

Language and Identity: How Do Different Aspects of an L2 Identity Correlate With Spoken English Ability in Japanese High School Students?

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Abstract

This paper attempts to establish that there is a correlation between the sociolinguistic identities of high school students and their productive English-speaking abilities. The paper initially explains the basic concept of sociolinguistic identity and refers to various aspects of research into Japanese national identity to analyse how these may influence the learning of English in Japan. Secondly, the participants' specific context is detailed and reasoning for the relevance of the two tasks that are put to them is provided. Following on from this, the methods of data collection and analysis are described. Results posit that learners with a greater interest in English-speaking cultures are more likely to interact competently, and in turn, having stronger productive skills correlates positively with the rejection of an anti-English sentiment. The paper ends with a brief discussion on how cultural constraints in Japan affect English expression and the importance of emerging trends such as "international posture" (Yashima, 2002).

Keywords: language, identity, spoken English ability, Japanese

Introduction

The sociolinguistic concept of identity stems from the notion that a country must construct a national identity to function as independent cities within a united whole, and that a national language holds central importance in forming it (Joseph, 2004). Being social constructs, identities are formed and reconstructed during interactions with others (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Schiffrin, as cited in Coulmas, 2013; Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2015; Takahashi, 2013), although the level of flexibility with which this occurs may differ depending on individual adaptability, cultural constraints and/or other factors.

This study builds on the idea that learners of a foreign language (i.e. English) with flexible identities, or a keen interest in English-speaking countries, may choose to build a second language (L2) identity for themselves and demonstrate greater expressive ability in English, whereas learners who avoid speaking English, or whose identities are less flexible, might instead stick to the cultural norms (and linguistic limitations) of their default national identity (i.e. Japanese).

High school participants from two selected classes complete an individual learner questionnaire on attitudes towards the English language in Japan and on what they believe to be their own L2 identities. They are also tested and graded on a paired speaking activity. The answers gleaned from the former are cross-analysed with Cambridge B1 Level grades for pronunciation and interaction from the latter to analyse the extent to which individual high school learners' L2 identities might influence their spoken English language production, and vice versa.

Research into various aspects of Japanese national sentiment, including an apparent fixation with native-speaker English, is depicted as a cultural split in attitudes towards the learning of English. Finally, I mention some of the study's limitations and suggest how future teaching might take into account knowledge of L2 identity and respond to the limitations of Japanese high school students.

“Identity” and Japanese views

This study understands a broad definition of identity as Peirce (as cited in Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006) describes it: the way a person understands and constructs a relationship with the world. It also draws attention to both essentialist and non-essentialist approaches; the former being an identity pre-determined by culture or biology that cannot be resisted (Bucholtz, 2003), and the latter being one that empowers an individual to construct his/her own reality (Hall, as cited in Phan, 2008). Within non-essentialist (or “liquid”) identities, I investigate the self-appropriated or “inhabited” aspect that becomes a learner's L2 identity, even though an externally imposed or “ascribed” element (Blommaert, as cited in Preece, 2016) may also qualify as an L2 identity. Subsequent references to the literature include both ascribed and inhabited identity research and I attempt to analyse their effects on the spoken English output of Japanese high school learners.

Coulmas (2013) points out that a language links both individual and collective identities to a sense of national loyalty. Sounding different to those around you can hence hypothetically place you on the wrong end of the “we-they distinction” (Coulmas, 2013, p. 191), even within your own community. It may therefore not be desirable to speak fluent English if your peers are not capable of doing so. The Japanese seem to have collectively and historically resisted being overpowered by the English language. Japan was never colonised by a Western power and English was never adopted during the 7 years of American occupation after World War II (Sergeant, 2011). Seemingly a matter of national pride, Japan also discouraged the teaching of the English language during WWII (Kubota, 1998), and even today, there may still be a sense that English, often likened to globalisation, is a threat to national unity and cultural values (Sergeant, 2011). Even though

English instruction is spreading in Japan, not only as an individual subject but also gradually as a *modus operandi* at schools (Seargeant, 2011), and Japan seems to prefer looking to the West for guidance than to Asia (Yano, 2011), Seargeant (2011, p. 31) observes that in the Japanese Diet “a commonly expressed concern is that the focus on English takes time away from Japanese language study and citizenship education.” The consensus seems to translate to something like: “by all means study English, but be cautious and don’t allow it to subtract from your Japanese language and values.”

The fact that Japan almost stands alone as a non-western country that has not had to sacrifice its language and culture in achieving extraordinary financial success, supports those who advocate a unique identity, or “*nihonjinron*”, that owes nothing to the West (Kubota, 1998, p. 300) and provides Japan with power and stability on its own terms (Rivers, 2011). As Kubota (2011) and the teachers in Matsuda’s (2011) study of high school students agree, it is a fact that one can be very successful in Japan today without much fluency or competence in English. Seen from the opposite end of the spectrum, Tsuda (as cited in Kubota, 1998) purports that Japan has developed an addiction to learning English as a defence mechanism to override an inner identity crisis. Officially, Japan’s rationale for developing English is that it is essential in the global competitive market, although interestingly, Seargeant (2011) notes that the promotion of English is directly linked to new programmes supporting the national language, in what would seem to be an attempt to balance out an excess of English language and possibly of foreign cultural influence. While such psychological views of a collective Japanese identity may have the effect of restricting English language production as a community, this discussion has not yet cleared the realm of ascribed identities. Thus far, identities are attributed, through the influence of the powers that be, to individuals who choose to accept them (Stewart & Miyahara, 2011). Having said this, we should not underestimate the strength of community pressure on individual decision-making in Japan.

English as an international language (EIL)

The notion of English as an international language (EIL), or *lingua franca* (ELF), provides L2 learners the choice of whether to unrealistically push for a native-sounding accent by removing any hint of local “foreignness” (Jenkins, 1998), or to accept identifying with the English pronunciation and usage of their L1 community, as long as it is comprehensible. Although seemingly simple and perfectly plausible, inhabiting the identity of a Japanese speaker of English does not come easy to Japanese learners. This is due in part to the negative connotations of Japanese English locally, in comparison to native varieties of English

(Chiba et al., 1995). According to several authors, the Japanese feel that their accent is incorrect and inappropriate when addressing NS and even doubt its intelligibility (Matsuda, 2003; Tokumoto & Shibata, 2011). Matsuda explains that even though the high school students in her study recognise the use of English internationally, they do not feel it belongs internationally, and definitely not to the Japanese.

Much of this modern obsession with imitating NS English may stem from the UK and US native speaker (NS) models provided to students in their textbooks (Kubota, 1998; Matsuda, 2003). The idea of associating English exclusively with the Anglo-American culture and ostensibly only learning it to communicate with NS, keeps Japan at the level of other EFL countries, lacking international contexts within its shores (Jenkins, 1998) and bereft of the possibility of developing its own variety of English (Yano, 2011).

A further reason for resisting an L2 identity in Japan may be because English, like in other EFL countries, is seldomly spoken outside the context of a classroom. This may prompt the few fluent speakers of English within the classroom to mask their bilingual abilities in order to fit in with their peers (Vasilopoulos, 2015). This notion of undercover L2 speakers in Japanese classrooms adds an intercultural angle that further limits the propagation of L2 identities. Greer (2000, p. 183) terms this pressure to fit in: “The Eyes of *Hito*” (*Hito* perhaps meaning *people* or *society* as an individual force). He suggests that students will make mistakes on purpose and evade sounding native to avoid “sanctions by the audience” (Lebra, as cited in Greer, 2000, p. 185) for standing out and breaking the in-class alignment of students’ levels.

Although unwillingness to identify with the English language as non-native speakers (NNS) may be linked to the country’s “national failure to acquire a working command of English” (Honna, as cited in Schneider, 2014, p. 22), it may also be due to the low regard Japan has for NNS countries within Asia (Rivers, 2011), such as Malaysia or the Philippines. Rivers maintains that Japan chooses to identify with Western superpowers instead of with other Asian countries, and Nakamura (as cited in Kubota, 1998) goes further to suggest that Japan has internalised an idea of Western superiority towards many of its neighbours. If it is true that Japan feels superior to its Asian neighbours, it may be difficult to nationally accept the educational value that Singaporean or Filipino English can have on their own local variety. If Japan were to empower its own variety of English and opt for ELF, what would this mean in terms of sociolinguistic identity? Does an ELF identity exist? Or is House (as cited in Jenks, 2013, p.167) right in saying that ELF is “an acultural variety of English ... unusable for ‘identity marking’”?

From internationalisation to “international posture”

To answer the above question, Jenks finds that individual language proficiency is an important part of an ELF identity. Without the confidence that proficiency provides, there seems to be little point in constructing an L2 identity. The idea of internationalisation in Japan is deeply related to English language proficiency. The term “*kokusaika*”, or internationalisation, is described by Kubota (1998, p. 300) as the way Japan “harmoniously embraces” Westernisation through the teaching and study of English, and perhaps oddly, through promoting Japanese nationalistic values. Although this is a more gracious definition than the previously mentioned “*nihonjinron*”, it contrasts the idea of how internationalisation is viewed in other countries. Stewart and Miyahara (2011) refer to a study by Yoneoka which presents Japanese students’ views of internationalisation as: knowledge of foreign languages and cultures, while the general view of internationalisation, by students from around the world (including German and American participants), was to be increasingly sociable and broad-minded to people from other nations. The latter is of course not linked to linguistic ability.

The term “international posture”, coined by Yashima (2002), is nevertheless closer to what the global group of students felt about internationalisation. Yashima (2009) describes it as a willingness to feel connected to a global community, regardless of language, and to interact with citizens from other countries. It is an individual decision or a personal choice and hence qualifies as an inhabited identity. Using international posture as one of the bases for predicting spoken English language production, this study attempts to find a correlation between positive global sentiments, as elicited in question 17 of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and successful English interaction during the paired speaking activity.

Figure 1 illustrates Yashima’s (2009) findings on how international posture, frequency of communication, willingness to communicate and English proficiency all mutually interconnect through the vehicles of confidence and motivation. Based on her studies, it is also worth predicting that the stronger the participants’ international posture, or perhaps conversely, the weaker their traditional “*nihonjinron*” views are, the greater their proficiency in spoken English would be. Strong agreement with statements such as 4, 9, 15 and 22 (see Appendix 1) might therefore point to participants having a claim over their own national agency and hypothetically, less interest in learning English.

Further evidence of inhabited identities in Japan can be found in Matsuda’s (2011) above-mentioned study. The students were frustrated due to the lack of oral communication in their classes, and their opinions were at odds with those of their teachers who believed studying English grammar would be more beneficial to them. These students believed in

the importance of English language communication more than their teachers did. This serves to consolidate the idea that international posture in a classroom is a student's choice and not a blanket identity attributed to them by figures of authority such as teachers or the Ministry for Education. The students' comments in Matsuda's study also strengthen Yashima's (2002, 2009) view that international posture is more sought after by younger generations of Japanese students, who may be interested in things such as helping foreign tourists in their cities, speaking to exchange students or pursuing a career abroad. This may be the beginning of what Arnett (in Lamb, 2004, p. 13) calls a "bicultural identity" and what LoCastro (in Lamb, 2004, p. 14) defines as a Japanese struggle to form "an identity that includes being a competent speaker of English while retaining one's L1 and the L1 culture."

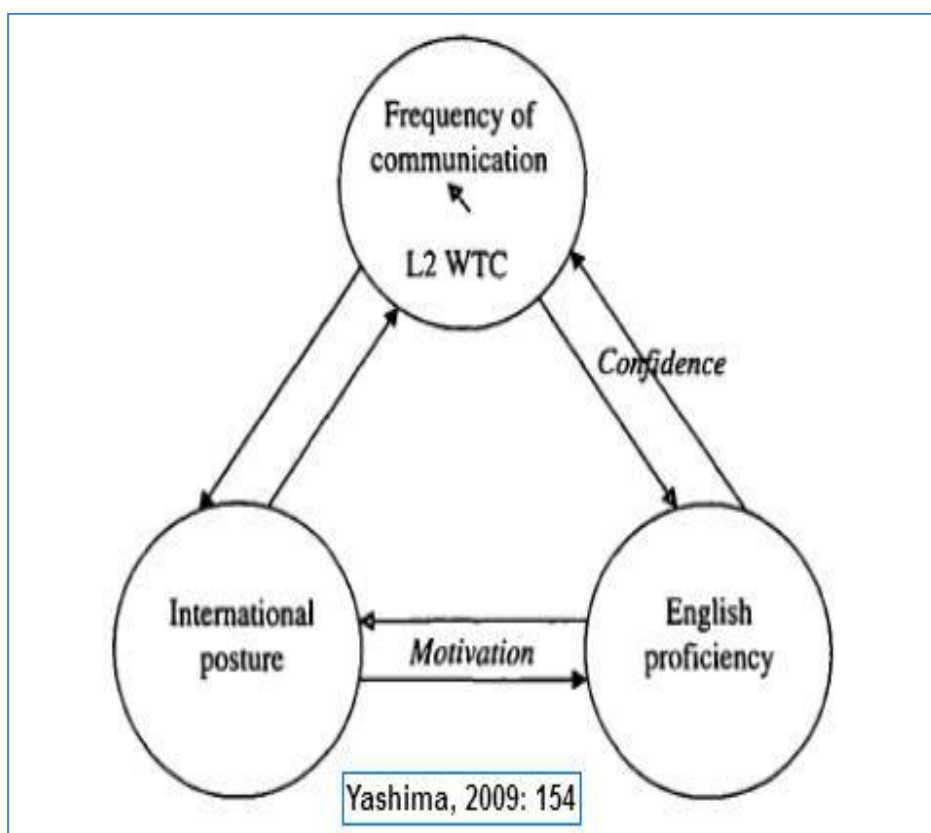


Figure 1. Diagram of international posture. Reprinted from *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 Self* (p. 154), by Z. Dörnyei, & E. Ushioda, (eds), 2009, Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Learners in my context

The participants were all first-year students in a Japanese private high school and all shared Japanese as their first language (L1). They were between the ages of 15 and 16 and took a compulsory course in *English Expression* at Level 2, out of three possible levels. Level 1 (the top level) is reserved for students returning from English-speaking countries or Japanese learners with remarkably high English proficiency levels. The level in question (Level 2) is roughly equal to a pre-intermediate/intermediate level, or a B1 in the CEFR scale. Classes comprised two 50-minute lessons a week throughout the academic year (3 trimesters), as well as self-study time. Students at the school generally come from wealthy backgrounds, which, according to Kubota (2011) and Schneider (2014), can be a marker of English competence in EFL countries such as Japan. Two full classes, of 28 and 30 students respectively, participated in the study, giving a total of 58 participants. However, due to a technical difficulty during recording, the final number of participants was 56.

The English Expression course at the high school is run by NS teachers and essentially covers the listening and speaking skills, as opposed to a parallel course generally centred on reading and writing skills, run by Japanese English teachers. Both courses are compulsory and are administered and graded independently. NS teachers are individually responsible for running their lessons as they see fit, obviously keeping to the school's standards. This fact, in part, belies the ubiquitous image of the native teacher in Japan, which Iбата (2013, p. 280) describes as: "an exotic 'Other'... insensitive to Japanese culture... to remain 'foreign' to Japanese learners in order to inspire students' interest in foreign cultures."

The activities

A questionnaire activity with 22 statements, adapted from Chiba, Matsuura, and Yamamoto's (1995) study of Japanese university students, required participants to circle a number on a seven-point scale next to the statements, with number 1 being "completely agree" and 7 being "completely disagree". The aim of this was to measure this sample of high school students' attitudes and familiarity with NS English, their attitudes towards other non-native varieties of English (Kachru, 1990) and to observe whether feelings of identity may have determined the way they interacted in English. The questionnaire was simply for the purpose of the research and had no pedagogical function other than to question students' awareness of issues regarding language and identity. In the case of some students, thinking about answers to these questions may have been something new to them. For this reason, the questionnaire was

translated into Japanese for the individual students to answer in their L1, as it was believed this would ensure a better understanding of the questions and hence provide a more accurate collection of data.

The interactive speaking activity in dyads was not an entirely new exercise for the students. Speaking tests during the course would often follow this same pattern with students required to discuss and problem-solve with each other. As part of a Health and Injury theme, the pedagogical aims of this task were: 1) to individually convey appropriate language of health, injury, advice and negotiation and 2) to interact in pairs for between 2-3 minutes, “practising the process of communication” (Littlewood, as cited in Al-Arishi, 1994, p. 343) in a way that may simulate a real-life event.

Nunan (as cited in Halápi & Saunders, 2016) maintains that problem-solving tasks, such as this one, inspire conversation, reveal creativity, promote self-confidence and develop fluency. These are aspects that cannot be rehearsed during individual preparation time and were therefore of interest to this study in which interaction in English was being assessed. The task was performed by the pairs in the presence of the teacher (this researcher), who timed and recorded the language samples. It was not delivered in front of the class, as this would have both increased anxiety (Gardner, as cited in Halápi & Saunders) and removed task authenticity. As Al-Arishi (1994) accurately notes, an audience will generally not listen-in to your everyday conversations. The speaking task was also a graded test that formed part of the final course grade. This fact should hopefully have pressured the students/participants into performing well and dissuaded the stronger speakers from purposely concealing their abilities, as the above literature imply they might do.

Method

In order to define the main aspects of sociolinguistic and cultural identity among the participants, the 22 statements from the questionnaire were grouped into one of four labels, namely, UK, US and English, Japanese pride, International posture and Identity. For example, statements such as 3, 8 and 10 (see the questionnaire in Appendix 1) formed part of the group UK, US and English; statements 4, 9 and 15 formed part of Japanese Pride and so on. Answering with a value of “4” denoted the participant’s neutral feelings towards the statement, whereas 1-3 meant feelings were positive and 5-7 were negative. In order to work out an individual respondent’s sentiments towards one of the four aspects above, the average value of all answers under one of the 4 labels was calculated and compared to that of his/her classmates.

Attempting to find a relationship between identity and spoken English proficiency, the speaking activity was graded based on

Cambridge English testing criteria for Level B1 (PET or Preliminary English Test). This assessment was chosen due to the similarity of my speaking activity with the collaborative task in the PET speaking exam and because of the international reputation of Cambridge speaking examinations. See Appendix 2 for a copy of the online Cambridge English criteria I chose to use for the grading. The recordings were listened to and the aspects of pronunciation and interactive communication were graded separately by two qualified Cambridge English speaking examiners. Given that the participants were allowed individual planning time prior to the activity, fluently rehearsed utterances and memorised questions were expected during the exchanges. Therefore, grades for pronunciation and interaction (such as repetition and reaction to the other speaker's comments) were the two features of language being measured, as opposed to either grammatical constructions or fluent stretches of discourse. To merit a high score (above a "3"), pronunciation, such as word and syllable stress, needed to be correct and not heavily influenced by the L1, although NS pronunciation was not a requirement. Jenkins (1998) states that using nuclear stress accurately is fundamental for English learners, regardless of whether this is native sounding or not.

Interaction needed to be fluid and both speakers were required to exchange opinions and react to each other's comments during the 2-minute test to receive more than a score of "3". According to www.cambridgeenglish.org, "the descriptors for band 3 and above generally indicate performance of at least B1 level." Total scores for the exchanges were made up of the sum of the Interaction and Pronunciation scores (for example a "3" for Pronunciation and a "3" for Interaction would give a total of "6"). Both examiners' scores were considered to calculate an average score per participant. It is worth noting that there was very little discrepancy between the two examiners' scores of the participants. Due to the level of the students in this study being relatively high for the criteria being used, average sums below "6.5" were considered "weak" and those above "8" were considered "strong". This procedure produced a total of 19 "strong" students but only 8 "weak" students. In response to this lack of data, a third category: the "average" student, was added to the study, which gave a further 18 subjects. It was decided that average students would be those who obtained combined sums of between 6.5 and 7.25.

Results

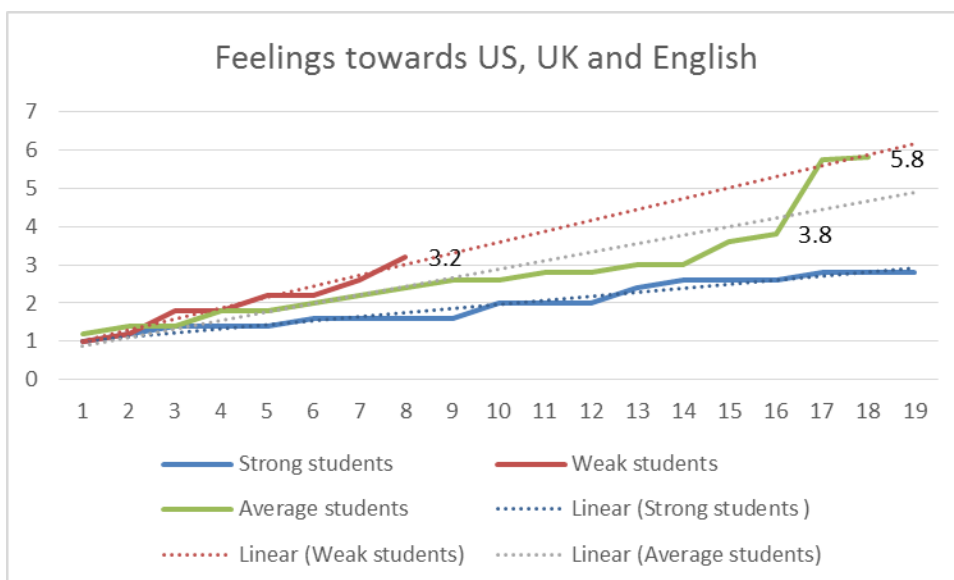


Figure 2. Line chart showing feelings towards English-speaking cultures

This first line chart (Figure 2) seems to depict a greater tendency among strong students to be positive about influences from English-speaking countries, as is shown by the blue line, which maintains a consistently low value. Interestingly, the strongest negative reactions (averages of around 5.8) came from student numbers 45 (S45) and S47, both in the “average” category. The weak students ranged from being very positive to less positive about English-speaking countries, although the lack of data for this group made it hard to read much into this. It can be argued however that the average-level participant’s linear graph (green line) was sufficiently different from the blue line, to give some credence to the hypothesis that stronger speakers were more interested in English-speaking countries.

Figure 3 depicts a possible correlation between a lack of spoken English ability and an anti-English sentiment, labelled “Japanese pride” in this study. This chart has all three trendlines matching the hypothesis that the stronger the level of spoken English, the greater the rejection of what seems to be a sense of pride in one’s inability to speak English. The most rejected statement from the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was statement 15: “I don’t like students who pronounce English like American or British people”, for which the average answer for all 56 participants was a value of 6.3, with 38 participants recording the

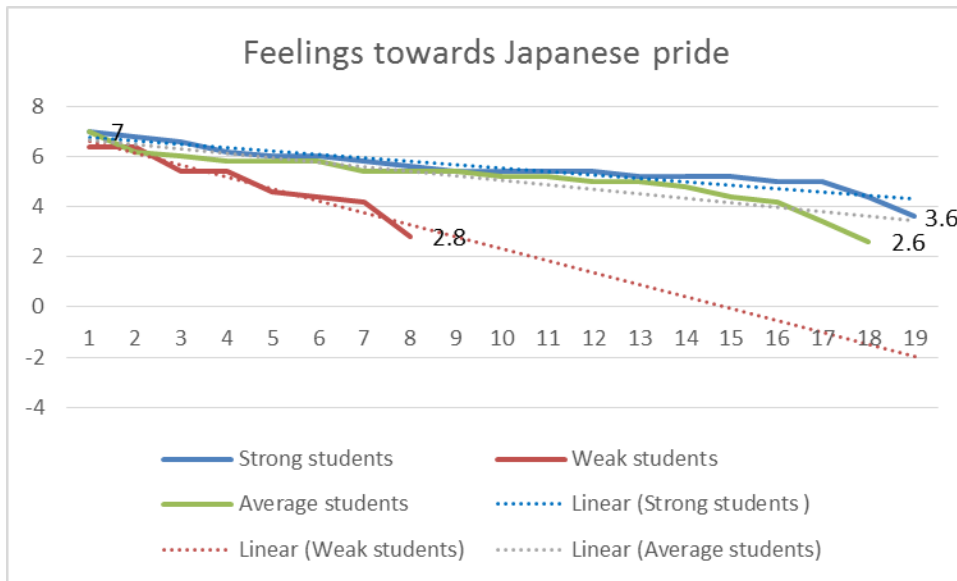


Figure 3. Line chart showing feelings towards Japanese pride

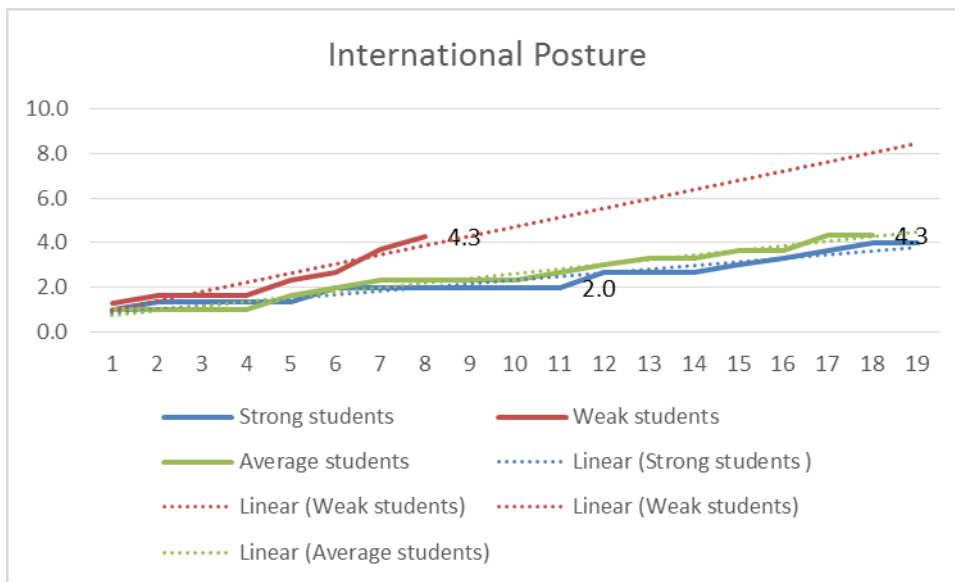


Figure 4. Line chart showing participants' levels of international posture

Table 1

Statistics of participants' average scores for international posture

International Posture	Strong students	Weak students	Average students
Mean	2.33	2.41	2.52
Median	2.00	2.00	2.33
Mode	2.00	1.67	1.00
S. D.	0.93	1.08	1.12
Range	3.00	3.00	3.33
Minimum	1.00	1.30	1.00
Maximum	4.00	4.30	4.33

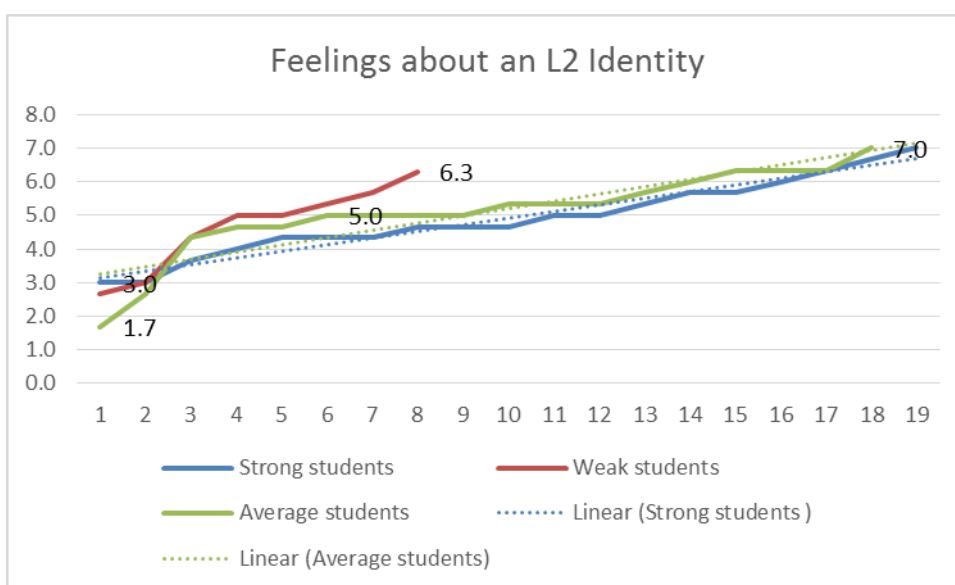


Figure 5. Line chart showing feelings about L2 identity

Table 2

Statistics of participants' average scores for L2 identity

L2 Identity	Strong students	Weak students	Average students
Mean	4.91	4.67	5.09
Median	4.67	5.00	5.17
Mode	4.33	5.00	5.00
S. D.	1.13	1.27	1.29
Range	4.00	3.63	5.33
Minimum	3.00	2.67	1.67
Maximum	7.00	6.30	7.00

strongest possible rejection value of 7. Only 4 out of the 56 participants, or 7%, agreed with statement 15 by choosing values between 1 and 3. Despite this study focussing solely on Japanese students, the idea of certain class-mates who share one's same language, speaking a foreign language with native-sounding pronunciation, can potentially be interpreted as pompous in any corner of the world. The data may therefore suggest maturity on the part of these particular participants who were generally unfazed by this phenomenon.

Figure 4 illustrates the possible correlation between international posture and oral proficiency. While the line chart appears to give credit to the hypothesis that the greater the English-speaking ability, the more predisposed participants were to a global mindset, individual answers made the boundaries less clear. The data in Table 1 shows a marginally more positive tendency towards international posture among stronger students, especially when compared to average students, but the distribution of data was not significant enough to draw any conclusions. Participants in all three levels responded positively to the idea of international posture, with mean values between 2.33 and 2.52. As previously mentioned, a wealthy background might be an indication of English ability among Japanese students. From these positive results we can argue that it is precisely the background of these particular high school students, and potentially of other wealthy private school students in other EFL countries, which is reflected as an inhabited identity of positivity towards foreign people and foreign cultures.

Despite results showing that participants expressed positivity towards the global community, the idea of an L2 identity appeared to be something out of reach for these teenagers. To statements such as number 13, which asked them to assess whether they felt they were different people when speaking English, or especially number 19, about whether they liked the way they sounded when speaking English, average responses across all 3 proficiency levels were negative. The line chart (Figure 5) depicts similar trends for all levels and the data in Table 2 reinforces the general rejection by participants of their Japanese-sounding English accents. As the exception that proves the rule, S45 again stands out as the only participant to react very positively to questions about his L2 identity, averaging 1.7 for this aspect of the study. These results support Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) and Matsuda's (2003) comments about a national impression that the Japanese accent is lacking, and unsuitable for addressing NS, and Matsuda's analysis of how Japanese speakers of English do not feel the language belongs to them as part of the international community. While this study does not empirically compare Japanese students to other EFL students, this particular self-critical characteristic of the participants may be more predominant among Japanese students, who rely heavily

on native English models and have a culture of extreme modesty, than that of students from other EFL countries.

In summary, findings of this study suggest that an appreciation for the English language and anglophone cultures does correlate with higher oral proficiency levels for the participants of this study. In addition, and more markedly, greater English spoken abilities correlate with a rejection of the seemingly archaic view that the English language has no place in Japanese society and that it detracts from being a true Japanese. Yashima's (2002) notion of international posture appears to come naturally to the participating students of this high school, possibly, due to their above average economic means. Finally, when asked explicitly to allocate themselves an English-speaking identity, the participants were generally unable to do so, falling back on beliefs that Japanese-sounding English is somehow inferior or unpleasant to the ear.

Discussion and implications

We can argue that international posture accounts for a form of inhabited identity and that results of this study are in line with Yashima's (2009) previous findings on how international posture links with motivation, willingness to communicate (WTC) and ultimately proficiency in English. However, an L2 identity is defined here as something gradable for Japanese students of English, initially as "kokusaika", then as international posture, or openness to English from "Outer Circle" countries (Kachru, 1990, p. 3) and eventually as a recognised L2 self. Defining the strength of individuals' L2 identities should therefore prove feasible through questionnaires such as the one used in this study. With such findings, an EFL professional may wish to adapt his/her teaching to show a greater recognition of the various levels of L2 identity within a classroom. This might be done in practice via various activities, or by simple changes such as pairing students in a way as to encourage the propagation of more advanced L2 identities. The curriculum itself could also be adjusted to consider knowledge of such individual differences, although this would require further research to explore how certain syllabuses work better or worse in groups with mixed L2 identities. If Japan is to combat its failure to attain a decent level of English (Honna, as cited in Schneider, 2014), acceptance of a Japanese-sounding accent and a complete dismissal of the idea that "we Japanese sound stupid when speaking English" would be good starting points.

A potential limitation of this study and a suggestion for further research is that some of the students could have been interviewed, and these qualitative results triangulated with the quantitative questionnaire results to add another angle to the research. We should also consider the value that Japanese culture attributes to modesty. It may be possible that

confident speakers among the participants, who might pride themselves of the way they sound when speaking English, will still have been critical of themselves. As Matsuno (2009, p. 14) observes, “Japanese believe that they should not assess themselves higher than others as modesty is traditionally considered a virtue”. An idea for further research might be to compare self-deprecating tendencies among Japanese students to students in other EFL contexts.

Ridicule for sounding “overly” proficient, or different, implies that Japanese students are presently unfamiliar with both fluent speakers of English and with a variety of pronunciations. Instruction therefore needs to focus on familiarising learners with other varieties of English that are accessible to them, to improve their acceptance and understanding (Chiba et al., 1995). If Graddol (as cited in Matsuda, 2003) is correct in claiming that the future of English will be decided by L2 speakers, Japan must free itself from its obsession with the superiority of NS Westerners’ pronunciation (Tsuda, as cited in Kubota, 1998) and individuals need to create a positive image of themselves and their own way of speaking English.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire No. _____

To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Circle a number from 1 to 7.

1 = Completely agree // 7 = Completely disagree

1. I study English because it is required for graduation.
2. I would like to speak English like they do in India, Singapore or the Philippines.
3. I would like to speak English like they do in the UK or USA.
4. I like speaking English with a Japanese pronunciation because I am Japanese.
5. English spoken by Japanese people is easy to understand.
6. English spoken by Japanese people is difficult to understand.
7. As long as it is understood, incorrect English is acceptable.
8. I prefer friends from English-speaking countries (UK, USA) to those from Asia.
9. There is too much English in Japanese TV commercials.
10. I want to study or travel in an English-speaking country like USA or UK.
11. English is the best foreign language to learn.
12. I am happy to respond in English, if spoken to in English.
13. When I speak in English I feel like a different person.
14. I envy those who can pronounce English like an American or British person.
15. I don't like students who pronounce English like American or British people.
16. If I speak good English, it's easier to make foreign friends.
17. I want to meet people and make friends from different countries.
18. It is more important to use Japanese correctly than to speak English fluently.
19. I like how I sound when I speak English.
20. I think I sound stupid when I speak English.
21. The Japanese language should always be used at schools in Japan.
22. Speaking too well in English makes me feel less Japanese.

Appendix 2

Assessing Speaking Performance – Level B1				
B1	Grammar and Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. Contributions are relevant despite some repetition. Uses a range of cohesive devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate. Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed. Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.
4	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.</i>			
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation. Contributions are mostly relevant, but there may be some repetition. Uses basic cohesive devices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and responds appropriately. Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support.
2	<i>Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.</i>			
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produces responses which are characterised by short phrases and frequent hesitation. Repeats information or digresses from the topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty. Requires prompting and support.
0	<i>Performance below Band 1.</i>			

<http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/168618-assessing-speaking-performance-at-level-b1.pdf>

Note on Contributor

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