

# A qualitative study of integrativeness among Japanese ESL learners in the British context

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# Literature review

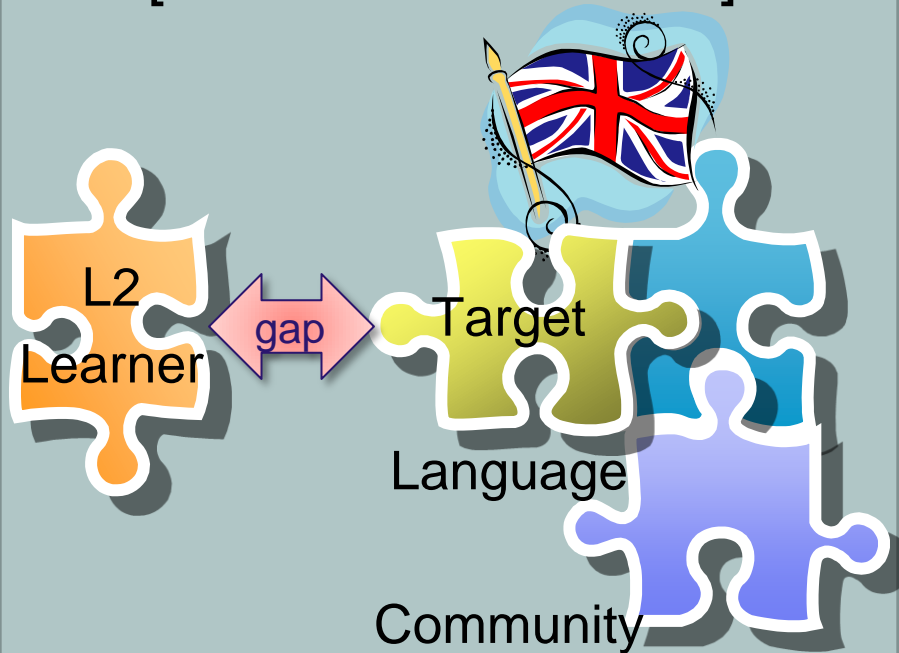


# Most significant L2 motivation: integrativeness



- ❖ Past research shows that success in second language (L2) learning depends on the learners' attitudes and motivations towards the target language community.
- ❖ In particular, learners who possess integrativeness should succeed in L2 achievement (Gardner, 1985).

[Lower achievement]



[Higher achievement]



# Integrativeness as the recipe for success



- ❖ The recipe for success, integrativeness is defined as below. Note that *tangible* target language community is essential, which implies that it is more relevant to ESL contexts than EFL contexts.

“Integrativeness reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language **in order to come closer to the other language community**. At one level, this implies an openness to, and respect for other cultural groups and ways of life. In the extreme, this might involve complete identification with the community (and possibly even withdrawal from one’s original group), but more commonly it might well involve integration within both communities.”  
(Gardner, 2001: 5)

# Integrativeness under fire



- ❖ The validity of integrativeness has been questioned and challenged by researchers who approach the concept in the EFL contexts, and more recently by those who refer to English as an international language (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006; Dörnyei, 2009; Lamb, 2004; Ushioda, 2006; Yashima, 2004).

→ Root cause: Lack of or vagueness of target language community available for the L2 learners.

1. ‘*Lack of*’: Learners in EFL contexts decisively lack target language community to integrate with.

“[T]he term may not so much be related to any actual, or metaphorical, *integration* into an L2 community as to **some more basic identification process within the individual’s self-concept**.” (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002: 456 on integrativeness)

2. ‘*Vagueness of*’: The progress of globalisation spread English to the wider world to the extent that we may as well say English is no longer solely possessed by native speakers. Therefore the target language community nowadays is composed not only by native speakers but also non-native speakers.

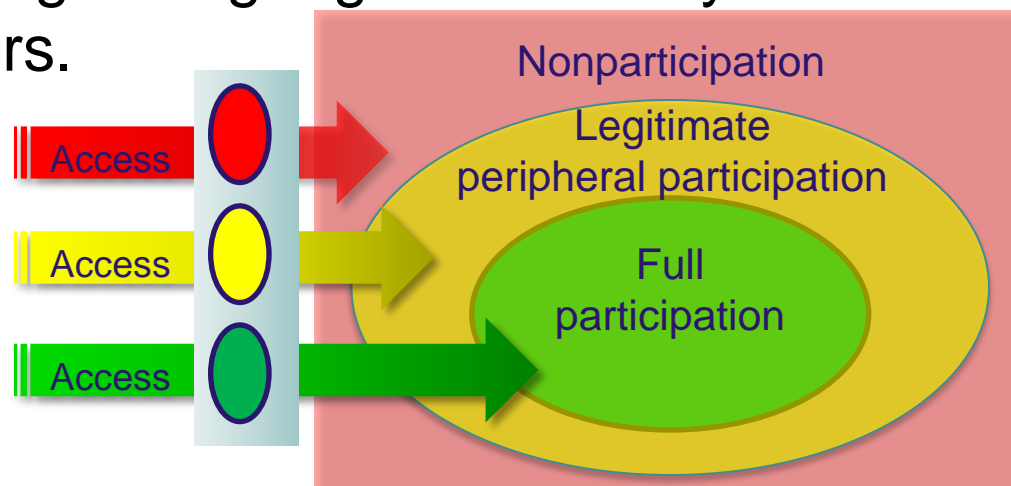
“...[a]s English loses its association with particular Anglophone cultures and is instead **identified with the powerful forces of globalization**, the desire to ‘integrate’ loses its explanatory power in many EFL contexts.” (Lamb, 2004: 3)

# Community of practice and participation



- ❖ Integrativeness is not only in the hands of L2 learners, but also in the hands of the target language community who can accept or reject L2 learners.

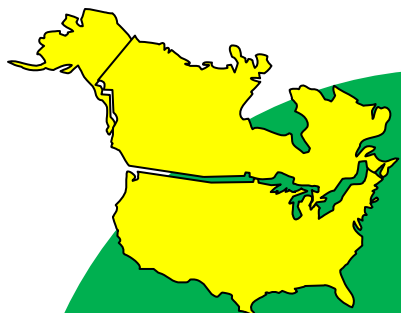
Lave and Wenger (1991) proposes two types of participation for newcomers in the community of practice. Whether newcomers can gain access to full participation or not depends on the old-timers' acceptance.



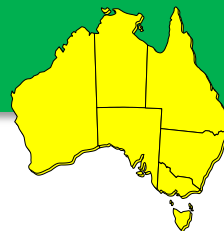
“From Lave and Wenger’s perspective, much rides on the nature and extent of access offered to the individual by the community of practice. That is, **is full and legitimate participation made available or not?**” (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001: 149)

“If we take seriously the argument that the identity of the second language learner is not a personality variable but a socially and historically constructed relationship to both institutional and community practices, then it follows that **teachers, researchers, administrators, testers, and policy makers are all implicated in the range of identities available to the second language learner**” (Norton, 2006: 506 – 507)

# Integrativeness in the UK



Are English speaking countries such as the UK the last stronghold where ESL learners are given favourable opportunity to experience actual integration into the local Anglophone community?





# Research method



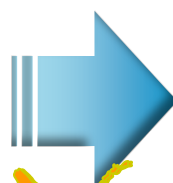
# British context



- ❖ In contrast to learning EFL in a monolingual and monocultural context of Japan, learners will have tangible native speakers to interact in the UK. Thus, integrativeness will not be imaginary but instead real and verifiable.

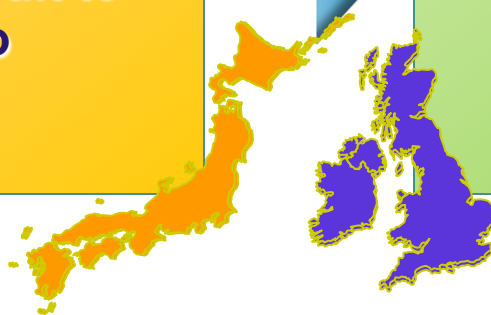
## <Japanese context>

1. Virtually monolingual & monocultural.
2. English use is rare. Because of this:  
Integrativeness is rather imaginary (i.e. it is difficult to find English speakers to integrate with).



## <British context>

1. Multicultural.
2. English use is the norm. Because of this:  
Integrativeness is real (i.e. English speakers are available to integrate with).



# Research questions



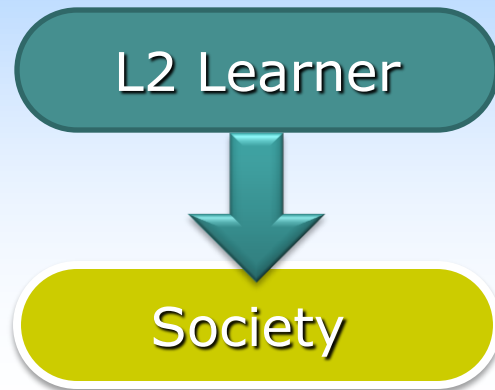
1. **How do the native Japanese speakers (hereafter referred to as 'NJS') weigh integrativeness as they use English in the UK? Who do they wish to integrate with? How does it change?**
2. What kinds of acculturation attitudes do the NJS have towards the native speakers, their own ethnic group and foreigners in the UK they interact with? Which is the most valued one? How do they change?
3. What is the NJS' perceived identity in the UK? Do they think of themselves as Japanese, British, or global citizens? How does it change?
4. In the NJS' perception, who owns the English language? How does it change?
5. How do integrativeness, acculturation attitudes and identity relate to willingness to communicate (WTC)? What determines WTC? How do they change along with time?

# My standpoint: social constructivism

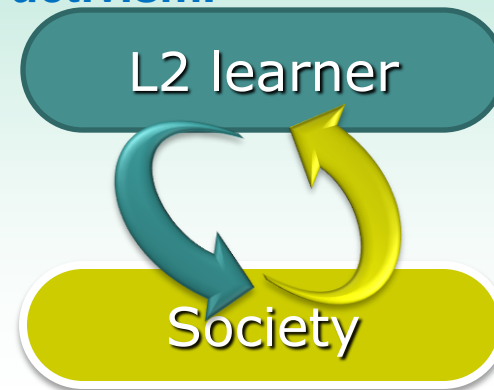


- ❖ Identity and L2 motivation is not solely formed innately and individually, but is rather co-constructed by interaction with the society. (Norton, 2006; Ushioda, 2003; 2006; 2007)

Conventional unilateral analysis of L2 learner's psychological factors derived from quantitative research rooted in positivism.



Interactive analysis of L2 learner's psychological factors derived from qualitative research rooted in social constructivism.



“In short,... individual motivation and the pursuit of particular identities are processes that are dynamically co-constructed (or constrained) through interaction.” (Ushioda, 2006: 153 – 154)

# Research method



**Participants** are NJS. It is a prerequisite that they intend to stay, or have stayed in the UK for at least a year. They were all brought up in Japan and are not 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants in the UK.

→ 2 NJS were interviewed for pilot study, and 8 NJS for 1<sup>st</sup> round interviews.

Out of 8 participants, there were 2 males and 6 females, 2 postgraduate students and 6 immigrants.

→ Homogeneous sampling was used (i.e. they have been living in the UK) as well as snowball sampling (i.e. some participants were introduced to me).

## Data collection methods:

- 1) **Semi-structured interviews over 3 stages** → 1<sup>st</sup> stage is finished.
- 2) **Participant observation** → ongoing.
- 3) **Diary** → planned.

**Paradigm:** **social constructivism.**

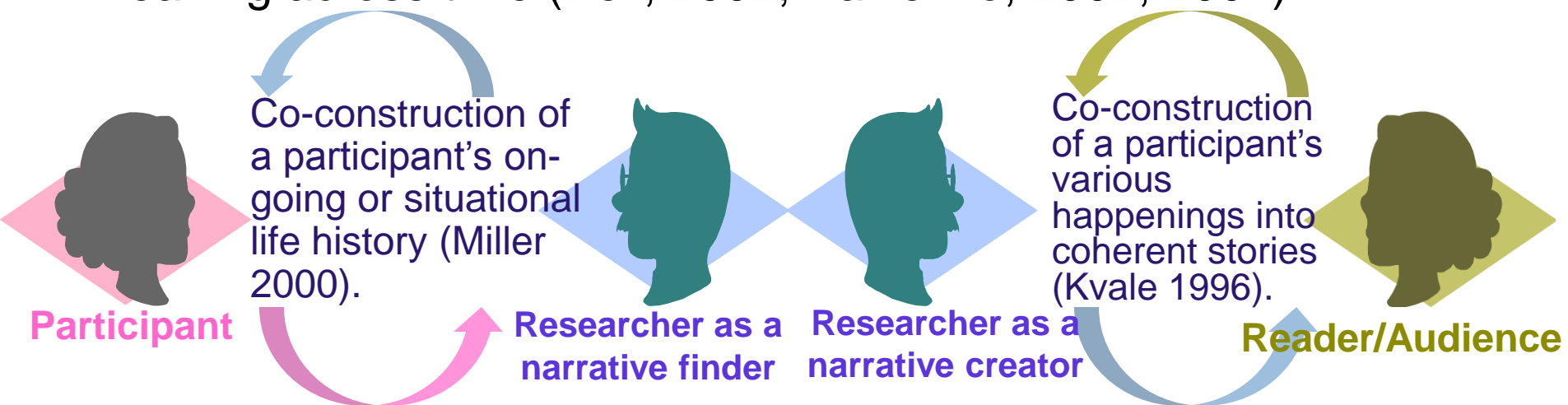
## Traditions:

- 1) **Phenomenology:** lived experiences of NJS are examined.
- 2) **Life history:** individual life experiences relevant to their cultural change and identity formation are inquired.
- 3) **Ethnography:** social world of NJS are described and interpreted.

# Narrative inquiry



- ❖ Narrative inquiry is a central means by which people give their lives meaning across time (Bell, 2002; Pavlenko, 2002, 2007).



[R]esearchers can gain **rare insights into learner's motivations, investments, struggles, losses, and gains as well as into language ideologies** that guide their learning trajectories. (Pavlenko 2002: 214 on narrative study)

Narrative inquiry involves working with people's consciously told stories, recognizing **that these rest on deeper stories of which people are often unaware.** (Bell 2002: 209)

# Initial findings



# Integrativeness: not driving the NJS



- ❖ Initial findings suggest that integrativeness is not the driving force for the NJS participants to learn or use English.

2. Some NJS **feel tense** when speaking to NS (native speakers).
3. Some NJS **cannot understand** what the NS are saying.
4. Some NJS refrain from talking **in fear that they cannot get their meaning across**.

1. All the NJS believe that **their cultural identity are Japanese** rather than British.

5. Most NJS feel an affinity with someone when they have common conversation topics, hobbies and moreover common background. **Integrativeness is not merely driven by people's ethnicity or language.**

6. Most NJS perceived **English as a tool which connects them to people throughout the world.** They do not feel that English is their 'own' language.

7. Some NS are **not attuned to NJS' English.**

NJS

Integrativeness? → → → →

Native English community



# On cultural identity



- ❖ 1. All the NJS believe that their cultural identities are Japanese rather than British.

(Martha, Homemaker; 11 years in the UK; married to a British husband)

*“Until recent I was busy raising two boys so I had no time to think about my cultural identity. However, when my boys started going to school, I had more free time and then I started rediscovering how attractive Japanese culture was. I began to practice tea ceremony and kimono (Japanese dressmaking) with other Japanese friends. I would not have done them if I were back in Japan, but the more I realise that there are no Japanese things around me in the UK, the more that I miss them. I realise that I am a foreigner here and that I am a Japanese.”*

# When speaking to native speakers



- ❖ 2. Some NJS feel tense when speaking to NS (native speakers).

(Sophia, Homemaker; 7 years in the UK; married to a British husband)

*“When I lived with my parent-in-law in the UK, I felt pressured and nervous because I did not have the courage to speak in English.”*

- ❖ 3. Some NJS cannot understand what the NS are saying.
- ❖ 4. Some NJS refrain from talking in fear that they cannot get their meaning across.

(Liz, postgraduate student; 2 months in the UK; single)

*“I got nervous when I was in a group of native speakers. I sometimes could not catch what they were saying, I did not understand local matters and I did not know what to say for I feared that I may say something irrelevant.”*

# On integrativeness



- ❖ 5. Most NJS feel an affinity with someone when they have common conversation topics, hobbies and moreover common background. Integrativeness is not merely driven by people's ethnicity.

(Martha, Homemaker; 11 years in the UK; married to a British husband)

*"I feel affinity with people who have more things in common, like wives who have young boys, who love tennis or painting. **The more that we have in common, the more that I find there is to talk about, and the closer we become.***

***It's not because of their ethnic background or the language we use to communicate that determine who I feel close to."***

(Tim, Businessperson; 10 years in the UK; married to a British wife)

*"When I came to London as an expatriate in my 30s, I had the desire to blend in with the local people because I was interested in a variety of things. However, I now feel that it is bothersome to do so because I use English at work and anywhere I socialise. When I come home, my children speak to me in English, **so the only places I can use Japanese to express myself thoroughly are with my wife and with the Tokyo Headquarter. I agree that learning English in order to blend in with native speakers is a good idea, but it does not apply to me.**"*

# NJS' perception of English



- ❖ 6. Most NJS perceived English as a tool which connects them to people throughout the world. They do not feel that English is their 'own' language.

(Ruth, Homemaker; 10 years in the UK; married to a British husband)

*“Having been a writer in Japan, **Japanese is my identity and my competency whereas English is a tool for communication which I need for living.** My ideal in using English is to be able to communicate to other people. I think English is a tool which belongs to anyone in the world.”*

(Eunice, Businessperson; 12 years in the UK; separated with a British husband)

*“English is not my mother tongue and I have the feeling that I am speaking a foreign language **driven by necessity and I have no choice but to use it.** I think English is **a handy tool to communicate with people from all over the world.**”*



# NS not attuned to NJS' English



## ❖ 7. Some NS are not attuned to NJS' English.

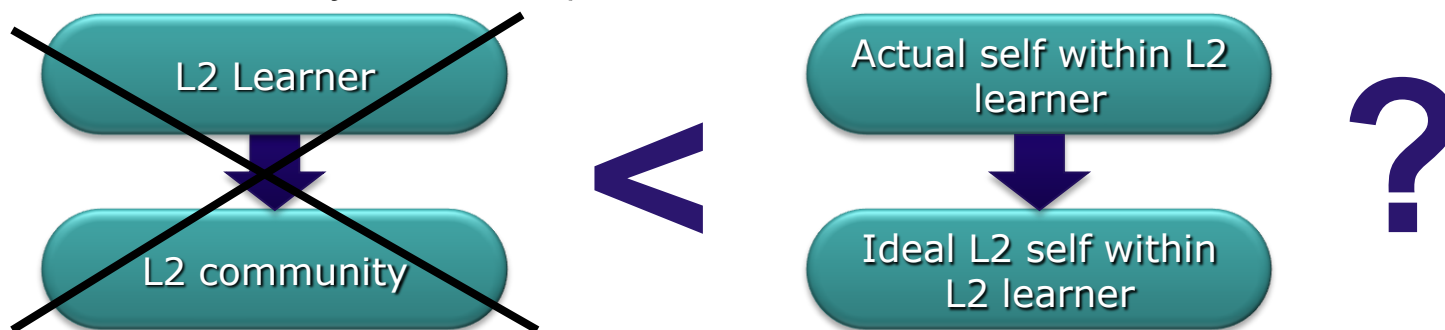
(Joshua, researcher; 2 years in the UK; married to a Japanese wife)  
*"I find that British people who are experienced in talking to foreigners will not misunderstand my talk so they would not ask what I said. On the other hand **there are people who cannot understand my English**, but I see that there are two types of people. One, is people who will try to understand me nonetheless, and the other who cannot be bothered. I do not like it when I see that kind of narrow-minded people."*

(Martha, Homemaker; 11 years in the UK; married to a British husband)  
*"When I use English to British people, I usually begin by checking whether they are attuned to my foreign accent. **Sometimes, it shows on their faces as if it is very difficult to listen to my English which is daunting and I start thinking "Oh, I feel reluctant to talk."** Good friends of mine will wait for me to finish off."*

# Conclusion



- ❖ 1. Integrativeness is not the driving factor for NJS to use English. However, this study thus far has neither confirmed nor negated the possibility that the “ideal L2 self” may be the alternative explanation, which remains to be examined (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2002; Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2009).



- ❖ 2. NJS have no choice but to use English in the British context, but they have a certain degree of freedom to choose who they interact with, be it native speakers or other non-native speakers in the UK. However, this seems to be determined by personality factors of their interlocutors and also their situated context rather than being driven by their interlocutors’ ethnicity or language.

# Thank You !

