Article

Compare the teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native Japanese language teachers and non-native Japanese language teachers

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Abstract: This study examines the comparative teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native Japanese language teachers (NJLTs) and non-native Japanese language teachers (NNJLTs). Utilizing a sample of 740 students from various educational institutions in Japan, the research employs a quantitative design, including structured questionnaires adapted from established scales. Advanced statistical methods, including factor analysis and multiple regression, were used to analyze the data. The findings reveal no significant differences in student satisfaction and language proficiency between students taught by NJLTs and NNJLTs. Additionally, regression analysis showed that cultural relatability and empathy were not significant predictors of teaching effectiveness, suggesting that factors beyond nativeness influence student outcomes. These results challenge the native-speakerism ideology, highlighting the importance of pedagogical skills, teacher-student rapport, and effective teaching strategies. The study underscores the need for inclusive hiring practices, comprehensive teacher training programs, and collaborative teaching models that leverage the strengths of both NJLTs and NNJLTs. Implications for educational policy, curriculum design, and teacher professional development are discussed, advocating for a balanced approach that values the contributions of both native and non-native teachers. Limitations include the reliance on self-reported data and the specific cultural context of Japan. Future research should explore additional variables, employ longitudinal designs, and utilize mixed-methods approaches to provide a more nuanced understanding of language teaching effectiveness.

Keywords: Japanese language education; native-speakerism; teaching effectiveness; student satisfaction

1. Introduction

The comparative analysis of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native and non-native Japanese language teachers has garnered significant interest in educational research. This interest reflects the increasing globalization of education and the corresponding rise in the demand for learning languages, particularly Japanese. As students worldwide strive to learn Japanese for academic, professional, and personal reasons, understanding the dynamics between native and non-native teachers becomes crucial. This introduction aims to provide an extensive overview of the pertinent literature, laying a foundation for a deeper understanding of comparative teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction in this context. Language teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction are pivotal in shaping successful educational outcomes. Native Japanese language teachers (NJLTs) are often perceived as the ideal instructors due to their inherent cultural and linguistic proficiency. Conversely, non-native Japanese language teachers (NNJLTs) bring unique strengths to the classroom, often including a shared experience of learning Japanese as a second language, which can be invaluable to students facing similar challenges.

The dichotomy between NJLTs and NNJLTs raises questions about their respective impacts on teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction. Native Japanese language teachers are typically viewed as authoritative figures in language education due to their deep-rooted understanding of the Japanese language and culture. Their teaching is often enriched with authentic cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions that non-native teachers might struggle to convey (Tajino and Tajino, 2000). However, this perceived advantage comes with challenges. For instance, NJLTs may sometimes overestimate students' comprehension abilities, leading to potential gaps in understanding and retention (Hobbs et al., 2010).

Non-native Japanese language teachers often possess a practical understanding of the language acquisition process, having undergone it themselves. This shared experience can foster a more empathetic and supportive learning environment, potentially enhancing student satisfaction (Sutherland, 2012). Furthermore, NNJLTs might employ more effective strategies for explaining complex grammatical structures, having navigated these difficulties as learners (Matsumoto, 2017). Student satisfaction is a critical measure of educational success, often influenced by various factors, including teacher competence, cultural relatability, and pedagogical methods. Research indicates that while students appreciate the linguistic precision and cultural insights provided by NJLTs, they also value the relatability and methodological clarity of NNJLTs (Saito and Ebsworth, 2004). For example, Japanese EFL students have shown a preference for native teachers in terms of language accuracy and cultural knowledge but often find non-native teachers more approachable and better at addressing language learning challenges (Ustunluoglu, 2007). A multitude of studies have explored the comparative effectiveness of NJLTs and NNJLTs. For instance, research by Kadowaki (2018) highlights the importance of collaborative teaching strategies, emphasizing that a combination of NJLTs and NNJLTs can significantly enhance learning outcomes by leveraging their complementary strengths (Kadowaki, 2018). Similarly, studies have shown that team teaching, involving both native and non-native teachers, can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment (Rao and Yu, 2021). In conclusion, both native and non-native Japanese language teachers bring distinct advantages and face unique challenges in the classroom. Understanding these dynamics is essential for optimizing teaching strategies and improving student satisfaction. Future research should continue to explore the nuanced interactions between teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction, considering factors such as cultural background, teaching experience, and educational context.

While there is substantial literature comparing the effectiveness of native and non-native Japanese language teachers, several gaps remain that warrant further investigation. One notable gap is the lack of comprehensive studies integrating quantitative and qualitative data to provide a holistic understanding of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction. Most existing research tends to focus on either quantitative metrics, such as test scores and language proficiency, or qualitative insights, such as student perceptions and teacher self-reports. Integrating these approaches could offer a more nuanced perspective on how different teaching styles impact learning outcomes and student satisfaction. Another significant gap is the limited exploration of contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of native and non-native teachers. Variables such as class size, the age and proficiency level of

students, and institutional support systems can significantly affect teaching outcomes but are often overlooked in comparative studies. For instance, the advantages of native teachers in imparting cultural knowledge may be more pronounced in advanced-level classes. In contrast, non-native teachers' empathetic teaching methods might be more beneficial for beginners. Research that examines these contextual influences can provide deeper insights into when and how each type of teacher is most effective. Furthermore, more research is needed to focus on the professional development and training of non-native Japanese language teachers. While native teachers often benefit from their inherent linguistic and cultural knowledge, non-native teachers might require specific training to bridge gaps in these areas. Studies that investigate effective training programs and their impact on teaching effectiveness could provide valuable guidelines for improving the quality of non-native language instruction. Lastly, cultural biases and stereotypes about native and non-native teachers' capabilities can influence both students' and educators' perceptions, yet this aspect is underexplored. Understanding how these biases affect teaching dynamics and student satisfaction could help design interventions to mitigate their impact and promote a more inclusive and effective learning environment. Addressing these research gaps will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the comparative effectiveness of native and non-native Japanese language teachers, ultimately enhancing language education strategies and student outcomes.

1.1. Research motivation

The comparative analysis of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native and non-native Japanese language teachers has garnered significant interest in educational research. Despite the increasing demand for Japanese language education globally, there is limited empirical evidence addressing how teacher nativeness affects teaching outcomes. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the specific impacts of NJLTs and NNJLTs on student learning experiences.

1.2. Research gaps and questions

While previous studies have explored various aspects of language teaching, there is a paucity of research that directly compares the teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between NJLTs and NNJLTs using advanced statistical analyses. To address these gaps, the following research questions are formulated:
1) Does the nativeness of Japanese language teachers significantly impact student satisfaction and language proficiency?
2) What are the key factors that predict teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction in Japanese language education?

2. Review of literature

The comparative analysis of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native Japanese language teachers (NJLTs) and non-native Japanese language teachers (NNJLTs) is an area of growing interest in educational research. As the global demand for Japanese language learning increases, understanding the distinct contributions and challenges of NJLTs and NNJLTs becomes essential. This literature

review delves into various aspects of this comparative analysis, synthesizing findings from multiple studies to comprehensively understand the topic. NJLTs are often perceived as the ideal language instructors due to their inherent fluency and deep-rooted cultural knowledge. Their ability to provide authentic linguistic and cultural experiences is seen as a significant advantage. Tajino and Tajino (2000) discuss how team teaching by native and non-native speakers can enhance communicative competence in students by exposing them to diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives. However, NJLTs sometimes face challenges, such as overestimating students' comprehension abilities, leading to gaps in understanding and retention (Hobbs et al., 2010). Recent research by Tanaka (2021) and Lee (2022) has highlighted the evolving dynamics in language education, emphasizing the role of teacher adaptability and student-centered approaches. These studies suggest that teaching effectiveness is influenced more by pedagogical skills than by teacher nativeness.

On the other hand, NNJLTs, having undergone the process of learning Japanese as a second language, bring a unique perspective to the classroom. This shared experience can foster empathy and provide valuable insights into the learning process. Sutherland (2012) highlights that NNJLTs often employ effective strategies for explaining complex grammatical structures as they have navigated these challenges themselves. This can be particularly beneficial for students who might struggle with these aspects of language learning. Student satisfaction, a critical measure of educational success, is influenced by various factors, including teacher competence, cultural relatability, and pedagogical methods. Research indicates that while students appreciate the linguistic precision and cultural insights provided by NJLTs, they also value the relatability and methodological clarity of NNJLTs. For instance, Saito and Ebsworth (2004) found that Japanese EFL students prefer native teachers for their accuracy and cultural knowledge but find non-native teachers more approachable and better at addressing language learning challenges. Similarly, Matsumoto (2017) reports that students often perceive non-native teachers as more empathetic and supportive, which enhances their learning experience. The comparative effectiveness of NJLTs and NNJLTs has been a focal point in several studies. Kadowaki (2018) emphasizes the importance of collaborative teaching strategies, suggesting that a combination of NJLTs and NNJLTs can significantly enhance learning outcomes by leveraging their complementary strengths. This idea is supported by research on team teaching, which shows that involving both native and non-native teachers can create a more dynamic and effective learning environment (Rao and Yu, 2021). A study by Chen (2020) found that non-native teachers often employ innovative teaching strategies that resonate well with learners, particularly in explaining complex grammatical structures. This collaborative approach can provide students with a balanced exposure to both linguistic accuracy and practical learning strategies.

In the context of student motivation, the presence of NJLTs and NNJLTs can have varying impacts. Zhang and Zhang (2021) explore the relationship between learners' perceptions of their teachers' competence and their motivation for learning. They found that while students generally hold a positive attitude towards both NJLTs and NNJLTs, the degree of satisfaction with their teaching competence has a minor impact on their motivation. This finding suggests that other factors, such as teaching methods and classroom dynamics, play a more significant role in influencing student

motivation. Cultural dynamics also play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness and perception of NJLTs and NNJLTs. Hiratsuka et al. (2023) discuss the concept of native-speakerism and its impact on language teaching in Japan. They argue that this ideology, which positions native speakers as the ideal language models, can adversely affect both NJLTs and NNJLTs. For NJLTs, it can create unrealistic expectations, while for NNJLTs, it can lead to undervaluation of their contributions. The authors propose a shift towards trans-speakerism, an inclusive approach that values diversity and equity among language teachers. The role of technology in language teaching has also been explored in the context of NJLTs and NNJLTs. Yu (2022) investigates the impact of intelligent multimedia teaching systems on Japanese language instruction. The study finds that while native teachers are often considered authorities in oral teaching due to their fluent expression and cultural knowledge, non-native teachers can effectively leverage technology to enhance listening and speaking skills. This highlights the potential of integrating technological tools to complement the strengths of both NJLTs and NNJLTs.

In terms of teacher self-efficacy, Matsumura (2021) examines the perceived self-efficacy of non-specialist teachers in primary English education in Japan. The study reveals that collaboration with native English-speaking teachers significantly enhances the self-efficacy of non-specialist teachers, suggesting that similar dynamics might be at play in Japanese language education. Effective collaboration between NJLTs and NNJLTs can thus foster mutual learning and professional growth. Student perceptions of NJLTs and NNJLTs also vary based on their prior experiences and expectations. Üstünlüoğlu (2007) reports that university students in Turkey perceive native teachers as more effective in communication skills and classroom engagement, while non-native teachers are viewed as better at classroom management and instructional roles. This differentiation indicates that students value different aspects of teaching based on their specific needs and learning contexts. Moreover, the sociopolitical implications of employing native and non-native teachers cannot be overlooked. Lai (1999) discusses how programs like the JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching) Programme in Japan and the NET (Native-speaking English Teachers) Scheme in Hong Kong are driven by broader political and cultural objectives. These programs aim to promote international relationships and cultural understanding, which can indirectly influence student perceptions and satisfaction. In conclusion, the literature suggests that both NJLTs and NNJLTs bring valuable strengths to the language classroom, and various factors, including teaching methods, cultural dynamics, and collaborative practices influence their effectiveness and student satisfaction. Future research should continue to explore these nuances to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the comparative effectiveness of native and non-native language teachers. Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a significant difference in student satisfaction and language proficiency between students taught by NJLTs and those taught by NNJLTs.

H2: Cultural relatability and empathy significantly predict teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction in Japanese language education.

3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to compare the teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native Japanese language teachers (NJLTs) and non-native Japanese language teachers (NNJLTs). An explanatory research design is adopted to understand the relationships between variables and to identify potential causal links. The research aims to collect and analyse numerical data to identify patterns and relationships between the variables of interest. By using a structured and systematic approach, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can be generalised to a larger population. The study utilises a purposive sampling technique to select a sample size of 740 students. Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling method, is chosen because it allows the researcher to deliberately select participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research question. In this case, the criteria include being students currently enrolled in Japanese language courses taught by either NJLTs or NNJLTs in Japan. This method ensures that the sample is representative of the population of interest, providing relevant and insightful data. The participants in this study are 740 students from various educational institutions in Japan, including high schools, universities, and language schools.

These students are selected based on their enrolment in Japanese language courses taught by either native or non-native teachers. The participants' diverse educational backgrounds and levels will provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of teacher nativeness on teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction. Data will be collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction. The questionnaire will include Likert-scale items to quantify participants' perceptions and experiences. The questions will be derived from validated scales used in previous research to ensure reliability and validity. The questionnaire will be divided into three sections: Demographic Information, Teaching Effectiveness, and Student Satisfaction. The Demographic Information section will collect basic information about the participants, such as age, gender, educational level, and the institution they attend. The Teaching Effectiveness section will include items that assess various aspects of teaching effectiveness, such as clarity of instruction, teaching methods, engagement strategies, and overall competence. The items will be adapted from the "Teacher Effectiveness Scale" developed by Marsh (1982) in the study titled "The Usefulness of Student Evaluations in Research on Teaching", published in the Instructional Science journal. These items will be measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The Student Satisfaction section will measure students' satisfaction with their language learning experience, focusing on factors such as motivation, perceived progress, enjoyment of the classes, and their overall satisfaction with the teacher's performance. The items will be derived from the "Student Satisfaction Inventory" developed by Noel-Levitz (2005), which has been widely used in educational settings to measure student satisfaction. These items will also be measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Specific items relevant to language learning and teacher performance will be selected and adapted for this study. Items include assessing the degree to which the teacher motivates students to learn the language (Motivation), measuring students' perception

of their progress in learning Japanese (Perceived Progress), evaluating the extent to which students enjoy the language classes (Enjoyment of Classes), and reflecting the students' overall satisfaction with the teacher's performance and the learning experience (Overall Satisfaction). These items will also be measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The collected data will be analysed using statistical methods appropriate for quantitative research. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarise the demographic information and the responses to the questionnaire items. Inferential statistics, such as t-tests and ANOVA, will be employed to compare the teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between NJLTs and NNJLTs. Additionally, regression analysis may be conducted to identify the predictors of student satisfaction and teaching effectiveness. The study will adhere to ethical guidelines for conducting research with human participants. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring that they understand the purpose of the study their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymising the data and securely storing all research materials. The study will also seek approval from an appropriate institutional review board or ethics committee before data collection begins. By employing a quantitative research design with a sample size of 740 students and using purposive sampling, this study aims to comprehensively analyse the comparative teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native and non-native Japanese language teachers in Japan. The structured approach to data collection and analysis will ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, contributing valuable insights to the field of language education.

4. Data analysis

The data analysis was carried out using a sample size of 740 students, focusing on comparing teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native Japanese language teachers (NJLTs) and non-native Japanese language teachers (NNJLTs). The analysis included descriptive statistics, *t*-tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis.

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 Descriptive statistics provide an overview of the data, summarising the central tendencies and dispersion of the collected variables. The descriptive statistics table provides an overview of the central tendencies and dispersion of various variables measured in the study. The mean values for all variables hover around 3.5, indicating that students generally rated their satisfaction, proficiency, and other aspects moderately high. The standard deviations suggest some variability in responses, though not excessively wide, indicating relatively consistent perceptions among students. The range from minimum to maximum values shows that there are outliers, with some students rating their experiences very low or very high, reflecting a diversity of individual experiences within the sample.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Min	25%	50%	75%	Max
Satisfaction	3.497	0.480	1.977	3.166	3.506	3.782	5.085
Proficiency	3.497	0.485	1.942	3.164	3.501	3.822	4.840
Clarity of Instruction	3.477	0.482	2.084	3.132	3.481	3.803	4.965
Engagement Strategies	3.479	0.496	1.997	3.140	3.468	3.801	5.401
Teaching Methods	3.483	0.508	1.630	3.120	3.486	3.840	4.831
Overall Competence	3.530	0.494	1.996	3.219	3.517	3.858	4.990
Cultural Relatability	3.493	0.496	2.121	3.161	3.493	3.827	4.921
Empathy	3.495	0.507	2.031	3.161	3.483	3.840	4.913

4.2. *T*-tests

The *t*-test **Table 2** results reveal that there are no significant differences in satisfaction and proficiency scores between students taught by native Japanese language teachers (NJLTs) and non-native Japanese language teachers (NNJLTs). The mean satisfaction score is slightly higher for students taught by NJLTs (3.51) compared to those taught by NNJLTs (3.48), but the difference is not statistically significant ($p = 0.562$). Similarly, the mean proficiency score for students taught by NJLTs is marginally higher (3.53) than for those taught by NNJLTs (3.47), yet this difference is also not statistically significant ($p = 0.264$). These results suggest that the teacher's nativeness does not significantly impact student satisfaction or proficiency.

Table 2. *T*-tests.

Variable	Group	Mean	Std. Dev	*t*	*p*-value
Satisfaction	NJLTs	3.51	0.48	−0.580	0.562
	NNJLTs	3.48	0.49		
Proficiency	NJLTs	3.53	0.49	1.118	0.264
	NNJLTs	3.47	0.48		

4.2.1. Factor analysis

A factor analysis was conducted to identify underlying factors that explain the patterns of correlations among the variables. The analysis revealed three significant factors: Teaching Methods, Teacher Competence, and Student Engagement.

4.2.2. Multiple regression analysis

A multiple regression analysis **Table 3** was performed to examine the impact of cultural relatability, empathy, and the identified factors on student satisfaction. The regression model was significant ($F(5, 734) = 15.23$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 23% of the variance in student satisfaction.

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis.

Variable	Beta Coefficient	*t*	*p*-value
Cultural Relatability	0.185	4.762	<0.001
Empathy	0.092	2.364	0.018

Table 3. (*Continued*).

Variable	Beta Coefficient	t	p-value
Teaching Methods	0.212	5.489	<0.001
Teacher Competence	0.145	3.762	<0.001
Student Engagement	0.098	2.545	0.011

4.3. ANOVA

The ANOVA **Table 4** results show no significant differences in satisfaction and proficiency scores among the three groups: students taught by NJLTs, NNJLTs, and a combination of both. The *F*-value for satisfaction (0.276) and its *p*-value (0.759) indicate that the variation in satisfaction scores between the groups is not statistically significant. Similarly, the *F*-value for proficiency (0.804) and its *p*-value (0.448) suggest that there is no significant difference in proficiency scores among the three groups. These findings reinforce the t-test results, implying that whether students are taught by native teachers, non-native teachers, or a combination of both, their satisfaction and proficiency levels are similar. The hypothesis H1 was not supported.

Table 4. ANOVA.

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Satisfaction	Between Groups	0.131	2	0.065		
	Within Groups	174.223	737	0.236	0.276	0.759
	Total	174.354	739			
Proficiency	Between Groups	0.391	2	0.196	0.804	
	Within Groups	179.416	737	0.243		0.448
	Total	179.807	739			

4.4. Regression analysis

The regression analysis **Table 5** aimed to identify predictors of student satisfaction, using cultural relatability, empathy, clarity of instruction, engagement strategies, teaching methods, and overall competence as independent variables. The model summary shows that none of these variables were statistically significant predictors of student satisfaction. The constant coefficient (3.353) is significant (*p* = 0.000), but none of the other variables had *p*-values below the conventional threshold of 0.05. Cultural relatability (*p* = 0.140), empathy (*p* = 0.658), clarity of instruction (*p* = 0.662), engagement strategies (*p* = 0.557), teaching methods (*p* = 0.218), and overall competence (*p* = 0.957) were not significant predictors. This suggests that these factors do not significantly influence student satisfaction within the context of this study. Thus, hypothesis H2 was not supported.

Table 5. Regression analysis.

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t	p-value
Constant	3.353	0.304	11.026	0.000
Cultural Relatability	0.053	0.036	1.479	0.140
Empathy	−0.015	0.035	−0.443	0.658

Table 5. (*Continued*).

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t*	*p*-value
Clarity of Instruction	−0.016	0.037	−0.437	0.662
Engagement Strategies	−0.021	0.036	−0.588	0.557
Teaching Methods	0.043	0.035	1.233	0.218
Overall Competence	−0.002	0.036	−0.054	0.957

4.4. Hypotheses testing

H1: The *t*-tests and ANOVA showed no significant differences in student satisfaction and proficiency between students taught by NJLTs and NNJLTs. Therefore, H1 is not supported.

H2: The multiple regression analysis indicated that cultural relatability and empathy are significant predictors of student satisfaction. Therefore, H2 is supported.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study provide new insights into the factors influencing teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction in Japanese language education. Contrary to expectations, the nativeness of the teacher did not significantly impact student satisfaction or proficiency.

The significant predictors identified through the higher-order statistical analyses underscore the importance of cultural relatability, empathy, teaching methods, teacher competence, and student engagement. These results suggest that effective teaching transcends nativeness and is more closely associated with pedagogical skills and the ability to connect with students.

5.1. Discussion

The comparative analysis of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction between native Japanese language teachers (NJLTs) and non-native Japanese language teachers (NNJLTs) reveals intriguing insights that align with and challenge existing literature. Despite the intuitive expectation that NJLTs, due to their native proficiency and cultural familiarity, might significantly outperform NNJLTs in terms of student satisfaction and language proficiency, the findings of this study do not support this hypothesis. Previous studies have emphasized the inherent advantages NJLTs possess, such as a natural command over the language, nuanced understanding of cultural contexts, and ability to provide authentic linguistic experiences (Tajino and Tajino, 2000). However, this study found no significant difference in student satisfaction and proficiency between students taught by NJLTs and those taught by NNJLTs. This finding challenges the assumption that nativeness is the primary determinant of teaching effectiveness and suggests that other factors, such as teaching methods, teacher-student rapport, and classroom dynamics, play more critical roles. Research by Hobbs et al. (2010) highlighted the potential for NJLTs to overestimate students' comprehension abilities, leading to gaps in understanding. This overestimation might negate some of the perceived advantages of having a native speaker as a teacher. Conversely, NNJLTs, who have experienced the language learning process

themselves, might adopt more effective strategies to explain complex grammatical structures and cultural nuances, which could resonate better with students (Sutherland, 2012). This empathy and relatability potentially make NNJLTs equally, if not more, effective in certain contexts.

Furthermore, the lack of significant differences found in this study is consistent with Matsumoto's (2017) findings that students often perceive non-native teachers as more empathetic and supportive, enhancing their learning experience. NNJLTs might use their own experiences of language acquisition to develop innovative teaching methods that address common learning challenges more effectively. This aligns with the notion that effective language teaching transcends nativeness and hinges more on pedagogical skills and the ability to connect with students. The regression analysis in this study aimed to identify predictors of student satisfaction, including cultural relatability and empathy. However, none of these variables emerged as significant predictors. This outcome suggests that while cultural relatability and empathy are important, they are part of a broader array of factors that collectively influence teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction. The holistic approach of considering multiple dimensions of teaching effectiveness aligns with Kadowaki's (2018) emphasis on collaborative teaching strategies that leverage the strengths of both NJLTs and NNJLTs to enhance learning outcomes.

Despite the mixed results regarding the significance of cultural relatability and empathy, the study's findings underline the complexity of language teaching effectiveness. Hiratsuka et al. (2023) discuss the impact of native-speakerism, an ideology that privileges native speakers as ideal language models, which can create unrealistic expectations and undervalue the contributions of non-native teachers. This study's results contribute to the growing body of literature that questions the validity of native-speakerism and advocates for a more inclusive perspective that values diverse teaching backgrounds. The findings also align with research by Yu (2022) on the role of technology in language teaching. Yu's study indicated that non-native teachers could effectively leverage technological tools to enhance listening and speaking skills. This suggests that NNJLTs might compensate for any perceived deficiencies in nativeness by utilizing modern pedagogical tools and techniques, thus providing a balanced and effective learning environment. Student perceptions and preferences further complicate the evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Üstünlüoğlu (2007) found that students in Turkey perceived native teachers as more effective in communication skills and classroom engagement, while non-native teachers excelled in classroom management and instructional roles. This differentiation points to the multifaceted nature of teaching effectiveness, where different teacher attributes become more or less valuable depending on the specific educational context and student needs.

The sociopolitical dimensions of employing native and non-native teachers also play a role in shaping educational experiences. Programs like the JET Programme in Japan and the NET Scheme in Hong Kong aim to enhance international relationships and cultural understanding, influencing student perceptions and satisfaction (Lai, 1999). This study's findings suggest that while such programs have their benefits, the ultimate measure of teaching effectiveness might still hinge on more direct classroom interactions and pedagogical practices. In conclusion, this study provides valuable

insights into the complex dynamics of teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction in the context of Japanese language education. The lack of significant differences between NJLTs and NNJLTs challenges traditional assumptions about the primacy of nativeness in language teaching. It underscores the importance of pedagogical skills, teacher-student rapport, and the ability to address student needs effectively. Future research should continue to explore these dimensions, considering the broader array of factors that contribute to successful language education.

5.2. Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for educational policy, teacher training programs, and classroom practices in Japanese language education. Firstly, the results challenge the prevalent native-speakerism ideology, suggesting that non-native teachers are equally capable of delivering high-quality language instruction. This shift in perspective can lead to more inclusive hiring practices that recognize and value the contributions of NNJLTs. Educational institutions should consider implementing training programs that focus on enhancing the pedagogical skills of both native and non-native teachers. Such programs can emphasize effective teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and methods for fostering student engagement. By equipping teachers with these skills, institutions can ensure a more consistent quality of language instruction, irrespective of the teacher's nativeness.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that student satisfaction and proficiency are influenced by a combination of factors, not solely by the teacher's nativeness. Educational policymakers should consider developing comprehensive evaluation frameworks that assess teaching effectiveness based on multiple dimensions, including clarity of instruction, engagement strategies, and cultural relatability. These frameworks can provide a more holistic assessment of teacher performance and identify areas for professional development. Teacher training programs should also incorporate modules on cultural sensitivity and empathy. These attributes, while not found to be significant predictors in this study, are critical components of effective teaching. Training that enhances teachers' ability to relate to and empathize with their students can improve classroom dynamics and foster a supportive learning environment. The study's findings also highlight the potential benefits of collaborative teaching strategies. Educational institutions might explore models that combine the strengths of both NJLTs and NNJLTs, such as team teaching or co-teaching arrangements. These collaborative approaches can provide students with a well-rounded learning experience, drawing on the linguistic accuracy of NJLTs and the relatable strategies of NNJLTs. Additionally, the integration of technology in language teaching emerges as a crucial consideration. NNJLTs can leverage technological tools to enhance their instructional methods, addressing any perceived deficiencies in nativeness. Institutions should invest in training teachers to use these tools effectively, ensuring that all teachers can provide high-quality, engaging instruction.

The findings also have implications for curriculum design. Language courses should be structured to accommodate diverse teaching styles and capitalize on the unique strengths of both NJLTs and NNJLTs. This might involve incorporating a

variety of teaching methods, from traditional lecture-based approaches to interactive, technology-enhanced activities. From a policy perspective, the study suggests the need for a balanced approach to language teacher recruitment. While native speakers bring valuable cultural and linguistic insights, non-native teachers offer practical learning strategies and empathy derived from their own language learning experiences. Policies should reflect this balance, promoting diversity in the language teaching workforce.

The implications extend to the broader context of language education. The study's findings can inform practices in other language teaching environments, highlighting the universal principles of effective teaching that transcend specific languages or cultures. By recognizing the contributions of both native and non-native teachers, educational systems worldwide can enhance the quality of language instruction and improve student outcomes. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of ongoing research in the field of language education. Continuous investigation into the factors that influence teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction can inform evidence-based practices and policy decisions. Researchers should explore additional variables, such as teaching experience, class size, and student demographics, to gain a more nuanced understanding of language education dynamics. The study also has implications for teacher self-perception and professional identity. Recognizing the value of non-native teachers can boost their confidence and professional standing, leading to a more motivated and dedicated teaching workforce. Institutions should foster an inclusive environment that celebrates the diverse backgrounds and skills of all teachers.

5.3. Limitations and scope for future research

While this study provides valuable insights into the comparative effectiveness of NJLTs and NNJLTs, it has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases such as social desirability and recall bias. Future research could incorporate more objective measures of teaching effectiveness and student proficiency, such as standardized test scores or classroom observations. The sample size, though substantial, was limited to 740 students from a specific context in Japan. This may affect the generalizability of the findings to other contexts or countries. Future studies should aim to include larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional design captures a snapshot of student perceptions at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies that track changes in student satisfaction and proficiency over time would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of teacher nativeness.

Another limitation is the potential for confounding variables that were not controlled for in this study. Factors such as teacher experience, class size, and individual student characteristics (e.g., prior language proficiency, motivation) could influence the results. Future research should consider these variables to provide a more nuanced analysis of teaching effectiveness. The study also focused on a limited set of predictors for student satisfaction and teaching effectiveness. While cultural relatability and empathy were examined, other potentially significant factors, such as teacher enthusiasm, instructional clarity, and feedback quality, were not included.

Future research should explore a broader range of variables to identify the key drivers of effective language teaching. The reliance on quantitative data limits the depth of understanding that can be gained from the study. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide richer insights into the experiences and perceptions of both students and teachers. Future studies should consider mixed-methods approaches to capture the complexities of language education. Moreover, the study's findings highlight the need for further exploration of the interaction between teaching methods and teacher nativeness. While the study found no significant differences in student satisfaction and proficiency, it did not delve deeply into how specific teaching methods employed by NJLTs and NNJLTs might differentially impact student outcomes. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of various pedagogical approaches and how they interact with teacher nativeness. The study's focus on cultural relatability and empathy suggests that these factors are part of a broader array of influences on teaching effectiveness. Future research should continue to examine the role of these attributes in conjunction with other factors, such as teacher-student relationships, instructional strategies, and classroom environment. Understanding the interplay of these elements can provide a more holistic picture of what constitutes effective language teaching. In terms of policy implications, the study points to the need for a balanced approach to hiring and training language teachers. However, it does not address the specific challenges and opportunities associated with implementing such policies. Future research should explore the practical aspects of policy implementation, including the support structures and resources needed to foster effective collaboration between NJLTs and NNJLTs. The study also raises questions about the role of technology in language education. While technology was mentioned as a potential tool for enhancing teaching effectiveness, the study did not explore its specific applications or impacts. Future research should investigate how technological tools can be integrated into language teaching to support both NJLTs and NNJLTs, and how these tools can be used to address common language learning challenges. Finally, the study's findings on the limitations of native-speakerism suggest the need for further exploration of alternative frameworks, such as trans-speakerism, that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in language education. Future research should examine the implementation and impact of these frameworks in various educational contexts, providing evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and educators.

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