

Japanese-Background Students in the Post-Secondary Japanese Classroom in Australia: What Norms are Operating on their Management Behaviour?

Kuniko Yoshimitsu

(Kuniko.yoshimitsu@monash.edu)

Monash University, Australia

Abstract

This study examines the management behaviour of Japanese-background students undertaking Japanese language as an academic subject at one Australian university in classes with non-Japanese students. To date, there seems to be no common understanding of the nature of these learners' behaviour in the given context or any legitimate grounds for this. The study attempts to seek a meaningful connection between the students' desire to engage in Japanese maintenance and the norms they possess to evaluate their interaction competence in the language. Drawing upon the notion of "language management in discourse" (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987), this study has aimed to identify the type of norms which these students applied to note their norm deviations and the possible grounds for this. The findings suggest two types of norms which operated upon their noting behaviours. These are the "imagined norm" of the imagined Japanese community and the "peer-pressure norm" imposed by non-Japanese peers in the Japanese classroom. It is argued that these norms seemed to have provided the Japanese-background students with the incentives to reflect upon their own learning behaviours in actual situations. By doing so, they could adjust their learning goals for the target language and further advance their language expertise. The language management process observed in this study justifies their presence in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom.

1 Background of the study

Japanese people have not established themselves as a major ethnic subgroup in Australia (as have the Italian and Greek communities, for example), and those who have decided to settle in Australia have required conscious language planning at the micro-level (i.e. individual and family levels) for their children (second generation Japanese), if they want them to maintain and develop their language (Oriyama, 2000, 2010; Yoshimitsu, 1999, 2000, 2003). It is therefore not surprising that Japanese-background students in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom have become noticeable relatively recently in Australia (Yoshimitsu, 2008). Their choice to participate in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom is, therefore, an emerging part of the growing diversity of learners' language and cultural background in the Australian Japanese language education setting. Nevertheless, it is quite encouraging to witness that micro-level language maintenance efforts have resulted in some of these second-generation Japanese developing their language proficiency to the tertiary level in an environment with constant competition from the dominant academic language, English. With their varying degrees of "investment" (a construct introduced by Norton, 2000, and inspired by Bourdieu's 1977 and 1991 work) in the language prior to their entering university, it is interesting to find out how these Japanese-background students engage in

the Japanese language classroom practices at university and what norms are operating in their learning behaviour. Norton (2000, 2010) argues that if learners “invest” in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1991), and therefore, one task for researchers is to seek a meaningful connection between a learner’s desire and commitment to learn a language, and their changing identity.

Tertiary-level Japanese language education as either a foreign language or as a second language for main stream non-Japanese learners has been firmly established in Australia over the last three decades, with Japanese being considered as one of the important languages in the Asia-Pacific region (de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). In addition, Japanese language education for Japanese-background learners (sometimes referred to as “heritage language learners”) has started to gain attention in recent years. For example, in response to the emerging needs of these learners, one Australian university, which is the site of this study, established a course entitled “Japanese for Background Speakers” in 2010 (Kurata & Koshiba, 2009). The programme is said to be the only one of its kind in Australia, and it has begun to attract the interest of some of these heritage language students. The acquisition processes and outcomes of these students have been closely monitored by a number of researchers, and the benefits as well as the issues of such a programme are expected to be revealed in the near future.

Although there seems to be no general consensus in the university community on who these Japanese-background students are, their clear-cut features can be depicted as follows:

They are Japanese bilinguals residing in Australia where English, the lingua franca, fulfils most of the practical functions of an official language (Clyne, 2003). Some of these individuals were born and raised in Australia, whilst the others migrated to Australia or became long-term residents in Australia, often at a young age, along with their parents who are of Japanese background or of an intercultural marriage. Bilingual individuals usually experience uneven exposure to and use of their two languages, and in many bilingual environments, it is common for one of the languages to be used less often, as well as these speakers having less contact with one language (Myers-Scotton, 2006). This less-used language in the case of Japanese-background students studying at university is Japanese, which can be referred to as the minority language. The environment, such as changes in schooling and the home situation, will affect the need for a particular language competence. The person’s perception of, and feelings for, the dominant language often influence their attitude toward maintaining the minority language, and because the needs and uses of both languages are usually different, bilinguals are rarely equally fluent in their languages (e.g. Baker, 2006; Bialystok, 2001; Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Many of these students learn Japanese language for some time, some from the pre-school and primary level through to the secondary level. Their language maintenance activities were often initiated and encouraged by their parents in their childhood (although these activities varied depending on the family’s socio-economical background), and the outcomes were the result of the combined efforts of their parents and themselves (Yoshimitsu, 1999, 2000). Now that they have reached the tertiary level, their commitment to continue to develop the language is (largely) their own choice. It is assumed that many of them have a common concern with maintaining and developing their Japan literacy to broaden their future career prospects. The current learning situation in Australia requires most Japanese-background students to realign themselves to fit within the broader educational structure and to participate in the Japanese classroom communities that are available to them. In this situation, both Japanese-background and non-Japanese-background students are learning Japanese as their L2. However, for many Japanese-background students, the target language/culture has been the L1/C1 of their early childhood (or up to a certain age). Therefore, they are not acquiring a totally new language/culture (L2/C2), but rather are re-acquiring language and culture that have been familiar to them primarily in family, friendship and community domains, but are now being met in a totally new context. Nevertheless, my earlier study (Yoshimitsu, 2008) pointed out that their Japanese language acquisition and development processes in the Australian academic context were not linearly sequenced from primary through to secondary levels and beyond, and that the programmes offered to them at university often did not meet the

learners' actual needs. And yet, their experiences inside and outside the Japanese classroom have rarely been focused upon in the university community in an overt or serious manner. Scholars such as Valdés (2005) and Cummins (2005) also noted this issue in other language situations in the U.S., pointing out that despite their acceptance (rather than avoidance) in language classrooms, the background-learners' needs often remain unmet largely due to the educators' as well as administrators' lacking adequate preparation for admitting them.

Assisting these Japanese-background students to advance their language expertise requires an understanding of who they are, what they can do with the language and what they wish to do with the language. However, there have been few investigations into their language acquisition and use in the Australian academic context, in particular at the tertiary level, even though the findings from such a study would contribute to expanding our understanding of these learners and their education.

2 Theoretical perspectives

Minority language situations in relation to dominant language(s) have long been a focus of inquiry in sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. The current study can be situated in two research fields; one is language management in discourse, which is derived from language planning, and the other, heritage language education. The ultimate goal of the studies in these areas is to understand how to maintain or preserve minority languages in an increasingly globalised world where English is an international language. I will next examine the relevant literature in these fields.

2.1 *Language planning: Language management in discourse*

De-ethnisation and assimilation with successive waves of immigrants were seen as characterising the American experience for minority groups. Australia also followed a similar path, despite strong advocacy for maintaining its community languages (Clyne, 1982, 1991, 2005). Fishman (1966, 1985, 1989, 1991, 2001) was the one of the first scholars to treat language maintenance and language shift as distinct fields of study in the context of the U.S. language planning, beginning in the 1960s. He viewed language maintenance as a characteristic of bilingual or multilingual communities and argued for the importance of understanding how individual language behaviour varied in such communities. For him, language planning is a necessary process for language maintenance (Fishman, 1966) and he has strongly advocated "reversing language shift" in the modern interactive society, which he referred to as the "global village" (Fishman, 1991, p. 3). The fundamental point of departure for reversing language shift-efforts is the view that language is a resource at the level of societal integration and social identification (Fishman, 1991). Focusing on different levels of language planning (macro- and micro-levels), he emphasised the importance of the relationship between these levels for effective implementation of language planning.

Following a similar direction, Jernudd and Neustupný (1987) formulated a language planning model called "language management," which sought to link the micro- and macro-levels of language planning in a particular language. Their model focused on language management at the micro-level of an individual's discourse and also at the macro- or organised (institutional) level. Jernudd and Neustupný's (1987) model was based on Neustupný's (1976, 1978, 1985) correction theory of language problems, in which the speaker's correction behaviour in problematic contact situations (intercultural situations) was the central concern. Jernudd and Neustupný (1987) view language management in discourse as a process in which language is monitored by the speaker or writer and by the hearer or reader, who rely on the norms they possess as a means of noting deviations. It is important to these scholars that deviations from the norms are negatively evaluated so that inadequacies can be established. Corrective strategies then need to be designed, and the appropriate adjustments made. The process will be completed when correction has been implemented. Thus, the correction of inadequacies in an individual's speech became the main concern in Jernudd-Neustupný's language management model. Their model also raises questions about the conditions or environment which best facilitate individual corrections of inadequacies in speaking or writing (Jernudd, 1983).

2.2 *Heritage language education*

More recently, a number of researchers have been dealing with the individual's choice of, or action toward, minority language maintenance in a newly emerging (or focused) field of study, "heritage language education" (Brinton, Kagan & Bauckus, 2008). Although it has been gaining significant ground in the U.S. research, policy, and practice since the 1990s, Canada has long been a leader in developing pro-active policies and initiatives to support minority and heritage language instruction and maintenance (Cummins, 2005; Duff & Li, 2009). In Australia, the term "community language" has been in use since about 1975 to denote languages other than English and Aboriginal languages employed within the Australian community, which legitimises their continuing existence as part of Australian community (Clyne, 1982, 1991; Romaine, 1991). Recently, the term "heritage/community language education" has emerged to recognise that the relatively recent American use of "heritage language" mirrors the older usage and context of "community language" in Australia (Hornberger, 2005). In the Japanese context, there is a body of literature that has dealt with teaching Japanese language (as a heritage language) to the children of Japanese expatriates referred as *kikokushijo* ("returnees' children") (e.g. Goodman, 1990; Kanno, 2000; Fry, 2007). More recently, there is an emerging literature which examines "children in transition" in the transnational context of globalization (Kawakami, 2006, 2008, 2012) or "children crossing borders," the "children who are moving beyond national, regional and linguistic borders" (Kawakami, 2006, 2008) with their parents.

A number of researchers have attempted to tackle the complex task of defining "heritage language" and describing "heritage language learners" in order to deal with heritage language acquisition and pedagogical issues (e.g. Cummins, 2005; Fishman, 1991, 2001; Hornberger & Wang, 2008; Kondo-Brown, 2003, 2005, 2010; Valdés, 2001, 2005). According to Cummins (2005), the target group refers primarily to students who have either learned the language as their home language (L1) or who have some form of family or "heritage" connection to the language (e.g. second and third generation immigrants). Valdés' (2001) definition includes individuals who appear in a foreign language classroom, who are raised in homes where a non-English language is spoken, who speak or merely understand the heritage language, and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language. Valdés' (2001) call for a coherent body of pedagogical theories is required, so that researchers can understand who heritage language learners are in various contexts and how these learners see, perceive, interpret, present and represent themselves in those contexts. Similarly, in addressing the question of "who are our heritage language learners," Hornberger and Wang (2008) acknowledge that there is no single profile of heritage language learners. They argue that individuals, their interactions with people around them, and their dynamic interface with the social, educational, cultural, economic, and political institutions constitute an ecological system, and in such a system, individuals are the centre of inquiry, but they are also always a part of the larger system in which they shape and are shaped by various factors in the system (Hornberger & Wang, 2008). As to the issues in curriculum development for heritage language learners, Kondo-Brown (2010), for example, draws our attention to the fact that the reported or demonstrated proficiency levels of heritage language learners differ widely because of at least three main factors: their diverse L1 backgrounds, degree of heritage language use and contact, and related socio-psychological factors, such as identity, attitudes, and motivation. Further, Valdés, González, Gazcía, and Márquez (2008) present a view that it is important to understand the ways in which educational institutions transmit what Phillips (1998) has termed "nation-imagining" beliefs and values that can often result in the alienation and marginalisation of heritage students.

In summary, existing definitions and approaches which appear in the literature provide a useful insight into the areas of studies which concern the maintenance of minority languages. What is also needed would be a perspective that focuses on the learners' behaviour and takes into account the norms underlying their behaviour in a given environment – the local ecology of language. Taking the view that language planning is a series of processes of selecting new norms (e.g. Haugen, 1972), the current study is interested in what norms this group of heritage learners are selecting (at

the conscious level) or what norms are operating (at the unconscious level) in their management process. In this regard, the notion of “language management in discourse” (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987) would provide a suitable operational framework for the current study. In this approach, management is considered as a process in which language is monitored by the learners who rely on the norms they possess as a means of noting deviations. I use the term “deviation” as denoting a noticeable difference from what is expected or normal.

3 Conceptual framework

This study draws on the “language management” model formulated by Jernudd and Neustupný (1987), which has been briefly discussed in the previous section (2.1). Subsequently, it has been further developed into an academic contact research theory (Neustupný, 2004) and is now generally referred to as Language Management Theory (LMT). “Management” is taken as a wide range of acts of attention, not only to language problems in a narrow sense of the word but also in reference to a wide range of additional problems in intercultural contact situations (Neustupný & Nekvapil, 2003). LMT emphasises the importance of the sociocultural dimension of interaction competence in such situations.

Three perspectives form the core of LMT. The first is a distinction between simple and organised management of language. Simple management is present at the micro-level, namely at the individual or family discourse level, and organised management, at the macro-level, such as the community, institutional and/or governmental discourse levels. LMT maintains that, in principle, language problems originate in simple management – management of problems as they appear in individual communication acts, and from there, these are transferred to organised management, and finally, the outcomes of organised management are again transferred to individual discourse (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987; Neustupný & Nekvapil, 2003). The second perspective is that management is viewed as developing in several stages, with the initial stage of deviation (noticeable difference) from the norm (expectation) in a situation. Neustupný (2004) states that it is essential to inquire into how the problems in academic interaction are noted, evaluated by the participants and how they subsequently seek adjustment. This process-oriented approach in contact research closely monitors the participants’ deviations from what is accepted as the base norm. A deviation does not become an interaction problem unless it is noted and evaluated by the participants (Neustupný, 2003), and in such cases no management behaviour is involved. Thirdly, LMT conceives that interaction competence consists of sociocultural, communicative and linguistic competence and all these three types of competence affect an individual’s behaviour in a contact (intercultural) situation (Neustupný, 2004).

4 Objectives of the study

Using the language management framework, this study explores Japanese-background students’ simple management processes (at the individual discourse level). Contact research addresses the question of how participants in fact deviate, note, evaluate and adjust. In particular, the initial stages of the management process are of importance (Neustupný, 2004), and therefore, the focus of inquiry in this study is placed on the participants’ noting of norm deviations. Neustupný and Nekvapil (2003) argue that the problems with interpretations of participants’ noting in academic contact situations stem from the fact that different participants often possess different norms or expectations, as the norm is a flexible entity which is subject to continuous adjustment. In order to gain an insight into the Japanese-background-students’ noting of norm deviations, it is important to explore what norms were operating upon their noting processes in an Australian academic context where both Japanese and non-Japanese students are learning Japanese as their L2.

The study addressed the following two specific questions:

1. What do Japanese-background students note in terms of linguistic, communicative or sociocultural contact competence?
2. What norms are operating in their noting?

The findings from such an inquiry as this will contribute to how their simple management (i.e. acting upon the contact problems or negatively evaluated deviations) can be incorporated into organised management (such as university policy development) in order to better cater for these students.

5 Methodology

5.1 Participants

The current study adopted an in-depth case study approach. The case study reported here focuses on the experiences of four Japanese-background students, who were at the time enrolled in an advanced-level Japanese unit at the same Australian university. These students, two female and two male (assigned pseudonyms), came from different family and educational backgrounds, as their brief profiles show below:

Table 1. A brief summary of the informants

Name	Gender	Parents	Residence in Australia	Language used at home (at the time of investigation)	Japanese schooling in Australia
Yuka	F	Both Japanese	Came to Australia at the age of 4 from Japan	Parents: Japanese Elder sister (university student): English	Nil
Akio	M	Both Japanese	Born in Australia	Parents: Japanese Elder sister (university student): Mixture of English & Japanese, but English is becoming more predominant	Melbourne International School of Japanese on Saturday, Grade 1 to Year 11
Miyo	F	Japanese mother, Australian father	Came to Australia at the age of 8 (Grade 4) from the US	Mother: Mostly Japanese Father: Exclusively English (No siblings)	Melbourne International School of Japanese on Saturday, Grade 4 to Year 9
Katsu	M	Japanese mother, Australian father	Came to Australia at the age of 7 (Grade 3) from Japan	Mother: Mostly Japanese Father: Exclusively English Younger brother (primary school): Mostly English	Nil

Yuka, a female student, was born in Japan of Japanese parents and migrated to Australia with her parents at the age of four, without any pre-schooling experience in Japan. She completed her primary and secondary education entirely at Australian schools. She did not have schooling experience at the Melbourne International School of Japanese, a supplementary school run on Saturdays where Japanese language and mathematics are taught in Japanese. This is partly because her family lived outside the Saturday Japanese School district, and therefore she learned Japanese from her parents (primarily from her mother). She lived with her parents until she commenced university study, and now lives with her elder sister who is also a university student. Yuka communicates in Japanese with her parents when she is at her family home in the countryside but in English with her elder sister. Yuka completed a Japanese subject for her VCE (Victorian Certifi-

cate of Education, which marks completion of secondary education in the State of Victoria, Australia) through correspondence studies to fulfil her university entry requirements.

Akio, a male student, was born in Australia of Japanese parents, and completed his primary and secondary education entirely at Australian schools, with no schooling experience in Japan. He had studied Japanese through the *Kumon* method from pre-school until he commenced studies at Saturday Japanese School in Grade 1. He continued there until Year 11, when he undertook Japanese as a second language for his VCE. Akio lives with his parents and an older sister, and communicates exclusively in Japanese with his parents, while using a mixture of Japanese and English (predominantly the latter in recent years) with his sister.

Miyo, a female student, was born in the United States, the only child of a Japanese mother and an Australian father, and migrated to Australia with her parents at the age of nine. She had completed Grade 3 in the US and undertook the rest of her primary and secondary education in Australian schools. She had had no experience of a Japanese school, but she had studied Japanese through the *Kumon* educational method from pre-school age until entering the Melbourne International School of Japanese, where she learned Japanese from Grade 4 to Year 9. She then undertook the Japanese as a Second Language course in the International Baccalaureate Programme during Years 11 and 12, in order to fulfil university entrance requirements. Miyo lives with her parents and she normally communicates with her mother in Japanese, while speaking English exclusively to her father.

Katsu, a male student, was born in Japan of a Japanese mother and an Australian father, and migrated to Australia with his parents at the age of seven. He had had primary education up to Grade 2 in Japan and completed his remaining primary and all of his secondary education at Australian schools. Katsu had studied English through the *Kumon* method in Japan. (Upon arriving in Australia, he did not formally study Japanese at all until his last year of secondary school, when he undertook Japanese as a second language for his Victorian Certificate of Education. Katsu lives with his parents and a younger brother, and communicates mostly in Japanese with his mother, exclusively in English with his father and mostly in English with his brother.

5.2 *Data collection procedures and analysis*

In accordance with Language Management Theory (LMT – defined in Section 3 as a conceptual framework), all language (contact) problems have their basis in actual interactions, implying that we must employ methods that keep us as close to the level of actual interactions as possible. Much of the data in this study was derived from the students’ “management summaries,” a concept introduced by Nekvapil (2004), where the narrators (i.e. informants) made their language acquisition processes the topic of their narrative in verbal form (i.e. in the interviews). As Nekvapil (2004) maintains, the informants’ descriptions of their learning experiences are themselves very interesting, and “management summaries” served as an important tool in understanding the students’ management behaviours in this study. The analysis presented in this paper is based on a written questionnaire and two semi-structured interviews with each participant, which were conducted by the researcher during one semester of their study. The written questionnaire was designed with the aim of eliciting information on the participants’ arrival in Australia, family backgrounds, educational backgrounds including Japanese language learning experiences, time spent in Japan, their goals of Japanese language study as well as their perceived level of Japanese competence. Based on the information gathered from the written questionnaires, the first semi-structured interviews with each informant were conducted to clarify their Japanese language learning trajectories and current situations. The second semi-structured interviews were of a retrospective nature and informants were asked to reflect on their recent experiences, from both within and outside the classroom, when interacting in Japanese with Japanese and non-Japanese people and recall how they participated in these situations. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was audio-recorded with their consent. These interviews provide a great deal of flexibility as the interviewer can clarify the questions if necessary, ask follow-up questions, and comment on the student’s re-

sponses. Some non-Japanese students' comments on their recent experience in studying with Japanese-background students are also referred to in this study.

Drawing upon LMT, the students' management behaviour was analysed, which is viewed as developing through several stages, with an initial stage of noting their own deviation (noticeable difference) from the norm (expectation) in a situation, then evaluated the deviation and subsequently seek adjustment if the noted deviation was negatively evaluated. LMT conceives that interaction competence consists of sociocultural, communicative and linguistic competence and all these three types of competence affect an individual's behaviour in a contact (intercultural) situation (Neustupný, 2004). The study examined the data from this perspective and illustrated the kind of deviations the students noted, the evaluation they attempted, and the underlying norms they adopted in the process of dealing with the noted deviations.

6 Research findings

In this section, I will discuss the research findings. I will firstly look at the levels of noting in relation to the participants' Japanese acquisition trajectory and their study goals at university. I will then focus on what norms were operating on the individual's noting process.

6.1 *Level of noting deviations: Linguistic, communicative or sociocultural level*

A person's behaviour in an intercultural situation is largely controlled by his or her interaction competence. From the perspective of LMT, interaction competence consists of sociocultural, communicative and linguistic competence and all these three levels of competence count for his or her management process (Neustupný, 2004). The study found a difference in the participants' level of noting. It seemed that Akio and Miyo were more concerned about developing sociocultural and communicative levels of contact competence, whereas Yuka and Katsu, on the other hand, primarily focused on their linguistic level of competence, at least when reporting their noting (at their level of awareness). It can be argued that this is due to their contrasting Japanese acquisition trajectory and their immediate study goals.

Akio, born in Australia with Japanese parents, and Miyo, who was born in the US and migrated to Australia with her Japanese mother and Australian father at the age of eight, had commenced studying Japanese with the *Kumon* method from pre-school age (Akio in Australia and Miyo in the US). They had both enrolled in the Saturday Supplementary Japanese School in Australia for six and 10 years, respectively, after which they had taken Japanese as a subject in their final school year. At the Saturday Japanese School, Akio and Miyo were taught Japanese language (*kokugo*, "national language") and Mathematics entirely in Japanese, using Japanese textbooks and following the Japanese school curriculum. They studied with the children of Japanese business sojourners, who represented the overwhelming majority of the classroom at that time.

Both Akio and Miyo were aiming at the language level required for possible university study in Japan and/or career development in Japan in the future, and therefore, developing sociocultural competence was of vital importance for their socialisation. In their experience, learning with non-Japanese peers who were engaged in L2 acquisition presented a less challenging academic situation for them, since such study tended to focus more on linguistic and communicative competence. When he reached the highest level of the Japanese programme at university, Akio found the content very challenging and hence, satisfying for the first time. He commented on this point:

I have long been waiting for the occasions when I can really feel that I'm learning something. Up until now, I was gaining little from classroom learning which often focused on the language such as vocabulary expansion, new kanji acquisition and grammatical items before getting into content comprehension. I often felt that I wasn't in the right place and my presence was unnatural. (Akio)

Like Akio, Miyo also expected more content learning using Japanese as a medium, a learning mode with which they were familiar at the Saturday Supplementary Japanese School. She admitted that since she was not good at expressing herself in front of her classmates, she behaved rather

discreetly in class. Outside the class, however, Miyo pursued rigorous management strategies to advance her literacy level. The following excerpt illustrates this:

I've never read through a Japanese novel yet, but recently I got one from my cousin, which was gaining a lot of attention in Japan, so I really tried to read it ... I've made a resolution to read only in Japanese during this semester in my own time, although it isn't easy to keep it up. It's a time consuming process to grasp the content before I start to find it interesting because I need to check the vocab frequently... When reading Japanese newspapers on the Internet using online dictionary, I usually make a list of new vocab I need to learn, so that I could improve my reading speed. (Miyo)

Yuka's and Katsu's cases provide a stark contrast in their Japanese acquisition trajectory compared to the cases of Akio and Miyo. Yuka, born in Japan to Japanese parents, came to Australia at the age of four without any pre-schooling experience in Japan. Katsu was also born in Japan and came to Australia with his Japanese mother and Australian father at the age of seven after completing Grade Two in Japan. Both Yuka and Katsu had no Saturday Japanese schooling experience and acquired Japanese language in a rather *ad hoc* manner, mainly at home and within their families' private networks of friends and relatives. Yuka learned Japanese with her Japanese parents (primarily with her mother) and Katsu, with his Japanese mother. Katsu's parents' primary concern was their son's English acquisition. There was no organised language management (at the macro-level such as community, institutional discourse levels) involved in their early stages of Japanese acquisition before they reached high school age. Both students completed VCE Japanese (secondary Japanese programme for the Victorian Certificate of Education in the State of Victoria, Australia) to fulfil university entry requirements. Katsu completed this course in the classroom while Yuka did so through correspondence study.

The noting of deviations reported by Yuka and Katsu suggests that their immediate concerns (or their awareness of problems) seemed to be centred more around improving their linguistic competence: Katsu for kanji competence to handle the advance-level reading materials and Yuka for level of age-appropriate vocabulary in order to converse naturally with native speakers in everyday situations. Both Katsu and Yuka expressed their intention to utilise Japan literacy for their post-graduation career prospects. Katsu specifically wanted to use language skills in the translation field, where he could avoid direct face-to-face interactions with which from his previous experience he did not feel very comfortable, and he was aware of this from the beginning of his tertiary studies. Yuka only vaguely knew what area she could explore using Japanese, possibly teaching Japanese in Australia or working in Japan. As to the current state of learning, she commented:

I'm glad that my kanji reading and writing has improved this year. It has been a challenging area throughout my Japanese study. Soon I'll complete the highest language level at uni, but I feel that I need to learn more with classmates. It's a pity that there aren't any higher levels after this. I want to use my Japanese for work, but I know I can't. I probably can survive living in Japan with my Japanese but not working. (Yuka)

Despite the high marks she had been obtaining for the subject at the university, Yuka was very much aware that her level of Japanese would not be sufficient in authentic situations, either in professional or everyday situations, as an adult with tertiary qualification. This made her desire more structured learning with learners at a similar level.

In summary, the study observed sharp differences in the students' Japanese acquisition processes prior to entering university. These processes shaped their immediate study goals at university and their levels of noting deviations with regard to communicative competence. Whereas Akio and Miyo acquired Japanese through a planned process where both organised management of the Saturday Japanese schooling and private management at the family and individual levels were involved, the acquisition process Yuka and Katsu went through was characterised by the absence of organised management such as Saturday Japanese schooling, and the dominance of unplanned or *ad hoc* management at the family and private levels. They all inherited the language, but organised education increased the value of how they used the language, from merely knowing the language in the private environment to actively utilising and developing it further in an academic environment to pursue their future (life-long) goals. The differences in the mode of acquisition

seemed to have affected how the individuals critically evaluate their own language use. As shown in the excerpts from the interviews, a more evaluative attitude toward their lack of socio-cultural knowledge came from the cases of Akio and Miyo, who both had stronger Japanese acquisition backgrounds. It is interesting to note that despite these notable differences, all commenced from the same level Japanese course at the university.

6.2 Norms underlying the noting processes

We generally accept social norms as the customary rules of behavior that coordinate our interactions with others. Neustupný (2004) maintains that in academic contact situations, the norm usually applied is the norm of the base system, and in this case the language employed commonly determines the base system. In such situations where multiple norms are present, contact (inter-cultural) situation norms may also emerge. Arguing from this perspective, the base norm of the Japanese language acquisition process in an Australian classroom situation would be Japanese, the target language, and also English, the language often used as a medium of instruction by instructors and also as a medium of interpretation, confirmation, discussion, and informal talk by learners. The target learners consist of the majority who are non-Japanese students, as well as the minority who are Japanese students. The former includes Anglo Saxon students as well as a variety of ethnic background students, and the latter, Japanese students with Japanese parents and those with mixed marriage parents. The current study is, hence, dealing with a complex situation where multiple learner norms are operating concurrently.

6.3 Imagined norm in the imagined Japanese community

The concept of learning is expressed in many different ways. For example, Wenger's (1998) central notion of learning, "community of practice," has proposed the concept of *engagement*, which refers to a learner's direct involvement with community practices and investment in the process of community of practice. If such engagement has yet not occurred, Wenger argues, the learners' imagination of the target community plays a crucial role. He claims that the *imagination* is a source of community as "a process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves" (Wenger, 1998, p. 176). Norton (2000, 2001) has incorporated Wenger's (1998) view into the study of second language learning, suggesting the notion of an imagined community for L2 learners who were newcomers to the language practices of that community. *Imagined community* refers to groups of people, not immediately tangible or accessible, with whom we connect through the power of imagination (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001). It is a community of the imagination – a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future (Norton, 2010). In the case of Japanese-background students who have reached the tertiary acquisition level, the question that arises then is what community practices do they seek to learn?

Following the Wenger's (1998) notion of learning, I argue that the imagined norm in the imagined Japanese community is a type of norm which all the participants in this study possessed with regard to their study goals. They all expressed their desired goals to use the target language either in a Japan-related profession or study at a Japanese university. They were expecting, either implicitly or explicitly, to encounter professional, academic and social norms in their future acquisition trajectory in an imagined Japanese community or a Japan-related community, and therefore, it gives strong grounds to interpret their noting in the Australian academic context in view of their imagined norm.

Throughout our interviews, Akio has maintained his viewpoint that the Japanese he learns in Australia would be different from the Japanese used in Japan by "*jun Nihonjin* (pure or genuine Japanese)" or "*zenbu Nihonjin* (100% Japanese)." Through the Internet, he often familiarises himself with the changing usage of Japanese, in particular, amongst young people of his generation, but he commented that whilst this would assist him to increase his knowledge, it would not to improve his interactive skills. If one wishes to develop his/her communication skills to interact with

Japanese (*jun Nihonjin* or *zenbu Nihonjin*), Akio's opinion was that the university (in Australia) was not the appropriate place. This attitude was reflected in his behaviour at one visitor session, where a group of Japanese university students (who enrolled in a short English course at the university) were invited to an advanced language class to exchange opinions on the current issues surrounding Japanese and Australian youth. At this occasion, he deliberately refrained from joining in the session thinking that:

The visitor session is for non-Japanese students who don't have much chance to communicate with native speakers, so I think I shouldn't take their opportunities away. (Akio)

Akio therefore remained as a mere observer whilst occasionally giving some help to non-Japanese peers by interpreting what the visitors had said. He might have been overly conscious of being a Japanese-background student in a Japanese language classroom (where his awkward situation is understandable); it also suggests that his imagined norm of "*jun Nihonjin* (pure or genuine Japanese)" or "*zenbu Nihonjin* (100% Japanese)" was operating in his management behaviour and hindered him from participating actively in the session since he was not confident in performing appropriately. One of his non-Japanese classmates described Akio as being pretty much an Australian who was also a foreigner to a lesser degree, who was always willing to help them (non-Japanese) not to make stupid mistakes in class. On the contrary, Yuka commented that:

Although Akio was born and raised in Australia, he looks like Japanese and acts like Japanese. His family is very much a Japanese-like family ... My mum is very liberal and won't tell us (myself and my elder sister) how to behave (in Japanese-way). She is not like a Japanese mother (*Nihonjin-poku nai*). (Yuka)

The question which arises here is how Akio maintains a balance between his Japanese-ness and Australian-ness. His imagined norm of Japanese-ness which he inherited from his parents and his family environment seems to be influencing his behaviour.

Yuka's case also illustrates how the imagined norm is operating upon her noting processes. As explained previously, Yuka initially acquired Japanese language through her mother's tutoring, using various Japanese materials available to them in Australia (e.g. comic books, story books, songs, videos) before taking VCE Japanese (the secondary Japanese programme for the Victorian Certificate of Education in Australia). She explicitly acknowledged her limited Japanese vocabulary, which, according to her, was probably equivalent to 12 year-old Japanese native speakers. Yuka implied that her level of Japanese was at junior high school level (equivalent to Year 9 in Australia), which is the level of compulsory education in Japan. Yuka was motivated to take Japanese language as an academic subject at university, hoping that it may eventually allow her to pursue a career using the language. However, as her Japanese class level advanced, Yuka started to realise that her Japanese level was far below her intended goal, even though she had been achieving satisfactory marks in the subject. Yuka's immediate concern was to develop her Japanese to an age-appropriate level, in her own words, "*otona no Nihongo* (grownups' Japanese)," which would allow her to at least converse naturally with her relatives in Japan whom she regularly visited.

Yuka's imagined norm derived from some embarrassing situations she had experienced in Japan when she tried to speak in Japanese. Referring to a situation she frequently encountered, she said:

Within 30 seconds or so, I have always sensed that people were adjusting the way of speaking to me as if they were thinking, "Are you really Japanese?" (Yuka)

These situations made her realise that she was not speaking the language in the way expected in the native situation, and thought that it was probably because she formulated the conversation by thinking in English. Yuka observed that it was an established habit for her to formulate what she intended to say in English first (if not the whole sentence, a part of it), then translate it into Japanese, sometimes doing so consciously, but mostly unconsciously.

Yuka referred to another occasion when she was made aware of her inappropriate level of Japanese for her age as a university student. It was when her relatives in Japan introduced her to their acquaintances:

After witnessing me conversing in Japanese a couple of times, my grandma and aunt have now come to introduce me to their acquaintances by saying that, “She is from Australia and does not speak Japanese well although she is Japanese.” They warn their acquaintances first so that we all can avoid embarrassment. (Yuka)

Yuka’s imagined norm has originated not only from her experiences in Japan. In Australia, she was also made aware of a norm deviation after telephoning a Japanese male classmate. His Japanese mother took the call so she asked for him. Later, her male friend casually mentioned to her that his mother wondered whether the caller was a non-Japanese girl who could speak Japanese. Yuka thought that the English equivalent of what she said to his mother was a routine expression of asking for someone on the phone but that maybe it was too abrupt for his Japanese mother whom she had never met.

In summary, drawing on the notion of the “imagined community” (Wenger, 1998, p. 176; Norton, 2000, 2001), this section analysed the Japanese-background students’ noting of norm deviations. It proposed a type of norm, the “imagined norm” in the imagined Japanese community, which was underpinning the students’ management processes. “Imagined community” has been discussed frequently as incentives to reap the benefits of social and intellectual mobility if one invests in L2 (namely English) learning. In short, according to McKay (2010, p. 96), “English provides linguistic power.” In the case of Japanese-background-students in this study, however, the imagined norm in the imagined community served to make them aware of their own norm deviations. Due to the nature of the analytical framework, negativity of their noted behaviour may have been over-emphasised in the data presented in this paper. The imagined community, however, certainly provided these students with strong incentives to reflect upon their current state of Japanese learning and to shape their future management.

6.4 Peer-pressure norm imposed by non-Japanese peers

The study found another type of norm which has been commonly applied to the participants’ noting deviation processes, which I refer to as the peer-pressure norm. This type of norm seems to become more conspicuous in a Japanese classroom community where both Japanese and non-Japanese students participate, and it often functions as negative peer pressure. The following two excerpts from the interviews with Yuka illustrate her reflections on her own language situation with regard to her identity, in particular, indicating the misconception of her identity that her peers tend to have:

I feel I’m not a full Japanese (“zenbu Nihonjin ja nai”). I guess I learn the language because I’m from a Japanese background, but I know I’m different from a native speaker. In fact, unless I see myself in the mirror, I’m usually unaware of that. Lots of my friends (non-Japanese outside Japanese classroom) say that I don’t behave like a Japanese. (Yuka)

Since entering university, Yuka repeatedly conveyed the message to her peers that she had a legitimate reason to be in the Japanese class with other L2 learners:

There are always some (non-Japanese) peers in the Japanese class who note my background and tell me that I’m Japanese as I was born in Japan to Japanese parents, implying that I could or should do well in the language without much effort. I used to debate this view with them saying that I came here when I was four so I’m an Aussie, and that’s why I’m learning Japanese. It took some time before they realised my language level, and that I am also struggling with learning like them, and have to frequently switch to English to understand the meaning of what I am reading and writing in Japanese. (Yuka)

As for Yuka’s habit of confirming in English when conversing in Japanese, it is interesting to refer to her classmate Cathy’s comment:

Yuka often translates what teachers have asked or said, or the answer to a question in English when she (and others) got stuck with Japanese momentarily. I feel this is rather annoying even though Yuka does it for her favour to non-Japanese peers. (Cathy)

Peer-pressure norm imposed by non-Japanese peers may have originated from the university community's perception that Japanese students who take Japanese language unit(s) compete unfairly with their non-Japanese peers. In a further example, Katsu's experience suggests that such a perception is far from reality. L2 Japanese language learners without a *kanji* (Chinese characters) background pointed out that building up *kanji* knowledge was very challenging. A lack of *kanji* competence could severely hinder a student who wishes to advance to a higher level Japanese class. Katsu singled out his poor knowledge of *kanji* as the main deficiency which hindered his ability to advance in his learning and seriously affected his overall Japanese literacy. Since he did not have Saturday Japanese schooling experience, he had never had the opportunity to develop a systematic method of learning *kanji*. Furthermore, because he was a Japanese-background student with a high score in VCE Japanese, he was able to skip basic level Japanese at the university, and therefore missed another opportunity to acquire *kanji* learning skills. David, one of Katsu's non-Japanese classmates, often sat close to him in class and did pair work with him, hoping that conversing more in Japanese with a native speaker would improve his Japanese. When Katsu obtained a very low score in a *kanji* quiz, David at first thought that it was because Katsu did not know about the quiz scheduled for that particular week. Soon David came to realise (and was amazed at the fact) that Katsu was not doing well in most quizzes. Unlike Yuka, who frankly explained to her peers why she enrolled in Japanese, Katsu was rather reluctant to do so. He expressed his concern stating:

I know I have to do better with my kanji quizzes. I often feel very depressed for not performing as well as my non-Japanese classmates. I don't know any practical way to learn kanji, so I try to memorise them by writing them out many times. But the number of kanji I have to learn each week amounted to more than I could possibly cope with. (Katsu)

As Yuka and Katsu's cases demonstrate, inaccurate perceptions of Japanese-background students stem from a common lack of understanding of their Japanese language situations in the academic context, in particular, at their literacy level. Being of a Japanese-background, Yuka and Katsu (and Akio and Miyo as well) are positioned where the expected level of performance is much higher than those applied to non-Japanese peers, and therefore, they may be judged severely if they perform poorly.

Miyo's case presents another example where a peer-pressure norm was operating in her noting. Despite being in a rather comfortable learning situation, Miyo viewed herself as not being an active participant in Japanese class. She seemed to become very self-conscious when speaking out in class and tend to be a quiet, even a silent participant avoiding possible embarrassment. As illustrated in the following excerpt, she was concerned about how her classmates would judge her performance as a Japanese-background student:

Some (non-Japanese) students in my class perform very well indeed, and this makes me a little hesitant to respond to the teacher's questions and also to join in the class discussions. I always become very nervous when speaking Japanese in front of classmates because I'm very worried about not speaking properly or making some errors. I'm probably afraid of not speaking appropriately as a Japanese. (Miyo)

In summary, this section illustrated how the peer-pressure norm was taken, interpreted or evaluated by each individual and how this type of norm affected their behaviour in a particular context. The examples presented above indicate that the peer-pressure norm reflects the expectations from non-Japanese students who often perceive that Japanese-background students hold an expert's position in contrast to their novice's position in the Japanese language classroom community, particularly to the lower performing students. An interesting point about the way these Japanese-background students position themselves in a given situation is that despite their possibility of be-

ing an expert (i.e. having superior knowledge of the practices in the language), no one – either themselves or their peers – explicitly stated that they had attained such a position.

7 Conclusion: Challenges ahead

Japanese-background students should be allowed to and, indeed, encouraged to undertake Japanese language as an academic subject at university in classes with non-Japanese students. However, there is a lack of thorough understanding in the current literature of what motivates these students to learn Japanese at the university level, how these learners behave in their given learning contexts, and why they behave so. I believe that it is quite natural for these students to behave according to the dispositions of their inherited Japanese background. The present study, therefore, sought to establish a meaningful connection between their desire to engage in Japanese maintenance and the norms they possessed to evaluate their interaction competence at the time of the investigation. The study aimed to identify the type of norms which these students applied to note their norm deviations and the possible grounds for this, and ultimately, how these learning behaviours shaped and motivated their language learning. By doing so, the study attempts to convince members of the wider community (both within and outside of university) that these students have legitimate reasons and rights to engage in further Japanese acquisition at the tertiary level.

I drew on the notion of “language management in discourse” (Jernudd & Neustupný, 1987) to achieve my study goal. In this approach, “management” is considered as a process in which language is monitored by the learners who rely on the norms they possess as a means of noting deviations. The term “deviation” is taken to mean a noticeable difference from what was expected or normal in a given situation. The norms are a flexible entity and are subject to constant adjustment (Neustupný, 2004) and therefore, students’ noting of their deviation from norms is a dynamic process. Based on the data obtained for this study, I suggested two types of norms which operated upon their noting behaviours. These are the “imagined norm” of the imagined Japanese community and the “peer-pressure norm” imposed by non-Japanese peers in the Japanese classroom. These norms can also be referred to as native norms, expert norms, expected norms or contact norms. What is important here is that these norms seemed to have provided the Japanese-background students with the incentives to reflect upon their own learning behaviours in actual learning situations. By doing so, they were able to adjust their learning goals for the target language and further advance their language expertise. In light of these findings, I would argue that the presence of Japanese-background students in the post-secondary Japanese language classroom is quite justifiable. Both the Japanese-background and non-Japanese-background students will gain much greater mutual benefit from learning to negotiate their identity and positioning in order to participate in the mixed classroom community, which is a situation reflective of present day society. Valdés et al. (2008) provides a salient reminder of the danger of educational institutions perpetuating “nation-imagining beliefs and values” (as described by Phillips, 1998), which risks the alienation and marginalization of heritage students. The challenge, therefore, that lies ahead for educators is to understand the special needs of these students and to establish an effective environment where they can co-exist with other non-Japanese-background students and achieve their learning goals.

This study takes the presence of Japanese-background students in the post-secondary Japanese classroom as a natural, cultural phenomenon in today’s increasingly mobile and globalised society, and seeks to give a voice to what is often a silent and much-misunderstood, even if it is small, group of students in the university community. Their situation can be viewed from the point of view of an outsider (e.g. that of a researcher) or from within, by the students themselves. I attempted to take both perspectives, although I acknowledge that as a researcher, I am more likely to have exhibited a critical and evaluative view of their behaviours (which, as a result, may influence my analytical interpretation of their behaviour), while students may not have been equipped with appropriate vocabulary to critically evaluate their behaviour or convincingly report on their experiences to an outsider. As Nekvapil (2004) maintains, the informants’ descriptions of their experiences are themselves very interesting, and “management summaries” (narratives) served as an important tool in understanding the students’ management behaviours in this study. The extent to

which these “management summaries” are useful in eliciting information as close as possible to the informants’ actual behaviour is an issue which requires further consideration.

With regard to the analytical framework adopted in this study, the current author is aware of views which are critical towards LMT, arguing that LMT could be used to purposefully look for deviations and by doing so, possibly instil a negative self-view amongst the heritage speakers studied in this investigation. A more positive approach can be taken regarding the language management of heritage speakers focusing on their plurilingual identity, which describes speakers who interact with different people utilizing different languages appropriate for different situations by tapping into their personal resources. Future research, therefore, should consider a new approach to deal with the discursive nature of heritage language learners’ language management. The small number of participants in the current study may limit how the findings can be applied to other situations. It should be acknowledged that not all heritage speakers who attend Japanese courses in tertiary institutions in Australia aspire to enter a Japanese university or the Japanese workforce, as was the case in this study. In the future, it would be important to expand the number of participants by including those with diverse aspirations, and also to consider the perspectives of their teachers and their peers.

The findings offer a relatively small and preliminary insight into the dynamic relationship between the learners’ language management and actual language use as illustrated in this paper. Nevertheless, I believe that it is an important step in gaining a better insight into the Japanese-background students’ management processes not only in the Australian context but also for other settings, for example, in the US and Canada, where both Japanese and non-Japanese students are learning Japanese as their L2. Moreover, it is hoped that the findings from this study will have some implications for the increasing number of Japanese heritage speakers who reside in Japan (Kawakami, 2012). Regardless of where they reside, assisting Japanese-background students to advance their language expertise requires a thorough understanding of who they are, what they can do with the language, and what they aspire to do with the language.

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