

## ***Native vs. Non-Native Teachers: Who Is the Real Model for Japanese Elementary School Pupils?***

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Native English speaking teachers (NESTs) are employed throughout Asian countries for the purpose of modeling the foreign language and providing support to non-Native English speaking teachers (NNESTs). At the same time, the exact influence of NESTs on students' learning behaviors has not been fully documented, and some studies have indicated a negative effect on overall learning. Based on the social cognitive theory of observational learning, this study attempted to address the following research questions: 1) How do students perceive classes lead by NESTS and NNESTs with regard to teacher modeling and students' own spoken output? and 2) How do teachers' modeled behaviors influence student output? Using repeated measures MANOVA, this study found differences in the amount of English spoken by NESTS and NNESTs, though no meaningful differences between different teacher groups' perceived affect when speaking English were found. Multiple regression analyses indicated that in the Japanese elementary classroom, the homeroom teacher exerted a greater effect on students' language learning behavior than language specialist NNESTs and NESTs. Findings indicate that the homeroom teacher may act as a behavioral role-model for language learning, and thus their involvement in foreign language classes may benefit students' foreign language acquisition.

**Keywords: NEST/NNEST, social cognitive theory, behavioral modeling**

## **BACKGROUND**

Since the spring of 2011, all elementary schools in Japan have included English language classes as part of their curriculum. According to the course of study guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (henceforth MEXT), foreign language in elementary school (FLES) classes are conceptualized around promoting interest and affect for communication through the use of principles from communicative language teaching in order to build a strong willingness to communicate (MEXT, 2008). With the new curriculum, elementary homeroom teachers (HRTs) without specific training in foreign language teaching or strong foreign language ability may be responsible for teaching English (Butler, 2007). While a range of texts, theories, and formats for lesson content exist (e.g., Naoyama, 2011; Oshiro & Naoyama, 2008), many HRTs question their ability to follow curricular guidelines to teach English and improve students' enjoyment and motivation (Fennelly & Luxton, 2011).

In order to support HRTs and provide their students with a means for natural English communication, native English speaking teachers (NESTs) are employed almost universally throughout Japan. More familiarly referred to as assistant language teachers (ALTs), these teachers are specifically mentioned at several points in the most recent course of study guidelines for elementary schools (MEXT, 2008). In many schools, specialist Japanese Teachers of English (JTEs) may teach when ALTs are unavailable, as well as provide intermediary support between HRTs, ALTs, and students. These three types of teachers often collaborate in different configurations depending on the policies of the school.

Many countries throughout Asia have similar policies for the employment of native English speakers in foreign language classrooms to provide additional linguistic and cultural support for students (Carless, 2006). Programs such as JET (Japan), EPIK (Korea), PNET (Hong Kong), and local programs in Taiwan, China, and other Asian nations hire NESTs with the expectation that they provide a tangible benefit to schools and learners, though programs of this sort are not without controversy both in terms of policy and local working relationships (Chen & Cheng, 2010; Luo, 2007; Mahoney, 2004). Within Japan, there remains a strong

belief that NESTs are the most desirable and appropriate candidates to teach and model English in elementary schools (Butler, 2007), in spite of questions regarding the validity of native speakers as linguistic models (Cook, 1999). Further, knowledge of in-class influences on motivation, learning, and achievement remains based more on anecdote than empirical research.

Previous studies to date in the Japanese school environment have mostly investigated perspectives on ALTs roles and relationships within schools. Several studies indicated the idea of the native English speaker as a role-model for English language as it is used, while the non-native teachers are expected to explain the language and manage classroom practice, perhaps often in Japanese (Mahoney, 2004; Miyazato, 2009). Likewise, studies found that ALTs may offer benefits to schools not directly in terms of students' learning, but indirectly by providing professional development for teachers (Crooks, 2001; Meerman, 2003; Carless, 2006). Gorsuch (2002) found that high school teachers in schools without ALTs were more likely to report using predominantly non-communicative methods to teach English.

Looking at classroom practice, Aline and Hosoda (2006) directly observed the roles played by homeroom teachers in ALT led elementary classes, finding that many HRTs were likely to act as translators or classroom managers rather leading or actively participating. While some HRTs engaged in the class as co-learners, practicing with the students, or co-teachers with the ALT, others in this situation used ALTs as substitutes. These HRTs may not be actively involved during much of English class (Aline & Hosoda, 2006; Carley, 2012), echoing again the idea of the ALT, rather than the JTE or HRT, as the primary role model for language (Mahoney, 2004) and indicating the underlying attitudes of some Japanese teachers when ALTs are present.

One potential reason for the prevalence of employment of NESTs in this fashion appears to be HRTs self-perceived English competence (Butler, 2004; 2007). While recognizing Japanese HRTs lack of belief in their linguistic abilities, an important variable not considered in many of the above studies is the actual language learning achievement students demonstrate in relation to frequency of contact with school ALTs. One major exception to this is a large-scale study by Butler and Takeuchi

(2008) which found that a higher frequency of ALTs' presence at elementary schools exerted a negative, though weak, statistically significant effect (Standardized beta=-.09,  $p < .01$ ) on students' language learning and proficiency measured by speaking tests. Still, one may consider that the size of the relationship here is more a suggestion than a real effect, and thus further investigation is necessary before claims can be made. Without clear documentation of the in-class environment and elementary students' behavior in regard to their native and non-native teachers, it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding actual influences of NESTs or possible influences on learning. In order to clearly understand the impact of ALTs, JTEs, and HRTs as models for students' learning behavior, an empirical investigation of in-class behaviors and influences is necessary.

## **MODELING BEHAVIORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

In looking at teacher behaviors and their influence on students' engagement, an important but often neglected aspect is the frequency with which teachers model the target language. The idea of learning through imitation is not a new concept, having been included as a part of learning psychology for over 100 years (see Schunk, 2007, pp. 82–88 for a comprehensive review). Based on robust empirical evidence, the social cognitive theory of human learning (Bandura, 1977; 1986) emphasizes the idea that students may learn new behaviors by imitating teachers and peers.

From general learning psychology, this theory posits a triadic interaction between people's internal states, their behaviors, and their environment. Learning occurs through observing and imitating the behavior of others, most specifically models with whom the observer can identify. Empirical evidence for this theory has been shown to be robust over time, with numerous studies confirming the power of behavioral modeling to promote learning (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 2007). One of the major findings here indicates that imitation is a conditioned behavior, meaning that the more often children witness a specific behavior, the more likely they will be to emulate it (Rosenthal & Zimmerman, 1978; Schunk, 2007). Considering the

importance of engagement for students' achievement and skill development (Schunk & Gunn, 1985; Skinner, Kinderman, & Furrer, 2009), students' imitation of their teachers is a matter of interest to teachers wishing to promote student learning.

In first language educational settings, modeling has been shown to promote positive behaviors, such as self-regulation for academic studying (Zimmerman, 1989; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1997), sustained silent reading (Methe & Hintze, 2003; Widowson, Dixon, & Moore, 1996), and moral development (Bucher, 1997). In Singapore, teacher modeling has been used to promote extensive reading for second language development (Loh, 2009). However, the social cognitive model for learning through imitation (Bandura, 1986) has not often been applied to the study of foreign language learning processes.

The concept of modeling and learning through imitation does not appear directly in theoretical second-language learning literature on the ideal use of the L1 and L2 in class, though it is also an often unattended point at the heart of the controversy. While exclusive target language use has never been shown to improve second language acquisition (Macaro, 2005), it is also theorized that using maximal amounts of the target language is necessary for students to acquire the language (Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Turnbull, 2001; Turnbull & Arnett, 2002). An underlying assumption in the proposition of maximizing teacher L2 use in the class appears to be the concept of the teacher as model, just as proposed by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). This idea can also be seen in investigations of JTEs perspectives on ALTs, who believe that the main role of the NEST is to be a model for language and culture (Mahoney, 2004).

Hypothesizing from the synthesis of social cognitive theory and foreign language classroom practice, it follows that frequency of language production and affect during output would promote students' language engagement. Other authors (Mahoney, 2004) have also speculated on this matter, saying "...motivation can certainly be offered by JTEs as well, whether by enticing students into English situational environments through activities, modeling English conversations with the [ALT] in front of class, or by speaking with their students directly" (Mahoney, 2004, p. 240), inferring that by modeling the tasks, teachers can make it more

meaningful and thereby motivating (Nakata, 2009). However, to date there have been no L2 studies of teachers' language use behaviors and their influence on student output.

In keeping with the themes presented above on influences of NESTs and NNESTs on student performance, as it stands, there have been no in-depth studies comparing English output in Japanese elementary schools with and without ALTs and JTEs. In regard to students' language learning behaviors, one may infer that the social proximity of the teacher, the teachers' affect when modeling, and the teacher's frequency of modeling may influence elementary students' learning behaviors. Given the scarcity of adequate empirical investigations on how native and non-native teachers may influence student engagement, this paper will investigate differences between affect and frequency of language modeling demonstrated by native-speaker ALTs, non-native HRTs and JTEs, and classroom outcomes in the form of students' reported output.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In light of the dearth of studies on differences between language modeling in native and non-native English speaking teachers' classes, the current research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do students perceive classes lead by native and non-native teachers with regard to teacher modeling and students' own spoken output?
2. What effects do perceptions of ALTs, JTEs, and HRTs modeling have on students' reported speaking output?

## **METHODS**

In order to compare the differences in effects of ALTs, JTEs, and HRTs on students' classroom learning, this study employed a quasi-experimental design, with the different conditions based on which teacher (ALT, JTE, or HRT) led the class.

### **Participants & Setting**

The teachers and schools in this study were from a group of 4 public elementary schools in a suburban area in western Japan. The participants were 2 JTEs, 4 ALTs, 12 HRTs, and 355 fifth-year elementary students distributed across 12 classes. Two schools employed a full-time specialist teacher of English, while the other two did not have such a position, allowing us to group the two schools accordingly using a between subjects condition. Each class was observed twice, once with and once without the ALT present, creating a within-subjects condition.

This study was granted approval by the Fukuoka University of Education Ethics Review Board. Permission to conduct research was provided through the local board of education. Principals at each school responded to a call for participants. Each teacher was approached individually. All were informed of the scope and aims of the study before agreeing to participate with signed permission forms. Fifth-year classes were chosen for the target population as it is the first year targeted for foreign language study in Japanese elementary schools (MEXT, 2008). The fifth year of elementary school was selected due to the fact that students have little previous in-school foreign language experience, and, therefore, have less expectancy regarding the classroom environment based on previous reinforcement (Bandura, 1986, pp. 230–231).

#### *Instrumentation*

In order to measure the differences between teachers, two items were created: one to measure students' ratings of the *frequency* of output, another to measure the

*affect* which their teachers display when speaking English in class. A final item was used to measure *students' output* as the outcome variable in the analysis. For the purposes of this study, frequency of output was considered in terms of students' subjective impressions of how often English as opposed to Japanese was spoken in class. Affect was treated as how students perceived their teachers' emotional displays, such as using a bright and clear voice to represent positive affect, as opposed to presenting the foreign language in a shy or passive fashion. Finally, students' output was considered in terms of how much English students feel that they produced in class.

Decisions on item format, wording, and analysis were made after numerous discussions between the researchers, followed by in- and out-of-school focus groups with volunteer 5<sup>th</sup>-grade elementary children and teachers. In the interest of ease of implementation, the researchers attempted to use the minimum number of items needed to assess the target constructs. Participating teachers and administrators expressed interest in both positive and negative features of the variables for professional development purposes, indicating the need to retain both aspects in the instrument. To facilitate this request, as well as avoid conceptual problems that may be associated with single Likert-type items (Carifio & Perla, 2007), we used bipolar semantic differential scales (Gardner, 1985). In order to maximize students' learning and exposure to the foreign language, participating teachers expressed interest in creating an instrument that would not take away significant class time. Further, with consideration for the age of the participants, teachers believed that students might not be able to accurately answer long or complicated surveys. For the above reasons, we chose to use only three items measuring both sides of teachers' affect during and frequency of spoken English output, and students' behavior in speaking either English or Japanese.

To align methodologically and theoretically with previous studies in upper elementary years on language learning and engagement (e.g., Carreira, 2011; Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009) we chose 4-point scales. Four-point scales have at times shown higher reliability than 6-point (Chang, 1994), and may guard against students' tendency to avoid choosing extreme answers by selecting the centermost choice (Reid, 1990). Further, while 4-point scales may lead to a certain

amount of skew, some negative skew may be expected in studies of elementary students (Spinath & Steinmayr, 2008). The complete classroom environment survey instruments can be found in Table 1.

**TABLE 1**  
**Final Survey Used to Assess Classes\***

In today's foreign language class:					
My teacher spoke mostly in Japanese	1	2	3	4	My teacher spoke mostly in English
My teacher did not appear to enjoy speaking English	1	2	3	4	My teacher appeared to enjoy speaking English
I spoke mostly in Japanese	1	2	3	4	I spoke mostly in English

\* Translated from Japanese

The researchers or their assistants visited classes in the last week of June and first week of July, 2012. As classes all followed the same textbook, visits were scheduled as close together as possible in order to sample students while they covered the same basic lesson content. Each class was studying a unit on ordering fast food in a restaurant, with the final goal of students performing a simple role-play. In the ALT led classes, ALTs spoke no Japanese due to strict working regulations given by the dispatch company which hired them for the city. Observed classes primarily used oral communication drills and activities, regardless of the teacher leading class. The researchers observed classes before implementing the surveys in the last five minutes of the class period, with teachers giving prompts to students to rate each item.

Students completed surveys immediately following foreign language activities classes to get the most accurate ratings and self-assessments (Butler & Lee, 2010). In handing out the surveys, students were reassured that their information would remain confidential, and their teachers, native and non-native, would not be informed of their answers. This guarantee was further written on the survey sheets. In completing the surveys, students first entered identifying categorical information (class, gender, student number, etc.). No student names were used on the surveys. In answering the survey questions, students were instructed that if they believed

their teacher spoke 80% or more of the time in English, they should mark a 4 on their answer sheet, while 80% of the time in Japanese would correspond to a 1. Students were then told to rate their teachers' affect when speaking English, with a 4 indicating that their teacher seemed to like English, and a 1 meaning they believed their teacher was shy, hesitant, or disliked speaking English. The same instruction as with item 1 was given for students' own output. In handing out and collecting surveys, researchers and their assistants emphasized that completion was optional, but also that these surveys would also help current and future elementary school teachers. Of the 355 students who took both surveys, 336 acceptably completed them on both occasions. Following collection, researchers and their assistants asked students who accurately completed surveys about individual items, finding that students believed answers reflected the classroom environment and were able to correctly elaborate on the item meanings.

### **Analyses**

To answer research question one, a repeated measures multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted using Pillai's trace due to its reputation for robustness and to guard against potential problems involving multivariate normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 269). An individual within-subjects repeated measures factorial ANOVA post-tests was run to show differences in each condition. Research question two was investigated with simultaneous multiple regression, running students' individual self-reported output against the two teacher variables. Data was analyzed using Stata version 12 (StataCorp, 2011).

## **RESULTS**

*Research Question 1: How do students perceive classes lead by native and non-native teachers with regard to teacher modeling and students' own spoken output?*

Before running the MANOVA test, the researchers looked at the descriptive statistics and confidence intervals (presented in table 2), and correlation matrix of the items to look for predictable patterns of differences. The pattern of intercorrelations for each item displayed moderate to weak correlation, showing no items too highly interrelated for the MANOVA test.

**TABLE 2**  
**Descriptive Statistics for Each Separate Condition**

	<b>ALT Absent No JTE HRT Lead (n=199)</b>	<b>ALT Lead No JTE HRT support (n=199)</b>	<b>ALT Absent JTE Lead HRT support (n=137)</b>	<b>ALT Lead JTE Support HRT support (n=137)</b>
Teacher affect when speaking English	Mean=3.62 / SD=.65	Mean=3.68 / SD=.62	Mean=3.46 / SD=.78	Mean=3.59 / SD=.70
	Skew=-1.74	Skew=-2.16	Skew=-1.28	Skew=-1.80
	Kurtosis=5.61	Kurtosis=7.84	Kurtosis=3.80	Kurtosis=6.04
	95% CI=3.53 / 3.71	95% CI=3.60 / 3.77	95% CI=3.33 / 3.59	95% CI=3.47 / 3.71
Frequency of teacher English output	Mean= 2.97 / SD=.83	Mean= 3.50 / SD=.73	Mean= 3.24 / SD=.90	Mean=3.62 / SD=.68
	Skew=-1.04	Skew=-1.47	Skew=-1.10	Skew=-1.84
	Kurtosis=3.32	Kurtosis=4.83	Kurtosis=3.39	Kurtosis=5.86
	95% CI=2.85 / 3.09	95% CI=3.40 / 3.60	95% CI= 3.09 / 3.39	95% CI=3.51 / 3.74
Students' Spoken Output	Mean=2.78 / SD=.89	Mean=2.92 / SD=.85	Mean=2.88 / SD=.85	Mean=2.79 / SD=.99
	Skew=-.23	Skew=-.35	Skew=-.50	Skew=-.39
	Kurtosis=2.26	Kurtosis=2.37	Kurtosis=2.74	Kurtosis=2.12
	95% CI=2.65 / 2.90	95% CI=2.81 / 3.04	95% CI=2.73 / 3.02	95% CI=2.63 / 2.96

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of each condition investigated. Pearson's correlation was less than 0.3 for each variable, indicating that the variables are not too highly inter-correlated to conduct the MANOVA test. While Doornik-Hansen tests of multivariate normality (Doornik & Hansen, 2008) showed a violation of basic normality assumptions,  $\chi^2(4) = 836.573$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , the use of Pillai's trace has been indicated as robust against issues resulting from normality problems (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The overlap in the confidence intervals for these variables indicated a strong degree of similarity in response patterns.

A subsequent 2x2 repeated measures factorial MANOVA run on the 2 variables investigated the 4 conditions in the study. The between-subjects conditions were whether or not the school employed a JTE, while the within-subjects condition represented the times that the ALTs were present or not. The results of the multivariate analysis failed to find a significant difference between the schools groups, Pillai's trace=0.021,  $F(3, 331)=2.44$ ,  $p=0.06$ , but did find within-subject changes in reaction to the ALT's presence, Pillai's trace=0.057,  $F(3, 332)=6.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

At the univariate level, within-subjects repeated measures factorial ANOVA tests found significant differences in effects on the condition of the frequency of teachers' output for both ALTs,  $F(1, 671)=59.63$ ,  $p < 0.000$ , partial  $\eta^2=0.15$ , and JTEs,  $F(1, 671)=9.72$ ,  $p=0.002$ , partial  $\eta^2=0.03$ , but no significant interaction effects between the two. The  $R^2$  was calculated at 0.58, indicating that this model accounts for roughly 58% of the variance. Further ANOVAs revealed between-subjects differences on teachers' affect,  $F(1, 671)=4.65$ ,  $p=0.031$ , partial  $\eta^2=0.02$ , as well as within-subjects differences between when ALTs were present and not,  $F(1, 671)=4.17$ ,  $p=0.042$ , partial  $\eta^2=0.01$ . This model was shown to account for nearly 60% of the variance,  $R^2=0.59$ . No significant differences were shown between students' output for any of the conditions. The confidence interval for these conditions is also available in table 1, indicating not only lack of statistical difference, but also strong overlap between groups.

*Research Question 2: What effects do perceptions of each type of teachers' spoken output have on students' reported speaking output?*

A simultaneous multiple regression was used to test the relationship between the classroom environment and students' spoken output. Results were run individually on the 4 grouping conditions. The resulting standardized beta coefficients for each group can be seen in table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**Self-Reported Spoken Output against Each OF the Predicted Classroom Variables**

	HRT alone ( <i>n</i> =199) Standardized $\beta$ $R^2=0.14$	HRT / ALT ( <i>n</i> =199) Standardized $\beta$ $R^2=0.10$	HRT / JTE ( <i>n</i> =137) Standardized $\beta$ $R^2=0.09$	HRT / JTE / ALT ( <i>n</i> =137) Standardized $\beta$ $R^2=0.06$
Teacher affect when speaking English	<b>.21**</b>	.11	.09	.13
Frequency of teacher English output	<b>.26***</b>	<b>.27***</b>	<b>.26**</b>	.14

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

The findings above consistently display a pattern of influence from teachers' output frequency across the three the contexts where the homeroom teacher is most involved in the lesson execution. The model  $R^2$  in each indicates that these variables explain between 6 and 14 percent of the variance associated with students' spoken engagement. The most consistent predictor of student output was the frequency of the teachers' output, though it did not demonstrate a significant effect in classes led by all three teachers. In classes taught by HRTs alone, affect when speaking English significantly predicted output, though not in any other condition. The similarity of the beta values suggests similar effects across contexts.

## DISCUSSION

*Research Question 1: How do students perceive classes lead by native and non-native teachers with regard to teacher modeling and students' own spoken output?*

The significant differences found in English production between ALT and non-ALT led classes may be based on the fact that, as a district policy, ALTs are required to use as much English as possible and asked not to use Japanese in class. HRTs may feel they lack the language skills to speak predominantly in English (Butler, 2004; 2007), and JTEs may use Japanese for numerous different class purposes (Hosoda, 2000; Miyazato, 2009). From the descriptive statistics, students recognize the increase in frequency of teachers' English output when the NESTs are present and not. While not at the same schools, JTEs were also perceived to produce more spoken English than HRTs. This finding is to be expected, as less confident HRTs (Butler, 2004; 2007) would be expected to produce the least amount of English, while the combination of trained specialist JTEs and NESTs would show the largest amount of English spoken. The effect size of the differences between the variables leaves room for further exploration of this topic, especially with regard to meaningful levels of difference on 4-point scales.

The lack of difference with regard to perceptions of teachers' affect for the language is relatively surprising. Less trained teachers might be expected to show more negative affect, such as hesitation or nervousness, in speaking English, though students did not appear to perceive strong differences here, indicating that the NNESTs in these classes demonstrated positive affect when speaking English. Especially noticeable is the positive rating given to HRTs who lead the classes—nearly equal with classes taught by JTEs and ALTs. Students' perception of their HRTs' positive attitude in English classes may represent a strategy by HRTs to compensate for weaker English skills in order to draw students into the lesson. Classes led by ALTs were slightly, though not significantly, more positively rated in each different school. Likewise, while significant differences were found between schools with and without JTEs, the effect sizes may indicate individual

differences between the teachers and classes, considering the fact that schools with JTEs were rated slightly lower than schools without.

The lack of differences found across conditions on student output indicates that while the base school conditions may vary, students in independent conditions report a similar amount of output. One inference we can make from this result is to say that students are given equal opportunities for output in classes run by both ALTs and Japanese teachers, and hence the exceedingly small differences in in-class spoken output. Thus, there may be a fair amount of crossover between the classes for Japanese and non-Japanese teachers, possibly due to the professional development provided by NESTs in the classroom (Crooks, 2001). Appropriate to the current course of study (MEXT, 2008), homeroom teachers are providing more communicative methods of instruction, similar to those used by NNESTs. Finding that elementary teachers are using more communicative methods goes against the previous research from high schools and junior high schools where Japanese teachers reported considerably less use of communicative activities (Gorsuch, 2002), and calls into question HRTs' perceptions of themselves as "not ready" to teach English in all contexts (Fennelly & Luxton, 2011).

*Research Question 2: What effects do perceptions of each type of teachers' spoken output have on students' reported speaking output?*

From the results of the multiple regression in research question two, the finding that the combination of JTE and ALT has little predictive effect on students' output may indicate that the ALTs' classroom influence is relatively small. Additionally, we see that classes requiring greater involvement from HRTs tend to predict students' spoken interaction, indicating how HRTs may influence students' motivation and active engagement in classes. Under the condition where HRTs may be less involved in class (i.e., the ALTs and JTEs are leading), as indicated by Aline and Hosoda (2006), teachers' spoken output did not predict student output in any significant manner, while within the same schools, in class conditions where HRTs were likely to be involved, to a greater or lesser extent teachers' spoken output predicted student output. The above finding indicates that students are most

likely to imitate the proximal model (i.e. the teacher they most often see) in line with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986). The result further implies reasons why the frequency of ALT presence displayed a negative relationship in Butler and Takeuchi's (2008) research: students may be unconsciously following the model provided by the HRT rather than the ALT.

## CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This study represents a pilot investigation of the influence of native and non-native English speaking teachers on elementary students' engagement and positive classroom learning behaviors. The findings show Japanese homeroom teachers as stronger behavioral models, while suggesting that NESTs may remain linguistic models. This result may provide a partial explanation of the previous finding regarding the negative influence of ALTs on language achievement (Butler & Takeuchi, 2008): the more often NESTs lead the class, the less often HRTs are involved, thus potentially negatively influencing students' output and engagement with the speaking tasks. Results may also relate to the idea of creating a meaningful motivational environment (Nakata, 2009), through the fact that a role model of a similar background (the HRT) is working hard in the second language. While it is beyond the scope of this current exploratory study, confirmation of these results will require further longitudinal research through the elementary years and beyond into secondary education.

The overall findings indicate the value of the Japanese homeroom teacher as a model for student behavior, contrary to previously documented beliefs among Japanese teachers indicating the primary language model should be the ALT (e.g., Mahoney, 2004; Butler, 2007). The higher influence of HRTs' English output when compared to JTEs, who are not part of students' regular classroom experience, and ALTs, who may be viewed as outsiders, shows the importance of HRTs' basic English abilities and willingness to communicate. We may conclude that students perceive differences in the amount of output that teachers produce in class, and that this in turn can help predict the amount of output that students produce.

Accordingly, the optimal role for the Japanese homeroom teacher may be one similar to the profile of the teacher as a co-teacher or co-learner as demonstrated by Aline and Hosoda (2006).

Consideration should be made for the fact that teachers' English level was not measured, though basic interactions with the HRT participants showed that they were not comfortable or fluent English speakers, as previously indicated by Butler (2004; 2007). While it is beyond the scope of this study to demonstrate empirically, ALTs and JTEs may be useful to less proficient HRTs by providing accurate models for foreign language use (Mahoney, 2004), or helping HRTs to better scaffold communicative activities and provide clear ideas for lessons (Crooks, 2001). In this way, ALTs and JTEs may continue to serve a professional development role for homeroom teachers. In the current study, ALTs and JTEs provided a base format for engaging students in foreign language activities, which may have helped HRTs to use positive interactional strategies and activities in language classes when teaching alone, thus explaining the relatively small differences in students' perceptions. Indeed, we may speculate that the interactions with the NESTs may have given some hope to teachers who may feel underprepared (Fennelly & Luxton, 2011). The crucial point is that the value of native and non-native specialist teachers is predicated on the active participation and professional and linguistic development of the HRT; further than translating instructions, the homeroom teacher should also be actively and positively using English for real communication and interaction with students.

The results offer a very specific positive suggestion for Japanese teachers, especially homeroom teachers, showing one way which Japanese teachers can positively influence students' foreign language behavior. In order to promote student output, homeroom teachers need strategies for frequent production and demonstrate positive effect in language classes. This finding supports the idea from social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986) that students are more likely to imitate a similar model such as their HRT than a socially distant one, as the ALTs and JTEs may be (Crooks, 2001; Gudykunst & Kim, 1984; Mahoney, 2004; Miyazato, 2009), which further confirms the idea of the classroom teacher as an important behavioral role-model for Japanese children (MEXT, 2008).

One further inference may be that more total spoken English in class may not necessarily promote English, as indicated by Macaro (2005), allowing room for HRTs to use the L1 in order to more clearly scaffold the speaking activities. The desirability of L1 scaffolding for the students in this sample may explain the predictive value of the HRTs who produce less English output compared to the JTEs and ALTs. The above implication should be interpreted carefully and will need more research to properly demonstrate. The relationship between the homeroom teacher's English output and students' output was found to be positive; the more homeroom teachers were perceived to speak English, the more English students spoke. While speaking the L1 in class may support activities, these findings suggest that rather than the L1, it is the influence of the homeroom teacher that predicts student output. It should also be noted that the generally high mean score in students' perceptions of the variables studied here may indicate that this sample of students receiving English instruction (MEXT, 2008) are capably served by all three teacher types with regard to promoting student output.

These findings offer concrete positive suggestions for Japanese homeroom teachers, though the study also is not without limitations. The possibility exists that effects may be suppressed by a ceiling effect created by the 4-level instrument. While the decision to use this scale type followed with previous research in the field of engagement in higher elementary years (e.g., Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009), the possibility exists that the scale may also be obscuring more substantial effects. At the same time, post implementation discussions with students indicated relative accuracy in answering patterns and some ability to clearly describe what a higher or lower level might entail. A scale with more exact measurements may allow more nuanced evaluation of the classroom environment, which future investigations on this topic will need to address in order to more accurately expand on these findings.

A discussion of the qualitative and linguistic aspects of the teachers' classroom modeling is unfortunately beyond the scope of the current investigation. Future investigations into elementary teacher language modeling should include direct reference to influences from NESTs and NNESTs on students' pronunciation,

intonation, and comprehensibility in order to address both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the classroom experience.

Further research will need to include variables such as students' engagement beyond English output, as purely focusing on output may not indicate the full range of students' engagement (Littlewood, 2007; Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009). Within the current elementary learning environment, the focus on growing accustomed to the language (MEXT, 2008) means that production is only one part of foreign language engagement. While productive engagement is important in language learning (Littlewood, 2007), and may be a tell-tale signs of cognitive and behavioral engagement (Skinner, Kindermann, & Furrer, 2009), it does not necessarily cover the range of engagement influenced by teacher behaviors. As an exploratory investigation, this study chose to maximize students' response rate and ease of understanding by using a bare minimum of items in the instrument. With more robust items measuring latent variables, including attention, active classroom participation, completion of activities, and accuracy of output, future studies may demonstrate the quality of teachers' influences.

In sum, this exploratory study sought to demonstrate the influence of frequency of and affect during classroom language modeling on students' linguistic engagement in classes taught by native and non-native speaker teachers. While differences and effects were not large, they demonstrate one way in which Japanese teachers may have a positive impact on their students. As this is a new direction in second language education, future research may offer more nuanced perspectives on the exact nature of classroom practices in elementary foreign language education in the context of Asia.

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