

Chapter 2

Native-Speakerism in Japanese Junior High Schools: A Stratified Look into Teacher Narratives

Jérémie Bouchard

Abstract Growing consensus in the literature identifies the ideology of native-speakerism as a problematic aspect of EFL education and applied linguistics. The prevalence of native-speakerism in EFL education can be said to affect both “native” and “non-native” English speakers, creating and reinforcing divisions based on the “native speaker” criterion. Part of this growing consensus is the notion that fostering critical cultural awareness among EFL teachers and learners constitutes a viable strategy for curbing the said effects of native-speakerism on EFL education. At the heart of these deliberations, however, are questions related to the actual presence of native-speakerism in—and importance to—EFL practices on the ground. One way to explore these questions is through analysis of EFL teachers’ interview narratives, which can yield valuable insight into teachers’ interpretations of their own practice, the context of education and the potential for change. In this chapter, I explore possible links between native-speakerism and Japanese junior high school (JHS) EFL education. To achieve this task, I analyse JHS English teachers’ oral narratives which occasionally include references to native-speakerism as a discourse of inclusion/exclusion. Following a stratified approach to critical social research, I then look at points of convergence and divergence between these references and data gathered from recorded and transcribed classroom discourse, classroom materials, textbooks and recent MEXT policies on EFL education.

2.1 Conceptualizing Native-Speakerism in the Current Study

Native-speakerism adherents privilege the knowledge of a mother tongue over the knowledge of other languages. “Native speakers” of a language are thus considered the owners of—and best references to—that language, while “non-native speakers”

J. Bouchard (✉)
Hokkai Gakuen University, Sapporo, Japan
e-mail: bouchardjeremie@yahoo.com

are seen as imperfect “native speakers”. Native-speakerism is part of a broader set of assumptions about language learning which first gained prominence with the direct method—aka the Berlitz Method—at the end of the nineteenth century (Byram, 2008; Cook, 2010), “assumptions which far exceed simple information about linguistic ability” (Aboshiha, 2015: 43). As such, native-speakerism practices can be seen as a set of strategies to protect monolingual “native” English speaker teachers (NEST) and promote Western cultural values in places where English education is in demand. Other perspectives on native-speakerism place NEST at a disadvantage (see Houghton & Rivers, 2013). According to Breckenridge (2010, pp. 5–6), “the current representations of native speakers detract from professional development by perpetuating static identities rather than encouraging professional development”. Holliday (2015, p. 15) expresses a similar view thus: “teachers who are labeled “native speaker” also suffer from being treated as a commodity by being reduced to a list of saleable attributes. They can also be caught up in discriminatory employment practices”. These views suggest that, in engaging in native-speakerism-related discourses and practices, native-speakerism perpetrators/adherents discriminate against both themselves and their intended victims, making native-speakerism a discourse of both inclusion and exclusion. Situated in the language classroom, native-speakerism has been identified in the expression of idealized, static and normative views of the target language, and in teachers requiring learners to imitate NEST (Angove, 2014; Glasgow, 2014).

In this chapter, I interrogate the presence of native-speakerism in—and its importance to—EFL practices on the ground. To do so, I look for evidence or traces of native-speakerism in teacher narratives and explore their possible links to observed EFL practices. I consider Rivers’ (2011) description of native-speakerism and the notion of the ideal NEST as containing four central features:

1. linguistic (i.e. NEST are monolingual, possessing innate knowledge of their native language);
2. racial (i.e. NEST are Caucasian and come from inner circle countries—i.e. countries where English originally emerged before spreading across the world (Kachru, 1992));
3. behavioural (i.e. NEST are friendly and entertaining);
4. cultural (i.e. NEST reproduce Japanese stereotypical images of cultures found in inner circle countries).

Throughout this chapter, I frame terms such as “native” and “non-native”—except acronyms—in quotation marks to highlight their problematic nature, especially with regard to the fusion between “nativeness” and language- and culture-related ideologies, as summarized in Derivry-Plard (2014) and in the above discussion. In the next section, I review key theoretical and methodological issues grounding the work in this chapter.

2.2 Theoretical and Methodological Issues

Teacher narratives provide a unique view into teachers' interpretations of their own practice, the context of education and the potential for change (Barkhuizen, 2007). Narratives as encapsulating accounts provide opportunities for teachers to revisit their experiences and practices from a certain epistemological distance, in order to gain new perspectives and forms of understandings.

Considering the emergent properties of narratives as both “about” broader processes in the real world and “about” their contents, this chapter conceptualizes teacher narratives as distinct from, yet related to, their real-world referents. Narratives are not seen as direct translations or instantiations of experiences; instead, narratives and experiences are seen as distinct and emergent layers of specific social realities. Scott (2000, p. 110) underscores the distinct and emergent properties of narratives thus:

the past is organised in terms of the present; that is, present discourses, narratives and texts constitute the backdrop to any exploration of the past. It is not that a biography refers to actual events which are then imperfectly recollected, but that past events are interpretations undertaken by the person whose “life” it is, and that these interpretations always have a pretext.

Similarly, Sayer (2000) argues that narratives tend to prioritize the structural features of the past while depicting the present in voluntaristic terms.

These facts underline the need for a stratified approach to narrative analysis and native-speakerism critique. This approach is partly based on an understanding that social and educational processes are more than a complex arrangement of spoken and printed texts requiring interpretation of their meanings (Sayer, 2000). Consequently, teacher narratives should be analysed in light of data gathered from other sources. By triangulating data thus, points of convergence and divergence within and across data sources become key analytical foci. The resulting epistemological complexity can potentially contribute greater insight into native-speakerism in context, the complex mediating processes linking structure and agency, and the potential for change.

Through data triangulation, elements of interest surface when traces of native-speakerism are located in more than one source of data. This approach is particularly relevant, as one of the foci in the current chapter concerns the potential importance of native-speakerism to observed EFL practices. Data triangulation is also necessary here because, while elements of interest might be found at particular points in the data, they are not necessarily fixed or permanent. Classroom and interview discourses—like any other form of discourses—occur in a temporal context (Mercer, 2010).

For this study, I interviewed four Japanese JHS English teachers working at three public JHS (Mr. Ono, Ms. Inoue and Ms. Ishida) and 1 private JHS (Ms. Tanaka), all located in Sapporo, northern Japan (all pseudonyms). Teacher narratives were gathered principally through interviews (i.e. oral narratives). In all, I recorded approximately 19 h of interviews over a period of approximately one year. This process yielded approximately 60,000 words or 120 pages of transcribed

interview data. Prior to these interviews, I exchanged with teacher-participants on a variety of topics through face-to-face, telephone and email communication, allowing me to pilot-test interview questions dealing with a wider range of topics pertaining to how teachers understand:

- (a) themselves as language learners and their roles as EFL teachers;
- (b) students as EFL learners;
- (c) the presence of English in Japan and its impact on local cultures;
- (d) the relationship between EFL policies, textbooks and their classrooms; and
- (e) current problems facing the Japanese EFL system and possible solutions.

In drafting interview questions, I considered Maxwell's (2012) situated approach to developing interview questions and observational strategies. Instead of explicitly focusing on native-speakerism, I chose to elicit teachers' views on their day-to-day practices and on EFL education at the JHS level. Interviews were (a) informal and semi-structured, (b) heterogeneously shaped (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), (c) collaboratively constructed by interviewer and interviewees (Mishler, 1986), (d) transformed into narratives through a combination of Q&A and everyday discourse and (e) conducted principally in English, with extensive code-switching. Interview questions provided an initial communicative structure, although being open-ended they also facilitated elaboration and the emergence of new and unscripted questions. To conduct data triangulation, I also consider quantitative and qualitative data gathered from:

1. audio-recordings and transcripts of classroom discourse;
2. field notes (completed during classroom observation);
3. MEXT-produced handbook for team-teaching;
4. MEXT-approved EFL textbooks; and
5. printed classroom materials.

Due to the limits of the current study, I did not gather students and teachers' views through attitude surveys. To gather classroom data, I observed 40 classes taught by the four teacher-participants. Following recommendations for reasonable ethnographic database proposed by Walsh (2006) and Seedhouse (2004), I audio-recorded 10 classes of 50 min each, for a total of 40 classes or approximately 2000 min (33.3 h) of audio-recorded data (overall, approximately 36,400 words of classroom transcripts were produced). Twenty of these classes were at the second-year level, and the remaining 20 were at the third-year level. As can be denoted from the samples analysed in this chapter, traces of native-speakerism in the data were marginal when compared with the entire body of data gathered for this study.

As a participant-observer, I was always present in each classroom. Depending on the discretion of each teacher, I was sometimes an assistant language teacher, a model for target language use, a source of target culture knowledge and most often a quiet observer. Field notes allowed me to record analytical decisions, ongoing reflections and explanations of classroom practices during and after each class and identify possible instances of native-speakerism in context. I analysed data through

a thematic approach, using a three-part coding system which allowed me to uncover tendencies and underlying narratives in the body of data. As general analytical themes emerged, I further categorized data into more refined themes by moving between broad and more detailed observations in an iterative fashion and, in the process, effectuating data triangulation. I then uncovered characteristic patterns across data type by producing a narrative, or a comprehensive account, of each theme. Tesch (1990) calls this process of revealing the characteristic patterns of each theme a re-contextualization of the data. The following questions guided the work in this chapter:

1. To what extent can explicit references to concepts related to native-speakerism be found in data gathered from teacher narratives and other sources?
2. What conclusions can be drawn about the relationship between native-speakerism in the data and EFL practices observed in Japanese JHS, if such a relationship does exist?

2.3 Analysis

I begin by reviewing native-speakerism traces in one recent MEXT policy document on EFL education in secondary schools, thus providing a glimpse into structural processes. I then focus on agentive processes by exploring the presence of native-speakerism in teacher narratives and other sources of data. While the ideology under focus remains native-speakerism, I also make occasional references to the ideology of “Japanese uniqueness”, or “Japaneseness”, thus drawing links between native-speakerism and the ideological discourse on *nihonjinron*. Similarly, Houghton & Rivers (2013) define native-speakerism by relating it to “a larger complex of interconnected prejudices” (p. 13).

2.3.1 *Traces of Native-Speakerism in Policy Discourse*

One of the most revealing policy documents recently published by The Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) is entitled “Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication” (MEXT, 2011). This 14-page long document, authored by the Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency established by MEXT in 2010, outlines policy makers’ takes on theoretical, educational, cultural and social issues related to EFL education in Japan. As such, it is a rich source of insights into institutional assumptions about the target language and culture (Seargeant, 2009).

Some evidence found in recent MEXT policy documents differs from native-speakerism’s linguistic argument (i.e. NEST as monolingual, possessing innate knowledge of their native language). In the Five Proposals, policy makers state

that new (Japanese) EFL teachers are required to possess “[a]bilities to expand students’ opportunities to come across English, while making classes a place for real communication” (MEXT, 2011, p. 11). While the authors of the Five Proposals indirectly refer to NEST as ideal target language models, they also mention the need to use “local people with good English skills”, thus also positioning fluent Japanese English speakers as legitimate target language models. In addition, considering that the vast majority of JHS English classes in Japan are taught by Japanese EFL teachers without the presence of “native-speaking” ALTs, the implication is that “real” L2 communication can potentially take place between Japanese teachers and students.

However, traces of native-speakerism in policy discourse are also evident. A statement found in the Five Proposals clearly endorses the linguistic and cultural arguments in native-speakerism: “lessons can be made more comprehensible and effective if English teachers utilize digital textbooks and teaching aids during class, presenting to students’ videos and images of native speakers speaking as well as facial expressions and gestures that accompany speaking” (MEXT, 2011: 8). Hashimoto (2013) argues that policy makers regard “native-English speakers” as possessing emic knowledge not just of English but of communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches (i.e. emphasizing L2 interaction as the principal learning goal), thus bringing attention to the cultural argument in native-speakerism. References to this can be found in the use of vague notions such as “talented foreigners” (MEXT, 2011, p. 8). Because the adjective talented is never specified as knowledge of TESOL, nor is it used in reference to Japanese EFL instructors, policy makers seem to define knowledge and practice of CLT along etic-emic parameters. Nonetheless, a contrasting perspective is also promulgated on the same page, by the statement advocating the hiring of foreign and Japanese English teachers with “rich overseas experience and excellent English proficiency” (MEXT, 2011, p. 8).

Considering Hashimoto’s (2013, p. 168) criticism of the 2003 Course of Study as “not designed to embrace the expertise of [native-English speaking] teachers” (p. 168), it is possible to suggest that moderate progress has taken place at the structural level of the Japanese EFL system between 2003 and 2011. More importantly, evidence shows that policy makers promulgate inconsistent perspectives, some departing from the notion of the NEST as the “ideal English speaker”, while others being clearly aligned with the linguistic and cultural arguments in native-speakerism.

2.3.2 Traces of Native-Speakerism in Teacher Narratives and Other Sources of Data

In the following five sections, I provide a thematic analysis of the presence of native-speakerism in teacher narratives and in other data sources. Of importance to the current analysis are 21 references to native-speakerism in teacher narratives, 1 in

a worksheet produced by Mr. Ono and 7 in recorded classroom discourse. As mentioned earlier, this limited number of references to native-speakerism in the data suggests that native-speakerism is of marginal importance to observed EFL practices. Analytical themes include “monolingual Japan” and “non-native” English speaker teachers (NNEST) as “poor” or “deficient”, links between geography and national identity, NEST as ideal references to target language and culture, NEST teachers as problematic and contradictions to native-speakerism in teacher narratives.

2.3.2.1 “Monolingual Japan” and NNEST as “Poor” or “Deficient”

Mr. Ono often expressed the belief that Japan is a place where English plays a limited role. In Fig. 2.1, Mr. Ono expresses this view thus:

Here, Mr. Ono uses the notion of limited contact with English speakers to define the everyday life of Japanese people as monolingual. Furthermore, his use of the deictic expression “we” constitutes both an addressee-exclusive form and a “we-body” or “national body” form (Billig, 1995). As such, the utterance *we can’t talk with them* strengthens the ideological links between language and nation state, while simultaneously underpinning perceived negative cultural traits of all Japanese people as a source of ethnic identity. This relates to Pigott’s (2015, p. 216) argument that particular discourses in Japanese EFL education reinforce “the notion that there is something quintessentially Japanese in failing at English”.

Perhaps the most obvious evidence in the data of the “monolingual Japan” view—and by implication Japanese individuals as monolingual—comes from a worksheet produced by Mr. Ono, which includes the cloze statement “Japanese use one _____. It’s Japanese” (the answer being “language”). Figure 2.2 includes a sample of classroom discourse in which the conflation between nationality and language is also explicit (Fig. 2.2).

Here, the monolingual paradigm is applied to suggest that all Korean people can only speak Korean and that communication between two people of different cultures requires a third party—the interpreter—whose responsibility is to ensure mutual intelligibility. Glasgow (2014) identifies a similar problematic discourse related to team-teaching in Japanese secondary schools. The most significant (and unfortunate) implication of Mr. Ono’s views is that NNEST are posited as poor or deficient language learners. In lines 6 and 7 of the following sample of classroom

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance
1	Mr. Ono:	Now, there are many foreign foreigners in Sapporo. [mmh] But we
2		don’t often unusual meet and talk of course talk [mmh] we can’t talk
3		[mmh] with them. [mmh]

Fig. 2.1 Sakura JHS (14 May 2013)

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance	Translation
1	Mr. Ono:	Korea Korean Korean can't Ja- can't	
2		understand Japanese. So in- we need	
3		interpreters.	
4	S1:	通訳.	Interpreting.
5	Mr. Ono:	Very good. Very good. Very good.	

Fig. 2.2 Sakura JHS (June 26)

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance
1	Mr. Ono:	Later, Bouchard 先生 (teacher), later could you tell them the difference
2		between <i>be going to</i> and different?
3	Bouchard:	Yeah.
4	Mr. Ono:	Uh sorry will yeah.
5	Bouchard:	Will. Sure I will.
6	Mr. Ono:	Yes. But ju- in Japan junior high school students can't understand the
7		difference.

Fig. 2.3 Sakura JHS (14 May 2013)

discourse, Mr. Ono presents all Japanese JHS students as limited in their capacity to process linguistic information (Fig. 2.3).

This perception surfaces again in the following interview sample where he describes one of the characters in the MEXT-approved Sunshine English Book 2 (Fig. 2.4).

This narrative sample reveals two problematic assumptions: (a) fluent Japanese English speakers are exceptions—i.e. they possess “foreign” features—and (b) EFL students are unlikely to attain fluency in the L2. In lines 10 and 11, however, Mr. Ono does not fully agree with students’ views. Finally, and perhaps more salient to the theme in this section, Mr. Ono commented later on that, while he thinks that a few students at his school might work abroad and become bilingual in the future, he also thinks very few of them will actually do so.

In sum, the “monolingual Japan” and NNEST as “poor” or “deficient” themes (a) can be located in multiple data sources and (b) reinforce the linguistic and (to some extent) the racial arguments in native-speakerism. In the next section, I explore evidence in the data drawing links between Japan as a geographical entity and “Japaneseness” as an aspect of Japanese national identity. While conceptually different from the “monolingual Japan” theme, elements explored in the following section reinforce it.

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance
1	Bouchard:	what are students kind of reaction or opinion about this textbook?
2	Mr. Ono:	Student opinion? [uh] Mmh. Some teachers some students said. For
3		example, Yuki is Japanese girl, [uh] but the CD is very very co- uh like
4		foreigner. [Mmh, her voice?] Like English speaking yes. [...]
5	Bouchard:	So the students find this strange? That Yuki has a very good
6		pronunciation in English? [Yes] Ah.
7	Mr. Ono:	Yuki is Japanese but uh students said uh she's Japanese but CD is very
8		very [uh] good pronunciation, and fast.
9	Bouchard:	What's your response? How do you react to this? (laughing)
10	Mr. Ono:	Mmh. Yeah, I think she started English uh earlier [uh] So, she's a good
11		speaker.

Fig. 2.4 Sakura JHS (8 May 2013)

2.3.2.2 Linking Geography and Identity

Part of the “monolingual Japan” theme found in the data is the notion that Japan—the country—is a unified entity possessing unique geographical, social, political and cultural features and that its citizens share common characteristics as a result. In this way, language, psychology and geography are fused, as shown in Fig. 2.5.

Defining Japan as an island, Ms. Inoue implies that people of Japanese ethnicity are geographically and culturally cut off from the rest of the world. She justifies what she sees as a general lack of interest in foreign countries and cultures among young Japanese people by drawing a direct link between the nation as a geographical entity and the individual as a psychological reality. Mr. Ono reproduces this argument thus (Fig. 2.6):

Again, Japan is defined as an archipelago both geographically and culturally separated from other nations, an environment ill-suited for foreign language learning and intercultural exchanges. The culminating argument here is that geography bears direct relevance to the psychology of a said unified Japanese population. In Fig. 2.7, Ms. Inoue stretches this perspective further by bridging psychology with biology.

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance
1	Ms. Inoue:	Something so uh in past [uh] uh stu- Japanese people uh 日本は(Japan)
2		[uh] uh Japan is island, so uh I don't in uh I uh they aren't interested
3		in 関心が(interest) indifferent for the other country.

Fig. 2.5 Asahi JHS (5 October 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Mr. Ono:	Japanese English ability is low [mmh] because you you know Japan is
2		communicate with the Ja- around Japan sea. [mmh] (drawing a picture
3		of Japan on a paper) So we can't go [mmh] other places.

Fig. 2.6 Sakura JHS (21 June 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Ms. Inoue:	some students can't uh understand the English or [uh]
2		なんだろう生まれてからも持ってるものが (it's something they've had since
3		birth) [mmh] なんだろう英語がわからない (how can I say they don't
4		understand English).

Fig. 2.7 Asahi JHS (5 October 2013)

Later in this narrative, Ms. Inoue draws additional references to a said English “allergy” among Japanese pupils and said inability to express “true” feelings in Japanese. In this way, she develops the notion of a Japanese “uniqueness” based on negative features (e.g. ethnocentricity, poor language learning aptitudes), thus recalling Pigott’s (2015) argument stated earlier. Parallel to the portrayal of NNEST as “poor” or “deficient” is the notion that NEST are, for Japanese EFL learners, ideal references to target language and culture, a theme which I explore in the following section.

2.3.2.3 NEST as Ideal References to Target Language and Culture

References to NEST as ideal L2 models were observed more or less consistently in teacher narratives and classroom data, suggesting moderate support for native-speakerism by teachers. This shows that the linguistic feature of native-speakerism is also of relevance to observed EFL practices. As such, references to NEST as ideal models constitute the clearest evidence of native-speakerism in the data. The sample of classroom discourse below shows how EFL students also adhere to the notion of the NEST as owner of “genuine” or “real” English (Fig. 2.8).

Here, a simple deviance from standard textbook greeting (lines 4 and 5) leads S1 to index NEST identity by distinguishing “real English” from “learner English”. This notion was particularly salient in the data, as the following eight samples show (Fig. 2.9).

A distinction between “real English” and “learner English” is also made, further reinforcing the NNEST as poor or deficient learner discourse. Here, however, it is based on interlocutors’ ethnicity. In the following excerpt, Ms. Ishida indexes a NNEST identity to define “real” English as beyond her reach (Fig. 2.10).

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>	<u>Translation</u>
1	S1:	Hello.	
2	Bouchard:	How are you?	
3	S1:	Thank you, uh. I'm fine.	
4	Bouchard:	Thank you, no thank you. You don't need to	
5		thank me.	
6	S1:	超native. 超native.	So native. So native.

Fig. 2.8 St-Maria J&SHS (18 June 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Mr. Ono:	Mmh. ALT, Assistant Language Teacher and foreign people
2		example like you [uh huh] oh I think English class use or listens real
3		English. [OK] So I'm Japanese.

Fig. 2.9 Sakura JHS (8 May 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Ms. Ishida:	Mmh I'm not a native. [mmh] But I have to teach it.
2	Bouchard:	When you say you are not a native speaker, uh are you saying for
3		example that (name of current ALT at Heiwa JHS) 先生(teacher)
4		[mmh] is a better teacher than you are?
		[...]
5	Ms. Ishida:	Mmh I can confirm him, [mmh] so is it true? [uh] Or which is better?
6		[uh] And so I have a question, [uh] many questions (laughing).
7		[mmh] Mmh I need.

Fig. 2.10 Heiwa JHS (10 February 2014)

In this sample, the owner of “real” English is the NEST, who then becomes a necessary source of knowledge for the Japanese JHS teacher. Within this paradigm, Ms. Ishida requires the ALT’s input to confirm whether her views on or understandings of L2 processes are accurate. Ms. Ishida’s view of the ALT’s English as the “real thing” is confirmed in Fig. 2.11.

In Fig. 2.12, Ms. Inoue refers to “real” English in her argument that NEST are essential to EFL education, especially with regard to the teaching of prosody and culture.

Her beliefs were also instantiated into classroom practice, as the following sample of classroom discourse shows (Fig. 2.13).

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Bouchard:	what is the role of the ALT uh the native English speaker in the junior
2		high school?
3	Ms. Ishida:	Ah real [mmh] realistic [mmh] realia.

Fig. 2.11 Heiwa JHS (10 February 2014)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Bouchard:	do you think that native speakers are uh essential?
2	Ms. Inoue:	Ah yes.
3	Bouchard:	Yeah?
4	Ms. Inoue:	Uh.
5	Bouchard:	They are very important to their education. OK. If you didn't have A-
6		uh ALTs?
7	Ms. Inoue:	Uh I think it's students can't uh know about other countries' people
8		[uh] and how to pronunciation. [uh] Uh not Japanese not Japanese
9		people's pronunciation. And uh touch or feel the uh other countries'
10		culture. [mmh] Mmmh I think. [...] I think advantage is uh students
11		can listen to the real English. [mmh] Or the uh I forgot the meaning of
12		uh 訛(accent) 訛(accent).

Fig. 2.12 Asahi JHS (19 October 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>	<u>Translation</u>
1	Ms. Inoue:	最初はみんなの前でやるのなれてって	Now that we've read in front of
2		、そのあとにねせっかく ジェイがいる	others for the first time; from
3		から、どんな発音って気をつけて。	now on, because Jay
4		あ? なれて行こ。	(Bouchard) is here, be careful of
5			your pronunciation. Uh? Let's
6			get used to it.

Fig. 2.13 Asahi JHS (5 September 2013)

Expressing an almost identical view during one of our interviews, Mr. Ono combines language and culture to construct NEST as essential to EFL education in Japanese JHS (Fig. 2.14).

Also noticeable in Fig. 2.15, which includes a sample of classroom discourse, is the manifestation of Mr. Ono's belief in the ownership of "real" English by NEST.

In these ideological constructions of the NEST as essential and as owner of "real" English, we can also notice the portrayal of the NEST as a "tool". This

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Mr. Ono:	when I'm have trouble uh English is foreigner is the best. [mmh] So I
2		want students know [mmh] real English or real other country's
3		culture.

Fig. 2.14 Sakura JHS (21 June 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>	<u>Translation</u>
1	Mr. Ono:	なんか前の説明以てるな。じゃそれ	It's like what I've explained
2		をと -	before. Alright, this - Mr.
3		せっかくブシャー先生にね来てもらっ	Bouchard told us, and Mr.
4		て、それブシャー先生実際の体験にあ	Bouchard's experience is real,
5		る。聞いたほうがいい。	so we should listen to it.

Fig. 2.15 Sakura JHS (15 May 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Bouchard:	what is the role of native English speaking ALTs in your class?
2	Mr. Ono:	[...] Oh they speak English. [mmh] So-
3	Bouchard:	Their only purpose is to speak [Yes] English.
4	Mr. Ono:	Purpose yes. So if they have students and ALTs interviews [mmh] uh
5		they can speak Eng - children speak can English [mmh] and get
6		answersやった (great!) confident [mmh] and so on. [mmh] Only it is
7	Bouchard:	the aim.
8	Mr. Ono:	That's the only aim.
9		Yes.

Fig. 2.16 Sakura JHS (21 June 2013)

instrumental perspective in native-speakerism is clear in the following interview sample (Fig. 2.16).

Here, the NEST is said to be essential to EFL education for two related purposes: providing a context for L2 use and raising learners' confidence.

In sum, there is ample evidence found in multiple data sources indicating strong support for the notion that NEST are ideal references to target language and culture, making this particular theme the most salient in this chapter. In the next section, I focus on the portrayal of NEST as problematic, a minor yet relevant element in the data.

2.3.2.4 NEST as Problematic

So far, the data have revealed extensive evidence that NEST are seen by teachers as essential to EFL education, largely because of the assumption that they own “real” English. In contrast, teachers also expressed concerns, or negative views, regarding NEST. While Ms. Inoue identified scheduling as the main problem when dealing with ALTs, she also argued that some ALTs may not have sufficient communication skills (regardless of language) which, in her opinion, can cause problems for students. In Fig. 2.17, she relates this said lack of communication skills among certain ALTs to said misanthropic feelings among ALTs.

The utterance *don't like human* is particularly revealing because it transcends the view of ALTs as pedagogical “tools” by emphasizing concerns beyond the linguistic realm. It also reveals the possibility for cultural and linguistic misunderstandings between foreign ALTs and Japanese EFL teachers to lead to complications in personal and professional relationships—e.g. mutual mistrust, refusal to engage in problem-solving processes, lack of empathy for one another, increasing detachment, nonchalance. Simultaneously, Ms. Inoue's comment reveals an adherence to the behavioural aspect of native-speakerism, which suggests that the NEST should be friendly and entertaining. A similar view is expressed by Mr. Ono in lines 6, 7 and 9 below (Fig. 2.18).

This narrative sample is complex, contradictory and therefore revealing. In lines 1, 2 and 3, my goal as the interviewer is to explore the racial argument in native-speakerism by eliciting Mr. Ono's views on the positioning of the NEST as Caucasian from an inner circle country. Mr. Ono recognizes a certain racial bias among the staff at Sakura JHS and does not feel comfortable elaborating on the issue further—hence the abrupt thank you in line 4. Instead, he focuses on the tendency among ALTs to use Japanese with students as a problem—thus supporting the linguistic argument in native-speakerism—and as the result of ALTs' said lack of motivation. In line 13, the combination of national and linguistic identities shows clear support for the notion of the NEST as monolingual individual, thus offering a parallel to the “monolingual Japan” theme. While the

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Ms. Inoue:	[ALTs] have to uh use good pronunciation and have a good uh best of
2		skills. [uh] But uh the most important is mmh communicate with
3		people. [mmh] Mmh uh not not Japa- Japanese じゃなく てもなんでも(not
4		only with Japanese people, anyone). Uh for example uh mmh only the
5		uh only high level English skill uh but don't like people [uh] とか (such
6		as) don't like human [mmh] or something like that. と (and) uh
7		students don't like English yeah.

Fig. 2.17 Asahi JHS (19 October 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Bouchard:	do you think it is OK for Sakura JHS for example to have an Indian
2		ALT? If you say English is most important [uh] do you think if there is
3		an [ahh] Indian ALT?
4	Mr. Ono:	Uh a little bias uh bias [Ah OK.] yeah. Thank you.
5	Bouchard:	OK. Can can you explain this [uh] bias?
6	Mr. Ono:	I think some ALTs don't use mostly don't use English. [mmh] They
7		don't be glad and they don't be happy
8	Bouchard:	Ah they are not happy with this ALT job. (laughing)
9	Mr. Ono:	They don't think it is good.
10	Bouchard:	Ah so they don't really like their job [uh] Uh. So do you think so about
11		(name of previous ALT at Sakura JHS) who comes here? [mmh] She's
12		not very happy about her job?
13	Mr. Ono:	She is from America. [mmh] Yeah. So she only use English.

Fig. 2.18 Sakura JHS (15 May 2013)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>	<u>Translation</u>
1	Ms. Ishida:	一番下を見てください、	Look at the bottom
2		発音っていうところ見てください。あ -	part, the part where
3		あまりですね、うんとデック先生意識しませんよね、	it says
4		イギリスの方なので。意識してI learned a lot	“pronunciation.”
5		about.	Mr. Deck doesn't
			really notice this,
			since he is from
			England. Please
			notice.

Fig. 2.19 Heiwa JHS (13 November 2013)

bridging of national and linguistic identity is also evident in the following sample of classroom discourse, the linguistic argument in native-speakerism surfaces with regard to varieties of English (Fig. 2.19).

Here, the British identity of the ALT at Heiwa JHS—Deck sensei—is used as justification for his said inability to notice prosodic nuances.

So far, the above analysis has shown not only traces of native-speakerism in teacher narratives but also evidence from other data sources of ideological processes aligned with native-speakerism. Both within and across data sources, the monolingual paradigm is combined with notions including “real English” and poor language learning aptitudes. Evidence of native-speakerism in multiple data sources suggests that the discursive features of the ideology are at times instantiated into

practice, which reveals interesting insight into the relative importance of the ideology to observed educational processes. The following section uncovers elements in the data which contradict these tendencies.

2.3.2.5 Contradictions to Native-Speakerism in Teacher Narratives

As the data triangulation in this section shows, traces of native-speakerism in teacher narratives are not always consistent. More broadly speaking, there is ample evidence showing gaps and contradictions in teachers’ accounts as well as between discourse and observed practice. In this section, I discuss evidence contradicting native-speakerism tenets, and in the process, I bring attention to the importance of analysing gaps and contradictions in teacher narratives. To some extent, the narrative samples in Figs. 2.20 and 2.21 contradict the notion of Japan as a monolingual environment.

The notion of Japan as a monolingual environment is challenged by Mr. Ono’s suggestion that Japanese can use English to communicate with each other in the classroom and in meetings. In arguing thus, Mr. Ono provides a divergent view from his earlier references to Japanese EFL learners as monolingual individuals. In Fig. 2.21, Ms. Tanaka communicates a similar viewpoint.

Here, Japan is depicted as a site in which business communication can potentially take place in English. However, while Ms. Tanaka’s argument above locates

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance
1	Bouchard:	When you say communicating with other people in English, who are
2		those other people?
3	Mr. Ono:	Yeah uh for example, oh when they are students [mmh] in uh with
4		Japanese students. [mmh] Or with ALTs [mmh] or with English
5		teachers. [mmh] For adults, uh with a few [mmh] a few adults with
6		using English in the meeting [mmh] and so on yeah.

Fig. 2.20 Sakura JHS (21 June 2013)

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance
1	Bouchard:	How important is it for [Japanese EFL students] to actually learn
2		[English]?
3	Ms. Tanaka:	Mmh when they become adult [uh] they have to probably use more
4		English in business. [uh huh] Uh they have to negotiate [uh] something in
5		English ah so when they graduate from high school I want them to
6		achieve that those abilities

Fig. 2.21 St-Maria J&SHS (2 August 2013)

Line	Interlocutor	Utterance
1	Ms. Tanaka:	we have international exchange students [Yeah] throughout the year.
2		And (name of a student) uh accept one student from Thailand. [mmh]
3		And she has lots of chances to use English. [mmh] So uh outside the
4		class or inside the class [uh] it doesn't matter. She feels she is now
5		ownership. She is-
6	Bouchard:	She owns-
7	Ms. Tanaka:	Owns that language.

Fig. 2.22 St-Maria J&SHS (2 August 2013)

practical L2 use in future situations beyond JHS education, in Fig. 2.22 below she also locates practical L2 use in the present.

This is, however, the only reference in the data to target language ownership by Japanese EFL learners. Also of interest here is indication that practical L2 use necessarily involves communication with a non-Japanese interlocutor. A similar view (recorded in field notes) was expressed by Mr. Ono as we entered his classroom: “You can use English wherever you go in the world”, adding “If we know English, we do not have trouble anywhere in the world. We must respect all countries, languages, cultures and people. English is the best”. It is not clear, however, whether Mr. Ono’s utterance *anywhere in the world* includes Japan. Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest that teacher narratives reveal a range of views—some of them conflicting—regarding Japanese EFL learners as monolingual individuals.

In the recorded classroom data, few traces of discourses contradicting native-speakerism were identified. On 30 January 2014, Ms. Ishida showed a YouTube video of an interview of Keisuke Honda, a famous Japanese soccer player who had just been hired by the soccer club AC Milan. In Fig. 2.23, she is commenting on Honda’s use of English.

The statement *even with imperfect English we can communicate our thoughts to people all over the world* clearly challenges the view of Japanese people as poor or deficient language learners. Also of interest, Ms. Ishida demonstrates awareness that fostering the development of pupils’ L2 communicative skills requires more than the teaching of L2 grammar. In an interview, soon after the above excerpt was recorded, she demonstrates awareness of sociolinguistic aspects of foreign language learning (Fig. 2.24).

What is also noticeable here is the deictic expression “we” used by Ms. Ishida here to refer to all Japanese people and thus as both an addressee-exclusive form and a “we-body” or “national body” form (see Mr. Ono’s use of “we” in Fig. 2.1 above), thus a reference to Japan as a geographical entity populated by a single and unified ethnic group.

The above analysis has combined both descriptive and critical perspectives on the data. In the discussion below, I focus more explicitly on the two main concerns

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>	<u>Translation</u>
1	Ms. Ishida:	彼の英語いろいろ間違えがあります。	He makes a lot of mistakes. But
2		さて、あの誤解してほしくないのは彼の間	I don't want you to
3		違えをして気するためにやってるんじゃない	misunderstand that I am
4		くて、え、彼の英語聞き取り君たち聞き取る	showing you this clip to point
5		と思います。オーなるほどなるほど。	out his mistakes. I think you
6		まあ、中学校英語で全世界に伝えることが	can all understand his English.
7		出来るんだって言うことがしてほしいって	Oh I get it I get it. I want you to
8		言う一つ。	remember that even with
			junior-high school English we
			can communicate our thoughts
			to people all over the world.

Fig. 2.23 Heiwa JHS (January 30)

<u>Line</u>	<u>Interlocutor</u>	<u>Utterance</u>
1	Bouchard:	Do you think English education in Japan has an impact, an effect, an
2		an influence on Japanese culture?
3	Ms. Ishida:	Mmh we can see and the listen [uh] and uh everywhere [uh] any time
4		[uh] and uh using using English [uh] uh even uh Japanese [OK.] even
5		Japanese (inaudible). Uh for example, Honda [uh] so we treated uh
6		this week.

Fig. 2.24 Heiwa JHS (28 January 2014)

in this chapter, which are the extent to which explicit references to native-speakerism can be found in the data and the conclusions which can be drawn about the relationship between native-speakerism and observed EFL practices.

2.4 Discussion

The above analysis has revealed support by teachers—both in discourse and in practice—for the notion that NEST are ideal references to target language and culture. As the most salient theme in this chapter, this notion is, according to Rivers (2011), based on four distinct and related features: linguistic, racial, behavioural and cultural. The above analysis has shown that all four features are present in the data, although the linguistic features are clearly more prominent.

Arguably, Japanese EFL teachers' support for the monolingual paradigm, most noticeable in portrayals of both Japanese EFL learners and NEST as monolingual

individuals, leads them to support the “ideal NEST” view in both discourse and practice. In the data, the “ideal NEST” concept and the monolingual paradigm were noticeably combined with notions including “real English”—parallel to Derivry-Plard’s (2014) notion of “authentic” versus “inauthentic” speakers—and Japanese EFL learners’ said poor language learning aptitudes. To some extent, these findings also echo results gathered from a study conducted by Matsuura, Fujieda & Mahoney (2004), which reveals that a majority of Japanese EFL teachers do not see individual bilingualism as the goal of Japanese EFL education. They also underscore the importance of the monolingual paradigm in the Japanese EFL context, particularly with regard to the positioning of Japanese EFL learners as monolingual individuals in constant need of L1 support.

The issue of monolingualism in Japanese EFL education can be explored from the perspective of language ideology. Ideologies linking language and nation essentially highlight national languages as pivotal to the construction of national identities. Byram (2008) states that national languages possess cognitive, affective and behavioural importance: “Cognitively it is crucial for further learning within and beyond school. Affectively it symbolizes national identity and is associated with iconic texts and national culture. Behaviourally it is a skill that has to be honed in order to acquire work and economic independence within the national society” (p. 104). The consequence for national educational policy and practice is that, as the national language becomes a pedagogical priority, it is also seen by agents active in a nationalized education system as a taken for granted entity. Furthermore, the national language becomes a vital possession of the state requiring protection from outside influences, making foreign language education a paradoxical project for foreign language teachers and learners.

From the perspective of modernist language ideologies, Japanese is considered to be the first non-Western language to have been modernized to become a recognized national language. According to Heinrich (2012), however, this particular legacy is somewhat problematic for the internationalization of Japanese society:

Language becomes ideologically loaded by the linking of language with non-linguistic matters, some of the most important of these links being concerned with history and society. Of the historical connections, there exists the idea that all Japanese speak Japanese and that they always have done. Another such belief asserts that Japanese is and has always been the first language of all Japanese, and also that it is the only language of Japan. Thus, Japanese constitutes a common bond between all Japanese since time immemorial, as well as a barrier between Japanese and non-Japanese (p. 172).

The geographical connotation in the “Japan-as-island” argument voiced by Mr. Ono and Ms. Inoue echoes processes related to cultural integration, or the promotion of the “image of culture as a coherent pattern, a uniform ethos or a symbolically consistent universe” (Archer, 1996: xvii). It reinforces the view of Japan as a geographical entity populated by a single and unified ethnic group, or a “tribe” of islanders (in contrast to continental people, jungle people, desert people, arctic people, etc.). This creates the image of an integrated community from which particular beliefs and practices are said to emerge uniformly among the people who

populate this community. Therefore, in the “Japan-as-island” argument, the word “island” has both geographical and psychological connotations.

However, while traces of native-speakerism have been found in multiple data sources, these traces remain marginal when compared with the entire body of data gathered for this study. As such, it is safe to say that the work in this chapter has revealed limited evidence of native-speakerism directly impacting observed EFL practices. Since random traces of native-speakerism-related elements were uncovered at the levels of structure (policy discourse) and agency (e.g. teacher interviews, recorded classroom discourse, teacher-produced materials), native-speakerism therefore cannot be identified as a determinant force in observed EFL practices.

Nevertheless, the work in this chapter has uncovered conflicting views in teacher narratives regarding Japanese EFL learners as monolingual individuals. Contradictions in teacher narratives and across data sources may be due to the following possibilities:

1. teachers may have limited knowledge of the issues or facts referred to during interviews;
2. teachers may recognize the facts and issues raised, but may not see them as pertinent to their everyday teaching practice;
3. teachers may wish to provide me with “something I can work with”;
4. teachers may reproduce arguments previously heard or read, felt to be appropriate to particular questions or communicative situations (e.g. “This is what Mr. Bouchard must want me to say”);
5. teachers may feel under evaluative pressure, thus wanting to project a positive self-image;
6. teachers may constantly formulate and revisit ideas as part of a broader process of self-organization and creation of new states of being (Mercer, 2014) and knowing.

While there is limited space in this chapter to do so, analysis of the contradictions in teachers’ expressed views can reveal a more fractured and diffused picture of native-speakerism at the level of agency. It also reminds us to think of people’s words and actions as (a) not necessarily consistent, (b) resulting from the complex interaction between agency, structure and culture and (c) part of agentive mediation of structural/cultural constraints and enablements, as human agents attempt to achieve specific goals in context and at specific points in time (Archer, 2004, 2012)—and not inevitably from structural—or ideological—imposition or control. As such, instead of viewing contradictions within narratives and across data sources as problematic features, they can be understood as strong indications that agentive mediation and human reflexivity are at play. Like ideologies, contradictions can therefore be conceptualized as points of tension we, as critical social researchers, need to explore in order to gain greater insight into the complex mediating process between structural, ideological and agentive forces, as well as the potential for change.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter has looked at teacher narratives from a stratified perspective and explored native-speakerism as a discourse of inclusion/exclusion in context. It has revealed support among four Japanese JHS English teachers for the notion that NEST are ideal references to target language and culture. These teachers' belief in the monolingual paradigm—positing both Japanese EFL learners and NEST as monolingual individuals—leads them to support the notion of the “ideal NEST” in both discourse and practice. These native-speakerism features in the data were most salient when arguments related to “real English” and Japanese EFL learners as poor language learners were expressed. However, it was also shown that native-speakerism is not a generating or organizing force in observed EFL education. Instead, it is more appropriate to identify native-speakerism as part of a wide array of cultural beliefs and representations which may or may not be drawn from by social agents as they engage in the task of teaching and learning English.

Furthermore, the presence of contradictions within narratives and across data sources has shown that, while native-speakerism is a problematic ideology of inclusion/exclusion, it also needs to be conceptualized as part of a range of possibilities and outcomes emerging from the complex interaction and mediation between structure and agency. Consequently, native-speakerism critique needs an approach, or a combination of approaches, which can account for imperfections and contradictions in the ways EFL teachers talk about and experience the world. This involves greater epistemological emphasis in narrative analysis on agency as a complex and situated process of people negotiating the discrepancies and contradictions in their everyday lives, given the tools and means available to them.

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Author Biography

Jérémie Bouchard is a tenured Lecturer at Hokkai Gakuen University, Sapporo, Japan, and has a doctoral degree at the University of Birmingham, UK. In his research, he explores potential links between ideological discourses and EFL education in Japanese junior high schools. By providing an ethnographic look into this particular stratum of the Japanese school system, he hopes to reveal greater insight into ideology in context as well as the links between structural and agentive processes shaping foreign language education in Japanese secondary schools.

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