Discursive othering of Asian Americans:
A preliminary reflection of a foreshadowing COVID-19' related hate

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the underlying causes of the hate against Asian Americans in relation to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Using discourse analysis, the author analyzes interview data collected before the outbreak of the pandemic in the Bay Area of the United States. Anti-Asian sentiment did not start after the beginning of the outbreak. Rather, it has existed in American society, and people in the Asian community have faced prejudice and hate incidents before the outbreak as well. This study examines the discourse in two ways: discourse as practices and discourse as language in use. Through the analysis of interview data, this study aims to 1) shed light on Asian Americans' experiences and reveal the racism Asians are subjected to; 2) examine how the discourse affects the identity and situation of Asians under a certain dominance; 3) analyze how discourse reproduces systemic violence against Asian Americans. The analysis shows that the same discourse which has positioned Asians as the "other" is reproduced both socially and politically and that is a reason for violence against Asian Americans. However, it is further revealed that Asian people construct their identity through these discourses, by either internalizing or opposing them.

Keywords

Discourse analysis, COVID-19, racism, hate crime, Asian Americans

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, the former United States President, Donald Trump, has used terms such as "Chinese virus," "China virus," and "Kung Flu" during his presidency (Mangan, 2020). A picture of the script of his speech with the word "corona" being crossed out and replaced with "Chinese" to form the term "Chinese virus" was posted by the photographer Jabin Botsford (Papenfuss 2020). This picture went viral and has been retweeted more than 40,000 times. Critics have stated that these racial slurs legitimize anti-Asian sentiments and can potentially increase the risk of hate crimes. A hate crime is defined as a "criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or in part by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity" by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)[2]. In fact, the website, Stop AAPI Hate, where people in California can self-report hate incidents against Asian Americans, registered more than 800 anti-Asian American hate incidents related to COVID-19 in only three months between March and June 2020. Jeung (2020) has identified a relationship between the increasing number of anti-Asian hate crimes and the racial slurs used by Trump and his close allies (Jeung, 2020; Kang, 2020 and Jeung, 2020; Cabanatuan, 2020). However, we have to carefully review that data. According to Gover et al., who accumulated the data from the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), the data size differs tremendously between the two organizations. The UCR reports that from 2014 to 2018, an average of 176 hate crimes were caused by the anti-Asian bias (this number also includes hate crimes against Pacific Islanders and Native Hawaiians), whereas during the same period, the NCVS reports 6,158 victims of hate crime against Asians, Pacific Islanders, or Native Hawaiians. Gover et al. argued that this discrepancy is caused by the vast underreporting of hate crime to the police and the hidden nature of hate crime against Asian Americans.

Since the UCR only includes offenses known to and reported by police departments, unlike the NCVS who includes hate crime cases both reported and not reported to the police, they exclude the underreported incidents. The analysis of NCVS's data by Gover et al. indicates that "anti-Asian hate crime has remained an alarming problem across time" (Gover et al., 2020). This suggestion is key to analyzing the current social situation in the U.S. We need to consider what is behind Trump's use of the terms, such as "Chinese virus" and the increasing number of hate incidents. In the subsequent section, I will explain the underlying historic victimization of Asian people and the discourse that constructs Asians as racial "others." First, I will examine the history of Asian Americans and the discourse surrounding them (Sections 1 and 2). I will then introduce the interview data relating to Asian Americans and Asian immigrants that I collected in the Bay Area, the U.S. before the pandemic. Even before the outbreak, my interviewees experienced exclusion and hate incidents in multiple approaches. By analyzing the data, I believe we can obtain a clearer perspective of what has been happening to the Asian community in the U.S. and the links to the incidents we are witnessing today.

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[2] FBI: https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes

Discrimination and violence against Asian Americans

1. A review of selected cases throughout history

As I mentioned above, Asian Americans are facing harsh discrimination in relation to COVID-19. However, this is not the first time Asian people have been victims of violence motivated by hate. The first Asian immigrants to the U.S. in a significant number were Chinese people in the mid-1800s. As an alternative labor force after the Reconstruction era, a large number of Chinese workers engaged in railway construction and lost their lives due to poor working conditions and the dangerous materials they had to deal with. They were believed to be politically powerless visitors who would not be a "long-term burden" and rather be "The apolitical noncitizen coolie" (C. J. Kim, 1999). In the 1870s, an anti-Chinese movement took place that was motivated by frustration with employment instability. Instead of protecting Chinese laborers, the U.S. government responded with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In the early 1900s, an anti-Japanese movement took hold, again motivated by frustration due to unemployment and a growing suspicion of Asian immigrants as their population was increasing. This time, the U.S. government responded with "The Gentleman's Agreement" of 1908, meaning that immigrants from Japan were largely restricted. In 1924, the U.S. government enacted the Immigration Act of 1924 with the purpose of preventing immigrants from Asia. These examples demonstrate how Asian immigrants have been targeted as scapegoats as regards political agitation. When the Naturalization Law was amended in 1870 to extend the right to "aliens of African nativity or persons of African descent," Chinese immigrants were still excluded as "aliens ineligible to citizenship" (C. J. Kim, 1999). As I will argue in Section 2, the discursive alienization of Asians still remains as part of the culture. Also, anti-Asian movements throughout history are considered to have led to the internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II. During this period, Japanese Americans were interned/relocated after the signing of Executive Order 9066.

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Japanese Americans who lived on the West Coast and some parts of Hawaii were forced to relocate, despite the fact that the majority of them were American citizens. People had to sell their houses and properties at extremely low prices; indeed, some people lost everything. Over 120,000 Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps. Others were detained and some were deported to Japan (Takezawa, 1994, Iino, 2000). Takezawa (1994) explained how interpretating historic experience from the point of view of members of ethnic groups, not only as individuals but also as a group, plays an important role in constructing ethnicity. According to her, the reinterpretation of the internment and the reconstruction of the ethnic identity of Japanese Americans happened through the postwar redress movement. From the 1980s to the 1990s, Asian people in the U.S. were again targeted due to anti-Asian sentiment arising from trade conflicts between the U.S. and Japan, and from demographic changes, including an increase in the Asian population. This sentiment led to a worst-case scenario as Chinese American, Vincent Chin, was murdered by two white men who had just lost their jobs and believed it to be because of the trade conflict. The culprits allegedly called the victim "Jap" during the violence.

What these precedents show is that political leaders have repeatedly scapegoated Asian people, as well as other ethnic minorities, whenever social or economic tensions have become heightened. Okimoto (2020) criticized President Trump for being "prone to pointing the finger of blame at others —especially racial and ethnic minorities and foreign nationals— and denying his own responsibility" (Okimoto, 2020; Zhou et al., 2020). It is clear that we are now

witnessing the same process of scapegoating but in the dynamics of a different era. Okimoto continues, "When will Americans understand and acknowledge that Asian Americans are fellow citizens, bearing no ties to events in Wuhan, China?" This means that Asian Americans are still not regarded as "fellow citizens" but more as "others." Support for the exclusion of and hate toward Asians comes from the discursive positioning of Asian people as being non-native. Thus, to tackle the ongoing anti-Asian sentiments related to COVID-19, an analysis of the discourse shared in American society is needed.

2.   Discourses underlying hate against Asian Americans

From wartime exclusion acts to the present day anti-Asian rhetoric linked to COVID-19, the discrimination of Asians has been buttressed by "othering." This is a process where a dominant group defines which members do or do not belong to society (Gover et al., 2020). Thus, we need to take into consideration the historical discourse that positions Asians as "perpetual foreigners" when analyzing the anti-Asian rhetoric of today. As mentioned in the previous section, people of Asian descent were prevented from obtaining citizenship for a long time. Even after anti-Asian naturalization laws were formally nullified in 1952, allowing naturalization for all Asians, people of Asian descent are still suffering discursive alienization in their daily lives.

People of Asian descent are seen as an outgroup, who are not and will never be rightful citizens due to the aforementioned "perpetual foreigners" discourse. In examining discussions of the black/white paradigm of the U.S., J. Y. Kim (1999) describes how it marginalizes Asian Americans and denies their nativity. This paradigm has been criticized as it only focuses on the relationship between black people and white people; it ignores both the solidarity and conflict among various racial groups. It also ignores how policies have affected various racial groups differently, and so forth. While agreeing with this point, J. Y. Kim advanced a supplementary argument that Asians are actually not exempt from this black/white paradigm and whether Asians are treated as black or "honorary white" is deployed opportunistically. In her words, "To be nonwhite is to be the other, and that other is constructed as black, regardless of where a particular individual or group comes from or what it looks like" (J. Y. Kim, 1999: 2396). She also highlighted that the absence of racialized groups such as Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans is harmful to these groups, just as it is harmful to the richness of race discourse in general. Alim et al. (2010), on the other hand, describes how the "racial and ethnic other" is performed in freestyle rap battles. By mocking Chinese tonality, erasing the ethnic diversity of Asians, referring to them as monolithic group, or overtly treating them as foreigners, Asian emcees are constructed as racial others in rap battles. Not only Asians, but also Latinos, also face racial othering in a similar vein. As a result, even after the legal ostracization of Asians was abolished, they are still treated as racial others or foreigners in cultural context, and it applies to other racial groups such as Latinos, too.

3. Purpose and research questions

To tackle the anti-Asian hate related issues, this study will focus on how language functions to reproduce and to report the issue. Hate is often expressed, experienced, and explained through language. Asian people are being subjected to hate through verbal abuse such as calling them as "corona" or "virus," yelling "Go back to your country," or "We don't want you here," as well as an overgeneralization and distortion of the Asian culture (e.g., assuming that any person who looks Asian is Chinese, and assuming that any Asian-looking person shares the same

culinary background, such as eating bats), and so on.[3] The othering of Asians is not only done by language, but it is also reported in a certain language. Through these data, I can analyze the process in which racial and ethnic experiences are interpreted and reported, but supposedly in a more relaxed way when incidents are reported to the police. This will reveal the way discourse as "language in use" (Cameron, 2001) functions in a relationship with an interactive purpose (i.e., reporting the incident).

As well as focusing on the function of language, I will also focus on how it buttresses the systemic dominance over minorities. van Dijk (1993) insisted that we can approach questions about social inequality by focusing on the role of discourse to reproduce or challenge dominance. Dominance is defined by van Dijk as the "exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality." From this point of view, discourse is what reproduces dominance; at the same time, it is what challenges dominance. Combining these notions of discourse above, this study aims to 1) shed light on Asian Americans' experiences and reveal the racism Asians are subjected to; 2) examine how the discourse affects the identity and situation of Asians under a certain dominance; 3) analyze how discourse reproduces systemic violence against Asian Americans. All of the above will be considered in a historical context and eventually be discussed in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Methodology

In this study, I will analyze interview data in the light of discourse analysis to examine the problems I highlighted in Section 1. The simplest definition of discourse is "language above the sentence" (Cameron, 2001). According to Cameron, discourse analysis is the study to describe events in language through its relationship with the communicative purpose in texts or interactions. Cameron argues that for discourse analysts, it is more accurate to define discourse as "language in use." As I mentioned in the previous section, it is "language in use" through which the othering of Asians is carried out and experienced. For Foucault, who described discourse as "practices" and as what forms the spoken/stated object, discourse is an arena in which power is tied to knowledge (Foucault, 1976). Foucault also highlighted how discourse co-occurs with different strategies in various dimensions of society and can present diverse appearances. As the purpose of this study is to analyze how systemic violence (e.g., hate crime) is maintained by the shared discourse in society, for example, the othering of Asians, discourse in terms of both "language in use" and "practices" should be taken into consideration.

Further, discourse as "practices" and the way of forming the spoken object is particularly important when considering racism. Wodak and Reisigl (2015) argued that discourses serve to construct collective subjects such as races, nations, and ethnicities. That is, discourse actually forms the group, such as "Asian" or "Japanese" and influences their lives: practically shared discourses form a collective concept of a particular race or ethnicity. It works both ways as members inside the group can construct solidarity by forming united self-image, while the collective image can also overgeneralize and oversimplify the group, thus leading to racial and ethnic stereotypes. From the standpoint that narratives create reality (Robert and Shenhav, 2014), repeated discourse becomes "reality," no matter whether the shared image of a specific group is accurate or not.

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[3] Stop AAPI hate report: http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate-reports/

Collectivity is another key to analyzing discourse. In the research interviews, attitude toward race and ethnicity is observable as part of the interviewees' "lived ideology" (Wodak and Reisigl, 2015). Considering that a single person's utterance contains multiple people's voices (Maybin, 2001), we not only see the racializing or ethnicizing process and ideology of the interviewees, but also those shared by society. The data that will be handled is only a small fraction of the experiences of Asian American's. However, they represent experience shared by large number of Asian Americans, and the results represent the current situation in American society, at least partly. Literature on identity studies has indicated that identity has individual and collective aspects (Bourhis, 1979, Tajfel, 1981, Giles and Coupland, 1991, van Dijk, 1998, De Fina, 2006). According to Holmes (2006), we engage in a continuous interpersonal and intergroup process of identity construction. The discourse about Asian Americans that we will see in focus on the content of the data, that is, the lived experience of Asian Americans and the socially shared discourses and practices according to Foucault. Such cues will also focus on the manner of speaking; for example, the more interactional and linguistic dimension of the interview and how Asian Americans shape their experiences into a discourse according to Cameron. The codes that were used in the transcription will be attached in the Appendices.

the data is likely to be shared in the Bay Area, the investigation site, both on an interpersonal and intergroup level. I will codify nonverbal cues during the interview, such as laughter, pauses, overlaps, etc., for a more detailed transcription than an arranged text without such cues to Data and analysis

The author has collected interview data from 10 persons in Japan and 26 persons in the Bay Area, U.S. (some interviewees took part in the interview twice, as a follow-up interview or as a one-to-one and pairs). The first period of interview was from December 2016 to March 2017, and the second period was from January to March 2019. The main informants in the U.S. were Asian American or Asian long-term residents. Their racial and ethnic identity, the generation of their immigration, their sexual orientation, and their gender identity are diverse. Also, some people are white-passing (to some extent) while others are not. For the purpose of obtaining answers to prepared questions while having as natural a conversation as possible, all the interviews were semi-structured. The majority of interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, while some were conducted in twos due to time limitations or to coincide with the interviewees' schedules. The language used in the interviews was English or Japanese, including occasional code-switching from English to Japanese and vice versa. Table 1 below includes the interviewees' and the interviewer's (author's) profile whose data I will analyze in this paper. The names of the interviewees are pseudonyms for the sake of anonymity. The "new" generation in the table means the generation that moved to the US after the war.

Table 1. profiles of interview participants

	Linguistic background	Generation
Shoko	Japanese(L1)/ English	Long-term resident
Yoshiko	Japanese	Long-term resident
Mao	English(L1)	"New" 2nd
Kacey	English(L1)/Japanese	4th
Sadie	English(L1)	3rd
Erin	English(L1)	3rd
A(IR)	Japanese(L1)/English	-

Although I interviewed a range of Asian Americans, in this paper I will focus on Japanese American and Japanese long-term residents in the U.S. to minimize the differences for the purpose of better comparison. Subsection 4.1 will deal with the discourse Asian Americans encounter in their daily lives and how they are experienced by interviewees. Subsection 4.2 will, on the other hand, deal with politicians' discourse and how it is experienced by interviewees. In Subsection 4.1, the data will show how the "perpetual foreigners" discourse is still alive and how it is experienced by interviewees. In Subsection 4.2, the data will show that Asians were politically targeted even before the COVID-19 outbreak, and that some interviewees linked their experience with the inauguration of President Trump.

5.   Discourse Asian Americans encounter in their daily lives

In this subsection, I will look into the othering discourse of Asians in the U.S. Extract 1 is from an interview with Shoko, a Japanese long-term resident in the U.S. At the time of the interview, she had lived in the country for approximately 25 years. For a further explanation of the context of the extract, she was talking to the interviewer (the author) about experience many Asian people have in common, such as being asked "Where are you from?" no matter how long they have lived there or what their citizenship status is. The interview was conducted in Japanese, so I attached a word-for-word translation and a more sympathetic version.

[Extract 1]
1. S: *tada   sono*: *sono toki-ni*: *dakara itsumo*(.) *do:-yu*:
      but well that time so   always   how
     "but well, in that situation how (I'm) always"
2.   *fu:-ni taisho   shi-teru-ka-tte   yu:-to   wa   ma:-↑ne*
        way cope doing say well
        "coping with (that), well"
3. A: @@
4. S: *nande mata   mata kika-re-tara ne*
5. where are **you** from-*te*   *itsumo* so again again   asked   if you know
      always
        "so, if (I'm) asked again, you know, always (I say) "Where are you from?""
6. A: @@
7. S: *muko:-no*@@ [*muko:-ni*
      that person to that person
      to that person"
8. A: [*sotchi-koso mitai-na n*::
      you too like
        "like, "How about you?""
9. S: *un   so:so:so:so*:
       yup   yesyesyesyes
10. S: *demo*: *sono   kare-ga ano yu:-no-wa sono↑ne ano*:
      But well he well says well so
      "but what he(=husband) says (is), well"
11. *no-tta   toki-no   doraiba:-wa   furendori:-no kanbase:shon-no*
      rode time driver friendly conversation
        "when (I) ride (the taxi), (it's for) friendly conversation"
12. *tame-da-tta*(.)-*to-yu:-fu:-ni-wa to-re-nai*(.)-*no to-re-nai-tte*
       for the sake of   like can't receive can't receive
        "for the sake of (friendly conversation), can't (you) interpret so"
13. *yu:-fu:-ni kiku-n-desu-yo yappari-ne*
      say like ask after all
        "(he) asks (me) like that, after all"
14. A: *a*: *sono* where are you from -*tte-yu:-no-o*

Well say
   "ah, (about) "where are you from""
15. S: *so:so*: <u>where where are you from</u> *-tte-yu:-no-o-ne*
   Yes say
      "yes, "where are you from""
16. A: [*e*::
17. S: [*dakara-ne   so*:
      so
18. A: @@
19. S: *dakara sore-wa* <u>*yahari*</u> *kare-ga hakujin dakara-da-na-to omo-tte*
   So that   after all he white that's why think
      "so, after all that's because he (is) white, I guess"

Before the material in line 1, the interviewer had brought up the typical experience of people of Asian descent, such as being asked "Where are you from?" in various situations. From line 1 to line 8, Shoko shares her experience of always being asked that question by a taxi driver, and how she copes with that (asking "Where are you from?" responding with a stress on "you"). From line 9 to line 18, Shoko explains that her husband suggested to her to interpret the utterance as a "friendly conversation" based on the fact that the drivers are often immigrants, too. However, Shoko does not accept this suggestion and assumes that this is a result of her husband's whiteness. Her discourse indicates that Asian people are alienized so often, even in the Bay Area, California, which includes counties with large Asian populations. Also, in her discourse, people of other racial and ethnic groups (taxi drivers and her husband) are positioned as the subjects who treat Asians as "others." From line 10 to line 11, her husband's utterance is given as a constructed dialogue. Line 4 has Shoko's own words as constructed dialogue, and line 13 and line 14 are the words of the taxi driver. Constructed dialogue is defined as "the animation of speech framed as a voice other than the speaker's, with emphasis on stories told in conversation" (Tannen, 2007: 1), whose function is explained as representing the utterance that occurred in past, imaginary speech that wasn't actually said, a summary of repeated utterances, inner speech (the speaker's thoughts represented as speech), and so on. From line 10 to line 11, Shoko spoke in Japanese but used English with a Japanese accent ("*furendori:*" "*kanbase:shon*") , when she could use Japanese matching words. This was not only to animate the conversation but also to associate this utterance with racial difference, which is also clear by her use of the adverb "*yappari/yahari*" in line 12 and line 18. *Yahari* and its colloquial variant *yappari* are used to (re)confirm the coincidence between presuppositions (including social norms or what is thought to be common sense) and propositions (Hasunuma, 1998). The proposition here is Shoko's husband's utterance, while the presupposition is that Whites (the ingroup) do not share the same feelings as Asians being treated as the outgroup. Therefore, Shoko implied that her husband's opinion was predictable due to his ascription as white, the group which will never be treated as racial "others," unlike Asians. In lines 4, 13, and 14, Shoko and the interviewer switched their accent from Japanese to English to make a constructed dialogue. As Tannen suggested, hearers also contribute to constructed dialogue to show their understanding and involvement as interviewer did in line 13. Thus, in sequence, the constructed dialogue "Where are you from?" was firstly made by Shoko, secondly by the interviewer, and thirdly by Shoko, again. This constructed dialogue in turn and Shoko's repetition of the interviewer's utterance in line 14, including particles ("*-tte*," "*-no*," "*o*") and a verb ("*yu:*") highlight Shoko's and the interviewer's strong involvement in conversation (Kurokawa, 2006), supposedly because of their common racial background as Japanese. In other words, they engaged in constructing co-membership through common experience —"our" experience (Kushida, 2006). A similar construction was observed in the data of a second-generation Japanese American, Mao.

[Extract 2]
1. M: growing up here: in America where you're like a minority
2. A: hm
3. M: <u>people</u> might like(.)try to talk to you in Chinese I mean like ( )
         <u>white</u> ( ) <u>white people</u> might try to talk to you in Chinese and [it's like
4. A: [ah yeah I know yeah
5. M: ok yeah I mean even Japanese like like I remember growing up(.)
         being the mall and this white dude would like
6. A: ( )like *konnichiwa* [(   ) @
7. M: [yeah exactly
8. A: @I know@
9. M: that's I mean [that's
10. A: [it's so annoying@
11. M: are they trying to be nice or whatever but obviously
12. A: uh
13. M: like just to try to display their power

This extract came after the interviewer's question about the experience of exclusion or discrimination. In line 3, Mao almost finished the sentence as "people might try to talk to you in Chinese," then self-repaired the subject "people" to "white people" (Sacks et al., 1977) and restated the whole sentence as "white people might try to talk to you in Chinese." Then, in line 6, the interviewer inserted the constructed dialogue "*konnichiwa*," to which Mao replied as "exactly" in line 7. This is also the case when the hearer supplies constructed dialogue to "illustrate an utterance type that is represented as occurring repeatedly" (Tannen, 2007: 113). As Mao's response in line 7 and the interviewer's expression of empathy in lines 8 and line 10 show, this extract is another example of co-membership construction in discourse (as language in use). Whereas Mao's (and partly Shoko's) discourse positioned white people as a subject of othering of Asians, the following extracts from Kacey indicate that not only white people but other racial groups, as well as Asians themselves, explicitly or implicitly treat Asians as "perpetual foreigners."

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[Extract 3]
1. K: like I work with a lot of patients they always ask
2. A: um-hm
3. K: yah always ask especially
4. A: ∘hm∘
5. K: <u>the Asian patients who don't speak Eng↑lish</u>
6. A: um-hm
7. (.)
8. K: <u>Latino patients</u> they ask so then I- I I I make sure I I know what they are
         asking but I want them to think about it
9. A: hmm
10. K: so sometimes I would say oh you mean like where- if you say where are
         you
         <u>really</u> from then I say you mean my great great
11. A: @
12. K: grandpa↑rents(.)because I'm <u>really</u> from well I don' know my story is a
         little bit
         mixed but <u>I'm from Tokyo and Los Angeles but [usually I would say Los Angeles</u>
13. A: [hmm um-hm
14. K: hm
15. A: oh so you- were you born in ah
16. K: To[kyo
17. A: [To↑kyo
18. K: um-hm
19. A: ah and ah moved to the US just after:
20. K: umm [like when I was three and a half

21. A: [ah::three and a half uh-huh
22. K: so I remember my cousins my American my *nikkei* cousins here
23. A: um-[hm
24. K: [or Los Angeles(.)I can remember that they were making fun of my English
25. A: ahh rea[lly
26. K: [I still have that memory
27. A: uh-huh
28. K: and you know feeling ashamed [I felt ashamed
29. A: [hmm

Just like in Extract 1, the interviewer brought up the experience of being asked "Where are you (actually) from?" as an Asian before the beginning of Extract 3. In lines 10 and 11, the word "really" inserted in the sentence "Where are you from?" implies the fact that even when Asian Americans claim their belonging to American society, it is often questioned as they are not actually from the U.S. Kacey said that "Asian patients who don't speak English" (line 5) and "Latino patients" (line 8) asked this type of question, indicating that Asians and Latinos also treat other Asians as an outgroup[4]. Although she was born in Japan (lines 12 and 16), she would say she is from Los Angeles if asked (line 12). As Kuroki (2012) argued, minorities survive by using their identity categories that activate their limited social resources. As such, Kacey can emphasize her national identity and origin in the U.S. by choosing Los Angeles as the city she was originally from. In a later part of the extract, Kacey revealed the memory of being scorned by her cousins due to her English skills at that time and of feeling ashamed. This discourse retroactively emphasizes the necessity of saying she is from Los Angeles.

Unlike previous extracts, Extract 4 is an example that shows the speaker's internalized positioning of Asians as "foreigners." Before the extract, Yoshiko told the interviewer that people always assume that she is Chinese only because she is Asian. In response to that, the interviewer asked her what she felt about living in the area with a large Asian population.

[Extract 4]
1. Y: *nanka   demo   tabun*   [(h)*amerika-jin*(h)
         Well but maybe   Americans
         "well but, Americans"
2. A: [*un*
                                        yes
3. Y: *bakkari-no   naka-ni jibun-tachi*   [*dake   yori-wa*
         Only among ourselves only rather than
         "rather than being among only (Americans)"
4. A: [*n*:
5. Y: *chotto   anshin-kan* @@
         a bit feeling safe
         "(I) feel safe a bit"
6. A: a: [*sore-wa ari-masu-ne n*:
         That exist
         "(I) feel that"
7. Y: *nanka   o onaji   (.) setake*
         Well same   stature
         "well, the same stature (as me)"
8. A: *n*:
9. Y: *onaji kao-no   bunrui*
         Same face sort
         same sort of face (as me)"
10. A: @@

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[4] The reason why Kacey mentioned these two racial groups is presumably because of the demographic feature of the area of the workplace.

> 11. Y: *ga I iru ho*:-*ga   chotto   anshin*
>   Exist more a bit safe
>   "(I feel) a bit safer (other Asians) exist"

In the above extract, Yoshiko expressed how she felt safe living among a large Asian population rather than living among "only Americans" (in lines 1 and 3). "Americans," in this utterance, apparently does not include Asians, as it is implied that they mutually exclude each other. Even though Yoshiko said she had a similar experience to Mao, as she was often lumped together with other races and ethnicities, she did not say that she had a problem with that or with being seen as uniformly "Asian." Moreover, Yoshiko herself seemingly holds an identical view about Asians in lines 7 and 9, stating that Asians are a hardly distinguishable group, a discourse which was most blatantly seen in wartime propaganda. The fact that they published the tutorial so people could tell Chinese and Japanese individuals from each other indicates that both the Chinese and the Japanese were constructed as uniform "other." On the other hand, in her discourse, Yoshiko said that the "similarity" of appearance among Asians gave her a feeling of safety. By doing so, Yoshiko reproduced the discourse that constructs Asians as stereotypical "others." However, as Foucault (1976) recounted, discourse co-occurs with different strategies in different dimensions of society, and the same discourse appears in different ways. Unlike wartime propaganda, Yoshiko used the discourse of "monolithic Asian" with a relatively more positive nuance —the physical similarity makes her feel safe, and gives her more sense of belonging. At the same time, this reproduction still conveys the negative aspect of the discourse.

As a summary of this subsection, the discourse of othering Asian people is still shared in the Bay Area among various racial and ethnic groups. Even Asian people share and reproduce this discourse, but the appearance of this discourse can be different. In the next subsection, I will examine the political targeting of Asian people and how it affected Asian people through the interviewees' discourse before the outbreak of COVID-19.

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6.   Discourse in politics: selected examples

In this subsection, I will examine the data interviewees talked about as regards the policy of President Trump and how it affected them. In Extract 5, Sadie and Erin talked about an incident involving Erin when she almost got hit by a car.

> [Extract 5]
> 1. S: I never considered myself a minority other than being Japanese
> 2. (.)
> 3. S: I never even considered myself a person of color @@
> 4. A: ∘hmm∘
> 5. S: until
> 6. E: that's because you grew up in ***(city name)=
> 7. S: =yes exactly
> 8. E: @@@
> 9. S: until the day after elections and she experienced(.)
> 10. E: [it was there
> 11. S: [the- the prejudice in ***
> 12. A: um-hm
> 13. S: and <that> shocked me because I realized(.)
> 14. E: it's still there
> 15. S: early on because of- because of the Japanese people being put in internment camps
> 16. A: um-hm

17. S: just for looking(.)you know(.)because they- they were easily to identify they are   Japanese
18. A: um-hm
19. S: and(.)because of that discrimination I knew when he started talking about the Muslims I thought this is wrong (h)I said(h) that(.)is just like the Japanese you know this could be happening
20. E: yeah registering Muslims
(…)
21. S: but I did not realize that this is wrong is what I was thinking but the day after elections (.)you tell it [yo- you tell the story
22. E: [I was walking her(.)our dog Dai↑sy
23. S: [in ***
24. A: [um-hm
25. E: [she's much bigger than- and white
26. A: um-hm
27. E: she's big and white and you could tell if she's walking on the street because she's white so I was I had the green light so I could cross
28. A: um-hm
29. E: so I was in crosswalk and I was like almost halfway and I saw this woman she was coming and she was going to make a left turn
30. A: um-hm
31. E: but I was already in the crosswalk so↑::
32. A: ∘>um-hm<∘
33. E: she saw me and she looked at me and then she turned into me
34. A: oh no
35. S: [(   ) the car
36. E: [so I had to pull back Daisy
37. A: oh no
38. S: my dog's name is Daisy
39. (.)
40. S: [otherwise she would have [hit her with her car=
41. ?:   [( )
42. E: =she would she would have hit us
43. A: hit- [oh no
44. E: [yes yeah it was on purpose [and I don't usually say ↑that
45. S: [()question
46.   yeah
47. E: [I don't usually say that
48. S: [( )-
49. E: because I usually give the driver the benefit of the doubt I'd just say oh she was thinking about something else or she was just absentminded or she didn't mean to do that I usually give them an [excuse
50. S: [yeah I know that [about her
51. E: [this one this one she looks directly at- she looked so full of hate and she (h)turned into me(h) I went woah woah
52. A: oh no:
53. S: so when she told me that it really hit me because I know that it's the truth when she's   telling me that because I know that she doesn't judge people and stuff
54. E: no [not in driving
55. S: [and and   @@
56. E: not like you do @@@
57. S: yes in driving my (   ) and get mad but for her to say that it made me realize(.)we are a target too I didn't=
58. ?:   =yeah
59. S: know that until then
60. A: [um-hm
61. S: [I didn't realize(.)that we are minority and a person of color
62. and different [in that way where we would be targeted
63. E: [i- it's coming out now

64. S: that was a shock to me
         (...)
65. E: so you know that- that [hatred is coming out
66. A: [that's awful
67. S: <u>that anybody who is different</u>
68. E: <u>yeah [if you're not white</u>
69. S: <u>[tha- (   )white</u>
70. (.)
71. S: <u>is a target</u>

In lines 1 and line 3, Sadie revealed that she did not recognize herself as a "minority other than being Japanese" or a "person of color." This recognition changed on the day after the election, when Erin had her incident. Turn-taking, as in lines 13-14 or lines 19-20, shows that Erin supports Sadie with structuring the discourse while Sadie has the floor (Edelsky, 1981, Hayashi and Hayashi, 1991, Cameron, 2001, etc.). Sadie and Erin co-constructed the discourse about the incident. Just after that, in line 57, Sadie got the floor back and summed up the story by saying that just after the election, she realized that she (and Erin) was a target of hate as she said in the first part of the extract. As well as this discourse describing the hate incident they faced, it also implies how political narratives affect a collective dimension of identity. As mentioned in Section 3, identity has a collectively constructed aspect. By referring to internment camps in line 15, Sadie made a connection between Erin's story and their ancestors' wartime experience, in which she foregrounded her collective identity as a Japanese American. Later in the extract, she referred to Muslims (line 19) and the similarity of their situation and that of Japanese Americans during wartime. By associating Muslims with Japanese Americans and positioning both of them as victims of America's political agitation, Sadie represented herself as a member of a broader group —a person of color. In this process, Sadie and Erin successfully co-constructed their group identity as Asian or persons of color while pointing out how political affair affected not only them but also other racial and ethnic groups, thus associating others' experiences with theirs.

The process of claiming group identity and demonstrating how political affairs affected their identity could also be seen in Shoko's discourse. In Extract 6, Shoko described how she felt when she heard Trump (actually a person close to Trump) mention Japanese internment camps to legitimate Muslim registration.

[Extract 6]
1. S: *konaida tsui   konaida toranpu-ga sono musurimurejisutore:shon*
         Recently just recently Trump well Muslim registration
         recently, just recently Trump, well, Muslim registration"
2. S: *suru-tte i-tta   toki-ni*
         do say when "when (Trump) said (he) was going to do (Muslim registration)"
3. S: *Nikkei: amerikajin-no   <u>shu:yo:jo</u>: o hanashi-o   dashi-te ki-te*
             Japanese   American internment camp story mention come
             "Japanese American's internment camp, (he) mentioned"
4. A: *hai*
             "yes"
5. S: *rekishi-teki-ni   kako-ni-mo rei-ga aru-tte yu:-fu:-na*
         Historically in the past instance exist like
         "historically (they) have precedent instance"
6. S: *koto-o   i-tta toki-ni*
         Thing say when
          "when (he) said like that"
7. A: *hai*
             "yes"
8. S: *a: ja: honto-ni-ne son-toki-wa   chotto   mo: <u>mi-omo-tte</u>*

Well literally at that time   well well myself with
 "well literally then, well, personally"

9. S: _zo:-tto_ _shi-te_   sore-wa ano(.)   haji hajimete anna   kankaku
    Terrified be that well the first time such feeling
     "(I was) terrified, that was the first time (I had) such a feeling"

10. S: yappari dakara jibun-mo hen-na hanashi _hanbun_ _Nikkei_ _amerikajin-ni_
    after all so me too weird story half Japanese American
     "so, then, me too, (it) sounds weird (but) half-Japanese American"

11. S: _na-tteru-n-da-na-tte_   sono toki-ni   _jibun-ga_ _atakku_ _sa-re-ta-_
    tte
    Became that time me attack was I am) getting (half-Japanese American), at that
    time I was attacked"

12. S: honto-ni omo-tta-n-desu-yo
    really   thought (I) felt, honestly"

In line 3, Shoko referred to the internment camp and expressed her shock and empathy with the Japanese Americans when she heard Trump mentioning Japanese internment camps as a precedent of Muslim registration (actually it was Carl Higbie, a spokesperson for Great America PAC who said that). From line 8 to line 12, Shoko revealed that she felt it personally, as it seemed as though she was being attacked. In lines 10-11, Shoko said that she thought she had become "half-Japanese American" through this experience. In this discourse, she used the story of internment camps in a symbolic way to construct her identity as "half-Japanese American," as this is the story shared among Japanese Americans whose ancestors experienced internment. In other data gathered by the author, Japanese American interviewees who are "new" generations (those who migrated to the U.S. after World War II) and Japanese long-term residents tended to be less empathetic or interested in the story of internment camps. Internment camps are thought to belong to experience of Japanese Americans, but of "older" generations (the generations migrated to the U.S. before World War II). However, in Shoko's case, this made her aware of her identity as "half-Japanese American," as it has a symbolic function as regards collective identity. In Shoko's discourse, the story of Japanese internment camps play an important role in providing shared meaning (Schiff and Noy, 2006), as it functions as a specific meaning or a symbol shared between participants.

To sum up this subsection, Japanese and Japanese American interviewees told their story of how politics in the U.S. influenced their lives and identities. The data were collected in February (Sadie and Erin) and March (Shoko) 2017, just after Trump was elected. Both stories suggested that even before the pandemic happened, the systemic targeting of Asians (and other racial and ethnic groups) became a bigger issue after the election. It changed the way Asians saw themselves, their identity, and their lives. I would like to discuss this in the next section with reference to the current pandemic.

4. Discussion

In this section, I will go back to the research questions I set out in Section 3, then discuss how the issues highlighted in this paper are linked to the current hate incidents related to COVID-19. I believe that research question 1), to shed light on Asian Americans' experiences and reveal the racism Asians are subjected to, was achieved by introducing the incidents reported by the interviewees. As regards research question 2), to examine how the discourse affects the identity and situation of Asians under a certain dominance, it was revealed that the othering of Asian Americans still continues, and that various racial and ethnic groups, including Asian people themselves, are subjects of this othering. Although it has been a long time since "Orientals" were renamed as "Asian Americans" in the civil rights movement, the stereotypical

assumption that Asians are a homogeneous group has not changed. This is stated in Mao's discourse and can also be affirmed by the author's similar experiences. However, some Asians, such as Yoshiko, embrace the homogeneous image as marker of solidarity. Other data on Japanese Americans clarified that some older Asian people even use the term "Oriental" as a positive marker of their solidarity and identity. However, the term is also widely shared as an inappropriate name for Asians. Findings from Subsection 4.1 show that the positioning of Asians as "perpetual foreigners" has also not changed and is still being used. Interviewees like Kacey and Shoko were aware of this discourse and explicitly opposed it, unlike Yoshiko, who has seemingly internalized this discourse and positioned Asians as non-American. At the same time, those interview data indicated how people in the U.S. position Asians as racial and ethnic "others." The data also indicated how Asian people position themselves and construct their identity, whether they internalize the othering or oppose it. By opposing the othering discourse, they claim their identity as American citizens and feel that they belong to society. What these data also showed is that Asians still experience traditional stereotypes against them and that they embed this discourse (as practices) into their discourse (as language in use), in which they position themselves and perform their identity. Another finding from Subsection 4.2 is that political discourse not only influenced individuals' lives, but also affected their self-identification. In a certain part of the interview not included in the extracts, Shoko stated that she had even shed tears of frustration when she heard that Japanese internment camps were legitimated by political figures. This story was repeated in the follow-up interview in 2019, where she explained how this had affected her emotionally. The Muslim registration legitimated by Japanese internment camps reproduced dominance over Asians too, not to mention Muslims. Sadie said it was the first time that she had seen herself as a target of hate when Erin experienced to the hate incident just after the election. This implies that not only does such negative self-recognition force minorities to live in fear, but it also discourages them as regards their social lives and reinforces the idea of dominance over them. In this regard, the next question is how those incidents and the political discourse links to the hate against Asians in relation to COVID -19.

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Research question 3), analyze how discourse reproduces systemic violence against Asian Americans, and the story of Sadie and Erin exemplifies what happens when political leaders decide to scapegoat a specific race or ethnicity to distract the public from their own administrative wrongdoings. As mentioned in the Introduction, President Trump pointed the finger of the blame at Asians (especially Chinese people) for the pandemic, which triggered a large number of hate crimes against them. However, we have to bear in mind, as Gover et al. (2020) pointed out, that Trump using the terms like "Chinese virus" or "Kung flu" was not the start of Asians being exposed to hate. Anti-Asian hate existed before that, as well as the hate incidents motivated by it. Furthermore, the political discourse of othering and scapegoating Asians supposedly happened and was reconsolidated around the time of the election in 2016. This was then further reinforced at the start of the pandemic, as shown in Erin's story. The hate speech samples collected by Stop AAPI Hate contain many statements that are in line with traditional racist discourse. For example, denying Asian people's nativity or belonging to the U.S. (e.g., "Go back to your country") and denying their racial and ethnic diversity (e.g., treating any Asian person as Chinese). That is, the same discourses are reproduced and consolidated in response to social issues in different times. Considering that these discourses are at the root of violence, this needs to be taken more seriously. Not only do Asians have to combat the violence which arises from hate, they also struggle in the fight against the disease itself. Although the mortality rate from COVID-19 is lowest in Asians on a national scale,[5] it

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[5] APM Research Lab: https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race

is highest in San Francisco, where the Asian population makes up 36% of the total population.[6] The reason for this can be explained by the language and cultural barriers (Nguyen, 2020), the difficulty in seeking help due to the fear of discrimination, and the "model minority" myth (della Cava, 2020). The model minority myth is the idea that all Asians are educationally and financially successful, which has led to society overlooking the Asian population in their struggle. As a result of this stereotypical view, Asians are barred from getting medical help and they receive less attention than other racial and ethnic groups (Chiu, 2020; della Cava, 2020). To stop this and to prevent further violence, we need to abandon the model minority myth and understand that Asians are actually in a vulnerable situation. It is not that history repeats itself, but that we are repeating it.

Conclusion

Through this paper, I examined the function of discourse in relation to hate and othering against Asian Americans. Data showed that Asian Americans have been under the influence of xenophobic discourses from wartime to today, and that the same xenophobic discourses are used for different purpose in different era and social context. As a result of the analysis, it can be seen that discourse as practices lead to the oppression and victimization of Asians, while discourse as language in use reveals this oppression and show how Asians express their identity. However, this research has limitations in terms of the racial and ethnic group it deals with, and it did not fully explore the function of discourse other than reproducing oppression. Further research is needed to include Asians other than Japanese, and to clarify the possibility of discourse as language in use to challenge oppressive discourse as practice.

Note: I have presented parts of Extract 5 and 6 in my Ph.D. thesis "Collective identity of sexual and ethnic minorities in intersectional discourse: For elucidation and social understanding of their multilayered-ness," and a part of Extract 5 in EJHIB2019. I have since expanded the scope of my research and acquired additional data that has helped me to develop a new understanding of code-switching patterns.

Appendices

(.) micro pause	[overlap	( ) inaudible	= latching
@ laughter	↑tone rising	: prolonged sound	… omission of lines
(h) exhalation	◦ ◦ smaller voice	< > slower than other parts	

> < faster than other parts

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[6] U.S. Census: https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanfranciscocountycalifornia,US/PST045219

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