



Non-native English Speakers in OpenStack Communities: A True Story (Lightning Talk version)

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OpenStack Summit 2018 Vancouver - May 21 11:55-12:05

<http://bit.ly/esl-yvr>

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Who are we?

Masayuki Igawa

- OpenStack Core Reviewer (Tempest - QA project)
- Japanese, working for SUSE at Tokyo Office

Dong Ma

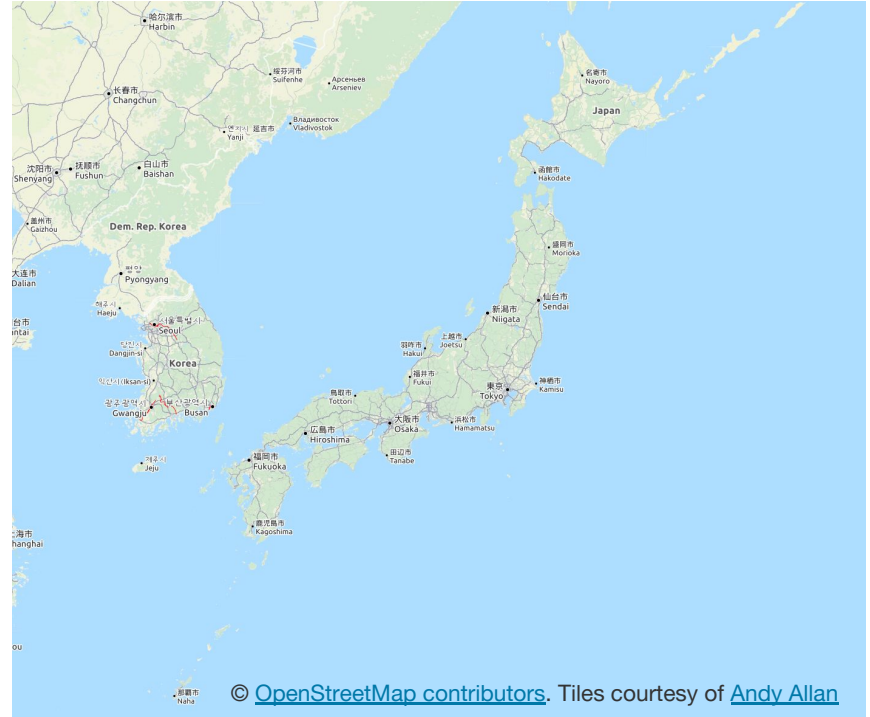
- Chinese, FOSSology project core contributor

Samuel de Medeiros Queiroz

- Brazilian, working at a telecom company in Brazil

Masayuki - Japanese

- **Do not express clearly**
 - Do not say “**Yes**” or “**No**” clearly
- **Tend to be perfect**
 - Do things in the best way possible
 - **Afraid** of mistakes
- **Keep intonation**
 - Speak **quietly** throughout the speech
 - **Less** intonation
- **Size of Economy**
 - **Big enough** in the past years
 - Surrounded by the **ocean and seas**



Masayuki - Japanese

- **Focusing on reading and writing**
 - **Listening** and **speaking** become a challenge!
- **Pronunciation and grammar are very different**
 - Pronouncing “**L**” vs “**R**” in words
 - **Right vs Light**
 - There aren't some sounds such as “**TH**”, “**F**”, etc
 - Subject-Verb-Object (E) vs Subject-Object-Verb (J)
 - (E) They **love** chocolate.
 - (J) They chocolate **love**.
彼らは (They) チョコレートが (chocolate) **大好きです** (love).
(Karera-wa chokoreto-ga **daisuki-desu**.)

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- **Katakana:** “ネットワーク” = “Network” (English)
 - Kanji (漢字), Hiragana (ひらがな), **Katakana** (カタカナ)
 - Network (ネットワーク), Light(ライト), Right(ライト), **McDonald's**(マクドナルド) etc
 - **Japanese-made English(Wasei-eigo)**
 - Paso-con (パソコン)
 - Air-con (エアコン)
 - Auto-bi (オートバイ)
 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wasei-eigo>

Dong Ma - Chinese

- Confucian culture
- Chinese pronunciation is not understood by others
- Not follow well with the English grammar



Samuel - Brazilian

- Conversations driven in similar way
- Short/direct responses may sound rude
- Some phonemes do not exist in Portuguese, e.g “*th*” vs “*f*”
- Regular schools do a poor job teaching English



Language

Reading

- **Easiest but important (but it's not so easy :)**
- **IRC conversation goes fast**
- **Long emails, conclusion is unclear**

Writing

- **Grammar**
- **Writing long and beautiful sentences is difficult**
- **Speed in IRC/chat**

Listening

- **Variety of accents**
- **Speed**
- **Vocabulary & Grammar**
- **Noisy environments**

Speaking

- **Vocabulary & Grammar**
- **Pronunciation**
- **Speed & Fluency**

Tips

Non-Native Speakers

- **Be opened, friendly**
- **Find a mentor**
- **Share your opinion**
- **Ask questions**
- **Brush up English skills**

Native Speakers

- **Be patient**
- **Speak slowly, please**
- **Use simple words and sentences**
- **Encourage communication**
- **Do not make fun**

Thank you!

- <https://opensource.com/article/17/1/non-native-speakers-take-open-source-communities>
- <https://docs.openstack.org/contributor-guide/non-native-english-speakers.html>
- <https://www.suse.com/communities/blog/tips-non-native-english-speakers-working-open-source-projects/>



Image by : opensource.com

Appendix - Full version

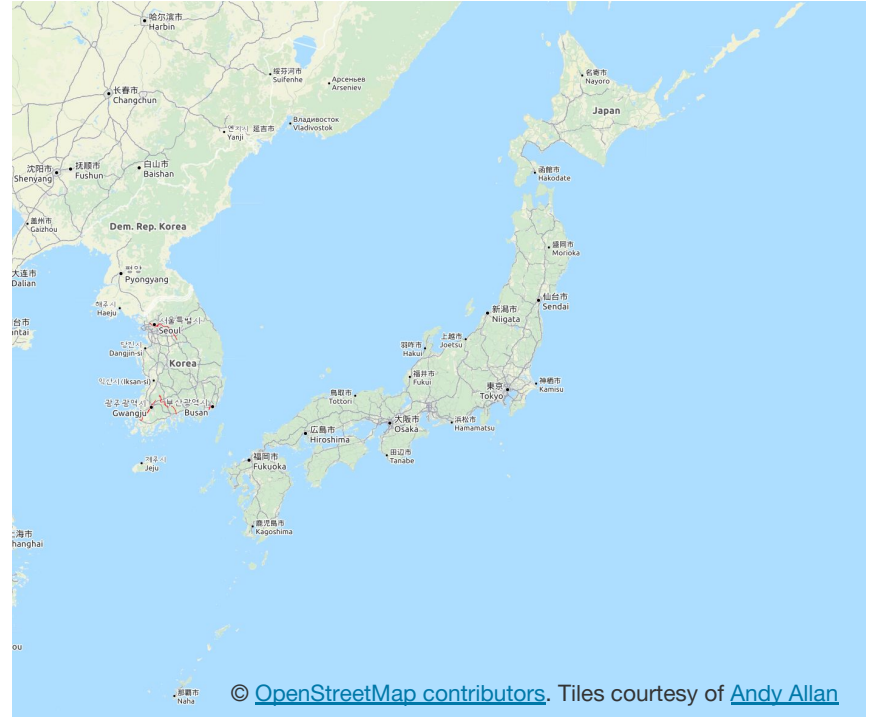
What is this talk about ?

- **Experiences**
 - What happened to us!
- **Challenges**
 - Cultural & Language-specific
- **Overcoming obstacles**
 - How to get through challenges?
- **Onboarding newcomers**
 - Easing the process

Cultural Challenges

Masayuki - Japanese

- **Do not express clearly**
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Dong Ma - Chinese

- Confucian culture
- **Doctrine of the Mean**
 - One guideline is **Leniency**
 - Like to say **yes**, do not like to say **no**
 - Like to **listen**, do not like to **negotiate**



Dong Ma - Chinese

- **Chinese pronunciation**
 - **Accent** is not well understood by others
- **Do not follow well with the English **grammar****
- **Writing is hard**
 - Because of the grammar, but it can be **understood**

Samuel - Brazilian

- **Conversations driven in similar way**
 - Express **yes** or **no** clearly
- **Responses**
 - Short/direct may sound **rude**
- **Grammar**
 - É uma casa **bonita**.
 - Es una casa **hermosa**.
 - It's a **beautiful** house.

Samuel - Brazilian

- **Phonemes**

- **th**anks vs **th**at
- **gh**ost vs enough vs night

- **Education system**

- **Poor** job teaching English
- Just **grammar** - not practical
- Dedicated English schools are **expensive**
 - **40%** of federal minimum wage
- Proficiency in a **2nd language** at universities

Samuel - Brazilian

- **Borders**

- **10** countries
 - **Only** Guyana speaks English
- Little English speakers immigration*
- Little **immersion**
 - No public TV channels in English

- **Wake up late**

- Harder to pronounce **sounds!**
- First time in OpenStack Summit



Samuel - Brazilian

- **Acknowledge**
 - English is **essential**, but ...
- **Make fun of other's mistakes**
 - **Afraid** of making mistakes
 - Affect **learning curve** negatively

Language Challenges

Reading

- **Easiest (but not so easy :)**
 - Read as many times as needed
- **One of the most important**
 - Most of the conversation goes in chats/MLs
 - But ... long threads, conclusion is often **unclear!**
- **IRC conversation goes fast**
 - It is hard to understand **quickly!**
- **Loss of intonation**

Writing

- **Grammar**

- It differs **significantly** from some languages
- They **love** chocolate. (English)
- They chocolate **love**. (Japanese)

- **Writing long and beautiful sentences is hard**

- Simple sentences are prevalent

- **Speed in chat**

- It is hard to reply **in time!**

Listening

- **Variety of accents**
 - American, British, Scottish, Australian, etc
- **Speed**
 - Native speakers speak **quickly** to each other!
- **Vocabulary and Grammar**
 - **Understand** what others say!
- **Noisy** environments

Speaking

- **Pronunciation**
 - Pay attention and **produce** sounds **correctly**
- **Speed & Fluency**
 - It is **required** to a certain degree
 - Time is **limited** and discussions cannot take forever!
- **Vocabulary and Grammar**
 - You need to express yourself correctly!

Overcoming obstacles

Overcoming obstacles

- **You may not own an outstanding level**
 - But that should **not block** you to start getting where you want

- **Full professional proficiency**
 - Get fluent **then** look for a job?
 - Learn needed vocabulary
 - Rootbeet, triglycerides, jackhammer?
 - English schools
 - Not required
 - General focus
 - Learn by yourself
 - Several means on the **internet**
 - Duolingo, etc...

Overcoming obstacles

- Prepare **in advance!**
- Focus on what you need the most
 - Chat & Mailing lists?
 - Review what you **write**
 - **Abbreviations** are hard: IIRC, AFAICT, FWIW, etc
 - It will be hard to follow - **read the logs!**
 - Events?
 - **Practice** listening
 - Phrasal verbs and slangs are a challenge
 - Prepare **good questions**
 - Make sure to **communicate!**
 - Public speaking?
 - Language makes it harder
 - Mileage! **Do it!**

Overcoming obstacles

- How to keep **constantly learning**?
 - Focus on **per-language** challenges
 - Local and native speaker teachers
 - Hear different **accents**
 - Communicate **daily**
 - Useful **tools** out there
 - **Practice** with others or yourself
 - One-to-one conversations

Overcoming obstacles

- **General Tips**

- Language immersion
- **Respect** cultural challenges
- Forget limitations
- Do your best and you will eventually improve
- **Yes you can!**

Overcoming obstacles

- **Reading**
 - **Read** bilingual books, twitter, blogs and other articles in English
- **Writing**
 - **Write** blog posts, tweet, articles and get reviews by natives (<http://lang-8.com/>)
- **Listening**
 - **Listen** to podcasts (<https://www.all earsenglish.com/>) and TED Talks (<https://www.ted.com/>)
 - **Watching** TV Show, Movies
- **Speaking**
 - **Speak** in English lessons online and to friends (<https://www.meetup.com/>)

Onboarding newcomers

Newcomers

1. **Be friendly**
2. **Find a mentor**
3. **Ask questions and share your opinion**
 - **Diversity** is important!
4. **Prepare in advance**
5. **Keep improving your English skills**

Native Speakers

1. **Be patient**
2. **Speak slowly**, please
3. **Use simple words and sentences**
4. **Encourage communication**
 - Again, **diversity** matters!
5. **Do not make fun!**



We adapt. You succeed.