University of Bath

A Constructivist-driven Examination
of English use in Japanese Media

Michael D. SMITH*, Christopher SAMUELL**

構成主義の観点から考える日本のメディアにおける英語使用

マイケル・ディーン、スミス・クリストファー・サミュエル

Abstract :

This pilot study sought to reveal identity-related conceptualizations of EFL use in Japanese media by employing a hermeneutic-constructivist process in which meaning emerged via the interdependence of researcher and subject. Specifically, the impetus of this small-scale qualitative inquiry was consideration of the potential negative impact of Japanese media on local ELL motivation－seeking to answer how ELT practitioners perceive comedic English use in Japanese media, and hypothesize what, if any, effect it exerts on ELL engagement rates within Japan. Research findings indicate that the majority of participants view the normalized form of EFL presented by local media as sustaining adverse effects on local perceptions of English－with the comedic usage of EFL thus recognized as potentially demotivating to local ELL participation. Nevertheless, researchers advise caution if attempting to develop the findings presented here beyond their original intention given the narrow scope of research subject populations.

要旨：この小規模な定性的調査は、日本のメディアにおける英語の使用が ELL の動機にどのような影響を及ぼすかを目的としている。コメディ番組における英語使用について英語教師はどのように認識しているかを知り、更に、日本の英語学習者にどのような影響を与えるかを理解するため定性的調査を実施した。参加者の大多数が、この英語の使用は人々の英語の認識に悪影響を与えると述べた。従って、コメディで英語を使用することは、英語学習の意欲を妨げる可能性がある。これらはあくまでも小規模の研究にすぎないため、さらなる研究が必要となる。

Key words：Sociolinguistics, Constructivism, Media Language Normalization

Background

The impact of multimedia on our everyday lives is profound－whether consuming news, watching video, listening to music, reading print, or being exposed to advertisements, we are continually interacting with media in one of its forms. Given such focused contact, it is apparent that media can exert an acute impact on the manner by which populations comprehend sociocultural phenomena. In

particular, recognition of this process is decisive when considering media consumption in terms of its implications for language. As Talbot, Atkinson, and Atkinson (2003) note, "everyday language is transient, but media language is forever" (Talbot et al., 2003, p.11). Accordingly, the notion of media-linguistic permanency affirms the significance of language application within the media. From this perspective, the means by which media sources in nonnative-speaking settings approach English as a foreign language (EFL) become noteworthy when attempting to appreciate the processes with which local populations observe English and, crucially, how the language comes to be associated with explicit cultural markers.

There is a plethora of English language content available throughout Japan, for instance－typically in the form of movies, music, online media, books, and television serials. Moreover, widespread adoption of smartphones has generated a situation in which the majority of Japanese citizens possess the means to access the Internet, regardless of time or location－making contact with the language simpler than ever. Outside of mainstream media, English is one of the core subjects within the Japanese education system, with local students receiving at least six years of compulsory English education (Abe, 2004, p.116) to be expanded to eight years in 2020. Several notable universities－particularly those associated with the ten-year Top Global University Project (*Sūpā gurōbaru daigaku sōsei shien*) launched in 2014－have also increased the level of English required to pass entrance exams. It stands to reason, therefore, that local EFL learners would be motivated to exploit the sizeable body of English language media in order to enhance linguistic competence. Yet, despite the breadth and accessibility of EFL content, Japan is commonly regarded as a low-level setting with regards to English language comprehension. Indeed, according to the English Proficiency Index, Japan has witnessed a deterioration in overall EFL competence in recent years, from being listed as a country with a "moderate" ability level in 2015 to "low" in 2017 (Education First, 2018). This decline occurred despite ongoing efforts by both Japanese industry, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), to communicate the necessity of English language learning (ELL) via "stereotypical associations of international appreciation" (McKenzie, 2010, p.13). Specifically, MEXT states :

"With the progress of globalization in the economy and in society, it is essential that our children acquire communication skills in English, which has become a common international language, in order for living in the 21st century. This has become an extremely important issue both in terms of the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation" (MEXT, 2003).

In view of the importance placed on ELL by the Japanese Government, it is essential that factors contributing to Japan's current frailties regarding English language proficiency be considered. Much has been said about the standard of English language teaching (ELT) in Japan, and how it has consistently failed to meet expectations ; notably, "there is a general consensus that the local education system has resulted in Japanese learners with weak English communication ability and low motivation to learning the language'" (Nakata 2006, p.166). However, rather than re-examining oft-discussed issues regarding the standard of ELT in Japan (e.g., Matsuda, 2003 ; Matsunaga, 2010), this pilot study aims to investigate broader sociocultural and sociolinguistic features inherent to local

EFL by considering the impact of Japanese media in relation to ELL participation levels.

This inquiry will begin by discussing existing theory on Japanese English language utilization, with specific regard to advertising and televisual broadcasts. Following this will be a description of the methodological considerations employed during this study, trailed by a discussion of research findings and their implications for ELL in Japan. Finally, the results of the exploration will be summarized before generating conclusions as a result of the research process. In doing so, it is expected that contextual factors surrounding EFL usage in Japanese media will be uncovered in an effort to draw attention to the tension between the requirement to learn English and, more broadly, the manner by which the language is presented to local populations. Specifically, the impetus of this small-scale qualitative inquiry is centered on the potential negative impact of Japanese media on local ELL motivation－seeking to answer how native and nonnative ELT practitioners alike perceive the comedic use of English in Japanese media, and hypothesize what, if any, effect it exerts on ELL engagement rates within Japan.

Literature Review

Advertising and English Language Usage

It is often stated that the Japanese media shares a complicated relationship with English. On the surface, it would appear that the use of English is ubiquitous in Japan, with English loan words adorning everything from magazine covers to buildings. However, when considering the variety of English that is adopted, as well as its function, one immediately notices that the majority of EFL in this context is exclusively aesthetic, serving no communicative purpose whatsoever. Tomoda (1999), for instance, cites a study which defined 45% of EFL terms used in local media as "special effects givers," with only 16% being used to bridge the lexical gap (Tomoda, 1999, p.241). Dougill (2008) affirms this notion when describing the relationship between English and Japanese advertising thus： "English is never even read, even by students and teachers of the language： it is purely decorative" (Dougill, 2008, p.18).

This condition was also examined by Haarmann (1984), who claims that English is "used to evoke positive associations in the minds of Japanese consumers, not to convey a literal meaning" (Haarmann, 1984, p.49). Whilst a reliance on English to create affirmative connections may suggest that the language is viewed positively in Japan, Takashi's (1990, p.45) assertion that, "elements pronounced according to English phonology are more conspicuous than ones pronounced according to Japanese phonology," reinforces the belief that English is purely decorative, suggesting that it is used primarily to draw the attention of consumers. This is problematic in that it reduces English to catchphrases and slogans, functioning to invalidate the language as a viable mechanism for communication.

The variety, as well as quantity, of English used in television commercials also affects the means by which local audiences perceive the language. Nevertheless, Mooney (2000) raises a compelling argument when he labels the debate surrounding English use in commercial media as academic, given consumer understanding of media language is, from his view, irrelevant. He furthers this account suggesting the majority of Japanese viewers remain unconcerned by what is being said in English. In most cases, English advertising is concise, consisting of rudimentary dialogue that enables the audience to comprehend meaning via broader contextual clues. Finally, he posits "on the

other hand, when the dialogue is lengthy and/or uses complicated English, the English is simply considered to add atmosphere to the commercial" (Mooney, 2000, p.32). This statement is persuasive given it offers a more comprehensive view of the variety of English observed in local commercials, and how its perceived employment influences viewers.

In considering Mooney's thesis, one can infer that not all English used in Japanese advertising is purely decorative, as suggested previously by Doughill (2008) and Haarmann (1984). Additionally, if the degree of English employed by Japanese media is, in fact, elementary, then consumers may apply additional effort to seek out and understand what is being communicated. It is only when English phrases are longer or more complex that the language reverts to its aesthetic function. Nevertheless, issues arise when considering EFL competence－specifically, Mooney's (2000) hypothesis fails to account for variability amongst consumers. What may be regarded as linguistically simple by some may be deemed difficult by lower-level consumers. Consequently, if the majority of the Japanese population retains a foundational level of EFL comprehension, local consumers will continue to view the language as merely decorative, with those who "grasp the meaning of the words" (Mooney 2000, p.32), representing a perceptible minority.

Television and English Language Usage

According to a 2015 survey (cited in Kimura, Sekine, & Namiki, 2016) carried out by *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* (NHK), Japan's most extensive public broadcasting organization, on average, Japanese people consume 2-3 hours of television daily. Given such figures, it would be fair to suggest that the medium asserts significant influence over many Japanese citizens. Notwithstanding the probability that a substantial number of "viewers" utilize TV as a background activity only, persistent exposure is likely to influence people in some way, whether on the conscious or subconscious levels. As a result, television provides one of the prime analytical focuses for this study in considering the impact of Japanese media on broader perceptions of English.

As noted by Clammer (1997), Japanese television represents "a large, diverse, and varied field containing the pursuit of many agendas, conflicting ideologies, technical procedures, and distinct styles" (Clammer, 1997, p.133). Against this background, it appears that Japanese broadcasters remain hesitant to circulate English-medium productions, with locally produced examples remaining somewhat obscure. While, "some specialist English language programs do exist, they are principally for English language instruction" (Tanaka, 1995, p.45). Notably, such serials are broadcast by NHK only. The channel of broadcast is significant as, according to the 2015 NHK survey cited by Kimura et al. (2016), viewers over 70 years of age are statistically most likely to watch NHK, while those aged 13-50 years view the channel only sparingly－with the natural conclusion being that the vast majority of Japanese viewers remain unexposed to ELL programming.

Talbot et al. (2003, p.18) state that, "in terms of output, the media are under professional and institutional control," with this statement being especially true of television broadcasting in Japan ; NHK itself is a publicly-owned company, chartered by the government of Japan. To nonnative viewers, Japanese television appears contrived, with every minutia of broadcasts tightly controlled by directors and producers. The concept of synthetic personalization－or the process of addressing mass audiences as though they were individuals via inclusive language－is a factor that appears to be the prime driver behind the majority of interactions shown on local television. Broadcasts in Ja-

pan are saturated with what Richie (1992, p.205) terms, carefully chosen words, implied flattery, attempts to create enthusiasm, and a certain ingratiating unnatural naturalness. Such cautious regulation of broadcast content may, therefore, explain the relative scarcity of Japanese people attempting English-medium communication in the media.

As noted by Ali (2012), many Japanese erroneously perceive the English language to be an entirely western, or very often, American concept. Subsequently, a dearth of opportunities to speak in English－and the perceived difficulty of mastering the language－has led many locals to view heavily-accented English variations as "incorrect." In an effort to *save face* (a concept fundamental to post-Confucian societies) many Japanese refrain from attempting public communication in English for fear of employing the language in an incorrect or unsophisticated manner. Edwards (cited in Loissa, 2014) supports this point, clarifying that language is, indeed, a complex sociocultural process, linked inherently to stereotypes, and specific attitudes. Edwards proceeds to state "these attitudes do not come from objectively intrinsic or aesthetic differences but from the perceived social differences" (Edwards, cited in Loissa, 2014, p.5). Widely held yet oversimplified attitudes towards English have resulted in the language fulfilling a similar function in television broadcasting as it does in advertising： often relegated to meaningless decoration, catchphrases, and buzzwords, in which only the simplest of English is communicated.

Nevertheless, that is not to suggest that more complex English remains unrepresented on Japanese TV； rather, it habitually serves a specific function： a source of jokes during comedy routines. This theory is affirmed by Ryan (2009), who maintains that "an English speaker appearing on Japanese television is far more likely to be a figure of fun that an object of admiration" (Ryan, 2009, p.6). It is crucial to recognize, however, that local presenters very rarely ridicule the English language or its speakers. In actuality, quips are directed primarily at Japanese people's inability, or perhaps *refusal,* to understand or apply English correctly. Consequently, English speakers are often utilized to deliver English dialogue in order for Japanese comedians to modify their utterance into jokes. Employing native speakers of English when the language is required connects this process to an earlier hypothesis： that Japanese people are, perhaps, resistant to be *seen* misusing English. It may thus be argued that self-deprecating humor stems from this insecurity, and that, by crafting comedy from incorrect English use, performers mirror the broader insecurities of Japanese society with regards to EFL comprehension. Thus, "the pervading juvenility of Japanese TV is the result of its conciliatory intentions" (Richie, 1992, p.214).

Whilst English itself is not the primary focus of the joke, habitually presenting the language in such a manner may influence common perception, fashioning it into an object of amusement. It may also normalize low English ability, confirming that entertainers who have succeeded in their career have done so without the need for ELL, and stressing that success in Japan is not tied to English－ thereby contradicting rhetoric associated with Government-mandated ELT programs (see background). Further, the promotion of low-comprehension English as comical or entertaining may negatively impact motivation to improve, as learners may relate to the image of the poor speaker of EFL by viewing the normalized variety of the language presented by local television broadcasts.

Philosophical Lens： Social Constructivism

In accordance with the broader epistemological orientation of the constructivist paradigm, the

research design presented here is connected inherently to the anti-positivist stance of subjective in-terpretivism－embodying the theoretical principle that the social and natural sciences are distinct, with the former requiring strategies that respect the interactive process of knowledge construction (Guba, 1990) and thus "subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman, 2012, p.30). Normalized so-ciocultural experiences are the product of collective action, implicit social agreement, shared prac-tices, and diverse social processes, rather than objective reality, "with these experiences only exist-ing via these social processes. As such, social meaning is a by-product of intersubjectivity" (Gerber, Adams, Onwuegbuzie, & Benge, 2014, p.18). Considering the focus of this investigation is clarifica-tion of *how* contextual conditions associated with the transmission of English by Japanese media frames perceived meaning-making, it is apparent that the decision to employ a constructivist-qualitative approach is appropriate, and in keeping with the philosophical and theoretical underpin-nings of interpretive methodological design described by Crotty (1998) and O'Leary (2017).

Method

Participants

Due to restrictions of time, and the decision to perform direct interviews rather than distribute questionnaires, participant numbers were reduced from an initial 30 to 10, all of whom were em-ployed locally as English language instructors during the period of primary data collection. It was felt that ELT practitioners would not only be more responsive to the issue but also provide en-hanced perspective by relating the research to personal experience－thus offering valuable insight into the impact of normalized EFL views on student motivation. In order to protect privacy, all re-search participants will hereafter be referred to by number, rather than name. Participants ranged in age from 29 to 64, and of the 10, 3 are recognized as nonnative residents of Japan, hailing from Germany, Canada, and England, respectively. Teacher 1, a German national, and Japanese teachers 2-5 practice at the same private junior/senior high school. Further, teacher 6, a Canadian, as well as Japanese teachers 7-8, work at a separate private junior/senior high school. Teacher 9, an English native, instructs at a private elementary school, whilst Japanese teacher 10 is employed at a public junior high school. Considering participant numbers were limited, it was decided that a sample of teachers practicing at different schools and levels was appropriate to mitigate any shared bias that may have developed by practicing together over a prolonged period. Additionally, it was crucial that

Table 1　Participant Designations and Demographic/Vocational Contexts

Participant Designation	Country of Origin	Vocational Context
Teacher 1	Germany	Secondary (private)
Teacher 2	Japan	Secondary (private)
Teacher 3	Japan	Secondary (private)
Teacher 4	Japan	Secondary (private)
Teacher 5	Japan	Secondary (private)
Teacher 6	Canada	Secondary (private)
Teacher 7	Japan	Secondary (private)
Teacher 8	Japan	Secondary (private)
Teacher 9	England	Elementary (private)
Teacher 10	Japan	Secondary (public)

the viewpoints of non-Japanese educators be examined in order to circumvent potential cultural biases, while also serving to provide a more comprehensive data set.Presented in Table 1 is a summary of the teacher's numerical designation, nationality, and vocational context :

Ethical Considerations

Despite a uniformly high standard of English comprehension amongst participants, it was decided that all questions would be presented in both the Japanese and English languages to aid understanding. Before initiating data collection, both verbal and formal permission to conduct research was obtained from the stakeholders' places of employment. Furthermore, all participants received full informative disclosure, outlining the scope of future research ; the handling of all submitted data ; and the rights of confidentiality, participation refusal, and the withholding of responses to any given question. Those who agreed to participate in the study were then instructed to read and complete ethical consent forms, as per standard ethical guidelines. Notwithstanding these measures, it must be conceded that the data collection format employed during primary research presented one major ethical limitation. Namely, one of the present researchers was also an English language instructor employed at the educational institution in which several of the participants taught at the time of questioning. In accordance with the principles of ethical beneficence (Bates, 2004), however, each subject received written and verbal assurances that the current study remained unconnected from their continued professional relationships and that non-participation or any tendered response would have no bearing on their future employment.

Additionally, *neutrality,* analogous to the positivist-orientated notion of *objectivity,* "explicitly recognizes that most researchers have some positioning in relation to their research topic" (O'Leary, 2004, p.59)－thereby demanding that investigators contemplate and, more crucially, *mediate,* their subjectivities in an effort to enact a transparent exploratory process (O'Leary, 2004). With this in mind, researcher and confirmation bias were identified as potential hazards to the internal validity of this study, with this threat minimized via the creation of an audit trail－which involved external observers tracing the natural progression of inquiry in an attempt to understand how and why conclusions were reached (Krefting, 1991). To mitigate personal biases, countermeasures also included researcher debriefings and peer interviews, with this process of *reflexivity* being consistent with the post-positivist treatment of trustworthiness described by Guba (1981, pp. 83-86)－most notably, his description of *auditing, peer debriefing,* and *member checks*－lending further credence to claims of project neutrality.

Moreover, the study's audit strategy served to account for research *auditability,* indicating "full explication of methods so that others can trace the research process and appreciate how and why researchers came up with their data, findings, and conclusions" (O'Leary, 2017, p.63). According to Krefting (1991), auditing suggests that researchers removed from the investigation would arrive at comparable conclusions if provided with the same data and context (Krefting, 1991, p.221). Thus, this process functioned as an external verification mechanism－allowing the auditor to systematically address the flow of practice involved during research and hence, establish interpretational confirmability (Guba, 1981).

Data Collection

Following pilot measures, primary data collection was enacted via a semi-structured open-ended research instrument which, in line with interpretive participant questioning, provoked dialogic inter-action. To promote further exchange, an interview guide, or list of topics or questions pertinent to conversations, was formulated in accordance with the issues held significant by the study's literature review. However, given that participants were encouraged to provide personal constructions, and to raise points that they deemed essential to their perceived representation of EFL within Japanese me-dia, each interview flowed differently. Kvale (1996) outlines this process as "a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as suggested questions. Yet, at the same time, there is an openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up " (Kvale, 1996, p.124). It was felt that this approach provided the most appropriate method of gleaning varied, in-depth feedback. Whilst using the same data collection instrument with all participants facilitated direct comparisons between re-sponses ; it was crucial that the interview process recognized participant autonomy, allowing free-dom to change the order of questions in accordance with the natural flow of conversation. Given that interviews, more so than questionnaires, "provide a useful way for researchers to learn about the world of others" (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p.239), it is apparent that this approach facilitated authentic, detailed conceptualizations of EFL use in local media. Moreover, direct, face-to-face questioning al-lowed for enhanced qualitative descriptions, making the process of accurately interpreting meaning more open (Kvale, 1996, p.124).

Data Analysis

From a procedural stance, epistemologies connected to constructivism inform naturalistic re-search, with qualitative-interpretive interviewing recognized as an appropriate frame by which to ex-plore social realities. Due to interactivity between the researchers and participants, "findings are lit-erally created as the investigation proceeds" (Guba & Lincoln, 1998, p.207)－with constructions in-terpreted via hermeneutical models and examined by dialectic exchange (Butler, 1998). To ensure thorough and relevant thematic evaluation, interview transcripts were analyzed inductively using open coding－specifically Braun & Clark's (2006) six-phase framework for thematic analysis－which involved immersive analysis of a collective data set, as opposed to individual participant re-sponses, to capture the essence of participant meaning (Rivas, 2012, p.370). In an effort to generate theory that is appreciative of context-bound understandings, special attention was paid to the social negotiation of meaning, both during and after primary data collection measures. During transcrip-tion, for instance, emerging themes and similarities and differences among participant constructions were noted. In keeping with standard qualitative methodologies, transcripts were examined multiple times, with participants asked to clarify issues which arose during review via follow-up.

Findings

Interviewees possessed varying levels of ELT expertise, ranging from 6-30 years of practical teaching experience. Responding to the question "Do you think your students feel motivated to learn English?" five of the practitioners identified approximately 50% of students as motivated learners, four teachers responded, "not really," with only one instructor answering in the positive. On aver-age, respondents viewed television for 1-2 hours daily, with teacher 3 claiming 2-3 hours, and

Teacher 1 replying "I do not possess a TV." Participants then viewed two video clips containing examples of Japanese celebrities purposefully misusing English for comedic effect, before being asked, "as a teacher of English, what are your feelings regarding these video clips?" Teacher 1 commented that the clips are "detrimental to what we want to achieve," and that they "cement the negative stereotype that English is too hard."

Nevertheless, Teacher 2 commented that despite witnessing presenters act in an overtly "stupid" manner in which they are purposely "bad at English," students may feel inspired to try harder, so as not to be like that person. Teacher 3 reported that such segments represent a "waste of time," as they hold no functional purpose outside of their comedic intention. She went on to assert that she had prior experience of one of the example videos when a student mentioned that they had seen the show on TV－prompting the learner to believe that they no longer needed to participate in ELL, given that the comedians in question had achieved considerable success despite their poor command of EFL. Teacher 4, however, suggested that such media may, perhaps, provide fruitful opportunity to absorb lesser-known English dialogue；albeit, considering English is routinely presented in a nonsensical manner, they "didn't like it."

Teacher 5's response was uniquely optimistic, suggesting that the content in question may encourage students by demonstrating that broken English is acceptable. However, Teacher 6 did not concur, going so far as to say he "hates" their content as they "foster the attitude that being bad at English is funny, or pride-worthy." He suggested that such compositions make his job as an ELT practitioner considerably more difficult as it reduces students' motivation to improve. Teachers 7, 8, and 10 did not react as strongly, yet also viewed them in a negative manner, maintaining that the videos are "silly," "stupid," and "fake," respectively. Finally, Teacher 9 commented that the videos "reinforce the idea that English in Japan is a joke." When asked "do you think seeing English presented in this way has any effect of broader Japanese perception of English?" 80% of participants answered, "yes, it has a negative effect." The only respondents who deviated from this belief were Teachers 5 and 8, who reported that they didn't believe such content exerted any effect, and any "real effect" on Japanese perceptions of EFL, respectively.

Finally, participants were asked, "what do you think Japanese broadcasters could do to create a more positive view of English?" Teacher 1 stated that more nonnative English speakers using the language on television would help eliminate the stereotype that English "belongs" primarily to native, inner-circle (Kachru, 1985) speakers. Teacher 2 concurred, indicating that situations in which English serves a purpose beyond a source of comedy would facilitate more inclusive attitudes. Teachers 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10 all stated that more channels should show ELL programming, with 4 of these 5 respondents stating that the educational shows seen on NHK specifically should be broadcast on more channels. Finally, Teachers 6 and 9 suggested broadcasters show Japanese celebrities interacting with people using advanced English, as this would demonstrate to students that it is not impossible to achieve a high level of EFL if one is Japanese.

Discussion

This study was implemented in order to determine whether the comedic manner by which English is presented in Japanese media exerts a negative effect on overall perceptions of EFL in Japan and, most significantly, whether this impacts local impetus to participate in ELL. It is felt that the

investigatory process yielded interesting, yet often conflicting results. For instance, the first theme of note is motivation. More than half of the practitioners questioned indicated that approximately 40-50% of their students felt inclined to learn English. These initial findings were fruitful, given the primary goals of the study were not only the determination of student motivation levels but to ascertain whether their perceived degree of motivation possessed correlation with the Japanese television media.

Additionally, 100% of the subject's television viewing habits were consistent with the 2015 NHK survey cited in Kimura et al. (2016.) This consonance validates the investigation as representative of general members of the Japanese public, despite the presence of a relatively small sample. Nevertheless, the most significant component of the study occurred after participants had viewed the sample video clips. Whilst teachers communicated mixed reactions to their content ; it was immediately apparent that non-Japanese ELT practitioners reacted to the videos more negatively. All 3 interviewed teachers disliked the videos unanimously, describing the content as harmful to the image of ELL in Japan. However, whilst the majority of native Japanese practitioners also disliked the videos, their responses were mainly concerned with the meaningless and absurd nature of the videos under scrutiny, with the notable exception of Teachers 3 and 5. Specifically, Teacher 3 recalled that video 2 served to move a learner to cease studying EFL, thus confirming the hypothesis that such content can exert a negative effect on ELL participants. Contrastingly, Teacher 5 viewed the sample content as potentially motivating for students. This response is intriguing, as Teacher 5 was the sole respondent to regard the material in a positive light. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that similar optimistic responses would appear more often in the presence of a more extensive sample size.

Nonnative residents of Japan often remark that the quality of local television content remains relatively low, with commentators such as Richie (1992, p.214) labeling it "bland," "inane," and "foolish" − thereby echoing the collective responses of Teachers 7, 8 and 10 who, it must be noted, are native Japanese residents. Nevertheless, the analogous reactions presented by non-Japanese participants during the interview process are most likely the result of increased sensitivity to the perception of English locally. The identity − and thus, *worth* − of non-Japanese ELT practitioners is tied closely to the language. Hence, when English is made to appear foolish or unnecessary, teachers may view their personal and professional efforts as devalued. The notion of nonnative instructors finding it difficult to reconcile their local identity − and feeling as though they are discriminated against − is echoed by Shishin (2002) who claims that whilst foreign teachers are "superficially welcomed," they are simultaneously exposed to "popular Japanese racism." In accordance with participant responses, labeling the sample content as racist would be highly contestable ; yet, it is inarguable that they present EFL in a far from favorable light.

The majority of participants agreed that the normalized form of EFL presented by local media does sustain adverse effects on local perceptions of English − with Teacher 5 offering the sole dissenting viewpoint which, perhaps, draws attention to limited sample size. While the choice of vocabulary − and the extent of agreement − differs amongst remaining participants, for the most part, reasonably similar responses are documented. However, given the presence of more extensive sample numbers, it is conceivable that more practitioners would echo Teacher 5's sentiments. Moreover, five respondents agreed that additional ELL programming would facilitate a more positive view of English locally. Teachers 1, 6, and 9 all believed that utilizing Japanese advanced EFL speakers

would aid motivation and that showing English used in a variety of situations would demonstrate that English can be used communicatively, as opposed to aesthetically. Finally, Teacher 1's calls for additional nonnative EFL speakers in local media is compelling as it may combat the stereotype that English is a distinctly western, or American, concept. Thus, by broadcasting a broader spectrum of English, it is conceivable that many Japanese would view their capacity for English more positively.

Conclusions and Limitations of Research

That English shares a complicated relationship with Japanese media is undeniable ; the former's influences can be decidedly manipulative, shaping biases, stereotypes, and ideologies connected to English, thereby contributing directly to tensions between identity and EFL education (Ali, 2012, p.11). With regard to the present investigation, thought-provoking understandings of the impact of Japanese media on motivation were garnered as a result of the participants' status as ELT practitioners. While overall results were mixed, the majority of respondents considered the comedic usage of EFL as potentially demotivating－with Teacher 5 representing the sole dissenting voice. Subsequently, it is advised that future investigations utilize larger sample numbers in an effort to secure more comprehensive data sets. With this in mind, the researchers urge caution if attempting to develop the findings presented here beyond their original scope. Donmoyer (2008), however, suggests that "reading qualitative accounts of radically different cases could produce enriched cognitive schema … [which] … would allow for a kind of intellectual generalization even when settings are radically different" (Donmoyer, 2008, p.372). Consequently, only consumers of this study may form transferability judgments as to whether the knowledge produced here remains applicable to their specific domains.

This study sought to unlock identity-related conceptualizations of EFL usage in Japanese media by employing a hermeneutic-constructivist process in which meaning emerged via the interdependence of researcher and subject. Given that "realities exist only in respondent's minds" (Guba, 1990, p.26), this subject-orientated stance afforded greater opportunity for unlocking meanings held by local ELT stakeholders. While the results of this pilot study could not surmise conclusively whether Japanese media poses a serious threat to local ELL motivation, sufficient findings are present to acknowledge this as an issue worthy of future investigation. During the research process, the reactions of (especially non-Japanese) participants raised a noteworthy issue : ELT practitioners may, perhaps, be too emotionally invested in their vocation to be truly objective in their responses. A follow-up, mixed-methods study measuring the attitudes of secondary and tertiary-level EFL learners, may reveal more balanced and, indeed, relevant considerations on the issue at hand. In order to secure a more comprehensive understanding of the problem, future studies may also research broadcasts that present EFL in a comedic fashion, analyzing average viewer age in relation to national English proficiency to determine possible correlations between viewership and English assessment performance. Nevertheless, while this topic clearly warrants further study, a chief catalyst for all research is aspiration to impact theory and/or practice on a broad scale and, while measures were taken to communicate context, the authors concede that the narrow scope of subject population potentially undermined research transferability, depending on one's views regarding the relationship between sample size and qualitative generalizability.

References

Abe, K. (2004). Japanese Attitudes Towards Foreign Languages. *Collegium Antropologicum, 28*(1), 115-122.

Ali, S. A. (2012). *The Impact of Media in Education : The Influence of Media in English Language Teachers' Identity and its Implications for Language Education in Japan.* The University of Birmingham. Retrieved from : https ://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/cels/essays/staci1068235diss.pdf

Bates, R. (2004). A Critical Analysis of Evaluation Practice : The Kirkpatrick Model & the Principle of Beneficence. *Evaluation & Program Planning, 27*(3), 341-347.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. http ://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods (4ᵗʰ Ed.).* Oxford, UK : Oxford University Press.

Butler, T. (1998). Towards a Hermeneutic Methods for Interpretive Research in Information Systems. *Journal of Information Technology, 13*(4), 285-300.

Clammer, J. (1997). *Contemporary Urban Japan : A Sociology of Consumption.* Oxford, UK : Blackwell.

Crotty, M. (1998). *Foundations of Social Research : Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process.* London, UK : SAGE Publications.

Donmoyer, R. (2008). Generalizability. In L. M. Given (Ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research : Volumes 1 & 2* (pp.371-372). London, UK : SAGE Publications.

Dougill, J. (2008). Japan and English as an Alien Language. *English Today, 93*(24), 18-22.

Education First. (2018). *English Proficiency Index.* Retrieved from : https ://www.ef.com/epi/regions/asia/japan/

Gerber, H. R., Abrams, S. S., Onwuegbzuzie, A. J., & Benge, C. L. (2014). From Mario to FIFA : what Qualitative Case Study Research Suggests About Games-based Learning in a US Classroom. *Educational Media International, 51*(1), 16-34. DOI : http ://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09523987.2014.889402

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Resources Information Center Annual Review Paper, 29,* 75-91.

Guba, E. G. (1990). *The Paradigm Dialog.* Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE Publications.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research : Theories and Issues* (pp.195-220). Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE Publications.

Haarmann, H. (1984). The Role of Ethnocultural Stereotypes and Foreign Languages in Japanese Commercials. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 50,* 101-121.

Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism : The English Language in the Outer Circle. In R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds), *English in the World : Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures* (pp.11-30). Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press.

Kimura, N., Sekine, C., & Nakami, M. (2016). Television Viewing and Media Use Today : From "The Japanese and Television 2015" Survey 1. *NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute Public Opinion Research Division.* NHK. Retrieved from : https ://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/english/reports/pdf/report_16042101.pdf

Krefting, L. M. (1991). Rigor in Qualitative Research : The Assessment of Trustworthiness. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 45*(3), 214-222.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews : An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing.* London, UK : Sage.

Kvale, S. (2006). Dominance Through Interviews and Dialogues Volume. *Sage Journals, 12*(3), 480-500.

Loissa, J. (2014). *Japanese Attitudes Towards Their English Pronunciation.* The University of Jyväskylä. Retrieved from : https ://jyx.jyu.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/43885/URN-NBN-fi-jyu-201407022204.pdf?sequence＝5

Matsuda, A. (2003). The Ownership of English in Japanese Secondary Schools. *World Englishes, 22*(4), 483-496. doi : 10.1111/j.1467-71X.2003.00314.x

Matsunaga, T. (2010). The Role of English Media in Modern Japan : Through the History of English-language Newspapers Issued by Zumoto Motosada. *Lifelong Education and Libraries, 10,* 71-77.

McKenzie, R. M. (2010). *The Social Psychology of English as a Global Language : Attitudes, Awareness, and Identity in the Japanese Context.* New York, NY : Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan. (2003). *MEXT Action Plan 2003.* Retrieved from : http ://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpac200201/hpac200201_2_015.html

Mooney, S. (2000). *5,110 Days in Tokyo and Everything's Hunky-Dory : The Marketer's Guide to Advertising in Japan.* Westport, CT : Quorum.

Nakata, Y. (2006). *Motivation and Experience in Foreign Language Learning.* Bern, CH : Peter Lang.

O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The Essential Guide to Doing Research.* London, UK : SAGE Publications.

O'Leary, Z. (2017). *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project (3rd Ed.).* London, UK : SAGE Publications.

Qu, Q. S., & Dumay, J. (2011). The Qualitative Research Interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management, 8* (3), 238-264. https : //doi.org/10.1108/11766091111162070

Richie, D. (1992). *A Lateral View : Essays on Culture and Style in Contemporary Japan.* Berkeley, CA : Stone Bridge Press.

Rivas, C. (2012). Coding and Analysing Qualitative Data. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching Society & Culture* (pp.366-392). London, UK : SAGE Publications.

Ryan, S. (2009). Ambivalence and Commitment, Liberation and Challenge : Investigating the Attitudes of Young Japanese People Towards the Learning of English. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 30*(5).

Shishin, A. (2002). *The Problem with Xenophobia and the Teaching of English in Japanese Universities.* Retrieved from : http : //webdoc.sub.gwdg.de/edoc/ia/eese/artic22/shishin/7_2002.html

Takashi, K. (1990). English Elements in Japanese Advertising. *English Today, 6*(2), 45-46. doi : 10.1017/S0266078400004752

Talbot M., Atkinson, K., & Atkinson D. (2003). *Language and Power in the Modern World.* Edinburgh, UK : Edinburgh University Press.

Tanaka, S. O. (1995). The Japanese Media and English. *World Englishes, 14*(1), 37-54.

Tomoda, T. (1999). The Impact of Loan-words on Modern Japanese. *Japan Forum, 11*(2), 231-253.