

Characterizations of native speakers by language teachers and students of Japanese and Chinese in the U.S.

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Abstract

This study provides a report on the data collected from the survey questionnaires and interviews from language teachers and students of Japanese and Chinese about their characterizations of native speakers (N=593). Quantitative data revealed that many participants associated native-speaker status with a variety of abilities, some of which were rather overrated. Qualitative data showed that participants judged someone's identity as a native or nonnative speaker of the target language by criteria such as their appearance, name, and linguistic ability. Statistical analysis indicated that participants' status as language teachers or students, the language program, and the native language (Chinese and Korean) were found to be significant in impacting participants' characterizations of native speakers. With the effects of globalization and increasing number of "atypical" native and nonnative speakers in the field of language teaching, this paper proposes to question and rethink our assumptions about native and nonnative speakers.

Key words: native speaker, nonnative speaker, teachers' beliefs, students' beliefs, Japanese, Chinese.

1. Introduction

Although language proficiency scales typically used in measuring one's level of language proficiency in the language assessment community (e.g., ACTFL, ILR, CEFR, etc.) do not differentiate between native and nonnative speakers, we often see “native or near native fluency” specified as one of the qualifications in job postings for language teachers. Similarly, “typical” native and nonnative speakers are selected for data collection in linguistics and second language acquisition studies (Ohira, 2001). However, the term “native speaker” is oftentimes not defined, which leaves individuals to rely on their own interpretations of “native speaker.” Further, the common practice of treating native speakers as the standard for language teachers has led a number of language educators and students to believe that native speakers are more effective and qualified as language teachers than nonnative speakers (Phillipson, 1992).

Subsequently, it has been reported that this so called “native speaker fallacy” (Phillipson, 1992) has negatively impacted many nonnative language teachers of English (Braine, 1999; Llorca, 2006) and other foreign languages (Horwitz, 1996). For example, Horwitz points out that nonnative-speaking language teachers may become very cautious about their language use when strict standards are imposed by a certain language program in the areas of linguistic accuracy and pronunciation like that of native speakers. As a consequence, they may consciously or unconsciously avoid taking risks and refrain from using the target language. They do this in fear of not meeting the standards set by the program or making a mistake in front of students or other teachers. Such behaviors often limit the instructional options they provide as language teachers.

To counter this, nonnative-speaking language teachers' unique strengths have been discussed in the fields of TESOL (e.g., Medgyes, 1992), Japanese language education (e.g., Abe & Yokoyama, 1991; Suple, 1977), and foreign language education in general (e.g., Horwitz, 1996). These studies have pointed out that nonnative-speaking language teachers have various strengths that come from

their language-learning experience and possibly a shared first language and culture with learners. Specifically, they are thought to have an enhanced ability to explain the target language in detail, and the ability to provide emotional support as well as effective learning strategies, and the capability to be a model of a successful learner (Medgyes, 1992; Abe & Yokoyama, 1991). Being able to take advantage of these positive aspects of their identities and having support from their teaching community has helped many nonnative-speaking teachers feel empowered in their language teaching communities (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Park, 2012; Shin, 2006).

While studies about nonnative-speaking language teachers provide useful insights about their unique challenges, studies on this topic outside of English language education conducted in the U.S. are still limited in number (Meadows & Muramatsu, 2007). More importantly, another potential problem lies in the fact that researchers often rely on their own interpretations of native and nonnative speakers, and those who do not fit in the dichotomy of native and nonnative speakers are oftentimes disregarded. For example, Ferguson's (2005) study about native- and nonnative-speaking teachers of Spanish selected classes taught by "typical" native Spanish language teachers who grew up speaking Spanish in Mexico or Puerto Rico. Consequently, speakers of Basque and Catalan were considered a minority, and were excluded in the study. Further, to represent "typical" nonnative speakers of Spanish, she collected data from classes taught by "American" teachers, and classes consisted of "American" students. These teachers and students were born and raised in the United States, and learned or were learning Spanish as a foreign language. In the process of selecting students, heritage speakers were excluded because they did not represent the majority of foreign language students of Spanish in the program. The following survey item, used in a follow-up study by Meadows and Muramatsu (2007), shows their underlying assumption about what it means to be a nonnative-speaking teacher of Spanish in the U.S.

“I prefer an American teacher because I can ask questions in English.” (p. 108).

This statement implies that nonnative-speaking language teachers in the U.S. are commonly considered “Americans” of whom students “can ask questions in English.” While this statement may capture those who are “typically” considered nonnative-speaking teachers of Spanish in the U.S., it disregards other types of nonnative-speaking teachers of foreign languages whose first language and culture are not American English.

Theoretical Background

The most general definition of native speaker used in dictionaries is someone who has spoken a particular language since s/he was a baby (Cambridge Dictionaries, 2016), or learned to speak the language of the place where s/he was born as a child” (Merriam-Webster, 2016). However, outside the dictionaries, interpretation of “native speaker” and “nonnative speaker” may be influenced by certain beliefs or practices shared by different languages (Slobin, 1996), and they are further filtered by experience, beliefs and assumptions held by each individual in the community (Clark, 1996). Subsequently, in addition to the dictionary definition of native speaker, a variety of characterizations are often associated with one’s native (and nonnative) speaker status. For instance, a clipped word *neitibu* (from a borrowed term *neitibusupikā* ‘native speaker’) in Japanese is oftentimes used to refer to high proficiency in a foreign language, e.g., *anata no eego wa neitibu desu ne* ‘Your English is native (very good, like a native speaker).’ In contexts of English language education in Japan, the same word may also simply refer to language spoken by *gaikokujin* ‘foreigners’ with the assumption that they are all native speakers of English. In Japan, young white individuals are commonly displayed as native-speaking English instructors in advertisements, such as the promotional photo in Figure 1, from NOVA, a chain of English language schools in Japan. This disregards other foreigners living in Japan whose first language is not English, even though the majority of foreigners living in Japan today are in fact from Asia (Ministry of Justice, 2015).

Figure 1. Iconic native speaker of English in Japanese advertisement¹

The advertisement is set against a dark pink background. At the top left, the NOVA logo is enclosed in a white speech bubble, with the text 'NOVA' above 'なら'. To the right of the logo, the main headline reads '講師は全員外国人。' in large white characters. Below this, on the left, is a sub-headline '講師は全員 ネイティブスピーカーの外国人' followed by a paragraph of Japanese text. On the right side of the advertisement is a photograph of a smiling white male instructor with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and red tie, standing in what appears to be a classroom or office setting.

One of the sales points of NOVA advertised in Figure 1 is that all of their instructors are native-speaking foreigners (i.e. *'kōshi wa zen'in neitibusupikā no gaikokujin'* or 講師は全員ネイティブスピーカーの外国人). Interestingly, this sales point explicitly links the social status of *gaikokujin* 'foreigner' with being a native speaker of English, which is implicitly linked with the capability to teach English language. Essentially, all "foreigners"—people who look and talk like this—are believed to be qualified to teach the English language. This is what Phillipson (1992) called the native speaker fallacy.

One prominent source of Japanese people's tendency to consider white individuals as *neitibu* is the social division that is represented in what Kachru (1992) referred as the Three Circles of English, namely the Inner Circle (e.g. England, U.S., etc.), the Outer Circle (e.g., India, Phillipines, etc.), and the Expanding Circle (e.g., China, Japan, etc.). In TESOL, the English language varieties spoken in the Inner Circle countries are often considered the most "traditional," and such varieties are often demanded by language institutions and learners in the Expanding Circle countries, where

¹ <http://www.nova.co.jp/> (accessed on 5/25/2017).

they do not have their own established types of English. This is because English is mainly used for international communication in the Expanding Circle countries.² Even though the number of the non-white population is increasing rapidly in the U.S. in recent years,³ since the racially white population has been the majority of English speakers in the Inner Circle countries for a long time, this racial commonality of the white population has often taken on iconic status for them, and their English variety is commonly regarded as the “correct” one. Consequently, some language institutions and learners may have a strong preference for having racially white native speakers of English from the Inner Circle countries, and may regard non-white individuals and any nonnative speakers of English as less qualified in the job market for English language teachers (Braine, 2010; Nero, 2006).

Doerr (2009; p. 18-19) explains how ideologies of native speaker like the ones discussed above correspond to the three interconnected semiotic processes that Irvine and Gal (2000) have identified. The three processes are *iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure*. In the process of *iconization*, exemplary and ideologically motivated representations of the native speaker come to be indexed by certain commonalities (Clark, 1996) and interests shared by a certain dominant population in the linguistic community. The selection process of typical Spanish native and nonnative speakers (Ferguson, 2005; Meadows & Muramatsu, 2007) and the iconic native English speaker displayed in Figure 1 exemplify the process. According to Irvine and Gal, the distinction between iconized native and nonnative speakers is reinforced in a process resembling *fractal recursivity*, in which an opposition that is salient at one level of social life is projected onto some other level. For example, a hierarchical *social* relationship between native and nonnative speakers can be projected onto other levels, or domains, such as standard vs. non-

² On the other hand, the Outer Circle countries use English for intranational communication. They do not have to rely on the English varieties established among the Inner Circle countries as much since they have their own established type of “Englishes” (Canagaraja, 2013).

³ <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/07/01/484325664/babies-of-color-are-now-the-majority-census-says> (accessed on 5/19/17)

standard, linguistically correct vs. incorrect, or even morally good vs. bad. This explains why certain individuals associate nonnative identity with negative ends of these domains, and believe that nonnative-speaking language teachers to be untrustworthy and ineffective. Finally, in the process of *erasure*, those who do not possess the common traits that are iconic of “native” and “nonnative” speaker are oftentimes disregarded, as they are relegated to insignificant status. Individuals who belong to linguistic and/or racial minority (in some cases even the majority) groups are oftentimes demoted to a category of “insignificant” and are not accounted for. Recall that speakers of Basque and Catalan as well as heritage learners of Spanish were excluded from Ferguson’s (2005) study. Note also that non-white foreigners in Japan, even though they were the majority, were disregarded as *gaikokujin* in NOVA’s sales point (Figure 1). Additionally, there are other cases of disregarded minorities like *nikkeijin* ‘the Japanese diaspora,’ *gaikokujin* ‘foreigners,’ and *hāfu* ‘half’ or ‘biracial Japanese’ in some Japanese communities (Doerr, 2009). For instance, some people from Japanese communities had mixed feelings about Ariana Miyamoto who is biracial and identifies herself as *hāfu* Japanese and *hāfu* African American, when she became the newly crowned Miss Universe Japan (Wingfield-Hayes, 2015). They raised their concerns about her representing Japan on Twitter, as expressed in their comments such as “Is it ok to select a *hāfu* as Miss Japan” and “It makes me uncomfortable to think she is representing Japan.”

This kind of treatment towards minority groups is prevalent across various contexts in the world (Cekaite, 2012; Doerr, 2009; Doerr & Lee, 2011; Sato & Doerr, 2008; Paugh, 2012), and it has been reported that, in attempt to blend in with the dominant groups, some minority language speakers self-deny or hide their identity as minority language speakers (Freeman & Freeman, 2011; Park, 2012; Doerr, 2009). This is because identifying themselves as minority language speakers could have a pejorative effect on their social status, due to various types of conventions established by the dominant groups of people in their community. Such behaviors are more common when certain iconic representation of people or language comes to be regarded as fixed or homogeneous in a given

community, and in such communities, the conventional concept of native speaker is accepted as something universal or timeless, objective and neutral, and beyond political dispute (Woolard, 1998).⁴

In sum, people associate a variety of characterizations with one's native speaker status, and the conventional concept of the native speaker is created and supported by the processes of *iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure* in different communities.

Research Questions

This study, as one of the few studies that have been conducted in the U.S. on the native speaker fallacy outside of TESOL (Meadows & Muramatsu, 2007), attempts to provide additional insights on the same topic, by studying the ideologies associated with native-speaker status. Specifically, to account for the problems associated with using participants' own interpretations of "native speaker," this study will analyze how target "native" speakers and "nonnative" speakers are actually characterized by language teachers and students in a University-level Japanese and Chinese language program in the U.S. Specific research questions posed by this study are as follows:

- 1) How is a target native speaker perceived by language teachers and students?
- 2) What factors do they use to determine whether someone is a target native or nonnative speaker?
- 3) How does one's background relate to students' and teachers' perception of target native speakers?

Discussion will focus on the quantitative and qualitative data collected from survey questionnaires and interviews⁵ to identify

⁴ Quoted in Doerr (2009, p. 18).

different perspectives on the questions posed, as well as general trends in how native speakers are perceived in the language program investigated. Both the Japanese and Chinese language programs surveyed share the same language instruction approach called the pedagogy of performing another culture, the Performed Culture Approach (“PCA”) (cf. Walker, 2010; Christensen & Warnick, 2006).⁶

Methods

Participants

Language teachers and students of Japanese and Chinese at the investigated language programs in Autumn Semester 2014 to Autumn Semester of 2015 participated. In total, there were 29 teachers⁷ (Japanese=13, Chinese=16) and 564 students (Japanese=375, Chinese=218) who completed the survey. As part of the survey, both teachers and students were asked to provide their background information concerning their language program, gender, age, language level, race, and native language(s). They were given 10 to 15 minutes in class (or outside the class) to complete the survey. The research was voluntary and participants did not receive compensation for the study. Due to a lack of parental consent to participate in this study, anyone younger than 18 at the time of data

⁵ Other qualitative data have been collected through observation as part of the research (Tsuchiya, 2016), but due to limited space, this paper will focus only on the data collected from survey questionnaires and interviews.

⁶ In this approach, class time is divided into Act class and Fact class. In Act class, both teachers and students are expected to speak only the target language. In Fact class, both target language and English are used to discuss grammar, pragmatics, and communicative culture. Though it varied from course to course, the ratio of Act and Fact sessions in the language class was usually about 4:1, so there were considerably more Act classes than Fact classes. See Tsuchiya (2016) for more details about the language program.

⁷ There were 26 graduate students, two full-time lecturers (J=2) and a faculty member (C=1).

collection was excluded. Table 1 provides the summary of the number of participants for each category (See Tsuchiya 2016 for more details). Follow-up interview sessions were conducted and audio-recorded with 25 students of Japanese (Level 1=8; Level 2=10; Level 4=7), either as a one-on-one setting or as a group.

Table 1. Participants' demographics

Category	Variables (Frequency)					
Status	*Students (564)			Teachers (29)		
Lang Prog	*Japanese (375)			Chinese (218)		
Gender	*Male (302)		Female (283)		Unanswered (8)	
Age	18-24 (498)	25-30 (61)		31 or more (25)	Unanswered (9)	
Level	Level 1 (357)	Level 2 (120)		Level 3 or higher (87)	Teachers (29)	
Race	*White (292)	Black (35)	Asian (201)	Multi-racial (37)	Other (7)	Unanswered (13)
Native Lang(s)	*English (409)	Chinese (105)	Korean (10)	Multi-lingual (38)	Other (24) ⁹	Unanswered(7)

Survey questions

⁸ Categories marked with asterisks were used as reference categories in the statistical analysis.

⁹ Since the number of native speakers of Japanese was only 3, they are included in this category.

To illustrate how language teachers and students characterize a native speaker, a total of 19 statements about native speakers were laid out in the survey for students (Appendix A) and teachers (Appendix B). Each statement included one characterization of a native speaker, such as one's childhood language, nationality, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, various linguistic abilities, dialect, gestures, culture, and teaching ability, etc. In the survey, participants were asked to indicate whether they would include any of these characteristics in their definition of a native speaker. Students and teachers were given three options for each statement: "Yes," "No," and "Not necessarily."

To create a continuous variable to be used as the dependent variable in a multiple regression analysis in relation to participants' background, participants' definitions of "native speaker" were numerated based on the following scheme:

1. Add 1 point if a participant selected "Yes"
2. Add 0.5 point if a participant selected "Not necessarily"
3. Add no points if a participant selected "No"

For example, if a participant selected "Yes" for 11 items, "Not necessarily" for 6 items, and "No" for 2 items, then their total index score would be equal to 14. It is assumed that a total index score close to 19 indicates a rather specific, and perhaps idealized, definition of native speaker. STATA 14¹⁰ was used to run a regression analysis.

In another portion of the survey, teachers were asked whether and why they would consider themselves a native or nonnative speaker of the target language. Students, on the other hand, were asked whether and why they would consider their current teachers to be a native or nonnative speaker of the target language. In case they were uncertain about their or their teachers' identities as a

¹⁰ STATA is a statistical software package whose programs have been used for more than 30 years in various academic disciplines, such as behavioral sciences, economics, education, medicine, and sociology, etc. (<http://www.stata.com/>). It has a broad suite of statistical tools, which include multiple linear regression.

native or nonnative speakers, both teachers and students were also given the option of expressing their uncertainty (e.g., by replying “I cannot tell.”). In all cases, they were prompted to provide a reason for their response.

Results and Discussions

According to the quantitative results obtained from the survey, the majority of participants believe that native speakers are those who have been using the language since birth or early childhood (82%).¹¹ This is in line with a typical dictionary definition of “native speaker” (e.g. Cambridge Dictionaries, 2016; Merriam-Webster, 2016).

However, in addition to this consensus characterization, other specific characteristics, including some idealizing ones, were found to be associated with one’s identity as a native speaker. For example, many participants associated native-speaker identity with that person’s competency in a variety of subjects and situations (77%), a reading and writing ability (73%), and even an ability to use grammatical patterns without mistakes regardless of factors such as stress and anxiety (55%). Some respondents also associated native-speaker identity with the ability to teach their native language as a second language (30%), with having been educated in the target culture (26%), as well as with socioeconomic status (21%). Table 2 provides a summary.

¹¹ This number represents the percentage of participants answering “Yes” in the survey for each item.

Table 2. Participants' characterization of "native speaker"

	Characterizations	%
1.	Target language has been spoken since birth/early childhood	84%
2.	Competence in a variety of subjects and situations	77%
3.	Can act appropriately in target language communities	77%
4.	Can read and write in target language in a variety of contexts	73%
5.	Can use idioms in a variety of contexts	72%
6.	Familiarity with culture/tradition	67%
7.	Pronunciation without foreign accent	60%
8.	Can use grammar without errors under stress and anxiety	55%
9.	Target language is not influenced by another language	39%
10.	Can teach their native language as a second language	30%
11.	Educated in the target language education system	26%
12.	Speakers of the standard language	21%
13.	Monolingual speakers of the target language	20%
14.	A person who holds the citizenship of the target	17%
15.	Socially and economically affluent	12%
16.	Target-language-like name	8%
17.	Target-language-speaker-like appearance	7%
18.	Sexually straight	2%
19.	Male	0%

Among all participants, the mean index score for their definition of native speaker was 11.44 out of a maximum possible 19. This indicates that, on average, participants agreed to include (or at least partially include) more than half of the 19 characterizations listed in Table 2. While these characterizations of the native speaker seem to correspond with real-world facts, it is important to note that they are not necessarily true either. For instance, regarding item #8 on Table 2, most, if not all, native speakers make grammatical mistakes even without the influence of stress and anxiety (e.g. social networks on the Internet provide ample evidence of grammatical mistakes made by native speakers). Further, not all native speakers

learn to read and write in their native language (some languages do not have a writing system) (#4), or can effectively teach their native language as a second language without proper training (#10). These characterizations may be considered incidences of *iconizations* that lead to what Irvine and Gal (2000) referred as *fractal recursivity*. For instance, the opposition of the social identity as native or nonnative speaker may be projected as other, analogous oppositions in different domains, such as linguistic competence vs. incompetence, capability vs. incapability to teach, and educated vs. uneducated, etc. To some people, the term “nonnative” may be associated with many of the negative ends of such oppositions.

Criteria used to judge native-speaker identity

It is interesting to note that one’s appearance (#17, 8%), and name (#16, 7%) were not commonly included in respondents’ definition of “native speaker”. Nevertheless, qualitative data from the survey and interview sessions indicate that participants in fact frequently used these characteristics to judge whether someone is a target native or nonnative speaker. They also used traits such as the person’s linguistic ability (e.g., pronunciation, fluency, etc.) and attitude as a teacher (e.g., being confident and comfortable). For instance, participants made judgments about a person’s identity as a native speaker of Japanese or Chinese with comments like those presented below. Interestingly, teachers whose English quality was perceived to have problematic traits (e.g., “having an accent” and “having a difficult time explaining in English,” etc.) were more likely to be regarded by students as native speakers of the target language. Note that some of the iconic native-speaker characteristics listed in the survey resurface in these comments, such as “complete fluency,” “receiving education in the target language institution,” and “reading and writing ability.”¹²

¹² Interestingly, a few Level 1 students considered every one of their teachers to be Japanese because, to these students, their teachers were “great,” “extremely fluent,” and considered to “have great knowledge in the

- “(She) looks Japanese and also her name is a Japanese name and has no accent (in Japanese).”—Level 1 Japanese student
- “Japanese name and sounds like perfect speaker”—Level 2 Japanese student
- “I know she is from Japan. She speaks English with an accent.”—Level 1 Japanese student
- “Complete fluency, accent, and is Japanese.”—Level 2 Japanese student
- “Native speaker should be born in the nation, educated in native culture and tradition. If they satisfy these conditions, they are native speakers.”—Level 1 Japanese student
- “I was born and raised in Japan. I received education in Japanese up through secondary school.”—Japanese teacher

Aside from these iconic traits, another iconic characteristic of native speakers of Japanese that was brought up is particularly noteworthy. In one of the interview sessions, a group of Chinese students in a Level 2 Japanese class agreed in associating Japanese native-speaker identity with apologetic behaviors. One of them said, “We learn some Japanese action(s) from TV, from movie(s), and they (Japanese people) say “*a, sumimasen, sumimasen* (‘Oh, excuse me, excuse me.’).” This female student thought one of her Japanese teachers was a native speaker of Japanese because her teacher appeared nervous and apologized a lot in class, even though she knew that particular teacher’s last name sounded Chinese. In other words, the frequent enactment of apologetic behaviors indexed this particular teacher’s social identity as a native speaker of Japanese.¹³

On the other hand, “nervousness,” i.e. the absence of self-confidence mentioned above, along with other iconic characteristics

subject.” On the other hand, none of the students in the upper-level course thought of their white teachers as native speakers of the target language.

¹³ Similarly, ethnically Japanese person was associated with the activity of eating rice in Doerr and Lee’s study (2009).

of a nonnative speaker, was what indexed a teacher's "nonnative speaker" identity for other students. These criteria include "proficiency in language(s) other than Japanese/Chinese," "unnatural use of target language," "inability to answer questions with regards to the target language and culture," and "appearance," "nationality," or "name other than Japanese/Chinese." Selected participants' comments are listed below:

- "She was nervous in class."—Level 2 Japanese student
- "X-sensei has an American accent and appears white"—Level 2 Japanese student
- "I don't think X-sensei is a citizen/was born and raised in Japan."—Level 3 Japanese student
- "Still learning the language."—Level 3 Japanese student
- "When we ask cultural questions outside of textbook, she says "I'm not sure."—Level 2 Japanese student
- "Unnatural repetition of *-desu* when she speaks Japanese."—Level 2 Japanese student
- "I don't think her name is Japanese. I don't think a native speaker must necessarily have a Japanese name but as Japan is a homogeneous country, I assume that someone without a Japanese name is not a native speaker until told otherwise."—Level 1 Japanese student
- "She's totally Japanese but with Chinese last name"—Level 1 Japanese student
- "(She) speaks English very well."—Level 1 Japanese student
- "(I) heard (my teacher) talk Mandarin to students."—Level 1 Japanese student
- "I began learning Japanese at the age of 17 and feel I have attained a high level of fluency, but do not consider myself a native speaker mainly because of my late age of starting and not having the linguistic range of a native speaker (i.e. someone educated in Japan from a young age, or who received daily input in Japanese from a young age)."—Japanese teacher

One general trend that is worth mentioning is that students oftentimes viewed native- and nonnative-speaking language teachers as two homogeneous groups. When language teachers were thought to possess traits that deviated from the iconic “native speaker,” some students disregarded such traits in judging a teacher to be a native speaker. For example, with regards to a so called *hājū* teacher of Japanese whose ethnic traits were judged to be both “white” and “Japanese,” some students judged her a “nonnative speaker” because, to them, she appeared “white” and “American.” But other students perceived the same teacher to be a native speaker of Japanese because of her “mannerisms” and “Japanese heritage.” In this way, these students disregarded diverse traits that did not fit into the commonly assumed, homogenous dichotomy. This is an example of what Irvine and Gal (2000) have called *erasure*—the disregarding of deviations from an assumed characterization.

Interestingly, there are other students who did not make a judgment when some of their teachers displayed traits of both “native” and “nonnative” speaker of the target language. When their language teachers appeared to have an appearance, language ability, and/or behavior that deviated from the iconic image of a native or nonnative speaker of the target language, students made comments like the following, of both teachers who self-identified as native speakers of the target language and those who self-identified as nonnative speakers:

- “Excellent proficiency in both Japanese and English.”—Level 2 Japanese student
- “He has an accent (in English), but seems Americanized.”—Level 2 Japanese student
- “Japanese origin/American born, style of class, best English.”—Level 1 Japanese student
- “Half Japanese.”—Level 1 Japanese student

- “I think she might have had a both Asian and American influence”—Level 1 Japanese student
- “She looks nonnative on the outside but essentially fluent & cultured on the inside.”—Level 1 Chinese student
- “I am not really sure what I would consider myself...”—Japanese teacher

Table 3 provides a summary of the criteria that students used to judge their teacher’s identity as a native or nonnative speaker of the target language.

Table 3. Notable criteria used by students in judging their teacher’s nativeness¹⁴

Native speaker	Cannot tell	Nonnative speaker
Last name from target language	No sufficient knowledge about their teacher’s background	Non-target language last name
Appearance as target native speaker (e.g., Japanese, Asian)	Having traits on both sides (e.g., Good Japanese + Good English or appearance as non-Japanese or not comfortable teaching, etc.)	Appearance as non-target language speaker (e.g., white)
Fluency in target language		Fluency in non-target language (e.g., English)
Fluency in the standard dialect		Fluency in non-standard dialect (e.g., Cantonese)
Target language pronunciation not influenced by another language		Target language pronunciation influenced by
Good cultural		

¹⁴ Aside from just simply being told directly by their teachers.

<p>understanding in target language</p> <p>Confidence in target language</p> <p>Accented English</p> <p>Great teacher</p> <p>Mannerism associated with target culture</p> <p>Growing up in target language country</p> <p>High position in the program</p>		<p>another language</p> <p>Incomplete cultural understanding of the target language</p> <p>Learned target language</p> <p>Unaccented English</p> <p>Not comfortable teaching</p> <p>Not born and raised in target language country</p> <p>Growing up in non-target language countries</p>
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Statistical analysis by selected variables

This section presents participant background variables that were used in regression analysis to project their characterizations of native speakers. The independent variables used for the multiple regression analysis were as follows:

- Status (teacher and student),
- Language program (Japanese and Chinese),
- Gender (male and female),
- Age (18-24, 25-30, and 31-older),
- Language level (Level 1, 2, 3 or higher, teachers),
- Race (White, Black, Asian, mix race, and other race),
- Native language (English, Chinese, Korean, multilingual speakers, and other language speakers).

A summary of number of participants in each category and their average definition index score, multiple regression results with and without teacher participants is displayed in Table 4. Reference group is in the parentheses for each independent variable. The statistical analysis excluded 22 student participants and 4 teacher participants who did not respond to all of the survey items by leaving some of their background characteristics and/or survey items unanswered.

Table 4. Summary of number of participants for each variable, average definition index score, and regression analysis results with and without teacher participants

	N	Avg. def. index score	Teachers included		Teachers excluded	
			coef.	<i>p</i>	coef.	<i>p</i>
Status (students)	564	11.49				
Teachers	29	10.43	-1.92	0.00*	-	-
Lang Prog (Jap)	375	11.37				
Chinese	218	11.55	0.10	0.62	0.51	0.04*
Gender (male)	302	11.43				
Female	283	11.41	-0.28	0.13	-0.17	0.43
Age (18-24)	498	11.55				
25-30	61	10.80	-0.64	0.05*	-0.56	0.16
31 or older	25	10.54	-0.80	0.11	-1.16	0.10
Level (Level 1)	357	11.55				
Level 2	120	11.38	0.15	0.53	-0.06	0.82
Level 3	87	11.37	0.33	0.20	0.00	0.99
Teachers	29	10.43	-0.00	0.99	-	-
Race (white)	292	11.20				
Black	35	10.99	-0.55	0.15	-0.34	0.45
Asian	201	11.43	0.13	0.66	0.22	0.54
Mix	37	10.73	-0.61	0.11	-0.56	0.23
Other race	7	11.00	-1.07	0.09	-0.59	0.44
Native lang	409	11.15				

(Eng)						
Chinese	105	12.20	1.17	0.00*	1.00	0.02*
Korean	10	13.35	2.31	0.00*	2.75	0.00*
Mix	38	11.64	0.29	0.49	0.36	0.48
Other language	24	11.60	0.76	0.15	0.50	0.45
R-Square			0.30		0.07	
N	593	11.44	567		542	

* $p < .05$

As mentioned, the mean index score of native-speaker definition was 11.44 among all participants. According to the data displayed in Table 4, independent variables that were found to have a statistically significant association with participants' characterization of "native speaker" were participants' status as a teacher or student, the language program, and their native language (Chinese and Korean). Gender, age (without the teacher participants), language level, and race were not found to have a statistically significant association. In the following, a brief report about status and native language will be discussed. Due to page restrictions to provide adequate information about the language program, differences between Japanese and Chinese language programs will not be discussed in this paper.

Status

The teachers' lower mean index score for their characterization of "native speaker" (10.43) on Table 4 seems to indicate that their characterization is less overrated than that of students (11.49). The data obtained from regression analysis on Table 4 supports this finding, in that the teacher respondents' index score for defining "native speaker" had a significant negative association with that of student respondents on average, while holding other variables constant (coefficient = -1.92;¹⁵ $p = 0.00$). From

¹⁵ The coefficient for categorical variables in multiple regression is the difference between the referent group and the compared group in their dependent variable. In this instance, this coefficient indicates that the

this statistical result, it may be inferred that the teacher participants, including new and inexperienced teachers, were able to pick out more of the idealized characteristics that are not necessarily true in the survey. The R-square value shown on Table 4 also supports this finding. Specifically, the R-square value of these variables for the definition index score is 0.30, which indicates that about 30% of the variance is explained by the variables used in the statistical analysis. Interestingly, when teachers are excluded from the data, the R-square value drops down to 0.07, indicating that only about 7% of the variance is explained by variables without the status variable. This seems to indicate that being a language teacher in this program may have had a great impact on one's characterizations of "native speaker," even though they are mostly graduate students who are new or have been in the language teaching field for only a couple of years. More qualitative data, particularly the process of language teacher training¹⁶ and the socialization experiences of individual language teachers, need to be documented to find out what accounts for this significance.

Native Languages

Participants' native language, specifically those who grew up speaking Chinese or Korean, was found to be statistically significant. The mean index scores on Table 4 seem to indicate that native speakers of Chinese (12.20) and Korean (13.35) have a more idealized characterization of "native speaker" in comparison to native speakers

teachers' index score for defining "native speaker," while holding other variables constant, is on average 1.93 less than that of students.

¹⁶ Succinctly, these teachers all went through an intensive teacher training program for at least two to four weeks, and learned how to use Performed Culture Approach as a prerequisite to become a teacher in the program. Teacher trainings were provided by the selected language pedagogy experts in the language program. The training curriculum includes activities such as lectures on theoretical backgrounds of Performed Culture approach, discussions of teaching techniques such as how to set up contexts in class and providing error corrections, teacher demonstrations, and multiple teaching practicums which were followed by feedback sessions. See Tsuchiya (2016) for more details.

of English (11.15). Regression analysis supports this observation. Specifically, Table 4 shows that those who listed Chinese or Korean as their native language, in comparison to those who listed English as their only native language, were found to have a statistically positive association with the definition index score on average, while holding other variables constant (Chinese: coefficient=1.17; $p=0.00$; Korean: coefficient=2.31; $p=0.00$). This indicates that native speakers of Chinese or Korean participating in this study have a tendency to regard native speakers with more specific, idealized characterizations. As for the Korean speakers, while it may seem that their characterization of “native speaker” is more idealized than that of native speakers of Chinese, it is important to note that the number of participants whose native language is Korean was only 10, as compared to 105 for native speakers of Chinese. Therefore, more Korean participants are needed to confirm this finding. However, it is still noteworthy that these Korean speakers at different language levels of Japanese and Chinese show such similarity in their characterizations of “native speaker.” Again, more qualitative data, particularly, factors that can possibly influence how native speakers are perceived in Korean and Chinese communities, need to be studied in order to account for this significance.

While some people, especially those who grew up in a monolingual society with one dominant race, may treat race and language as similar categories, it is interesting to point out that the variable race, in contrast to native language, was not found to have a statistically significant impact on participants’ characterizations of native speakers.

In sum, the finding indicates that characterizations of native speakers are influenced by variables of one’s status as language teachers, the language program, and the native language. In contrast, variables of age, race, language level, and gender were not found to have a statistically significant impact on participants’ characterization of native speakers.

Summary and implications

In summary, quantitative data from the survey questionnaires (N=593) indicated that many participants associated native-speaker identity with a variety of abilities, some of which were rather overrated, such as competency in a variety of subjects and situations, an ability to use grammatical patterns without mistakes, as well as the ability to teach their native language as a second language. As summarized in Table 3, qualitative data showed that participants judged someone's identity as a native or nonnative speaker of the target language by criteria such as their appearance, name, and linguistic ability, even though these factors were not commonly included in respondents' definition of native speaker. Statistical analysis indicated that participants' status as language teachers or students, language program, and native language (Chinese and Korean) were found to have a statistically significant impact on their characterizations of native speakers.

In present-day practice, the term "native" speaker is still frequently used in reference to the standard "typical" native speakers. This practice puts any language teachers with deviating characteristics at risk of being marginalized as non-standard. With the effects of globalization, there are increasing number of teachers who have deviating characteristics from the "typical" native speaker, and their participation in the field will motivate us to question and rethink our assumptions about the native speaker standard.

As we reflect on our tendency to make judgements based on one's native speaker identity, it is important to remember that none of us has all the idealized characteristics of "the native speaker" of our own language, and there are many individual factors that contribute to the effectiveness of language teachers. As scholars like Doerr (2009) and Sato and Doerr (2008) suggest, we need to question and rethink our assumptions about what we mean by the term native speaker. Unlike variables like age, race, and gender that are inherent and cannot be changed, variables of one's status as language teachers, language program, and one's native language, that were found to have significant associations with one's characterization of native speakers,

are things that we can do something about to bring about a difference. In other words, we have the power to change conventions (Clark, 1996) of how we perceive native speaker in a certain language program or in a certain language community. It is hoped that the findings and discussion offered in this paper can contribute in starting a meaningful discussion among native, nonnative, and all other kinds of language teachers, so that we can all move beyond the native speaker fallacy, to a place where our pedagogy is enriched anew.

Limitations

This study used survey data extensively, but the generalizability and reliability of the survey results are limited to the investigated language program studied. Thus, it would be important to conduct similar studies in other language institutions. Further, it is important to mention that the numbers of participants in certain groups were low (e.g. Korean speakers). More participants are needed in such groups to confirm this study's findings. This study provided results obtained from students and teachers of Japanese and Chinese, but similar studies are needed in other foreign languages, since native speakers of different foreign languages may be perceived differently depending on their social status established in given communities. Finally, as mentioned, more qualitative data, particularly, the process of language teacher training, socialization experiences of individual language teachers, and factors that might influence how native speakers are perceived in different language communities, are needed to find out what really accounts for this study's findings.

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Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

Participant's demographic information: (Please check the appropriate blank)

1. Current Class: Japanese: Level 1 ___ Level 2 ___ Level 3 ___
Level 4 or higher ___
Chinese: Level 1 ___ Level 2 ___ Level 3 ___
Level 4 or higher ___
2. Age: 18-24 ___ 25-30 ___ 31 and older ___
3. Ethnic background: White ___ African American ___ Asian ___
Hispanic ___ Other ___ ()
4. Gender: Male ___ Female ___
5. Native language(s): English ___ Chinese ___ Korean ___
Other ___ ()

Definition of Native Speaker

In YOUR definition of a **native** speaker of a language (Japanese, Chinese etc.), **would you include the following characterizations?** (Please choose one for each row, using a check mark (√) or an 'X' to indicate your response. There is no right or wrong answer, so please give your honest feelings. Your response will be kept anonymous.

		Yes	Not Neces sarily	No
Timing	A person who has been using the language since birth/early childhood			
Nationality	A person who holds citizenship of Japanese/Chinese etc. speaking country or state.			
Ethnicity	A person who looks Japanese/Chinese etc.			
	A person whose name is/sounds Japanese/Chinese etc. (e.g. Tanaka/Wang)			
Gender	A person whose gender is male (I associate native speaker with a male speaker).			

Sexual Orientation	A person who is straight (I associate native speaker with a straight person).			
Linguistic Ability	A person whose Japanese/Chinese etc. pronunciation is without foreign accent.			
	A person who only speaks Japanese/Chinese etc.			
	A person whose Japanese/Chinese etc. is not influenced by another language they speak.			
	A person who can read and write in Japanese/Chinese etc. in a variety of contexts.			
	A person who can manage to use grammatical patterns without mistakes, regardless of various factors such as stress and anxiety.			
	A person who can use idiomatic expressions in a variety of contexts.			
	A person who speaks the standard language as opposed to a dialect.			
Behavior	A person who can use the language competently in a variety of subjects and situations (e.g. education, politics, science, parenting, etc.)			
	A person who can act appropriately in situations where Japanese/Chinese etc. is widely spoken.			
Education	A person who is educated in Japanese/Chinese etc. education system.			
Social/Economic Status	A person who is socially connected and economically affluent.			
Culture	A person who is familiar with Japanese/Chinese etc. culture and tradition.			
Teaching	A person who can teach Japanese/Chinese etc. as a second language.			

List your current Japanese/Chinese teacher(s). Do you regard your teacher(s) as a native or nonnative teacher (check one)? Why?

Teacher Name	Native	Nonnative	I cannot tell	Reason

Appendix B

Teacher Questionnaire

Participant's demographic information: (Please check the appropriate blank)

1. Class you're now teaching: Japanese: Level 1 Level 2
 Level 3 Level 4 or higher
 Chinese: Level 1 Level 2 Level
 3 Level 4 or higher
2. Age: 18-24 25-30 31 and older
3. Ethnic background: White African American Asian
 Hispanic Other ()
4. Gender: Male Female
5. Native language(s): English Chinese Korean
 Other ()

Definition of Native Speaker

In YOUR definition of a **native** speaker of a language (Japanese, Chinese etc.), **would you include the following characterizations?** (Please choose one for each row, using a check mark (✓) or an 'X' to indicate your response. There is no right or wrong answer, so please give your honest feelings. Your response will be kept anonymous.

Table 4. Summary of number of participants for each variable, average definition index score, and regression analysis results with and without teacher participants

		Yes	Not Necessarily	No
Timing	A person who has been using the language since birth/early childhood			
Nationality	A person who holds citizenship of Japanese/Chinese etc. speaking country or state.			
Ethnicity	A person who looks Japanese/Chinese etc.			
	A person whose name is/sounds Japanese/Chinese etc. (e.g. Tanaka/Wang)			
Gender	A person whose gender is male (I associate native speaker with a male speaker).			
Sexual Orientation	A person who is straight (I associate native speaker with a straight person).			
Linguistic Ability	A person whose Japanese/Chinese etc. pronunciation is without foreign accent.			
	A person who only speaks Japanese/Chinese etc.			
	A person whose Japanese/Chinese etc. is not influenced by another language they speak.			
	A person who can read and write in Japanese/Chinese etc. in a variety of contexts.			
	A person who can manage to use grammatical patterns without mistakes, regardless of various factors such as stress and anxiety.			
	A person who can use idiomatic expressions in a variety of contexts.			
	A person who speaks the standard language as opposed to a dialect.			
	A person who can use the language competently in a variety of subjects and situations (e.g. education, politics, science, parenting, etc.)			
Behavior	A person who can act appropriately in situations where Japanese/Chinese etc. is widely spoken.			
Education	A person who is educated in Japanese/Chinese etc. education system.			
Social/Econ Status	A person who is socially connected and economically affluent.			

Culture	A person who is familiar with Japanese/Chinese etc. culture and tradition.			
Teaching	A person who can teach Japanese/Chinese etc. as a second language.			

Do you consider yourself a native or nonnative teacher? Why?
Native ___ Nonnative ___ I cannot tell ___

Please explain: