Non-Native Learner's Agency in Native-Speakerism

Xinqi HE (何欣琪)

University of Tokyo

The ideology of native-speakerism has been a frequent focus of scholarship in both English and Japanese language teaching. Two assumptions of native-speakerism—a psycholinguist belief and the belief in a stable community—guarantee the superiority of those labeled "native-speakers," Yet, these assumptions are increasingly challenged by diversities in language, nationality, and other forms of identity, resulting from globalisation and the mobility of populations. In order to understand how native-speakerism exerts influence on individuals, and how it is potentially challenged by mobile populations, this study focuses on migrant students studying English in Japan. Narrative interviews are used to explore whether and how non-native learners experience, reinforce, and challenge English and Japanese native-speakerism in a Japanese English teaching context. The results show that non-native learners actively experience and reinforce native-speakerism, leading to their marginalisation. However, migrant students failed to challenge native-speakerism as their othering experiences lead to the internalization of its ideology and assumptions.

ネイティブ至上主義は、英語教育と日本語教育において注目されてきた。言語学習における「ネイティブ話者」の優位に関する憶説は、グローバル化や人口移動の増加に起因する言語、国籍、アイデンティティなどの多様性により揺さぶられている。本研究は、移動する学習者がネイティブ至上主義をどのように経験、強化し、それに挑むのかという過程を考察し、ネイティブ至上主義と学習者の移動がどのように影響し合っているかを解明することを目的とした。インタビュー調査の結果、ネイティブ至上主義を経験、強化する過程は観察されたが、それに挑む過程は観察されなかった。これは、移動する学習者の他者化される経験が原因であると考察された。

    It is not an exaggeration to say that native-speakerism exercises significant influence in the English language teaching (ELT) field, including pronunciation norms, teacher identity, and curriculum (Kumaravadivelu, 2015). Native-speakerism refers to an

ideology that positions native English speakers and related teaching materials or methods, which are associated with Western cultures, as superior to non-native ones (Holliday, 2006). While native speakers of a language are commonly defined as individuals who acquire that language during childhood (Braine, 2010), the perception of native speakers is often associated with other, non-linguistic factors, such as race and ethnicity. Based on these perceptions, "native-speakerism" also refers to the ideology that attaches certain stereotypes to and consequently discriminates non-native and native speakers (Houghton & Rivers, 2013). While native-speakerism emerged in ELT, it has become a focus for researchers interested in the teaching of other languages, including Japanese (Hashimoto, 2018). Native-speakerism of both languages assumes that there is a certain language associated with fixed factors such as region, race, ethnicity, and culture, which results in a homogeneous stable community. For instance, Japan is constructed as a homogeneous nation where the "Japaneseness" (Lie, 2000) is associated not only with language, nationality, and appearance, but also with the traits and behaviours that are regarded as Japanese culture. This homogeneous assumption about the Japanese community includes a psycholinguistic belief about language competency, that people within the community who acquire the language from an early age can achieve a notably different level of proficiency than those outside the community who acquire it later. This assumption also implies that specific cultural knowledge is acquired by those who learn the language at an early age. This level of cultural knowledge, thought to be remarkably different from that of outsiders, creates a boundary that guarantees membership in a stable community. These two implications guarantee the superiority of native speakers in both linguistic and cultural aspects and exclude non-native speakers.

These two assumptions are challenged, for example, by the rise of English as an International Language" and "World Englishes," where language ownership no longer lies solely with native speakers. Moreover, the phenomena of superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) and metrolingualism (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2011) point towards a tendency for nationality, language, and identity to become multi-layered in a fluid society, with the assumption that a belief in stable community becomes indispensable. Since mobile populations are indicative of a fluid society, they have the potential to challenge the assumptions about a stable community. As there is a comparative lack of research focussing on students in the native-speakerism literature, this study emphasizes migrant students' agency within the native-speakerism ideology of ELT. In doing so, it focuses on the case of Japan, where English and Japanese native-speakerism function simultaneously, drawing attention to whether and how non-native learners experience, reinforce, and challenge native-speakerism in Japanese ELT.

This paper will proceed as follows. First, it discusses two main approaches to

native-speakerism. Second, it calls attention to the potential of mobile populations to challenge this ideology. Third, it focuses on three non-native learners' experiences with native-speakerism in order to understand whether, how, and why they experience, reinforce, and challenge this ideology.

Native-Speakerism in the Language Teaching Field

Native-speakerism was initially defined as a set of beliefs within ELT where "native-speaker teachers represent a western culture from which springs the ideals of both the English language and the English language teaching method" (Holliday, 2006, p. 385). Aligned with this definition, Holliday accentuates the concept of "culture disbelief," where those labelled "non-Western" are seen as inferior "Westerners." This notion emphasises the colonial features of native-speakerism, focussing on unbalanced power structures. Earlier research reports "disbelief" towards those labelled as "non-Western" as a component of native-speakerism in several different aspects of ELT, such as teaching methods and materials, and teacher and learner identities.

Such research illustrates a prejudice in favour of western teaching methods, including English-Mediated Instruction (Swan et al., 2015), and communicative pedagogy (Anderson, 2016; McBeath, 2017) in teacher training programs, while the experiences and knowledge of those who are labelled as "non-native speaker teachers" is devalued (McBeath, 2017) and thus marginalised (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Teaching materials are also reported to construct English in a fixed manner that deprives non-native teachers of their language rights (Manara, 2018). The experience of marginalisation constructs a non-native identity for both teachers and learners, which constantly positions them as chasing "standard" English (Huang, 2018) and fossilising at certain stages along the way (Selinker & Lakshmanan, 1992). This results in a desire to be viewed as "native-speakers" and thus, they internalise and strengthen native-speakerist ideology (Huang, 2018).

Although native-speakerism is understood as an abstract ideology, it nonetheless exerts real influence on individuals. Focussing on the influence of native-speakerism, Houghton and Rivers (2013) redefined it as "prejudice, stereotyping and/or discriminating, typically by or against foreign language teachers, on the basis of either being or not being perceived and categorised as a native speaker of a particular language" (p. 14). This redefinition, emphasising the link between native-speakerism and "prejudices including ethnocentrism, racism, and sexism" (Houghton & Rivers, 2013, p.14), shifts the focus to all discrimination, including that against native speakers.

Stereotypes about non-native teachers associate them with more understanding of and emphasis on the language learning of their students than native speakers (River & Zotzmann, 2017). These essentialist stereotypes about English teachers, however, are

reported to be contradictory to reality, as they ignore the complexity of individual experiences (Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016). In addition, general stereotypes attached to native speakers tended to be affirming, such as their language rights and cultural affinity, while those attached to non-native speakers include negative labels of marginalisation and stigmatisation (Braine, 2010). One reason for non-native speakers being labelled as "inferior" is that their language is regarded as "unauthentic" and "incorrect." While the attitude towards linguistic insufficiency in "native speakers" is more tolerant, the mistakes of non-native speakers tend to be regarded as a deficiency (Huang, 2018).

These stereotypes of both native and non-native teachers exert an impact on employment. It has been pointed out that native level criteria were applied to applicants for English teaching jobs in non-English speaking countries (Haberland, 2011), which gives an advantage to native speaker applicants. Mahbood et al. (2004) also conducted a quantitative study which illustrates a native speaker standard was applied by English program administrators for employment in the United States. A similar result is found in Clarke and Paran's (2007) study where non-native status was regarded as a negative consideration for non-native applicants. After initial employment, non-native teachers are expected to focus more on instructing students in grammar than in speaking, as the spoken language of non-native speakers is regarded as inauthentic and inferior to that of native speakers (Glasgow, 2014). Conversely, the roles of teaching speaking, including pronunciation, and ways of communication tend to be assigned to native teachers if they are available, as they are expected to speak "natural" and thus "good" English. This discrimination is also reported in terms of students' attitudes, as studies show their inclination preference for native-speaker English teachers (Buckingham, 2015). This preference, however, is not based on teachers' professionalism but upon the assumption that native-speaker English teachers speak more authentic English and that, therefore, students are typically more motivated to learn English from native-speaking instructors (Calafato, 2019).

Discrimination not only exists at the linguistic level but is also associated with race and ethnicity. This is shown by the reality that, when they are available, educational institutions tend to employ educators who are Caucasian looking and originate from inner circle[1] countries (Selvi, 2010). Kubota and Fujimoto (2013) explored the experience of a Japanese American native-speaking teacher who acquired English at an early age. While the educator's language skills were impeccable, his racial traits contributed to the experience of marginalisation and exclusion, as "a racial hierarchy of power'" exists in

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[1] Kachru (1992) divides countries into three groups, namely, inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle, based on how English functions in each country. English is used as the first language in inner circle countries. It functions as an official language in countries of the outer circle and is regarded as a foreign language in countries of the expanding circle.

Japanese society (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013, p. 204). Discrimination also occurs against native-speaker teachers as their professional identity tends to be undermined. It is reported that educational institutions tend to promote themselves by saying that employ native speaker in order to attract consumers (Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009), indicating that rather than prioritizing the professional skills of an educator, more attention is given to their foreign status (Haque & Morgan, 2009), which is a representation of a different cultural identity (Seargeant, 2013).

While Holliday's notion of native-speakerism stated above is grounded in ELT, Houghton and Rivers (2013) did not focus on specific languages. Some research now focuses on native-speakerism in languages other than English, such as Japanese. Despite the fact that native-speakerism in Japanese is largely unexplored compared to that of ELT (Yokoyama, 2005), studies reveal that aspects of Japanese native-speakerism resemble those of ELT. In the context of Japanese-language teaching, native-level competence remains the learning model for non-native Japanese language learners (Nomura & Mochizuki, 2018), which results in the exclusion of non-native speaking teachers as the learning model (Kusunoki, 2018). The superiority of native Japanese speakers is largely constructed through Japanese language textbooks, where an inequality is developed between native Japanese speakers and Japanese learners (Heinrich, 2005). The inequality is produced not only linguistically but also culturally, since Japanese traits, such as selflessness and modesty, are emphasised as learning goals, which casts leaners in the role of　the Other who can barely fit in with the group of Japanese native speakers (Heinrich, 2005). In a similar fashion, the preference for native-speaking Japanese teachers has also been reported within the Japanese educational context overseas, as they are regarded as representatives of Japanese culture (Kadowaki, 2018).

In addition, the superiority of Japanese native-speaker status is believed to exist in broader Japanese social contexts than merely educational fields. Investigating concepts of "mother-tongue speaker" and "native speaker" in Japanese, Hashimoto (2018), suggested that "mother tongue speaker," written in Chinese characters, is applied in Japanese society to emphasise the native status of the Japanese speaker. This is distinguished from the concept of "native speaker,"', written in *katakana*, which applies to native English speakers. Through the different terms applying to Japanese native speakers and English native speakers, Hashimoto emphasised a tacit monolingual assumption that English native speakers should not be native Japanese speakers. In a sociological sense, this action excluded English native speakers as a group, which is a discriminatory action called "Othering" (Jensen, 2011). This discrimination has targeted all "non-Japanese-native" speakers, as shown by these terms. The language proficiency of non-Japanese native speakers has also been found to be underestimated by their native counterparts in

Japanese work settings (Kusunoki, 2018). Thus, Japan provides an ideal setting for exploring the dual native-speakerism contexts of English and Japanese.

Two Assumptions of Native-Speakerism and the Challenge from Mobile Populations

Native-speakerism is based on psycholinguistic and nationalist assumptions (Seargeant, 2013). The psycholinguistic assumption, which dominates the second language acquisition field, posits the notion of a critical period, during and after which language acquisition is markedly different. This overlaps with the definition of native-speakerism, in which native speakers are authorities on the language, possessing superior competence (Canagarajah & Said, 2011). In ELT, this assumption is increasingly challenged by the acknowledgement that English is used extensively by non-native speakers. This results from both the global spread of English and from the use of English by mobile populations as a *lingua franca*. Characterisations of "English as an international language," "World Englishes," and "English as a lingua franca" shift the focus of English acquisition to its communicative function among non-native speakers. Similarly, an increased emphasis on valuing diverse types of English and respect for related cultures has emerged (McKay, 2018). The assumption of native-speaker authority collapses when it can no longer exert an exclusive claim to foster communication. Thus, this shift in both ELT and the literature has decoupled essentialist links between English and English native speakers (Higgins, 2003).

The second native-speakerist assumption is that of membership in a national community. During the acquisition of language at an early age, a child is assumed unconsciously to acquire cultural knowledge and values specific to a given national community (Seargeant, 2013). The possession of cultural knowledge and values is regarded as a symbol of membership, as the "culture" —just like language—is assumed to exert different degrees of influence, depending upon whether one has acquired them at a younger age or later in life. As such, this assumption emphasises a strong relationship between language, community, and people. As a result, those who are not equipped are excluded from the community. This culture-related assumption is deeply embedded in the context of expanding-circle countries, such as Japan, where native-speaker teachers are often promoted as representatives of Western culture in the advertisements of language institutions (Haque & Morgan, 2009). However, scholars have emphasised emerging landscapes of super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007), where several languages merge within specific spaces, and experiences of translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011), where communication occurs via mixed languages, without fixed boundaries among them. This results from increasingly mobile populations, where languages are neither isolated nor

fixed but blended and merged. The resulting diversity severs essentialist relationships between language and nationality (Park & Wee, 2017), challenging the ethno-culture of nation states where language, culture, nation-states, and people are linked (Antonsich & Petrillo, 2019). This diversity challenges claims of stable communities where language and culture are acquired at an early age and are fixed and inaccessible to outsiders.

Research has highlighted how mobile populations contribute to increasing diversity among (and within) languages, nationality, and identity, granting them the potential to challenge a native-speakerist ideology. These potential shifts of language and national identity have been explored in settings where migrants engage in everyday interactions with surrounding communities (Park & Wee, 2017). Still, research so far has generally focused on both native and non-native teachers' changing perspectives on native-speakerism. In contrast, this study examines the experiences of non-native, mobile learners who carry and acquire complex linguistic repertoires across borders and thus possess the potential to exert a genuine impact on native-speakerism and nationalist ideologies. As such, this paper addresses the questions of whether and how non-native learners experience, reinforce, and challenge ideologies of native-speakerism.

Research Method

Reflecting the belief that narration is a sense-making activity where meanings associated with experiences are understood based on the perspectives of participants (Bell, 2002), this study made use of narrative inquiry. It is closely related to counter-storytelling, which is often employed in "critical race theory," providing access to marginalised groups and challenging socially privileged narratives (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013). Narrative inquiry is considered to be identity performance (Watson, 2007), in which both the micro level of participant accounts and the macro level of language ideology and discourse are central (Barkhuizen, 2007). Thus, narrative inquiry values the agency of non-native learners, while emphasising the broader context in which embedded ideologies can be analysed.

Data collection consisted of interviews, allowing for in-depth information to be obtained about participants' experiences and perceptions of their experiences (Mann, 2016). Narrative interviews, lasting approximately one hour, were conducted four times with a Nigerian-born participant (Arabic-native speaker) and twice with a Russian-born participant (Russian-native speaker) and a Vietnamese-born participant (Vietnamese-native speaker). Participants were given the choice of either English or Japanese as the interview language, though all chose English, using Japanese occasionally. Participants were identified through a snowballing technique where one "seed" participant introduced other participants to the author (Beauchemin & González-Ferrer,

2011). The author of this paper teaches English part-time at the college where data was collected. She is a Chinese native, instructing students who are primarily Japanese natives. The three participants were not her students but were introduced to her by colleagues. Participants were informed that participation in this research would not influence their grades.

Interviews began with open questions such as "Tell me about your English learning experience" or "In what situations do you use English, Japanese, and your native language?" Follow-up questions were then asked to obtain a more nuanced understanding. All interview data were recorded and transcribed, following a written participant agreement.

In contrast to narrative studies where the linguistic form of data is the focus, narrative inquiry is primarily concerned with narrative content (Pavlenko, 2002). To gain a better understanding of this content, the data were treated as being constructed mutually by the participant and author. Narrative inquiry calls objectivity into question, placing greater emphasis on subjectivity in constructing meaning (Hayes, 2013). Miyahara's (2017) six-step analytical model was applied to emphasize interaction between participants and author and to permit reflexivity. First, interview transcripts were read multiple times. Second, exploration notes were prepared to distinguish descriptive, linguistic, emotive, and conceptual comments. Third, all notes were assigned to themes. Fourth, thematic connections were examined, with themes categorised into various subcategories within higher-level categories. Fifth, connections were established among relevant categories with reference to the appropriate literature. Finally, the author's position and analytical process were examined reflectively.

Research Background and Participants' Profiles

All three participants were non-Japanese, who had arrived in Japan as adults. Each spent eighteen months studying Japanese at language schools, after which they began majoring in English at Komo[2], a two-year private college, well known for language education (especially English) and career guidance. Komo emphasises language ability, cross-cultural understanding, and a global perspective. The homepage of the college website features staff members from diverse ethnic backgrounds and shows classroom scenes wherein Asian students interact with Caucasian teachers.

Satoshi[3], aged 24, is a Nigerian-born male with a native-level Japanese speaking father and a mother who spoke both Arabic and French at a native-level. Satoshi considers Arabic and French his native languages and had spoke no Japanese until arriving in Japan at age 21, at which time he began studying the language. Satoshi's stated

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[2] Pseudonym for the college
[3] All names used in this paper are pseudonyms

reason for coming to Japan was that since he has Japanese nationality and a Japanese-sounding name, he felt ashamed being unable to speak the language. Satoshi began learning English in middle school and spent free time playing online games, speaking with North Americans in English. Satoshi's goal was to leave Nigeria and to use his English skills to gain access to global society: "…even if I don't like the word 'globalization,' I am still inspired to be an 'international person." I feel like if I don't learn well, [and] if I hadn't learned English, I wouldn't be able to achieve this goal (Satoshi, 4th Interview)'. Satoshi's emphasis on the instrumental value of English was also clear when he noted: "I feel like Japanese…well probably in the future, English will be more used in Japan than Japanese itself. Just like…India maybe. Yes, I think, I think it will be" (Satoshi, 4th Interview).

Vladimir is a native-level Russian speaker, who majored in law at a Russian university. He served in the army after graduation and then worked in a logistics firm. Vladimir said that Japanese language competence is valuable in the Russian job market, and, as a result, he had planned to return to Russia after learning Japanese. Due to his personal situation, he decided to remain in Japan, looking for employment. With modified goals, Vladimir decided to learn English, believing it would have financial value in the Japanese job market. He initially failed the college entrance exam. but later passed it after studying for two years at another college. Vladimir's strong belief in the instrumentality of English was clear when he mentioned that several of his friends who spoke English but not Japanese successfully gained employment in Japan.

Nhung is a native-level Vietnamese speaker who majored in finance and Japanese at university. She worked for a car company after graduation but became dissatisfied with the working environment and resigned. Interested in acquiring overseas work experience, she came to Japan to improve her Japanese language skills and because it has a lower cost of living compared to many European countries or the United States. Although Nhung rarely uses her English in Japan, she insists that both English and Japanese are necessary for her work there.

Thus, while the participants came to Japan for different reasons, their decision to study English at a Japanese college reflected a belief in the instrumental value of English language skills in Japanese society, a setting in which native-speakerism is prevalent in both the English and Japanese teaching industry.

Interview Findings

Seven major themes emerged from the interview data. Participant agency in reinforcing Japanese and English native-speakerism when studying English was evident in the interviewees' "preference for English-only instruction," "mistrust of non-native

teachers," and a "preference for native speakers as language partners." Simultaneously, participants also experienced Japanese native-speakerism through "correction of Japanese" by Japanese-native speaking teachers. Additionally, they experienced "denying Japanese identity," by a broader Japanese community, when their attempts at communication in Japanese language were denied. Yet, while literature would lead us to believe that, as members of mobile populations, the participants would challenge the ideologies of native-speakerism, this was not the case, possibly due to experiences involving "Othering based on language" and "Othering as a foreigner."

Reinforcing Native-Speakerism

As students in the English education industry, all three participants unavoidably experienced the English native-speakerism ideology. Despite the assumption within the literature that mobile populations are assumed to have for the possibility of challenging native-speakerism, participants in this study showed a tendency towards reinforcing the ideology through their language learning experiences, detailing a "preference for English-only instruction" (rejecting the use of Japanese in English class), a "mistrust towards non-English-native teachers" (refusing to accept that that non-native teachers had professional competence), and a "preference for native speakers as language learning partners" (rejecting non-native speakers as language partners).

The following excerpt illustrates how participants preferred monolingual teaching when studying English in Japan. During his first interview, Vladimir stated that he was satisfied with classes taught by "foreigner teacher" in a program with only native English teachers but described his frustration in classes with Japanese teachers who used "a mix of Japanese and English" (Vladimir, 1st interview), characterising those classes as a waste of time and money.

(Vladimir, 1st interview)
V: …almost every classes where teachers are Japanese, not good for me.
R: you mean they are…
V: of course not, not every classes. But out, mostly. Last term, two teachers, just because of the teachers, they're really good, they understood I think we study English, every test and every questions were in English. We are studying English. The test are in English. But when in Japan, with Japanese classmates with Japanese sometimes answers I can't understand it. We are studying English, right?

Vladimir considered classes taught by non-natives to be good when English was used as the language of instruction, while classes conducted in Japanese were not good.

Vladimir's comment that "We are studying English, right?" underscored his belief that classes should be conducted in English. Similarly, Nhung preferred classes where only English could be spoken, unlike Japanese students who preferred not to follow this rule .

(Nhung, 2nd interview)

N: Yes and I feel comfortable …it and … He always... Help… Say… Everybody has to use English in the class not Japanese. Except the break time.

R: the break time.

N: and I think it easy for everybody to improve English, so yes, I feel not nervous or maybe boring in class, not boring…

R: Oh, you don't feel boring in class. So you always speak English in that class?

N: yes, but maybe some Japanese students don't do like that. And they don't want to speak English, Japanese.

Just like Vladimir, who described "every tests" and "every questions" in English as "good," Nhung described English-only medium classes as "comfortable," "not nervous," and "not boring." Both prefer English-medium instruction, expressing dissatisfaction with teachers or students who do not speak English, which epitomises the fallacy of monolingual teaching approaches, where target languages are believed to be best taught without the use of another language (Kiczkowiak & Lowe, 2018). This is similar to the notion of cultural disbelief (Swan et. al., 2015), in which the English-only medium is perceived as superior, with other pedagogical approaches considered ineffective. With English framed as essential for globalisation and constructed as an "international language," countries such as Japan attempt to implement English-only policies in language classes, believing they will improve proficiency and integrate students into a global society (Hashimoto, 2013a). By preferring the English medium, the participants reinforce the status of English as a form of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992), which is closely related to native-speakerist ideology. This monolingual approach not only strengthens the position of English but furthers the assumption that native speakers are the gold standard in ELT (Phillipson, 2016).

Participants also expressed "mistrust towards non-native teachers," which is also in accord with the notion of cultural disbelief suggested by Holliday (Swan et al., 2015); although, in the literature, native-speaking English teachers are sometimes constructed as Others in some settings, including Japan (Hashimoto, 2013b). However, English native-speaking teachers are preferred when hiring in places where English is taught as a second or foreign language (Mahboob et al., 2004). This preference for native teachers results in discrimination towards non-native teachers, who are regarded as unqualified

when compared with unqualified native teachers (Phillipson, 1992; Rao, 2010).

When talking about his relationship with the teachers in the language institution, Vladimir was deeply suspicious of whether Japanese English teachers were qualified to answer questions about English.

(Vladimir, 1st interview)

R: No, because I'm curious about your social network in school. So not much with Japanese teacher, but you feel close, well, kind of close to native teacher.

V: No, I can communicate with Japanese teacher about weather, about everything, about sport, about hobby, about everything, about Japanese life, but not about study, Study English. I can ask, hear them about everything, but not English. Because they are not know English. Okay they can speak in English, maybe not very well but they can, they can, but they are not native speakers.

While Vladimir was willing to have casual conversations with Japanese-native speaker teachers, he rejected the idea of asking them for assistance with English, even though this was their job, denying the professional identity of Japanese teachers, by saying "they are not native speakers." Similarly, Vladimir emphasised that only native speakers have absolute authority when it comes to the language.

(Vladimir, 1st interview)

R: but they are teaching English, right? So you can still ask questions about English.

V: not Japanese teachers.

R: why not?

V: because they are Japanese.

R: oh, you mean they are not native?

V: if… for example, you're my teacher, but I don't mean to be rude, but you're Chinese, if I have questions about English, I asked not you.

Here, Vladimir expressed suspicion of those he labelled as non-native teachers, including the author. Interestingly, when characterising teachers, Vladimir associates nationality with language ability, explaining that the author is "Chinese" rather than stating that her native language is Chinese. The participant demonstrated his mistrust of non-English native speaking teachers by not relying on these teachers as resources for questions involving English. This suspicion is based not on the teacher's proficiency but on their non-native speaking status, which aligns with the ideology of native-speakerism.

Last, participants displayed a "preference for native speakers as language learning

partners," demonstrating how non-native learners also experience discrimination under the ideology of native-speakerism. When describing her relationship with Japanese classmates, Nhung voiced a clear preference for native speakers of English as language practise partners.

(Nhung, 2nd interview)

R: so they usually use Japanese with you?

N: yes. But some friends they always just speak English with me. but actually I speak Japanese and they said by in English we can understand together because they want to practice English and I want to practice Japanese.

One possible explanation for Nhung's choice to view Japanese-native speaker classmates as resources for practising Japanese, rather than English, is that it implicitly demonstrates a belief that language skills are best improved by practising with native speakers. Yet, this choice implicitly characterises Japanese-native speakers as unqualified to be English language practise partners. Indeed, Satoshi behaved similarly.

(Satoshi, 2nd interview)

S: One of my friend is actually tried to speak English to me all the time. It's kind of hard for him. But he's trying.

R: You never talk to him in Japanese?

S: I do. I don't want to practice English I want to learn Japanese so..

Here, one of Satoshi's Japanese classmates sought to practise English with him—a logical choice given that that they are majoring in English. Yet, out of a desire to practise Japanese, Satoshi responded in Japanese. One explanation is that, similar to Nhung, Satoshi regarded his Japanese classmates as resources for practising their native rather than non-native language.

Moreover, even the value of conversations in English with non-English native speakers was downplayed by participants. Unlike Nhung and Satoshi, Vladimir was willing to speak English with non-English-native-speakers at college and his place of employment. Yet, he dismissed the value of these conversations to improve his English. When discussing how his language abilities improved after starting work, Vladimir emphasised the importance of Japanese colleagues in improving his Japanese. Yet, despite extensively using English with customers at work, Vladimir stressed that his English improved only because of native teachers.

(Vladimir, 1st interview)

R: it sounds like you have a lot of practice in Japanese doing your part-time job.

V: of course, so I think my Japanese skill and not my English skills, maybe a bit, just a bit of my English skills too, improving, improving because of my part-time job…Because my skill, my current English skill just because of daily school, conversation with the Americans and Canadians, native speakers.

R: you mean teachers.

V: School teachers. Only because of schoolteachers. Really, I really, thankful for them.

(…)

V: The night part-time job I'm communicating with Japanese, but with some persons, we can speak in English.

R: but mainly you..

V: yeah mainly Japanese. but in the restaurant and the bar, yes sometime I can only speak English. Not with everyone.

R: It sounds like your English skills improves.

V: English skills improves because of Komo . Komo native teachers. Only thanks, thanks of them.

Vladimir revealed that learning English rather than Japanese was his goal. As such, he was more willing to use English with other people, regardless of their primary language. Vladimir mentioned speaking in English at length with an Indian customer as well as with Japanese classmates. However, Vladimir attributed his improved English solely to conversations with native English speaking teachers. In other words, for Vladimir, practising with native speakers is the only legitimate route to improving his English. This is like Nhung and Satoshi's logic of viewing Japanese native speaking classmates as valuable for practising Japanese with, but not English. To conclude, the preference for native speakers when choosing a language partner, combined with denying the practical potential of conversations with non-native speakers, embodies and reinforces the native-speakerist ideology.

The participants contributed to reinforcing a native-speakerist ideology by preferring English-only instruction, English-native teachers, and English native speakers as language practise partners. Combined, these preferences imply a faith in the "authenticity" of the native speaker as opposed to the non-native speaker. The relationship between authenticity in language education and the notion of native speakers has been examined previously (Pinner 2014), dating back to traditional linguistic research where native speakers were regarded as "ideal speaker-listeners" when studying language (Reis, 2011). While norms of "English as an international language" are a topic of

discussion in the literature, English textbooks seldom focus on other varieties of English besides those used in inner circle countries (Yamanaka, 2006). This facilitates the prevalence in many countries of the idea that "authenticity" attaches to Western culture and speakers of its languages. This idea is reinforced by constructing speakers of other languages and members of other cultures as Others (Lowe & Pinner, 2016). Consequently, native speakers and their languages—legitimised as "authentic"—are afforded greater value, resulting in racial and professional discrimination towards non-native speakers (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013; Lowe & Pinner, 2016).

Experiencing Japanese Native-Speakerism

Apart from their role in reinforcing native-speakerism, the participants—as non-native speakers—are also victims of native-speakerism. While native-speakerism was first defined as an ideology privileging "the West" in ELT (Holliday, 2006) and thus embodying colonial features of English, the preference for "native-ness" is present in the teaching of other languages (Hashimoto, 2013b), as some studies have pointed out (e.g., Houghton & Rivers, 2013). However, these studies still focus chiefly on the experience of teachers. In contrast, the participants demonstrated that non-native learners both experience and are influenced by native-speakerism associated with other languages. Here, participants emphasised how they experienced native-speakerism through "correction of Japanese" and "denying Japanese identity."

All participants were reluctant to communicate with non-teaching staff at Komo, out of the belief that the staff did not properly understand the participants' situations. As a result, Nhung relied on her language teacher, who she assumed would have a greater understanding of migrant students. Yet, when Nhung was seeking employment and consulted her Japanese teacher about her written Japanese, she experienced the pressure of needing to write at a native level.

(Nhung, 2nd interview)

N: the staff in the career centre I don't talk with them a lot. I just say with my Japanese teacher and if I don't understand, I talk with her, and her explain to me. but something because I write, I prepare some about the reason that I want to work and I, I asked her to check for me. But she just said that it's not right in the Japanese. And she, many times she said, she asked me to do it again. And I don't feel comfortable to do that. So I just want to start a little time for that… They just look at my paper and say it's not like Japanese. People write, and I have to do it again again again and again. Maybe… but I don't… actually I don't know how to write perfectly like Japanese or something like that.

The above quote illustrates Nhung's frustration with the expectation from her Japanese teacher that job applications be repeatedly re-written to conform with unclearly articulated standards of being "right." Here, the exact Japanese level associated with "right" is never made clear, but Nhung is concerned that she is not operating at the expected level. The emphasis on "right" Japanese represents a native-speakerist ideology, where only native-level Japanese is considered authentic, which frustrates non-native learners. Moreover, since teacher-student relations are hierarchical in Japanese society, the teacher's emphasis on a "right" Japanese enhances the superiority of native-level language, thereby constructing the non-native speaker as an "inferior other."

During small talk prior to one of the interviews, Satoshi mentioned how he was also constructed as the Other by a Japanese teacher. In front of classmates, Satoshi's teacher suggested it would be better if he changed his name, since he did not look or sound Japanese. Satoshi explained why this offended him. As he was born in Nigeria and spent his teenage years in Algeria, he sometimes described himself as "Algerian-Japanese", while claiming the "Japanese Nigerian in Nigeria" status at other times: "In Canada I was the, I don't know what, the Nigerian that looks like a Japanese. However, in Japan, I look like a little bit like Japanese people, so I do not feel that distance" (Satoshi, 2nd interview). Since Japanese is part of Satoshi's complex identity, he viewed learning the Japanese language as an issue of identity rather than a practical necessity. Yet, for Satoshi's Japanese teacher, a Japanese native speaker is someone who looks racially Japanese and speaks native-level Japanese. The construction of Satoshi as an Other is based on a fixed idea of a correspondence among nationality, language, and appearance, in accordance with assumptions of native-speakerism. Satoshi's experience is consistent with earlier research on Japanese native-speakerism, where Japanese language teachers were shown to have a strong belief in the tight relationship among race, language, and nationality (Hashimoto, 2018). This Japanese native-speakerism is thought to subvert the superiority of English native speakers (Hashimoto, 2018). Yet, Satoshi's experience shows that this sense of disempowerment applies to all non-native Japanese speakers, regardless of whether they are English native speakers.

Construction of Native-Speakerism

As noted, participants did not utilise their potential, as members of a mobile population, to challenge native-speakerism. Rather, they contributed to native-speakerism while simultaneously being victimised by the ideology. How participants experienced "language-related Othering" and "Othering as a foreigner" is of significance in understanding this topic. Bluntly, interactions with native-speaking teachers or a

native-oriented system contributed to participants constructing native-speakerist ideology. In one instance, Nhung described a situation where a Canadian teacher offered to help her with English pronunciation outside of class.

(Nhung, 2nd interview)

R: teacher you mean in a class?

N: in class and some teacher now help me for my pronunciation. Yes, because I can't pronunciation exactly so they can't understand and they spend some time with me and help me to improve my pronunciation (…) I meet him two times a week, twice a week, yes.

Here, Nhung's pronunciation of English did not meet the native speaking teacher's criteria and was thus corrected. Instead of justifying the correction of Nhung's pronunciation on the basis of subjective criteria, the lack of explicit criteria and the correction by the native speaker combined to potentially contribute to a hierarchy between native and non-native speakers. This episode constructed Nhung as a "non-authentic Other" whose non-native English was inferior and required correction. In contrast, in the course of the research, the author noted instances of miscommunication—when the author could not understand specific words used by Nhung. When this happened, Nhung wrote the English word, and the miscommunication was immediately solved. This contrasts with her being confronted by native-speaking teachers who constructed her English as incorrect and corrected it, despite her having a strategy for dealing with pronunciation problems.

Teaching methods based on translating into and out of Japanese also contribute to othering the participants based on language. All three participants reported struggles with English reading comprehension classes in which they were required to translate academic articles from English to Japanese. The problems were particularly obvious in the case of Satoshi.

(Satoshi, 2nd interview)

R: The other thing I want to ask you is to which level, Japanese language level, do you expect to reach? Are you satisfied with the Japanese ability you have?

S: right now, not that much. I feel like I'm still lacking a lot of vocabulary. And eh, I don't have a specific goal but I want to get as close as possible to native level. But I think it takes more than 10 years so. I still have a long way to go.

R: So you are not satisfied with your language, I mean Japanese ability currently. When do you, when would you have that feeling?

S: for example when we translate, I can translate into another words, but the way I translate it is like… It is like a Japanese 12 years old would do it. It is not high-level Japanese.

The excerpt above illustrates that Satoshi regarded his Japanese ability as "not high-level Japanese." While not experiencing difficulties in daily conversation with Japanese classmates, he was both dissatisfied and frustrated with teaching methods that centred on translation, which required "high-level" Japanese. Indeed, this was a repeated theme for Satoshi, noting that an English reading comprehension class consisted of 80% translation, where he felt it necessary to go home and "practise, practise for the reading class" and "Learn the Japanese, only Japanese" (Satoshi, 1ˢᵗ interview). As such, this native-speaker oriented teaching method constructs non-native learners' language as inferior.

Othering also occurred in cases where non-native learners are deprived of language ownership. The following excerpt illustrates how Vladimir was constructed as the Other when wanting to speak Japanese, but denied that possibility.

(Vladimir, 1st interview)

V: If you live in Russia you need only Russian. If you want to do job with Japanese or Chinese or other language, you need that language, not English. But if you live in Japan, if you are foreign, you definitely eh…need Japanese and English…I don't know, because many situation you come across, or a media with other foreigners or Japanese, and every one think oh, you are foreigner you definitely know, you definitely speak English. But I cannot so… many, not many, sometimes funny, sometimes strange situations when, where I cannot give a clear answer. What? 日本語でお願いします [Please say that in Japanese]. So things very strange, foreigner are asking about Japanese.

R: you mean people around you expect you to speak English.

V: yes very well.. Like a native speaker.. but I'm not.

(Vladimir, 2nd interview)

R: Well, there is one thing I'm so curious about the interview we had last time. Then you have mentioned that people thought that you should speak English here in Japan. How do you feel about that? Because..

V: It's fine for me. Because the Japanese tried to speak with me in English. And I talk with them in Japanese. They are very surprised. Like. に,日本語上手[Your Ja, Japanese is good]. And it makes me fun…

R: do they change their language into Japanese? I mean in the beginning they tried to..

V: Even they realise they can speak in English and Japanese, they still try to talk with me in English or using Japanese with some English words.

In the excerpt above, Vladimir emphasises the necessity of knowing both Japanese and English while living in Japan. He asserts that, in Japan, he would be expected to speak English at the level of a native English speaker, as he is a foreigner. Vladimir also mentions that, if he asked for something to be repeated in Japanese when he was not sure of the English, people thought his request to be strange. Note that Vladimir's spoken Japanese was met with the comment, *Your Japanese is good*, implying little expectation that he could speak Japanese, as he was placed outside the Japanese-speaking community. Quite simply, he was regarded as someone who should not know how to speak Japanese. Furthermore, Vladimir says that, even when people realised he could speak Japanese, they still insisted on speaking English with him. As such, Vladimir, was constructed as an "Other," who did not own the right to the Japanese language. As stated, Vladimir planned to learn Japanese when he initially came to Japan but changed his goal and began studying English. The possibility exists that these interactions with the Japanese community—this process of "Othering" —contributed to Vladimir's identity and his sense of what language he should be speaking. As his goal shifted from studying Japanese to English, Vladimir internalised this "Othering," associating himself with the ownership of English and not Japanese. This internalisation of the racial-linguistic connection can be considered a hindrance to challenging native-speakerism.

It is important to emphasise that membership in a stable community is not solely a function of language. A racially based hierarchy is thought to exist in the concept of native speakers, where those who are perceived as white are associated with native speakers and thus linguistically and culturally superior to those who are perceived as people of colour and non-native speakers (Huber et al., 2008). In Japan, Asian-American English native-speaking teachers have experienced exclusion and disqualification, regardless of their professional qualifications (Kubota & Fujimoto, 2013). With the association between native speaker and "white" being explicit in ELT, it is wide-spread. The possibility is real that, due to Vladimir's Caucasian appearance, the surrounding Japanese community othered him as not belonging to their community and did not expect him to speak Japanese. Rather, he was associated with an English-speaking community that is not representative of his native language.

To conclude, one likely reason that members of a mobile population failed to challenge native-speakerism assumptions is that their Othering experiences contributed to constructing native-speakerism ideologies. Experiencing native-speaking teachers

correcting their English, as well as taking classes that demand Japanese ability, contributed to the idea that native-like language ability is superior. Furthermore, the experience of being constructed as a foreign "Other" strengthened the notion that only native speakers have ownership of a given language, a notion which is racially biased.

Concluding Discussion

While native-speakerism has been widely discussed in ELT, few studies have explored this ideology in other language contexts (Hashimoto, 2018). Both Japanese and English native-speakerism are based on assumptions that the language of native speakers differs markedly from that of non-native speakers, manifesting native speakers' membership in stable communities. Since scholarship on linguistic diversity suggests the potential for mobile populations to challenge native-speakerism, this article has focussed on the agency of migrant students when studying English. It explores whether and how non-native learners experience, reinforce, and challenge native-speakerism in a Japanese English learning context where English and Japanese native-speakerism are intertwined. In contrast to earlier research, the three participants reinforced, rather than challenged, this ideology, preferring English-only instruction and English native-speaking teachers, as well as expressing suspicion of non-English instruction and non-English native-speaking teachers. While these preferences have been explored in earlier research (Braine, 2010), this article also exposed how participants reinforce native-speakerism when choosing language practise partners. These processes are based on strong connections between authenticity and native-like proficiency (Pinner, 2014). Yet, while non-native learners reinforced native-speakerism, their experiences also show how they are marginalised by this ideology, when their language is constructed as "inferior." Further, a belief in who qualifies as a native speaker denied participants the chance to self-identify with specific language communities. Thus, non-native learners reinforced the internalised native-speakerism ideology, thereby marginalising themselves.

This paper also addressed reasons why migrant students did not challenge native-speakerism. Interactions with native speakers and native-speaker-oriented institutions constructed participants' languages as an Other. They were excluded from (or associated with) certain communities, thereby depriving them of, or granting them, rights associated with particular languages. This process contributed to their preference for native-like language proficiency, as well as their sense of language ownership, namely internalised native-speakerism.

This article has explored how non-native learners reinforce and experience, but do not challenge, native-speakerism. It reveals the active agency of non-native speakers in constructing an ideology that marginalises themselves and contributes to a more

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developed understanding of native-speakerism and the multilingual context of ELT.

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