

**OWNERSHIP OF ENGLISH THROUGH STUDY ABROAD:  
HOW JAPANESE EFL STUDENTS MITIGATE  
NATIVE SPEAKERIST IDEOLOGY<sup>1</sup>**

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I really feel bad about this you know, I feel like I have to lose my identity. I'm a Taiwanese person and I should feel comfortable about this, and I just feel that when I'm speaking English, I will want to be like a native speaker, and it's really hard, you know. (Jenkins, 2009, p. 205)

**ABSTRACT**

Several research studies have described English ownership among Japanese EFL learners (e.g., Matsuda, 2003; Saito & Hatoss, 2011; Sasayama, 2013) as low, indicating that they almost invariably showed their preference for native norms rather than allegiance to their own English varieties. While such research has demonstrated the dominance of this *native speakerist* (Holliday, 2006) ideology among L2 learners from many contexts, it is important to investigate opportunities in which such learners might overcome such ideologies to develop their ownership. This study examines how a study abroad context offers an opportunity to reimagine themselves as legitimate speakers of English (Norton, 1997). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 Japanese students studying in Hawai'i and analyzed by way of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The findings revealed that study abroad helped the participants mitigate native speakerist ideology through various developments, including the awareness of the value of Japanese language, culture, and identity, a correction of previously idealized images of native speakers, the development of L2 speaker models, and use and knowledge of English as an international language, including the conception of English as a lingua franca. Based on the findings, I discuss how the current study can inform pedagogical practices not only in study abroad, but also in EFL contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> Editors note: Out of respect for the points that the author makes in this paper, I only edited to correct obviously typographical errors and to make the paper conform to APA format. However, I did not edit the English in any way. I think you will find it perfectly comprehensible. - JDB

## INTRODUCTION

While the global appropriation of English has widely been acknowledged in academia, the notion of native speakers<sup>2</sup> as the idealized model of English speakers is still maintained among many English as a foreign language (EFL) learners (e.g., Butler, 2007; He & Zhang, 2010; Jenkins, 2009; Luk, 1998; Matsuda, 2003; Saito & Hatoss, 2011; Shaw, 1983; Timmis, 2002; Xu, Wang, & Case, 2010). The excerpt above (Jenkins, 2009, p. 205) can help us clarify an issue about English ownership, which highlights a Taiwanese second language (L2) English speaker's struggle in acquiring English as his/her own language, being lost in a limbo between the preservation of one's own indigenous identity and the desire for an identification with native speakers. As the Taiwanese speaker of English indicates, many learners exhibit a complex and ambivalent sense of ownership in that while at the conceptual level they understand that they do not need to speak like a native speaker given the global and local roles of English, they still wish to speak and even become like a native speaker at the personal level due to a lingering *native speakerism*, or the idea that native speakers represent the ideal speaker of the English language and that they are also the most valued language teacher by virtue of their first language (L1) status (Holliday, 2006). As such, what is in the ownership is often struggle, resistance, legitimacy, authority, correctness, non-inferiority, self-worth, confidence, and therefore, it is considerably complicated and worth exploring.

Ownership of English, therefore, is an important theme both in terms of L2 identity and English language learning. Without a sense of ownership, no matter how much learners invest in their English language learning and no matter how well they come to master the language, their continued belief in their peripheral position with respect to native speakers will prevent them from considering themselves legitimate speakers (Norton, 1997; Parmegiani, 2010), resulting in inferiority and lack of self-worth, confidence, and motivation (Dornyei, 2005). On the other hand, ownership arguably brings empowerment. Seilhamer (2015) argues that “with linguistic ownership, speakers have *carte blanche* to manipulate the language in whatever way they see fit to suit their own whims and purposes” (p. 385). They no longer need to watch faces of native

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<sup>2</sup> Although the term “native speaker” and “non-native speaker” have been contentious for many years, I intentionally use these terms since this research discusses the ideology that stems from its problematic concept.

speakers to see whether the usage and expression they say are “correct” or not, but rather with ownership they are encouraged to use English in the way they want, making use of their own linguistic and cultural frameworks to the extent that it is mutually intelligible in various contexts of the language use. To put the concept in a metaphor, having ownership of English is just like playing jazz in that when you were a jazz player, you do not play strictly from the music score but depart from the score to improvise, play it by ear, and create your own music by throwing your feeling and expression into it. Similarly, if you have ownership of English, you do not conform strictly to the lingua-cultural norm of native speakers, but express your own identity in your own English variety (e.g., Crystal, 2003; McKay, 2002; Widdowson, 1994). Such empowerment creates a joy of learning English with linguistic creativity and innovation, brings L2 learners beyond NS/NNS dichotomy, and develops their sense of legitimate speakers of English, all of which potentially leads to a non-subordinate L2 identity construction. In short, ownership matters.

The current study focuses on ownership of English among Japanese students in the context of study abroad in Hawai’i. While study abroad had been a popular context of research for some time, it is a site gaining increased research attention since the launch of Japan Public-Private Partnership Student Study Abroad Program: “TOBITATE! Ryugaku JAPAN” (MEXT, 2013) which attempts to double the number of students studying abroad by 2020. While many studies have examined the effects of study abroad on L2 learning outcomes and performance such as English proficiency, intercultural competence, motivation (e.g., Sasaki, 2007; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003; Williams, 2005), little or no attempt has been made to investigate the relationship between study abroad and ownership of English among Japanese L2 users. In addition, most ownership studies, as I will explain below, focused on just identifying and describing its existing beliefs among L2 learners (e.g., Matsuda, 2003; Saito & Hatoss, 2011; Sasayama, 2013), but an examination of how they have constructed their ownership and for what factors is quite limited. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore whether and in what ways the study abroad experiences influence Japanese students and seeks to identify what allows them to mitigate native speakerist ideology and thereby take ownership of English.

## RESEARCH ON OWNERSHIP OF ENGLISH

One salient distinction in the research on ownership of English is between macro- and micro-ownership (Parmegiani, 2010), which leads us to consider whether ownership is a matter of societal-level (the extent to which people adopt English in the local context) or personal-level (the extent to which an individual perceives the language as his or her own). Not surprisingly, macro-ownership studies have been carried out in the Outer Circle contexts where English plays critical roles in the society at large, while micro-ownership has been more relevant in the Expanding Circle where people learn English as a foreign language in schools but start gaining identity as EIL<sup>3</sup> users in international society. Generally speaking, the studies of macro-ownership have focused on ownership of local norms, while research into micro-ownership have investigated ownership of international norms, and ownership of one's own English with respect to native norms.

### *Macro- and Micro-Ownership*

*Ownership of a local norm.* In the Outer Circle contexts where English has become embedded into the people's everyday lives from family to social, cultural, political, and historical levels, norms of English have developed to carry the weight of the local sociolinguistic values, creating new ways of using English from phonological to pragmatic aspects. This “norm-developing” (Kachru, 1985, p. 17) context has led the researchers to put the speakers' orientations toward English norms to foreground their degree of English ownership (e.g., Bokhorst-Heng, Alsagoff, McKay, & Rubdy, 2007; Higgins, 2003; Rubdy, McKay, Alsagoff, & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Saraceni, 2010). A pioneering study in this research paradigm was carried out by Higgins (2003) in which she investigated whether and to what extent speakers in the Outer Circle countries “project themselves as legitimate speakers with authority over the language” (p. 615) by way of discourse analysis through an acceptability judgment task. Her research and methodological orientation were utilized by Bokhorst-Heng et al. (2007) and Rubdy

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<sup>3</sup> Some researchers prefer to use the term ELF instead of EIL since they argue that *International Language* in EIL may be associated with some codified and unitary variety (Jenkins, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2004). However, I employ these terms interchangeably to refer to “uses and functions of English, with its many varieties, in international and unpredictable multicultural situations” (Saeki, 2015, p. 44).

et al. (2008) in Singapore, with subtle but an important change in the groupings of dyads according to age and sociolinguistic contexts. Taken together, these studies have revealed the emergence of ownership over their local varieties with varying degrees, suggesting that more and more people in the Outer Circle now view themselves as legitimate speakers of their local English varieties.

***Ownership of international norms.*** In juxtaposition to the Outer Circle contexts, there has been an assumption in the early paradigm of World Englishes that de-democratized English varieties in the Expanding Circle by labeling them as “norm-dependent” (Kachru, 1985, p. 17) or exonormative. This view has still been maintained at the grass-roots level, and even in academia: “[t]he issue of English ownership is not as relevant for them [those living in the Expanding Circle] as it is for those living in the Outer Circle because there may not exist a local variety of English in their respective country... Speakers in the Expanding Circle cannot claim any ownership” (Yoo, 2013, p. 82). However, this widespread assumption is subject to closer scrutiny since it understands ownership categorized by Circles or countries, ignoring the complexity of language use and ownership by each individual speaker. Furthermore, transnational influences through media, technology, travel, and commerce accelerated by postmodern globalization has enabled people in the Expanding Circle not only develop local uses of English, but also interact with other multilingual communities (Canagarajah, 2014). This has geared the research attention toward investigating whether and to what extent each individual forms one’s identity as a legitimate English user in international society (e.g., Ke, 2010; Lamb, 2004; Nikula, 2007; Phan, 2009; Seilhamer, 2015; Yashima, 2002).

Through an investigation into L2 motivation of Indonesian children, Lamb (2004), for example, showed that “individuals may aspire towards a ‘bicultural’ identity which incorporates an English-speaking globally involved version of themselves in addition to their local L1-speaking self” (p. 3). Phan (2009) focused on identity and ownership of English in EIL to explore how Asian international students in Thailand see themselves in relation to English. She reported that despite many stereotypes about international students, “these students’ appropriation of EIL for their own advantage reflects a healthy and sensible sense of sharing the ownership of English” (p. 201). Along the same lines with a subtle but important change is Seilhamer (2015) in which he examined ownership with his framework of English ownership,

consisting of prevalent usage, affective belonging, and legitimate knowledge, concluding that the Taiwanese participants have varying degrees of ownership. In summary, the research in this paradigm has revealed EFL learners' sense of membership into multi-normative EIL community, highlighting their beliefs and perceptions of English that is "shifting from a geographical and political commodity to one of identity and use" (Hansen Edwards, 2016, p. 758).

***Ownership of one's own English with respect to native norms.*** Another paradigm of research on ownership focuses specifically on learners' struggle to overcome native speakerist ideology (Norton, 1997), in which the current study is positioned. It is my contention here that any examination of ownership of English must take account of the process through which they decrease a longing to be like native speakers, since, as Lewko (2012) succinctly points out, "part of what may impede language ownership among second language users of English may come from the notion of idealized native speakers" (p. 17). In reference to Seilhamer's (2015) definition above, for example, no matter how frequent they use English (prevalent usage), no matter how important English becomes for them (affective belonging), and no matter how confident they are about the language use (legitimate knowledge), if they are fixed on a birthright paradigm of language ownership, believing that "English cannot be the 'own' language of those who do not inherit it as their mother tongue" (Parmegiani, 2010, p. 361), they will never be able to claim substantive ownership.

Findings in this research paradigm are still pessimistic in that L2 learners typically view native speakers as the authority and owners of English and are willing to adhere to their lingua-cultural norms (e.g., Butler, 2007; He & Zhang, 2010; Jenkins, 2009; Lai, 2008; Luk, 1998; Matsuda, 2003; Saito & Hatoss, 2011; Shaw, 1983; Timmis, 2002; Xu, Wang, & Case, 2010). Speaking of Japanese students who the current study focuses on, Matsuda (2003), for example, reported that many Japanese high school students still believed that English belonged to its native speakers and perceived their own variety as incorrect English in comparison to "real" English of native speakers. A more recent replication study of Matsuda (2003) by Saito and Hatoss (2011) concluded that Japanese high school students evaluated native varieties far more positively than non-native counterparts with their own local English being the most devalued. In short, the previous studies have revealed that Japanese students, by and large, still consider native English varieties as more legitimate in comparison to their non-native counterparts.

## THE STUDY

### *Concept of Ownership Used in this Study*

Based on the third paradigm of English ownership mentioned above, ownership of English, in this particular study, is defined as an internalizing process through which L2 speakers of English perceive and use their own forms of English and see them as legitimate varieties, on par with other local forms of English, including those of native speakers. With this definition, the current study aims to explore the contributing factors (e.g., experiences, knowledge, and beliefs) during study abroad that mitigate native speakerist ideology for the development of English ownership among Japanese EFL students. It should be noted here that although a decrease of native speakerist ideology is an essential part for L2 learners to develop their ownership, I would emphasize that it is one of its multiple dimensions.

### *Participants*

Participants in this study were 13 Japanese university students (five males and eight females) who are in various types of study abroad programs in Hawai'i (e.g., a language school, a university exchange program, and a graduate school). Their average age was 21.69, ranging from 20 to 25. Five of them had language-related majors, while others had a major such as business, travel industry, and political science. They had experienced varying periods of study abroad, ranging from 4 months to 2.5 years (see Table 1, ordered by time abroad). All of them were native speakers of Japanese and learned English mainly in Japanese educational institutions, and none of them viewed themselves as *kikokushizyo*, or returnee. Table 1 below is a summary of the participants. All names reported here are pseudonyms<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> As for Satomi, she mainly used English to communicate with people in Myanmar.

Table 1  
*Participants*

<b>Participants</b>					
<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Study-Abroad Experiences</b>
Taichi	Male	21	Applied Linguistics	BA	30 months (Hawai'i)
Satomi	Female	24	Politics	Exchange	12 months (Myanmar), 4 months (Hawai'i)
Yusuke	Male	21	Liberal Arts	BA	15 months (Hawai'i)
Shingo	Male	25	Applied Linguistics	PhD	10 months (Massachusetts), 4 months (Hawai'i)
Mari	Female	23	English	Language School	8 months (Hawai'i)
Mana	Female	20	Political Science	Exchange	6 months (Hawai'i)
Megumi	Female	20	Liberal Arts	Language School	6 months (Hawai'i)
Minori	Female	22	Travel Industry	Exchange	6 months (Hawai'i)
Misaki	Female	22	English	Exchange	6 months (Hawai'i)
Riko	Female	20	Economics	Exchange	6 months (Hawai'i)
Tomonori	Male	21	Economics	Exchange	6 months (Hawai'i)
Erika	Female	20	Travel Industry	Exchange	4 months (Hawai'i)
Takashi	Male	23	Applied Linguistics	MA	4 months (Hawai'i)

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data collection for this study was conducted by way of semi-structured interview since it allows researchers to focus on a particular theme to investigate, while at the same time it helps them further capture the complexities of participants' perceptions and experiences (Patton, 1990). In the process of recruiting participants, I first explained how the data would be used, assured them of anonymity, and obtained permission to record the interviews from all the participants. All interviews were carried out in Japanese with an aim to obtain the participants' autobiographical retrospective accounts in learning English as well as to learn more about their beliefs toward native speakers during study abroad. A few open-ended questions were set up beforehand in order to ensure the appropriate coverage of important topics for each participant. The participants were first asked to describe their self-perception toward native speakers, and then compare them to that of their initial days of study abroad. Based on their responses, I asked follow-up questions to explore how and why their ideas and attitudes toward native speakers had changed. Each interview ranged from 30 to 40 minutes. Member checking was carried out to some participants after the interviews to ensure the validity of my interpretation (Charmaz, 2006).

Data analysis was based on grounded theory (GT) approach, which “is to move beyond the description and to generate or discover a theory, and abstract analytical schema of a process” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 62). GT is a useful theoretical framework when “no theory exists or when a theory exists that is too abstract to be tested” (Cho & Lee, 2014, p. 5) like ownership of English. In addition, I found GT to be the most suitable approach to exploring emergent forms of ownership because this study attempts to investigate the factors during study abroad from the interview data and generate a theory explaining the relationship between each factor. In analyzing my data, I first transcribed all the interview recordings and read it through carefully. In the repeated readings of the transcript, I highlighted utterances and concepts with themes represented the excerpts, following standard GT methods. After I reached the saturation point in highlighting and thematizing, I put these interview quotations on different document with memos, followed by its categorization based on the similarity of information. Drawing on the memos and member check for clarification, each theme was converted to higher and more abstract theoretical construct to capture the bigger picture of how they demystified native speakerist ideology during study abroad.

## FINDINGS

The analysis revealed that though many participants expressed a native speakerist ideology before study abroad, many were taking English as their own language by demystifying this ideology through various experiences they had during study abroad. I present my findings with reference to a grounded theory of ownership of English, shown in Figure 1, which highlights both common and unique experiences that exerted influences on my respondents’ mitigation of native speakerist ideology. Double lines in the figure illustrates the common themes that many participants (five or above) recurrently mentioned, while single lines represent unique factors that a smaller number (two to four) of them commented on.

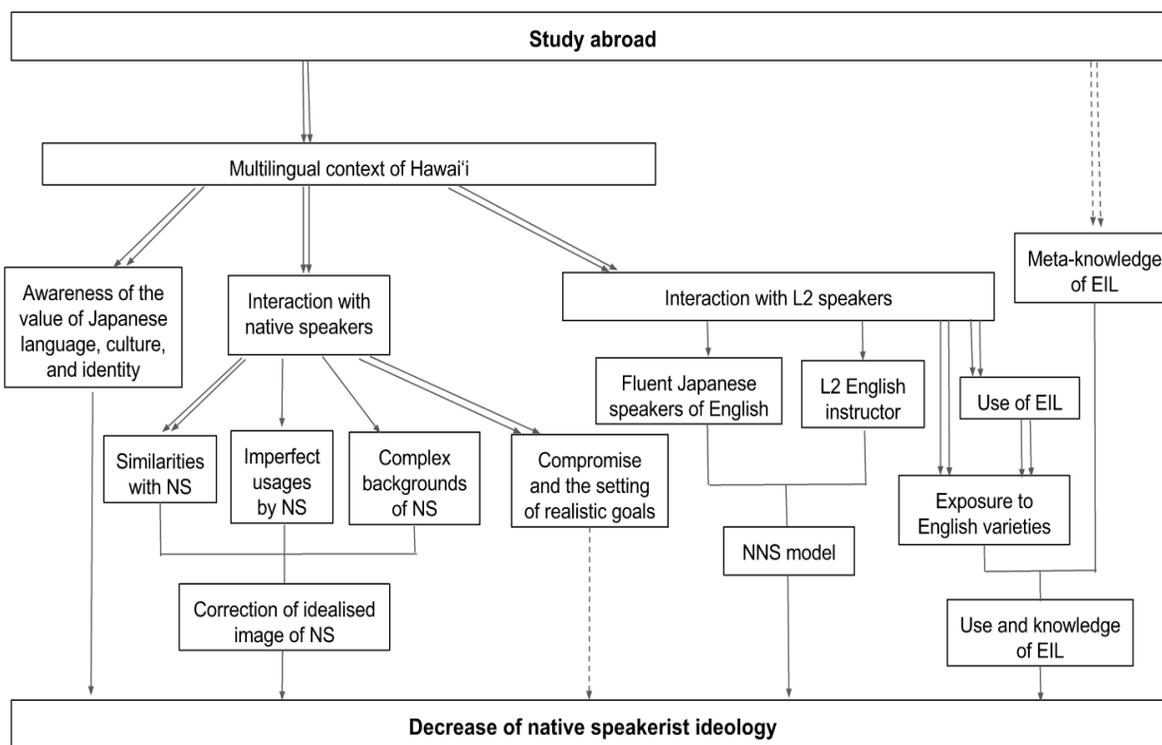


Figure 1. Grounded theory of ownership of English in the context of study abroad.

To explain how the speakers developed ownership, I explain the themes in Figure 1 and illustrate each theme with selected data from the interviews, based on the representativeness of each theme. All interview data was translated from Japanese into English by the author for a wider audience, and no original excerpts in Japanese are given due to the limited amount of space.

**Multilingual Context of Hawai'i**

Many participants mentioned how the unique linguistic environment of Hawai'i mitigated the desire to speak like a native speaker. For instance, the following conversation took place after Minori said that she wanted to become a person who can speak English along with multiple languages, rather than a monolingual native speaker.

Takuya: Did you have that idea [to become a multilingual speaker] before you came here [Hawai'i]?

Minori: No, I used to wonder why I'm a Japanese. I used to have a strong longing for native speakers before I came here. But I've come to think like it's better to be able to speak multiple languages than just be fluent in English.

Takuya: What made you change the idea?

Minori: I think it's because of the [multilingual] character of Hawai'i. When I was in Japan, I had an image like "English is America" or "foreigners are Americans". But here, Americans are not the only foreigners. Asians and Europeans are foreigners, and they speak their languages along with English. Here in Hawai'i, many different languages co-exist, and I found this kind of community very interesting.

While Minori once held an understanding of the world that centered on America before due to the skewed and limited representation of English and its speakers in Japan, living in Hawai'i opened up her perspective of the world with different ethnicities and languages co-existing in harmony. As with Minori, many of my participants told me that the exposure to different languages and the ways in which these languages are used along with English gave them opportunities to consider the complexity of English speakers and its community, causing them to decrease the longing for a monolingual native speaker. The analysis identified three contributing factors for the decrease in native speakerist ideology that stemmed from the multilingual context of Hawai'i. Moving down from the top of Figure 1, these factors are as follows: (a) awareness of the value of Japanese language, culture, and identity; (b) interaction with native speakers; and (c) interaction with L2 speakers.

*Awareness of the value of Japanese language, culture, and identity.* Many participants expressed that the experience of staying away from their homeland and living in a place where the majority of people do not speak Japanese made them realize the value of their language, culture, and identity. Such awareness seemed to be of importance for them to appreciate their indigenous values rather than to aspire to the values of native English-speakers. They redirected their learning goals away from native speakers toward a local L1-speaking self, as Satomi expressed, "*I want to speak English with Japaneseness.*" In the following excerpt, Riko explained how she became proud of being a Japanese during study abroad.

Riko: When I was in Japan, I didn't realize the importance of Japanese language because everyone speaks it, but here in Hawai'i there's a community where native speakers of Japanese are highly valued, right? If you work in travel industry in Hawai'i, it is very advantageous if you can speak Japanese. I took it for granted to be able to speak Japanese, but I realized that it was actually not, and rather it was valued. For that, I'm proud of being a Japanese.

Like Riko, many participants reported that study abroad in Hawai'i increased their sense of affinity for L1 and Japanese selves through various experiences [e.g., interacting with *nikkeijin* (Japanese Americans), seeing L2 learners of Japanese], reducing the longing for a native speaker of English. Thus, the findings suggested that such awareness could play an important role to demystify native speakerist ideology by developing a vision of an English-speaking “nationally-responsible future self” (Lamb, 2004, p. 16).

***Interaction with native speakers.*** The linguistic and cultural diversity of Hawai'i did of course include the opportunity for my participants to interact with native speakers. Surprisingly, or counter-intuitively, the findings revealed that as the participants interacted more with native speakers, their idealized image toward native speakers was not strengthened, but rather decreased and modified.

#### ***Correction of Idealized Image of NS and Interaction with Native Speakers***

Returning to Figure 1, “Correction of idealized image of NS” is used as an umbrella term to capture this theme, which is categorized into three subsidiary themes: understanding of (a) similarities with NS; (b) imperfect usages by NS; and (c) complex backgrounds of NS.

***Similarities with NS.*** Living in Japan may make it difficult to understand who a native speaker of English is due largely to a biased representation of native speakers by media and to Japan's distinctive features of what is still a primarily monoethnic and monolingual country, when compared to other nations (Saeki, 2015). However, many of the participants mentioned that their interaction with native speakers deconstructed and corrected their idealized image of native speakers. Shingo, for example, used to hold a dichotomous view between “us” and “them” (native speakers), but the interactions with native speakers in natural setting made him realize more similarities than differences with them.

Shingo: Native speakers that I knew before study abroad were only teachers [ALTs]. They were all teachers who are smarter and in higher position than me... But when I started a study abroad, I thought like these guys [native speakers] are also humans and talk about stuff like, “This girl is cute” and “Who would you wanna date with?”. And an imaginary wall of native speaker that I had in my mind before was lowered when I realized that they’re just the same with us.

Like Shingo, many of my participants had not had many opportunities to interact with native speakers outside classrooms in Japan, causing them to have an imaginary version of native speakers in their mind which was often sophisticated and cool (Furukawa, 2014). It is an interesting observation here that the limited exposure to native speakers can rather reinforce native speakerist ideology. As Shingo suggested, however, daily-life interaction with native speakers changed its image to a more realistic one, enabling him to become more aware that native speakers were similar in nature to themselves.

*Imperfect usages by NS.* The interaction with native speakers also made some of my participants increase their awareness of imperfectness in the usages among native speakers in that they also made mistakes and did not use the language “perfectly” all the time. For example, while Erika once held an assumption of native speakers being perfect and authoritative, the awareness and deliberation of “perfectness” exerted influences on the decrease in native speakerist ideology.

Erika: I’ve become optimistic. I used to believe that I can’t be perfect unless I get very close to native English because English is the language that native speakers have authority. But I was relieved when I realized that no one speaks in perfect English.

Takuya: “Native speakers are perfect” Is this what you used to believe?

Erika: Yeah, I used to, but recently I’ve noticed that even native speakers don’t speak English perfectly. And I’ve been wondering what “perfect” means, but I don’t know. If there’s no such thing as “perfect English”, then we don’t have to aim at it. And I’ve come to think that I should be more confident with my English

now.

In her interview, she explained how bible study which she started to join during study abroad influenced her beliefs of English in that the lesson that no one is perfect other than God led her to the contemplation of the notion of “perfect.” As Erika expressed, some my respondents indicated an incomplete knowledge of English among native speakers and questioned the notion of “perfect,” which brought them beyond the idealized English of native speakers. The finding also suggested that such awareness gave the participants opportunities to reflect on their own English performance, which reinforced their confidence in their own English.

*Complex backgrounds of NS.* In addition to the understanding of similarities with and imperfect usages by NS mentioned above, hybrid linguistic and ethnic ecology of Hawai’i and the interaction with native speakers in such a context provided the participants with the chance to consider who a native speaker is. Mana, for example, believed that native speakers are Caucasians and speak “perfectly clear English like the one in CD,” but she changed this idea by realizing the complexity of sociolinguistic context of being a native speaker.

Mana: I came to think this especially after I came here, but the single word “native” is actually complicated. There’s a native speaker whose family members are all Caucasians and Americans, and there’s a native speaker who is raised in Hawai’i by their Chinese parents. And they have completely different pronunciation. Well... I still have a stereotype like native speakers are Caucasians and speak very clear English. But even when your parents are Chinese, if your mother tongue is English, you’re a native speaker of English, right? So, I realized native speakers did not necessarily mean those who speak perfectly clear English like the one in CD... Besides, those who are born and raised here by Chinese parents can speak both Chinese and English at the same level, which means s/he is a native speaker of two languages, right?

For Mana, seeing a person who is born and raised in Hawai’i by Chinese parents with English being his/her one of the native languages caused her to become aware of the variations of pronunciation among native speakers and to consider the ambiguity of its definition. For some of

my participants, the desire to speak like a native speaker was challenged by the complexity of its notion—which native speaker and who is a native speaker? It can be concluded here that the interaction with native speakers helped them gain a better understanding of what a native speaker is like by increasing the awareness of the similarities with, imperfect usages by, and complex background of NS, leading them to a correction of idealized image of native speakers.

***Compromise and the setting of realistic goals.*** Not only the interaction with native speakers contributed to the correction of idealized image of native speakers, it also made them realize the difficulty of attaining a native level, causing them to compromise and set more realistic goals. Megumi, for example, said that although she had held the desire to speak fluently with a native pronunciation, the interaction with native speakers made her feel it was impossible to achieve native competence, which led her to compromise and shift her goal away from attaining native proficiency.

Megumi: I thought it was cool to be able to speak English fluently with good pronunciation like native speakers before the study abroad. I still want to speak like them, but recently I've come to realize it's not possible to do so.

Takuya: Why?

Megumi: The thing is fluency. If I'll stay here for many, many years, it's a different story, but I feel like it's not possible to be fluent just in a year. I'm trying to sound like native speakers in terms of pronunciation, but as for fluency... I still think to speak. I'm not giving up, but I feel like I cannot speak like them.

Takuya: Is that why you've decreased a longing for native speakers?

Megumi: I still have the longing for native speakers, but I don't adhere to them any more. I'd thought I wanted to be like them before I came here, and it was cool to speak like them, but now I think it's the most important to be able to get the meaning across to make communication.

As with Megumi, many of my participants expressed the impracticality of achieving native competence during the short period of study abroad and led them to a compromise or give up. This theme may not directly be related to the decrease of native speakerist ideology since the participants still wished to be able to speak like native speakers (as you can tell in Megumi's

comment “I cannot speak like them” rather than saying, “I don’t need to speak like them”). However, I included the theme here since this shifted their orientation away from native speakers and caused them to set a more realistic goal that meets their current communicative needs, though native speakerist ideology may still have remained about the same.

### *Multilingual Context of Hawai’i and Interaction with L2 Speakers*

Referring back to Figure 1, in addition to the interaction with native speakers, the multilingual context of Hawai’i is a site where my participants had quite a few opportunities to engage in the interaction with other L2 speakers of English. The findings revealed that such experiences decreased their native speakerist ideology when they realized that proficient L2 speakers are more realistic and attainable models after they witnessed fluent Japanese speakers of English as well as L2 English instructors. The interview data also revealed that the use of English in L2-L2 interactions and experiencing the concept of EIL raised their awareness of the diversity of English in the world today and brought them beyond NS/NNS dichotomy.

As shown in the figure, the term NNS models is used to include both fluent Japanese speakers of English and L2 English instructors, which are recurrently commented on as parts of the interactions with L2 speakers, eliminating their native speakerist ideologies.

***Fluent Japanese speakers of English.*** Due to the limited roles of English in daily lives, seeing Japanese people speaking English in natural settings in Japan is not very common for many. However, here in Hawai’i, some of the participants mentioned that they witnessed Japanese people communicating in English successfully, and this made them realize the full functionality of L2 English, despite various features of Japanese English. For example, although Mari used to have a strong negative attitude toward Japanese English in the past, this attitude changed after she encountered Japanese people speaking English competently.

Takuya: What do you think about Japanese English?

Mari: I think it’s fine if it’s intelligible. I used to hate it, though.

Takuya: Then, what made you change the idea?

Mari: Well, I saw some Japanese people speaking English fluently with native speakers. There’re such people here, right? Their English pronunciation is not

close to native at all, but they make communication very well. This made me think like “Japanese English is fine if we can communicate”. I haven’t reached to that level, though.

It is worth noting that while she came to embrace Japanese L2 norms, she conceded that there was still room for the development of her proficiency, whether it was native-like or not. However, her interview excerpt above suggests that the observation of how Japanese people with the similar sociolinguistic background of the language learning communicate successfully in their own English varieties changed her idea that being able to communicate is more important than trying to acquire native pronunciation.

**L2 English instructor.** Again, Figure 1 suggests that the interactions with L2 speakers included the opportunity to have L2 English instructors, which caused some of my participants deconstruct native speaker fallacy. NS/NNS dichotomy is maintained not only in daily discourse, but it is particularly salient in the field of TESOL. Clark and Paran (2007), for example, succinctly points out that “non-native-speaker teachers of English are often perceived as having a lower status than their native-speaking counterparts, and have been shown to face discriminatory attitudes when applying for teaching jobs” (p. 407). Takashi, however, said that having colleagues who were L2 speakers, but nevertheless received graduate assistantships and taught English, changed his idea and brought him beyond the dichotomy between NS/NNS.

Takashi: There’re many international friends around me, and some of them get GAsip [Graduate Assistantship] and become instructors of ELI [English Language Institute], though they’re not native speakers of English. The idea that non-native speakers can teach English on the same stage with native speakers was quite encouraging to me.

In the interview, he mentioned that before this experience, he believed that non-native speakers could never excel native speakers because he believed that they were more proficient and fluent. However, having a non-native English speaker teacher made him demystify native speaker fallacy in teaching profession (Phillipson, 1992), realize the legitimacy of L2 speakers, and encourage his own L2 speaker status.

*Use and knowledge of EIL.* Returning to Figure 1, another theme that stemmed from the interaction with L2 speakers was the participation in EIL interaction through which the participants were exposed to different varieties of English. In addition, the findings revealed that the learning about the concept, features and functions of EIL through sociolinguistic course, podcast, or friend's conversation on the topic, was also significant for them to be informed of an appropriate understanding of the changing landscape of English today, causing them to shift their goal orientation away from native speakers to more realistic ones that fit their needs and purposes. Despite of the strong influence of the meta-knowledge of EIL on the decrease in native speakerist ideology, I used a dotted line in the figure since it may not be a theme that necessarily emerges from the experience of study abroad.

The findings suggested that the interaction with other L2 speakers, or the *use of EIL*, made many of my participants become aware of the roles and functions of English as a language that goes beyond national geographical boundaries. For example, although Erika used to have an assumption that she used English to communicate with native speakers, her interaction with friends from China and Korea challenged this assumption.

Erika: I've come to think like, "It should not necessarily be a native speaker as an interlocutor to talk with in English". Since I now use English as a common language with my friends from China and Korea, I've come to think that I want to speak English that everyone around the world can understand, rather than only native speakers...

Takuya: Is it what you've realized during this study abroad?

Erika: Yeah, it was not until I came here that I made friends with Chinese and Koreans.

As with Erica, many of my respondents pointed to the lack of opportunity to use English with other L2 speakers in English classrooms in Japan, which constructed the assumption that English is used to communicate chiefly with native speakers. However, making friends from the Outer and Expanding Circle countries and using English as a vehicle for interaction made them realize the roles of EIL in L2-L2 interactions and motivated them to speak English with international intelligibility.

Whether it is just witnessing other L2 speakers interacting with each other or actively participating in EIL, these experiences consequently entailed the *exposure to different varieties of English*. The participants' responses to the exposure to other varieties of English were mixed, with the small number of them expressing negative attitudes as previous studies revealed (e.g., Matsuda, 2003; Saito & Hatoss, 2011) while the others being more open to the pluricentric idea of English. Satomi, for example, said,

Takuya: Do you wish to achieve American English pronunciation?

Satomi: Not really. I think it doesn't have to be very good American English as long as people can understand me.

Takuya: Is it what you believed before this study abroad?

Satomi: No, I didn't think in that way before. Actually, I was devoted to mimicking native pronunciation completely.

Takuya: Then, what made you change your idea?

Satomi: When I came here, I heard many English[es] of different countries like China, Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, and so on. And I realized that each of them has very different pronunciation, and I found it very interesting...

In her interview, she mentioned that she used to believe everyone spoke in American English because it was the only variety that she had learned in school, which motivated her to “mimic native pronunciation completely.” Imitating native pronunciation is more common than not in English classrooms in Japan in such practices as read aloud [*ondoku*], shadowing, and repeating after an audio track from a CD, reinforcing a skewed understanding of phonological features of English today. The exposure to English of various countries in Hawai'i, however, raised her awareness of the diversity of English, shifting her goal of learning English from the acquisition of native pronunciation to that with international intelligibility.

***Meta-knowledge of EIL.*** In addition to the actual use of English and exposure to English varieties, some of my participants who were in the field of language studies reported that the explicit knowledge of EIL/ELF also helped them demystify native speakerist ideology. Such learning about the concept, features, and functions of EIL took place in various occasions like sociolinguistic course, educational podcast, or friend's conversation on the topic. Takashi, for

example, said:

Takashi: During this study abroad, I took sociolinguistics and learned the concept of English as an international language. And now I think like, “I want to use English in my own way, without trying to sound like a native speaker”... Though I had a longing for native speakers before study abroad, now it’s going away a little bit.

It can be concluded here that both the actual use of English in multi-lingual context and meta-understanding about English as in the disciplines like EIL, ELF, and World Englishes made them become aware that English does not belong only to native speakers but also to all people regardless of which country they may come from. Also, the use and knowledge of EIL gave them an opportunity to reflect on their own English varieties, which in turn led to their confidence, legitimacy, and ownership.

## **DISCUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

One interesting observation during the interviews as well as data analysis that should be noted is that none of my participants had a strong integrative orientation toward American varieties of English. Although they had viewed native speakers as sophisticated and had previously positioned them as the goal of their language learning to varying degrees, such ideologies were not to the extent that they desired to assimilate into the target language community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Very few of them expressed the crucial identity struggle caused by native speakerist ideology and the preservation of their local L1-selves, as mentioned in the interview excerpt at the beginning of this paper (Jenkins, 2009). In other words, for most of my Japanese participants who study abroad in Hawai’i, the notion of “native speaker” in relation to the role of identity had become less relevant. Although there were many instances in which my participants said, “I want to be like a native speaker,” the subsequent conversation with them made me consider in what ways they want to be like a native speaker. For example, Tomonori and I had the following conversation after he acknowledged the difficulty to speak like

a native speaker due to the structural differences that English and Japanese have.

Takuya: Then, don't you think, not like "I cannot be like a native speaker", but like "I don't need to be like a native speaker"?

Tomonori: I don't think so. I want to be like them [native speakers] if I can.

Takuya: What do you mean by "you want to be like them if you can"? Do you just want to speak English like them in terms of language? Or, do you want to be like them, like Americans?

Tomonori: I'm talking about language, you know, I just want to speak English like them. Do I want to be like an American? Umm... I've never thought about it, but... that's not it at all.

As Tomonori suggested, native speakerism among my participants was only limited to language level, but not to the extent that it could jeopardize their local identity. This seems to suggest that there is a continuum of native speakerist ideology from one end of "colonization of consciousness of the non-English-speakers, causing them to develop linguistic, cultural, psychological dependency upon, and identification with, the English, its culture and people" (Tsuda, 1996) to the other end which is characterized by an interest in native-like language use but an indifference to native speakers. The interview data revealed that while the majority of my participants held allegiances to their indigenous language, culture, and identity, when it comes to the learning of English, they were somewhere at the language level on its putative native speakerist continuum, with the desire to speak English like a native speaker, particularly in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency, but lacking desire to be like native speakers.

### ***Implications for EFL Pedagogical Contexts***

Although this study focused on Japanese students in the context of study abroad, the factors that were identified can usefully be incorporated into various L2 classrooms regardless of EFL or ESL. In what follows, I describe pedagogical practices that may help students who do not experience study abroad to mitigate native speakerist ideology and facilitate their ownership of English. Below, I discuss several ideas for teachers which are based on the grounded theory this study has produced.

***Teachers can work to make the students become aware of the values of local language, culture, and identity:*** As many of my participants mentioned, living in their L1 context brings little threat to their L1, culture, and identity, make it difficult to understand the values, and sometimes cause them to aspire to speak and even become like a native speaker. It is, therefore, necessary to “increase awareness of their own cultural values, often in relation to those of others, to enable them to express their cultural identity through English” (Saeki, 2015, p. 55). One of the pedagogical ideas to achieve this in classrooms is to establish a “sphere of interculturality” (Kramsch, 1993) by presenting cultures of other countries in various ways (e.g., textbooks introducing world cultures, audio-visual materials introducing different cultures, online newspapers of other countries) as a way of gaining greater knowledge and understanding of the students’ own culture. These ideas are supported as far back as Smith (1976), who suggested the following pedagogical implications of EIL: “learners of an international language do not need to internalize the cultural norms of native speakers of that language; the ownership of an international language becomes de-nationalized; and the educational goal of learning it is to enable learners to communicate their ideas and culture to others” (cited by McKay, 2002, p. 12). In other words, having ownership of English essentially means to internalize the language as their own through the expression of oneself within each individual’s linguistic and cultural framework, rather than to attempt to stretch out one’s hand to an exonormative native English.

***Teachers can work to raise the students’ critical awareness of the term “native speakers,” including visual images:*** As many of participants mentioned, the interactions with native speakers in Hawai’i gave them opportunities to become aware of the similarity with, imperfect usages by, and complex backgrounds of native speakers, which led to the correction of their idealized image. In EFL classroom settings, it would be important to raise their critical awareness of the term native speakers in discussing such questions as “Who is a native speaker?” and “What does it take to be a native speaker?” The native speaker in classroom materials is often “portrayed as handsome, often with blond hair and blue eyes, well-educated, well-dressed, understated and kind” (Piller & Takahashi, 2006, p. 66), and may still be maintained among more than a few Japanese people due to a biased representation of native speakers in media, recruitment of native speakers teachers with such physical characteristics in the ELT industry, and Japan’s distinctive feature of largely homogeneous ethnic population compared to other

countries. In their discussion, teachers should keep in mind that what we perceive as a native speaker is often imaginary and based on ideologies that do not reflect the demographics of L1 speakers.

***Teachers can work to invite successful L2 speakers to an English class/recruit non-native English instructors (e.g., assistant language teachers):*** As some of my participants suggested (e.g., Shingo and Takashi above), while undue favor to native English speaker teachers (NEST) may reinforce students' association of native speakers with the sole and desired model, the positive recruitment of non-native English speaker teachers (NNEST) can help them understand the legitimacy of L2 speakers. In addition, inviting successful L2 speakers of English into an English class, or sharing video data featuring fluent Japanese users of English, also brings empowerment for L2 learners, as they can be more realistic and attainable models than native speakers in a sense that they are nothing less than the learners themselves in terms of the language-learning background. This would be a first step in providing alternatives to the native speaker models, as represented by most of the assistant language teachers (ALTs) hired for the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) program, in which 90% of them are from the Inner Circle countries such as America, Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand (MEXT, 2013). This proportion is contrary to the current sociolinguistic reality of English in which more than 80% of English speakers belong to the Outer and Expanding Circle countries. To be effective, teachers can invite those who are close to their students' social and age level as "near peer role models" who can make a lasting impression on some of the students (Dornyei & Murphey, 2003, p. 128).

***Teachers can work to raise students' awareness of English in the world and provide adequate exposure to other varieties of English:*** The current situation may be that while students learn English in the EFL setting, they are unaware of how English is used as an international language, who is using English and for what purposes, and what the roles and features of English are in the world (Saeki, 2015). Since participating in international communication in English will require the learners to shuttle between different varieties of English and cultural communities (Canagarajah, 2006), it is essential to increase their meta-understanding about English as well as to provide the exposure to various features of World Englishes. Teachers can do this by teaching *about* English as well as playing audios and videos that include World Englishes, making use of online resources such as elllo (elllo.org) and Global Englishes (<http://www.globalenglishes.com/>).

Also, TED (<https://www.ted.com/>) can be used since many TED presenters come from different countries with their English varieties.

***Teachers can work to create an EIL environment that facilitates L2-L2 interaction:*** As many of my participants expressed, interaction with other L2 speakers made them become aware of the roles and functions of English as a language for international communication and allowed them to deconstruct their assumption that they learned English to communicate with native speakers. In addition, such L2-L2 interactions further facilitated language socialization and legitimate peripheral participation into their respective communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and also prepared the students for future multilingual society in which they must accommodate and negotiate between different varieties of English and cultures. While such practices have been attempted at college level where EIL/ELF/WE scholars are found (e.g., D'Angelo, 2012; Hino, 2009; Uyeda, Owada, Oya, & Tsutsui, 2005), most high school teachers are not informed of the ideas to implement the necessary changes. Digital communication media such as epals (<https://www.epals.com>) or Mystery Skype (<https://education.microsoft.com/skype-in-the-classroom/mystery-skype>) could be incorporated in classrooms to create an EIL environment.

It should be noted that these suggestions of EIL pedagogy is not intended to replace the existing classroom practices entirely with something new, but instead, they can be added and adapted into various parts of the curriculum. One of the possible challenges in exposing the students to World Englishes and cultures as well as creating an EIL environment would be an accessibility of Internet in classrooms since such online environment has not been fully equipped in many schools. Along with many other constraints, however, teachers can start implementing the necessary changes by making use of the ideas of EIL activities and tasks introduced in books and articles about EIL (e.g., Alsagoff, McKay, Hu, & Renandya, 2012; Galloway, 2013; Hino, 2012; Matsuda, 2012; Matsuda, 2017). Having said that, what is of particular importance is teachers' attitudes toward EIL. Previous studies have shown that not just learners but teachers give positive evaluations to native than non-native varieties as an appropriate instructional norms (e.g., Coskun, 2011; Lai, 2008; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). In order to implement these changes in the most effective way, it is essential for teachers to be informed of the theoretical reasons why there needs to be such a shift from EFL to EIL pedagogy.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the ways in which the experiences during study abroad demystified native speakerist ideology as an important process of taking ownership of English among Japanese students, in an attempt to explore the experiences, knowledge, and beliefs that influenced their decrease of such ideology. The findings revealed that study abroad helped the participants mitigate native speakerist ideology through various factors such as awareness of the value of Japanese language, culture, and identity, correction of idealized image of native speakers, L2 speaker models, and use and knowledge of EIL, as shown in Figure 1. However, of course, the data are limited by the small number of participants and the time they had spent so far in their study abroad experiences. There was also a difficulty in eliciting all of their stories relevant to the research question, due to their memory limitations. Nevertheless, I hope that this study can contribute to an understanding of the mechanisms by which native speakerist ideology can be mitigated, thereby providing language learners and language educators with important pedagogical implications.

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