to leave Tokyo or walk to  
869 Osaka or something, I don't know.  
870  
871 *Because you've been implicated in two quite historic events, you know...*  
872  
873 Yeah.  
874  
875 *...in, in a short space of, of time, so.*  
876

877 Yeah, yeah.  
878  
879 *That's really interesting.*  
880  
881 Yeah. No-one died with {the bankruptcy} {redacted} I don't want to, ehm, well, say that  
882 my experience was the same...  
883  
884 *[Laughter]*  
885  
886 ...ehm, I mean, it was very different, but I think it probably affected me in a similar  
887 way...  
888  
889 *Yeah...*  
890  
891 ...that's what I feel.  
892  
893 *...that's something I have never really thought to ask other people. Like, I've only asked*  
894 *them about natural disasters. I never asked to, I never thought to ask maybe about, just,*  
895 *life-changing events...*  
896  
897 Yeah.  
898  
899 *...you see, so that might also be, that might be something I, maybe, need to follow up on...*  
900  
901 Yeah.  
902  
903 *...maybe I need to, if, if it comes to decision making, if that, if I end up...*  
904  
905 Uhm.  
906  
907 *...really focusing on how people...*  
908  
909 Sure.  
910  
911 *...made decisions, maybe not just natural disasters but other significant experiences in*  
912 *their life...*  
913  
914 Yeah.  
915  
916 *...could be a factor too but...*  
917  
918 Yeah, yeah, yeah.  
919  
920 *...I'm not sure. Eh, I don't know this. I'm just, kind of, thinking aloud...*  
921  
922 Yeah, yeah...  
923  
924 *...now, but.*  
925  
926 ...I guess I didn't really think about that too much but, yeah, I think maybe it's, there must  
927 be, I think there might be some connection. Maybe it's an insignificant connection...  
928  
929 *Yeah, yeah.*  
930  
931 ...but it's something maybe.



932  
 933 *Yeah, and I don't want to be putting words in your mouth or anything...*  
 934  
 935 [Laughter]  
 936  
 937 *...it's just when you, when you said it, eh, I just suddenly wondered, eh, if that might have,*  
 938 *have been a factor, but, yeah.*  
 939  
 940 I think for me personally it's likely that it was. At least to some degree.  
 941  
 942 *Yeah. That's pretty much all of the, the questions that I have unless you think that there is*  
 943 *something else relevant to do with language or especially translation or interpreting that*  
 944 *I haven't covered.*  
 945  
 946 Ehm, ehm, I can't really think of anything. My memory isn't too good really at times...  
 947  
 948 [Laughter]  
 949  
 950 ...but [laughter] ehm, yeah, I guess I covered most of the...  
 951  
 952 *Yeah, that's great...*  
 953  
 954 ...important things.  
 955  
 956 *...that's really it...*  
 957  
 958 But...  
 959  
 960 *There is, oh sorry?*  
 961  
 962 ...yeah, ehm, well, if you have any follow-up questions, for example, I can probably  
 963 check my Internet history at that time, maybe emails, texts, and things like that.  
 964  
 965 *Yeah, that might, eh, ehm, that would be definitely something that I would be, eh,*  
 966 *interested in, but more at a, kind of, a later stage when I am more focused on what it,*  
 967 *what it is that I am asking. I don't want to give you extra work now needlessly...*  
 968  
 969 [Laughter] Sure.  
 970  
 971 *...because, eh, ehm, at the moment, I'm still, I'm just gathering the data and trying to*  
 972 *figure out where to go from here...*  
 973  
 974 Yeah.  
 975  
 976 *...because, as I said, you are the twenty-sixth person I have spoken to. I still have quite a*  
 977 *few more people to speak to...*  
 978  
 979 Uhum.  
 980  
 981 *...I'm not a hundred-percent sure, there are, there are some themes which I think are*  
 982 *emerging, ehm, based on the different things that people have said, but it's not clear to*  
 983 *me really yet.*  
 984  
 985 Do you, when, when are you leaving?  
 986

987 *So, I leave, eh, the 14th of October, so less than a week.*  
 988  
 989 Okay. Ehm, well, I have, eh, maybe some expat friends and maybe in particular the guy  
 990 who was in the hospital, if you have any interest in?  
 991  
 992 *Absolutely, do you think he might be free? Like, it's kind of a short deadline, like, I'd be*  
 993 *free, I think, Friday, I'd be free pretty much any time or Saturday maybe-ish.*  
 994  
 995 I think he is probably free at lunch time or after work, I imagine.  
 996  
 997 {redacted}  
 998  
 999 *Okay. If you think he might be free, say, Friday lunch time or something, I'd love to, to*  
 1000 *speak to him, because I am especially interested to speak to people who, maybe, didn't*  
 1001 *have your language abilities...*  
 1002  
 1003 Okay.  
 1004  
 1005 *...because that, in terms of translation...*  
 1006  
 1007 Yeah.  
 1008  
 1009 *...or cultural barriers or language barriers, that's really interesting so.*  
 1010  
 1011 That's one person that comes to mind. Ehm, another friend of mine, he's from Jamaica  
 1012 and I think he was in {the office of a major international financial services firm} at the  
 1013 time, ehm, maybe on the 30th floor in a meeting...  
 1014  
 1015 Wow.  
 1016  
 1017 ...ehm, and, well, eh, I guess he's a pretty tough guy, ehm, but, and it's funny, when he  
 1018 talks about it, ehm, he, he says, like, well, he was instantly out of the conference room  
 1019 and he ran...  
 1020  
 1021 *[Laughter]*  
 1022  
 1023 ...faster than he has ran in his life, and he said he's seen some shit in his life, but...  
 1024  
 1025 *This was [laughter].*  
 1026  
 1027 ...he was scared, he was really scared about that. He just.  
 1028  
 1029 *That would be fascinating. I would absolutely love to speak to either of those people if*  
 1030 *you think they might be free. Maybe if you just check with them and see, and just let them*  
 1031 *know that I'm only here for a, a short time, eh, we could probably work something out.*  
 1032  
 1033 Yeah, and he is my friend who lives {downtown Tokyo} and whose house I stayed in.  
 1034  
 1035 *Ah, okay. Yeah, ehm, if, if you think there would be a chance, please do, do check with*  
 1036 *them, and, the, the only day, so to, tomorrow is Thursday, right?*  
 1037  
 1038 Yeah.  
 1039  
 1040 *Thursday, I absolutely, unfortunately, can't do because I am presenting at a seminar in*  
 1041 *Toyo University...*

1042  
 1043 Oh, really?  
 1044  
 1045 *...but, em, the Friday, I think I'm pretty much free all day so I could do a lunch time or I*  
 1046 *could do an after-work thing if you think that might be a chance.*  
 1047  
 1048 Okay, well, I...  
 1049  
 1050 *If you just check with them and, and, and, and see, yeah, that would be great.*  
 1051  
 1052 ...well, you do have other people to talk to?  
 1053  
 1054 *Yes, I do on the Saturday and Sunday...*  
 1055  
 1056 Okay.  
 1057  
 1058 *...but I could probably, you know, schedule around things or, or something, if, if, I'm*  
 1059 *trying to get as much done as I can before, before I go, obviously because this is kind of,*  
 1060 *not a once-in-a-lifetime chance, but you know what I mean...*  
 1061  
 1062 Yeah.  
 1063  
 1064 *...like, it's, it's an expensive trip...*  
 1065  
 1066 Yeah.  
 1067  
 1068 *...I don't think there's much chance I'll be, be back again...*  
 1069  
 1070 Yeah.  
 1071  
 1072 *...and, as I said, I'm particularly interested to hear from people who might not have had*  
 1073 *language abilities like yours and the, kind of, intermediate level, just, just because in*  
 1074 *terms of translation, there is perhaps more likelihood that they would have encountered*  
 1075 *it...*  
 1076  
 1077 That's true.  
 1078  
 1079 *...in some way so. Yeah, please by all means, eh, check and see, see what they say. That*  
 1080 *would be great.*  
 1081  
 1082 **Note:**  
 1083 After switching off the audio recorder, I remembered to ask the participant to mark the  
 1084 Likert Scale for post-interview stress, but unfortunately, I was unable to record his  
 1085 comments while doing so. He basically just said that he did not feel any particular  
 1086 increased stress as a result of me interviewing him (aside from some standard social  
 1087 anxiety at meeting a stranger to talk about himself in an unusual way). More significant,  
 1088 he said, was his surprise at how much he ended up remembering about the disaster and  
 1089 how much he ended up talking. He had thought before coming that he would only have  
 1090 enough information to give me a brief account lasting a few minutes. He felt happy that  
 1091 he ended up being able to help me as he thought he would have had nothing of value to  
 1092 say. I assured him that his responses had indeed been of great value.

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/13 Interview with Participant 27*

5 *Researcher: My methodology is pretty much to just ask people to tell me their story...*

6  
7 Participant: Okay.

8  
9 *...and you can choose to talk about whatever you like...*

10  
11 Okay.

12  
13 *...I mean, the reason I am kind of interested in getting all sorts of background information*  
14 *or...*

15  
16 [Note: the waiter arrives with the participant's food and he thanks the waiter in Japanese  
17 and spends a few seconds arranging plates around him]

18  
19 *...the reason for that really is just so it will, kind of, help me, I guess, interpret whatever*  
20 *linguistic stuff I hear about...*

21  
22 Okay.

23  
24 *...so please don't feel kind of constricted to talking about only, only linguistic stuff, just*  
25 *tell me whatever interests you or whatever you think is important...*

26  
27 Okay.

28  
29 *...but just again to let you know that the things I am particularly looking into are how*  
30 *people communicated and how they got information...*

31  
32 Okay.

33  
34 *...those are the two, two...*

35  
36 Parts you want to focus on.

37  
38 *...yeah. So, like, really in terms of the questioning, I'm not very directive or anything, I*  
39 *just...*

40  
41 Leave it open.

42  
43 *...want to know, yeah, just want to know what, what your experience was and...*

44  
45 Okay.

46  
47 *...sort of, work from there. Like, if there's things maybe that you know, I pick up on or*  
48 *that I'd like more detail, maybe I'll ask you that, but pretty much it's just once, once*  
49 *you're happy to tell me what happened to you in the 3.11 that's, that's good enough for*  
50 *me.*

51  
52 How far into the post-disaster do you want me to go?

53

54 *Well, you see, this is actually one of the questions that I have asked everyone...*  
55  
56 Uhum.  
57  
58 *... when the disaster ended for them if it has ended, so that's pretty much up to you. Most*  
59 *people have given very different types of answers for, for that, and some people have only*  
60 *focused on one day, some people on much longer periods...*  
61  
62 Okay.  
63  
64 *...so really, well, maybe we'll start with that, for you when did the disaster end, if it has?*  
65  
66 It hasn't. On the day of the earthquake, I was in the subway, the Marunouchi Line,  
67 between Yotsuya and Shinjuku, Yotsuya-sanchome and Shinjuku-gyoenmae. And the  
68 train stopped between the two stations, quite frightening...  
69  
70 Uhm.  
71  
72 ...and so we stood there for about twenty minutes until the train started moving. Got out,  
73 and went up to the ground. Saw that all the buildings were empty, everyone was on the  
74 street. So I rea, realized, you know, I mean, I knew it was huge, biggest thing I've ever  
75 experienced. That night I couldn't get home. Even though hundreds of thousands of  
76 people walked home, I got a hotel room at Shinjuku and decided to wait it out, and it was  
77 a terrible night because every hour there were huge aftershocks...  
78  
79 Uhm.  
80  
81 ...no gas, no water. It was just a place to sleep and that was fine with me. The first train  
82 home in the morning, that was at 6am, as soon as I got home, I turn on the Internet, and  
83 started reading the New York Times...  
84  
85 Uhm.  
86  
87 ...because I trust the New York Times for information. I know some of the journalists  
88 there, and it has a reputation of honesty and transparency. And so, I started reading that  
89 they were putting seawater on the, the reactors to keep them cool. I immediately bought a  
90 ticket to the United States...  
91  
92 Uhm.  
93  
94 ...because I knew very well how many lies Tepco had made in the past, and I knew very  
95 well the danger that existed, and I knew where the prevailing winds were going, and I had  
96 watched CNN at the same time, and they were talking about, "in two days the winds were  
97 shifting south". And I said, "I'm out of here. I am out of here." And so, I left two days  
98 later. I wanted to stay another couple of days and see what happened, and I saw the panic  
99 buying, I saw the gas lines, I saw the hoarding of food. I said, "Yeah, I'm, it's, I'm  
100 going." And so I left on the 14th of March, and on the 15th of March, the first plume of  
101 radiation came over Tokyo, and I missed it by twelve hours. The second plume came  
102 over on the March 21st, if you look at the research...  
103  
104 Uhm.  
105  
106 ...nothing was stated publicly, no-one was informed that it was coming, and it, that was  
107 another reason why I left, because I understood what was going to happen. I know that  
108 Japan does not create transparency and honesty in a crisis. It, they don't respond quickly

109 enough. They spend too much time forming consensus, and you don't have time in a  
 110 crisis to form consensus. So I left for two weeks, I came back on the 28th of March. In  
 111 hindsight, I probably wish I'd stayed away another couple of weeks, but I think the bulk  
 112 of the radiation had come out by then and the prevailing winds were not over Tokyo  
 113 anymore. And so I came back. What I started doing is reading a lot of, obviously English-  
 114 only information...

115

116 *Uhm.*

117

118 ...because Japanese information, I didn't trust and not only that I can't read Japanese very  
 119 well. So I started listening to, you know, NHK [Note: the Japanese national broadcaster]  
 120 in English, because I think they built a lot of credibility during the crisis...

121

122 *Yeah.*

123

124 ...and I knew some of the people who worked there. But I was reading a lot of blogs like  
 125 'Tokyo Radiation Levels' on Facebook, 'TRL'. And, 'Tokyo Kids and Radiation'. And  
 126 those were the two blog sources I started reading because there were some very talented  
 127 and knowledgeable people offering stuff. And I was trying to read through what was,  
 128 what was hyped, what was sensationalism...

129

130 *Uhm.*

131

132 ...what was reality, and who, it was very interesting how many people because experts...

133

134 *[Laughter]*

135

136 ...in this crisis, and, and most of them don't know what they're talking about. So you had  
 137 to read through it, and just, I started writing my own, you can look on {a major online  
 138 news blog} and type my name in in that period and you will see I wrote about twenty  
 139 pieces...

140

141 *Wow.*

142

143 ...so feel free to look. So what, so in terms of communication based on my own  
 144 experiences as media in crisis trainer, I felt that I had to make my own judgments based  
 145 on my own experience of how the place works from twenty-five years here...

146

147 *Yeah, yeah.*

148

149 ...and I was accurate...

150

151 *Yeah.*

152

153 ...and, and I was, you know at the same time, what was going on were the *fly-jin* [Note: a  
 154 derogatory term for foreign nationals who left Japan during the disaster] scenario. The  
 155 foreigners who left were cowards, and they, they were wimps, and, of course, just  
 156 because Armageddon didn't happen, doesn't mean that it couldn't have...

157

158 *Uhuh.*

159

160 ...and, in fact, everyone was very lucky that it didn't...

161

162 *Yeah.*

163

164 ...because what has come out since, and two or three months after the crisis, the amount  
 165 of radiation that came out startled the mind, right? I'm very glad that I left during that  
 166 time...

167

168 *Yeah.*

169

170 ...in addition to that what has been very clear is, and I wrote about this, and I used a  
 171 pseudonym too on some of my writings, and that's where I really said what I thought. But  
 172 I felt when the state was faced with the issue of existence, that they would choose  
 173 survival over telling the truth...

174

175 *Uhm.*

176

177 ...so rather than tell the people of Tokyo that clouds of radiation were coming and causing  
 178 mass panic, the alternative is not to tell them and keep the state moving...

179

180 *Uhm.*

181

182 ...keep the economy moving...

183

184 *Yeah.*

185

186 ...so that's what I think they did...

187

188 *Yeah.*

189

190 ...I can't prove it, but that's my take...

191

192 *Yeah.*

193

194 ...so as the months went by it became very clear that, that, the beef scare, the, the food,  
 195 food contamination from, from contaminated hay, there were lots of cases of school  
 196 children being fed contaminated food...

197

198 *Yeah.*

199

200 ...tonnes and tonnes of issues going on, fish being contaminated, the amount of radiation  
 201 flowing through the rivers and coming out of mouths of the Arakawa river, for example,  
 202 and into Tokyo Bay which had become heavily contaminated. I haven't eaten fish in two-  
 203 and-a-half years here...

204

205 *Okay, wow.*

206

207 ...and I went a long time without even having a salad...

208

209 *That's interesting.*

210

211 ...I was importing all my food.

212

213 *Yeah, and, like, as you mentioned, you chose this restaurant because it's, you know*  
 214 *it's...*

215

216 *Yeah...*

217

218 *...imported.*

219  
 220 ...I don't know where this comes from [Note: pointing to a side salad that he did not eat]  
 221 but I know where the spaghetti and the tomato sauce comes from...  
 222  
 223 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. [Note: here again I start to try to talk for a longer time than I*  
 224 *normally would to try to give the participant some time to eat his lunch] And then, a lot of*  
 225 *the things that you mentioned, other people have talked about in, not in the same way but*  
 226 *in similar ways, eh, I know, say for example, the issue of the fly-jin, that has come up*  
 227 *with, it was something I was interested in...*  
 228  
 229 Well, let me tell you a story about that. I was furious about the whole thing, and I go,  
 230 "You're kidding me. We have foreigners chastising foreigners for leaving a foreign  
 231 country in a crisis." And you could, and I mean, it's the most insane thing I ever heard.  
 232 And I thought to myself, "This is ridiculous." A friend of mine in NHK in April of 2013,  
 233 no, 2011, sorry, about a month after the crisis (indistinct), she said, "We're doing a story  
 234 on *fly-jin*. Do you want to represent the people who left?" I go, "Ah, yep!"...  
 235  
 236 *[Laughter]*  
 237  
 238 ... "I will do it." And I went on, and she did a story with somebody who stayed...  
 239  
 240 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 241  
 242 ...and, and I definitely went on the record talking about that...  
 243  
 244 *Yeah.*  
 245  
 246 ...I felt it was very important. It was one of the most ridiculous things I've ever seen in  
 247 my life...  
 248  
 249 *Yeah.*  
 250  
 251 ...how ridiculous...  
 252  
 253 *Yeah.*  
 254  
 255 ...that, and, and even if, like it was Japanese saying it, it would still be ridiculous...  
 256  
 257 *Yeah.*  
 258  
 259 ... "It's a nuclear crisis, guys. Open your eyes."  
 260  
 261 *That's absolutely one of the, the elements that's becoming clear to me...*  
 262  
 263 *Uhm.*  
 264  
 265 *...even at this early stage...*  
 266  
 267 *Yeah.*  
 268  
 269 *...is that, you know, I'm saying that I'm looking at foreign nationals' experiences, but you*  
 270 *can't lump all foreign nationals to, to, together, I very clearly have to define what I mean*  
 271 *by foreigner.*  
 272



273 Oh yeah. Everyone forgets the Japanese left in huge numbers too. Is anybody calling  
 274 them cowards? I mean, the whole thing is nonsense.  
 275  
 276 *Yeah.*  
 277  
 278 It's insane. It pissed me off...  
 279  
 280 *Well.*  
 281  
 282 ...so that's why I was happy to go on the air...  
 283  
 284 *Yeah.*  
 285  
 286 ...what was also interesting is that that was one thing that happened, but by about July and  
 287 August of 2011, I felt that the, the real issue was no longer the nuclear plant, it was food.  
 288  
 289 *Oh, I see.*  
 290  
 291 And so I started a blog on Facebook...  
 292  
 293 *Yeah, that's what I had seen, yeah.*  
 294  
 295 ...called {redacted}. And what has been interesting of that, that site is, initially there was,  
 296 there was talk by some people, "Well, you're, you're taking away from the focus on  
 297 Tokyo Radiation Level [Note: the Facebook group]. We should stay together and have  
 298 one place where everyone talks." And I go, "Well, what for? You know, I don't think the  
 299 issue is going to be nuclear anymore. I think it is going to be the aftermath."...  
 300  
 301 *Yeah.*  
 302  
 303 ...so I started my own site {in} 2011, and, you know, at the time, Facebook was  
 304 calculating things very differently than they do it now. They don't show you the numbers  
 305 anymore...  
 306  
 307 *Oh.*  
 308  
 309 ...but I was getting, I mean, I was getting, I was getting ten, twenty-thousand hits a day...  
 310  
 311 *Wow.*  
 312  
 313 ...at least...  
 314  
 315 *Wow.*  
 316  
 317 ...and it was getting into cumulatively, you know, into the millions...  
 318  
 319 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 320  
 321 ...of people watching, and so I became, what I decided to do with the site was try to limit  
 322 my commentary, and I think people are smart, let people read and make their own  
 323 decisions. I mean, I did, I did, there were some emotional moments, you know, when I  
 324 would see things and I would just go like, you know, like, "This is outrageous." But I, in  
 325 my position, I work sometimes for the government, so I can't criticize the government,  
 326 and I actually had, my employer pulled me in a couple of times and said, "What are you  
 327 doing?" And I said, "I'm not saying anything that's not in the press." "Yeah, but you

328 work for the government.” And I said, “Yeah. But I’m not saying anything that’s not in  
 329 the press.” So I said, “Has anybody heard anything? Has anybody said anything?” “No.”  
 330 “So then what’s the problem?” “Well, I’m uncomfortable.” “Well, I’m not uncomfortable  
 331 and I’m doing it, so.”...  
 332  
 333 *Yeah.*  
 334  
 335 ...I felt that these issues, it’s not about me...  
 336  
 337 *Yeah.*  
 338  
 339 I said, “There’s a larger calling here.” So what I did was I decided to keep it, if you look  
 340 and go all the way back and look at the thousands of posts that I put up, you’ll see that it  
 341 has transformed into...  
 342  
 343 *Uhm.*  
 344  
 345 ...what it is now which is pretty much leaving the commentary aside...  
 346  
 347 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 348  
 349 ...but I mean...  
 350  
 351 *Well.*  
 352  
 353 ...well still, and every day, I’m, like, rolling my eyes, like, today, you know, the United  
 354 Nations did its independent searching saying that, that the estimation of exposure to the  
 355 workers at, up at the Fukushima plant is, is reduced by twenty percent from reality. The  
 356 just, sort of, I call it ‘Surprise of the Day’, you know, because it happens every day, right?  
 357 So, so, so the website I think has become a trusted place where people can go for a quick  
 358 summary of the issues related to food...  
 359  
 360 *Yeah.*  
 361  
 362 ...and I don’t think anyone else is doing it, and I don’t care if they do...  
 363  
 364 *Yeah.*  
 365  
 366 ...but I don’t think they’re doing it the way I’m doing it...  
 367  
 368 *Yeah.*  
 369  
 370 ...and it’s trusted. I’ve had, I’ve met people, like, someone will introduce me and say, “I  
 371 told them about your blog.” And they would say, “Thank you.”...  
 372  
 373 *[Laughter] Yeah.*  
 374  
 375 ...“I read it every day. I really appreciate it.”...  
 376  
 377 *Yeah.*  
 378  
 379 ...that kind of, so I’ve also done, I’ve been on two, two {major broadcaster} shows in the  
 380 United States...  
 381  
 382 *Okay.*

383  
 384 ...on it, and, you know, I think the issue at this point is dying down. People are getting  
 385 what I call radiation fatigue.  
 386  
 387 *Oh, yeah.*  
 388  
 389 People are tired of worrying about it...  
 390  
 391 *Yeah.*  
 392  
 393 ...so what's happened, and I think they know that this would happen over time, is that  
 394 people stopped worrying about it...  
 395  
 396 *Yeah.*  
 397  
 398 ...but the problem is still there, and when I read that they say that it's leaking in the port  
 399 of Fukushima, but it's not going out in the ocean, I'm thinking to myself, "What are you  
 400 talking about?"...  
 401  
 402 *Yeah.*  
 403  
 404 ...but Greenpeace is out there measuring...  
 405  
 406 *Yeah.*  
 407  
 408 ...and Greenpeace hasn't found, I mean, the, the solution to pollution is dilution, you  
 409 know the famous saying? And the dilution is happening...  
 410  
 411 *Yeah.*  
 412  
 413 ...so there are traces of cesium but, of course, there are two-hundred different kinds of  
 414 radionuclides that are not being measured, right? Including strontium eighty, eighty-nine  
 415 and ninety, etc., right? And so, so the issue then becomes one of do you want to stay here  
 416 and live your life like this...  
 417  
 418 *Yeah.*  
 419  
 420 ...or do you want to leave? And then people, it's fascinating, but I'm sure that it's part of  
 421 your research, to see the justification people say, because a lot of people who did the  
 422 head-in-the-sand thing, "Well, this is where I work, and so my business is here, and my  
 423 family is here, so what can I do?" There is a lot of that, right? And then there's a lot of,  
 424 there's a lot of, "Well, you know, it's not that bad." It's kind of bad...  
 425  
 426 *Uhum.*  
 427  
 428 ...and then people with children are really confused. I mean, I have a woman who lives  
 429 around the corner from me with a kid, she's Japanese, and I started telling her, she reads  
 430 my blog, she goes, she goes, "I don't want to live here anymore." I said, "well, there's a  
 431 lot of people like you."  
 432  
 433 *Yeah.*  
 434  
 435 So it's a very big issue now for people with children...  
 436  
 437 *Yeah.*

438  
 439 ...people who are a little bit older worry less about it. I'm not sure it's justified.  
 440  
 441 *Well, I've, I've definitely heard that said that, you talked about, you know, the different*  
 442 *justifications...*  
 443  
 444 Tonnes of them.  
 445  
 446 *...for, for staying. One of the things I've heard fairly repeatedly is, "Well, from what I,*  
 447 *from what I understand, the effects will only kick in in twenty, thirty, forty years, so I'll*  
 448 *nearly be dead by then anyway, so."*  
 449  
 450 How about the 'It's better than China'?  
 451  
 452 *[Laughter]*  
 453  
 454 "I used to live in China, so it's better." I mean, have you heard that one?  
 455  
 456 *[Note: the researcher nods in agreement]*  
 457  
 458 I mean, it's, that, to me, you should focus your research on that...  
 459  
 460 *Interesting, yeah.*  
 461  
 462 ...really, it's the stuff. And I don't think anyone has done research on it...  
 463  
 464 *Yeah, that's interesting.*  
 465  
 466 ...that would be really original for you to do something...  
 467  
 468 *Yeah. that's the thing...*  
 469  
 470 ...I'd love to read it.  
 471  
 472 *...that's a fascinating topic, actually, yeah.*  
 473  
 474 You should think about that.  
 475  
 476 *Yeah.*  
 477  
 478 People would, people would...  
 479  
 480 *Yeah.*  
 481  
 482 ...people would read about that.  
 483  
 484 *I know as well, one other thing that is fascinating to me is when you talked about, kind of,*  
 485 *the head-in-the-sand or the radiation fatigue...*  
 486  
 487 Right.  
 488  
 489 *...that absolutely has come up, not just among the, the overseas nationa, the foreign*  
 490 *nationals...*  
 491  
 492 Right.

493  
 494 *...but among Japanese, too...*  
 495  
 496 Oh sure.  
 497  
 498 *...I went up to {redacted} Ibaraki...*  
 499  
 500 Yeah, okay.  
 501  
 502 *...so, as you know, they had their own accident previously in 2004, 2001 or 1999 or*  
 503 *something like that anyway...*  
 504  
 505 Yeah.  
 506  
 507 *...1999, I think it was. Anyway, so they had their own history and some of the foreign*  
 508 *nationals that I spoke to were there for that accident...*  
 509  
 510 Yeah.  
 511  
 512 *...and then subsequently here and, just, they were talking about this as you mentioned,*  
 513 *kind of, radiation fatigue...*  
 514  
 515 Right.  
 516  
 517 *...because one of the people that I met there would have been a big surfer, because it's a*  
 518 *bit of a surfing community {along parts of the Ibaraki coast}. And...*  
 519  
 520 A foreigner?  
 521  
 522 *Yes. And, he hasn't surfed since...*  
 523  
 524 Surf's up, dude.  
 525  
 526 *...[laughter] hasn't surfed since.*  
 527  
 528 Right.  
 529  
 530 *What he was talking about in terms of the radiation fatigue is he noticed that, so 2011,*  
 531 *nobody was at the beach...*  
 532  
 533 Uhum.  
 534  
 535 *...2012, pretty much nobody was at the beach, I would say, he said pretty much nobody*  
 536 *was at the beach. If there were people at the beach, there was nobody in the water...*  
 537  
 538 Oh.  
 539  
 540 *...and then 2013, there was a big change...*  
 541  
 542 Yeah.  
 543  
 544 *...it seemed that, maybe people were just.*  
 545  
 546 Well, cesium 134 has a half-life of two years, right? So, so, it still doesn't mean much  
 547 because it's still there. But for some reason, all the, automatically, everything was okay.

548  
549 *But he also mentioned, the reason I picked up on this part is he mentioned exactly what*  
550 *you said about all the other nuclides that are not measured [laughter]...*  
551  
552 There's two-hundred of them.  
553  
554 *...it was just so, he was like, "Yeah, fair enough." You know, some of his Japanese surfer*  
555 *friends said, "Well, the cesium levels have been measured and are, you know, fine or*  
556 *whatever." But he says, "Okay. What about?"*  
557  
558 So, you know what this comes down to, Patrick? Back to my theory: survival of the  
559 state...  
560  
561 *Uhm.*  
562  
563 ...that's what this is all about...  
564  
565 *Yeah.*  
566  
567 ...that's what this is all about.  
568  
569 *Yeah. Well, if, if.*  
570  
571 Why, you, do you think for a minute they couldn't, they couldn't test more food if they  
572 wanted to? If they wanted, to have the resources and the money assigned to it that they  
573 couldn't. Why don't they do it?...  
574  
575 *Uhm.*  
576  
577 ... (indistinct) Do you know the percentage of food that's tested?  
578  
579 *I don't, I don't.*  
580  
581 Take a guess.  
582  
583 *Well, I'm assuming it's low...*  
584  
585 *Yep.*  
586  
587 *...let's say two percent.*  
588  
589 One, less than one.  
590  
591 *Aaaahhh. Okay.*  
592  
593 Do you know the sample sizes of what's tested?  
594  
595 *I have no idea.*  
596  
597 Nobody does because they don't make it public. This is what we're dealing with.  
598  
599 *Uhm. I know as well that, em, you talked about in, sort of, relation to the way the state*  
600 *operates, the idea of consensus. That's something that's, kind of, interesting to me, too, in*  
601 *terms of my study looking at foreign nationals...*  
602

603 Yeah [clears throat].  
604  
605 *...because you talked about how in a crisis, you know, consensus is, slows everything*  
606 *down...*  
607  
608 That's right.  
609  
610 *...a lot of the foreign nationals that I spoke to, especially the people in the worst-affected*  
611 *areas, didn't want to go to the communal refuge centres...*  
612  
613 Right.  
614  
615 *...they wanted to be able to make their own decisions...*  
616  
617 Of course.  
618  
619 *...well, you.*  
620  
621 Especially after the, the government tells people in Iitate [Note: a village in Fukushima  
622 prefecture about 40km away from the damaged plant that was outside the compulsory  
623 30km evacuation zone, but in which a voluntary governmental evacuation was carried out  
624 based on high radiation levels] to go north and puts them in the middle of the cloud...  
625  
626 *Uhm.*  
627  
628 *...why would you trust the state? The state has done nothing but lie. Tepco [Note: the*  
629 *company that runs that damaged Fukushima reactors] has done nothing but lie. Why is*  
630 *Tepco still in charge of calling the shots up there. And actually it's not, it's the state that*  
631 *is, because it is funded by the taxpayer...*  
632  
633 *Uhm.*  
634  
635 *...which means it is funded by the government, which means the government is making*  
636 *the decisions. It, it, anything that defies logic goes back to my original theory...*  
637  
638 *Yeah.*  
639  
640 *...survival of the state.*  
641  
642 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know as well, like, some of the, you know, you mentioned about, say*  
643 *with your blog, your way of addressing the issues now is to give people information and*  
644 *let them make their own decisions...*  
645  
646 That's right...  
647  
648 *...that seems to...*  
649  
650 *...people are smart.*  
651  
652 *...that seems to work well for the foreign nationals that I have spoken to...*  
653  
654 That works well for females with children.  
655

656 ...yeah, yeah. *I'm also interested in this idea of Japanese people, because, you know,*  
 657 *translation obviously, my original focus was going to be translating from Japanese to,*  
 658 *let's say, English, Chinese, Korean...*  
 659  
 660 That's not a story...  
 661  
 662 *But...*  
 663  
 664 ...that's not a story.  
 665  
 666 ...*what I'm interested in.*  
 667  
 668 ...not to pooh-pooh your research, but that's not the story. The story is, but I don't know  
 669 what your focus, your focus is on linguistics...  
 670  
 671 *Yeah.*  
 672  
 673 ...but I mean, then maybe that's a story from a linguistic point of view...  
 674  
 675 *Yeah.*  
 676  
 677 ...but the interesting story about what's happening is the destruction of trust between the  
 678 state and the people. To me, that's a really interesting story. You ask Japanese if they  
 679 trust the state...  
 680  
 681 *Uhm.*  
 682  
 683 ...I don't think so. I don't really think so.  
 684  
 685 *Yeah.*  
 686  
 687 Trust has been destruct, destroyed.  
 688  
 689 *Kind of, linked to that one thing surprised me so far, it mightn't sur, surprise you, it*  
 690 *surprised me that a lot of foreigners that I spoke to felt that they were better off for*  
 691 *information than Japanese people...*  
 692  
 693 Yeah. I know, when I tell Japanese friends that I run a blog, and they read it, they freak  
 694 when they see what's going on in English. They freak. And I try not to put the fluff out  
 695 there. I don't, I try not to do sensationalism stuff, em, [Note: the participant asks the  
 696 waiter for water in Japanese] I try to keep it to, to important articles related to the topic...  
 697  
 698 *Yeah.*  
 699  
 700 ...sometimes I fail, but I want people to, to realize, I want the blog to be balanced, but  
 701 there's not a lot of positive news. So when I find a positive piece, I put it up there. I'm  
 702 fine with that. But people are forced to make critical decisions, and, and, you know what  
 703 happens in November, up there? They start taking the rods out of, of Pool Number 4...  
 704  
 705 *Oh, yeah. This is a very delicate...*  
 706  
 707 Thirteen-hundred rods.  
 708  
 709 ...*very, very delicate operation.*  
 710



711 Thirteen-hundred rods.  
712  
713 *Yeah.*  
714  
715 And if anything goes wrong, it is eighty-five, potentially, eighty-five times worse than  
716 Chernobyl...  
717  
718 *Yeah.*  
719  
720 ...in terms of radiation release. I mean, it's not just a Japan problem...  
721  
722 *Yeah.*  
723  
724 ...it's a survival of the globe problem. And that's just one fuel pool out of all the nuclear  
725 plants that are around the world, right? I mean, it's a huge issue on a larger scale, right?  
726  
727 *Yeah.*  
728  
729 So, I don't want to pooh-pooh what you're doing. I think what you are doing is important.  
730 But, but I'm a political scientist, and so what's interesting is how do you, how do you  
731 rebuild trust when the trust has been broken inside a state.  
732  
733 *That is an interesting topic.*  
734  
735 And how do you do that in a place where there is a history of broken trust? So if you go  
736 back to World War II, it reminds me of World War II when the Japanese public was lied  
737 to about the state of affairs and the state of Japanese war effort, etc. This is sort of  
738 repeating itself...  
739  
740 *Uhm?*  
741  
742 ...you know, because people are not allowed up there, and information is not transparent,  
743 how do we actually know what's going on. It builds suspicion, it builds distrust...  
744  
745 *Yeah.*  
746  
747 ...so, the system, my hope was that after they screwed up after the, you know, the initial  
748 months, that they would realize that they need to rebuild the trust, but they haven't...  
749  
750 *Yeah.*  
751  
752 ...they haven't done it...  
753  
754 *Yeah.*  
755  
756 ...and I don't think they will. I don't, see the problem is most people here just carry about,  
757 just care about Prada bags and Louis Vuitton shoes, I mean they, they're not too deeply  
758 interested in what, what's going on. So I don't know about Ireland, but I know in the  
759 United States where I come from, it would be a big issue...  
760  
761 *Uhm*  
762  
763 ...and the, the, there would be huge protests if when they lied for, for the last two years  
764 about leakage into the ocean, that the, the president of Tepco takes a 10% pay cut as  
765 punishment...

766  
767 *[Note: researcher makes sharp intake of breath]*  
768  
769 ...I mean, believe me, in America, that man is not only gone, but he'll be sued, right? So  
770 be, the way in which the reaction is happening here is a whole other topic...  
771  
772 *Uhm.*  
773  
774 ...of incredible interest.  
775  
776 *Absolutely, yeah. I, to be honest, you know, I have found that this whole topic is a, kind*  
777 *of, Pandora's Box, that, you know.*  
778  
779 Speaking of, speaking of which, are you here on the 16th?  
780  
781 *I'm afraid I'm not. I leave tomorr, em, the 14th, Monday...*  
782  
783 Okay...  
784  
785 *...tomorrow.*  
786  
787 ...there's a, there's a guy in, it's interesting, because of all the work I've done the last two  
788 year's, I've met a lot of interesting people in cyberspace, etc., and there's a guy, Robert  
789 Rand, who has just finished making a movie called Pandora's, oh what's it called, shit,  
790 I'll have to look it up. Pandora's, not box, but Pandora's wish or something like that  
791 *[Note: the name of the movie is Pandora's Promise], and it's about a movement of*  
792 *protesters termed pro-nuclear...*  
793  
794 *Oh.*  
795  
796 ...and he's made a movie about it and it's sort of a pro-nuclear movie...  
797  
798 *Oh, wow.*  
799  
800 ...and I have tried to stay away from, from the whole issue of nuclear issues...  
801  
802 *Yeah.*  
803  
804 ...I'm not trying to take a side on it...  
805  
806 *Yeah, yeah..*  
807  
808 ...right? Because that's not in my interests...  
809  
810 *Yeah.*  
811  
812 ...but it's pretty interesting stuff.  
813  
814 *That's fascinating.*  
815  
816 *[Note: the participant starts searching through his smartphone] Let me pull up, let me pull*  
817 *up the, I'll see if I can find it. I didn't, I hope you didn't take offence to my comments*  
818 *before...*  
819  
820 *Oh, no, no, no.*

821  
 822 ...because what you are doing is very important...  
 823  
 824 *No, I...*  
 825  
 826 ...but...  
 827  
 828 *...I think, no, but, the...*  
 829  
 830 ...I think it signals great things...  
 831  
 832 *...the only thing I would say is that I can only talk about what I am informed about...*  
 833  
 834 That's right.  
 835  
 836 *...and I'm not a political scientist...*  
 837  
 838 That's right.  
 839  
 840 *...so I won't be telling that story. I think a political scientist would tell that story*  
 841 *[laughter] a lot better.*  
 842  
 843 Yeah, maybe so...  
 844  
 845 *Yeah, so...*  
 846  
 847 ...depending on who is doing it.  
 848  
 849 *...yeah, I can only tell, you know, the story that I'm equipped for.*  
 850  
 851 So I think the, the story for what you are talking about and the fact that I am not doing  
 852 Japanese media except the English version of it. I'm doing Jiji and Kyodo and NHK, you  
 853 know, I'm going off the wires every day...  
 854  
 855 *Yeah.*  
 856  
 857 ...but that's just a translation...  
 858  
 859 *Yeah.*  
 860  
 861 ...and I don't know if it's a good translation. I think the, the, the issue is if Japanese were  
 862 reading on a regular basis what's being written not only in English but in other languages,  
 863 like Korean and German or French or whatever, Chinese, Korean, I think it would be very  
 864 uncomfortable.  
 865  
 866 *You see that is a huge story for me, in terms of the linguistic stuff, I think, and there are,*  
 867 *you know, political reasons behind why information isn't transmitted, too, like, you know.*  
 868 *It's, you know, NHK has a very particular role in disaster response in Japan and has a*  
 869 *very particular relationship with the state...*  
 870  
 871 Right.  
 872  
 873 *...and so they present...*  
 874  
 875 Funded by the state.

876  
877 *...information, yeah, so preven, they present information in a certain way and they pre,*  
878 *present certain information and that feeds into Kyodo and the other press agencies.*  
879  
880 Right.  
881  
882 *But one thing I would like to touch on a little bit because you've talked about trust a*  
883 *couple of times...*  
884  
885 Uhum.  
886  
887 *...a lot of the foreign nationals I've spoken to spoke of a breakdown of trust in their own*  
888 *media, their own domestic media, let's say, people from the US being angry with the way*  
889 *the disaster was pors, portrayed in the US media.*  
890  
891 No, I've heard about those stories, like, somebody saying that there was a nuclear plant in  
892 Shibuya, right? I mean, there was a whole movement during the crisis, and, and, some  
893 English teacher started a website talking about this which I found out after the website  
894 was going on that was, sort of, judging the journalists credibility, that it was some  
895 English teacher who has not even a journalism degree and has nothing to do with it. I just,  
896 sort of, rolled my eyes at it. But that person called, it was called the, I think it was 'Wall  
897 of Shame'. Did you ever read about it?  
898  
899 *I didn't, no. I haven't heard about it.*  
900  
901 You can go and look...  
902  
903 *I'll have to look for that. Yeah, I will. I'll have a look for that.*  
904  
905 ...it's pretty interesting. That they put the New York Times on the Wall of Shame, and I  
906 just thought this, this was, like, trash. I don't believe in a thing they say. To put the New  
907 York Times on the Wall of Shame for bad reporting? I completely disagreed. That doesn't  
908 mean the New York Times is perfect or the Economist is perfect or the Financial Times is  
909 perfect, but I would believe what those people, or the Wall Street Journal...  
910  
911 *Yeah.*  
912  
913 ...I would believe what those people write a lot more than I would the Nikkei [Note: this  
914 is the Japanese equivalent of the Wall Street Journal]...  
915  
916 *Yeah, what, what...*  
917  
918 ...I mean, come on.  
919  
920 *...why would, why would you say that? Just to clarify.*  
921  
922 Well, because, talk about, I mean, anything that's planted in the Nikkei, is, is payback for  
923 something else, or, or, or strategic. It's not impartial news. If you look at the, the way in  
924 which media is distributed, and the *kisha* club [Note: means press club] creation which  
925 was to, hopefully to give news out in a, in an impartial and e, equal way at the same  
926 time...  
927  
928 *Yeah.*  
929

930 ...but it, you know, I just went to a great talk by New York Times Martin, Martin, Martin  
 931 Fackler a couple of weeks ago, and he had written a book about, this in Japanese, about  
 932 how the media responded during the crisis which you should take a look at...  
 933  
 934 *Uhm.*  
 935  
 936 ...Martin Fackler, he's, he's got a book in, in, he gave the example of the Japanese media  
 937 are like baby sparrows in the nest opening their mouths waiting for mama to feed them. I  
 938 thought he was absolutely right, I had a good laugh at that.  
 939  
 940 *Yeah. You also mentioned earlier on that, you know, you, you, one of the reasons why you*  
 941 *trusted, say, the New York Times or other, you know, I think you mentioned the Wall*  
 942 *Street Journal as well, is because you knew some of the people...*  
 943  
 944 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 945  
 946 *...who worked in these organizations. Those people, you mean you knew people here in*  
 947 *Tokyo...*  
 948  
 949 *Yeah.*  
 950  
 951 *...like your, so, as, again, this is, I come back to translation because it's what I am*  
 952 *interested in, would you know, those people, do they speak fluent Japanese or do they...*  
 953  
 954 *Some of them are Japanese.*  
 955  
 956 *...okay. So they, they themselves are Japanese and speak fluent English?*  
 957  
 958 *Some do, some of the journalists who are foreigners do, some, some of them don't.*  
 959  
 960 *Yeah, because for me, the interesting point is, you know, if you're trusting, let's say, an*  
 961 *English-speaking journalist who is getting their information through some form of*  
 962 *mediation...*  
 963  
 964 *Right.*  
 965  
 966 *...how, how much do you know about the mediation? I'm interested in that whole topic,*  
 967 *though, of I guess, if you'd like to call it news translation as well...*  
 968  
 969 *I don't know much about that.*  
 970  
 971 *...it's just interesting to me because, as you said, trust was a, a, kind of, a key word...*  
 972  
 973 *Right.*  
 974  
 975 *...that, that came up, I think, you know, if, if you're, if you're familiar with the language*  
 976 *of the place you're reporting on, that maybe gives you the ability to...*  
 977  
 978 *Well for me, what's more, what's more interesting...*  
 979  
 980 *...access certain things.*  
 981  
 982 *...is some of the blogs that were coming out with, with information. You know, mother,*  
 983 *women's groups, mothers' groups, that kind of thing. You know, there was one a couple*

984 of weeks ago I posted on my {redacted} site about what they are finding out in, in terms  
 985 of numbers of cancers or numbers of, of, of tainted foods.  
 986  
 987 *That's interesting...*  
 988  
 989 Yeah.  
 990  
 991 *...so this is a kind of a citizen journalism...*  
 992  
 993 Yeah, yes.  
 994  
 995 *...type of thing. And you've mentioned, like, obviously Facebook...*  
 996  
 997 Well, the state has, has said that they are monitoring social media to keep pressure on it,  
 998 right, so, so that's something everyone keeps in mind.  
 999  
 1000 *Aaahhh, that's, that's, yeah, that's quite, that's quite chilling actually.*  
 1001  
 1002 Well, for, how is it any different than in America with the NSA?  
 1003  
 1004 *Oh, well, yeah.*  
 1005  
 1006 I mean, I think anyone who writes anything, whether traditional media or social media...  
 1007  
 1008 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1009  
 1010 ...knows that they are being read, so, like, I have thought about that...  
 1011  
 1012 *Yeah.*  
 1013  
 1014 ...and I don't care.  
 1015  
 1016 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1017  
 1018 I, it's not an issue for me...  
 1019  
 1020 *Right.*  
 1021  
 1022 ...I mean, you know, part of the reason I don't care is because my career is winding down.  
 1023 I have made my money, and I've done what I wanted to do, and I don't need to be so  
 1024 cautious.  
 1025  
 1026 *Okay. In terms of social media, were there any other avenues in addition to, say,*  
 1027 *Facebook that were useful to you or...*  
 1028  
 1029 Well,...  
 1030  
 1031 *...just Facebook?*  
 1032  
 1033 ...yeah, I mean, I go through about ten or twenty sources every day...  
 1034  
 1035 *Okay.*  
 1036  
 1037 ...you know, Kyodo, of course, NHK, Asahi, Weekly, Mainichi, Yomiuri, in, in  
 1038 English...

1039  
 1040 *Yeah.*  
 1041  
 1042 ...the Japan Times, Japan Today, Reuters, you know, all kinds of, CNN, I go to all kinds  
 1043 of sources...  
 1044  
 1045 *Oh, yeah, you do.*  
 1046  
 1047 ...and I spend about a half an hour a day. I've got it down pretty...  
 1048  
 1049 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1050  
 1051 ...like, I scan every item, because, you know...  
 1052  
 1053 *Yeah.*  
 1054  
 1055 ...just, I'm busy, right...  
 1056  
 1057 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1058  
 1059 ...okay? And, "Oh well that kind of looks interesting. Let's take a look at that." And, you  
 1060 know...  
 1061  
 1062 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1063  
 1064 ...so I do it early in the morning...  
 1065  
 1066 *Okay.*  
 1067  
 1068 ...I want to start with that. It has become a hobby for me, but it has become a hobby with  
 1069 meaning...  
 1070  
 1071 *Uhm.*  
 1072  
 1073 ...because it helps a lot of people...  
 1074  
 1075 *Yeah.*  
 1076  
 1077 ...and there have been several times where I've just said, "You know what? I've made  
 1078 the point. Everyone who knows, who reads it knows." But then I realize that I'm getting  
 1079 new people from all over the world every day, and I have thirty-six hundred people now  
 1080 that, at least, that are 'liked', that have 'liked' it...  
 1081  
 1082 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1083  
 1084 ...but a lot more reading it in, in, in about seventy countries...  
 1085  
 1086 *Yeah.*  
 1087  
 1088 ...so, the power of the Internet.  
 1089  
 1090 *Yeah, that's, yeah, that has definitely come across strongly in the, in everybody's story. If*  
 1091 *they hadn't had access to the Internet, I don't think as, the people I spoke to who stayed*  
 1092 *would have stayed.*  
 1093

1094 That's right. And, and, I know people who have left, I'm thinking particularly of a  
 1095 Frenchman who left immediately, very bitter, he started another website, called 'Evacuate  
 1096 Fukushima', on Facebook which has about four-thousand followers. I know lots of  
 1097 different people, I know another, the Japan Kids, 'Tokyo Kids and Radiation' left a year-  
 1098 and-a-half ago. And they were very interesting. He's American from Miss, [Note: the  
 1099 participant mimics a southern drawl while saying the next word] Mississippi...  
 1100  
 1101 *[Laughter]*  
 1102  
 1103 ...thirty years old with a Japanese wife and two boys, and he rigged up his own  
 1104 measurement device to, to test food, and the started getting people sending him soil  
 1105 samples and turf samples, and so he left, and so you, sort of, think like, "Does he know  
 1106 something that I don't know?" You know, with two little kids, thinking like this is, this is,  
 1107 and they, they, they were radical. They spent four-thousand dollars on a machine that  
 1108 took isotopes out of water before they drank it...  
 1109  
 1110 *Crikey.*  
 1111  
 1112 ...they were very, very interesting people, they, they...  
 1113  
 1114 *And yet, they left.*  
 1115  
 1116 ...they started a petition in Suginami Ward [Note: a suburban area of Tokyo] to get the  
 1117 playgrounds cleaned up, five-thousand signatures...  
 1118  
 1119 *Aaaahhh...*  
 1120  
 1121 ...very, very interesting couple...  
 1122  
 1123 ...wow.  
 1124  
 1125 ...but he went back to Mississippi and struggled to find work and, you know, but he made  
 1126 his choice...  
 1127  
 1128 *Yeah.*  
 1129  
 1130 ...he had a good job here, they were making good money, but then he said, "That's not  
 1131 what it's about."  
 1132  
 1133 *Yeah, a lot of, a lot of people who mentioned in the, sort of, reasoning for why they've*  
 1134 *stayed, a lot of things would come down to, to the job or...*  
 1135  
 1136 Well, it comes down to money.  
 1137  
 1138 ...yeah, yeah, yeah, not having.  
 1139  
 1140 But it's coming down to me about I'm getting tired of looking at my food every day  
 1141 going, "Where the fuck is that from?"  
 1142  
 1143 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1144  
 1145 Has that been tested?  
 1146  
 1147 *Yeah.*  
 1148



1149 Who tested it? What method did they test it with? What was the sample size?  
 1150  
 1151 *Uhm.*  
 1152  
 1153 What did they test for? I'm tired of asking the questions...  
 1154  
 1155 {redacted}  
 1156  
 1157 *Yeah, I think that, that this is where, this is one of the reasons why I wanted to ask people*  
 1158 *when the disaster finished for them, if it had, and just to let you know, almost everybody*  
 1159 *has said it hasn't.*  
 1160  
 1161 No and...  
 1162  
 1163 *There, there were one or two people who have said.*  
 1164  
 1165 ...families, families have broken up that are living in Okinawa [Note: the prefecture of  
 1166 Japan geographically furthest away from the disaster zone] and the husband stays...  
 1167  
 1168 *Yeah.*  
 1169  
 1170 ...or Osaka. The husband stays here and goes down on the weekend...  
 1171  
 1172 *Yeah.*  
 1173  
 1174 ...there's lots of that going on. There's lots of that going on.  
 1175  
 1176 *In terms of the information during the crisis, what did you feel about the US Embassy?*  
 1177  
 1178 The what?  
 1179  
 1180 *The US Embassy.*  
 1181  
 1182 Well, I felt they were more accurate than the Japanese sources. You know, the 80-km...  
 1183  
 1184 *Yeah.*  
 1185  
 1186 ...area versus the 50-km or 20-km or whatever the...  
 1187  
 1188 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1189  
 1190 ...Japanese government said, it was, was in the end accurate. Not completely accurate.  
 1191 But in terms of real threat or real danger, immediate danger. I felt it was accurate. I also  
 1192 felt there was a movement if at all possible not to call for evacuation...  
 1193  
 1194 *Okay.*  
 1195  
 1196 ...if you look at the Germans and the French, within a couple of days, they ordered people  
 1197 out, the Germans and the Fre, and they were chastised heavily...  
 1198  
 1199 *Yeah.*  
 1200  
 1201 ...the kindergarten closed, you know, I mean, it, it, it has been a fascinating experience. I  
 1202 don't blame them at all. I think they did the right thing. I kind of wish the American  
 1203 government had done, I think there were plans to have planes ready and stuff...

1204  
1205 *Yeah.*  
1206  
1207 ...but how do you evacuate seventy-thousand people...  
1208  
1209 *See, that's huge, yeah, huge.*  
1210  
1211 ...let alone thirty-million people in Tokyo Metropolitan Area, right?  
1212  
1213 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
1214  
1215 You can't. You cannot evacuate this place.  
1216  
1217 *Which comes back to what you were saying about survival of the s, state versus*  
1218 *transparency and truth.*  
1219  
1220 Even if they could, they wouldn't do it...  
1221  
1222 *Yeah.*  
1223  
1224 ...there's no way.  
1225  
1226 *Yeah.*  
1227  
1228 So, so, so for me, when is the next big aftershock? It hasn't happened yet. For me, when  
1229 is Mount Fuji [Note: an active volcano located relatively near Tokyo] going to blow?  
1230 There, there are a lot of threatening, you know, if you look at the Nankai fault, which  
1231 goes all the way down pretty much to the coast, that one is ripe for something. So it could  
1232 happen now or it could happen in a thousand, I don't know when it's going to happen...  
1233  
1234 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1235  
1236 ...but I, then the question is: Do you want to live in a place where there are earthquakes  
1237 all the time?  
1238  
1239 *Yeah.*  
1240  
1241 Do you want to live in a place where you don't know if there will be a tsunami? Do you  
1242 want to live in a place where, if there is a big earthquake, food will be cut off?  
1243  
1244 *Uhm, uhm.*  
1245  
1246 And when you are in an evacuation centre, who is going to eat before you? Japanese are.  
1247 You know, I don't know that I want to live like that.  
1248  
1249 *Yeah.*  
1250  
1251 {redacted}  
1252  
1253 And it's unfortunate because it has changed Japan for my lifetime.  
1254  
1255 *Yeah.*  
1256  
1257 And I think if anyone starts doing research on seriously what's going on with the soil,  
1258 you know, I posted something today you should look at. It was posted I think earlier this

1259 year, that's, there, there's a professor that came out and said two-hundred-and-fifty  
 1260 kilometers around the plant is contaminated. That includes Tokyo...  
 1261  
 1262 *That includes Tokyo, yeah.*  
 1263  
 1264 ...and there are micro-hotspots in that area.  
 1265  
 1266 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1267  
 1268 So, so, when you get cabbage from Chiba [Note: a prefecture bordering Tokyo to the  
 1269 east] has is been tested?  
 1270  
 1271 *Yeah.*  
 1272  
 1273 Has it been tested?  
 1274  
 1275 *Yeah.*  
 1276  
 1277 It comes back to the same questions: what kind of, of dosimeter or, or scintillator or  
 1278 something was used? Who did it? Was it a government employee or farmer? Farmers are  
 1279 testing their own food...  
 1280  
 1281 *Uhm.*  
 1282  
 1283 ...is that a conflict of interest? Well, of course it is. Troubling questions [laughter].  
 1284  
 1285 *Yeah. And the, a lot of it comes back to the fact that, I think, maybe the key word from,*  
 1286 *from speaking to you is a breakdown of trust.*  
 1287  
 1288 *Yeah.*  
 1289  
 1290 *That seems to be the main...*  
 1291  
 1292 I noted that.  
 1293  
 1294 *...that seems to be the main thrust that, yeah. I mean.*  
 1295  
 1296 Ask people [Note: knocking gently on the table between us for emphasis] when you  
 1297 interview them if they trust the Japanese government.  
 1298  
 1299 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1300  
 1301 Did you ask them?  
 1302  
 1303 *I asked, I asked a few different, trust did come up in various different things. What, what I*  
 1304 *was surprised by was how lack of trust for the media came up more often.*  
 1305  
 1306 For me, I don't think that's an issue. Anyone that says there's, there's a lack of trust in  
 1307 the media. Japanese media or foreign media?  
 1308  
 1309 *Both actually.*  
 1310  
 1311 That, that means that there is a conspiracy by all media and everyone participates in  
 1312 writing the same thing. It's bullshit. It's complete nonsense. There's no, I would believe it

1313 on the Japanese side more than I would on the U, on the foreign side. There's no way  
 1314 there's a conspiracy to hide the truth. There's no way. I don't believe it...  
 1315  
 1316 *Yeah.*  
 1317  
 1318 I don't believe it. Read the New York Times. They come out all the time questioning the  
 1319 state, questioning the system. They came out with a great piece two years ago called the  
 1320 Cultural Collision talking about how the system works in favour of industry. There's,  
 1321 there's tonnes of evidence that they are writing the truth...  
 1322  
 1323 *Uhm.*  
 1324  
 1325 ...I just think that they are. That doesn't mean that all journalists are doing it. I'm not  
 1326 talking about the Japanese media.  
 1327  
 1328 *Yeah.*  
 1329  
 1330 I know several journalists who came here. I did a, I was on a piece on, on {a US station}  
 1331 in March this year, and I met her in, in February this year when she was here, I actually  
 1332 brought her to this restaurant...  
 1333  
 1334 *[Laughter]*  
 1335  
 1336 ...and, and she did a piece on the two sides of the troubling issues. If you want, I can send  
 1337 the link to you.  
 1338  
 1339 *That would be great, yeah, I'd appreciate it.*  
 1340  
 1341 I did something probably no-one else that you, you've, has had, at the height of the crisis,  
 1342 I started researching on the Internet, I started finding who, people who were authorities  
 1343 on this issue. I came across a couple of names of people. One was a Professor Emeritus at  
 1344 Oxford, Wade Allison. Have you heard the name?  
 1345  
 1346 *No.*  
 1347  
 1348 He is a very interesting guy. He is about seventy years old now. And he's sort of retired,  
 1349 professor emeritus, and he, he says there's nothing to worry about with any radiation, you  
 1350 couldn't possibly eat enough to do damage, chromosomal damage to your body. That's  
 1351 one side of the story...  
 1352  
 1353 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1354  
 1355 ...and there was another professor at the University of Idaho, Tokuhiro Akira, and I met  
 1356 these two guys in cyberspace and we became friends, and I said, "Look, come over to  
 1357 Tokyo. I'll organize with the American Chamber, a big talk at the Tokyo American  
 1358 Chamber." And they came over, they, they spent their own money, and they came over  
 1359 and I organized a press conference for them and I organized the event, and we had 160  
 1360 people there that night, I remember it was October 2nd or 3rd, there's also, that's also on  
 1361 the Inter, on the...  
 1362  
 1363 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1364  
 1365 ...on the, the, the Web, if you want to look at it, I can try to send you the links. And, I  
 1366 remember distinctly they were on the panel, we got the spokesperson for the Japanese  
 1367 government to sit on there too, Shikata-san, and, so he sat there, this woman stood up,

1368 “Are you telling me you would feed this to your grandchildren?” He took the mic and  
 1369 said, [Note: mimicking a curt or terse tone] “Yes.” Nobody would believe him. So there’s  
 1370 a feeling that we’re, we’re all being damaged and that there’s, we’re doomed, and that  
 1371 there’s, but the experts are often saying there’s not much to worry about. The thing, you  
 1372 do your own research and you see that no one can definitely say if it’s safe or not safe...  
 1373  
 1374 *Uhm.*  
 1375  
 1376 ...no-one. There’s no-one that can say that. They can say from their position, but they  
 1377 can’t say for sure...  
 1378  
 1379 *Uhm.*  
 1380  
 1381 ...so every time that you hear it’s safe, you, you, you go on to another website or another  
 1382 person that’s an expert who says any kind of radiation is damaging. And then they’ll say,  
 1383 “No, but you know in Denver, Colorado the background radiation is, is higher than what  
 1384 you’re getting or if you fly over to New York, you’re getting more radiation on an  
 1385 airplane.”...  
 1386  
 1387 *Yeah.*  
 1388  
 1389 ...yeah, but that’s external radiation, it’s not internal radiation. So it’s always, it’s never-  
 1390 ending...  
 1391  
 1392 *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
 1393  
 1394 ...it’s, it’s radiation fatigue.  
 1395  
 1396 *Yeah, yeah, I know, I’m, I’m that’s also another, sort of, thing that even has emerged, I*  
 1397 *mean, not, obviously radiation is, is the major one, but I think a general disaster fatigue*  
 1398 *is also...*  
 1399  
 1400 *Yes...*  
 1401  
 1402 *...there in that people talk.*  
 1403  
 1404 ...which works in favour of the state. What happened to the anti-nuclear movement?  
 1405  
 1406 *Uhm.*  
 1407  
 1408 When it was 160,000 strong a year-and-a-quarter ago? Where is it now? It’s gone.  
 1409  
 1410 *Yeah.*  
 1411  
 1412 You know, there were very disturbing videos of people who would hold up signs at these  
 1413 political rallies, you know, and ‘You’re killing us’ or ‘Down with nuclear power’. The  
 1414 police would come and take them away, surround them. They’re on tape. It’s a very ugly  
 1415 side of Japan.  
 1416  
 1417 *Uhm. This is one thing that has definitely, I think the crisis seems to have brought to*  
 1418 *surface some issues that were probably bubbling away underneath...*  
 1419  
 1420 *That’s right.*  
 1421  
 1422 *...just social issues...*

1423  
 1424 ...everything bubbles away underneath here...  
 1425  
 1426 *Yeah.*  
 1427  
 1428 ...who talks about the issues?  
 1429  
 1430 *Yeah. This, this is, kind of, like, the final topic that I have touched on with everybody, em,*  
 1431 *the idea of a community. This, I'm obviously looking at it from a, a language point of*  
 1432 *view, but just in general, a lot of people say that either being connected to your local*  
 1433 *community or not connected to your local community can have a strong impact on your*  
 1434 *experience of disaster. It could be, gen, generally they talk about a positive experience if*  
 1435 *you're well-connected with your local community.*  
 1436  
 1437 How is it a positive experience?  
 1438  
 1439 *This is, so, they say by being connected with your local community, there's more chance*  
 1440 *that there will be somebody there to look out for you, there'd be more access, you'll know*  
 1441 *where to go to do things, you'll have people to help you.*  
 1442  
 1443 Really?  
 1444  
 1445 *Yeah, this is what I want to ask people about. This is what is said in the literature. Do*  
 1446 *you?*  
 1447  
 1448 No, I don't agree with that. I've done everything on my own. I don't, I don't think that  
 1449 being, I mean, I met people who were groups who had similar thinking, and I would go to  
 1450 some meetings and listen to them, and in fact, there were several meetings that I helped  
 1451 organize, we had panel discussions on the topic from fellow Facebook pages and stuff,  
 1452 that's also on, on, in the Internet, I could send you a link, too...  
 1453  
 1454 *Please do, yeah.*  
 1455  
 1456 ...but I did everything on my own. That's not to say that having a community is a bad  
 1457 idea. But I don't know what a community is going to do that I can't do on my own. I can  
 1458 do my own research. And would rather do my own research. At least I know what the  
 1459 sources are. I used my brain to make my own decisions. So for me, the community thing  
 1460 is not important. I would argue the opposite. I would argue that, that the power of the  
 1461 group stifles honesty. I would argue that business people here who have businesses to  
 1462 operate and belong to, like, a chamber of commerce don't want to make waves because  
 1463 they don't want to hurt their business and they don't want to hurt their reputation. I would  
 1464 argue the opposite.  
 1465  
 1466 *That's very interesting. That's very, very interesting.*  
 1467  
 1468 And so, I have a feeling that, and the example of my business where I work, my boss  
 1469 saying to me, "I'm uncomfortable..."  
 1470  
 1471 *Yeah.*  
 1472  
 1473 ...with what you're doing." "Why? Has anybody said anything?" "No."...  
 1474  
 1475 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1476

1477 Uncomfortable. Well, that's an example of being cautious and not saying anything. You  
 1478 know, it, it's like your neighbour disappears...  
 1479  
 1480 *Uhm.*  
 1481  
 1482 ...and everyone in the neighbourhood knows that the neighbour is not there anymore, but  
 1483 nobody says anything...  
 1484  
 1485 *Yeah.*  
 1486  
 1487 ...so for me, I don't buy that argument. I think it's dangerous.  
 1488  
 1489 *That's interesting that you should de, describe it in those terms because another kind of, I*  
 1490 *guess theme that I have noticed is that rather than maybe linguistic barriers or issues,*  
 1491 *cultural barriers or issues seem to be much stronger.*  
 1492  
 1493 Oh yeah...  
 1494  
 1495 *Would you feel? You'd feel?*  
 1496  
 1497 ...definitely. Oh, you know, *deru kui wa utareru*, the nail that sticks out gets hammered  
 1498 down [Note: this is a very famous Japanese proverb] I mean, that says it all. And it's very  
 1499 powerful here, it's very powerful. It, it's more powerful in a place like Singapore where  
 1500 there's F.U.D., Fear Uncertainty or Doubt, and people self, self-regulate themselves on  
 1501 what they say. But here, here you can't have a discussion with, with somebody in  
 1502 Japanese. How deep can you go? If you say, "*Ano, Fukushima ni tsuite dou omoimasu*  
 1503 *ka?*" "*Iya, muzukashii desu.*" "*Nani ga muzukashii?*" "*Iya, mou, iroiro desu ne.*" "*Ja,*  
 1504 *katte ni chotto gutai teki ni setsumei dekimasuka?*" [Note: Sharply inhaling breath  
 1505 through teeth "*Iya.*" [Note: the encounter spoken in Japanese here is intended to show  
 1506 the stereotypical evasiveness characteristic of trying to talk about controversial issues in a  
 1507 Japanese cultural context. The encounter might translate as something like "So what do  
 1508 you think about Fukushima?" "It's hard to say." "What's difficult about it?" "Well, it's a  
 1509 complex problem." "How is it complex? What do you mean exactly?" Well, you know  
 1510 yourself, the way these things are. The encounter transliterates as "So what do you think  
 1511 about Fukushima?" "It's difficult." "What's difficult?" "No, well, it involves various  
 1512 things." "Well, just for me could you be a bit more specific." "Not really." [Sharply  
 1513 inhaling breath through teeth is a Japanese cultural signal for not wanting to or not being  
 1514 able to talk further on the topic in hand] I mean, that's, that's how it goes here, right?  
 1515  
 1516 *Yeah. That's very, very interesting.*  
 1517  
 1518 I find Japan dangerous from that perspective.  
 1519  
 1520 *And yet you lived here for twenty, twenty-five years, I think.*  
 1521  
 1522 That's right.  
 1523  
 1524 *Is, has the disaster?*  
 1525  
 1526 Because I don't have to play by the rules here. I have what's called a *gaijin menkyo*  
 1527 [Note: it's the idea of a free pass given to foreigners]...  
 1528  
 1529 *[Laughter]*  
 1530  
 1531 ...I have my own licence. Nobody expects me to act Japanese...

1532  
1533 *Yeah.*  
1534  
1535 ...so I don't have to, and therefore I have the freedom to do what I want. Actually, Japan  
1536 is a wonderful place to be completely free. You have the right to be left alone in society.  
1537 We all have the right to be left alone. That's what you can do very well here in Japan.  
1538  
1539 *That's very, very interesting. That's very, very interesting. Do you mean all people who*  
1540 *live here or foreign nationals who live here?*  
1541  
1542 I mean anybody has the right to be left alone. I mean, how many stories have we heard  
1543 about people collecting benefits from the state after somebody dies...  
1544  
1545 *[Laughter]*  
1546  
1547 ...because nobody checked up on them for twenty years. I mean, it's the classic example.  
1548  
1549 *That's true [laughter]. That's true, that's very true.*  
1550  
1551 But that's also, that's a plus. It's very interesting, but it's also dangerous.  
1552  
1553 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1554  
1555 Right? So, so at what point do people speak up. I think the crisis was an interesting  
1556 example to see, to show, to see a coalescence of society stand against what they're  
1557 feeling. So basically now, everyone has got radiation fatigue, everyone wants to go on  
1558 with their lives. They don't want to worry about it anymore...  
1559  
1560 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.*  
1561  
1562 ...and until, I mean, you know, there'll be more, there will be more evidence of...  
1563  
1564 *Yeah.*  
1565  
1566 ...pollution of the food chain. It's going to continue to come up...  
1567  
1568 *Yeah.*  
1569  
1570 ...and there will be more cases of cancer, and there will be more cases of deformities.  
1571 Insects being defor, I mean, you just name it...  
1572  
1573 *Yeah.*  
1574  
1575 ...it's going to continue. So, the question is do we want to be around for that?  
1576  
1577 *Yeah.*  
1578  
1579 Is this the way you want to live your life? {redacted}  
1580  
1581 *And also this particular type of continuing crisis, it crosses borders as well...*  
1582  
1583 That's right, sure.  
1584  
1585 ...as you mentioned.  
1586



1587 I love what the Koreans did two weeks ago, banning. It was like, "Fuck you guys." Now  
 1588 the question is do they have evidence that there is tainted food because, if they have, they  
 1589 haven't shown it. So how much of it is political nonsense and how much is reality? But  
 1590 it's, it forces them, and I wrote this in my blog, it forces the authorities to be transparent.  
 1591 It's a wonderful thing. When the United Nations comes out with the re, report today,  
 1592 stating that they are lying about talking about the levels of exposure for the workers, and  
 1593 it's the United Nations basically saying that Japan, you are lying, this is big for Japan...  
 1594  
 1595 *Uhm.*  
 1596  
 1597 ...they're going to, and especially now with the Olympics, it's a wonderful thing to keep  
 1598 pressure on this, on the authorities. If there was anything to clean up the mess as best they  
 1599 could, it's the Olympics now. It's a wonderful thing.  
 1600  
 1601 *I actually am glad, very glad you mentioned that because I completely forgot to ask you*  
 1602 *about that, what was your opinion, yeah, so when you heard that Tokyo got the*  
 1603 *Olympics...*  
 1604  
 1605 Yeah.  
 1606  
 1607 *...you actually felt, "Okay, this is a good thing."*  
 1608  
 1609 It's a good thing for the disaster.  
 1610  
 1611 *Yeah. Were you at all surprised that they?*  
 1612  
 1613 Yeah, they threw more money at it than anybody else did. That's how they choose the  
 1614 Olympics. It's all about money, right?  
 1615  
 1616 *[Laughter]*  
 1617  
 1618 So, but, but for them to get up, they were very good about answering the issue of, you  
 1619 know, "New York has more background radiation than Tokyo does. Hong Kong has more  
 1620 background radiation than Tokyo does." You know, it was very interesting. And  
 1621 everybody bought it. But the question is...  
 1622  
 1623 *[Nervous laughter]*  
 1624  
 1625 ...how long will people buy it? Now, you know, if you go on, if you go on the website of,  
 1626 it's not a, it's the one about testing that waters that I mentioned [Note: clicking his fingers  
 1627 as he tries to recall the name] it doesn't matter, anyway, if you go on their, their website,  
 1628 they're printing what they're finding in, in the ocean, and so there is evidence of certain  
 1629 kinds of bottom-feeders that are higher levels of radiation than other kinds of fish, and,  
 1630 you know, there's all kinds of articles on that. But people have biases when they write...  
 1631  
 1632 Yeah.  
 1633  
 1634 ...em, especially non-journalists. But the thing about social media is, you're a journalist  
 1635 and I'm a journalist and he's a journalist. Everyone's a journalist. Everyone's an expert.  
 1636  
 1637 Yeah...  
 1638  
 1639 It's crazy.  
 1640

1641 *...it's really hard for me, because I am interested in the idea of, like, how people gathered*  
 1642 *information, it's really hard for me to start to make a call on the value of social media...*  
 1643  
 1644 Well, that's right.  
 1645  
 1646 *...it's hard to, part of me thinks, "Okay, yeah." I've, I've directly asked people was it*  
 1647 *useful to them, and many people have said it was a lifesaver, it was useful...*  
 1648  
 1649 Right.  
 1650  
 1651 *...but then, there are other sides of the story where it created confusion, lack of, trust*  
 1652 *broke down, maybe people were overwhelmed.*  
 1653  
 1654 Which is more why I like to read traditional media because they are professional  
 1655 journalists who do their research...  
 1656  
 1657 *Yeah.*  
 1658  
 1659 *...you know, Martin Fackler [Note: New York Times Tokyo Bureau Chief] talks about*  
 1660 *the fact that during the crisis he went up to Fukushima and all the journalists were invited*  
 1661 *up, and they all went over here [Note: gesturing to one side of the table] and he was like,*  
 1662 *"Well, I want to go over there." [Note: gesturing to the opposite side of the table] "I want*  
 1663 *to go and talk to this guy walking along the street." Nobody would do it but him. So*  
 1664 *anyway, he would leave the group where they were taking him and showing him*  
 1665 *everything is okay, and he would go off to the side. Right, to me that, that kind of person*  
 1666 *is somebody I trust. That doesn't mean they are not lying or they can't make a mistake,*  
 1667 *but all the time you can tell from what people write if they're not professionals in terms*  
 1668 *of understanding of nuclear issues, but they are professional writers who know how to do*  
 1669 *research anyway, so.*  
 1670  
 1671 *Yeah, no, it's, that's, it's a fascinating topic. I don't know whether I'll be able to deal*  
 1672 *with it in this particular thesis project, but the idea of the, sort of, social media versus*  
 1673 *traditional media is, it's, it's, a big question...*  
 1674  
 1675 Oh it's a huge issue because...  
 1676  
 1677 *...in the disaster probably related to all topics.*  
 1678  
 1679 *...because, but it's a huge question over all because...*  
 1680  
 1681 *Yeah.*  
 1682  
 1683 *...traditional media has rules and social media does not...*  
 1684  
 1685 *Yeah.*  
 1686  
 1687 *...the rules for social media are still being written...*  
 1688  
 1689 *Yeah.*  
 1690  
 1691 *...and that's why it's dangerous.*  
 1692  
 1693 *Yeah. And yet, you know, it has been beneficial for you, it has helped you to get a*  
 1694 *message out there.*  
 1695

1696 Well, it has helped. What I am doing is taking traditional media and putting it on social  
1697 media.  
1698  
1699 *Right, right, right. I see what you mean.*  
1700  
1701 I'm, I'm just, I'm just, a vehicle for translating what's already been out there.  
1702  
1703 *I got it, I got it. That's an important, actually I'm glad that you said that, that's an*  
1704 *important distinction.*  
1705  
1706 With a little commentary...  
1707  
1708 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, but you.*  
1709  
1710 ...but those one-liners, you know, people like the cynicism...  
1711  
1712 *Yeah, yeah.*  
1713  
1714 ...they like, it's healthy skepticism.  
1715  
1716 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's no, actually, yeah, that's been very useful. I'm glad*  
1717 *you, I'm glad you did mention that. And, and I'm also surprised, again, I get surprised by*  
1718 *things people say because I am coming in with my own biases and prejudgments. I*  
1719 *assumed you wouldn't have been happy with the Tokyo Olympics, but the way you*  
1720 *describe it, it's a way to keep pressure on them, yeah.*  
1721  
1722 Absolutely.  
1723  
1724 *Things may have to be more transparent in response to.*  
1725  
1726 Well, as the years go by now...  
1727  
1728 *Yeah.*  
1729  
1730 ...and it's, if there are more stories and issues, then they could lose the Olympics...  
1731  
1732 *Yeah.*  
1733  
1734 ...that's not without the realm of possibility. And you think they want to lose the  
1735 Olympics? No way.  
1736  
1737 *Yeah.*  
1738  
1739 I don't want to be in Japan after 2020. All, fiscally the place is going to fall apart. The  
1740 debt levels are going to continue to rise with Abenomics [Note: a neologism for the  
1741 economic policies of Japanese Prime Minister at the time of the interview, Shinzo Abe]  
1742 and funding of these things. I would not want to be around Japan after 2020.  
1743  
1744 *Yeah. It sounds like there's a lot of darkness on the horizon.*  
1745  
1746 There is, and then, the sales tax is going from 5 to 8...  
1747  
1748 *Yeah, that's.*  
1749

1750 ...but that it actually has to go, the value-added tax has to actually go up to what it is in  
1751 France at 23%.  
1752  
1753 *Yes, yeah.*  
1754  
1755 That's what it is going to go to. I would say by the time the Olympics is done, we are at  
1756 20%. You watch...  
1757  
1758 *Yeah.*  
1759  
1760 They have no choice. They have to do it.  
1761  
1762 *Yeah.*  
1763  
1764 So this is the thing, right? Abenomics, everyone thinks it's so wonderful, why is it  
1765 wonderful? They're taking Japan deeper into debt. This, they're, they're doing what the  
1766 Fed does. They're printing money to buy their own debt. It's insane...  
1767  
1768 *Yeah.*  
1769  
1770 ...right? And at what point does the market say it's not sustainable anymore? Well, they  
1771 said it in Greece and they said it in Cyprus...  
1772  
1773 *Okay.*  
1774  
1775 ...the market decides, not the government.  
1776  
1777 *And I'm always interested in, like, the communication or the information aspect side, I*  
1778 *think the Abenomics and the Tokyo Olympics have been very well spun.*  
1779  
1780 *Yes.*  
1781  
1782 *Very, very well spun.*  
1783  
1784 Dentsu and Hakuhodo [Note: two major Japanese advertising agencies] did a great job.  
1785  
1786 *[Laughter] Did that surprise you at all?*  
1787  
1788 No, no. I mean, that's PR. {redacted}...  
1789  
1790 *Yeah.*  
1791  
1792 ...I understand.  
1793  
1794 *You know how it works.*  
1795  
1796 It's very interesting stuff.  
1797  
1798 *Yeah, it's, yeah, as I said, going back to that, kind of, Pandora's Box image, there's just*  
1799 *so many interesting aspects to this whole, you know, event and the phenomena that have*  
1800 *come out of the event. I won't be able to talk about anything but a fraction of these things,*  
1801 *but...*  
1802  
1803 Maybe it's a second or third project.  
1804

1805 *Yeah, yeah, yeah, you never know, and that's, that's why as I said I very clearly wanted*  
 1806 *to say from the get-go that I don't intend to destroy it or...*  
 1807  
 1808 No, you shouldn't.  
 1809  
 1810 *...because I think there could be other useful things, you know, there may be other stories*  
 1811 *that could be told.*  
 1812  
 1813 So out of the 27 people or whatever that you've spoken to, does anybody have my story, I  
 1814 don't think so.  
 1815  
 1816 *No, no. There are people...*  
 1817  
 1818 Starting their own blog, bringing speakers over, you know, writing in, in {a major online  
 1819 news blog}.  
 1820  
 1821 *No. There are people who have made contributions in other ways or, you know, done*  
 1822 *different things, but absolutely nothing in terms of, as you said, those particular steps.*  
 1823  
 1824 I didn't think so. {redacted}  
 1825  
 1826 *Yeah, yeah. And like for sure, one thing that, one thing that you've said that I want to*  
 1827 *look more into as well is looking at, you know, the Japanese people not being able to get*  
 1828 *the information or not wanting to get the information. Like, you mentioned about mothers*  
 1829 *now reading your blog or, yeah, they're getting...*  
 1830  
 1831 Half of the people on my blog are Japanese. I get the numbers and the prefectures...  
 1832  
 1833 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 1834  
 1835 ...when I go on my Facebook as an administrator. I'm disturbed that the way in which  
 1836 testing occurs on a national basis is not made transparent. I'm disturbed that it's not  
 1837 consistent. I'm disturbed that there's no, no independent testers on a systemic basis,  
 1838 double-checking what's going on. There's none of that.  
 1839  
 1840 *Yeah.*  
 1841  
 1842 It's very upsetting.  
 1843  
 1844 *Yeah, it's, as I said, I think the disaster brought to, to the surface issues about life in*  
 1845 *Japan...*  
 1846  
 1847 *Yeah.*  
 1848  
 1849 *...that maybe have been, kind of, like, as I said before, bubbling away.*  
 1850  
 1851 That's right.  
 1852  
 1853 *Well, that's pretty much all I have, unless is there anything that you think might be*  
 1854 *relevant in terms of information gathering or communication that I, you know, we haven't*  
 1855 *touched on or that might have been relevant to your experience?*  
 1856  
 1857 I think people have a brain. Use it and then use it in a way that's good for them. That's  
 1858 my feeling on that.

1 This transcript has been anonymized in parts to attempt to protect that participant's  
2 identity. Changes made to the transcript have been signalled by enclosing the relevant  
3 passage in curved brackets.

4 *2013/10/22 Interview with Participant 28*

5 *Researcher: Then really, the way I start every interview is just by asking the same basic,*  
6 *general question...*

7  
8 Participant: Yeah, of course.

9  
10 *...tell me what happened to you in, in the disaster.*

11  
12 Right. Well, em, I was at school at the time, at my job as an assistant language teacher.  
13 Ehm, it was the day before, eh, the third-grade graduation ceremony, so, eh, there were  
14 no classes in the afternoon. All the kids were running around the school putting up  
15 decorations, and basically organizing the whole thing. So I had sort of been floating  
16 around the school and talking to the kids and helping out where I could and, eh, but at this  
17 time I was back in the staff room sitting at my desk...

18  
19 *Yeah.*

20  
21 ...eh, and, the building started to shake. We'd had a few, em, decent-sized earthquakes in  
22 the week before, so we were all, sort of, thinking it was another one of those. Eh, but it  
23 just kept going, it just kept going and going. Eh, apparently, it went for, like, four minutes  
24 or something. Yeah, I couldn't have told you that at the time, I just, you know, I didn't  
25 think of it that way, but yeah, it really went for a long, long time. Eh, and, yeah, so you  
26 had, sort of, time to realize it was an earthquake, think about whether it was serious  
27 enough to get under your desk, realize it was, sort of serious enough to get under your  
28 desk, get under your desk, and then, sort of, reali, think about whether you should be  
29 getting out from your desk and, you know, just, kind of, sitting under there. And then it  
30 just started, you know, the whole time just increasing, increasing in intensity. Ehm, so  
31 yeah, eventually it stopped and the staff room was a total mess, ehm, and luckily there  
32 were some of my English teaching colleagues, eh, Japanese teachers in the staff room, so  
33 I asked one of them, "What do we do now?" So we all did the usual disaster routine. We  
34 got out of the building and all the kids were starting to line up outside the building, some  
35 of them were crying, some of them were laughing. Ehm, yeah, it was, it was pretty  
36 intense. Eh, there were cracks in the walls that we could see, and plaster had come off,  
37 and all that sort of thing. Eh, I was really amazed at how well the building stood up, and  
38 all over Sendai, though. Like, there were hardly any buildings that, that, eh, had fallen  
39 down or anything. It was mostly roof tiles and, eh, brick walls, and that sort of thing. Eh,  
40 and, yeah, we, we just sort of waited outside and, em, then it started to snow [laughter] so  
41 we took all the kids inside the gymnasium, and then there was another aftershock, and so  
42 we took all the kids out of the gymnasium, ehm, and then after I don't know how long,  
43 I'd been on my phone texting, eh, my wife, {redacted} who, eh, was teaching at another  
44 school, so we didn't know, kind of, what had happened elsewhere. But, of course, the  
45 cellphone network was totally overloaded at that point, so I didn't hear back from her.  
46 Ehm, and yeah, eventually all of the, the Japanese teachers, kind of, took groups of kids  
47 in the direction of their homes because, eh, it's quite a suburban school, so everyone lived  
48 really nearby...

49  
50 *Yeah.*

51  
52 ...so everyone, kind of, scattered out that way, eh, and I was left with the, the tea lady and  
53 the, eh, the school janitor and the principal. Eh, and the principal said, "You'll be okay to

54 get home?" And I was like, "Yeah, I think so. I'll just walk." Ehm, so I just walked home,  
55 which was about a thirty-, forty-minute walk. And then, obviously, the buses had stopped,  
56 this was how I normally go home. Eh, yeah, so walking home, yeah, notice a few tiles  
57 had come off the tops of houses and, yeah, there were a few walls and things had, sort of,  
58 fallen down but, kind of, things were remarkably intact still. Eh, got back to my  
59 apartment. Ehm, just it was sort of starting to get dark, em, and {my wife} wasn't there,  
60 which was a bit worrying. Eh, because her school is only five minutes' walk away. Ehm,  
61 so, got in there and the apartment was a total mess. Everything had fallen out of the  
62 cupboards. Our kitchen was covered in broken glass and bits of, em, food that had come  
63 out of jars and stuff. It was not nice, eh, and our lounge was kind of the same. Everything  
64 had moved. Books had come out of bookshelves. Eh, so, I grabbed a torch, put on my  
65 coat, and - well, I was already wearing a coat - ehm, put on some warmer clothes and set  
66 out towards {my wife's} school to try and find here. But luckily she was just walking up  
67 the street as I got out. So that was a relief, a big relief. Ehm, and then there was another  
68 New Zealander, actually, living just around the corner from us, em, who was new to  
69 Sendai that year. Eh, so we went around and checked on her, and she was quite shaken  
70 up. So we all went back to our place and we, eh, kind of, tidied up as much as we could,  
71 which, kind of, included just clearing a few, kind of, stepping holes...

72  
73 *[Laughter]*

74  
75 ...in the junk, because it was so dark at that point and there was no power. Eh, so we  
76 couldn't really do much else without it. Eh, and we just, kind of, slept in our clothes with  
77 our shoes by the end of the bed. And our friend, yeah, we had a little futon that we put on  
78 the floor for her. Ehm, and yeah it was pretty uneasy night but, em, yeah, just some  
79 aftershocks happening. Nothing too big, luckily. Em, yeah, the buildings really, kind of,  
80 wobble when you get those aftershocks because I think they're really built to, to, sh, to  
81 shake with the earthquakes rather than stand up, withstand them. Ehm, yeah, and then  
82 from there, do you want me to keep going or?

83  
84 *Yeah. Oh, just whatever you want to talk about...*

85  
86 Sure, sure.

87  
88 *...really there's no structure.*

89  
90 I can keep going, for sure. Ehm, from that point, eh, the next day, some more friends of  
91 ours came round and we, sort of, set, we tidied up the house and, sort of, set up a little  
92 base for about five of us, all just staying together and making sure we all were, kind of,  
93 supporting each other, I guess. Eh, and we were lucky because two of our American  
94 friends who were staying with us had been there for about six years, I think, so they were  
95 quite good at, em, speaking Japanese, which was, you know, we'd only been there for a  
96 year-and-a-half, so we weren't the best speakers. We hadn't studied Japanese before, or  
97 anything like that. Ehm, an eventually the power came back on the next day, eh, we, sort  
98 of, celebrated a little bit [laughter]...

99  
100 *[Laughter]*

101  
102 ...and turned on the TV, and then realized that there'd been this massive tsunami that we  
103 really didn't know anything about. Ehm, and we were able to change, charge our cell  
104 phones. Oh, I didn't mention that - my cell phone went dead pretty much straight  
105 afterwards because I'd, just, been running it down to the bottom of the battery and, ehm,  
106 it was just, kind of, unfortunate, you know. Luckily, {my wife} was able to get on  
107 Facebook, eh, and let my family know that I was okay, because obviously they were  
108 pretty worried about me. Eh, because everyone here [Note: in Christchurch] just saw

109 Sendai, tsunami, and, you know, put two and two together, I lived in Sendai so I was  
110 probably dead, basically. Eh, [laughter] which is kind of horrible to think about. Ehm, but  
111 yeah, luckily she was able to get on Facebook for me and let people know that I was  
112 okay. Facebook was really good for that purpose. It was a really good way to get in touch  
113 with people. Ehm, yeah, so, getting the power back on was, like, a really sobering thing  
114 because we found out, just, what, the total extent of the disaster. Eh, yeah, so, okay, and  
115 obviously then there was the Fukushima reactor problem as well which, sort of, em,  
116 flared up into our minds at that point. Eh, and so we spent about a week, eh, in Sendai in  
117 our apartment, em, mostly with those same people, em, just, kind of, gathering food  
118 together, em, the supermarket down the road was really pretty cool, like, the workers  
119 there went back the next, within a couple of days and they, kind of, brought some stock  
120 out, eh - this was, like, a basement supermarket - they brought it up into the, em, kind of,  
121 the courtyard of the shopping mall area, and people formed a queue and you got some,  
122 like, one item of this and one item of that, and, em, do it that way. And so we all just, sort  
123 of, gathered, sort of, supplies, so bottled water and green tea and that sort of thing, ehm,  
124 cup ramen...

125  
126 *[Laughter]*  
127

128 ...and that sort of thing. Ehm, yeah, and we spent, kind of, five or six really nervous days,  
129 eh, watching the BBC on our phones basically, em, looking for updates on the Fukushima  
130 reactor, not really knowing if we should be trying to get out of Sendai or if we should  
131 stay where we were, we, eh, we kind of figured that we, from what we know, we didn't  
132 need to stay inside or anything, it wasn't that serious yet. Em, but, yeah, it was definitely  
133 a huge worry, em. {my wife} and I registered at that point with the New Zealand  
134 Embassy which were giving out daily, em, kind of travel tips, I guess. Not travel tips, but,  
135 em, what would you say? Status updates, I guess?

136  
137 *Yeah.*  
138

139 Eh, and they were saying, you know, "It's okay. It's okay. You don't need to, we would  
140 advise people not to enter the area but you don't need to leave if you don't want to." Em,  
141 yeah, and what else happened? Media from New Zealand started getting in touch with  
142 me. Eh, because pre, previously I'd worked in newspapers so there were a couple people  
143 who knew how to get hold of me. Em, and that was okay, at first, but then I, kind of, got  
144 sick of, em, people, sort of, taking things out of context and there was one particular news  
145 crew that had come over and wanted to meet with us and, ehm, this happened on a  
146 particularly stressful day when, eh, some Australian, Australian friend and his Japanese  
147 wife, eh, had a car, we didn't have a car, and they said, em, "Look, we're going to drive  
148 out to, eh, Yamagata and see how far we can get. Do you want to come with us?" And  
149 we, sort of, said, "Ehhhhh, okay. Yes?" Because we didn't really know if we'd have that  
150 option again...

151  
152 *Yeah.*  
153

154 ...if they left without us. Ehm, because the highways were closed, eh, bullet trains were  
155 not functional, and, ehm, yeah, so went with them to Yamagata, em, and then, yeah, there  
156 wasn't really anywhere to stay in Yamagata because every, everybody had been doing  
157 that. Ehm, and we, kind of, got there and realized we're, kind of, driving this way, we  
158 don't really know how far we're going to be able to get, we don't really have anywhere  
159 we can stay, maybe we should just turn around and go back, because we've got supplies  
160 and we have somewhere to stay, and we've, you know, we're pretty safe where we are,  
161 we think. So actually we turned around and went back to Sendai, em, so it was really  
162 stressful and this news crew, kind of, caught us right when we were going through this  
163 weird, kind of, time of thinking we were going to escape and then deciding, maybe, it



164 wasn't such a good idea. Eh, and they actually met us on the road to Yamagata, I think, or  
 165 to Sen, back to Sendai and we said, "Yeah, we thought about leaving, though we are  
 166 actually going to go back." And they were like, "Oh, okay. Ehm, yeah, we were going to  
 167 be going in, but our news crew said we weren't allowed. We've to go back to Tokyo."  
 168 And we were like, "Why, why did they say that?" And they were like, "Ah, it's just, you  
 169 know, TV, the TV company said." And we were like, "Oh god, is there something we  
 170 don't know?" But anyway, they kind of threw us up and then filmed us and, kind of, it  
 171 felt like it was trying to be quite emotionally manipulative. Like, one of those human  
 172 interest stories for the news, and I really didn't like that." So we, kind of, tried to, kind of,  
 173 distance ourselves from the media from that point. Although, I did do a couple of radio  
 174 correspondence things for the national radio program here which was actually really cool  
 175 because it was live and they couldn't, eh, they weren't trying to bait me to say  
 176 particularly emotional things for their reader, their viewership or anything like that. I  
 177 could just, sort of, say what I wanted and, yeah, so I felt quite good about that. Eh,  
 178 anyway, ehm, yeah, so we eventually went back to Sendai and, by that point the, the  
 179 Embassy had, em, in collaboration with the Australian Embassy had sent some people in  
 180 to Sendai, eh, and they held a little kind of conference, I guess, for everyone, all the New  
 181 Zealanders and Australias, Australians who were there and they really reassured us about  
 182 the situation, which was really cool. Em, we heard some terrible stories about the  
 183 Canadian Embassy and how badly they handled it. There was Canadian friends of ours,  
 184 basically they rang them up and the Embassy told them to go to Sendai Airport and catch  
 185 a flight out but, of course, the airport had been washed away. So they said, "Oh okay,  
 186 well in that case you should go to Fukushima Airport. That's the closest one."

187  
 188 *[Laughter]*  
 189

190 So, yeah, I was really pleased that our embassy was on to it and knew what they were  
 191 doing. Yeah, basically they reassured is that it wasn't a problem, em, being in Sendai,  
 192 they were still sending people in to help in Sendai, and if they needed to get us out they  
 193 would. So that was really cool. And then, I think, the next day, ehm, they organized a, a  
 194 bus, a minibus, em, to go to Tokyo and said, "If anyone wants to get on it, they can. It's  
 195 not an evacuation, but if you want to get out, you can." Eh, and so I rang my school up  
 196 and said, em, this was the school holidays at this point, and said, "Look, if it's okay, I'm  
 197 going to go down to Osaka for a while." Because we had friends there that we could stay  
 198 with. Em, and they said that that was okay, so, em, yeah, {my wife} and I jumped on this  
 199 bus and some of our Canadian friends came with us [laughter] which was cool of the New  
 200 Zealand Embassy to do [laughter]...

201  
 202 *[Laughter]*  
 203

204 ...eh, and we all just, em, yeah, headed down to the highway to Tokyo and then got the  
 205 bullet train from Tokyo to Osaka. We stayed for about two weeks, em, with our friends  
 206 and just to, it was, kind of, for our own peace of mind, and for our families' peace of  
 207 mind as well. Ehm, yeah, yeah, eh, and that was good because, yeah, as I said, the  
 208 southern part of Japan, kind of, hadn't been altered at all...

209  
 210 *Yeah.*  
 211

212 ...really, just business as usual, ehm, yeah, so it was good to get away. Em, and yeah, we  
 213 didn't really have any intention of leaving Japan, we didn't think it was that serious, em,  
 214 so yeah, we just, kind of, hung out there for two weeks and then, em, by that point the  
 215 bullet train was back up and running, so we went back to Sendai and back to school. Em,  
 216 yeah. Ehm, the week before school started again, I think it was, the two of us tried to do a  
 217 little bit of volunteering, because with the, the, ehm, assistant language teachers who  
 218 were still there had been organizing that so we went out to Ishinomaki for a day, and, em,

219 it was, like, horrible thick, like, mud under people's houses and that was pretty, em, yeah  
 220 that was pretty sombre, ehm, just what, like, it was where the tsunami had come in, it  
 221 hadn't, ehm, washed the houses away but it had just, sort of, flooded people's houses,  
 222 maybe a metre-and-a-half up to people's first floors, so. Yeah, there were boats in the  
 223 middle of the street and the streets were just lined with people's belongings basically.  
 224 They just were throwing absolutely everything out, and it seemed like they weren't, kind  
 225 of, being picky. It was just everything, everything goes. Ehm, and yeah, the next day we  
 226 went to Niigata, and was it Niigata? No, that's not the right place. Ehm, I can't remember  
 227 where it was, just another coastal town, and they had set up, sort of, a shelter. In the  
 228 shelter they were, had volunteers where they were giving out all these bits of food and,  
 229 em, and, yeah, we didn't manage to do really any volunteering there, I think possibly  
 230 because the, of the language barrier. They wanted, they were, sort of, giving out jobs and  
 231 we were, sort of, trying to pick up what they were saying and then figuring out, "Oh yeah,  
 232 we could, we could do that one." There were enough people there that they had more jobs  
 233 than people, I think [Note: this is a slip of the tongue and the participant meant to say  
 234 more people than jobs, I suspect] so, em, after that we went back to school and it was,  
 235 kind of, business as usual, as much as it could be, I suppose. Em, yeah. Does that? Yeah.  
 236  
 237 *Absolutely, no, all that you've talked about...*  
 238  
 239 That's all of the stories.  
 240  
 241 *...is absolutely fascinating. Ehm, there are things that I've, that I would like to go back to*  
 242 *a little.*  
 243  
 244 Absolutely, yeah, yeah.  
 245  
 246 *Ehm, but just seeing as that's the point where you stopped...*  
 247  
 248 Yeah.  
 249  
 250 *...what I'm interested in and what I've asked everybody is when did the disaster end for*  
 251 *you, if it has ended?*  
 252  
 253 Yeah, em, that is a good question. Eh, I suppose for me, ehm, I think I felt confident  
 254 enough, the only issue for me was the nuclear fallout, I think, eh, and I felt confident  
 255 enough in the information we were getting that it wasn't a problem where we were in  
 256 Sendai. So I think when we went back to Sendai, I would say, [laughter] well, it's hard to  
 257 say because I mean there were constant aftershocks, you know, even for months  
 258 afterwards, so I suppose, yeah, I was going to say then, yeah, but maybe it was a lot later.  
 259 I'm not sure. I couldn't put a date on it, yeah, but I guess as long as there were  
 260 aftershocks, it was still, kind of, a nervous thing every time. Eh, and I, there were  
 261 definitely a couple of big aftershocks at least where we wondered if it was going to be  
 262 another big earthquake, eh, yeah, it, sort of, just, just stopped short of the point where, eh,  
 263 so I guess maybe a few months.  
 264  
 265 *Yeah, yeah, no the aftershocks are, I think, a very valid point about how long the disaster*  
 266 *went on...*  
 267  
 268 Yeah.  
 269  
 270 *...for, for people...*  
 271  
 272 Yeah.  
 273

274 ...similarly in Christchurch too...

275

276 Well, yeah.

277

278 ...I think aftershocks were a big issue.

279

280 People who were outside of the place don't really understand that it's, it's an ongoing

281 thing. Eh, yeah, and it was, sort of, at the point where you got, where you were, you were

282 getting one or more, you know, could be a dozen aftershocks a day, of varying

283 magnitudes and, yeah, it's a funny thing where it sort of becomes part of your daily routi,

284 routine, but you never really get used to it because you're always, it puts you on edge

285 straight away. Eh, yeah, and they can be, sort of, little shallow rolling ones or they can be

286 really sudden jarring ones, ehm, yeah.

287

288 *And, of course, they're happening at night time too...*

289

290 Yeah.

291

292 ...it doesn't just happen in waking hours so it can be very disorienting when they're

293 happening, disturbing your sleep as well.

294

295 Yeah, well the first, the September earthquake here [Note: referring to Christchurch]

296 happened in the middle of the night, it was, it was, kind of, a lucky thing because a lot of

297 the ci, city was damaged...

298

299 Yeah.

300

301 ...but there was no-one here to...

302

303 Yeah.

304

305 ...everyone was at home. Ehm, but, yeah, it's worrying. I think by the time we got back to

306 Sendai we weren't sleeping in our clothes anymore but we definitely had a bag by the

307 door that we could take with us if we needed to and that sort of thing. Yeah, so, I guess,

308 the dis, I suppose you would say the disaster was over but we were always prepared to

309 have to face it again. Yeah, you know, which you'll notice here. [Note: he means here in

310 Christchurch]

311

312 *And then, as you said, the nuclear element added another dimension.*

313

314 Yeah, yeah. Em, yeah, it was tricky because everyone was say, was saying, "Oh, the

315 Japanese isn't telling wha, people what's really happening." And, yeah, it was pretty

316 worrying. You, you still see the odd thing come up on the news about, I saw one last

317 week, I think, about abnormal readings and things that have been reported there and,

318 yeah, it's hard to know what to believe, but I guess, we, sort of, had enough faith in our

319 embassy and the fact that the situation was being monitored by international scientists as

320 well as Japanese scientists. That, yeah, we felt confident enough to be there.

321

322 *I'm really pleased to hear that you were satisfied with the embassy's, em, sort of, actions*

323 *because I've spoken to people from Canada [laughter]...*

324

325 Yeah.

326

327 ...and other nationalities who really were not happy...

328

329 Yeah, yeah.  
 330  
 331 *...em, you mentioned that you registered with the embassy, had you been registered with*  
 332 *them beforehand or something or?*  
 333  
 334 I, I'm actually a little fuzzy on the details of this. I feel like we may have been registered.  
 335 We, definitely, we had been to the embassy when we first arrived in Japan, we had been  
 336 to a function there, so I feel like they must have known we were there, ehm.  
 337  
 338 *Because I'm interested to know if they contacted you first or you contacted them when the*  
 339 *disaster happened.*  
 340  
 341 I think, my father contacted them on my behalf immediately and then I emailed them as  
 342 well. I think my emailing them just got me signed up to their daily, ehm, status updates.  
 343  
 344 *Status updates. Yeah, the Irish Embassy did the same thing...*  
 345  
 346 Yeah.  
 347  
 348 *...we got a, kind of, I can't remember if it was daily actually, but we got a pretty regular -*  
 349 *actually it probably was daily at the start, yeah...*  
 350  
 351 Yeah, yeah, yes, yes.  
 352  
 353 *...and then maybe it was weekly or monthly or something like that. Ehm, I'm also*  
 354 *interested, as you know, so I'm interested in things like communication and...*  
 355  
 356 Yeah, of course.  
 357  
 358 *...information gathering, and so on. So a couple of things I'd like to go back to see if you*  
 359 *can remember...*  
 360  
 361 Yeah.  
 362  
 363 *...when the actual first earthquake hit, you would have been in school. Do you remember*  
 364 *any, sort of, you know the P.A. system they have, like, these loudspeakers all throughout*  
 365 *Japan, do you remember any announcements or messages...*  
 366  
 367 No...  
 368  
 369 *...over that system?*  
 370  
 371 *...no there weren't any as far as I remember. Ehm, I think the power went out almost*  
 372 *immediately. I suppose they would have reserve power for that sort of thing, but no, I*  
 373 *don't remember any. Eh, I think there was just, people knew the emergency evacuation,*  
 374 *and so all the students and teachers knew to meet outside in the, eh, parking lot, I guess.*  
 375 *Yeah. And it was a suburban school, so it wasn't, like, in a heavily populated area. Em,*  
 376 *yeah, yeah, I don't remember any.*  
 377  
 378 *Yeah, that absolutely tallies with what everyone else in the, sort of, I've spoken to people*  
 379 *who were in {various parts of Miyagi} and most people have, have said that they don't*  
 380 *remember any announcements. One slightly worrying one was I spoke to somebody in*  
 381 *Chiba who was on the coast and they don't remember any tsunami...*  
 382  
 383 Oh really? Yeah...

384  
 385 *...warning which should have happened.*  
 386  
 387 *...I was going to say that, that, the coastline, yeah...*  
 388  
 389 *Yeah, they were right, they were walking along the coastline with their, their family...*  
 390  
 391 *Wow, yeah.*  
 392  
 393 *...so I don't know, but that could be just a question of memory, but...*  
 394  
 395 *Yeah.*  
 396  
 397 *...anyway. Ehm, another, kind of, couple of issues that I'm really, really interested in is...*  
 398  
 399 *Yeah.*  
 400  
 401 *...say, so I know you tried to text {your wife} pretty much as soon as the event had*  
 402 *happened and then your battery ran out...*  
 403  
 404 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 405  
 406 *...so, you never got through at all to anybody or?*  
 407  
 408 *No, I wasn't able to. Ehm, no, I think the, the network was overloaded with people*  
 409 *texting each other, which was probably the reason why it didn't, the text message wasn't*  
 410 *received. She didn't get it till hours later. Ehm, yeah, and I don't, I'm not sure that I was*  
 411 *able to access the Internet straight afterwards. That might have been a network overload*  
 412 *as well. We were definitely able to, to in the hours afterwards, though.*  
 413  
 414 *Yeah, and just one thing I wanted to confirm was when you were accessing the Internet*  
 415 *that was on a mobile device?*  
 416  
 417 *It was, yeah. It wasn't a smartphone, it was one of the shells, but it had Internet.*  
 418  
 419 *Yeah. Ehm, and I know that Japanese phones also have a TV, like, the one-seg TV, did*  
 420 *either you or {your wife}...*  
 421  
 422 *Yeah.*  
 423  
 424 *...use that or?*  
 425  
 426 *...No. No, we didn't. Em, I don't know why that was. I can't. No, I don't think we did, I*  
 427 *don't think we tried to.*  
 428  
 429 *Okay, yeah, no, em, it's just, like, obviously, what I'm interested in are aspects to do with*  
 430 *language and culture, and a lot of the Japanese people did use the one-seg TV...*  
 431  
 432 *Yeah, yeah.*  
 433  
 434 *...I don't know, maybe it's because they're used to it, they use it in their everyday lives.*  
 435  
 436 *Yeah, we didn't use it very often, eh, day-to-day anyway, so, maybe we didn't think of it*  
 437 *at the time in the confusion or yeah.*  
 438

439 *Well, this is clearly one thing that's in the disaster literature that when a disaster*  
 440 *happens, you use the things you're already familiar with...*  
 441  
 442 Right.  
 443  
 444 *...so perhaps as somebody who wouldn't have used the TV on your phone in your regular*  
 445 *life, it just wouldn't occur to you, maybe, to use it in...*  
 446  
 447 True, yeah...  
 448  
 449 *...in times of disaster.*  
 450  
 451 *...eh, yeah, eh, we had, em, our American friends who came to stay with us later in the*  
 452 *week actually visit, visited us on the evening because they had a car as well, they were*  
 453 *just, sort of, driving around, they were living in the area, ehm, and just to see how we*  
 454 *were, and I think we turned on the radio in the car because they were the more fluent*  
 455 *Japanese speakers that, sort of, eh, gave us a rundown. But I think, em, I think we felt*  
 456 *reasonably safe where we were and having Christchurch go through all that stuff just a*  
 457 *month before, eh, I think we felt like we kind of knew what we had to do in, in the*  
 458 *situation. We made sure we had drinking water and, em, we had a bit of food, and, yeah,*  
 459 *and then we were able to get the power the next day, so, we turned on the TV straight*  
 460 *away after that. Yeah.*  
 461  
 462 *Th, these two, em, issues are really, really interesting to me and they are probably going*  
 463 *to be a bit of a focus in my, my, eh, thesis: the issue of the radio - eh, not many people*  
 464 *have mentioned radio.*  
 465  
 466 Yeah, I think we did turn on the radio, eh, we tried looking for maybe an English-  
 467 language broadcast or something like that but, as far as I remember there wasn't one.  
 468 There were a few odds it was, like, a short, recorded message that was just repeated.  
 469 Yeah, so we didn't really use that very much.  
 470  
 471 *So, that would have been, like, an emergency radio that you had or just a regular?*  
 472  
 473 I think that was just a regular radio - that was once the power came back on, yeah, yeah.  
 474  
 475 *And then I'm really, really interested in the topic of your American friends listening to the*  
 476 *radio and maybe explaining things...*  
 477  
 478 Yeah, yeah.  
 479  
 480 *...to you. Do you remember any of the topics or what kind of information was being*  
 481 *talked about at that stage?*  
 482  
 483 I think they were, it was mostly a case of us watching the tsunami footage and they were,  
 484 sort of, picking out the body counts and that sort of thing from the information, so, yeah,  
 485 trying to figure out what city, what towns had been hit and that sort of thing, yeah. Ehm,  
 486 yeah, as I said, with, we didn't really feel like we were in any particular, immediate  
 487 danger, so, we didn't, I don't think we were really looking for, like, evacuation notices or  
 488 anything like that.  
 489  
 490 *Yeah, that's, kind of, what was actually going to be one of my next questions. Did you and*  
 491 *{your wife} ever consider to going to one of the refuge centres?*  
 492

493 Well, ehm, we were, we knew that our closest, em, kind of, emergency meeting place was  
 494 a park down the road, eh, and, well, we were in our apartment with a roof over our heads  
 495 so we didn't really see, eh, a benefit to going down to the park just to see what was  
 496 happening, you know? And yeah, we had some, we had some food and drink, as I said,  
 497 so, yeah, there wasn't an immediate emergency in terms of that, so, yeah, we had, sort of,  
 498 made contact with the people that we, a bit kind of like a buddy system, I guess, with, eh,  
 499 the ALTs, the assistant language teachers that were in our area, and, kind of, knew  
 500 everyone was okay, ehm, so yeah, yeah, yeah, just to answer the question, our local  
 501 emergency centre was a park, so didn't really think that would be of benefit to going  
 502 down there, yeah.  
 503  
 504 *[Laughter] Yeah, no, ehm, a, a, almost everyone I've spoken to, eh, didn't choose to go*  
 505 *to a, sort of, communal refuge centre...*  
 506  
 507 Yeah.  
 508  
 509 ...ehm...  
 510  
 511 There were some people that did. Eh, where would they have been? I think if they were  
 512 further on the east, on the eastern coast, there were some people who did spend at least  
 513 one night at a refugee shelter, but, and that might have been people who were in more  
 514 remote places and didn't want to be by themselves.  
 515  
 516 *Yeah, I think what you mentioned, that kind of buddy system or making your own, kind of,*  
 517 *refuge cen, communal refuge centre...*  
 518  
 519 Yeah, I think it was like that, yeah.  
 520  
 521 ...with people you knew seemed to be a real theme for a lot of the people that I, I spoke  
 522 to, not just in Miyagi, I spoke to people in Ibaraki and Chiba and Tokyo, this kind of idea  
 523 seemed to repeat in a lot of the stories, em, they told me. Em, then kind of moving on, em,  
 524 I know you said that once the power went on, you, you, kind of, went online that was...  
 525  
 526 Yeah, we were able to charge our phones, eh, we still didn't have a phone line, so cell  
 527 phones were the only way we could access the Internet. Eh, so we charged our phones,  
 528 put on the TV, ehm, yeah.  
 529  
 530 *I know you mentioned the BBC...*  
 531  
 532 Yes.  
 533  
 534 ...were there any other websites that you...  
 535  
 536 Ehm...  
 537  
 538 ...thought to go to or?  
 539  
 540 ...we did. Ehm, I think the B, the BBC seemed like, kind of, a trusted resource to us. Eh,  
 541 we probably did check several other ones but we kept going back to the BBC one because  
 542 they seemed to be the most up-to-date and, kind of, non-sensational, I guess. Because a  
 543 lot of, I think, a lot of news sources went the sensationalistic route of, eh, using the word  
 544 meltdown in headlines and, you know, that wasn't very helpful for us. Ehm, yeah, yeah,  
 545 that was quite a problem actually, like, because a lot of our friends, once we were on the  
 546 Internet, our friends, Facebook was saying, em, "This is the next Chernobyl. You have to  
 547 get out. You have to get out." And we were saying, "Well, actually, no, I don't think it is.

548 It's probably not really helping you, helping me for you to, kind of, say that to me  
549 because I can't actually get out of the city real easily so." It was a pretty stressful time.  
550  
551 *That's really fascinating to me because I've had this again and again from people about*  
552 *social media being a bit of a blessing and a curse.*  
553  
554 Yeah, I would say so.  
555  
556 *Could you expand on that a bit more?*  
557  
558 Well, yeah, just for those reasons. Ehm, it was really useful immediately because you  
559 can, if you update your profile and say, "I'm okay," then anybody who's interested can  
560 see that they don't need to worry about you, which is really good. Em, and, yeah, there's  
561 also the case of people who able to get on the Internet, other people can tag their name  
562 and say, "Look, I've seen such-and-such. They're fine." So yeah, it, I'm sure it was  
563 amazing for just about everybody's families back home. Eh, but, yeah, then there was the,  
564 the point of, eh, being, sort of, kept up-to-date on the situation by perhaps your least-  
565 educated friends who don't really know what exactly was happening but have read, eh,  
566 the *Daily Mail* or whatever [laughter] eh, yeah, do I guess there's a flip-side to it.  
567  
568 *Did you use any other social media? You mentioned Facebook, I know.*  
569  
570 I was emailing my dad. My mum doesn't really use the Internet so she was just getting  
571 information from, I guess, him. He was keeping everyone updated. Em, yeah, so I was  
572 emailing the Embassy and emailed Dad and that would probably be the extent of it, I  
573 guess, yeah.  
574  
575 *Em, in terms of the, sort of, websites that you went to...*  
576  
577 Uhm.  
578  
579 *...did you go to any Japanese websites?*  
580  
581 Eh, did we? Em, it wasn't probably very helpful for me because I couldn't read Japanese  
582 very well. I could do *katakana* and *hiragana* [Note: two scripts in the Japanese writing  
583 system that are relatively easy to learn but not the predominant scripts used in the  
584 Japanese writing system] fine, but, eh, *kanji* [Note: the complex Chinese characters used  
585 in the Japanese writing system], I was still really a beginner at them and that, so, I was  
586 definitely not at newspaper reading ability, em, yeah. Eh, and then there was also the,  
587 kind of, the thought that the Japanese media might not be the most unbiased, em, yeah. So  
588 I, kind of, chose to go to international sources for that reason, I suppose, as well as the  
589 language thing.  
590  
591 *Did you consider going to any, like, government ministry websites or anything?*  
592  
593 Ehm, well, as I said, I was in, in contact with the Embassy, eh, so I was, kind of, relying  
594 on the status updates. Because I had, I had called the as well, so, yeah. I guess, I didn't  
595 really need to be on their website constantly. Yeah.  
596  
597 *Sorry, I meant Japanese government...*  
598  
599 Oh, Japanese government?..  
600  
601 *...eh, websites.*  
602



603 ...eh, no, no. I didn't really, really do that, no.  
604  
605 *Oh, the, the, the reason I just asked it, nobody did, yeah. [laughter]*  
606  
607 Right! [laughter]  
608  
609 *Ehm, and yet, like, just because this is my area of, of interest, I know that the minist,*  
610 *various ministries spent a lot of time translating, eh, information into various languages,*  
611 *not just into English...*  
612  
613 Right, right.  
614  
615 *...but nobody knew about it...*  
616  
617 Right, yeah.  
618  
619 *...nobody knew to go there.*  
620  
621 No. I, I was certainly not aware of any websites.  
622  
623 *Yeah. This is really interesting to me, because it's one of the things which is, kind of,*  
624 *coming out as a bit of a theme that it's not just enough to do the work of translating, you*  
625 *have let the people who might need it know.*  
626  
627 Yes, yes. Undoubtedly true, yeah.  
628  
629 *Uhm, and so, again, as I said, what you said tallies with almost everyone that I've spoken*  
630 *to, even...*  
631  
632 Yeah.  
633  
634 *...they just never even thought to go there because they didn't see any reason why they*  
635 *should...*  
636  
637 Yeah, yeah.  
638  
639 *...and yet, as I said, there was possibly, I mean, I don't know about the content or the*  
640 *quality of the information, it may not have been that useful to you at the time...*  
641  
642 Uhm.  
643  
644 *...but, well, as I said, they spent the time and effort doing it...*  
645  
646 Yeah, yeah.  
647  
648 *...but nobody seemed to, seemed to know about it.*  
649  
650 Right, so just in general, I didn't really know that.  
651  
652 *Yeah, no, a, as I said, eh, this is, eh, a fairly common, common theme, so it's one of the*  
653 *things that's come across...*  
654  
655 Uhm.  
656

657 *...that you've to do the work but then you have to let people know that you've done the*  
658 *work.*  
659  
660 Yeah, yeah.  
661  
662 *I'm also, like, interested in the idea of the media representation of you as someone*  
663 *experiencing the disaster...*  
664  
665 Right.  
666  
667 *...you had this kind of special relationship in that you were involved with the, the media...*  
668  
669 Yeah, yeah.  
670  
671 *...in your, your former life...*  
672  
673 Yes.  
674  
675 *...did you feel, em, I guess, you talked about, kind of, manipulation and, maybe, them*  
676 *framing...*  
677  
678 Yeah, yeah. Ehm, yeah, I, sort of, felt that most about the TV crew that wanted the, kind  
679 of, you know, soundbites for the, for their, whatever show they were putting together. I  
680 never even saw the, what they...  
681  
682 *That's what, was it a New Zealand TV crew?*  
683  
684 ...it was, it was a New Zealand.  
685  
686 *So all of the media that contacted you...*  
687  
688 Yeah, yeah.  
689  
690 *...were New Zealand based.*  
691  
692 Yeah, ehm, it started with, ehm, a former colleague of mine who was a reporter who got  
693 in touch with me and I was happy to talk to her, and she wrote a story for the {local paper  
694 of a town two hours away from Christchurch}, a pretty small town, and I think that got  
695 picked up by, eh, Fairfax, FNZN, or with one of the [Note: after the interview, I checked  
696 and it was with Fairfax] ...  
697  
698 *One of the agencies, yeah.*  
699  
700 ...yeah, eh, so that, kind of, was circulated around New Zealand news strips, eh, New  
701 Zealand newspapers.  
702  
703 *And she would have contacted you by email or?*  
704  
705 By Facebook. We were Facebook Friends, yeah, so, ehm, there was that and then, I think,  
706 from there, I think another one of my friends works in television in Auckland and I think,  
707 ehm, someone contacted me, contacted me on Facebook and said, "This person said that,  
708 that you were in Sendai." And I just, I didn't really want to talk to them. But, ehm, I can't  
709 remember how national radio got in touch with me but, ehm, that seemed like, because  
710 national radio is, kind of, like, quite a respectable...  
711

712 *Yeah.*  
 713  
 714 ...em, it's like the New Zealand governmental radio, so I was happy to talk to them and  
 715 that was on {a certain} afternoon programme and so, I think for about, it might have been  
 716 three days in a row, eh, in the first week after the thing I was, kind of, their correspondent  
 717 of sorts - I think they had someone else there as well but, eh, they were talking to me  
 718 every day for about three days [Note: I checked the archive after our interview and it was  
 719 for three days] just getting the situation and, eh, yeah, by the time I'd, kind of, decided I  
 720 was going to stay in Sendai a while, I think they decided that the news story there was,  
 721 kind of, done and so they didn't contact me again, but, so I was happy to do it, and, em,  
 722 actually, when I got back, a lot of people said, "I heard you on national radio. It was  
 723 really good to hear what you were going through and how the, what the situation was  
 724 like," so I'm actually really glad that I did that one in particular.  
 725  
 726 *Yeah, I'm really interested in the, kind of, citizen journalist, em, in disasters because a lot*  
 727 *of the time, you know, other journalists can't get into the area.*  
 728  
 729 Yeah, yeah. Ehm, yeah, and people did send news crews over, as I said, em, but, I'm not  
 730 sure how, whether they got into Sendai itself in the end or if anyone did. I don't really  
 731 know. Eh, as I said, I haven't really seen any New Zealand news coverage that was of the  
 732 time because I was in Japan then and, you know, it hasn't been replayed since, so.  
 733  
 734 *Yeah, because I, I, again I'm always coming at things from a translation perspective but*  
 735 *any news crew that goes over probably needs some sort of translator or cultural*  
 736 *mediator...*  
 737  
 738 Yeah.  
 739  
 740 *...at some point, and some of the people that I spoke to did actually show news crews*  
 741 *around...*  
 742  
 743 Right, right.  
 744  
 745 *...but they had mixed feelings.*  
 746  
 747 Yeah, yeah, eh, as I said, I really think that the crew that spoke to me were looking for,  
 748 eh, emotional soundbites rather than, kind of, useful information from me about the  
 749 situation, so I kind of resented that, I think. Yeah, asking questions like, "What do you  
 750 want to tell your family back home," and that sort of thing. Yeah, I didn't really like it.  
 751 And especially putting us on the spot after immediate, like, telling us just before we went  
 752 on camera that they weren't allowed to go in to Sendai, and that sort of thing, and, yeah,  
 753 it was a particularly stressful time for us, so yeah.  
 754  
 755 *Oh yeah, I think there was huge, there's huge ethical issues where, eh, in terms of, kind*  
 756 *of, the way reporting is done...*  
 757  
 758 Yeah.  
 759  
 760 *...in times of disaster and, ehm, I also think as well that, eh, it's, kind of, highlights that*  
 761 *issue you mentioned a bit earlier on of how, you know, you didn't feel you could, kind of,*  
 762 *trust the Japanese media so much...*  
 763  
 764 Right.  
 765  
 766 *...and yet the overseas media, like maybe your domestic media...*

767  
768 Wasn't, yeah.  
769  
770 *...also, you, in the other kind of extreme, it was being sensational or.*  
771  
772 Yeah, well, they were either getting second-hand information or they were, in other cases,  
773 fishing for a particular angle, yeah.  
774  
775 *So what does that leave? There's [laughter].*  
776  
777 Yeah, well, exactly. Ehm, you have to go, I was trying to look for scientists and people  
778 in-the-know. Actually it wasn't from the media but, em, one of the, an American woman  
779 who was doing, who was also an ALT, there were about 70 of us from all over the world,  
780 there were 70 or 80 of us. Eh, and one of them, her father was, eh, a scientist with a  
781 particular, eh, who was in a particular field of, eh, radiation, that sort of thing, and he,  
782 she, sort of, forwarded an email to the group saying, "My father has said obviously he's  
783 not happy that I'm here, but he feels pretty safe about me being here, so that's probably a  
784 good thing." Eh, and actually, my brother works in radiology in {a hospital in New  
785 Zealand}, eh, and he was visiting Japan at the time, eh, he's been in Sendai the week  
786 before and he'd just gone down to Osaka, eh, and he was kind of reassuring me as well  
787 saying, you know, because there were stories about milk being contaminated or spinach  
788 or things that, particular types of foods that were susceptible to, em, absorbing radiation  
789 and he was saying you'd have to drink, you know, thirty litres of milk in ten minutes...  
790  
791 *[Laughter]*  
792  
793 ...to get the sort of, three-hundred litres, or something just ridiculous in order to get any,  
794 kind of, noticeable level of radiation. Ehm, so, you know, that was, that was really good  
795 to get, kind of, eh, kind of, scientific information from people who had [laughter] an  
796 interest in getting you out if they wanted to, I suppose.  
797  
798 *That's fascinating, ehm, one of the themes which is also appearing is, I thought I was*  
799 *going to be talking about how foreigners were so particularly vulnerable and they had*  
800 *such a vulnerable position compared to Japanese people in the disaster because of*  
801 *language. I'm not sure that's the case.*  
802  
803 Yeah, yeah. Ehm, yeah, like, when you mention this is all about, em, sort of, the language  
804 aspect of it then I, kind of, thought about how much Japanese I spoke in that week and it  
805 probably wasn't very much the week afterwards. Em, going down to the supermarket to  
806 get supplies and things would be, kind of, using my everyday supermarket Japanese, you  
807 know, and, em, there was a particularly big aftershock where {my wife} and I, it was at  
808 night and we got our torch out and, kind of, walked around the neighbourhood just to  
809 check and see if everyone was okay, and it seemed like it was fine, so, yeah, it was, it  
810 was, sort of, a case of people popping out of their doors and being like, "Daijobu?" [Note:  
811 in English, it means 'Okay?'] "Daijobu." And that was, sort of, it and we went back home  
812 and, yeah.  
813  
814 *And that, sort of, links into the, kind of, final thing I wanted to ask you about. Em, a lot of*  
815 *the NPOs and local authorities are now coming up with recommendations and advice for*  
816 *what to do in preparation for the next disaster, and one of the things they talk about is*  
817 *how, em, foreign residents need to be more integrated into their local communities. So,*  
818 *kind of, linked to what you just said there, did you and {your wife} feel part of the local*  
819 *community before the disaster happened?*  
820

821 I would say our neighbourhood wasn't a commun, much of a community, especially from  
822 our perspective. We lived in an apartment building that was four apartments. Ehm, yeah,  
823 two stories, two on the bottom floor, two on the top floor. And we, honestly, in the two  
824 years we were there, we saw our neighbours in that building maybe less than ten times,  
825 eh, just, kind of, popping in and out, barely said a word to each other. We sort of had met  
826 the couple, the old couple that lived behind us in a house, eh, and we, sort of, said hello to  
827 the family that lived across from us in the mornings if we saw them, but I don't think they  
828 were that friendly to be honest. Ehm, so yeah, there wasn't much of a community feel. I  
829 guess there was one lady down the road who, on the first day that we got there, helped  
830 {my wife} find her way back home when she was lost...

831  
832 *[Laughter]*

833  
834 ...and we said hello to her when we saw her on the street but, yeah, we didn't, yeah, we  
835 had that New Zealander living literally around the corner from us so, em, there was that,  
836 em, but yeah. But I mean aside from that, em, {my wife's} school was really nearby, so  
837 she'd always see the kids that she taught in the neighborhood, eh, and I used to do things,  
838 like, I took an Aikido class at a gym, kind of, eh, maybe ten minutes, five or ten minutes  
839 bike ride away. So we were sort of involved in some things, em, but, yeah, there wasn't  
840 really a big neighbourhoodly feeling going on.

841  
842 *Just to confirm, all those people you were mentioning, they would have been Japanese*  
843 *people, do you think?*

844  
845 Eh, yes...

846  
847 *Yeah.*

848  
849 ...yeah. Apart from the New Zealander.

850  
851 *Apart from that one, yeah, yeah.*

852  
853 *Yeah.*

854  
855 *Em, it's a difficult question, I know, but if you did want to integrate foreign residents*  
856 *more into a community like the one you lived in...*

857  
858 *Yeah, yeah.*

859  
860 *...can you think of any, any way to go about it, or, what might have been the barrier?*

861  
862 Well, I think, em, the main barrier is probably that Japanese people tend to keep to  
863 themselves, in my experience, em, I'm not sure that it was our, it was the language barrier  
864 that was preventing us from having much, kind of, interaction. Eh, yeah, and like I say, I  
865 can't really confirm that a hundred percent, but, yeah, it was just kind of suburban area,  
866 ehm, I know, you know, it's, it's kind of similar to here, like, you might know your  
867 immediate neighbours, you might not even know their names...

868  
869 *Yeah, yeah.*

870  
871 ...necessarily. You might just say hi to them in the morning and then, beyond that, yeah,  
872 you don't really know, tend to know anybody, I guess, unless there's some sort of  
873 circumstances otherwise.

874  
875 *Yeah, yeah.*

876  
 877 Yeah, so how you would go about it? I don't know. I, I guess we, you could try and get  
 878 people involved in community groups like sports groups or, you know, like an Aikido  
 879 class like I did, eh, that sort of thing. Yeah, it's difficult, like.  
 880  
 881 *It's a tough one...*  
 882  
 883 Yeah.  
 884  
 885 *...oh, and I, I, absolutely agree with what you said there about, I'm not sure that it's just*  
 886 *a Japanese thing. I think it could be, like, a city thing...*  
 887  
 888 Well, yeah...  
 889  
 890 *...or a suburban thing.*  
 891  
 892 ...sure, or a suburban thing. Anywhere in the world.  
 893  
 894 *I know in my apartment block in Ireland, I, I certainly don't know anybody's name...*  
 895  
 896 Yeah.  
 897  
 898 *...I'd say hello to people when I see them but...*  
 899  
 900 Right, yeah.  
 901  
 902 *...I don't know them, and I wouldn't call, I wouldn't knock in on their door or anything*  
 903 *like that...*  
 904  
 905 Yeah, exactly.  
 906  
 907 *...so I have to be very careful that when I talk about this, I don't, like, say, "Oh in Japan,*  
 908 *you know, you can't."*  
 909  
 910 Right, you don't want to do that. Ehm...  
 911  
 912 Yeah.  
 913  
 914 ...yeah, I think you're probably right...  
 915  
 916 Yeah.  
 917  
 918 ...it is just, just a thing about living in a big city, em...  
 919  
 920 Yeah.  
 921  
 922 ...it's probably a lot different in a smaller town...  
 923  
 924 Yeah.  
 925  
 926 ...eh, especially if you're the only foreigner, you probably are integrated more into the, to  
 927 the community...  
 928  
 929 *Well, also, what I've heard from...*  
 930

931 ...just because you're by yourself.  
 932  
 933 ...*you and what I've heard from other people in their stories is that you were part of a*  
 934 *community, but it wasn't necessarily your neighbours. It was...*  
 935  
 936 Yeah, it was...  
 937  
 938 ...*people like the Americans...*  
 939  
 940 ...yeah, absolutely...  
 941  
 942 ...*the Australian with the Japanese wife and the other New Zealander...*  
 943  
 944 ...it was those people we were talking to.  
 945  
 946 ...*but you did form a part of a community...*  
 947  
 948 Absolutely, yeah.  
 949  
 950 ...*you, you formed your own response so. I'm not sure necessarily that you need to be*  
 951 *part of the, sort of, your neighbourhood...*  
 952  
 953 Right.  
 954  
 955 ...*but you need, you do need people to call on.*  
 956  
 957 Yes, yeah. Oh absolutely. It would have been really, really difficult if we hadn't known  
 958 anybody at all.  
 959  
 960 *Uhm. There was also one other issue, I, I said the community one was the, the, the last*  
 961 *question, but, just to, kind of, go back, sort of, rewind a little bit, I did want to check up*  
 962 *on when you were talking about, ehm, the idea that, eh, you know, with the media, ehm,*  
 963 *sort of, manipul, not manip, maybe pressuring you, did you get any sort of, I don't know,*  
 964 *did you sign any sort of disclosure or anything like that?*  
 965  
 966 No, no. Yeah, like I said, my reporter friend just asked me if I wouldn't mind answering,  
 967 you know, talking to her and so I think she, yeah, she called me on my phone, eh, and, eh,  
 968 that was fine. I was happy to do it. Em..  
 969  
 970 *But say with the TV crew?*  
 971  
 972 With the TV crew? No, eh, no, I don't think we signed anything actually, thinking about  
 973 it.  
 974  
 975 *That's interesting, because, I mean there's a lot of work in the disaster literature about,*  
 976 *kind of, abusing...*  
 977  
 978 Right.  
 979  
 980 ...*disaster, I don't want to say victims because, like...*  
 981  
 982 Yeah.  
 983

984 *...that's a very loaded word, but people who are suffering in a disaster, and it's*  
 985 *interesting how, you know, they didn't, you didn't have to, sort of, you didn't have any*  
 986 *ownership over your story.*  
 987  
 988 Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ehm, yes, and I, that was, kind of, the problem I had. Like, I was, I was  
 989 really pleased to do the radio thing because I knew it was going live to the air so it  
 990 couldn't be edited, it was, kind of, going to be into the, yeah, I guess the fact that they  
 991 couldn't take quotes and use them out of context.  
 992  
 993 *Yeah, yeah. Ehm, there, there wasn't - these are just coming to me now - your*  
 994 *relationship with your work, did you feel that they gave you some information or helped*  
 995 *you out during the period?*  
 996  
 997 Eh, I'm trying to remember what sort of contact I had with them. Ehm, yeah, well, I  
 998 mean, so, my school itself, I think, they spoke to, just about what the situation was with  
 999 work, but this was a few days after the, the earthquake and, yeah, they said it wasn't  
 1000 necessary for me to come in straight away. I think, I think they went back to school really  
 1001 soon, like, a week later or something like that. Most of the teachers there. Which I  
 1002 thought was crazy, like, I heard stories of, like, teachers leaving their kids at home to go  
 1003 to work because it was, kind of, expected of them. Em, but having said, like, aside from  
 1004 that, our actual employers were the, were the Board of Education, and so they had two,  
 1005 eh, a New Zealander and an American, who were, kind of, eh, our immediate supervisors,  
 1006 I guess, and they were definitely in touch, ehm, making sure that everyone was okay, em,  
 1007 so, yeah, in that respect, yeah, I guess we were, we were looked after by our employers.  
 1008  
 1009 *I'm, I'm glad to hear that because I've spoken to people who were employed by, say,*  
 1010 *Japanese companies or...*  
 1011  
 1012 Right...  
 1013  
 1014 *...and they never heard a word.*  
 1015  
 1016 ...I can imagine that happening. Yeah, and I mean, I don't even know what else it would  
 1017 be like, what it would be like for other people on the JET program [Note: Japanese  
 1018 government-run Japan Exchange and Teaching Program to employ foreigners mostly to  
 1019 teach in Japanese schools] in different areas because there were varying, kind of, levels of  
 1020 interaction...  
 1021  
 1022 *Right, right, right.*  
 1023  
 1024 ...depending on where you were. But yeah, Sendai had quite a good, kind of, support  
 1025 network in the first place...  
 1026  
 1027 *Yeah.*  
 1028  
 1029 ...em so.  
 1030  
 1031 *I think that's, kind of, one of the learning points as well, like...*  
 1032  
 1033 Yeah, absolutely. Like, if we didn't have that, I would have been, I don't know what I  
 1034 would have done. Yeah.  
 1035  
 1036 *And, similarly, I've, I've said this to other people, from hearing people's stories, if you*  
 1037 *hadn't had the Internet...*  
 1038



1039 Yes...  
 1040  
 1041 *...I don't know what your experience would have been like.*  
 1042  
 1043 *...it would have been quite different, yeah, I think. Because we, well, yeah, we would*  
 1044 *have been going from Japanese TV and Japanese radio totally, I suppose.*  
 1045  
 1046 *Yeah. I mean obviously you can't imagine those...*  
 1047  
 1048 Yeah, yeah.  
 1049  
 1050 *...would, would, what if's, they don't work, so, I mean, there's no point in even*  
 1051 *speculating, but it's just...*  
 1052  
 1053 But, yeah, that, it, it was...  
 1054  
 1055 *...it's interesting.*  
 1056  
 1057 *...totally invaluable.*  
 1058  
 1059 *Yeah. That's pretty much all I have just in case there's anything you think is relevant to,*  
 1060 *like, language or culture or translation that I haven't talked about.*  
 1061  
 1062 Right, ehm, not that I can think of. Em, yeah. I think that's probably all I, yeah. As far as  
 1063 I can recall...  
 1064  
 1065 Yeah.  
 1066  
 1067 *...at this moment.*  
 1068  
 1069 *Well, as I said, I'm hoping to, kind of, focus things...*  
 1070  
 1071 Yeah.  
 1072  
 1073 *...and maybe come back to you with some more, it'll be nothing, it'll be nothing, sort of,*  
 1074 *as long-winded...*  
 1075  
 1076 [Laughter]  
 1077  
 1078 *...as what I've asked you here, I've taken way more of your time...*  
 1079  
 1080 It's totally fine.  
 1081  
 1082 *...than I intended to. The last question I have, I've really struggled with. It's very clumsy.*  
 1083  
 1084 Okay. [laughter]  
 1085  
 1086 *So, ehm, what I was, what I was worried about was that, you know, me coming along,*  
 1087 *sort of, two-and-a-half years later or whatever, asking you about your experiences, would*  
 1088 *I somehow re-traumatize the people that I, that I, I, I spoke to, and, I'm not a counsellor,*  
 1089 *and I was like, "How the hell am I going to figure out if I have caused somebody more*  
 1090 *stress or whatever?"...*  
 1091  
 1092 Uhm.  
 1093

1094 *...and so I just, I apologize for this being so clumsy but, I just basically said, "Well, okay,*  
1095 *I'll just ask."* [laughter]  
1096  
1097 So, rate, rate my anxiety at the current moment. [Laughter] Yeah.  
1098  
1099 *Exactly.*  
1100  
1101 Ehm, I would say maybe a one. Yeah.  
1102  
1103 *What, the reason I ask this question is because, with the University, we put counsellors in*  
1104 *place and we agreed that if people ranked over a certain number, we would introduce,*  
1105 *the couns, English-language counselling.*  
1106  
1107 Right, right.  
1108  
1109 *Ehm, you know, some of the people that I spoke to had pretty different experiences to you*  
1110 *and I was afraid that they might...*  
1111  
1112 Yeah, sure.  
1113  
1114 *...potentially be, you know, re-, re-, re-traumatized. Luckily, nobody circled the figure*  
1115 *that I was afraid of [laughter]...*  
1116  
1117 Yeah, sure.  
1118  
1119 *...eh, one person came close, which was scary, and we did actually introduce the*  
1120 *counsellor, but they were just like, "Oh, I don't need it." Eh [laughter].*  
1121  
1122 Yeah. I mean, the thing is like, we were just, we were incredibly lucky, and I wouldn't  
1123 even, I mean it was a really stressful time for me at the time, but it's, I just, sort of, count  
1124 my blessings that we weren't living on the coast or, eh, that the nuclear fallout wasn't,  
1125 kind of, sweeping across the country and, yeah, so, I mean, I've talked about with lots of  
1126 friends since, and they all wanted to know about it so, yeah, it's not a big deal for me...  
1127  
1128 *Did it...*  
1129  
1130 ...to talk about it.  
1131  
1132 *...did it feature as a, a, an element of your decision to come back to New Zealand?*  
1133  
1134 No, eh, we'd already, em, declined to re-contract, so, yeah, we saw out the rest of our  
1135 contracts and then we came home as we intended to do.  
1136  
1137 *As you intended to do.*  
1138  
1139 Yeah. Like, lots of our friends had decided to stay on and decided to stay on, like, yeah.  
1140  
1141 *That's, that's again, I came in with some preconceptions which have been overturned,*  
1142 *like, I thought that, em, I thought that people would feel quite sorry for themselves or that*  
1143 *the stories would be these stories of, like, "Oh it was so terrible," or, and, don't get me*  
1144 *wrong, people did have some very bad experiences, but time and again everyone has*  
1145 *said, "There was somebody worse off than me."...*  
1146  
1147 Yeah.  
1148

1149 ...or, you know, *"I didn't have it so bad. Some people here had it much worse than me."*  
1150  
1151 Well, absolutely, yeah.  
1152  
1153 *It's really interesting because I think there's a danger for researchers coming into a*  
1154 *disaster to only focus on vulnerability and not to think about all these other things like*  
1155 *amazing resilience or ways of coping...*  
1156  
1157 Right.  
1158  
1159 ....*positive things that come out of, come out of it, too, so.*  
1160  
1161 Yeah. Probably there were people who had re-contracted and decided that maybe they  
1162 would actually go back at the end of this year instead. I'm sure that must have happened.  
1163 Ehm, but, yeah, there were, as I said, plenty of people that stayed on for another year or  
1164 another two years or are still there now.  
1165  
1166 *Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, listen, thanks a million for your time. I really, really appreciate it.*

## ***APPENDIX F: Codebook of coding definitions***

Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
1	Accurate information ABSENT	Reference by the participant to the absence of accurate information in their experience of the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	20
2	Accurate information PRESENT	Reference by the participant to the presence of accurate information in their experience of the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	5
3	Actionable information ABSENT	Reference by the participant to the absence of actionable information in their experience of the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	24
4	Actionable information PRESENT	Reference by the participant to the presence of actionable information in their experience of the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	26
5	Advice or lessons learned	Reference by the participant to a piece of concrete advice or other lesson learned for how to prepare for, respond to, or recover from a disaster in a Japanese context as a result of their experience of the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	27
6	Alarms and sirens	Reference by the participant to alarms and sirens being used to communicate information in the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	12
7	Assumptions about disaster	Reference by the participant to something that is taken for granted about disasters. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	18
8	Assumptions about foreign nationals in disaster	Reference by the participant to some way in which an assumption is made about how foreign nationals experience disaster or to something that is taken for granted about foreign nationals in disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	17
9	Awareness of framing	Reference by the participant to being aware of framing taking place in the news and other media when they were gathering information in the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	19
10	Beginning of the disaster	Reference by the participant to when the 2011 disaster started for them (i.e. the beginning of what they look on as their disaster experience). This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	28
11	'Believe' type trust	Reference by the participant to having belief in something or someone in relation to the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	14
12	Changed habits	Reference by the participant to changing the way that they regularly behave as a direct result of their experiences of the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	23
13	Changed habits of communication	Reference by the participant to using a method of communication in the disaster that they had not used much prior to the disaster or to not using a method of communication in the disaster that they had used often prior to the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	7

Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
14	Changed habits of information gathering	Reference by the participant to using a method of information gathering in the disaster that they had not used much prior to the disaster or to not using a method of information gathering in the disaster that they had used often prior to the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	9
15	Characteristics of disaster-related information	This is a tree node collecting together any node relating to the characteristics, features or qualities of information in the 2011 disaster that participants talked about. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
16	Communal and organised response and recovery	Reference by the participant to making use of a communal and organised response or recovery service. (I.e., response or recovery involving forethought; e.g., efforts run by an official responder or similar like a refuge centre.) This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	19
17	Communicating NEGATIVE	The participant makes reference to someone communicating in the disaster for any reason other than to improve their awareness of the disaster situation. This act of communicating is connected with a negative experience (either explicitly stated or implied). This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	27
18	Communicating NEUTRAL	The participant makes reference to someone communicating in the disaster for any reason other than to improve their awareness of the disaster situation. This act of communicating is connected with neither a negative nor a positive experience. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	28
19	Communicating POSITIVE	The participant makes reference to someone communicating in the disaster for any reason other than to improve their awareness of the disaster situation. This act of communicating is connected with a positive experience (either explicitly stated or implied). This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	25
20	Complacency	Reference by the participant to themselves or to other foreign people in Japan going back to being complacent about disaster preparedness after the 2011 disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	9
21	'Confidence in' type trust	Reference by the participant to having confidence in something or someone in relation to the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	22
22	Context	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the fifth phase of data analysis directly relating to contextual issues in this project. This is an inductive code.	Phase 5	0
23	Cultural barrier ABSENT	Reference by the participant to a cultural barrier relating to life in Japan in the context of the disaster that might have been expected but was absent. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	5
24	Cultural barrier PRESENT	Reference by the participant to the presence of a cultural barrier relating to life in Japan in the context of the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	17
25	Cultural barrier PRESENT for participant	Reference by the participant to the presence of a cultural barrier relating to life in Japan in the context of the disaster that directly impacted on their own personal experience. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	13



Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
26	Cultural mediation by another	Reference by the participant to someone mediating the disaster culturally for someone experiencing the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	12
27	Cultural mediation by the participant	Reference by the participant to how they themselves mediated the disaster culturally for someone experiencing the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	5
28	Culture	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set directly relating to culture. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
29	Culture of disaster in Japan	Reference by the participant to a characteristic feature of the culture of disaster in Japan. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	20
30	Disaster culture	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set directly relating to a culture of disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	0
31	Disaster preparation, response, and recovery	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set directly relating to preparation, response, and recovery in disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
32	Earthquake	Reference by the participant to the fact that the earthquake was relevant to their own experience of the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	27
33	Effect of the interview process	Reference by the participant to how my conducting an interview with them affected them. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	22
34	Ending of the disaster	Reference by the participant to the disaster ending for them, either temporally or functionally. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	28
35	External factors	Reference by the participant to a factor not related to the disaster that influenced the decisions that they made during the disaster on how to respond and recover. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	28
36	Fly-jin	The participant makes reference to leaving Japan in the disaster, to the 'fly-jin' phenomenon (a derogatory term for foreign residents that left Japan during the disaster) or to some other equivalent term to describe foreigners who were said to have 'deserted' Japan or been 'traitors'. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	27
37	Focus in response or recovery	Reference by the participant to the thing that was their focus at the response stage or at the recovery stage of the disaster. (E.g., family, contacting home, food, getting out of town, getting back to normal, etc.). This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	28
38	Foreign nationals are a community	Reference by the participant to their belief that foreign nationals in Japan should generally be considered the same and have much in common. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	17

Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
39	Foreign nationals are not all the same	Reference by the participant to their belief that foreign nationals in Japan should not all be considered the same and do not necessarily have much in common. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	22
40	Guilt	The participant makes reference to feelings of guilt at being relatively okay while others were much worse off in the disaster or guilt at coming away relatively unscathed from the disaster while others suffered more permanent trauma. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	12
41	Independent and ad-hoc response and recovery	Reference by the participant to not making use of a communal and organised response or recovery service and instead responding or recovering in some independent or ad-hoc way. (e.g. refuge centre and going-it alone instead). This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	19
42	Information gathering NEGATIVE	The participant makes reference to someone gathering information in order to improve their awareness of the disaster situation. This act of gathering information is connected with a negative experience (either explicitly stated or implied). This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	28
43	Information gathering NEUTRAL	The participant makes reference to someone gathering information in order to improve their awareness of the disaster situation. This act of gathering information is connected with neither a negative nor a positive experience. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	28
44	Information gathering POSITIVE	The participant makes reference to someone gathering information in order to improve their awareness of the disaster situation. This act of gathering information is connected with a positive experience (either explicitly stated or implied). This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	25
45	Instances of belief	Any instance in a participant interview where the participant explicitly mentions belief or a variant of the word in relation to their experience of the 2011 disaster. (Any use of believe where the participant was addressing the researcher or expressing some uncertainty about an assertion they were making in the interview has not been coded here.) This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	15
46	Instances of communicating	This is a tree node collecting together the positive, negative and neutral instances of communicating from the participants' accounts. I am taking communicating to be any other communicative event not included in information gathering. (I am taking information gathering to be any communicative activity in the disaster whose main purpose was to increase someone's situational awareness of the disaster context.) This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
47	Instances of confidence	Any instance in a participant interview where the participant explicitly mentions confidence or a variant of the word in relation to their experience of the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	3
48	Instances of faith	Any instance in a participant interview where the participant explicitly mentions faith or a variant of the word in relation to their experience of the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	3



Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
49	Instances of information gathering	This is a tree node collecting together the positive, negative, and neutral instances of information gathering from the participants' accounts. I am taking information gathering to be any communicative activity in the disaster whose main purpose was to increase someone's situational awareness of the disaster context. (I am taking communicating to be any other communicative event not included in information gathering.) This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
50	Instances of reliance	Any instance in a participant interview where the participant explicitly mentions reliance or a variant of the word in relation to their experience of the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	12
51	Instances of trust	Any instance in a participant interview where the participant explicitly mentions trust or a variant of the word in relation to their experience of the 2011 disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	10
52	Instances of trust model	Any instance in which X (any foreign or Japanese resident in the disaster zone at onset) trusts (in) Y in context C for performing action $\alpha$ (executing task) and realizing the result $p$ (that includes or corresponds to her goal $gx$ ). This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	24
53	Knowledge of response and recovery ABSENT	Reference by the participant to NOT knowing how to correctly respond to or recover from such a large-scale disaster or to NOT having some prior training in how to respond to and recover from such a disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	12
54	Knowledge of response and recovery PRESENT	Reference by the participant to knowing how to correctly respond to or recover from such a large-scale disaster or to having some prior training in how to respond to and recover from such a disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	15
55	Language	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set directly relating to language. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
56	Linguistic barrier ABSENT	Reference by the participant to a linguistic barrier relating to Japanese in the context of the disaster that might have been expected but was absent. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	13
57	Linguistic barrier PRESENT	Reference by the participant to the presence of a linguistic barrier relating to Japanese in the context of the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	28
58	Linguistic barrier PRESENT for participant	Reference by the participant to the presence of a linguistic barrier relating to Japanese in the context of the disaster that directly impacted on their own personal experience. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	14
59	Linguistic mediation by another	Reference by the participant to someone or something mediating the disaster linguistically for someone experiencing the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	22

Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
60	Linguistic mediation by the participant	Reference by the participant to how they themselves mediated the disaster linguistically for someone experiencing the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	8
61	Memory STRONG	Reference by the participant to being able to remember or to remembering clearly about their experience of the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	21
62	Memory WEAK	Reference by the participant to not being able to remember or to not remembering clearly about their experience of the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	21
63	Methodology	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set directly relating to methodological issues in this project. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
64	Native language NEGATIVE	Reference by the participant to the negative impact on a foreign person's experience of the disaster of communicating or gathering information in (one of) their native language(s). This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	26
65	Native language NEUTRAL	Reference by the participant to a foreign person's experience of communicating or gathering information in (one of) their native language(s) in the disaster but without mentioning any positive or negative association. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	22
66	Native language POSITIVE	Reference by the participant to the positive impact on a foreign person's experience of the disaster of communicating or gathering information in (one of) their native language(s). This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	22
67	News translation	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set directly relating to the broad theory of news translation. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	0
68	Non-verbal non-pictorial communication or information gathering	Reference by the participant to using some non-verbal way to communicate or gather information in the disaster. E.g., using body language, using sign language, or copying the actions of others. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	12
69	Nuclear	Reference by the participant to the fact that the nuclear event was relevant to their own experience of the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	25
70	Other disaster intercultural communication	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set directly relating to other forms of intercultural communication (aside from translation and interpreting) that appeared in the data set. These data speak to the ethics of whether translation and interpreting were good in the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0



Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
71	Panic ABSENT	The participant makes reference in their account of the disaster to an absence of panic where it might have been reasonably expected; in relation to themselves and to others. I differentiate panic from stress and other negative feelings by focusing on the idea that panic is overwhelming and prevents reasonable response whereas the others do not. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	25
72	Panic PRESENT	The participant makes reference to the presence of panic in their account of the disaster; not just their own panic, but others' panic also. I differentiate panic from stress and other negative feelings by focusing on the idea that panic is overwhelming and prevents reasonable response whereas the others do not. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	20
73	Partner (Japanese)	Reference by the participant to having a partner of Japanese nationality. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	12
74	Partner (non-Japanese resident in Japan)	Reference by the participant to having a partner not of Japanese nationality who is resident in Japan. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	5
75	Partner (non-Japanese resident outside Japan)	Reference by the participant to having a partner not of Japanese nationality who is resident outside Japan. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	2
76	Personal judgement	Reference by the participant to making up their own mind (using their own judgement) about an issue in the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	17
77	Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEGATIVE	Reference by the participant to the negative impact on a foreigner's experience of the disaster from communicating or gathering information using pictures, graphs or diagrams rather than verbal codes. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	11
78	Pictorial rather than verbal codes NEUTRAL	Reference by the participant to communicating or gathering information using pictures, graphs or diagrams rather than verbal codes in the disaster but without mentioning any positive or negative impact. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	12
79	Pictorial rather than verbal codes POSITIVE	Reference by the participant to the positive impact on a foreigner's experience of the disaster from communicating or gathering information using pictures, graphs or diagrams rather than verbal codes. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	9
80	Polyglotism	Reference by the participant to the fact that they themselves spoke Japanese to communicate or gather information in the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	25
81	Principal perceived hazard	This is a tree node collecting together any node relating to the three hazards (earthquake, tsunami, nuclear) that led to the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0

Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
82	Relationship NEGATIVE	Reference by the participant to the negative impact on their experience of the disaster of interacting with another party (individual, institution, etc.). This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	24
83	Relationship NEUTRAL	Reference by the participant to interacting with another party (individual, institution, etc.) in the disaster but without mentioning any positive or negative impact. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	28
84	Relationship POSITIVE	Reference by the participant to the positive impact on their experience of the disaster of interacting with another party (individual, institution, etc.). This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	27
85	Relationship with a significant other	This is a tree node gathering together any node in the data set relating to whether or not the participant had a significant other (girlfriend, boyfriend, husband, wife, etc.) at the time of onset of the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 3	0
86	Rival explanations	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the fifth phase of data analysis that could present an alternative answer to the final research question in this research project (why is translation important?). This is an inductive code.	Phase 5	0
87	Rural residence	Reference by the participant to being resident in a rural area at the time of the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	6
88	Sensationalism in news media ABSENT	Reference by the participant to a lack of sensationalism in the news media in the disaster where they might have expected it. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	12
89	Sensationalism in news media PRESENT	Reference by the participant to sensationalism impacting on their opinion of the news media in the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	18
90	Single	Reference by the participant to not having a partner. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	9
91	Stress	The participant makes reference to the ways in which they were made to feel stress or some similarly negative feeling during the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	23
92	Suburban residence	Reference by the participant to being resident in a suburban area at the time of the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	6
93	Timely information ABSENT	Reference by the participant to the absence of timely information in their experience of the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	14



Reference number	Code name	Description	First appearance in thematic map	Number of sources coded
94	Timely information PRESENT	Reference by the participant to the presence of timely information in their experience of the disaster. This is an inductive code.	Phase 2	12
95	Tone of voice	Reference by the participant to the tone of voice of the person delivering a message in the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	9
96	Topics needing cultural mediation	Reference by the participant to an instance during the disaster where information needed to be mediated culturally. The mediation does not necessarily have to be for the benefit of the participant. This is a reference to the content of the information not to their opinion on the mediation act. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	14
97	Topics needing linguistic mediation	Reference by the participant to an instance during the disaster where information needed to be mediated linguistically for a foreign national in the disaster. The mediation does not necessarily have to be for the benefit of the participant. This is a reference to the content of the information not to their opinion on the mediation act. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	27
98	Translation	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the fifth phase of data analysis directly relating to translation and interpreting issues in this project. This is an inductive code.	Phase 5	0
99	Trust	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the fourth phase of data analysis directly relating to trust issues in this project. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	0
100	Trustworthy information ABSENT	Reference by the participant to the absence of trustworthy information in their experience of the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	21
101	Trustworthy information PRESENT	Reference by the participant to the presence of trustworthy information in their experience of the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	9
102	Tsunami	Reference by the participant to the fact that the tsunami was relevant to their own experience of the disaster. This is an <i>a priori</i> code.	Phase 2	18
103	Urban residence	Reference by the participant to being resident in an urban area at the time of the disaster. This is an <i>in vivo</i> code.	Phase 2	16
104	Various codes no longer being pursued in this project	This is a tree node collecting together any node in the data set that was no longer considered after the fourth phase of analysis. While interesting, these codes did not help to answer the research questions in this thesis and did not fit into its central narrative. This is an inductive code.	Phase 4	0

***APPENDIX G: Reference list of secondary data***

In addition to the the primary data analysed in this thesis (anonymised member-checked interview transcripts, anonymised interview record sheets, participant profile data, the researcher's autoethnographic account, anonymised logs of data gathering and data analysis, and instances of trust corresponding to the Castelfranchi and Falcone [2010] model of trust), the secondary data below have also been explicitly referred to in the participant-led and interpretive analysis chapters.

<b>Secondary data explicitly referenced in this thesis</b>				
<i>No.</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Section in thesis</i>	<i>Source</i>
1	First emergency warning broadcast on NHK Television in Japan on March 11, 2011	Television news broadcast and accompanying video transcript	4.5.5.1	The transcript of the original Japanese broadcast is available here: <a href="http://sekihi.net/stones/19338">http://sekihi.net/stones/19338</a> [Accessed 14 October 2014]. The broadcast has been archived here: <a href="http://www.nicovideo.jp/watch/sm13889097">http://www.nicovideo.jp/watch/sm13889097</a> [Accessed 14 October 2014]. The researcher's translation of the video transcript is available in the thesis.
2	Historic disaster-related information portal of the Cabinet Office of Japan	Website	4.5.5.2	The website is available here: <a href="http://www8.cao.go.jp/teiju-portal/jpn/etc/disaster/index.html">http://www8.cao.go.jp/teiju-portal/jpn/etc/disaster/index.html</a> [Accessed 14 October 2014].
3	First e-mail from the Irish Embassy to its citizens in Japan on March 16, 2011	E-mail	4.5.5.3	This e-mail comes from the researcher's private records.
4	Instructions from Sendai City Government on how to claim disaster-related assistance	Government pamphlet	4.5.5.4	Soft copies of the original pamphlets and newsletters can be seen here in Japanese <a href="http://www.city.sendai.jp/report/2011/1198131_1413.html">http://www.city.sendai.jp/report/2011/1198131_1413.html</a> and here in English <a href="http://tinyurl.com/oeu5ls4">http://tinyurl.com/oeu5ls4</a> [Accessed 14 October 2014].
5	Anonmyised chat string between users of a Facebook group set up to support foreign nationals experiencing the 2011 disaster	Social media content	4.5.5.5	Reference to the source of the content is not provided here to protect the anonymity of the users.

6	E-mails to loved ones and blog entries created by the researcher in March and April, 2011	E-mails and social media content	4.4.1	These e-mails and social media content come from the researcher's private records.
7	Documentary excerpts broadcast on NHK Television and archived in the Japanese National Diet Library reporting on the experiences of foreign residents in the disaster zone in March, 2011	Television documentary excerpts and accompanying video transcripts	5.4.2	Transcripts of these reports translated into English by the researcher are available in Appendix H. View the footage in Japanese for: the Chinese subject here <a href="http://tinyurl.com/nvmjaot">http://tinyurl.com/nvmjaot</a> ; the American subject here <a href="http://tinyurl.com/naaeo67">http://tinyurl.com/naaeo67</a> ; the Filipina subjects here <a href="http://tinyurl.com/pcgn6yb">http://tinyurl.com/pcgn6yb</a> and here <a href="http://tinyurl.com/qx822uq">http://tinyurl.com/qx822uq</a> [Accessed 5 June 2015].
8	Government magazine interview with foreign Translators who volunteered in the 2011 disaster	Government publication (interview and accompanying photo)	5.6 and 5.7.5	The magazine article and accompanying photo can be viewed here <a href="http://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/201106/201106_02.html">http://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/201106/201106_02.html</a> [Accessed 5 December 2014].
9	Survey carried out by the Sendai International Relations Association (an NPO based in the disaster zone) on foreign nationals' experiences of the 2011 disaster	Survey of 282 foreign nationals in Sendai	5.7	The survey, <i>Higashinihon daishinsai no gaikokujinhisaisha ankēto kekka</i> is available in Japanese from: <a href="http://www.sira.or.jp/japanese/blog/archives/2011/12/post-174.html">http://www.sira.or.jp/japanese/blog/archives/2011/12/post-174.html</a> [Accessed 5 December 2014].



10	Searchable archive of posts to a professional translation and interpreting forum in the Japanese locale, Honyaku Mailing List, from the time of the disaster	Website	5.7.1	The archives can be consulted here: <a href="http://tinyurl.com/njtljye">http://tinyurl.com/njtljye</a> [Accessed 5 December 2014].
11	Historic disaster-related information portal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan	Website	5.7.2	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs portal for foreign nationals in the 2011 disaster can be viewed here: <a href="http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/incidents/familylinks.html">http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/incidents/familylinks.html</a> [Accessed 5 December 2014].
12	Historic disaster-related information portals of Google and Yahoo! Japan	Website	5.7.2	The Google site can still be consulted here <a href="http://www.google.co.jp/intl/ja/crisisresponse/japanquake2011.html">http://www.google.co.jp/intl/ja/crisisresponse/japanquake2011.html</a> and the Yahoo! site here <a href="http://notice.yahoo.co.jp/emg/en/">http://notice.yahoo.co.jp/emg/en/</a> [Accessed 20 March 2015].
13	Historic crowdsourced and machine-translated crisis map from the 2011 disaster made using social media content and GPS information	Crisis map	5.7.2	See <a href="https://www.sinsai.info/">https://www.sinsai.info/</a> [Accessed 20 March 2015].
14	Testimony of an online interpretation service that provided distance volunteer interpreting in the 2011 disaster	Website	5.7.2	See <a href="http://babelverse.com/blog/2011/12/the-babelverse-story-crisis-response/">http://babelverse.com/blog/2011/12/the-babelverse-story-crisis-response/</a> [Accessed 20 March 2015].

15	Screenshot of a vlog by a foreign resident at the time of the 2011 disaster showing a still from his Facebook page	Social media content	5.7.4	Reference to the source of the content is not provided here to protect the anonymity of the vlogger.
16	Report of the Tokyo English Lifeline, a multilingual counselling service in Japan, covering the disaster period	NPO annual report	5.7.5	Reference: Tokyo English Life Line 2011. <i>TELL Annual Report 2011</i> . Tokyo, Japan: TELL.
17	First report filed by the the UK's <i>Guardian Newspaper</i> Tokyo correspondent on March 11, 2011	Newspaper report	5.7.7	The article is available here: <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/11/japan-earthquake-miyagi-tsunami-warning">http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/11/japan-earthquake-miyagi-tsunami-warning</a> [Accessed 5 December 2014].

***APPENDIX H: Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) modelled trust instances***

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL (red text indicates where Translation was likely)

Instance no.	1	2	3
Data source	P13	P10	P8
Translation likely?	Yes; foreign resident	Yes; foreign resident	Yes; Japanese resident
Trustor	P13's French clients	foreign residents	P8 and her foreign colleague
Trustee	P13	P10	Their Japanese colleagues
Interview passage	Also, I started being busy with my customers who were in a big hotel in Tokyo. So got in touch with them, I think we used Skype. Yes, they explained me that, we parted five minutes before, they explained me that it started shaking while they were boarding a taxi and it's shaking like hell in the taxi. And so they were in a panicky mood [...]. They, they were probably more hooked than I was to news sources and as they, they do not rely on Japanese language, they were relying I assume on everything which is non- which was non-Japanese: French, they were French, maybe English news sources. And probably they were more aware than I about the matter of Fukushima. So, they were in a total panic and they asked me, they told me that they wanted to go to Osaka and that they would pay any means of transportation because they were thinking that everything was stopped. And I was not in a panic, well, I was not shaking. Eh, worried, but not shaking. And they said that the trains are not running. Tokyo-Osaka is something like, let's say, two hours, okay? Bullet train. So, I told them, "Okay, I'm going to check. The Internet is working."	I've been here a long time. Once I was back, I was inundated with the locals asking me for information and what to do. And luckily for me, I do have a lot of Japanese friends, so I could help most people. If not, they could come here and I could feed them and look after them and whatnot. But, yeah, that would be very helpful. I think, someone knowledgeable in the area, knowledgeable in the language and that interacts with that source of information would definitely help the foreign community.	I thought, "Okay, I look at my Japanese, eh, colleagues and see what they are doing and they wait a bit, of, of course everyone was quiet and they waited until the announcement came that we could go out of the building, then you apparently after earthquake there will be, eh, aftershocks and then you just have to wait until, em, there is no aftershocks so that it's okay to go downstairs. So that was maybe five minutes later. "Ah, Japanese, what are we colleagues shouting for, foreign guys was shouting, "Ah, Japanese, what are we supposed to do?" [laughter] Anyway, I thought that was good. I just followed.
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Respond appropriately to the overall disaster	Be safe from worse events
Delegated action	Arrange their evacuation	Find information on how to respond to the disaster	Lead the disaster response initially
Likely predictions	Competence	foreign residents may have predicted that P10 would be able to find a not communicate important information from Japanese sources to them in English- therefore, Translation may have impacted here	foreign residents may have predicted that P10 would be able to find a not communicate important information from Japanese sources to them in English- therefore, Translation may have impacted here
	Willingness	P13's French clients may have predicted that P13 would also have the local knowledge to be able to plan their evacuation- therefore, Translation may have impacted here	P8 and her foreign colleague may have predicted that their English-speaking Japanese colleagues would know how to respond to a disaster of this scale and be able to instruct them how to do so in English- therefore, Translation may have impacted here
	Un-harmfulness	P13's French clients may have predicted that P13 would be concerned to ensure the safety of potential future clients	P8 and her foreign colleague may have predicted that the colleague feeling of their English-speaking Japanese colleagues and shared experience would make them concerned for their welfare
	Dependence	P13's French clients may have predicted that P13 was morally obliged to help them to evacuate Japan seeing as how he had been hired as their professional interpreter	P8 and her foreign colleague may have predicted that their relationships as co-workers with their English-speaking Japanese colleague would ensure they would not lead them into greater harm
	Strong	P13's clients could have searched for information from many other sources by themselves (their hotel, their embassy) but they were more willing to devote their efforts to an existing relationship where they were assured of language expertise and local knowledge	P8 and her foreign colleague may have had the skills to lead a disaster response independently, but they may have reasoned that the greater disaster experience and local knowledge of their colleagues might have ensured a better response
Context	Opportunities	There were other ways they could have gotten this information (e.g. their hotel, embassy) so counting on P13 could have ended up being wasted effort	The Japanese colleagues could have told them to do something which could end up being more risky
	Obstacles	Having a long-standing business relationship with a professional interpreter meant that Translation presented an opportunity to delegate at least part of their evaluation planning to P13	Having a long-standing business relationship with a professional interpreter meant that Translation presented an opportunity to delegate at least part of their evaluation planning to P13
	Obstacles	Language and culture might have put obstacles in the way of P13's French clients evacuating, seeing as they were temporary visitors to Japan with no Japanese ability	Having a long-standing business relationship with a professional interpreter meant that Translation presented an opportunity to delegate at least part of their evaluation planning to P13

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL (red text indicates where Translation was (likely)

Instance no.	4	5	6
Data source	P19	P3	P24
Translation likely?	Yes: Japanese resident	Yes: Japanese resident	Yes: foreign resident
Truster	P19	A certain EU embassy's diplomatic officers	P24's employer
Trustee	His Japanese boss	The embassy's local Japanese staff	P24
Interview passage	And then I looked around and I could see some people were quaking down and, kind of, like, "Uh, uh, uh." [Note: the participant gestures looking worriedly above his head] "You know, "Jishindai", like, earth, "it's an earthquake!" And with that, I thought, "Whoa! I'm in the subway. I want to get out of the subway." So, through the turnstile, I looked around at my boss, I said, you know, "Let's go." And this older gentleman, my boss, put his hand on my shoulder, and he said, "No, let's wait here. It's safer to be here." And I, kind of, just because he was so decisive, I thought that was a good thing. He said that to me in English, by the way. Just, I'm remembering now.		There was a lot of pressure. There were times, like, for example, where I had to on the spur of the moment - I wasn't given any notice - but I had to go and interpret for the mayor that was talking to the US Army, and I don't know the specific words that are going to come up and the vocab that they are going to use, so I cringe thinking about that now because it was one of the - (in the job I did), you're not fluent at Japanese so there is no way you are going to be able to do anything like a hundred-percent perfect, but you do your best, but they were all in their army suits and she was dressed in her nice, like, and I'm just in casual jeans and what not, so I just cringe about that because (in that job) it was like the worst possible situation to be in, but I got it done and it was finished with but lots of pressure to make sure that things were correct.
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Instruct their citizens in how to respond	Ensure communication was possible between the Japanese mayor and the US military responder
Delegated action	Lead the disaster response initially	Translate announcements and broadcasts being made over the Japanese NHK emergency radio channel - Translation impacted here as it was the direct nature of the delegated action	Translate (interpret) for the mayor
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	His employer may have predicted that, as a translator (lower cast 1), P24 would be able to speak sufficient Japanese to help them meet their goal
		Know-how	His employer may have predicted that P24's desire for continued employment and a good working relationship would have made him concerned to do his job well
	Willingness		His employer may have predicted that, as a translator (lower cast 1), P24 would also have the specialist knowledge, expertise, and experience to interpret
	Un-harmfulness	Revolence	His employer may have predicted that P24's employment with the embassy would ensure that he was morally obliged to work in a way that would not harm the mayor or her reputation
		Morals	
Context	Dependence	Sanctions	
		Strong	
		Weak	The employer may have had some Translation skills to be able to communicate with the US military representative independently, but she/he may have predicted that P24 would have facilitated higher quality communication
Obstacles	Opportunities	Risk failure	
		Risk wasted effort	
		Risk unexpected harm	The employer risked a loss of face or miscommunication in front of an important contact by using their own staff member who was not an official interpreter
Context	Opportunities		Happening to have a foreign national Translator on their staff presented the employer with an opportunity to have a smoother communication with an important contact, perhaps at less cost and effort
	Obstacles		Language and culture might have been obstacles to smooth communication between the mayor and the US military representative

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL (red text indicates where Translation was likely)

Instance no.	7	8	9
Data source	P12	P10	P16
Translation likely?	Yes; Japanese resident	Yes; Japanese resident	Yes; foreign resident
Trustor	P12	Canadian Journalists who arrived in the disaster zone	P16
Trustee	His Japanese colleagues	Owner of an Australian pub in the disaster zone (wife of P10)	Other members of the Bangladeshi community
Interview passage	There definitely were some PA announcements, and, they were impossible, utterly impossible for me to understand, because it was, kind of, static-y, you know, like, crackley, kind of (Note: the participant then covers his mouth with his hand and produces some incomprehensible sounds) over the systems so, but, like, the Japanese people around understood. (Researcher: Yeah, this is interesting for me. You said, "It was translated for me." Can you be more specific?) Like, by whom? (Researcher: Or not by the people but, like, was it a stranger? Was it someone you knew?) Oh, the company. Again, it was, it was people from the company.	(Researcher: There's just one other thing I did, kind of, want to get a bit more detail on. And that was about the reporters. I think that's a really interesting topic in terms of, so first of all, the Canadians, did they have a translator with them or could they speak Japanese?) No, that's why they sought, that's why they sought this place out, they said. Because they knew it was run by an Australian, and luckily my wife does, has a very good sense of Jap, of English. Erm, and she could help them out.	(Researcher: And what was the language in the camp?) Mainly Japanese, mainly, all the adults went and, mainly Japanese but, one or two people could comment in English, and to use Japanese it was not difficult for us, because all peoples were the same place and many of them know Japanese, because in our community three or four people I said about, all of my friend that know Japanese, because if there is an announcement instantly he translated, "Oh, this like this."
Likely goal	Respond appropriately	Report back on the disaster	Respond appropriately to the instructions in the evacuation centre
Delegated action	Translate tsunami warnings coming over the PA system into English for him	Navigate the disaster zone	Translate announcements being made in the evacuation centre
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	P16 may have predicted that certain other members of the Bangladeshi community would be able to understand and communicate him in Bengali instructions and announcements given out in Japanese - therefore, Translation may have impacted here
		Know-how	The reporters may have predicted that the owner of an Australian pub would have sufficient techniques to smoothly navigate Japanese social situations - therefore, Translation may have impacted here
	Willingness		The reporters may have predicted that the owner of an Australian pub would want an English language report to be created and would devote time away from other tasks to help them create their report
		Benevolence	The reporters may have predicted that the owner of an Australian pub would be benevolent and not put them at greater risk
	Un-harmfulness	Morals	
		Sanctions	
		Strong	P16 lacked the Japanese skill to be able to understand Japanese instructions in the evacuation centres, therefore he was strongly dependent on this Translation
	Dependence	Weak	
		Risk failure	
		Risk wasted effort	
Context	Opportunities	Risk unexpected harm	These members of the Bangladeshi community could have neglected to communicate vital information to P16 or could have ended up giving him misinformation
			Having other Bengali-speaking friends in the evacuation centre at the same time presented P16 with an opportunity to have a Translated experience
	Obstacles		Language and culture might have put obstacles in the way of P16 responding appropriately in the evacuation centre, seeing as he had little Japanese ability and Japanese was the main language of communication in the centre



INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATAMATCHING TRUST MODEL (red text indicates where Translation was likely)

Instance no.	13	14	15
Data source	P21	P28	P15
Translation likely?	Yes: Japanese or foreign resident	Yes: Japanese resident	Yes: Japanese or foreign resident
Trustor	P21	P28	P15
Trustee	Japanese authorities	His Japanese colleagues	Japanese authorities
Interview passage	When they did the survey on Tokyo tap water, I checked the location because I'm one of those people [laughter] auditing the information, and they tested the water, like, one chome [Note: means a subdivision of land similar to saying one 'block' away] from my house, so it was like, "Alright" [laughter]	And then it just started, you know, the whole time just increasing, increasing in intensity. Ehm, so yeah, eventually it stopped and the staffroom was a total mess, ehm, and luckily there were some of my English teaching colleagues, eh, Japanese teachers in the staffroom, so I asked one of them, "What do we do now?" So we all did the usual disaster routine. We got out of the building and all the kids were starting to line up outside the building, some of them were crying, some of them were laughing. Ehm, yeah, it was, it was, it was pretty intense.	[Researcher: How did you understand about the radiation story?] Maybe because I knew that it's dangerous for my health, so I decided to read about it on the Internet. And even I tried to compare between what's happened in Fukushima and what happened in the nuclear reactor in Ukraine, Chernobyl. And the basic level of radiation and what we are allowed to expose to, and what's the limit. So I started to read, like, all this information at that time. [Researcher: Can you remember where you found that information, what language that information was in?] The language were both English and Japanese. The website, for the level of radiation [Note: he then started checking his phone browser history to find the website and it was one hosted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan] Every day I started to check, to check, to check. Respond appropriately to the nuclear disaster
Likely goal	Respond appropriately to the nuclear disaster	Be safe from worse events	Research the relevant geographic radiation levels daily
Delegated action	Measure and report the radiation levels in drinking water	Lead the disaster response initially	P15 may have predicted that the Japanese authorities had sufficient skills to measure, understand, and accurately communicate these scientific measurements. As the information was not only in Japanese but in English too, Translation may have impacted here
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	P28 may have predicted that his English-speaking Japanese colleagues would know how to respond to a disaster of this scale and keep the students and themselves safe and would be able to instruct him how to do so in English - therefore, Translation may have impacted here
		Know-how	P28 may have predicted that the collegial feeling and shared experience of his Japanese colleagues would make them concerned for his welfare
	Willingness		P21 may have predicted that the Japanese authorities were concerned at accurately publicising radiation levels to convince people that it was safe to be in Japan
	Un-harmfulness	Benevolence	
		Morals	P28 may have predicted that the caretaking role as teachers of his Japanese colleagues morally obliged them to keep him and the students from harm
Dependence	Sanctions		The eyes of the world were on the Japanese government. International scientific authorities were scrutinising Japanese radiation data. P21 may have predicted that the sanction for the Japanese authorities of being caught publicising incorrect radiation measurements would have been too great for them to risk such a harmful act
		Strong	P21 lacked the skills and resources to measure water radiation herself and to access other alternative Japanese sources of radiation measurement. Thus, she would have depended on Translation to achieve her goal
	Weak		
		Risk failure	The risk to P21 was that the authorities would fail to measure the levels correctly or fail to communicate those measurements adequately
		Risk unexpected harm	The risk he faced was that the measurements would be wrong or misleading and that he would increase the danger of radiation poisoning to himself
Context	Opportunities	The teachers could have told him to do something which could have ended up being more risky	
	Obstacles	happening to be around English-speaking colleagues at the time of onset of the disaster presented P28 with an opportunity to have a Translated experience	Language and culture might have prevented P15 from fully understanding the radiation risks he was exposing himself to by being in Japan as a foreign resident with no experience of disasters and little Japanese ability



INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL (red text indicates where Translation was likely)

Instance no.	16	17	18
Data source	P16	P17	P24
Translation likely?	Yes; foreign resident	Yes; Japanese resident	Yes; foreign resident
Trustor	P16 and other Bangladeshi residents	P11	P24
Trustee	One member of the Bangladeshi community who could speak good Japanese	Nuclear experts in his acquaintance (friends and former students)	Exchange student volunteers
Interview passage	(Researcher: And so, that TV signal on maybe that man's car or the mobile phone, that was a Japanese TV?) Japanese TV. And that man was living here maybe around 11 or 12 years. He knows Japanese very well, and he was doing job here. He left Japan two months ago, and now he is in Australia. And he is really very good in Japanese because he was doing job in Japanese company [...] In our community there is few peoples - five or six peoples - they know Japanese. But at that time, that person, that person heard this news and they translated me and my two or three friends.	(Researcher: I wanted to know how you got the information. Was it in Japanese and you just were able to understand it or did you find? No, it's just I got English, eh, all through other friends, like, American guys in the nuclear industry, eh, another Japanese guy who studied nuclear, eh, physics in Tokyo University (an ex-student) gave me a lot, stuff that I couldn't find, but a lot of it, fairwinds, there's an awful lot out there in English, if you search for it	When I wasn't there, if I was at a radio station, we had other, exchange students translating on my behalf, but their first language wasn't English. So, yes, it would be put into English, but it may not have been, it definitely wouldn't have been how I would have translated it exactly, and I, I don't know if it would have gotten the meaning across, but it was in English so if they needed to explain it, they could explain it, and I a phone call came through, they could explain it, but when you are reading something and it is about, like, a certificate that you need, this specific thing, like, it needs to be, like, perfect English, I guess, and as long as, I won't say perfect, as long as it is understandable, but I guess sometimes there is little things that don't come across, I, I, I guess.
Likely goal	Respond appropriately to the overall disaster	Assess the risk of nuclear radiation	Keep multilingual information flowing out
Delegated action	Find information on how to respond to the disaster	Find information on the nuclear disaster	Translate on P24's behalf - do his job
Likely predictions	Competence	P16 and other Bangladeshi residents may have predicted that this member of the Bangladeshi community would be able to understand and communicate important information from Japanese sources to them in Bengali - therefore, Translation may have impacted here	P24 may have predicted that university exchange students would be able to understand, Translate, and communicate basic disaster-related messages
	Skills		
	Know-how	P11 may have predicted that the nuclear experts would have access to privileged information on the nuclear disaster	
	Willingness	P11 may have predicted that the nuclear experts would want to honestly assess the risk for their own safety and the safety of their friends	P24 may have predicted that these foreign exchange students would try hard to understand and accurately translate disaster information for their own safety and for the safety of other foreign nationals in the community
	Benevolence	P11 may have predicted that their shared status as foreign residents and shared experience of the disaster would prevent this member of the Bangladeshi community from doing them harm	P24 may have predicted that their shared status as foreign residents and shared experience of the disaster would prevent them from doing him harm
	Un-harmfulness		
	Morals		
	Sanctions		
	Strong	P11 lacked the Japanese skills and scientific expertise to find and understand sophisticated nuclear information without help - therefore, Translation impacted here	
	Weak		P24 could not be there to Translate 24/7 so it was less effort for him to delegate to others even if the quality achieved in the action might not have been as high
Context	Dependence		
	Risk failure	P11 risked the time and resources involved in getting information from these friends when he could have been searching elsewhere	
	Risk wasted effort		They could create more confusion or panic through misTranslations which would cause more trouble down the line
	Risk unexpected harm	This member of the Bangladeshi community could have neglected to communicate vital information to P16 and the other Bangladeshi residents or could have ended up giving them misinformation	
	Opportunities	Having a community member who could speak Japanese, had been in Japan a long time, and had access to Japanese news over his car navigation system meant these Bangladeshi residents did not feel the need to go searching for information themselves - the potential Translation afforded these foreign residents the opportunity to delegate at least part of their information gathering to this community member	Having other team members with skills to Translate while he was not there presented an opportunity for P24 to delegate some of his responsibilities
	Obstacles	Language, culture and lack of scientific expertise might have been obstacles to P11 finding information on the nuclear disaster	

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL (red text indicates where Translation was likely)

			held in the Japanese authorities
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INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	22	23	24
Data source	P14	P6	P16
Translation likely?	No	No; but perhaps news translation	No; but perhaps news translation
Trustor	P14	A Japanese government office	P16
Trustee	P14's Japanese friends in Aomori	P6 and the PR company he worked for	A friend outside the worst-hit area but still in Sendai
Interview passage	So the first contact I made was, eh, with one my friends in Aomori [Note: a prefecture in the far north of Japan not so seriously affected in the disaster] and what I got him to do, eh, because, eh, at that time, I knew that it was on a national, world-scale, because usually when there's an earthquake there's no news of it. Ehm, so I got one of my friends in Aomori to post on my Facebook account that I was okay. Reduce his parents' worry	And we were feeding the [Twitter feed of the Japanese government office that was our client] so we were picking up information generally off of NHK and Kyodo in English and feeding that out through the Japanese government office that was our client so that foreign nationals could get access to information.	After four and five days, we was able to use Internet. That's like, especially because we was outside, one of my friends was in [a section of the participant's university located in central Sendai], he was alone, he sometimes used to use net in his lab, he supplied us all the information about Fukushima
Likely goal	Reduce his parents' worry	Have interested foreign parties understand the government office's view of the disaster	Respond appropriately to the disaster
Delegated action	Access and update P14's Facebook account	Create their English Twitter feed	Find information on the nuclear disaster
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	The government office may have predicted that the staff of this firm, including Participant 6, were skilled in technology, communication, and language because it had previous experience of their work as existing clients and knew that the firm had international staff
		Know-how	P14 may have predicted that his best friends in Japan would know how to use Facebook and communicate with his loved ones in an appropriate way
	Willingness	Un-harmfulness	P14 may have predicted that his best friends in Japan would be concerned with helping to maintain good family relationships for him and reducing the worry of his loved ones P14 may have predicted that his best friends in Japan would not want to harm him
		Dependence	P16 may have predicted that their status as friends would ensure that the friend in question was concerned for the wellbeing of P16 P16 may have predicted that their friendship would ensure he provided information that would not harm P16
	Context	Obstacles	Infrastructural damage, and linguistic and cultural barriers acted as obstacles to P16's goal of knowing how to respond and be safe in the disaster

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	25	26	27
Data source	P27	P6	P14
Translation likely?	No; but perhaps news translation	No; but perhaps news translation	No
Trustor	P27	P6 and the PR company he worked for	His students
Trustee	Journalists he knew at the NY Times	Established news agencies	P14
Interview passage	I trust the New York Times for information. I know some of the journalists there, and it has a reputation of honesty and transparency. And so, I started reading that they were putting seawater on the, the reactors to keep them cool. I immediately bought a ticket to the United States because I knew very well how many lies Tepco had made in the past, and I knew very well the danger that existed, and I knew where the prevailing winds were going.	And we were feeding the Twitter feed of the Japanese government office that was our client so we were picking up information generally off of NHK and Kyodo in English and feeding that out through the Japanese government office that was our client so that foreign nationals could get access to information.	As a teacher I made me think about what are you going to do when you're, when you lead people. If you're in a class when this happens or you're with students, you're walking on the street and, eh, at my school, I often walked with my students to school, what do you do, you know, I look about, I look at my environment a little bit differently. What kind of things can go wrong, so, yeah, it changed my perspective on things a bit.
Likely goal	Respond appropriately	Update the Twitter feed of their Japanese government office client	Be safe from worse events
Delegated action	Find information on how to respond to the disaster	Find relevant and useful information on the disaster	Lead the disaster response initially
Likely predictions	Competence	P27 may have predicted that their professional skills as journalists would have meant that they would find useful information, analyse it, and report it well	
	Willingness	P27 may have predicted that the journalists at the NY Times were concerned with accurately publicising information about the disaster to serve the interests of their reading public and maintain their reputation	P14's students may have predicted that he would know how to respond to a disaster of this scale and be able to instruct them how to do so in Japanese
	Un-harmfulness	P27 may have predicted that their professional code would ensure that they would honestly and transparently find and transmit useful information through their columns	P14's students may have predicted that P14's relationship with them as a teacher would make him concerned for their welfare
	Dependence	P27 could not read Japanese well, but he could have gone to alternative multilingual sources to get English information instead of the NY Times, but he may have predicted that higher quality could be achieved by looking there	P14's students may have predicted that P14's ethical code as a teacher would ensure he would not lead them into greater harm
	Obstacles	P27 may have predicted that their professional code would ensure that they would honestly and transparently find and transmit useful information through their agency feeds	
	Opportunities	P6 and his co-workers could have gone to alternative sources to get English information instead of the established news agencies, but they may have predicted that higher quality could be achieved by looking there	P14's students may have predicted that they were too young and inexperienced and lacked the necessary skills to lead the response
	Context	The journalists at the NY Times could have had agendas that did not correspond to helping people like P27 (e.g. writing sensational, poorly founded pieces based on inaccurate information or hearsay in order to generate more hits on their services)	
		The fact that the NY Times was a reliable online in Tokyo the day after the onset of the disaster presented P27 with an opportunity to delegate some of his information gathering despite the risk that this information might be sensational or untrue or locally irrelevant	P14 could have told them to do something which could have ended up being more risky
		The disaster disrupted the standard routines of the school and put more responsibility on the shoulders of some teaching assistants than they might have expected, thus, creating a challenge for them	

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	28	29	30
Data source	P5	P1	P10
Translation likely?	No	No	No
Trustor	P5	P1	P10 and other long-standing members of the foreign community in his city
Trustee	His employer	Japanese-speaking receptionists in her apartment building	Japanese friends
Interview passage	<p>[Researcher: Was that difficult for you to make that decision to stay?] There's a lot of stuff. One is that I've been working in the same job so, like I said, I don't feel separate from everyone else, and everybody else was just going to work normal, like, so I'd go to work in a panic after talking to my parents, and I'd go talk to my boss, "I'm thinking I might go home for a while." And he was like, "What? Do what you want, but it's not such a big deal." And I was like, [laughter] "Not big deal?" He was, kind of, un, un-emphasizing it.</p>	<p>Things had not fallen over, but there were cracks, like, in several places in between and all the boards had moved apart, and the wallpaper, wallpaper had moved apart, eh, and apparently- because I, I went down to the reception desk and talked to the girls on the reception, there is a reception desk in the building, right- eh, the elevator was working, back up working, but they had been down. But they told me that a lot, a lot of the other rooms also had these cracks. But, because I went down to say, "Look, is the structure of the building okay?" And they said that the structure of the building was sound. It was only the boarding in front. It's not the actual, there was none on the concrete, or anything, or that any of the other actual structure had been damaged. And I said, "Okay."</p>	<p>The gaijin [foreign] community here is sort of the old. It's a, it's quite an old group that's been here for a long time. They all stuck together through it and people that I think were on the year contracts and two-year contracts soon just buggered off people that had moved here and made Japan their home, eh, they went through it with the Japanese just like they would have been Japanese, I guess, eh, yeah, I mean, I guess the, the good information, the useful information at the time was actually which convenience store was being stocked, eh, which supermarket had food. Elm, which petrol station was going to open that day and, and that information all came by, just, your friends. The language, and that, that was Japanese all, for me, because I speak the language, a few Japanese people called me and said, "If you need petrol tomorrow, the petrol station down the road from my place is opening and they're letting you get so much a mount of fuel or they're letting you fill your tank," or whatever. So, eh, I think, yeah, most of the information, word-of-mouth.</p>
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Respond appropriately	Get supplies of food and fuel
Delegated action	Decide whether it was safe to stay in his hometown	Decide whether it was safe to stay in her apartment	Find information on how to respond to the disaster
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	P10 may have predicted that the receptionists' employers would have given them privileged information about the safety of the building
	Willingness		P1 may have predicted that their desire to keep their tenants safe and happy in their homes would have ensured that the receptionists would be willing to give good information to P1
	Un-harmfulness	Benevolence	P10 may have predicted that their friendship and shared experience would ensure that they would not try to harm him
		Morals	
Likely predictions	Dependence	Sanctions	
		Strong	
	Risk failure	Weak	P10 could have consulted many Japanese and English sources of information by himself as he had lived in Japan for many years, but he may have predicted that his wide network of Japanese friends would more efficiently help him to respond to a disaster of this scale
		Risk wasted effort	
		Risk unexpected harm	If this network of Japanese friends did not provide information in the end, P10 could have missed out on other opportunities to get important information
Context	Opportunities		P10's ability to speak Japanese, his many Japanese friends, and his status in the community allowed him to delegate some of the burden of gathering information after the disaster
	Obstacles		The disaster disrupted the standard routines of P1 and caused her to look for assistance where she might not normally have looked

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	31	32	33
Data source	P20	P10	P27
Translation likely?	No	No	No
Trustor	Japanese employees		
Trustee	P20	Friends in the local nuclear industry	Certain Japanese restaurants
Interview passage	But, you know, I had people that reached out to me privately that were, sort of, like, "I'm really uncomfortable being here. I want to go to Kyoto. I want to get to Osaka. I have family there." Or I have people that I know there, whatever. And, and, but they couldn't say it and they couldn't tell Japanese people...	I was lucky in that sense. Em, I had a Plan B. Em, as I already mentioned, I look after the, the guys that work out at the nuclear power plant there, eh, the project manager at the, at the time had basically reassured us that, "Anything big happens, make your way towards the plant because they will be taking us out in helicopters." He said, "Your family will be allowed to board the helicopters." I said, "Sweet!" And it would have been the easiest thing to drive because everybody would have been heading the other way [laughter].	[Researcher: You mentioned, you chose this restaurant because it's, you know it's [the food is] imported.] I don't know where this comes from [Note: pointing to a side salad that he did not eat] but I know where the spaghetti and the tomato sauce comes from.
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Be safe from worse events	Keep him from being exposed to internal radiation
Delegated action	Ask for permission not to come to work as expected	Evacuate him and his family	Use safe ingredients to prepare his food
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	
		Know-how	P27 may have predicted that the restaurant staff would know how to set up processes that ensured that the ingredients advertised ended up being used in the final dishes
	Willingness		P27 was a long-time customer of this restaurant and he may have predicted that a desire for his continued business would have ensured the restaurant staff's concern in meeting P27's desires
		Benevolence	
	Un-harmfulness	Morals	
		Sanctions	P27 may have predicted that the legal sanction he could bring on a restaurant for not using the ingredients advertised ensured the safety of his food to some extent
		Strong	
	Dependence	Weak	P27 could have eaten only food that he prepared for himself, but he likely reasoned that going to certain restaurants he deemed trustworthy under certain contextual conditions cost him less effort
		Risk failure	The restaurant staff could, through malice or ineptitude, use ingredients that were not safe and damage P27's health - this is the risk he was taking
		Risk wasted effort	
Context	Opportunities	Risk unexpected harm	
		A foreign boss with special ability to intercede on their behalf without facing the same cultural sanction presented the Japanese employees with an opportunity	P27's ability to speak Japanese presented him with an opportunity to confirm the ingredients that were being used in this restaurant
	Obstacles		

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATAMATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	34	35	36
Data source	P1	P10	P15
Translation likely?	No	No	No
Truster	P1	P10	The Sudanese Embassy
Trustee	The embassy of her country (keep anonymous) One is probably would have ignored whatever because I had the embassy backing. I had the connection to them and I had, I, I, I probably was very fortunate in knowing that it something really awful happened, somebody, eh, would look after me, right? Which is different from maybe in a average person who didn't have any family in Tokyo	Welsh friend resident in the same place in Japan It was only for a Welsh friend of mine who had a computer with battery power still, and his wife was still working amazingly, and I got through to him through Skype. And then, such a good friend, eh, he had been around and checked on my family which was a great relief.	Members of the Sudanese community in Japan [Researcher: But, you know, can I ask, did you register with your univer, or with your embassy when you arrived in Japan? How did they find you? Actually, I don't know exactly, but I think they, they asked one of my friends, like, to, to give me, to give them, like, the, my contact, like, information. And actually, not only Sudanese university [Note: he means embassy here but my earlier mistake probably caused this slip beca use he self-corrects in a moment] but also the, maybe Gatar, I don't know how to say, like, is it Qatari or Gatar, maybe Gatar university, Gatar Embassy also contacted me [Note: he was unsure of how to pronounce Qatari in English and went with a voiced-consonant pronunciation]. And, also, I didn't know how they get my telephone number so [laughter]. I think from one of my friends. [Researcher: Right, right. And so these would have been your friends in Japan in other places?] Yes.
Interview passage			Support their citizens in the disaster zone
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Reduce his worry	Research other Sudanese citizens resident in the disaster zone
Delegated action	Evacuate her P1 may have predicted that the embassy would have detailed plans and strategies in place to evacuate staff and citizens in case of a disaster	Check on the safety of P10's wife and kids and report back	The embassy may have predicted that a small community in Japan like the Sudanese one would have tight networks that could easily be called on
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills Know-how	The embassy may have predicted that a feeling of national spirit would have ensured that members of the Sudanese community were concerned for the safety of fellow citizens
	Willingness	P1 may have predicted that her special relationship with the embassy staff would have ensured that they would be concerned for her wellbeing P1 may have predicted that her special relationship with the embassy staff would have ensured that they would not harm her	The embassy may have predicted that a feeling of national spirit would have ensured that members of the Sudanese community would wait to help as much as they could to ensure all Sudanese in the disaster zone were kept safe
	Un-harmfulness	Benevolence Morals Sanctions Strong	
	Dependence	P1 could have tried to arrange a plan for evacuating independently, but she was counting on the fact that her privileged access to the embassy would achieve a better result If the embassy did not, in the end, allow P1 to evacuate with them, she would find herself stuck in a dangerous situation	
		Risk failure Risk wasted effort Risk unexpected harm	
	Opportunities	P1's special status as a friend and close colleague of staff in the embassy presented her with an opportunity not to need to think about her own evacuation plan	
	Obstacles	Infrastructural damage blocked standard communications between P10 and his wife	
Context			Not all Sudanese citizens (including Participant 15) registered their information with the embassy prior to the disaster, so this may have helped to move the embassy toward trusting these friendship networks to find all their citizens in the disaster zone

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	37	38	39
Data source	P16	P17	P2
Translation likely?	No	No	No
Trustor	Bangladeshi evacuees	P17 and other Chinese residents in Sendai	P2 and his friend
Trustee	The Bangladeshi Embassy	Chinese family and friends	The Irish Embassy
Interview passage	We tried to inform our embassy, Bangladesh Embassy, actually, all the community was trying to make communication with their embassy to rescue them from here.	This is China custom, we get together, so if you know something, eh, they send a me, I mean, Chinese government doesn't tell us, they just write it down on the website or whatever it is, but the Chinese, eh, I mean, the, my father and mother, parents, they are very worried about us, so they just checked the internet. And whoever it is, they would tell their kids they are coming and you just tell your friends, so it's something like this. (Researcher: Ah, so it's a kind of a, like a, a word-of-mouth community.) Yes, this is a word-of-mouth community, so, it's not like you have to trust your government for information, no, it's like we just solve the problem ourselves.	But we could see the, the helicopters coming in and dropping water. Myself and (the new co-worker) goes, "What the fuck is going on here! We've heard nothing from no-one." The embassy had rang us. No, actually, I rang the embassy, because they just didn't know who was there. I rang them and I goes, "Look, there's this fella, this fella, this fella, this fella, this fella. We're all okay. We have no information. But this is your contact numbers. I goes this, this, and this. I had all that."
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Respond appropriately to the disaster	Be safe from worse events
Delegated action	Evacuate them	Spread disaster-related information among the Chinese community	Evacuate them
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	P2 and his friends may have predicted that the embassy would have the planning ability and resources needed to stage an evacuation
		Know-how	P17 and other Chinese residents in Sendai may have predicted that their family and friends would know where to find relevant, useful information and get it to them
	Willingness		P17 and other Chinese residents in Sendai may have predicted that their bonds of family and friendship would mean that they were concerned for their welfare
	Un-harmfulness	Benevolence	P17 and other Chinese residents in Sendai may have predicted that family and friends would not want harm to come to them in the disaster
		Morals	
		Sanctions	
	Dependence	Strong	
		Weak	They could have searched for information in many other places
		Risk failure	They would not know how to respond to the disaster if no information was forthcoming
	Context	Risk wasted effort	
Risk unexpected harm			
Opportunities		A feature of Chinese culture presented those Chinese who experienced the disaster with the opportunity to delegate some of their information gathering and spreading tasks	
Obstacles	Infrastructural damage frustrated and delayed the action of evacuating		



INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	40	41	42
Data source	P20	P24	P8
Translation likely?	No	No	No
Trustor	P20	P24	P8
Trustee	His friends and acquaintances	The New Zealand Embassy	The Dutch Embassy
Interview passage	You just wanted as much information as you could get, and then you start to parse it for yourself and figure out what's going on and rely on the people that you trust for, you know, who might not [laughter] frankly be really great arbiters of, of nuclear radiation and understanding what's going on with that. But at least you, sort of, rely on them in a social context, and so you would be able to sit down and drink and talk about different things and see what works. So, I, I think that was, you know, largely how we interpreted the stuff.	I guess the New Zealanders were lucky because they made sure that we were there, and so that's why I guess I trusted them, that if they wanted us to leave that I would be notified to leave.	The Dutch were not so panic, panicking or, because we heard, "Oh, the French, they want everyone to leave the country." I received a message more about, that it would be, if you wouldn't have a urgent reason to stay in Tokyo, it would be recommended to leave Tokyo and maybe go to west Japan, something like that, they said, and I thought, "Okay, I have urgent reason because my work is here so [laughter]. And maybe one month later they sent another mail and it was also similar, reassuring and, eh, eh, both of the mails I forwarded to my family and my, my boyfriend to make them feel reassured
Likely goal	Respond appropriately to the disaster	Be safe from worse events	Be safe from worse events
Delegated action	Interpret and parse nuclear-disaster-related information	Decide whether it was safe to stay in his hometown	Decide whether it was safe to stay in Tokyo
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	P8 may have predicted that the embassy would have better experience, resources, and contacts to make the decision on evacuating
		Know-how	
	Willingness	Information in the public domain	
		P20 may have predicted that this friends were capable enough of parsing information in the public domain	
	Un-harmfulness	P20 may have predicted that his friends would want to accurately interpret the disaster information for their own safety and for the safety of their friends	P8 may have predicted that the embassy would want to be able to say that it had done a good job taking care of all its citizens during the disaster
		P20 may have predicted that their friendship and shared experience would ensure that they provided information that would not harm him	
	Dependence	Benevolence	P8 may have predicted that it was the job of her embassy to take care of her and decide when to remove her from danger, if necessary
		Morals	
		Sanctions	
		Strong	
Context	Opportunities Obstacles	Weak	P8 could have decided to evacuate independently, but may have thought delegating the decision to the embassy would have achieved a better result
		Risk failure	If the embassy neglected to inform her, made the wrong decision, etc. she would be stuck in a dangerous place
		Risk wasted effort	
		Risk unexpected harm	
		P24 counted on her status as a citizen of the Netherlands as an opportunity to delegate some of her decision-making in the disaster	P8 counted on her status as a citizen of the Netherlands as an opportunity to delegate some of her decision-making in the disaster

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	43	44	45
Data source	P26	P9	P1
Translation likely?	No	No	No
Trustor	P26	P9	P1
Trustee	The German Embassy	The US Embassy	VP of the government agency that the participant worked for
Interview passage	I think recommending that, that people leave the country seems like a last-ditch call, and it is something that shouldn't be done lightly, but maybe having the information that, eh, they had at the time, well, I, I think I understand the decision, and maybe with that information, maybe it was the right decision. I think the potential fallout could have been really big.	No, but my friend in Saltama, he's from, the same as me, he told me about it. He was saying you can take your family on the plane. So I don't know if he contacted the embassy. It wasn't a big worry for me, but just knowing that, I felt safer. That was good information, that I could have gone. I could have taken my family to Hawaii or somewhere in America or something.	Internet was working, and I sent an email to, eh, I sent an e-mail literally to the VP of the government agency that the participant worked for in the home country of the agency and to the head of human resources to other people saying "Yeah, this is our situation, this is what has happened and we are okay. I haven't had any contact with (redacted), with my boss, as you know he was on holidays, and I know I don't know his situation or, you know, where he is. "I just wanted to let you know we're okay -- I'm staying in the office and if the phones come back up I'll try and ring somebody." I said, "Could you please call my family?" So I asked them to call my family.
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Be safe from worse events	Reduce her parents' worry
Delegated action	Decide whether it was safe to stay in Tokyo	Evacuate him and his family	Call her parents for her
Likely predictions	Competence	P26 may have predicted that the embassy would have better experience, resources, and contacts to make the decision on evacuating	P1 may have predicted that this VP would know how to contact her loved ones in an appropriate way
	Willingness	P26 may have predicted that the embassy would want to be able to say that it had done a good job taking care of all its citizens during the disaster	P1 may have predicted that this VP would be concerned with helping an employee in trouble
	Un-harmfulness	P26 may have predicted that it was the job of his embassy to take care of him and decide when to remove him from danger, if necessary	P1 may have predicted that this VP would not want to harm her
	Dependence	P26 could have decided to evacuate independently, but may have thought delegating the decision to the embassy would have achieved a better result	P1 could have tried other ways to let people know she was alive (e.g. the Japanese 171 hotline service explained in Chapter 4) but P1 may have predicted that getting this VP to do it was easier and less costly
	Risk	If the embassy neglected to inform him, made the wrong decision, etc. he would be stuck in a dangerous place	The risk was that the VP would neglect to call as promised and she would be left still needing to get in touch somehow and would have wasted her time asking him
	Opportunities	P26 counted on his status as a citizen of Germany as an opportunity to get delegate some of his decision-making in the disaster	P1 had no phone connection, but the opportunity was that she had a working internet connection and could connect with a seemingly trustworthy contact in Ireland to whom she could delegate an action
	Obstacles		Infrastructural damage acted as an obstacle to normal communication with her family
Context			

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	46	47	48
Data source	P11	P20	P20
Translation likely?	No	No	No
Trustor	P11	P20	P20 and his wife
Trustee	Nuclear experts in his acquaintance	His nanny	Her employer
Interview passage	It's just I got English, eh, all through other friends, like, American guys in the nuclear industry, eh, another Japanese guy who studied nuclear, eh, physics in Tokyo University (an ex-student) gave me a lot, stuff that I couldn't find, but a lot of it. Fairwinds, there's an awful lot out there in English, if you search for it.	We had a couple of kids at the time. We have three now. But two at the time. Fairly young. And the, eh, the nanny had, sort of, you know, taken them under a desk, and, and they were okay.	My wife's company, they have pretty serious security, kind of, evacuation protocols that, you know, if things got bad, they would pretty quickly, you know, "here's the rally point," kind of "get there and then we'll take care of you." So I would really end up relying more on those than I would frankly that, sort of, the official (ward) representative that's going to come by.
Likely goal	Be safe from worse events	Take care of their kids	Be safe from worse events
Delegated action	Decide whether it was safe to stay in his hometown	Respond appropriately to the disaster	Evacuate him and his family
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	P20 may have predicted that his wife's company would have the planning ability and resources needed to stage an evacuation
	Willingness	Know-how	P20 may have predicted that the nanny had enough training and experience to know what to do in a disaster
	Un-harmfulness	Willingness	P20 may have predicted that the nanny's professional ethics would have ensured that she/he would be concerned about the wellbeing of children in her/his charge
		Benevolence	P20 may have predicted that his family's status as employees and family members of employees would ensure that the company would not do them harm
		Morals	P20 may have predicted that the nanny's professional ethics would have ensured that she/he would be not bring the children into greater harm intentionally
Likely predictions	Dependence	Sanctions	
		Strong	P20 and his wife were both at work when the disaster happened and so could not look after the kids in the immediate aftermath of the disaster
		Weak	The family could have counted on evacuating by themselves or through their embassy, but may have thought delegating an evacuation to the wife's company would have achieved a better result
	Opportunities	Risk failure	
		Risk wasted effort	If the company did not evacuate them, they could miss other evacuation opportunities
Context	Opportunities	Risk unexpected harm	
	Obstacles		P20 counted on his wife's status as a valued employee of this company as an opportunity to get evacuated from the disaster zone

INSTANCES IN PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW DATA MATCHING TRUST MODEL

Instance no.	49			
Data source	P9			
Translation likely?	No			
Trustor	The previous owner of the school he now runs			
Trustee	P9			
Interview passage	And that, the previous owner was in (in America, she was American) and she said, "predicted, can you hold down the school for one month while I come back." So for me, I was thinking, "Okay, I'm the only teacher.			
Likely goal	Be safe from harm			
Delegated action	Run the school in her absence			
Likely predictions	Competence	Skills	She may have predicted that, as an existing teacher in her school, P9 would have the skills to keep the business afloat	
		Know-how	She may have predicted that, as a long term resident of the village, P9 would have the local knowledge and good reputation to keep the business going in her absence	
	Willingness		She may have predicted that P9 would want the opportunity to earn extra money and reputation	
	Un-harmfulness	Benevolence		
		Morals		
	Dependence	Sanctions	She may have predicted that the laws in Japan and the contracts involved in running a business would help ensure some lack of harm	
		Strong	She could not run the school as she was in another country	
	Risk	Weak		
		Risk failure	P9 could have ruined her business, stolen her money, etc.	
		Risk wasted effort		
Context	Opportunities		The fact that a worker was still there in Japan who had the skill to continue the business gave this woman the opportunity to stay away from the disaster zone to keep herself safer	
	Obstacles			

***APPENDIX I: Anonymised log of data analysis***

2013/12/2

I spent most of November just transcribing. I have a goal to have 14 interviews transcribed by the end of December and all done by the end of March. I have been writing memos as I have been going along. The main realization I had today is that my first coding needs to be simply based on my three 'how' research questions to make sure that I have data to answer these points. Therefore I want my initial codes to be finding all the instances where participants talk about communication tools, information gathering, translation, and interpreting.

2013/12/6

While I was out jogging tonight I got real inspiration for my project - I saw the outline of the whole these based on the way case studies seem to be written (from what I've read so far about case studies anyway). The main point I realised is that I need to make vignettes or some sort of way to thickly describe the context before introducing my themes. This seems standard to case studies. I also want to include my own ethnographic account in these vignettes to make the thing ethnographically-informed.

2013/12/10

A big realisation today was that I haven't actually moved that far from my initial project proposal. It might seem that my project has changed a lot since my initial proposal about social media, but if you look at the minutes of my meetings with [my supervisor], from the very start the questions were about establishing what was communicated in the disaster and what were the translation needs. This still relates to my current two 'how' and one 'why' questions. I might need to make this argument in my viva.

2014/3/3

I have tried a few different methods of transcribing so far. At first, I thought it was going to be easier to use the dictation software (Dragon) and then clean up the transcript. But after trying this for a few participants, I found it was more time-efficient to just listen to a slowed playback and type (using NCH dictation software and hotkeys) because creating the sense of dialogue on paper took more typing and editing time. Either way, it still seems to be taking roughly one hour to transcribe five minutes of interview data.

2014/3/24

While I am transcribing, I have been feeling the need to include all my yeahs, but I am mostly not using yeah to mean I agree with what the participant is saying. I am mostly using it to mean yeah I am listening to you. This should be borne in mind when trying to interpret my immediate reactions to what participants say. It is part of my ethnographic listening strategy to try and keep them talking and to not overtly disagree too often as this would bring the focus more strongly back on me and my opinions. However, in some of my interviews, some of my longer interjections were just to give the participant some time to drink their coffee, regroup, take a breather, etc.

2014/4/4

While transcribing, there have definitely been times where I have felt a pull to correct some grammar or some internal logic inconsistency (not just for the non-native speakers, mind). I have really tried to avoid this urge. Instead my solution has been to immediately follow the passage in question with a note explaining what I thought the participant meant usually phrasing it as a slip of the tongue.

2014/4/9

Today I decided my analytic strategy for data analysis. I will operationalize thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006). I had a really good training in NVivo today from qdatraining.eu and the trainer emphasized the importance of making your strategy explicit in the methodology so that the reader can better evaluate your findings.

2014/4/16

Listening back on all these interviews again, I think there are some clear examples in my transcripts of evidence showing that my participants could not remember stuff very clearly at the beginning but do remember much more by the end (an advantage of the ethnographic interview methodology). For instance, Participant 24 asks himself at the beginning of his transcript 'what happened then?' but goes on to talk in great detail. Another example is Participant 15 saying he received no information from his university at the start but then telling of some very useful face-to-face counselling from his university in great detail at the very end. I have also really been struck by the importance of very detailed listening in transcribing. For example, in Participant 27's interview when at first I thought he said "It's not my interest", but on repeated listening, I realized he was saying, "It's not in my interests" which changed the meaning or the intention of his communication considerably.

2014/4/17

I think knowing that the participant will be reading and signing off on my transcripts is making me consider elements I perhaps would not have considered. For example, I have been thinking about how to describe someone crying. I do not want to offend the participant or make them think that I was judging them or highlighting what might be perceived as weakness by some readers. I decided to try the euphemism of shedding tears, regaining composure, collecting himself, etc.

2014/5/8

Today was great - I attended an ethnography workshop from Martyn Hammersley. Along with validating some of the methodological choices I have made so far in this project, his talk verified that thematic analysis was a common approach to analysis in ethnography, even going so far as to run through an example analytical situation in the workshop. I now feel totally convinced that this is the right analytical approach for me and it builds on my decision to use it based on it being popular in case study too.

2014/5/20

I had a big realisation today when thinking about how I've been borrowing from disaster studies and communication studies and various other disciplines, but what I have to remember is that I am trying to get a PhD in translation studies. I have to remember that I am just borrowing debates and literature and concepts from them and I will have to defend these choices, but I am still trying to get contribute to conversations in translation studies. That's why I think a really important decision for me will be deciding the theoretical framework I end up using to tie my whole thesis together because I think this is where I can reorient my argument back onto the things that interest scholars of translation.

2014/6/3

Today I learned (by trial and error, unfortunately) that it is not possible to use more than one classification for the attributes you want to apply to your case nodes in Nvivo. I thought I could organize my attributes under a few headings, but this meant that each time I updated one of the new classifications, anything I entered for a previous classification returned to the default unassigned. It did not take too much time to merge all the attributes under one classification - the time loss really came in manually re-entering all the attribute values. But at least I was able to figure out how to order the attributes so that they followed the same order as my hard-copy profile data sheets. It was better to learn this lesson now while I am still only in Phase 2 of the formal thematic analysis project. One thing that this is reinforcing about the analysis process for me is how long everything takes with 28 participants and with interview data that are so long. One slip makes a lot of extra processing time. I have started formally coding in NVivo my list of initial codes identified in Phase 1 (re-reading and familiarization). As it is not possible to keep many codes in one's head at one time, I have decided to just do about 6 or 7 codes at a time and work my

way through the list of candidate codes in progressive cycles. This number of 7 is justified by the fact that most adults can store between 5 and 9 items in their short-term memory. This idea was put forward by Miller [Miller, G. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. *The psychological review*, 63(2), 81-97.] and he called it the magic number 7.

2014/6/5

What seems to be a trend so far is that 'Information gathering negative' is the node with the most entries (by quite a big margin). I am concerned that this might reveal I am in some way biased towards looking for a finding like this, but I am really just trying to use only the rule-for-inclusion that I established in as systematic and consistent a way as possible, so I really do think that this represents the fact that participants may have talked more than anything else about the negative aspects of gathering information to gain situational awareness.

2014/6/7

Today, I found myself wanting to further refine or improve the codes I had made on June 4 above. As I have been going along coding the transcripts, I have tried to be really rigorous about dividing instances to try to improve situational awareness (what I have termed information gathering) from all other instances of communicating mentioned in the interviews. This has been going well. But what I found myself struggling with was being consistent in whether I thought these instances were having a negative, positive or neutral effect. For this reason, I sharpened up my inclusion rules to say that the act of communicating or information gathering was connected with a negative or positive experience (either explicit or implicit) rather than saying it led to a positive impact on their experience of the disaster. I think this rule is more reasonable and more what I am trying to capture. (I wrote a memo in NVivo detailing the change so that I have a record for how my nodes developed over time.) Sharpening the rule in this way led me to want to create two new subnodes for all six of the communicating and information gathering nodes in Cycle 2. Specifically, I want to break the coded data down into nodes for 'how the act was carried out' and 'why it was positive or negative' e.g. lack of power, lack of connectivity, or better response to disaster. By just doing this, I think by Cycle 2 I should be able to show a very detailed and useful picture for how my participants gathered information and communicated in the disaster going a long way to answering two of my research questions and allowing me to usefully explain the context of my case in the context chapter that I am due to write over the summer.

2014/6/10

Today I think I came to a conclusion about how I am differentiating between communicating and information gathering. I have developed a typology of disaster communication (simplified from the one I developed for IAMCR and based on the primary data I have gathered) and it now includes five communicative functions: warning about the disaster; instructing people how to respond; developing situational awareness of the disaster; administering the disaster; supporting others through the disaster. So basically, if someone is communicating in order to develop situational awareness of the disaster, I am terming that 'information gathering'. All other communicative acts, I am terming 'communicating'. Also, counting the instances of "codable moments" (Boyatzis 1998: 3) has been tricky. I have basically tried to only count it as one codable moment if it is not interrupted by a long digression or by a significant interjection by me. Thus repeated instances of talking about the same relevant topic only interrupted by minor digressions or interventions are being counted as one moment. I am doing this to try and avoid unnecessary repetition and get more of an overall feel for the level of talk people devoted to codable topics (i.e. this should help me see if they kept returning to one topic throughout the interview).



2014/7/3

After attending the training school on ethics last week, I am starting to wonder if ethics is starting to appear as something that will be a theme in my work. Or more so, is ethics the beginning of an answer to my final research question - why is any of this translation stuff in a disaster important. Does translation have a part to play in a globalizing and urbanizing world to help to ensure ethics and justice in times of disaster? So some of the things I need to start thinking about are could ethics be the thread that ties my theme chapters together seeing as ethics comes out so strongly in anthropology? Can translation help to bring justice to disaster-affected populations?

2014/7/4

I think the act of coding now about linguistic and cultural barriers and mediation is starting to clear up one thing for me. In my first impressions after the interviews, I had been saying that culture came across very strongly. But what I think I can say now with more confidence is that cultural barriers came up frequently in participant accounts, but that cultural mediation did not. In other words, this may have been a gap that was not filled for participants. On the other hand, linguistic barriers came up even more frequently, but so too did instances of linguistic mediation. So does this perhaps point to a need for some suggestions needed on how to culturally mediate a disaster for people in Japan?

2014/7/7

One thing I am realising that I will have to emphasise about the fly-jin phenomenon is that it was foreigners calling other foreigners fly-jin, not only Japanese calling foreigners this derogatory name. This intra-group hostility is an important feature and underlines my argument in my thesis that all foreigners cannot usefully be lumped together or treated as one homogenous group when trying to prevent, prepare, respond to and recover from disasters. I also had some difficulty today with the way I have broken linguistic and cultural mediation into providing and receiving. I am not sure this differentiation is justified and I may need to get rid of it and make just two codes instead of four. But for now, I have tried to solve the problem by refining the rules for inclusion to show where the point of view is focused (on receiver or on provider?).

2014/7/8

I have been thinking about the start and end of the disaster for my participants a lot. One thing that strikes me now is that perhaps one of the lessons learned from the disaster that I can give to others is to follow your instinct to prepare when a significant (but not devastating) earthquake or natural hazard occurs. Many participants talked about how the earthquake two days before made them think about disaster preparedness but how they did not act on it and wish now that they had.

2014/7/13

Now that I have completed a more significant amount of coding, I am starting to see the value of the coding density bar in NVivo. (Basically it is like looking at all the highlighted marks you might put at the side of a hardcopy page - more marks means more coding around certain passages.) By looking at the passages that are very densely coded, I will be able to see what codes overlap and explore potential relationships between codes. I have made a note to myself to go through all these coding densities systematically when I finish Phase 4 of coding.

2014/7/14

When talking about accuracy being a problem, overwhelmingly this seems to be related for foreign mass media bringing out this whole sensationalism and panic-mongering thing again and the role of translation in this whole inaccurate propagation of information that foreign residents were exposed to. Perhaps I could call on the literature from Christina Schaeffner and Luc van Doorslaer to discuss this in the thesis.

2014/8/19

It seems too that the panic fallacy theory in disaster studies is really being borne out in my data and there is a strong sense that panic was absent when it might have been expected especially among the Japanese but also among the foreigners.

2014/8/21

I realised today that, when I have completed all of the Phase 3 or 4 coding, I must look at all the codes and really ask myself again, "Which of these codes really help me to answer my research questions?" (Maybe with an emphasis on including the codes originating with the participants.) This will help me to show that I was following the Braun and Clarke idea of starting with participant-led coding. I think I also need to be careful when I am deciding what codes to focus on to remember that I am trying to answer questions ultimately about translation and its importance and this could mean a focus on different codes than if I was trying to talk about the importance of learning Japanese yourself as a foreigner in Japan. Another point is that I must recognise that memory is coming up as being frequently mentioned in the interviews. I can look at the various reasons why memory is weak or memory is strong in the hope that this will show that the weak occasions are for insignificant details but the strong occasions are for important data.

2014/8/22

I may need to write about the different customs and behaviours of different embassies - Chinese not contacting citizens directly but relying on word-of-mouth to spread information, US or Ireland driving up into zone, Australia and New Zealand running town hall meetings etc. I have also been thinking about how to show the depth of my findings in the data. Maybe I can show that the final themes I chose came up again and again when I looked at the data from several different directions or maybe I can use some graphs or charts.

2014/9/5

As I am coding, I am reading Pym (2012) On Translator Ethics. Basically his whole book is trying to use ethics as a way to explore the question 'Why translate?' (as opposed to the often-asked 'How to translate?') The book is making me think about some very interesting ideas which I may try to apply to my thesis. For example, the idea of what is actually a translation (Pym 2012: 74-75) versus pseudo-originals (e.g. much news content) could be very useful in dealing with the information my participants received. Another good point made by Pym (2012: 44) is about the three main purposes for ethics in Western thought: survival of the society or institution concerned; general happiness; recognition of the right of each individual to participate in social life. So it is about more than just right and wrong. And maybe the third category about participating in social life is where I could link ethics to my topic.

2014/9/6

I may have to rethink my claim in some of my memos (e.g. the presentation to Jay) that foreigners were more independent in their responses. Looking at the data now after coding there is a strong sense that many foreigners did take the independent path, but that work and other communities of foreigners did provide organised and communal response strategies for many of my participants, and for most it was more like a mixture of some initial communal and organised response followed by a more independent and ad-hoc strategy. On another topic, I have been thinking about, escaping and the desire to get out of a building (even among people who know this is not the safest strategy in a Japanese context) has come across very strongly in the data - especially in the node 'Focus in response or recovery'. This may also end up being a lesson learned that will need to be communicated to official responders.

2014/9/9

I am really starting to think that the benefits of translation versus polyglotism is an issue that I am going to have to deal with in my thesis. I may have to say that in X context or for X type of communication, translation is preferable, but in Y context or for Y type of communication, polyglotism is preferable. For instance, it may be that for interacting with Japanese people as a volunteer or as a fellow victim, showing empathy, etc., polyglotism may be better. It is also interesting to me how the ideas of the importance of preparation and of empowering foreigners to support others came across strongly in the 'Advice and lessons learned' nodes. I think I can show that translation can help to achieve these aims, link this to an ethics of translation, and perhaps suggest concrete ways to go about implementing such aims. The benefits of social media also came across surprisingly strongly considering I did not try to focus on them in interviews and often actively spoke about how I had mixed feelings on them. In concrete disaster studies terms, 'stay inside' is probably the main learning point which I can contrast interestingly with the many accounts of wanting to get out. This is where cultural mediation comes in and may be the main cultural mediation point that I will make in the thesis.

2014/9/10

Another interesting quote from Pym (2012: 86) is about trust. Talking about professional translators: 'Increasingly, they will have to realize that what they sell is their seal of approval, their trustworthiness, their responsibility.' Seeing as trustworthiness of information came up as such a category for me in my data, perhaps this is another way of answering my final question and arguing for the importance of translation.

2014/9/13

I am noticing a real tension between foreigners not being all the same and foreigners being a community. I think it is becoming clear that participants could see (and refer) to a 'foreign community' but still recognise that there were great differences in views on and reactions to the disaster within that 'community'. So I think I am going to be careful to say that referring to foreign nationals resident in Japan does not preclude members of that community from holding very different opinions or having very different experiences.

(The gap between entries here corresponds to the period where I was busy teaching, going to UCL and IPCITI, and writing up my context and translation chapters.)

2014/11/28

While I was reading some secondary sources today, I realised that I need to think about the idea of trade-offs and priorities with respect to translation and the phases of the disaster and the need - therefore - for linguistic and cultural issues to be integrated into an overall disaster management policy. This idea was inspired by reading the following (from [http://dwl.gov-online.go.jp/video/cao/dl/public\\_html/gov/pdf/hlj/20110501/28-29.pdf](http://dwl.gov-online.go.jp/video/cao/dl/public_html/gov/pdf/hlj/20110501/28-29.pdf)): During the emergency in Phase 1, the policy objectives are very clear: saving lives and assisting survivors are more important than anything else. There's no need to worry about trade-offs with other policy objectives. However, in Phase 2, policy objectives must be prioritized, considering trade-offs. There becomes a demand for a policy that is both coherent and economically rational. Particularly difficult problems are the following points to consider.

2014/11/30

Now that I am through a few more rounds of analysis, I think the whole thesis is coming down to the category of trust. This is a category that has appeared time and again from lots of different perspectives and across a lot of different codes. For example:

- how translators and translation in disasters is concerned with the establishment of trust and the provision of trustworthy information;

- how a lack of trustworthy information may have led to sensationalism and rumour, and the framing of the disaster in different ways;
- how foreign people fell back on communities of friends and other foreigners over other services probably because of the bonds of trust;
- how you don't trust your own Japanese abilities under the stress of a disaster and want information confirmed;
- how trust relates to the ethics of translation and what is right and wrong and good and bad in times of disaster;
- even how, in a natural disaster, you have lost trust in the environment (built and natural) around you;
- and even how trust was a category for me in my methodology in getting the participants to trust me, having to establish trust quickly, and finding ways not to lose that trust as the process went on.

So maybe I need to think about some theory of trust in translation (is there one?) or create one? For instance, I know of Abdallah, K. & Koskinen, K. (2007) *Managing Trust: Translating and the Network Economy*. *Meta* 52(4): 673-687 and Fionnuala's thesis with Dorothy trust came out as a major theme.

2014/12/3

Today I just noticed that there would seem to have been a slight preference among participants for the Translation work done by Japanese nationals. I am a bit surprised by this. This goes somewhat against what I have been arguing up to now in various seminars, conferences, etc. It would seem that it was not just foreigners helping foreigners as I had thought. This realisation came to me looking at a Table cross-referencing relationships in the disaster with linguistic and cultural mediation. I may need to mention this in the viva as some idea which changed and that this was as a result of the Braun and Clarke methodology of multiple phases and coming at the data from multiple directions.

2014/12/15

I am now really trying to hone in on trust as a concept. I am reading several works to get a sense of what models, concepts, categories, relationships, etc. are already out there. One thing I need to be clear on is definitely going to be whether I am writing a chapter about what trust tells us about translation, what translation tells us about trust, or both. From my early reading so far, it seems that the first step in the chapter will need to be to show that there was uncertainty and vulnerability among foreign residents and to show how they were uncertain and vulnerable. Can I make the argument that a translator was '...a kind of trust entrepreneur who actively shapes context in a trust-enhancing manner?' (Möllering 2006: 75)

2014/12/16

A big part of trust seems to come down to not fully knowing or controlling others' actions or intentions: 'The infant's anxiety can be generalized to the problem of ignorance that actors face in any social encounters with others whose actions and intentions they cannot fully know or control (Giddens, 1991). Generally, trust presumes a leap to commitment, a quality of faith which is irreducible' (p. 19)' (Möllering 2006: 117). How does this relate to my study? If I do use a heuristic, I would be aiming more for normative not predictive insight - using my empirical study to come to some conclusions that enable me to give some advice to my audience - not simply grasp the empirical reality but shape it by making a case for things that should be done or changes that ought to come about. (See Möllering 2006: 133 for more on this idea of normative insight.)

2014/12/17

I am reading more and more about trust to see if it will help me with my final research question. 'On the contrary, trust is needed precisely because all guarantees are incomplete. Guarantees are useless unless they lead to a trusted source, and a regress of guarantees is

no better for being longer unless it ends in a trusted source. So trust cannot presuppose or require a watertight guarantee of others' performance, and cannot rationally be withheld just because we lack guarantees. Where we have guarantees or proofs, we don't need to trust. Trust is redundant' (O'Neill 2002 Lecture 1). The following could be a good quote: 'How can we avoid the news as represented or (mis)represented, if we have no other sources?' (O'Neill 2002 Lecture 1). 'Our ambition is not to place trust blindly, as small children do, but with good judgement. In judging whether to place our trust in others' words or undertakings, or to refuse that trust, we need information and we need the means to judge that information. To place trust reasonably we need to discover not only which claims or undertakings we are invited to trust, but what we might reasonably think about them. Reasonably placed trust requires not only information about the proposals or undertakings that others put forward, but also information about those who put them forward' (O'Neill 2002 Lecture 4). 'We place and refuse trust not because we have torrents of information (more is not always better), but because we can trace specific bits of information and specific undertakings to particular sources on whose veracity and reliability we can run some checks' (O'Neill 2002 Lecture 4).

2014/12/18

I need to make very clear that I am restricting myself to looking at how trust and translation interacted in relation to how foreign residents communicated and gathered information only - that I am not looking at how trust impacted on their other actions in the disaster because that would be beyond the scope of the thesis.

2015/1/6

Trust is acknowledged in the literature as being terminologically and conceptually slippery. What are the concepts that I need to differentiate trust from? I must list them in my thesis and show how trust has been operationalised by me. For now, it seems to be concepts like cooperation, confidence, belief, faith.'

2015/1/8

I liked this definition of trust from (Rousseau et al. 1998: 395) 'Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another.' They also emphasise that trust is often viewed as stable or static in theory but empirical observation suggests that it is a dynamic phenomenon. I must remember that my theorising should not be attempting to establish causal relations as my methodology is not suited to such claims. Rather I should be using theory for different purposes - perhaps descriptive or normative. I think, whatever happens, the angle I will have to take in my analysis is the role that information (and therefore translation) plays in the whole trust concept. Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) have a really good lit review of the trust literature and a very interesting but complex model. Most importantly, their model is holistic and they seem to be claiming some sort of universality – it's not all about economics, or game theory.

2015/1/9

I had an a-ha! moment in the shower. I have been reading a lot of theory on trust recently and have been struggling to see how any of it is going to help me show that translation was important in the disaster. But then, having come across the Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010) model yesterday, it suddenly seemed clear that I should at least look through all my primary and secondary data to empirically test their model. When I have these, I will at least be able to say whether their model is instructive or not. Furthermore, I suspect that doing this will allow me to look for intersections between these incidences and instances of Translation. In doing so, I hope I will be able to show that Translation was an important factor in trust or that its absence led to a lack of trust - perhaps the answer to my final question will be something along the lines of Translation was important because it was a factor that correlated with the presence/absence of trust.

2015/1/12

Today, I thought some more about the possible structure of a trust chapter - what I would need to write about (in addition to adding trust to my literature review). By setting out to examine the phenomenon of translation in this thesis, I have found that issues of trust have correlated with this phenomenon in different ways (in relation to: the provision of trustworthy information and establishment of trust in Translators; to sensationalism and rumour; to falling back on bonds of community; to language abilities; to ethics; to the natural and built environment; to my methodology). However, according to the trust theory outlined in the literature review chapter, terminological and conceptual confusion is rife. So then, the first step in the chapter would be to show what I do have in the thesis so far - instances of reliance, confidence, belief, etc. Then the next step would be to show where in my data I can confidently say that trust was present as per Castelfranchi and Falcone (2010). By using this model as a lens to examine my data, I should then be able to clearly pinpoint where, how and why translation and trust intersect in my data. And all of this should go to be answer to the research question why translation was important. I have spent most of the last couple of days just going through my data and applying the model. I think I have been able to find ample instances of the model in my data so far.

2015/1/28

I have thought some more about how I want to structure the chapter and how I want to handle the ethics, news translation, and other important stuff. I take the view that the main function of a thesis is to attempt to explain something academically interesting and worthwhile and thus to contribute to academic knowledge and to the conversations going on in academia. In order to do this, I feel it is important to convince the reader of the explanation that you think is most plausible and most compelling and, by corollary, you should consider but in way refute other rival explanations. This is what I intend to do in this chapter, and I will show that ethics, news translation, and translation ecology are three rival explanations for the importance of Translation in the 2011 disaster and other disaster contexts that I will acknowledge but refute in order to focus my explanation on trust as a way to see the importance of Translation.

***APPENDIX J: Japanese source texts referred to in Section 4.5.5***

*Source text referred to in Section 4.5.5.1 of initial TV warning on NHK*

(電子音) 緊急地震速報です 強い揺れに警戒してください。  
(電子音) 緊急地震速報です 強い揺れに警戒してください。

緊急地震速報です。次の区域では強い揺れに警戒してください。宮城県 岩手県 福島県 秋田県 山形県です。揺れが来るまではわずかな時間しかありません。怪我をしないように自分の身の安全を守ってください。倒れやすい家具などからは離れてください。また、上から落ちてくるものに気をつけてください。緊急地震速報が出ました。宮城県 岩手県 福島県 秋田県 山形県です。怪我をしないように身の安全を確保してください。倒れやすい家具などからは離れてください。今、この国会でも揺れを感じています。先ほど・・・国会の中でも揺れが続いています。揺れが始まってから10秒以上経過しました 次第に...

(チャイム音と画面の切り替わり)  
国会中継の途中ですが、地震津波関連の情報をお伝えします。今、東京のスタジオも揺れています。東京のスタジオも揺れています。緊急地震速報が出ました。宮城県 岩手県 福島県 秋田県 山形県に緊急地震速報です。また今東京渋谷のスタジオも揺れを感じています。東京渋谷のスタジオも揺れています。

(背後で 揺れてます！ の声)  
強い揺れを観測した地域の皆さんにお伝えします。落ち着いて行動してください。揺れが収まってから火の始末をしてください。

(背後で 揺れてるよ！ の声)  
まず上から落ちてくるもの、倒れてくるものから身を守ってください。

(背後で 揺れてるよ！ の声)  
現在、東京渋谷のスタジオが大きく揺れています。東京渋谷のスタジオが大きく揺れています。

(背後で 揺れてるよ凄い！ の声)  
建物の倒壊や山崩れ、崖崩れの恐れがあります。

(背後で 揺れてるから！ の声)  
上から落ちてくるもの、倒れてくるものから身を守ってください。現在、東京渋谷のスタジオが非常に大きく揺れています。東京の渋谷のスタジオが大きく揺れています。

(背後で 揺れてるよ！東京撮って！ の声)  
上から落ちてくるもの、倒れてくるものから身を守ってください。揺れがおさまるまでしばらく安全な場所に居てください。

(背後で 東京撮ってよ！ の声)  
揺れがおさまってから火の始末をしてください。



(背後で 東京揺れてる！ の声)

NHK では新しい情報が入り次第お伝えします。テレビやラジオのスイッチを切らないでください。午後 2 時 46 分ごろ東北地方で強い地震がありました。震度 7 が宮城県北部です。震度 7 が宮城県北部。

(背後で 震度 7 震度 7 だって の声)

また、震度 5 弱が山形県、震度 6 強が宮城県中部、福島県中通り 福島県浜通り、茨城県北部、震度 6 弱が岩手県沿岸南部、岩手県内陸北部、岩手県内陸南部 宮城県南部などとなっています。

(背後で 変われ！変えろ！ の声)

(仙台駅の映像と車のわずかな防犯クラクション音)

(津波情報の明滅する日本地図への切り替わり)

*Source text referred to in Section 4.5.5.2 of Cabinet Office website*

3 月 (がつ) 1 1 日 (にち) (金) (きん) に、東北地方 (とうほくちほう) を中心 (ちゅうしん) に大 (おお) きな地震 (じしん) がありました。地震 (じしん) についての公式 (こうしき) の情報 (じょうほう) は、以下 (いか) のホームページ (ほーむぺーじ) で見 (み) ることができます。正 (ただ) しい情報 (じょうほう) に基 (もと) づいて、落 (お) ち着 (つ) いて行動 (こうどう) をしてください。

チェーンメールにご注意を

東日本大震災に関連して、チェーンメール、電子掲示板、ミニブログなどで、誤った情報が流れています。報道や行政機関のウェブサイト等の信頼できる情報源で真偽を確かめ、これらのチェーンメール等に惑わされないようにしましょう。

また、チェーンメールを転送することは、いたずらに不安感をあおることにつながります。チェーンメールを受け取った時は、すみやかに削除して転送を止めてください。

節電へのご協力をお願い

今回の地震によって、東京電力及び東北電力管内の電力供給設備に大きな被害が出ています。

電気の使用に当たっては、極力節電いただきますよう、皆様のご協力をお願いいたします。

*Source text referred to in Section 4.5.5.4 of Sendai City pamphlet*

消防局防災安全部防災安全課  
(仙台市災害対策本部事務局内)  
(代表) 022-261-1111

財政局税務部資産税課  
(直通) 022-214-8144

「り災証明書」・「り災届出証明書」の申請を受け付けます

平成23年4月1日

東北地方太平洋沖地震とそれに伴う津波により、住居等が被害を受けた方で、各種支援制度を利用するために「り災証明書」・「り災届出証明書」が必要な方の申請を受け付けます。

「り災証明書」・「り災届出証明書」について

1. 「り災証明書」は、建物の被害程度を証明するもので、被害状況の調査（建物被害認定調査）が必要となります。この調査結果に基づき被害程度の認定ができたものから、「り災証明書」を順次発行します。
2. 「り災届出証明書」は、被害の届出がなされたことを証明するもので、建物に限らず、被害を受けた動産なども対象となります。「り災届出証明書」は申請受付の際にその場で発行します。

申請手続き

申請に必要なもの

- 官公署発行の写真付の身分証明書（運転免許証、パスポート、住民基本台帳カードなど）  
※震災により、ご用意できない場合はご相談ください。
- 被害状況がわかる写真（可能な場合）
- 委任状（ご本人、同居親族等以外の方が申請される場合）

申請受付

場所 【建物・動産被害】 各区役所・総合支所固定資産税担当課  
本庁舎 8 階「被災者支援相談窓口」

【火災による被害】 各消防署

時間 各区役所・総合支所、各消防署 午前8時半～午後5時  
本庁舎8階「被災者支援相談窓口」 午前9時～午後4時半

（「仙台市政だより 4月号」では平日のみと記載しておりますが、各申請受付場所ともに、当分の間は土曜・日曜・祝日も受け付けます。）

お願い

- 「り災証明書」発行のための建物被害認定調査を順次実施していますが、今回の地震、津波による被害が甚大であることから、申請から発行までに時間がかかる見込みです。ご理解を賜りますようお願いいたします。

- 調査員が被害調査に伺う前に建物の修繕等をされる場合には、後日でも被害の内容を確認できるように、必ず修繕前の被害状況を撮影した写真と工事の見積書や明細書等を保管いただくよう、お願い申し上げます。
- 「り災届出証明書」でも各種支援制度が受けられる場合があります。各支援機関等にご確認のうえ、ご活用ください。

***APPENDIX K: Translated transcripts of reports referred to in Section  
5.4.2***

*NHK report on Chinese national who experienced the 2011 disaster in Fukushima*

The report can be viewed here:

[http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010428\\_00000](http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010428_00000)

Anonymised source text:

×××：「地震、地震」と大きい声が出て、歩いて外に行くのが難しかった。揺れて歩けなかった。大きい物が、コロンコロンと落ちてきて怖かった。急いで外に逃げました。

NA：福島県×××市で暮らす中国出身の×××さん。日本語がよくわからないため、地震や原発事故の状況を把握できませんでした。あの日、×××さんは自宅近くのスーパーで買い物をしている時、大きな揺れに襲われます。

×××：びっくりでした。駐車場に行ったら、車が揺れていて、もっと怖かった。

NA：地震の後、最も困ったことは、やはり言葉でした。当時は、今よりも日本語を話すことが苦手で、スーパーでの避難指示もわかりませんでした。

×××：緊張して（避難指示が）あまり聞こえない。地震があったのがわかるだけで、他のことは何もわからなかった。

NA：中国語が堪能な夫に、ふだんは頼りきっていた×××さん。しかし、市役所に勤める夫は、震災の対応で家に戻ってくることができず、2人の子どもと生活しなければなりませんでした。

×××：子どもは、ママが外国人なので、パパと一緒に外出すると安心します。パパと一緒に行かないと、子どもは、ママと一緒に行かないです。

NA：さらに×××さんを困惑させたのが、原発事故の情報です。テレビを見ても、何が起きているのか、わかりませんでした。

×××：“シーベルト”の意味は、当時は全然わからなかった。どのくらい危険か、わからなかった。

NA：電子辞書を頼りに何とか理解しようとします。しかし、震災によるストレスで、急に視力が落ち、辞書や新聞を読むことが難しくなりました。

×××：外国人は、自分の国ではないので、もっとストレスがたまります。

NA：そうした中で×××さんを支えたのは、同じ中国出身の友人、×××さんです。×××さんは日本語が堪能で、震災の後、×××さんにさまざまな情報を伝えました。

×××：原発でわからないことは友だちに相談した。

×××：彼女に電話して、「一緒に避難しますか」って。「（原発から）煙が出ているから、すごく危ない状態だよ」って。

×××：いろいろ教えてもらったことは、少しわかりましたので、一緒にいると安心します。

NA：こうした経験を今後の災害に生かそうという取り組みを始めたのが、福島県国際交流協会です。外国出身住民100人のアンケートをとり、証言集をまとめました。

NA：（文面）爆発の意味がわからなかった。みんな忙しくて、誰も詳しいことを教えてくれなかった。

×××専務理事：このSOSカードというものを作りました。

NA：震災前は、外国人の立場に立った視点が足りなかったと、独自につくったのが、この“SOSカード”です。災害が発生した時に、日本語が苦手な外国人が、カードに表示されている絵を指し示すことで、状況を把握できるようになっています。

×××：日本は、いつも小さい地震がたくさんありますので、日本語が少ししかわからない外国人を助けてほしいです。

Target text (translated by the researcher):

Chinese national: I heard someone shout, ‘Earthquake, earthquake!’ I was walking, and it was difficult to get outside. It was shaking, so I couldn’t walk. I was afraid because large objects were falling down around me. I rushed outside.

Narrator: This is ×××, from China living in ××× city in Fukushima Prefecture. She couldn’t understand what was going on during the earthquake or nuclear disaster because of her lack of Japanese ability. On the day of the earthquake, a violent tremor hit while she was doing some shopping in a supermarket near her house.

Chinese national: It gave me a fright. When I went to the car park, the cars were shaking and I got more scared.

Narrator: The biggest problem she faced after the earthquake was language. At the time, her level of Japanese was lower than it is now, so she couldn’t even understand the evacuation instructions being given at the supermarket.

Chinese national: I’m shaken, so I can’t really hear (the evacuation instructions). All I know is that there has been an earthquake. The rest, I didn’t understand at all.

Narrator: Mrs ××× would usually have asked her husband, who is fluent in Chinese, but he works at City Hall and had to help with the disaster response, so it was just her and her two children at home.

Chinese national: The kids feel better, because mum is a foreigner, going outside if their dad is with them. If their dad is not there, they don’t go outside with me.

Narrator: What confused Mrs ××× even more was the information about the nuclear accident, and she didn’t understand what was going on, even by watching TV.

Chinese national: What does ‘sievert’ mean? At the time, I had absolutely no idea. How dangerous was it? I didn’t know.

Narrator: She struggles to understand using an electronic dictionary. However, under the stress of the disaster, her eyesight suddenly worsened and reading a dictionary or newspaper became difficult.

Chinese national: Foreigners are, because it’s not their country, under more stress.

Narrator: It was a friend, also from China, who supported Mrs ××× through all this. This friend is fluent in Japanese and provided Mrs ××× with a variety of information after the disaster struck.

Chinese national: I asked my friend’s advice about the nuclear stuff I didn’t understand.

Chinese national’s friend: I called her on the phone and said, “Will we evacuate together? “There’s smoke coming out (of the reactor) so it’s a really dangerous situation,” I said.

Chinese national: She explained all sorts of things to me, and it helped me understand a bit better, so I feel better if she is there.

Narrator: One group that has started to learn lessons for future disasters from experiences such as these is the Fukushima International Association (FIA). They surveyed 100 foreign residents and collected their testimony.

[Showing the testimony document onscreen] “I didn’t understand what the explosion meant.” “Everyone was busy so nobody had time to explain in detail.”

FIA representative: We produced this SOS Card.

Narrator: This ‘SOS Card’ was developed independently by the association before the disaster at a time when they had not yet a sufficient number of foreign viewpoints. When a disaster occurs, foreigners with low Japanese ability can point to the the pictures on the card to come to some understanding of the situation.

Chinese national: Japan always has a lot of small earthquakes, so I want the foreigners who can only speak a little Japanese to get help.

*NHK report on US national who experienced the 2011 disaster in Miyagi*

The report can be viewed here:

[http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010286\\_00000](http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010286_00000)

Anonymised source text:

××× : こんな悲惨な光景をこれまで見たことがなかった。津波のせいで、こうなったとは、とても信じられなかった。地震というものを知らなかった。あの大地震が初めての経験だった。

NA : 宮城県×××市の小中学校で、英語を教えている×××さん。来日して 1 か月半、日本語も×××市のこともよくわからないときに震災に襲われました。

×××さんは、市内の自宅から×××島にある小中学校に船で通っています。あの日、小学校の職員室で授業の準備をしていた時、突然、大きな揺れに襲われました。

×××：激しい揺れが何度も襲ってきて、座っていられなかった。本当にぞっとしました。怖かったんです。

NA：×××さんは、アメリカの×××州出身。大きな地震とは縁がなく、津波の知識也没有ありません。島から出ることができなくなった×××さん。小学校に隣接する中学校の職員室で、避難生活をするようになります。

×××：一体何がどうなってしまったのか、状況を把握しようと思いました。同時に、みんなが話していることを、わからないながらも懸命に聞き取って、みんなが今、何を考えているのか、必要としているものは何かなど、そんなことを懸命に知ろうとした。でも、日本語がよくわからないので、状況と言葉を同時に理解するのは難しかった。コミュニケーションをとるのが大変なときもあった。途方に暮れてしまいました。

NA：×××さんが、当時の気持ちをつづった日記です。震災から2日目。×××さんは、学校の中に引きこもっていました。3日目。海の方へ向かいます。津波が、どんなものなのかを知りたいと思ったからです。そこで見たのは、想像を超える光景でした。

×××：こんな悲惨な光景をこれまで見たことがなかった。津波のせいで、こうなったとは、とても信じられなかった。とてもむなしい気持ちになりました。たくさんの建物が消えてしまい、元に戻らないと思うとむなしくなった。

NA：4日目。ようやく心に余裕ができ、教え子たちが避難している体育館に向かいました。体育館に入ったとたん、子どもたちが駆け寄ってきます。子どもたちは口々に「英語を教えてほしい」と×××さんに言いました。×××さんは、子どもたちの好きな英語の本を読んで聞かせます。

×××：こんな状況の中で、子どもたちに英語を教えるとは驚きでした。でもそのことが、英語を教えるという、自分の仕事への自覚を目覚めさせてくれた。私は、英語を教えるために、ここにやって来ました。こんな状況の中でも教えることができ、うれしかった。

NA：5日目。ようやく船に乗れることになり、×××さんは島を離れ自宅に戻ります。海に近いアパートの部屋の中は、津波に襲われて、ひどい状況でした。

×××：アパートは、海からは少しは離れていたのですが大丈夫だろうと思っていたでも被災していた。以前のままだったらと思うが。

NA：その後、5か月間、避難所や知り合いの家などで過ごしました。震災をきっかけに、多くの外国人が日本を離れました。しかし、×××さんは、日本に残り続けることを決めました。それは、大勢の人たちに支えられる中で、自然と出てきた答えでした。

×××：「×××、君の分だよ」と言って、物資が詰まった6つの段ボール箱をくれました。一度は断ったのですが「たくさんあるから使って」と言われました。



箱には「友だちから」「×××のです」と書いてあって、本当にうれしかった。私は本当に幸運でした。もし、みんながいなくて一人だったら、寂しくてつらくて、震災でこころがくじけて、今の自分ではいられなかった。みんながくれた優しさを、みんなにお返しできればと思う。

Target text (narrations translated by the researcher, US national's comments transcribed directly from the broadcast report)

US national: My first time just seeing with my own eyes, and I just can't believe that a tsunami is capable of doing all this. I haven't really felt earthquakes before, so this was my first real experience with one.

Narrator: This is ×××, who teaches English in the elementary and middle schools of [one of the cities worst-affected by the disaster] in Miyagi Prefecture. The earthquake struck when he had only been in Japan a month-and-a-half and when he knew little Japanese and little about the city he had moved to. ××× commutes by ferry from his home in the city to the school on [a nearby island]. On the day of the earthquake, he was in his classroom in the elementary school preparing for lessons when suddenly an extremely violent tremor hit.

US national: The shaking was very violent, lots and lots of moving really, and I couldn't really sit still very well, and just kind of, like, really frightening.

Narrator: ××× is from [a Midwestern state of the US] so he was unfamiliar with severe earthquakes and had no idea about tsunamis. Stranded on the island by the disaster, he took refuge in the teachers' room of the adjoining middle school.

US national: I am trying to understand the situation as it's unfolding, as it's going on, and, at the same time, I am trying to listen to the language to be able to understand what it is they're thinking and what it is that they need or don't need, etc. And it's difficult because you are trying to balance, in a sense, two things really: the situation and also the language. And with less language, it's hard for me to be able to communicate sometimes - just confused really.

Narrator: This is the diary where ××× kept a record of his feelings at the time. Day 2 of the disaster. He still hasn't left the middle school. Day 3. He heads out toward the sea. He wants to see what the effect of the tsunami has been. What he saw was much worse than he had imagined.

US national: And my first time just seeing with my own eyes, and I just can't believe that a tsunami is capable of doing all this. At the same time it's just so sad. It is just so sad, the fact that these buildings that were once there, they're gone, they are all gone. And it's not going to change back.

Narrator: Day 4. He finally feels strong enough to go see his pupils taking refuge in the gymnasium. As soon as he entered the hall, the children rushed towards him. They each said to him, "We want you to teach us English." He read one of their favourite English books to them.

US national: Just kind of, like, surprised. Like, 'It's not class, but okay.' It made me be able, be able to teach them and be able to do my job. And that was one thing I came here to do, was to teach English, and I was glad, so I got this small moment to do that.

Narrator: Day 5. At last, the boats are making the crossing again and ××× can leave the island and return home. His apartment located near the sea had been hit by the tsunami and was in a bad state.

US national: I thought maybe it might be okay because the apartment is, like, a little way away from the water, so I thought maybe apartment [sic] would be okay. I still wish today it was the way it was but it isn't.

Narrator: For the next five months, he stayed in a refuge centre or with friends. Many foreigners left Japan because of the disaster, but ××× decided to stay. He felt it was only right after all the kindness that so many had shown him.

US national: There were about six boxes that they gave me and they were like, "Oh, ×××. This is for you." And I was like, "Oh no. You need it." So they were like, "No, no, no. We have plenty of stuff. Please take it." And on the box, it said, you know, 'For ×××. *Tomodachi kara* - from your friends' and '××× *no desu* - ×××'s things'. And it was just so wonderful. I think I am very lucky. I think I would just have been lonely and sad and just be like, like, "How could things have turned out this way?" Yeah, I wanted to repay them for their kindness in, like, any way I could.

*NHK report on Philippine national who experienced the 2011 disaster in Miyagi*

The report can be viewed here:

[http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010292\\_00000](http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010292_00000)

Anonymised source text:

NA : 平成 23 年 3 月 11 日、宮城県×××市は巨大な津波に襲われました。

××× : (津波が) 千年に一回来るといふ話、聞いたんだけど。まさかね、私が日本にいる間に来るとは思わなかった。

NA : フィリピンから 26 年前に来日した×××さんです。日本人の夫と 7 年前に離婚し、近所づきあいもありありませんでしたが、震災をきっかけに人とのつながりが広がりました。地震の時、薬局に来ていた×××さんは、パスポートを取りに急いで自宅へ戻りました。

××× : パスポートがあれば、いつでもフィリピンに帰れると思って、万が一のこと何かあった場合は。

NA : パスポートを手に、すぐに高台へと向かいます。自宅のあった×××は、×××湾と×××に挟まれた平地にありました。地震直後から、避難する車で大渋滞が起こり、身動きが取れなくなります。

××× : 車はそっちもいっぱい、こっちもいっぱいになって、もうどうにもならないんだよね。

NA：地震から 40 分後、津波が×××をさかのぼり、あっという間に×××さんのすぐそばに迫りました。

×××：そこ、空じゃないの。もう海、水、黒。ドア開けようと思って、一生懸命こう…開かない。

NA：×××さんは、開いていた窓からなんとか脱出。近くのマンションに駆け込む人たちのあとを必死で追いかけます。

×××：「私もここに入っていいいんですか？」と聞いた時に、「何言ってるの。早く！しゃべるんじゃないよ。もう逃げないと危ないから」とか（言われた）。

NA：×××さんは、マンションの3階まで駆け上がります。そこには×××さんの家族を含む 11 人の日本人が避難していました。夜、×××さんたちは燃える町を見つめながら、寒さと孤独に耐えていました。×××さんは周りの人たちに必死で話しかけます。

×××：不安でたまらないから一生懸命、朝まで声かけてるの、私。「みんな大丈夫ですか。みんな頑張ろう」とか。だから、「諦めちゃだめよ」とか。

NA：翌朝、目にしたのは、変わり果てた町の姿でした。

×××：いつもだと7時とかはもう明るい。あの時は、もう朝なのに暗いよね。暗みがちょっと違う。なんか地獄みたい。

NA：朝7時半、ようやく救助がやって来ます。それでも×××さんは不安でした。

×××：みんな日本人でしょ。私だけがフィリピン人だから、たぶん迎えに来て、私は一緒に連れていってもらえないと考えただけど、声かけられたの、「行きましょう」って。すごいうれしかった。この時になったら、やっぱりフィリピン人でも外国人でも関係なくなると思った。

NA：震災後、×××さんは積極的に人と関わりをもつようになりました。今度は自分が×××の人たちを助けたいと、介護士になるための勉強をしています。

×××：「助けて」と言ったら助けてくれるよね。そう今思ったの。ここだと何とかなる。だから×××にいて決めたの。

Target text (translated by the researcher):

Narrator: March 11, 2011. ×××City in Miyagi Prefecture was hit by a massive tsunami. [Note: this was one of the worst-affected cities in the disaster zone.]

Philippine national: I had heard that a tsunami comes once every thousand years, of course, but I never dreamed that one would come while I was in Japan.

Narrator: This is ××× who came to Japan 26 years ago from the Philippines. She divorced her Japanese husband 7 years ago and wasn't friendly with many in the neighbourhood, but the disaster has ended up strengthening her relationships with others.

The earthquake hit when she was on her way to the pharmacy, so she rushed back home to get her passport.

Philippine national: I thought if I had my passport, at least I could always get back to the Philippines, just to be on the safe side.

Narrator: Passport in hand, she headed for higher ground. Her apartment was located on the plain between [one of the worst-affected bays in Miyagi and some nearby mountains]. The roads were jammed with other cars full of people trying to escape. Nobody could move.

Philippine national: There were cars everywhere I looked. I was trapped.

Narrator: 40 minutes after the earthquake, the tsunami reached up as far as ××× and suddenly it had enveloped her.

Philippine national: This wouldn't open. It was just sea...water...everything was black. I tried to open the door, I pushed as hard as I could, but it wouldn't open.

Narrator: ××× managed to get herself out of an open window and ran for her life after a group of people fleeing toward a nearby apartment building.

Philippine national: When I asked them, "Is it okay if I come in, too?" They said, "What are you doing! Don't talk, move! Quick! Get in here. It's dangerous out there."

Narrator: ××× ran up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the apartment building. 11 Japanese people, including the ××× family, had escaped the tsunami there. In the evening, as they watched the town in front of them ablaze, they did their best to cope with the cold and the isolation. ××× did all she could to keep talking to those around her.

Philippine national: We were all so scared. I had to do something. I just kept saying, "Is everyone okay? Hang in there." "We can't give up."

Narrator: The following morning they saw what had become of the town.

Philippine national: Usually it would already be bright by 7am, but that day it was still dark, a strange darkness. It was like we had found ourselves in hell.

Philippine national: By 7.30am a rescue party finally arrived. But ××× was still worried.

Philippine national: I thought, "They're all Japanese. I'm the only Filipina. Maybe they won't take me along." When they said to me, "Let's go," I was so happy. I thought, "When it's a disaster, it doesn't matter if you're Philippine, or a foreigner, or whatever. Everyone gets rescued."

Narrator: After the disaster, ××× made a special effort to become more involved in the lives of the people around her. She is training to be a careworker so that she can help the people of [her town] from now on.

Philippine national: If someone needs help, you help them, right? That's what I think now. I can be of some help to people here. That's why I've decided to stay in [her town that was devastated by the disaster].

*NHK report on another Philippine national who experienced the 2011 disaster in Miyagi*

The report can be viewed here:

[http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010293\\_00000](http://www9.nhk.or.jp/311shogen/map/#/evidence/detail/D0007010293_00000)

Anonymised source text:

NA：あの日、巨大な津波に襲われた宮城県×××市。市内に暮らしていた 70 人以上のフィリピン人も被災しました。14 年前、フィリピンから×××市に嫁いだ×××さん。夫と 2 人で暮らしています。震災の時、フィリピン人の仲間の安否確認に奔走しました。

×××：やっぱり水産関係でみんな仕事出勤だったから、たぶん誰か死んだかなと思いました。

NA：自宅で大きな揺れに襲われた×××さんは、はだしで外へ飛び出しました。

×××：地球終わりかなと思いましたね。「神様」と言って、すごい泣きました。

NA：隣のおばあさんに声をかけ、夫と 3 人で地域の集会所に向かいます。しかし、人でいっぱいだったため、70 メートル先にあるドライブインに車を止めました。その直後、津波が市街地を襲います。

×××：でっかい水と流された建物と見たときに、それですごいパニックになって。

NA：×××さんは山の斜面を登り、何とか逃げることができました。夫とおばあさんも無事でしたが、集会所は津波に飲まれていました。

NA：毎週、市内の教会に通っていた×××さん。顔を合わせていたフィリピンの人たちのことが心配でした。2 日後、避難所に張り出された名簿で、友人の名前を見つめます。

×××：例えば×××さんとか、「ああ無事だな」って、ほっとしたですね。安心しました。でも、まだまだ知りたい友達いっぱいあるから。

NA：翌月、全国から教会の信者に支援物資が届きました。×××さんは神父に頼まれ、自宅を拠点にしてフィリピンの人たちに配布します。できるだけ多くの仲間に届けたいと、市内に住むフィリピン人の名簿を作成しました。

×××：メールして、例えば「知っているフィリピン人いるの？名前ちょうだい」とか、「電話分かる？」って。

NA：連絡がつかない人の所には直接足を運びました。1 か月後に名簿が完成し、市内に 75 人の仲間がいたことが分かります。それまでの知り合いは 20 人ほどでした。

NA：震災後、フィリピン大使館には家族や友人からの問い合わせが相次ぎました。大使館から連絡を受けた市役所は津波で被災。外国人の名簿が流され、安否確認が遅れていました。市の国際交流業務を担当する×××さんは、手がかりを探していました。偶然出会った×××さんに名簿を見せてもらいます。

市の国際交流業務担当：まだ震災から1か月半の混乱期ですね。「その中でも、ちゃんとつながっているんだ。この人たちすごいわ」と思いました。「日本人、こんなのできるかな、外国で」と思いましたよ、本当に。

NA：震災後、仲間の輪が広がり、頻繁に集まるようになりました。フィリピンから遠く離れた×××市で生きる仲間として、絆を深めています。

×××：やっぱり私たちの家族は、みんなフィリピンにいて寂しいじゃないですか。（本当の）お姉さんみたいなとか、妹みたいなとか、それでつながっていますね。1つの家族みたい。

Target text (translated by the researcher):

Narrator: ××× City in Miyagi Prefecture [Note: this was one of the worst-affected cities in the disaster zone], a city hit by the massive tsunami on that fateful day. More than 70 Philippine nationals living in the city were affected by the disaster. This is Mrs ×××, who came here from the Philippines 14 years ago to be married. She lives here together with her husband, and during the disaster she worked hard to confirm the safety of her Philippine friends and acquaintances.

Philippine national: As everyone here is involved in the fishing business, they were all out at work, and I thought it was fairly likely that some of them had died.

Narrator: Shaken by a violent tremor in her home, Mrs ××× dashed outside barefoot.

Philippine national: I really thought it was the end of the world. I said ‘Oh God!’ and burst into tears.

Narrator: She and her husband called in on an elderly neighbour, and the three headed together to the local assembly hall. However, it was so crowded that they carried on and to a roadside restaurant 70 metres down the road. It was just after stopping there that the tsunami engulfed the centre of the city.

Philippine national: I really started to panic when I saw all that water and buildings being washed along.

Narrator: Mrs ××× scrambled up the side of a hill and managed to narrowly escape the water. Her husband and neighbour also made it, but the local assembly hall was swallowed by the wave.

Narrator: Mrs ××× attended a church in the town every week, and she was worried about the other Philippine people she knew from there. Two days later, she saw some friends names on the lists posted at the evacuation centre.

Philippine national: For example, I’d see a name like ××× and think, ‘Oh, she’s safe,’ and it would be a great relief. But there were still so many other friends I wanted to know about.

Narrator: Every month, relief goods would arrive from members of the church throughout the country. Mrs ××× was asked by the priest to use her home as a base and pass the goods on to the other Philippine nationals in the community. As Mrs ××× wanted the goods to reach as many people as possible, she began to make a list of the Philippine nationals living in the city.

Philippine national: I'd send a mail and say, for example, 'Do you know anyone from the Philippines here? Can you give me their names,' or 'Can you give me a call?'

Narrator: She called in person at the homes of the people she couldn't get through to. After one month, the list was finished, and she now knew that there were 75 fellow Philippine nationals living in the city. Up until the disaster, she had only gotten to know about 20.

Narrator: The Philippine Embassy was flooded with calls from concerned family and friends after the disaster. The Embassy contacted the town hall, but it had been damaged by the tsunami, and the list of foreign nationals had been washed away. This held up the process of confirming the safety of foreign residents. The person responsible for international exchange at the town hall, ×××, needed help, and by chance she ran into Mrs ××× who showed her the name list she had compiled.

Town hall representative : This was still the first six weeks after the disaster when everything was totally chaotic. I thought, 'She managed to contact all these people when everything was still such a mess. She is amazing.' I really thought, 'You know, I wonder if a Japanese person could have managed to do the same overseas?'

Narrator: Since the disaster, Mrs ×××'s circle of Philippine friends has widened, and they now meet regularly. The bonds of community between the Filipinas living far from home in ××× City are being strengthened.

Philippine national: You know, it's hard for us. Our families are all back in the Philippines. But we've become a real family. We're so close that they're like my sisters now.