論　文

On The Preferential Use of *there* Constructions by Japanese Speakers of English : A Preliminary Study Using a Two-Alternative Forced-Choice Task in Linguistic and Discourse Contexts

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1. Introduction

1−1. Background

The notion of *World Englishes* has recently gained more and more recognition among researchers as well as practitioners. The basic premise of the notion is that, even though each of the varieties of English spoken in the world has unique structural and functional features, all of them should be equally treated (Kachru, 1965). In this vein, previous research (e.g., Suenobu, 2002) has sought to describe and identify unique features of Japanese English. The connotation of *Japanese English*, however, has often been negative, suggesting that it is not generally intelligible to native speakers of English (NS, henceforth) due to grammatical errors and/or mispronunciations. One of the reasons for this negative connotation is that previous research has generally attempted to characterize Japanese English on the basis of how different it is from native Englishes (e.g., American or British English). Specifically, it has focused on grammatical errors that Japanese speakers of English (JS, henceforth) make, and made generalizations about them.

In the authors' view, too much focus on *errors* has ignored an important aspect in characterization of Japanese English. That is, non-native speakers of English (NNS), including JS, produce sentences that are grammatically correct, but may not be preferred by NS. Taking this approach, the authors initiated their study on the use of *there* constructions by JS and NS. The primary reason for focusing on *there* constructions is that, as JS learn basic syntactic properties of the construction at an early stage of English education, a relatively large proportion of the sentences do not contain grammatical errors. However, the authors' observations at university-level classes have shown that, although the sentences are grammatically correct, they appear to be seldom used by NS in some particular linguistic contexts. It was believed that analysis of

these sentences would shed light on some fundamental differences in Japanese English and native English.

1–2. Linguistic Properties of *there* Constructions

1–2–1. Syntactic and semantic properties

A basic word order of a *there* construction is as follows. A pronoun, *there*, is followed by a verb (be-verb or a restricted set of verbs such as *appear* and *stand*), which is followed by a noun (termed *logical subject*; LS, henceforth). In a typical *there* construction, the LS is followed by an adverbial phrase that indicates a location of the LS (i.e., adverbial locative; e.g., There are many people *in the park*). The LS can also be followed by an adjectival phrase that modifies it, which includes a relative, infinitive and participle clause (termed *post-LS modifier*).

Some restrictions apply as to a type of nouns that can be LS in *there* constructions (e.g., Imamichi & Ishikawa, 2006; Takami & Kuno, 2002; Uchida, 2011). Specifically, LS must be an indefinite noun phrase, or in Milsark's (1977) terms, a weak noun phrase (i.e., *some*, *few*), bare plurals (*seats, voters*), mass nouns (*cheese*), etc. These constraints are termed *definiteness restrictions*[1]. The restriction normally excludes a strong noun phrase that includes *the, all, most, each, every*, demonstratives (*this, that*), possessives (*my, his*), personal pronouns (*I, you*), and proper names (*Norm, Al*).

Another semantic restriction is that the predicate must represent a temporary property and avoid individual-level adjectives such as *tall*, *beautiful*, and *intelligent* (Bolinger, 1977), as shown below.

(1) a. There are salesmen knocking on the door.

b. *There are salesmen intelligent. (a. b., Abbott, 2004, p. 15)

Finally, NS strongly prefer to use *there* constructions when the be-verb denotes occurrence of some event. This accounts for NS' preference of (2a) over (2b) below.

(2) a. Do you know there was a traffic accident in downtown last night?

b. *Do you know a traffic accident was in downtown last night?

1–2–2. Discourse properties

It is widely recognized that *there* constructions serve an important discourse functions in terms of a placement of old and new information in a sentence. According to Breivik (1999), the construction signals the readers (or listeners) that they must be ready to direct attention to a new item of information in a discourse. Another function is to place an NP with new information near the end of the sentence (i.e., end-weight principle). These account for NS' preference of (3a) over (3b) below.

(3)　a. When I entered the room, there was a little girl near the blackboard.

b. When I entered the room, a little girl was near the blackboard.

In sum, the use of *there* constructions is governed by an interplay of semantic restrictions on LS or the predicate, with discourse factors such as placement of new/old information in a sentence.

1–3. Previous Research on The Use of *there* Constructions by JS

A great deal of research has been conducted on learning of *there* constructions among L2 learners of English in a framework of syntactic and semantic theories (cf. Oshita, 2004) and of language typology in terms of informational structure (e.g., Sasaki, 1990; Shibata, 2006). However, the data were sparse regarding the preferential use of *there* constructions between JS and NS. Miki (2010) compared the use of a number of English sentence structures that included *there* constructions, using Nagoya Interlanguage Corpus of English (NICE). The corpus consists of a large collection of essays written by adult JS and NS on such social topics as crime, economy and English education. The study indicated that JS tended to use *there* constructions in contexts where NS would prefer other sentence structures.

Using the same corpus, Miyake & Tsushima (2012a) compared *there* constructions produced by JS and NS in terms of several linguistic features including tense, plurality of LS, presence of quantifiers, adjectival modifiers of LS, adverbial modifiers of a be-verb and semantic categories of LS. It analyzed 245 *there* constructions in 201 essays and 368 *there* constructions in 200 essays produced by JS and NS, respectively. The results indicated that, as compared with NS, JS prefer to use *there* constructions with a present tense, plural LS, quantifiers (e.g., *many*), a relative clause and LS denoting "beings" (e.g., *people*). With these linguistic features combined, the *there* construction preferred by JS is "*there* + present tense verb + quantifier + 'being' noun + plural + relative clause + verb...." The phrase, *there are many people who*..., can be frequently found in the NICE corpus, as exemplified below.

#78: I think that *there are many people who* work for money.
#159: However, indeed, *there are many people who* commit a suicide.

Miyake & Tsushima (2012b) further investigated the issue of the preferential use of *there* constructions by examining their acceptability. In this study, two native evaluators (NEV1 and NEV2) and two Japanese evaluators (JEV1 and JEV2) with an excellent command of English rated the acceptability of *there* constructions, using a scale of four (i.e., from "Strongly recom-

mend replacing '*there* construction'" to "Strongly recommend keeping '*there* construction'"). They were also asked to rewrite the sentences if replacement of *there* construction was necessary. It was found that the four evaluators showed dramatic differences in the acceptability ratings. Especially, NEV1 strongly recommended retaining *there* constructions (i.e., rating=4) in 35% of the sentences, and NEV2 did so in as many as 85% of them, while JEV1 and JEV2 did so in 56% and 69% of them.

Despite these differences, the results clearly showed that the evaluators recommended replacing a non-negligible proportion of *there* constructions with some other structures. Among all *there* constructions produced by JS (*N*=245), *there* constructions were changed into some other sentence structures by at least one evaluator in as many as 83% (*N*=209) of the sentences[2]. When the sentences were summed across the five evaluators (counting evaluation of the same sentence by five evaluators as five different cases of evaluation), the replacement occurred in 38% (*N*=451) of all *there* constructions (*N*=1193). The proportion of *there* constructions changed in the editing was further analyzed as a function of the grammatical category of the post-LS modifiers, which included a relative clause, a prepositional phrase, an infinitive/participle clause. 40% of *there* constructions with the relative clause, which JS prefer to use, were replaced, while 32% of the prepositional phrases were replaced.

The study also examined the pattern in which the original *there* constructions were changed into some other constructions. In a majority of cases (81%), the construction was changed to a sentence with a subject followed by a verb, be-verb or a passive (i.e., be+past participle). In the example below, LS in the original sentence is moved to the subject of the edited sentence, which is followed by a verb in the relative clause used in the original sentence.

JS: There are many people who support the government's policy.
Edited: Many people support the government's policy.

In some cases, the subject and/or the verb of the edited sentence is not copied from the original sentence, but inserted by the editor, as exemplified below.

JS: There is a right to express your ideas freely.
Edited: You have a right to express your ideas freely.

In sum, the previous studies provided evidence that JS prefer to use a certain set of linguistic features in *there* constructions (i.e., present tense, plural, a relative clause, LS which denotes

"being"), and that a relatively large proportion of *there* constructions produced by JS are not preferred by NS. It remained unclear, however, what kind of linguistic or discourse factors would underlie the preferential use of *there* constructions between JS and NS.

1-4. Rationale of The Study

To fill in this gap, the present study attempted to extend Miyake & Tsushima (2012a, b) by investigating whether JS would show evidence of the preferential use in some selected linguistic and discourse contexts. First of all, to examine JS' preferential use, the present study used a two-alternative, forced-choice task embedded in a reading task, instead of a writing task. Short passages, each of which contained a set of *there* construction and its alternative sentence, were created. To control for the length of the passage and the position of a *there* construction, one passage consisted of three sentences, and the last sentence always had the alternatives (except in a control context). To minimize reading difficulty, vocabulary level in the sentences was made as low as possible. It should be noted that the present task conditions were different from those under which *there* constructions were produced in essay writing. In the writing task, JS produced *there* constructions in a spontaneous manner, so that the production was based on their productive knowledge of using the construction. The forced-choice task, on the other hand, is basically a receptive task, as JS were able to see two alternatives when they made a choice. Recognizing these differences, the present study attempted to show whether JS would still show the preferential use in the receptive task.

Second, the present study selected a limited number of contexts, and examined their effects on the choice between the alternatives. The contexts (to be detailed below) were selected on the basis of the data on the acceptability rating and/or the proportion of *there* constructions replaced in Miyake & Tsushima (2012a, b). It was necessary to control for the context because the available data clearly indicated that the number of linguistic and discourse factors combine to influence the preferential use. The present study was the first step to delineating those factors. The following were the contexts selected (see Appendix for the list of all the passages used in the test).

1) LS + a relative clause (RC)

Example passage:

Yesterday I was watching London Olympics on TV.

I was surprised that Summer Olympics do not have baseball any more.

(a) But there are many people who like to watch those sports.

(b) But many people like to watch those sports.

As described above, (a) has the linguistic features JS have been shown to prefer (i.e., a quantifier, a relative clause, LS denoting "being"). It has also been shown that NS changed (a) into (b) in the editing in a relatively large proportion of cases.

2) LS with old information (OI)

Example passage:

I went to Kyoto with my grandparents this summer.

We visited many famous shrines and temples together.

(a) Those traditional buildings were within the city, and it was very convenient to travel.

(b) There were those traditional buildings within the city, and it was very convenient to travel.

NS normally prefer (a) over (b) because LS in (b) has old information. In this case, "those traditional buildings" refer to "many famous shrines and temples". It should be noted that the use of the determiner also violates definiteness restriction.

3) LS being proper nouns (PN)

Example passage:

My hobby is taking photos.

In order to take great photos, we need good cameras.

(a) Nikon D3S, Canon 5D MarkII, and Pentax 645D are some examples.

(b) For example, there are Nikon D3S, Canon 5D MarkII, and Pentax 645D.

NS normally avoid LS when the noun denotes a definite entity, including a proper noun (i.e., definiteness restriction). For JS, (b) is compatible with the Japanese translation of the intended meaning, "... *ga aru*."

4) Verb inserted in the alternative sentence (VI)

Example passage:

My favorite artist is Lady Gaga.

She was born in New York in 1986.

(a) There are her concerts every year in Japan.

(b) She has her concerts every year in Japan.

In the previous studies, the editors sometimes inserted a subject and a verb in the alternative sentence. In this case, as the topic of the passage is Lady Gaga, NS may normally prefer (b) over (a).

5) If there is a person who... (PW)
Example passage:
This is the busiest street in Tokyo.
A lot of people have been killed in traffic accidents here.
(a) If you see someone trying to cross the street, please warn him/her.
(b) If there is a person who tries to cross the street, please warn him/her.

The data have shown that NS would strongly prefer (a) over (b) because "If there is a person who..." in (b) implies such a person actually exists. Some JS produced (b) because the sentence is compatible with the Japanese translation, "*moshi ... suru hito ga itara*."

6) Control (CR)
Example passage:
(a) There was a small basket court in a small town in USA.
(b) A small basket court was in a small town in USA.
A boy called Michael played basketball there from morning till night every day.
He later became a famous basketball player in the world.

This context was included to examine how the participants would perform in the context where the choice of the *there* construction was most likely. In this context, NS normally choose (a) for the following reasons. First, the *there* construction is typically used as an introduction of a story. Second, it is compatible with the end-weight principle such that it directs the readers' attention to "a small basket court...." If the participants would perform at a chance level under this context, this would suggest that the task itself was too difficult for them.

1–5. Specific Research Questions

The primary purpose of the present study was to obtain preliminary data on the preferential use of *there* constructions by JS in specific linguistic and discourse contexts, using two-alternative, forced-choice procedure. The specific research questions asked in the study were;

1) Did JS significantly prefer a *there* construction or an alternative sentence in each context?
2) If yes, what were the relative effects of the context on the degree of preference across the contexts?
3) Did English ability of JS significantly influence the pattern of preference across the contexts?

2. Method

2-1. Participants

Participants were 56 undergraduate students learning English as a foreign language at a private university in Tokyo, Japan (sophomores: *N*=50; juniors: *N*=3; seniors: *N*=3). As an indicator of the English ability, they provided data on a TOEIC score (i.e., the highest score within a year). 31 students had a score below the TOEIC score of 500, 14 students between 500 and 595, and 11 students above 600. Overall, the English ability among the students can be categorized as pre-intermediate, intermediate or upper-intermediate.

2-2. Description of The Test Procedure

As described above, JS were tested using a two-alternative, multiple-choice task embedded in a reading task. Two passages for each of the five contexts and the control context were prepared, totaling 12 passages (i.e., questions). The order of presentation was determined as follows. First, the order of six contexts was decided by randomization. Second, one of the two passages for each context was placed in the former half (i.e., six passages), while the other in the latter half, so that two passages of the same context were not presented consecutively. Between the two passages of the same context, the order of choice (i.e., *there* construction or the alternative) was reversed.

All the participants, except for ten participants, were tested on-line using a quiz facility of a learning management system called Moodle. They were asked to read a passage and click on either of the alternative choices. It was made clear that they had to choose one answer even when they were not sure which one to choose. Ten participants were tested using paper materials, which had identical texts. The test took approximately ten minutes.

3. Results

3−1. Proportion of Choosing *there* Constructions as a Function of The Contexts

As described above, the participants responded in a forced-choice task of choosing either a *there* construction or an alternative construction in six contexts with two passages in each context (i.e., 12 passages in total). The frequency of choosing *there* constructions among all the passages per participant ranged from two to eight with the average of 5.48 (N=56; SD=1.48), indicating that the participants differed substantially in their choice of the constructions. As is shown in Table 1, the proportion of choosing *there* constructions in both sentences in one context (i.e., # of *there* response is "2") and that of neither sentence (i.e., # of *there* response is "0") amounted to 53.3%. This indicated that the participants' responses were not random, but showed some preferences for either construction across the contexts.

Table 1. *The frequency of choosing there constructions per participant as a function of contexts (RC=relative clause; OI=old information; PN=proper nouns (definiteness restriction); VI=verb inserted; PW=If there is a person who...; CR=control)*

		Question Type						
# of *there* response		RC	OI	PN	VI	PW	CR	Total
0	Count	22	23	3	16	33	7	104
	Expected Count	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3	104
	% within Question Type	39.3%	41.1%	5.4%	28.6%	58.9%	12.5%	31.0%
1	Count	27	26	33	24	19	28	157
	Expected Count	26.2	26.2	26.2	26.2	26.2	26.2	157
	% within Question Type	48.2%	46.4%	58.9%	42.9%	33.9%	50.0%	46.7%
2	Count	7	7	20	16	4	21	75
	Expected Count	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	75
	% within Question Type	12.5%	12.5%	35.7%	28.6%	7.1%	37.5%	22.3%
Total	Count	56	56	56	56	56	56	336
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2 shows the frequency of choosing *there* constructions or alternative constructions summed across the two questions and all the participants in each context. The proportion of choosing *there* constructions was greater in CR and PN, while the opposite was true in RC, PW and OI. The chi-square test found that the frequency of choosing either construction across the five contexts was significantly different, $\chi^2(1, N=560)=45.40$, $p=.000$. It was also found that the proportion of response for either construction within each context was significantly different

from each other in all the contexts ($p < .05$) except in VI. The overall results indicated that the participants prefer to use *there* constructions over alternative constructions in PN and CR, but prefer to use alternative contexts in RC, PW and OI.

Table 2. *The frequency of choosing there constructions or alternative constructions summed across the participants (N=112) as a function of contexts (RC=relative clause; OI=old information; PN=proper nouns (definiteness restriction); VI=verb inserted; PW=If there is a person who...; CR=control)*

		Question Type						
Response		RC	OI	PN	VI	PW	CR	Total
Alternative	Count	71	72	39	56	85	42	365
	Expected Count	60.8	60.8	60.8	60.8	60.8	60.8	365
	% within Question Type	63.4%	64.3%	34.8%	50.0%	75.9%	37.5%	54.3%
there construction	Count	41	40	73	56	27	70	307
	Expected Count	51.2	51.2	51.2	51.2	51.2	51.2	307
	% within Question Type	36.6%	35.7%	65.2%	50.0%	24.1%	62.5%	45.7%
Total	Count	112	112	112	112	112	112	672
		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

3–2. Proportion of Choosing *there* Constructions as a Function of Specific Contexts

Although the results above clearly indicated that the participants' preferences of *there* constructions significantly differed across the contexts, the data in Table 1 indicated that the response pattern would be different between the questions in two passages in each context. Figure 1 shows the proportions of the choices as a function of contexts and questions (Question #1 and #2). It is shown that, although the proportions of the choices in two questions of the same context were in general agreement, they differed substantially in some contexts. In PN, for example, the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was much greater (87.5%) in Question #2 than in Question #1 (42.9%). In CR, it was much greater (78.6%) in Question #1 than in Question #2 (46.4%). In the other contexts, the differences in the proportions ranged from 10.5% in OI to 20.4% in VI. The results indicated a possibility that the participants' choices were influenced not just by the factor intended by the test but also by some other factors.

This interpretation was collaborated by the results of correlation analyses which examined whether the responses between the two questions in the same context were correlated. The results showed that the correlation coefficients were low and not significant in any of the contexts, ranging from -.109 to .198.

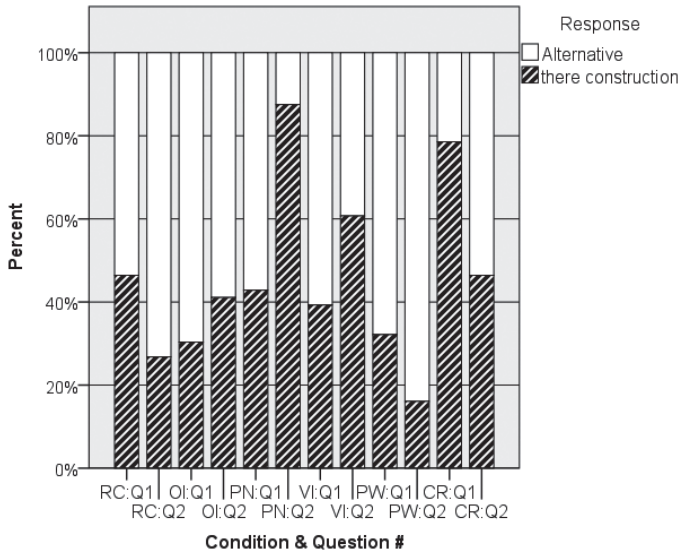

Figure 1. *The frequency of choosing there constructions or alternative constructions summed across the participants as a function of contexts and questions (RC=relative clause; OI=old information; PN=proper nouns (definiteness restriction); VI=verb inserted; PW=If there is a person who...; CR=control)*

3–3. Effects of English Ability on The Preferential Use of *there* Constructions

The next analyses examined whether the proportions of the choices were influenced by the participants' English ability. They were divided into two groups according to the reported TOEIC scores. The high-ability group had scores of equal or above 500 (*N*=25), while the low-ability group, below 500 (*N*=31). Figure 2 shows the proportions of the choices as a function of contexts across the two groups. It is shown that the proportions were very similar between the two groups, except in RC, where the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was higher in the high-ability group (46.0%) than in the low-ability group (27.7%).

As is shown in Figure 3, the proportions of the choices showed relatively similar patterns between the lower and higher groups across the two questions of the same context, except for Question #1 of RC, Question #2 of OI and two questions of PN. In Question #1 of RC, the proportion of *there* constructions was much higher in the high-ability group (64.0%) than the low-ability group (32.3%). In Question #2 of OI, it was higher in the low-ability group (51.6%) than the high-ability group (28.0%). In Question #1 of PN, it was higher in the high-ability group (56.0%) than in the low-ability group (32.3%). In Question #2 of PN, on the other hand, it reached almost 100% (i.e., 96.8%) in the low-ability group, while it was much lower (76.0%) in the high-ability group.

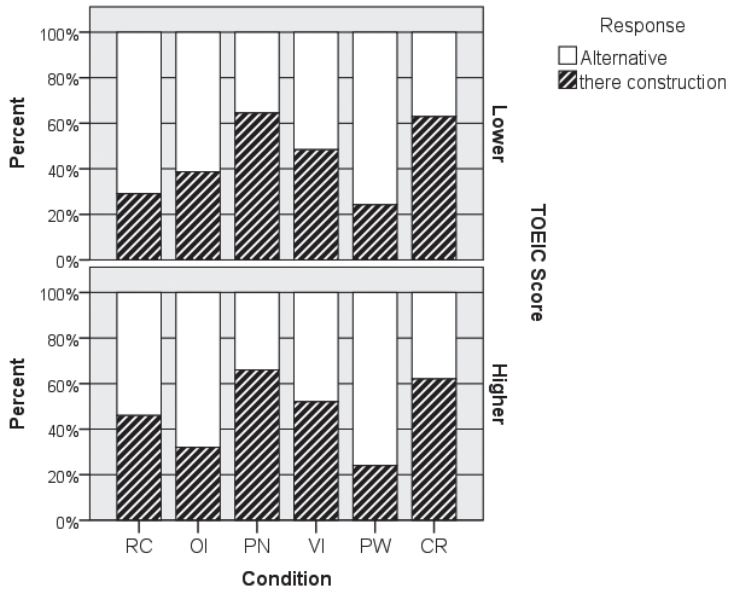

Figure 2. *The proportion of choosing there constructions or alternative constructions summed across the participants as a function of contexts and TOEIC scores (RC=relative clause; OI=old information; PN=proper nouns (definiteness restriction); VI=verb inserted; PW=If there is a person who...; CR=control)*

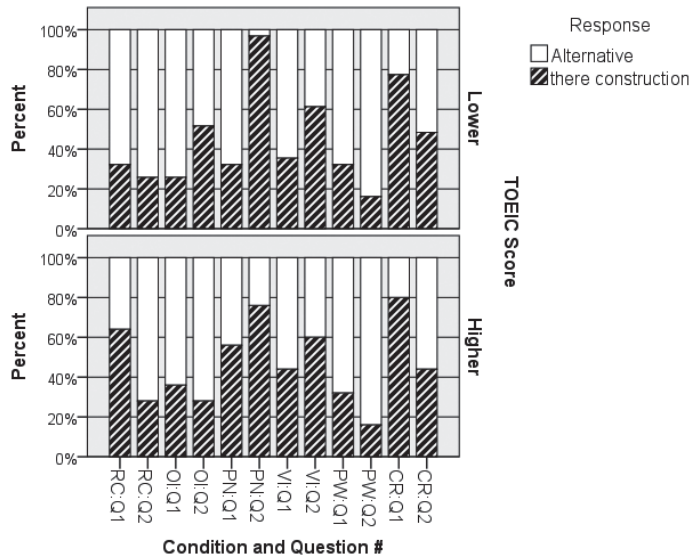

Figure 3. *The proportion of choosing there constructions or alternative constructions summed across the participants as a function of contexts, questions and TOEIC scores (RC=relative clause; OI=old information; PN=proper nouns (definiteness restriction); VI=verb inserted; PW=If there is a person who...; CR=control)*

4. Discussion

4−1. Summary of The Results

As described above, the Japanese participants completed the task of choosing either a *there* construction or an alternative construction in six different contexts with two passages in each context. The present study was designed to investigate whether JS would show preferential use of *there* constructions in particular linguistic and discourse contexts. The following were the selected contexts; 1) logical subject (LS) + a relative clause (RC), 2) LS with old information (OI), 3) LS being proper nouns (PN), 4) insertion of a verb (VI), 5) If there is a person who... (PW), and 6) control context (CR).

The study was conducted to examine the following three specific research questions: (1) Did JS significantly prefer a *there* construction or an alternative sentence in each context?, (2) If yes, what were the relative effects of the context on the degree of preference across the contexts?, (3) Did English ability of JS significantly influence the pattern of preference across the contexts?

As for the frequency of choosing *there* constructions among all the passages per participant, the responses were not random, but showed some statistically significant preferences for either construction across the contexts, except in VI. Specifically, the proportions of choosing *there* constructions were higher in PN and CR, and lower in RC, PW and OI. The results indicated that the participants preferred to use *there* constructions in PN and CR, but preferred to use alternative constructions in RC, PW and OI. It was found that, although the participants' preferences of *there* constructions differed across the contexts, the response pattern was different between the questions in two passages in each context. The proportions of responses in two questions of the same context differed substantially in PN and CR.

The next analyses examined whether the participants' English ability influenced the pattern of preference across the contexts. The results showed that the proportions were very similar between the two groups, except in RC and OI. In RC, high-ability group preferred to choose *there* constructions, but in OI, low-ability group preferred to choose it. Further analyses brought the result that the proportions of responses showed relatively similar patterns between the lower and higher groups across the two questions of the same context. Exceptions included Question #1 of RC, Question #2 of OI and both Questions#1 and #2 of PN.

4–2. Possible Accounts of The Results on The Proportion of Choosing *there* Construction in Each Context

The following sections will discuss possible accounts of the results on the proportion of choosing *there* construction in each context.

4–2–1. *there* constructions with a relative clause (RC)

Miyake & Tsushima (2012a, b) found that, as compared with NS, JS preferred to use *there* constructions with a relative clause in essay writing. With the other preferred linguistic features combined, the *there* construction preferred by JS is "*there* + present tense verb + quantifier + 'being' noun + plural + relative clause + verb...." (e.g., I think there are many people who work for money). It was speculated that JS preferred to use this type of sentence because they might try to gain a wider sympathy from readers for what they write. It was also found that a relatively large proportion (i.e., 40.4%) of *there* constructions with a relative clause were replaced with some other constructions in the editing.

In the present study, the two passages were created so that the target sentences occurred in similar contexts as described above (see Appendix). It was found that the proportion of choosing the *there* construction (i.e., 37%) was lower than what the previous results appeared to suggest. First of all, although it is difficult to directly compare the present result with that of the previous study as the two studies used a very different elicitation method (essay writing vs. choosing alternatives), it appears plausible that the relatively low proportion of choosing *there* constructions was due to the methodology in which JS were explicitly given alternative sentence constructions when they made a choice. Second, while the present study used a short passage, the previous study used a relatively long essay with social topics where the kind of generalization using *there* constructions might be relatively important.

Next, it was found that the high-ability group preferred to choose *there* constructions with a relative clause than the low-ability group (see Figure 2). The result was compatible with that of Miyake & Tsushima (2012a) that JS were more likely to use *there* constructions as they became more advanced in their English ability in essay writing. The present result, however, showed that the trend was limited to Question #1 (see Figure 3 and Appendix). A possible reason for the difference between Question #1 and #2 is that the topic of the passage is "I" in the former, but "my parents" in the latter. It might be the case that the high-ability group preferred to use the *there* construction in a context where "not only I, but also many other people", but less so in a context where the topic is the third person (i.e., "my parents").

4–2–2. *there* constructions with LS carrying old information (OI)

Miyake & Tsushima (2012a, b) found that NS tended to avoid using *there* constructions

when LS carries old information. It was suggested that NS follow a topicalization principle, according to which they place items that carry given information near the beginning of the sentence and items that carry new information toward the end. In the present study, the two passages were created such that the LS (i.e., "the news" and "those buildings") refers to a noun phrase in the previous context, and thus carries old information (see Appendix). Determiners (i.e., "the" and "those") were used to linguistically mark old information on the LS. It should be noted that the presence of the determiners also violated the definiteness restriction in the sentences as well.

It was found that the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was relatively low (i.e., 35.7%; see Table 1), indicating that JS did not prefer to use *there* constructions in this context. The analyses on the effect of English ability, however, found that the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was much higher in the low-ability group (51.6%) than the high-ability group (28.0%) in Question #2, but that a significant difference was not observed in Question #1. The determiner used before the LS was "the" in Question #1, but "those" in Question #2. It could be the case that the low-ability group might be merely responsive to the presence of "the" in their overall choice of alternative structures, while the high-ability group might be able to pay attention to the information status of LS marked by both "the" and "those".

4–2–3. *there* constructions with LS being proper nouns (PN; definiteness restriction)

As described in Introduction, NS normally follow definiteness restriction when using *there* constructions. Specifically, the LS in a *there* construction should be an indefinite noun phrase. Miyake & Tsushima (2012b) found that acceptability rating of *there* constructions with LS being proper nouns was substantially low. In the present study, each of the two passages had a *there* construction which contained a multiple proper nouns (see 1–3 and Appendix).

It was found that, averaged over the two questions, the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was relatively high (i.e., 65.2%; see Table 2). It was also found that the proportion was much higher in Question #2 (i.e., 87.5%) than in Question #1 (i.e., 42.9%; see Figure 1). The analyses on the effect of English ability further revealed that, in Question #2, the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was higher in the low-ability group (i.e., 96.8%) than in the high-ability group (i.e., 76.0%).

The relatively high proportion of choosing *there* constructions might be due to transfer from Japanese. JS generally follow a rule that existential sentence-endings, *–aru* (for things) and *–iru* (for people), are directly translated into *there* constructions in English, and vice versa. The present finding suggests that, when JS apply this rule, they tend not to be concerned with definiteness of LS, and not to follow definite restrictions. This appears to be true especially for

the low-ability group and for the *there* construction where LS are things (i.e., Question #2) rather than people (Question #1). It might be the case that the low-ability group was subject to the influence of the transfer when the LS indicates more concrete presence (i.e., "cameras") than people (i.e., "names of friends").

4–2–4. A verb inserted in the alternative sentence (VI)

Miyake & Tsushima (2012b) found that, when *there* constructions were edited by evaluators, a verb that did not exist in the original sentence was inserted in the alternative sentence (see 1–3). In the present study, the passages were created such that a *there* construction was paired with an alternative sentence where a verb, *have*, was inserted (see 1–4 and Appendix). In one passage (i.e., Question #1), the alternative sentence has a subject (i.e., *she*) which is the topic of the passage (i.e., *Lady Gaga*). It was presumed that the participants who pay attention to continuation of the topic would choose the alternative construction. In another passage (i.e., Question #2), the subject of the alternative sentence is a noun phrase using a gerund (i.e., *entering this college*), which contains an item of old information (i.e., *this college*), whereas the *there* construction ends with the item (i.e., *there are both good and bad points in entering* ***this college***). It was presumed that the participants who honor the topicalization principle would choose the alternative sentence. The present result found that, averaged across the questions, the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was around a chance level (i.e., 50%). Although the proportion could be compared with that of the other contexts, it was not possible to rule out the possibility that the participants performed at a chance-level where they randomly made choices. Thus, it was impossible to draw a firm conclusion regarding the preference for *there* constructions or alternative constructions in this context.

4–2–5. If there is a person who... (PW)

Miyake & Tsushima (2012a, b) found that JS produced *there* constructions in the if-clause, "if there is a person who...," in essay writing. The *there* construction is intended to mean "if somebody exists who...". It was suggested that the sentence, "if there is a person who...", is a direct translation of Japanese, "*moshi ... suru hito ga itara*". It was found that almost all the *there* constructions with this sentence structure were replaced with alternative constructions, and that the acceptable ratings given to such *there* constructions were generally low. In the present study, each of the two passages included a *there* construction in a clause, "if there is a person who...," and its corresponding alternative sentence.

It was found that, averaged across the two questions, the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was relatively low (i.e., 24.1%; see Table 2), indicating that the participants were relatively free from the influence of the direct translation described above in this context. One

NS informant commented that the *there* constructions are not satisfactory because the (logical) subject of the if-clause (i.e., *a person*) is not in agreement with that of the main clause (i.e., *you*). This might also contribute to the relatively low proportion of choosing *there* constructions.

4–2–6. Control context (CR)

The control context was included to ensure that the participants were able to perform the task in the context where they were most likely to choose the *there* construction. In Question #1, the *there* construction is typically used as a sentence that introduces the story, directing the readers' attention to "a small basket court". In Question #2 (see Appendix), the *there* construction guides the readers' attention to "a quiet knock", which is an introductory event that triggers the following events. As described in 1–2–1, NS normally use the *there* construction to denote occurrence of some event. In addition, a passive voice is not called for in the alternative sentence, according to an NS informant.

It was found that the proportion of choosing the *there* construction for Question #1 was quite high in both English-ability groups (i.e., approximately 80%) as expected (see Figure 3). This indicated that the participants were able to perform the task regardless of their English ability. It was found, however, that the proportion of choosing *there* constructions was around the chance level in both English-ability groups for Question #2 (see Figure 3). First, the *there* construction appears best suited for describing existence of a place (i.e., *a basket court*) that physically exists in the world in Question #1. In Question #2, on the other hand, description of occurrence of a sound might not be best suited for using the *there* construction. Second, the *there* construction in Question #2 cannot be directly translated into the Japanese *–ga aru* (*-ga atta* in the past tense), which might have discouraged the participants from choosing the *there* construction.

4–3. Implications for Teaching

In Japan, JS generally learn *there* constructions at a relatively early stage of English education. A lot of JS just have the knowledge that Japanese sentence-endings *–iru* (to be/exist in a certain place or time; used for people and animals) and *–aru* (used for everything else) can be translated into *there* constructions in English. Not many of them, however, have been taught about NS' usage of the constructions in terms of linguistic and non-linguistic contexts (i.e., the syntactic, semantic and discourse factors). As the result of the learning experiences, JS' use of *there* constructions may become different from NS'.

Traditionally, both teachers and students in Japan have invariably characterized such dif-

ferences as errors, but they should be treated as features if Japanese English would be one of the World Englishes. Japanese English is just "a set of patterns Japanese speakers of English tend to produce after years of classroom exercise; it covers a wide range of proficiency levels and performance varieties. Since non-native speakers commonly look for and settle upon patterns they find easy to handle both structurally and functionally, it will be interesting to identify them descriptively" (Honna & Takeshita, 1998, cited in Honna, 2009, p. 123).

What is significant here is that Japanese English is nothing but outcome production by JS. It is not feasible to impose JS' actual use of *there* constructions on Japanese students, and to teach Japanese English as the target language as if it had a substantial structure. Teachers should have Japanese learners of English (1) gain knowledge on the fact about how NS use the expressions (*there* constructions in the present study) in their rules and how JS use them as well, then (2) recognize the differences between the usages of NS and JS, and (3) choose the usage they like when they actually uses English to express themselves in the real world.

4–4. Concluding Remarks

The primary purpose of the present study was to provide preliminary data on JS' preference for *there* constructions under a context where linguistic and discourse factors are reasonably controlled. To this end, short passages were created such that the factor in question would be critical in making a choice between a *there* construction and an alternative structure. It turned out, however, that the participants' performance was influenced by some other factors than the factor tested in each context. First of all, the participants' choice appeared to be influenced by whether the sentence was directly translated into the Japanese counterpart (i.e., *–iru*, *–aru*). Second, it seemed to be affected by whether the LS denotes concrete object or people, and whether it denotes a concrete place or a sound. Finally, it appeared to be influenced by whether the determiner was "the" or "those". In future research, these factors should be carefully controlled in addition to the primary factor tested in a particular context in order to provide more reliable and interpretable data.

The present results found that, in some contexts, JS significantly preferred to use alternative constructions, showing that JS' overall response patterns are relatively similar to those which are expected from NS. The result is probably due to the task context where the participants are explicitly provided with both choices. The characteristics of JS that have been observed in the previous studies (Miyake & Tsushima, 2012a, b) would more clearly manifest themselves in spontaneous production tasks (e.g., speaking or writing). In these tasks, JS might be more susceptible to L1 influence, depending more upon translation from Japanese

sentences. The challenge in future study may be to elicit *there* constructions in some spontaneous task while controlling for the linguistic and discourse factors that have been found significant in the previous studies as well as the present study.

The present study appears to have generated more questions than answers as any preliminary study does. However, it is hoped that continued research will delineate the factors that underlie the preferential use of *there* constructions by JS, which will then lead to better understanding of a particular feature of Japanese English.

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Notes

1) Previous research has shown that the definiteness restriction has a number of exceptions (cf. Kuno & Takami, 2004; Rando & Napoli, 1978).

2) *There* constructions produced by JS in the NICE corpus were edited by one native speaker. The data were combined with those of the four evaluators to increase the sample size.

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Appendix: Passages used in the forced choice task

Context 1: Relative clause (RC)

Question #1;

Yesterday I was watching London Olympics on TV.

I was surprised that Summer Olympics do not have baseball any more.

(a) But there are many people who like to watch those sports.

(b) But many people like to watch those sports.

Question #2;

My parents like smoking.

They have tried to stop the habit but they cannot.

(a) Like them, many people fail to quit smoking.

(b) Like them, there are many people who fail to quit smoking.

Context 2: Old information (OI)

Question #1;

Last night I went to Shibuya with my friends and saw a traffic accident there.

A lot of people from the mass media gathered around the scene.

（a）There was the news of this accident on TV this morning.

（b）The news of this accident appeared on TV this morning.

Question #2;

I went to Kyoto with my grandparents this summer.

We visited many famous shrines and temples together.

（a）Those traditional buildings were within the city, and it was very convenient to travel.

（b）There were those traditional buildings within the city, and it was very convenient to travel.

Context 3: LS being proper nouns（PN）

Question #1;

I belong to a tennis club in my university.

I have many good friends in the club.

（a）Among them, there are Yuko, Toshie and Madoka.

（b）Yuko, Toshie and Madoka are among them.

Question #2;

My hobby is taking photos.

In order to take great photos, we need good cameras.

（a）Nikon D3S, Canon 5D MarkII, and Pentax 645D are some examples.

（b）For example, there are Nikon D3S, Canon 5D MarkII, and Pentax 645D.

Context 4: Verb inserted in the alternative sentence（VI）

Question #1;

My favorite artist is Lady Gaga.

She was born in New York in 1986.

（a）There are her concerts every year in Japan.

（b）She has her concerts every year in Japan.

Question #2;

Speaking of this college, the quality of education is high, but the tuition is very expensive.

The campus is large, but it is very far from the station.

（a）Thus, entering this college has both good and bad points.

（b）Thus, there are both good and bad points in entering this college.

Context 5: If there is a person who...（PW）

Question #1;

We want to play baseball tomorrow.

But we don't have enough members.

（a）If there is a person who can join us, please give me a call.

（b）If you know somebody who can join us, please give me a call.

Question #2;

This is the busiest street in Tokyo.

A lot of people have been killed in traffic accidents here.

（a）If you see someone trying to cross the street, please warn him/her.

（b）If there is a person who tries to cross the street, please warn him/her.

Context 6: Control（CR）

Question #1;

（a）There was a small basket court in a small town in USA.

（b）A small basket court was in a small town in USA.

A boy called Michael played basketball there from morning till night every day.

He later became a famous basketball player in the world.

Question #2;

（a）As I was reading a book in my room late at night, a quiet knock was heard at the door.

（b）As I was reading a book in my room late at night, there was a quiet knock at the door.

I said, “Yes?”

As soon as I opened the door, a little girl came into the room.