

JAPANESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR ENGLISH  
PRONUNCIATION

Bachelor's thesis  
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## JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract  <p>Vaikka englantia puhutaankin nykyään enimmäkseen vieraana kielenä, on äidinkielenä puhuttu englantia yhä standardi kielen opetuksessa. Monelle englannin oppijalle se on myös ainoa oikea tapa puhua englantia. Tämä on havaittavissa myös Japanissa, jossa englannin kielen äidinkielenkaltainen osaaminen on vaikeata saavuttaa, ja japanilaisten asenteet omaa englannin ääntämystä kohtaan ovat hyvin negatiivisia.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli jatkaa aiempien tutkimusten työtä uudella otannalla, ja mitata japanilaisten asenteita omaa englannin kielen ääntämistään kohtaan sekä tarkastella näihin asenteisiin vaikuttavia muuttujia. Tutkimus suoritettiin kyselyllä, jossa mitattiin vastaajien asenteita omaa ääntämistään kohtaan ja selvitettiin erilaisia tilanteita ja konteksteja joissa vastaajat ovat tekemisissä englannin kielen kanssa sekä sitä äidinkielenään että vieraana kielenä puhuvien kanssa. Tutkimuksen tuloksia verrattiin myös edellisen tutkimusten tuloksien kanssa.</p> <p>Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että edellisiin tutkimuksiin verrattuna vastaajien asenteet olivat hieman positiivisempia, mutta muuten hyvin samankaltaisia. Yksikään muuttuja ei selkeästi vaikuttanut asenteisiin kokonaisvaltaisesti, mutta muuttujilla oli vaikutusta yksittäisten tai muutamien kysymysten vastauksiin. Positiivisimmin asenteisiin vaikuttivat vastaajan korkea ikä ja englannin kielen käyttö työn yhteydessä. Tulokset ilmentävät äidinkielenkaltaisen englannin yhä vallitsevaa asemaa kielen standardina.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

There are now more English speaking people in the world than ever, and for years the number of non-native English speakers has overshadowed the number of native English speakers. This influx of English learners and speakers from the expanding circle (Kachru 1982) has given rise to a question of the meaning and value of nativeness. Furthermore, the division of English speakers into native and non-native speakers has been criticized for creating inequality by putting native speakers in a position of power over non-native speakers. These factors have promoted the concept of EIL, or *English as an international language*, and the term *world Englishes* to describe the diverse local and global varieties of the English language that exist today.

However, English is still widely taught with native-likeness as a goal, even though SLA studies have shown that acquiring particularly native-like pronunciation after the critical period to be challenging (Piske et al. 2001). As native-like English use is set as a goal, and contrasted with the learners' non-native English, it is easy to perceive native English use as a standard, a correct way to use language. This leads to non-native English use to be seen as incorrect or substandard (Tokumoto & Shibata 2011). This is true all over the world, but especially so in countries like Japan. Differences in Japanese and English make it difficult to reach a native-like English fluency, especially as the Japanese often have little contact with English and limited opportunities to use it. Studies on Japanese learners of English show that the Japanese value native accents, especially American ones, as correct and prestigious while non-native accents, including their own, are judged negatively (e.g. Chiba et al. 1995, McKenzie 2008a; 2008b, Tokumoto & Shibata 2011).

Most of the research concerning Japanese English learners' attitudes towards non-native English use concentrates on evaluating speaker samples from native and non-native English speakers from different parts of the world, and only Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) discuss the learners' attitudes towards their own L1 accented English use. Furthermore, while McKenzie (2008b) discusses some of the social factors that affect Japanese English learners' attitudes towards native-like pronunciation, the bulk of the studies focus only on fairly homogenous groups of similarly aged students who study English at a university level. The aim of this present research is to make the target group more diverse by studying English learners of different ages and with different educational backgrounds (i.e. both those who have and have not studied English at a university), and to take into account how the extent

and contexts of the learners' English use affect their own attitudes towards their own pronunciation of English.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 English in Japan**

It is recorded that the Japanese first came into contact with the English language in the 1600s when the to-be shogun of Japan, Tokugawa Ieyasu, met with William Adams, an Englishman sailing aboard a Dutch trading vessel, who later became a consultant and an interpreter for the shogunate (Ike 1995:3). Japanese isolationist policy kept the spread of English slow for the next 200 years, until the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853 established trade relations with the United States. The influx of protestant missionaries from America at this time ultimately lead to American English being the standard taught in Japan. During the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, English became compulsory in schools and became an important part of education, but as Japan turned towards nationalism in the turn of the century, the role of English was heavily discussed and debated (Ike 1995:3-6). After the Second World War, the educational system was restructured under American occupation, and English became more prevalent in Japan through popular culture and use in international business. In 1987 Japan Exchange and Teaching program (JET) was established. The program was set up also to promote co-operation between the west and Japan (or trade relations, as many critics point out) to bring native English speaking teachers to Japan as ALTs, or *assistant language teachers*, to improve Japanese students' communicative skills. Even though teachers from all over the world can apply, almost all of them are native speakers, mostly from the US and the UK (Galloway, 2009). Galloway refers to the criticism of "imperialistic" pro-west attitudes that are being taught through the quest for native teachers, and points out that her and others' research do not agree with the claims of its efficiency. In 2011 the age for starting compulsory English education was lowered to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade (age 10).

As the English language has been brought into Japan largely by western (largely American) forces and has coincided with the westernization of Japan, it has often clashed with the Japanese nationalistic identity and values. This has led to English being seen as an "outsider language", and it has been accused of polluting the Japanese language and the way of life. The prioritization between preserving the national identity and the need for English in international communication and business has driven the Japanese educational policy to various directions during the last century (Seargeant 2009).

Differences between the two languages can make it difficult for Japanese speakers to reach a native-like level of fluency in English. First, the Japanese writing system differs greatly from English. Japanese writing consists of *kanji*, which are adopted Chinese characters, and two sets of *kana* syllabaries. The *kanji* can function as representatives for whole words or word stems and can often be read in multiple ways (for example, the character 水 can be read as both *mizu* and *sui*). The *kana* represent a single consonant-vowel sound (with the exception of the *kana* for nasal sound), and they exist in two systems. *Hiragana* is used to write Japanese words, word endings and grammatical units such as particles, and *katakana* is mostly used to write foreign words and loanwords. Second, Japanese grammar and syntax are very different to English. For example, there are no articles or plural forms in Japanese, the word order is SOV rather than SVO, etc. (Dougill 2008). Also, the phonetic systems of these languages are very different as Japanese has relatively few consonant and vowel sounds compared to, for example, General American English, the most commonly taught variety in Japanese schools (Saito 2011). Even though communicative language practices in English teaching have been stressed in the national curriculum since the 1989 and 2002 Reform acts, actual teaching practices are still focused on preparing students for exams and communication is largely thought to be a secondary goal for students (Sergeant 2009:50-52).

The perception that English is something western or even American, the difficulty of mastering the language and the lack of opportunities to use spoken language are likely some reasons Japanese English learners tend to perceive their accented English as more “incorrect” or less desirable compared to native English accents, especially American ones (e.g. Chiba et al. 1995, McKenzie 2008a; 2008b).

## **2.2 Language attitudes and nativeness**

Language is a social and cultural process, and as such it is intricately linked with stereotypes and value judgments – that is, attitudes. These attitudes do not come from objectively intrinsic or aesthetic differences, but from the perceived social differences (Edwards 2006). Studies by William Labov and others have found out that different social factors, such as age and education, have an effect on language attitudes. Often these attitudes are influenced by the idea of standard language. Garrett (2010) writes:

In standard language ideology, there are strong pervading common-sense views about which language forms are right and which are wrong. The notion of correctness is reinforced by authority. Standard languages are codified in dictionaries and grammar books, for example, and spread through the educational systems. They are also reinforced by awarding of prestige or stigma to language forms. The devaluing of some forms leads to a view of them as non-standard or substandard. (Garrett 2010:7)

In EFL context, the standard often comes from standardized British or American English. Speakers generally rate American and British varieties of English as more desirable and prestigious, and research shows again and again that native-like English fluency is still the goal for many EFL students (e.g. Matsuda 2003, Jenkins 2007:231).

These few models of native English are often considered as the only goal in reaching native-like fluency, which is problematic considering the fact that English is spoken as a native language in countries all over the world, and the concepts of second and foreign languages are becoming more and more complicated in the globalized world (Graddol 2006:110) Even in British and American Englishes the scope of different varieties of dialects and accents is extremely wide. Still, the idea of these few native varieties as the native standard for EFL learning pertains.

### **2.3 Previous research on topic**

There has been some research about Japanese attitudes towards nativeness. Matsuda (2003) interviewed Japanese private senior high school students about their attitudes towards the ownership of English and found out that even though the students felt that English is an international language, it belongs to native speakers and should be used according to native (especially US and UK) standards. They perceived the Japanese variety of English as “either Japanese or incorrect English that deviated from the “real” English of native speakers.” (Matsuda 2003:493)

The main focus of the research has been Japanese English learners' attitudes towards native and non-native English speakers' accents (e.g. Chiba et al. 1995, McKenzie 2008a; 2008b). In most of these studies Japanese university level students of English had to evaluate different native and non-native speaker samples. The results conclude that the Japanese favor UK and especially US accents over non-native, including Japanese, varieties. Furthermore, Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) compare Japanese English students' attitudes towards their own English pronunciation to those of Malaysian and Korean English students. The study found

that out of the three, the Japanese were most likely to dismiss their own L1-accented speech and to believe it to be insufficient for clear and intelligible communication between both native and non-native speakers of English (Tokumoto & Shibata 2011:402). The study speculates that the reason for the low appreciation towards the Japanese accent is the respondents' low exposure to other non-native varieties of English and limited opportunities to use their own English skills outside of school.

The present study continues from Tokumoto & Shibata's (2011) research. It concentrates only on the Japanese attitudes, and expands the target group of the study to be more general. The target groups of the above studies generally represent a very homogenous group of similarly aged learners who study English at a university level. In my current study I have expanded the target group to include Japanese who have not studied English at university level, and widened the age range. This gives a more general outlook on the attitudes of Japanese learners and gives a range of different durations of English education and different English proficiencies. Furthermore, of the research mentioned above only McKenzie (2008b) studied the different factors that affect the Japanese English learners' attitudes, and found out that the different factors (e.g. gender, perceived competence) affected the attitudes. In the present study I will try to find out whether certain factors such as age and use of English media affect the participants' language attitudes. The factors deal with exposure to English(es) and the use of English, which I believe to be significant factors in the participants' attitudes towards their pronunciation, as Tokumoto & Shibata (2011) speculated. Contact with different English accents and being able to communicate with others in one's own non-native English accent may be factors that increase speaker confidence.

### **3 PRESENT STUDY**

The present study aims to find out more about Japanese attitudes towards their English pronunciation and the factors that might have an effect on those attitudes.

#### **3.1 Research questions**

- 1. What kinds of attitudes do these Japanese participants have towards their pronunciation of English? How do they compare to Tokumoto & Shibata's (2011) findings?**

Previous research shows that the Japanese seem to have a negative attitude towards their English pronunciation. Are similar attitudes seen in the present participants?



## **2. Do any of the measured factors have an effect on these attitudes? Which factors?**

The factors included in the present study are: age, duration of English studies, studying English at university level, studying abroad, using English at work and the amount of English media used. Tokumoto & Shibata (2011) suggested lack of opportunities to use English as one of the reasons for the negative attitudes. They also think the lack of exposure to non-native English use is affecting this. If this is true, it could show in the analysis.

### **3.2 Data and Method**

The participants of the study were selected from those who answered the online questionnaire and fulfilled the following conditions: a) they had to be native Japanese speakers b) have studied English as a foreign language. The participants were 29 Japanese natives whose ages ranged from 19 to 30. They had studied English for 5 to 13 years, and 11 of the participants were studying or had studied English as their major in university. Almost all of the participants (23) had studied abroad as part of their university education in countries such as Germany, Finland, Canada and New Zealand. Out of these 23 participants 9 had studied in a country where English is spoken as a native language. 9 of the participants used English at work. 8 of the participants reported using little or no English language media, 9 participants reported using some English language media, and 12 participants reported using a lot of English media. The reported media use was compared to different media that the participants reported using, and it was seen that the amount of media usage was consistent with the amount of different media used.

The attitudes were assessed with an online questionnaire, which was written in both English and Japanese and was distributed to participants via social media between February and March of 2013. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part, a 12-item questionnaire to measure attitudes was adapted from Tokumoto & Shibata (2011). The questionnaire was designed to assess three different components forming the participants' attitudes. The cognitive component attempted to find out attitudes towards accentedness (whether or not the participants believe they have a non-native accent, question 3), intelligibility (whether the participants believe they can be understood by other English speakers, questions 6 and 7) and perceived acceptability of their accent in different situations (questions 10, 11 and 12). The affective component and the behavioral component attempted to measure how the participants felt about their own accent (questions 1 and 4), and what

kind of behavioral judgments or intentions participants had towards spoken English (questions 2,5,8 and 9), respectively (Tokumoto & Shibata 2011:395).

The items assessed attitude with a six-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=moderately disagree, 4=moderately agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree). The second part of the questionnaire consisted of choosing different contexts where the participants used English, where they could choose from a number of options (e.g. travel, friends, different media etc.) or write their own. They were also asked if they had studied abroad and if so, where. The results were analyzed by calculating the mean score of each question item for the whole sample which were then compared to Tokumoto & Shibata's (2011) results with a t-test to see if the differences were significant. The variables in the group were analyzed with two methods. Correlation analysis was used to determine whether and how participants' age or the duration of their English studies correlated with the attitudes they had. Correlation test was used to eliminate the need for grouping the participants according to their age or duration of English studies, and to see if the attitudes changed as age or duration of English studies grew. The effect of different other variables was determined by performing a t-test for group pairs and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the three media use groups to measure the statistical significance of the differences between groups. The other variables included in this study were as follows: 1) whether the participants studied English at university level, 2) whether they had studied abroad, 3) whether they had studied abroad in a country where English is the native language, or in a country where it is not, 4) how much they used English media, and 5) whether they had to use English as a part of their job.

### **3.3 Results**

The questions regarding the cognitive component were analyzed first. Question 3 aimed to discover the participants' attitudes towards accentedness, i.e. whether the participants felt they speak English with a non-native accent (in contrast to a native accent). On average the participants slightly agreed with the statement (Mean=3,66 Standard Deviation=1,37). Compared to the participants in Tokumoto & Shibata's (2011) study, the participants thought of their accents as sounding more native (M=4,72 SD=1,11). The t-test confirmed the difference to be statistically significant ( $p < 0,01$ ). Questions 6 and 7 assessed the participants' perception of their accents' intelligibility, and found out that they slightly agreed with both the statements, as presented in Table 1. The present study's participants were more positive

towards their intelligibility to native speakers of English than in the 2011 study ( $p < 0,01$ ), but felt almost equally confident about their intelligibility to non-native speakers. In both studies the participants felt that non-native speakers could understand them better than native speakers.

Table 1: Participants' perception of the intelligibility of their pronunciation

Item	Mean (standard deviation)		Significance
	Present study (N=29)	Tokumoto & Shibata (2011) (N=50)	
6. Native speakers of English can easily understand my accented English	3,79 (1,17)	2,74 (1,05)	$p < 0,01$
7. Non-native speakers of English can easily understand my accented English	3,97 (0,91)	3,74 (1,07)	$p > 0,1$

Questions 10, 11 and 12 measured the participants' attitudes towards the acceptability of their English pronunciation. Table 2 shows that the participants slightly disagreed with the statements presented in questions 10 and 11, which stated that their English is suitable for international business and for an English teacher, respectively, and agreed with their pronunciation being suitable for personal cross-cultural communication. Results for questions 10 and 12 were higher than those of the 2011 study (question 10:  $p < 0,01$ , question 12:  $p < 0,05$ ). The results for question 11 were very similar.

Table 2: Participants' perception of the acceptability of their pronunciation

Item	Mean (standard deviation)		Significance
	Present study (N=29)	Tokumoto & Shibata (2011) (N=50)	
10. My pronunciation would be acceptable in international business	3,45 (1,45)	2,58 (1,21)	$p < 0,01$
11. My pronunciation would be acceptable for an English teacher	3,1 (1,54)	3,2 (1,2)	$p > 0,1$
12. My pronunciation would be acceptable in cross-cultural communication	4,45 (1,05)	3,86 (1,2)	$p < 0,05$

Questions 1 and 4 related to the affective component, and they measured the participants' attachment to their own accent of English. Question 1 measured confidence in pronunciation, and showed that the participants slightly disagreed with the statement "I am confident in my English pronunciation." (M=3,31 SD=1,16) The attitude in the present study was yet again more positive than in the 2011 study (M=2,34 SD=1,24  $p<0,01$ ). Question 4 asked the participants whether they were happy with their accent, and showed that on average the participants disagreed with the statement (M=2,59 SD=1,33) nearly as much as the participants in the 2011 study (M=2,36 SD=1,26).

The other questions were added in to measure the behavioral component of attitudes and to assess the behavioral intents and judgments considering their spoken English. Question 2 assessed whether the participants felt their accent was native-like. They disagreed with this statement (M=2,48 SD=1,41) as did the participants of the 2011 study (M=2,26 SD=1,08) In question 5 the participants were asked if they hesitate to show their accent, and they slightly disagreed with the statement (M=2,86 SD=1,45). This response was again more positive than in the 2011 study (M=3,78 SD=1,54  $p=0,1$ ). In question 8 the students were asked if they would like to keep their accent and they disagreed with the statement (M=2,55 SD=1,4). The participants of the present study had slightly more positive attitudes towards their accent (M=2,04 SD=1,18  $p<0,1$ ). The last question measuring the behavioral component was question 9, which asked whether the participants would like to sound like a native speaker of English. The question had the highest agreement rate in the whole questionnaire (M=5,03 SD=1,49) and it was very similar to the 2011 study (M=5,46 SD=0,95)

Altogether, the attitudes of the participants in the present study were slightly negative towards their English pronunciation. Although most of the answers vary between the slightly disagree – slightly agree range, there are two topics that stand out from the results. First, not surprisingly, the answers in the questions 8 and 9 strongly indicate that these Japanese would like to sound more like native speakers, which in general is the model in EFL teaching around the world. Second, answers to questions 10, 11 and 12 indicate that even though the participants have negative feelings towards their accent in professional settings (international business and teaching English), they agreed that it is suitable for cross-cultural communication. I expect this result to stem from the fact that all of the participants report some kind of intercultural communication in their ways of using or having used English. Compared to the 2011 study the results were more positive in most aspects, with five questions showing significantly more positive attitudes, and others showing slightly more positive or similar results.

### 3.3.1 Variables

Next I analyzed the different factors' effect on the attitudes. First, correlation between participants' age and questionnaire answers were tested. Overall it was found that there was moderate correlation between only about half of the statements. Older age correlated positively with confidence in English pronunciation (question 1: Pearson correlation 0,469  $p=0,01$ ) perceived intelligibility to both native (question 6: PC +0,53  $p<0,01$ ) and non-native English speakers (question 7: PC +0,433  $p<0,05$ ), and also in perceived acceptability in international business (PC +0,475  $p<0,01$ ) and personal cross-cultural communication (PC +0,558  $p<0,01$ ). The correlations might be explained by the fact that the older participants have had more time to use English in different contexts, and have studied English longer than many of the younger participants. Further analysis also showed that age moderately correlated with English media use (PC +0,454  $p<0,05$ ) and, perhaps unsurprisingly, with using English at work, which had the strongest correlation to age (PC +0,626  $p<0,01$ ). The age of the participant also moderately correlated with the duration of English studies (PC +0,633  $p<0,01$ ). In general, duration of English studies correlated slightly with confidence (PC +0,428  $p<0,05$ ) and perception of intelligibility to native (PC +0,389  $p<0,05$ ) and non-native (PC +0,389  $p<0,05$ ) speakers, and moderately with acceptability in cross-cultural communication (PC +0,497  $p<0,01$ ).

The next subject of analysis was the variable of studying English at university level. The t-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in only two questions (question 1 and 2) and even there the significance was low ( $p<0,1$ , see Table 3).

Table 3: Analysis of differences between participants who have studied English at university level and those who have not

Item	Mean (standard deviation)		Significance
	University (N=11)	Non-university (N=18)	
1. I am confident in my English pronunciation	3,82 (1,17)	3,00 (1,14)	$p < 0,1$
2. I speak English with a native-like accent	3,09 (1,45)	2,11 (1,37)	$p < 0,1$

Then the variable of studying abroad in any country was analyzed. This time, two questions had a statistically significant difference. As seen in Table 4, those who had studied abroad

were more confident about their intelligibility to native English speakers and thought their pronunciation would be more acceptable for an English teacher. Analysis on whether the participants who had studied abroad had done so in a country where English is the native language did not have any statistically significant effect on their attitudes. ANOVA analysis was used to confirm there were no significant differences between the three groups.

Table 4: Analysis of differences between participants who have studied abroad and those who have not

Item	Mean (standard deviation)		Significance
	Studied abroad (N=23)	Have not studied abroad (N=6)	
6. Native speakers of English can easily understand my accented English	3,96 (1,3)	3,67 (0,52)	p < 0,05
11. My pronunciation would be acceptable for an English teacher	3,39 (1,59)	2,0 (1,1)	p < 0,05

Table 5: Analysis of differences between participants who use English at work and those who do not

Item	Mean (standard deviation)		Significance
	Use English at work (N=9)	Do not use English at work (N=20)	
1. I am confident in my English pronunciation	3,89 (0,928)	3,05 (1,23)	p < 0,1
4. I am happy with my accent	3,44 (1,42)	2,2 (1,196)	p < 0,05
6. Native speakers of English can easily understand my accented English	4,56 (0,882)	3,45 (1,191)	p < 0,05
10. My pronunciation would be acceptable in international business	4,56 (1,33)	2,95 (1,32)	p < 0,01
11. My pronunciation would be acceptable for an English teacher	4,00 (1,5)	2,7 (1,49)	p < 0,05
12. My pronunciation would be acceptable in cross-cultural communication	5,00 (0,87)	4,2 (1,11)	p < 0,05

The next variable to be analyzed was using English at work. The most noticeable difference

was also the one that was most expected, as the working participants had more positive attitudes towards the acceptability of their pronunciation in international business. Table 5 shows that the result's high statistical significance. The other two measures of acceptability were also significantly higher in the working demographic. The group was also significantly happier with their pronunciation, they believed more strongly that native speakers could understand them easily and were slightly more confident about their English pronunciation.

The last variable was the use of English language media. The participants were divided into three groups based on how much and how many different English media they told they used, and analyzed with one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. The amount of media use affected intelligibility to native English speakers significantly, but post hoc Tukey test revealed that the effect was significant only between those who use little or no media and those who use a lot of media. The answers in question 12 were also affected by media use, but only slightly. Again, post hoc Tukey test revealed that the effect is observable only between lowest and highest amounts of media use.

Table 6: Analysis of differences between groups of different amount of media use

Item	Mean (standard deviation)			Significance	Location of significance (Tukey p)		
	G1 (N=8)	G2 (N=9)	G3 (N=12)		G1-G2	G1-G3	G2-G3
6. Native speakers of English can easily understand my accented English	3,00 (1,07)	3,67 (1,32)	4,42 (0,90)	p < 0,05	p > 0,1	p < 0,05	p > 0,1
12. My pronunciation would be acceptable in cross-cultural communication	3,88 (1,13)	4,22 (1,20)	5,00 (0,739)	p < 0,1	p > 0,1	p < 0,1	p > 0,1

Note: G1 = Little or no media use, G2 = Some media use, G3 = Lots of media use

### 3.4 Discussion

The analysis of the data shows that generally the participants' attitudes towards their English pronunciation are slightly negative. They perceive their accent as non-native, wish to sound more like native speakers, and feel their accent might not be suitable for professional contexts. However, the participants' answers reflect the fact that they do not seem to hesitate to use their spoken English, and they feel that their pronunciation is understood and suitable for cross-cultural communications. Compared to Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) the attitudes

were slightly more positive. The participants of the present study had significantly more positive attitudes towards their intelligibility to native speakers of English and acceptability of their English in both international business and cross-cultural communication. They also had higher confidence in their own pronunciation. These significant differences, and the slight ones in many other questions, are possibly caused by broader contexts of English the participants may have. Many of the participants had studied abroad, some in countries where English is the official language, which might explain the increase in positivity towards acceptability in cross-cultural communication and intelligibility to native speakers. Also, many of the participants used English at work, which might explain the attitudes towards their English in international business. In Tokumoto & Shibata (2011) the participants are younger and most likely haven't yet had a chance to go abroad or work, since they are only in the beginning of their studies. The participants in the present study also believed their English to be more native-like than in the 2011 study. This brings up an interesting point on whether the attitudes are more positive because of the perceived native-likeness. A correlation test seems to confirm that the belief in one's accent's native-likeness is a significant factor in more positive attitudes towards one's pronunciation.

As for the second research question, none of the factors seemed to have significant overall effect on the attitudes, and they mainly affected only certain questions. The factors that seemed to affect the attitudes the most were the participants' age and whether the participant used English at work. It is not difficult to deduce from the results that the older participants were also more likely to use English at work, making it hard to say which one of the factors had a larger role in forming the attitudes. Older participants also had studied English longer and used more media (both of which were connected to slightly more positive attitudes). All in all the analysis shows that using more English and being more in contact with English results in some increase in positivity for participants towards their own English pronunciation. Another reason for the positivity seems to be the fact that the participants also perceived their accent to be native-like. Unfortunately the small sample size and the still somewhat homogenous composition of the target group make generalization difficult.

The findings of the present study were in line with the previous studies; even though the attitudes were slightly more positive than in Tokumoto & Shibata (2011), the results were still very similar overall. The students also found nativeness to be a desirable goal for their English learning as seen in Tokumoto & Shibata (2011) and Matsuda (2003). McKenzie (2008b) found out that different variables in the target group significantly affected the participants' judgment of native and non-native accents, and it was expected that here too the



variables would play a greater part.

The results imply that the perceived prestige of nativeness still exists strongly, especially as the positive attitudes were at least partly caused by the participants' perception of their English as being native-like. The fact that the participants still slightly agreed that their pronunciation is understandable to both native and non-native speakers of English and is suitable for cross-cultural communication is encouraging, but the positive attitudes were still very mild. The decision to lower the age of starting English studies in Japan is a good way to boost this confidence through making it easier to learn more English, and the globalized world makes it easier than ever to be in contact with English speakers. This being said, the education system of Japan still relies on native varieties in English education, and gives little chance for students to hear non-native English in school settings (Galloway 2009) Even though the Japan Exchange and Teaching program (JET) gives the opportunity for English speakers from all around the world to come and teach English in Japan, almost all the teachers still come from countries where English is spoken as a native language. Furthermore, a large majority of them come from the US and the UK (Galloway 2009:172)

The small number of participants to the study set an obvious limitation to the interpretability of the present study. Even combined with Tokumoto and Shibata (2011) the number of participants with this kind of pronunciation attitude testing is still under a hundred, and they do not represent a very broad sample of the Japanese population. Both studies fail to take into account variety in educational background, living in different areas in the country (which greatly affects the amount of contact with non-Japanese people and the English language in many parts) and other possible factors such as gender and proficiency in English. The current sample may also be somewhat more accustomed to communicating with foreigners, since most of them had studied abroad and were mostly contacted for the questionnaire via Finnish students. Further research is needed in the area to accurately assess the attitudes of Japanese and other expanding circle users of English, and into how these attitudes could be made more positive. As native speakers are still the powerful majority that affect the whole world's use of English, the power balance seems not to be changing that much. This leads to attitudes towards one's own non-native accents continuing to be negative, which has an effect on learning, confidence and language use.

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## 5 APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

1. 私は私の英語の発音に自信があります。  
I am confident in my English pronunciation
2. 私はネイティブスピーカー(英語を母語にする人)のようなアクセント / 訛りで英語を話します。

**I speak English with a native-like accent**

3. 私は非ネイティブのアクセント / 訛りで英語を話します。

**I have a non-native accent**

4. 私の英語のアクセント / 訛りに満足しています。

**I am happy with my accent**

5. 私は私のアクセント / 訛りで話すことに抵抗があります。

**I hesitate to show my accent**

6. 英語を母語にする人は、私の訛りのある英語でも容易に理解できます。

**Native speakers of English can easily understand my accented English**

7. 非ネイティブスピーカーは、私の訛りのある英語でも容易に理解できます。

**Non-native speakers of English can easily understand my accented English**

8. 私の英語のアクセント / 訛りを保ちたいと思います。

**I would like to keep my accent**

9. 私は英語を母語にする人のように発音したい。

**I would like to sound like a native speaker of English**

10. 私の発音は、国際ビジネスの場で通用します。

**My pronunciation would be acceptable in international business**

11. 私の発音は、英語の先生として通用します。

**My pronunciation would be acceptable for an English teacher**

12. 私の発音は、異文化間コミュニケーションをするとき通用します。

**My pronunciation would be acceptable in cross-cultural communication**