



# DECONSTRUCTING THE MYTH OF THE NATIVE SPEAKER

JAPANESE PERCEPTIONS OF NATIVE SPEAKER FRIENDS IN INTERCULTURAL  
CONTACT SITUATIONS

Intercultural speakers need to 1) be cognizant of their own and others' attitudes, 2) have knowledge of the self and of others on both an individual and societal interactional level, 3) be able to interpret and relate, 4) be able to discover and interact, and 5) have critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997).

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- “The undoing of native-speakerism requires a type of thinking that promotes new relationships. This is already evident in discussions concerning the ownership of English” (Holliday, 2006 p. 386).
- Moving from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelativist frame of reference allows learners to be more willing to engage in social network formation with native speakers (Isabelli-García 2006).
- The more interaction learners have with native speakers of a language the more that interaction can have a strong influence on a learner’s second language development (Isabelli-García, 2006; Lapkin, et al., 1995; Marriott, 1995; Regan, 1995; Siegal, 1995).

What problems do Japanese learners encounter in their interactions with non-Japanese English speakers?

NATIVE SPEAKERS, NATIVE SPEAKERISM AND HOW DO LEARNERS REALLY PERCEIVE NON-JAPANESE ENGLISH SPEAKERS?

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- The Myth of the Native Speaker perpetuates non-native speakers (including Japanese EFL learners) and their cultures as:

“‘collectivist’, ‘reticent’, ‘indirect’, ‘passive’, ‘docile’,  
‘lacking in self-esteem’ ‘reluctant to challenge  
authority’, ‘easily dominated’, ‘undemocratic’, or  
‘traditional’ and, ‘uncritical and unthinking’”  
(Holliday, 2005, p. 385)

HOW LANGUAGE TEACHERS PERCEIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

## Initial Data Collection and Analysis

### 1. Interaction interviews (Monash University, Melbourne)

Used by Neustupný (2003), Muraoka (2001), and Asaoka (1987)

### 2. Language Management Theory (Jernudd and Neustupný, (1987)

## Second Stage Data Collection

### 1. Online questionnaire created using data from initial data collection

9 JAPANESE PARTICIPANTS

6 FEMALES, 3 MALES; AGES 19-40

1-1.5 HOUR INTERACTION INTERVIEWS:  
FOCUSING ON IDENTIFYING “DEVIATIONS”  
AND ADJUSTMENTS MADE

50 JAPANESE PARTICIPANTS

28 FEMALES, 22 MALES; AGES 19-40

ON-LINE ANONYMOUS QUESTIONNAIRE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

HOW DO JAPANESE LEARNERS PERCEIVE THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH NON-JAPANESE ENGLISH SPEAKERS?

HOW DO THEY REACT TO PROBLEMS IN THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH NON-JAPANESE ENGLISH SPEAKERS?

DO THEY ESTABLISH MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS?

## Stages of LMT

1. Norms – expectations (socially-shared or individual) of appropriate and expected behavior,
2. Deviation –behaviour of an interlocutor or self which deviates from a norm,
3. Noting – whether or not the deviation is noticed,
4. Evaluation – the noted deviations are evaluated as positive, negative or neutral,
5. Adjustment design– the plan made by the participant to attempt to remove the problem,
6. Implementation – the act of implementing the adjustment plan to attempt to remove the deviation  
(Neustupný , 2005, pp. 310-311).

# LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT THEORY

DURING INTERACTION INTERVIEWS, PARTICIPANTS SOME TIMES NOTE AND RE-EVALUATE THEIR OWN BEHAVIOURS AND THE BEHAVIOURS OF THEIR INTERLOCUTORS.

THEY REDEFINE WHAT THEY EXPERIENCED AND RAISE THEIR OWN AWARENESS OF WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE INTERACTION.

# NATIVE SPEAKERS AS A LANGUAGE RESOURCE

## ■ Linguistic Deviations – Grammar correction by non-Japanese English speakers (NJES)

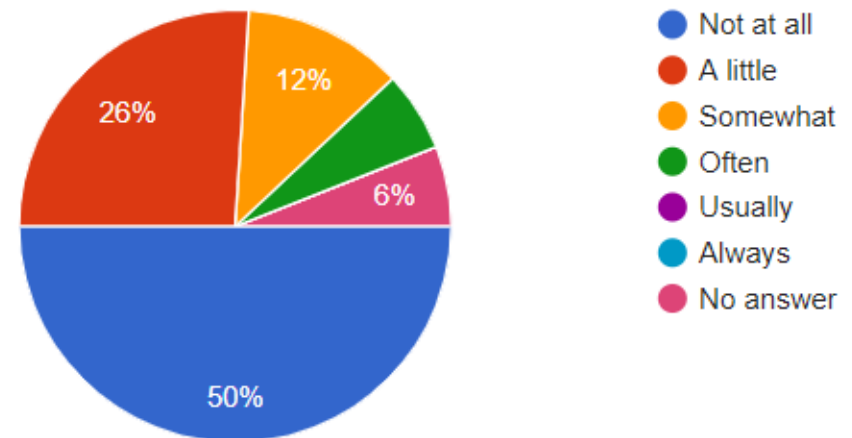
JF3: “I think my English is okay. If I have any question, or if I can’t say what I want to say, I just ask him, so. That’s okay.”

JM7: “Sometimes I don’t know 文法 (bumpo: grammar), but my friend help me. She knows Japanese well, so she just tell me in Japanese.”

“Participants (JF1, JF2 JF4, JF6) sometimes noted and evaluated negatively their ability with English in their interactions, but indicated that their NJES friends gave them assistance when necessary,” (Devitte, 2016).

- Participants are not always aware of correction when made during the interactions.
- Generally they are focused on communicating their ideas and listening.

**Do your NJES usually help with or correct your grammar?**



(Devitte, 2018) On-line questionnaire Data.

# NATIVE SPEAKERS AS A LANGUAGE RESOURCE

## ■ Linguistic Deviations – Vocabulary correction by non-Japanese English speakers

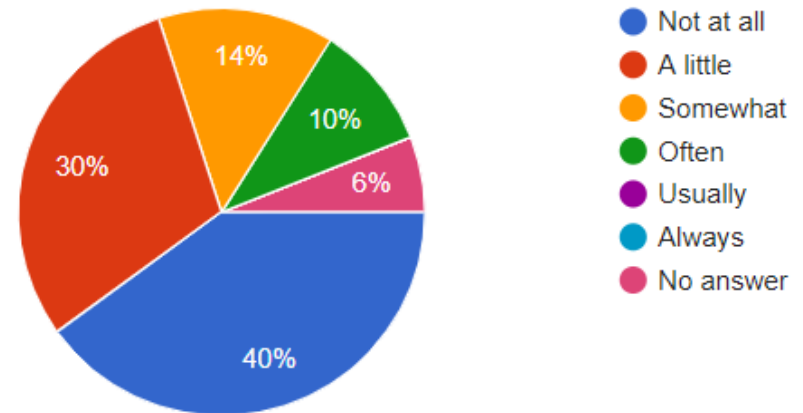
JM9: “If I don’t know something. I just google it. Or look up the word in a dictionary.”

JM6: “I don’t always know the word, but my friends know and if I say in Japanese or I talk (around) they help me find what I want to say.”

“The act of code-switching prevalent in the data implies that in friendships there is less of an emphasis on differences in power and distance and that it is not considered to be an imposition to code-switch between languages by the participants as their internal agenda during interactions is to communicate (Devitte, 2016).

- Codeswitching and using the internet are common ways to circumvent linguistic problems when they are noted

## Do your NJES usually help with or correct your vocabulary?

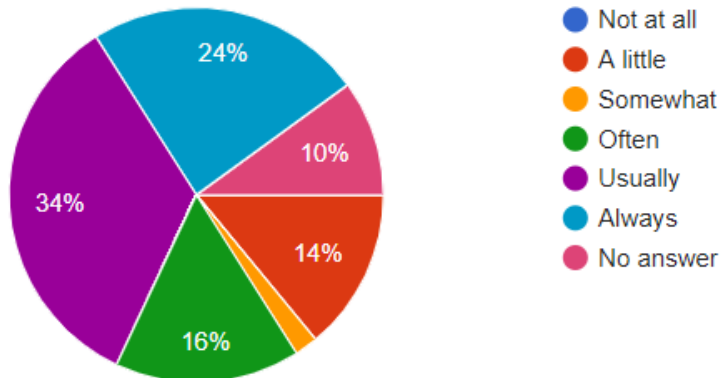


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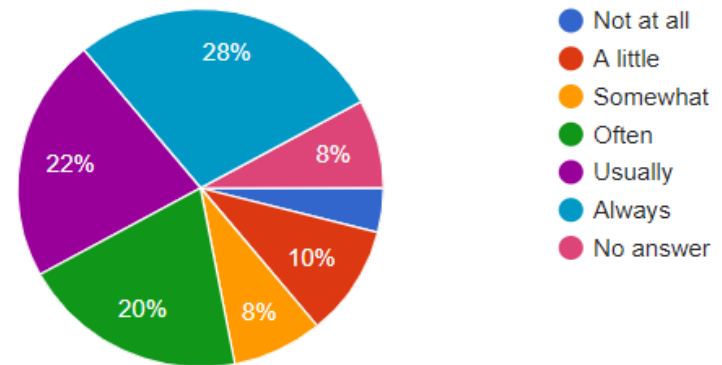
# PARTICIPANTS' FEELINGS ABOUT COMMUNICATING IN ENGLISH

- Socio-Linguistic Deviations- noting non-understanding and “good” communication

Do you feel your friends understand your English?



Do you feel you communicate well in English?



Interaction interview reported **adjustment designs**:

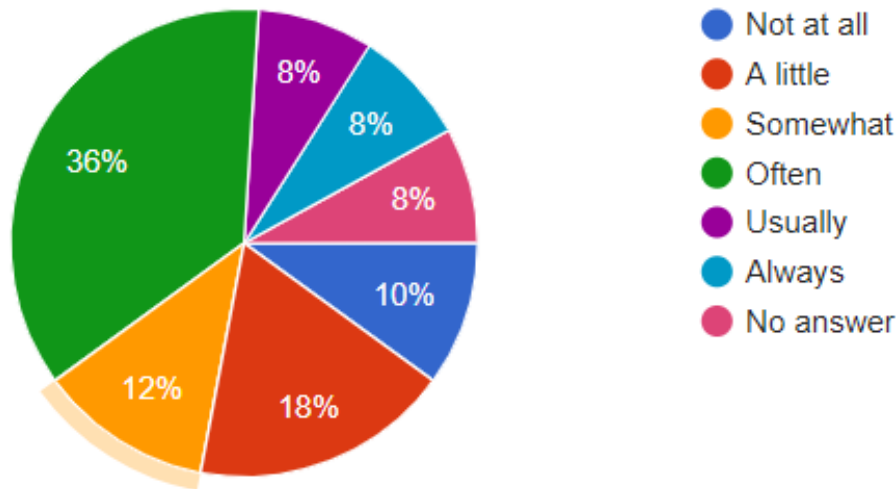
- Take a “passive role” in a conversation (such as just listening to their NJES friend),
- Take more active roles by asking questions or offering their own commentary,
- View linguistic **deviations** as a “learning opportunity”.



# PARTICIPANTS' SELECTION OF TOPICS

## ■ Socio-Linguistic Deviations- topic selection

**Do your NJES usually choose the topic of conversation?**



JF2: "I remember. (My friends were talking) In a marijuana discussion everyone was talking. Not someone dominating the floor because everyone has a different background and has something to talk about. You know, I have something to talk about, but also I want to listen to others."

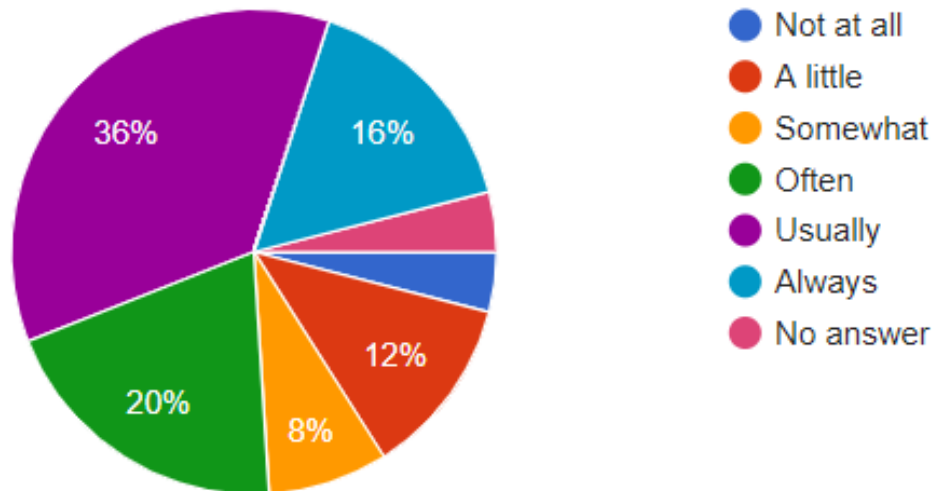
JM 2.18: "I like it. As it is exciting that we can communicate, share our feelings for our lives though our cultural values are quite different. It is also interesting to know new cultures and the way of thinking in other countries."

- View topic **deviations** also as a "learning opportunity",
- NJES friends are seen as having a broader range of experience and knowledge.
- **NJES typically select or dictate topic choice (52% often or more)**

# PARTICIPANTS' KNOWLEDGE OF TOPICS

## ■ Socio-Linguistic Deviations- background knowledge

**Do you usually understand what they are talking about?**



JM9: “Actually, as you know I was still a student, so sometimes it was difficult (to participate). Because they were talking about music, and not about our generations music. Most of my friends are maybe over thirty. It's a good thing for me because I can know about different things.”

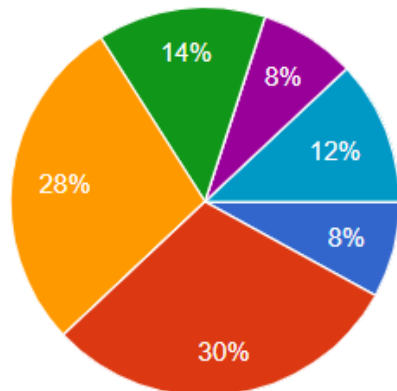
JF 2. 32: I like it. As it is exciting that we can communicate, share our feelings for our lives though our cultural values are quite different. It is also interesting to know new cultures and the way of thinking in other countries.

- The “passive role” is used to acquire new background knowledge.
- Again internet is essential in helping learners to “research unknown” information.
- 52% (Always or usually) indicated they understand the topics of conversation

# FEELINGS OF CLOSENESS TOWARDS NJES

## ■ Socio-Linguistic Deviations- closeness

**How close do you feel you are with your NJES friends?**



- They are closer to me than even my best Japanese friend...
- They are just like my very good / best Japanese friends.
- They are just like my usual Japanese friends.
- They are not as close to me at my usual Japanese friend...
- They are not very close at...
- I don't know.

JF2: "I can definitely be open with foreigners more because you know, I can make repair after a conversation. "It's not what I mean, but...my true feeling is this". If I do that to Japanese, they don't believe me."

JM 2.2: "It is fun to talk with foreigners. In many cases, it is inspired by a non-Japanese way of thinking, which will broaden our horizons."

JF 2.42: "I do not distinguish between my Japanese friends and friends from other countries. I just feel they are friends of mine."

- All of the initial participants indicated that they as close or closer to their NJES friends
- NJES are seen as more "open" than Japanese
- 66% (Closer 8%, Very good, 30%, Usual 28%) indicated similar responses to initial participants

- “The undoing of native-speakerism requires a type of thinking that promotes new relationships. This is already evident in discussions concerning the ownership of English” (Holliday, 2006 p. 386).
  - The participants seem to be taking ownership of their English in that they are using English to establish, maintain and negotiate social relations with their NJES friends.
- Moving from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelativist frame of reference allows learners to be more willing to engage in social network formation with native speakers (Isabelli-García 2006).
  - The participants value their NJES friends as much as their Japanese friends and view them as essential contributors to their lived experiences.
- The more interaction learners have with native speakers of a language the more that interaction can have a strong influence on a learner’s second language development (Isabelli-García, 2006; Lapkin, et al., 1995; Marriott, 1995; Regan, 1995; Siegal, 1995).
  - While the effects on linguistic development are largely nonconclusive, the interpersonal interactions with NJES enhance Japanese learners experiences with English and potentially improve motivation to interact and use their 2<sup>nd</sup> language.

## CONCLUSIONS

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