

# 日本の大学英語教育の場における英語ネイティブ教員と 日本人英語教員による協業と経験

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## The Collaboration and Experiences of Native and Japanese English Teachers/ Researchers in Japanese College EFL Settings

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### Introduction

This article proposes the collaboration of native and Japanese native English teachers/researchers from three separate personal viewpoints concerning EFL programs in Japan: a native speaker of English<sup>1</sup> (Chapter 1, MacDonald), a Japanese English teacher (Chapter 2, Tsuda), and an intercultural communicator (Chapter 3, Pennington). The authors are currently teaching in the EFL program at Nakamura Gakuen Junior College, and this article is one of our first attempts at collaboration as teacher-researchers in order to develop an "ideal EFL program".

Within the framework of the native/non-native division, the ideal native English speaking teachers and the ideal non-native English teachers arrive from different directions but eventually stand quite close to one another. Both groups of teachers serve equally useful and unique purposes. In an ideal school, therefore there should be a good balance of native English speaking teachers and non-native English speaking teachers, who complement each other's weaknesses (assuming there are weaknesses). Given a favorable mix, various forms of collaboration are possible, and learners stand only to gain from such cross-fertilization (Medges, 1944, p. 441).

### Chapter 1: Language Teachers as Native Speakers of English

Kelly MacDonald

#### Personal experience with collaboration – the omnibus

My rather limited experience with collaboration came several years back in the form of an omnibus – a twice a week class shared with a Japanese English teacher. I should probably note that this turn-taught class was not the original intention of the administration – the omnibus was, in this case, a result of scheduling difficulties due to the limited availability of a very small pool of English language teachers.

My fellow teacher in the omnibus happened to be a personal friend as well as colleague and our regular e-mailing naturally developed into a reflection on our classroom experience, with updates on what material we had covered and how the students had fared with the material.

I did not know it at first but my colleague was making very good use of my end of our correspondence. Seeing in it some form of opportunity, she had begun printing out my e-mails and taking them to class. While not actually showing the mail to the students, she dramatically unfolded the mail each week and related to the students my observations. This unintentional feedback on my part became a source of great anticipation for our students.

### Reflection

Unfortunately, this omnibus ended after its first year but this collaboration provided me a rich opportunity for reflection through dialogue with my colleague. In reflecting on my classroom experience, I was able to consider more deeply the practices I was bringing into the classroom and see how they

reflected my rather naive beliefs.

As the native English teacher attempts to maneuver through classrooms in this foreign culture we must remember "a large part of what we call culture is a social construct, the product of self and other perceptions" (Kramsch, 1993, p.205), and reflect on our own biases and cultural misunderstandings and how they can influence the decisions we make in the classroom.

Bailey (2002) promotes reflection by native English teachers in the form of "cultural hermeneutics". This he defines as "strategies of doubting, questioning and self-reflection in order to transcend outdated anthropological concepts and over-simplified journalistic presumptions" (Bailey, 2002, p.2). Without self-reflection, Bailey warns teachers may inadvertently reinforce and perpetuate cultural stereotypes.

The reflective process also seems particularly crucial for native language teachers when considering, as Pennycook insists, that "export of applied linguistic theory and of Western trained language teachers constantly promotes inappropriate teaching approaches to diverse settings" (1994, p.159). If the theories and methodologies we learn are rooted in Anglo-American cultural values, how do we reconcile these with the classroom situation we find in Japan?

In all of this, our Japanese counterparts can play a key role, giving us insight into Japanese culture and students, and more importantly ourselves as we go through this reflective practice. So, why not collaborate?

### **Native/nonnative dichotomy**

As I witnessed with my omnibus and its unfortunate demise, collaborative work among native and Japanese English teachers is severely lacking. There is not only little collaboration but oftentimes many part-time native English teachers do not actually know what or how their Japanese counterparts are teaching. Japanese English teachers and native teachers disappear into their separate rooms at meetings and the unspoken rule seems to be "You do what you do best; I do what I do best". But the "division of labor" in Japanese universities, as Chiba and Matsuura (2004) point out, in which native teachers are mostly given

classes focusing on speaking and listening and Japanese English teachers given reading and writing classes, has room for reconsideration. Japanese English teachers, who "can provide a good learner model for imitation", "teach language learning strategies more effectively", and "anticipate and prevent language difficulties better", should be given more speaking classes (Medgyes, cited in Chiba & Matsuura, 2004, p.17). Chiba and Matsuura go on to say that native English teachers would do well to teach more writing classes, maintaining that Japanese students are more inclined to expose themselves in writing than in speaking and that in teaching them, native speakers can learn more of their students' insights and perceptions.

What I am suggesting here is not that universities reverse the current division of labor. On the contrary, this would serve only to reinforce any existing native/nonnative dichotomy. Rather, the acknowledgement of this binary and its roots in the "native speaker fallacy" (Phillipson, 1992) can help us to in turn acknowledge unnecessary distance between native and Japanese English teachers at Japanese universities, a distance that may be impeding possibilities for collaboration.

A number of practical constraints must be considered before engaging in collaborative work. The most salient of these is perhaps time and money. With the overwhelming number of part-time English teachers in Japan, collaboration would in all likelihood entail working on unpaid time. Another inhibitor may be a certain tendency on the part of teachers to feel as if the classroom is their own domain. In what context and to what extent teachers may be willing to collaborate needs to be determined. Such constraints lead me to think that collaboration should not be top-down but that the university facilitate and encourage such endeavors. Further, and most importantly, collaboration should take place when both the native and Japanese English teachers feel it mutually beneficial. Only then will both parties reap its rewards.

## **Chapter2. Three Principles for Language Teachers with Respect to Japanese English Teachers**

Dr. Akiko Tsuda

Based on my EFL teaching/learning experiences

at home and learning ESL experiences abroad as well as my research experiences in EFL settings, I would like to present three principles to promote the collaboration and experiences of native and Japanese English teachers/researchers, especially focusing on the Japanese college EFL setting.

### **1. Show a role model as a foreign language learner and communicator through collaboration with native English teachers**

In 2005, I conducted semi-structured individual interviews for 26 Japanese university graduates who are required to use English in their workplaces and conducted a needs analysis on 16 of the interviewees from various vocational communities, including engineering, medicine, academics, local governments, etc. (Tsuda, 2006) In general, I can conclude that English language needs (such as World Englishes) in workplaces are growing and that communication in English among non-native English learners will become important. Therefore, I suppose that switching activities between Japanese and English using four integrative skills: listening, speaking, writing, reading needs to be introduced in EFL classes in Japan. In reality, however, each language skill tends to be taught individually: conversation classes are taught by native speakers of English, and reading and writing classes are taught by Japanese English teachers. To satisfy actual needs, we, both native and Japanese English teachers, should develop EFL programs together.

As for the Japanese English teacher's part, we need to brush up our foreign language skills in order to provide better language programs and be better role models as foreign language learners. However, among the 26 interviewees I conducted, three were Japanese English teachers: one male professor who majored in English literature, one female high school teacher, one English conversation school teacher, and one preparatory school teacher. Surprisingly, all of them felt there was a lack of exposure to native English speakers in Japanese school systems.

In the previous part of this article, from an English native speaker's view, Kelly MacDonald mentioned the separate working systems to which we belong. Apparently Japanese English teachers who have been living in monolingual communities,

including myself, have various plausible excuses not to contact native English speakers and may avoid free communication with them, often due to an inferiority complex because of being a non-native teacher. Recently, however, empowerment of non-native English teachers has been emphasized, focusing on "the bright side of being a non-NEST (Medgyes, P, (2001). Japanese English can be a good role model for foreign language learners and for native English teachers who learn Japanese. We can learn how to learn and teach foreign language to each other.

### **2. Be a good mediator between Native English teachers and Japanese speakers including students and other faculty and staff members**

Compared to school systems in multiethnic countries, universities in Japan, basically, can be said to have an unfriendly environment for non-Japanese students and faculties. For example, if you browse JREC-IN (<http://jrecin.jst.go.jp/seek/SeekTop>), a job advertisement website for academics owned by the Japan Science and Technology Agency, English language instructors with Japanese language skills are welcomed. Many job listings have the following: "Preferably basic communication ability in Japanese..." , "...native speaker of English with a working knowledge of the Japanese language..." , "Command of Japanese sufficient for daily conversation is desirable" . Applicants often need to submit a resume in English as well as in Japanese.

The definition of basic communication ability might vary with the individual. However, if a native English speaker works or studies at a Japanese university they will immediately find out how difficult it is to survive in this high-context world without a friendly mentor or experienced foreign staff member (Wadden et al, 1993).

As a co-teacher, Japanese English teachers need to be more aware that we are living in Japan, one of many Asian EFL countries that value high context "non-verbal communication" or *Isshin denshin*. We should always provide sufficient information for native English teachers for all important information, from sudden schedule changes to agendas given by universities. These things are rarely translated into English. As a result, native

English teachers might run about in confusion and feel isolated.

Also, Japanese English teachers who understand both Japanese and English and have bicultural knowledge can serve as mediators. We can tell native English teachers, especially who are comparatively unfamiliar with Japanese language and culture, why Japanese people tend to think or act in some way, and tell Japanese faculty why native English teachers tend to think or act the way they do. Of course, there are individual differences, and we should avoid ethnic stereotyping. However, the role of bicultural mediator as Japanese English teachers will be required for better organization of a language program.

### 3. Teach and research together!

Based on the premise that Japanese English teachers can be confident as language learners and be good communicators and willingly serve as mediators between native English speakers and Japanese speakers, now we can develop curriculum, design materials, and use them. Then, based on our mutual agreement, we can launch research studies in EFL.

Japanese English teachers can be a good source of information required for academic research on Japanese EFL program for native English teachers/researchers in Japan, who tend to be treated as outsiders and marginalized by their faculty. However, native English teachers are far richer in authentic experiences gained in their homelands.

Compared to other disciplines, joint research in EFL by native and Japanese English teachers/researchers is not so common. For example, the Japanese Association for Language Teaching has been dominated by native English speakers and the key posts of Japan Association of College English Teachers have been dominated by Japanese English teachers.

Unfortunately, well-accepted articles written by Japanese critics who list the many problems in the Japanese educational system, including EFL programs at colleges, have been written almost entirely in Japanese language for Japanese readers. Therefore, native English teachers sometimes get the wrong picture about the problems and know little about the Japanese mass opinion about

foreign language education (Tsuda, 2007). They are in danger of being left behind with regards to EFL trends in Japan and other Asian countries. In addition, as non-native speakers, Japanese English teachers are often too overwhelmed to submit to international EFL/ESL research arenas. To complement each other, English native and Japanese English teachers should form academic partnerships.

### Intercultural Collaboration: Teachers and Their Student's Expectations

Dr. Randall Owen Pennington Jr.

I propose that in order for non-native Japanese and native English teachers to collaborate more in their teaching, it is necessary to look at expectations, affective factors and the intercultural communication dynamics that occur when westerners and Japanese teachers meet and when Japanese students meet western teachers.

It is indeed encouraging to see that ESL instructors in Japan and other countries, as well as intercultural communication researchers, are in increasing numbers, coming to terms with the enormity of the importance of affect and cultural relativity. Research in these areas is ongoing and dynamic.

To fully understand the situation in Japan, Western teachers need to know more about the context of the Japanese education system and as Hadley & Hadley (1996) put it, "the culture of learning" in Japan. Western teachers (and Japanese students) need to know *what* is expected of them, *why* it is expected of them, and also *be willing* to work with the students to come to some sort of *compromise* (Pennington, 2003) as to what is acceptable for the students and the teacher; an overlapping of classroom cultures if you will.

Both language teachers (Western) and students (Japanese) fail to recognize these basic differences in behavior, communication, context, and expectations and are, quite naturally, very quick to misattribute the causes for behavior. Similarly, the same failure to recognize the basic differences in behavior, communication, context and expectations is immediately transferable to the situation of native Japanese people (assuming they were raised in Japan and educated in Japanese institutions)

working with and collaborating with native English speakers (assuming they were not raised in nor educated in Japan). Let's begin by looking at what Japanese university students think a "good teacher" is.

### The Good Teacher in Japan

Hadley and Hadley (1996) surveyed 165 Japanese university students (ninety-nine males and sixty-six females) as to "What is a good teacher?" In each class in which the survey was given it was explained well and uniformly in Japanese, followed by an English explanation. Great care was made

to ensure that all students understood the survey completely before completing it.

Of prime importance was that the students were instructed to suggest attributes that would apply to any teacher, Japanese or non-Japanese. The students were also told to express their ideas in Japanese and were allowed to work in groups in order to negate any test-like atmosphere that may influence the responses. Further, the students were given no examples or hints as to what they should write in order to not contaminate the results. Every effort was made to keep the results as objective and unbiased as possible.

The results are reproduced below:

What is a Good Teacher?			
Text Entry	Frequency	Text Entry	Frequency
Kind	40	Serious	6
Friendly	27	Doesn't give tests	6
Impartial	25	Easy passer	6
Understandable	18	Won't force own opinion	5
Cheerful	17	Good character	5
Punctual	13	Reliable	5
Fun	12	Interesting lectures	5
Enthusiastic	12	Tells stories from his life	5
Humorous	11	Active	5
Nonviolent	11	Considerate	4
Knowledgeable	10	Sympathetic	4
Writes in large letters on board	10	Doesn't take class roll	4
Speaks in a loud voice	10	Strict	4
Writes clearly	9	Experienced	4
Speaks clearly	9	Clear explanations	4
Not too much homework	9	Has a sense of humor	4
Gives easy tests	9	Liked by students	3
Humble	9	Fair	3
Interesting	9	Easy explanations	3
Good storyteller	9	Talks about experiences	3
Good teaching methods	8	Teaching has variety	3
Tells interesting stories	8	Interesting lessons	3
Intelligent	8	Ambitious	3
Honest	7	Earnest	3
Easy to talk with	6	Intellectual	3
Open minded	6	Physically attractive	3
Unique	6	Smart	3
Clean	6	Clever	3

(Figure 1)

(Hadley & Hadley, 1996)

**Some Surprises**

While there is some obvious overlap in the responses, even the most cursory glance at the previous data shows that affective factors constitute the top ten items on the list. The top ten qualities (which are mostly affective or personality related qualities) such as being, "kind, friendly, impartial, understanding, cheerful, punctual, fun, enthusiastic, humorous and non-violent" scored a total of **186** in frequency, while qualities such as "knowledgeable, intelligent, intellectual, teaching has variety, smart, interesting lectures, interesting lessons and good teaching methods" scored a total of **43** in frequency. The latter group had no responses placing in the top ten. Further, there are more overlapping responses for the affective factors outside of the top ten that are not included in the preceding figure.

Hadley & Hadley (1996) analyze the results as follows:

"The subjects' general portrait of a good teacher is that of a kind-hearted, friendly individual who is open-minded, sympathetic but impartial in student relations and class decisions. A good teacher never resorts to physical violence or forces and opinion on an issue. A good teacher is punctual for class, is fun to be around, and should not only be very understandable, but understanding as well. A good teacher focuses on the needs of the students, not on tests or homework, and is knowledgeable and experienced, but humble.

Whatever other teaching methods he or she uses, a good teacher is a storyteller who shares real-life anecdotes of interest to students. Enthusiasm for teaching, a sense of humor and cheerfulness will encourage students to participate in class. A good teacher can be admired, trusted, and depended on by students."

Now let's look at what a good teacher is from a western viewpoint.

**Language Teachers Are Like Triangles**

Trying to solve the mystery of what a good language teacher is no easy task.

Costas Gabrielatos (2000) has tackled this weighty question with his triangle illustration of the "shape" of a good language teacher.

In his framework, Gabrielatos reconciles the three main views as to what makes an effective language teacher: (1) personality and (2) methodological / language skills and (3) knowledge. The framework is simple to visualize: basically the shape of the language teacher optimally should be like an equilateral triangle, with all three teacher-attributes equally developed. The three sides of the triangle should be equal and are:

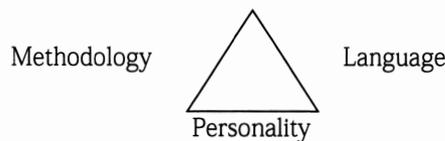
1. Personality
2. Methodology (knowledge and skills)
3. Language (knowledge and skills)

The following is an illustration of the framework:

(Figure 2)

**The Shape of the Language Teacher**

Costas Gabrielatos, 2000



The major attributes of each element are as follows:

**Personality**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-awareness</li> <li>2. Interpersonal skills</li> <li>3. Ability to observe, think critically, use experience</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Attitude towards change, development, diversity, quality, co-operation, authority</li> <li>5. Perception of learning, teacher/learner roles, development</li> <li>6. Sensitivity to context</li> </ol>
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**Methodology**

<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Skills</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Views on methodology</li> <li>2. Available materials</li> <li>3. Own view in learning/teaching</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seeing implications of theory</li> <li>2. Planning and teaching</li> <li>3. Balancing support and challenge</li> <li>4. Action research</li> </ol>

## Language

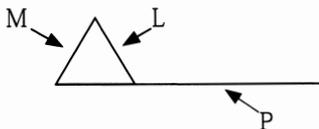
Knowledge	Skills
1. Views on language 2. Awareness of own views on language	1. Own language use 2. Ability to see the implication of language analysis, draw conclusions from own contact with language 3. Sensitivity to learners' L2 level

Gabrielatos' framework is deceptively simple and at the same time appeals to the training and common sense of western-trained ESL teachers. Non-trained teachers also see the beauty and truth in what Gabrielatos (2000) admittedly says, "is a crude representation of the complex interrelations that make up the profile of the language teacher."

Nevertheless I believe this to be an excellent way to visualize what a good language teacher should be... within the traditional sensibilities of Western educational philosophy.

Now let's view the responses of Hadley's surveyed students using Gabrielatos' model:

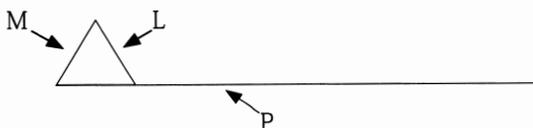
(Figure 3)



According to Gabrielatos (2000), the "good" teacher these Japanese students describe would not be a good teacher.

With these results in hand, I decided to replicate the Hadley's research. Sixty freshmen at Kyushu University of varying majors and forty-five sophomores from Seinan Gakuin University majoring in French were surveyed (52 males and 53 females). The procedures that the Hadley's used were followed closely. Once again, the results of the surveys can be illustrated showing a heavy weighting toward the affective or personality-related characteristics of the teacher at the almost total exclusion of the methodological / language related items.

(Figure 4)



Once again we see Japanese university students giving an almost exclusively personality-based estimation of what a "good teacher" is.

With these two surveys to refer to, it appears that Gabrielatos' triangulation of the shape of the language teacher may be in need of revision. In fact, I believe that Gabrielatos' triangles are indeed a very accurate and astute way to visualize the "ideal" shape of the language teacher. However, I believe the equilateral triangle approach is neither appropriate nor ideal in a non-Western setting.

Clearly, from the preceding surveys we can see that the personality axis of the triangle is comparatively of much higher importance to Japanese students (who eventually become teachers in Japan). It is natural to infer that, since Japanese students place such a high value on affective personality traits in a teacher, that the manner of communication (concerning affect) of any teacher will be the deciding factor in whether or not Japanese students will receive him/her well. In other words, with Japanese students, it isn't *what* you know or *how much* you know or *how well* you know it. Rather, it is *do you have a good personality* (by Japanese standards). Conversely, in a Western setting, while personality is important in the classroom, the teacher's subject knowledge, methodology and skills are primary.

From this very limited example, it can be easily extrapolated that cultural relativity is of primary importance when communicating in the classroom and subsequently, in the workplace. Our own (both teachers and students) views of communication and our behaviors are fundamentally shaped by our respective experiences in our cultures. Our cultures guide us on how to think about behavior and its causes. Our cultures even guide us as to whether to think about the reasons for behavior (Caprara & Cervone, 2000).

Gergen (1979) believes that researchers can be heavily influenced by the values and assumptions

of the culture in which they participate. This author believes that Gergen's statement applies not only to researchers, but also to all people.

With this in mind, Kim (2002) asks the appropriate question, "In what specific ways and to what extent does cultural baggage hinder the quest for objective understanding?"

### **East is east and West is best?**

Gordon (1998/1999) said that well into the decade of the eighties, Caucasian males had an inordinate amount of control and influence in American communication scholarship, theorizing, authoring of journals, papers, etc...

As a result, views of communication have been skewed. Littlejohn (1996) also says that communication theory has a strong Western bias at the expense of not adequately integrating Eastern ideas into communication research.

When speaking of the growth of communication research, Yum (1988) said, "...much (growth) has been within North America and most research and theory is based upon Western philosophical foundations. As more scholars from Asia have entered the field of communication, there has been increasing dissatisfaction with the use of North American models of communication to explain communication processes in Asia, and even some aspects of communication processes in North America."

Min-Sun Kim (2001) showed that the communication theory studied in the West has primarily been based on the assumptions of individualism and that very often, universal pronouncements about human communication phenomena are usually made from empirical research involving Caucasians from the United States. Kim (2002) maintains that the overwhelming majority of communication research centered in the West, along with research in social science, assumes that all people have independent self-construals or individual notions. She claims that this independent view of self is one of the major stumbling blocks to overcome in our quest for better understanding of communication events. Kim believes that this individualistic model of self-identity will take a different shape or may not be applicable in cultures where people view themselves as more

interdependent; such as is the case in Japan.

Min-Sun Kim (2002) breaks down Berry's (1978) recommendations on social psychology into three steps she feels are necessary to take in the study of human communication:

- (a) Cultural de-centering away from Euro-American theory,
- (b) Re-centering the discipline within the culture of interest
- (c) Integrating the different cultural perspectives to move toward a truly universal theory of human communication

While Kim's ideas on human communication theory are intriguing and broad ranging, the three steps above may not be entirely applicable in their current form to view the importance of teacher personality in Japan.

In order to better understand the data gathered I will modify Kim's ideas to suit the teacher-student and native English teacher-Japanese English teacher situations.

I reckon that I should try to (a) culturally de-center myself from my typically American-based viewpoints and (b) try to re-center myself within the culture of interest (Japan). I will not attempt the most ambitious (c), to move toward a universal theory of human communication as it is far beyond the breadth of this research. Of course, other issues such as student stereotypes of foreign teachers, religious/philosophical issues, student dissatisfaction, language education methodology and policy, and current trends in Japan no doubt have great bearing on the subject and are deserving of deeper consideration. I have not delved into these topics, as the scope of this report will not allow it. I hope to report my findings on these issues at a later date.

### **Conclusion**

The theme of this article is collaboration of native and non-native English teachers in Japanese college EFL settings, and indeed this article is in itself just such a collaboration. While the three authors come from varying nationalities with diverse professional and educational experiences, one thing seems very clear in each authors mind: there is a need

to understand not only our students needs, but there is a need for greater reflection about our (the teachers) own beliefs, values and roles in the classroom.

The need for both native and non-native English teachers in Japan to cooperate and collaborate on a higher level than is currently being practiced cannot be understated.

There is a clear need for Japanese English teachers to increase their exposure to native English speakers during their training (perhaps a compulsory period of study in an English speaking country) and to learn educational theory and philosophy in those native speaking countries.

Conversely, native English speaking teachers in Japan definitely need to have a working knowledge of the Japanese education system with regards to English education methodology, purpose (college entrance examinations), and teacher training. It is quite natural for native English speaking teachers to assume that their Japanese counterparts have received the same basic training in education that they received in their home countries, when in fact that is not the case.

For example, most native English teachers in Japan are quite shocked to learn that there is no widespread knowledge in Japan of Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning, which is a philosophical foundation of education in the west. Most Japanese teachers are equally shocked to learn that their native speaker counterparts cannot parse grammar as well as they can, despite being native speaker educators. It is just this kind of fundamental difference in educational training that makes the collaboration of native and non-native English teachers more difficult. The assumptions made by both groups are based on their experience and educational norms in their home countries.

A greater mutual intercultural understanding of these differences and an increased willingness to bridge them can dramatically improve the quality and effectiveness of collaboration between native and non-native teachers in Japan.

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- or her language is one basis for establishing or confirming the rules of the grammar. A native speaker is said to speak his or her native language "natively" . (Richard, Platt, and Platt, 1997. p.241)

## 注

- 1 In this article, we define a native speaker as follows: a person considered as a speaker of this or her native language. The intuition of a native speaker about the structure of his