The teaching of English as an International Language in Japan

An answer to the dilemma of indigenous values and global needs in the Expanding Circle*

Nobuyuki Hino
Osaka University

This paper explores the ambivalent nature of Japanese attitudes toward English vis-à-vis the Japanese language, followed by a discussion of Japanese efforts in incorporating the concept of English as an International Language (EIL) into their educational system and teaching practice as a solution to this dilemma. While the Japanese have an indigenous language used for all purposes including academic discourse, in this age of globalization they seem to find it to their disadvantage. The recent move in Japan in both public and private sectors is to promote the use of English even among Japanese people, often at the expense of their native language. One practical approach to a solution or a mitigation of this dilemma is the teaching of EIL or de-Anglo-Americanized English as a means of expressing indigenous values in international communication. Although Japanese teachers of English have not really gone beyond the World Englishes paradigm, which describes the Expanding Circle Englishes including Japanese English as basically exonormative, efforts have been underway in Japan to put the idea of EIL into practice. The teaching of EIL in place of Anglo-American English provides a chance of reconciliation between the use of internal and external language resources.

Introduction

With the increasing number of foreign residents which mounts to over two million (Yamamoto 2007: 1; Ministry of Justice 2008), Japan is faced internally with the task of embracing multicultural and multilingual diversity. In addition to Koreans whose presence in the country stemmed from Japanese colonialism before and during World War II, Japan now accepts long-term residents from such countries as Brazil, China, Taiwan, and the Philippines, among others. Public services for such a variety of linguistic backgrounds, including school education, are being developed at local levels, though quite slowly (cf. Kawahara and Noyama 2007).

In spite of the growing need for multilingualism, linguistic life in Japan is still heavily dependent on the native language of the majority group, known simply as Japanese. Indeed, due to the lack of colonization by Western powers, Japan escaped a possible setback in the public use of their indigenous language. The Japanese language is dominantly used for almost all domains of Japanese life, from family conversation to court procedures. Although some change is perceived which will be discussed later, the language of instruction from elementary schools to universities is basically...
Japanese, with the exception of the reading assignment at the graduate level where the use of English is not rare.

The dominance of the Japanese language actually presents various domestic sociopolitical problems. Japan has indigenous languages other than Japanese, notably Okinawan (Ryukyuan) and Ainu, but the maintenance of these languages has won very little governmental support, with especially the latter being nearly extinct as a result. Japan has allowed practically no room for the minority native languages in public domains. Linguistic handicaps for the increasing number of foreigners, alluded to above, are also becoming serious social problems. This is evident in the lack of court interpreters for many languages, which makes it difficult to protect the human rights of foreigners involved in court cases.

Unlike some countries in the Kachruvian Outer Circle, where English plays a significant role as a lingua franca between their nationals with different native languages, an intra-national use of English is generally not considered to be a solution for this newly arising diversity of foreign residents in Japan. In view of the fact that these foreign workers, mostly from Latin America and Asia, do not necessarily understand English, such use of English in Japan would create another linguistic divide. The Japanese in general are not proficient in English either. Moreover, as mentioned again below, introducing an internal use of English with no such historical background would indeed be sociolinguistically difficult.

Although it is wrong to regard Japan as a monolingual country, a common misconception traditionally held by the Japanese leadership, it is also true that the Japanese language enjoys an overwhelmingly dominant status intra-nationally. As long as one lives inside of Japan, Japanese is the only language one needs. A recent symbolic example for this is physicist Toshihide Masukawa, a Nobel prize winner in 2008, who is capable of speaking very little English. In spite of his extremely limited oral skills in English, Masukawa was able to achieve the highest position as a scientist.

In contrast to the nearly exclusive use of their native language in domestic situations, the Japanese today are facing a global demand to accommodate themselves to international means of communication, which de facto is English in most cases. As a country belonging to the Expanding Circle in the World Englishes paradigm (B. Kachru 1985), for whom English is a foreign language rather than an internal means of communication, the global need for learning English presents a challenging task for the Japanese at least in two important aspects. Firstly, as a language linguistically unrelated to the Japanese language, English is not an easy language for the Japanese to learn. Otani (2007: 35–47) points out that one of the basic reasons for the notoriously poor performance by Japanese examinees on the TOEFL is the linguistic distance between English and their native language, a stronger factor than the mode of their English language education which is usually held responsible. In view of the fact that few Japanese have ever even tried to learn Korean, which is a language with close linguistic kinship to Japanese, it is ironic that the Japanese now find themselves in a position where their international survival may depend on the learning of this ‘alien’ language. Secondly, the global use of English means that Japanese people face a formidable task of expressing, in a language embedded in the Anglo-American culture including the Judeo-Christian tradition, their indigenous values which have historically been formulated through the mixture of East Asian influence and their original culture.

In short, the Japanese nowadays seem to be somewhat lost in a limbo between English and their native language. A clue for them to get out of this situation lies in the learning and teaching of English from EIL perspectives, which will be discussed in this paper.

**Increasing presence of English in Japan**

In response to the global need for the use of English, a trend is perceived in Japan today of incorpo-
rating this foreign language in those domains of Japanese life affected by the tide of globalization. The most drastic and controversial of these moves was a proposal by a government-affiliated policy council in 2000 that it should be worth considering designating English as “the second official language” of Japan (Nijisseiki Nihon no Koso Kondankai 2000). Simply put, this idea was, in my interpretation, an attempt to remodel the whole nation into a gigantic English language school which would provide all Japanese with opportunities to acquire the language in their daily lives. Although criticisms voiced by some Japanese that such a proposal would lead to an erosion of their ‘national language’ may be questionable, it is also uncertain whether it would be sociolinguistically realistic to try to artificially relocate Japan from the Expanding Circle to the Outer Circle where English is used as a second language. However, this proposal by a major government-authorized committee still serves as a salient example of an urge among Japanese today to integrate themselves into English-speaking environment.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education issued a proposal known as “The Action Plan to Cultivate ‘Japanese with English abilities’”, which further promoted the presence of English in educational contexts. For example, although considerably slow compared to their Asian neighbours such as Korea and China, it was decided by the Education Ministry in 2008 that the teaching of English should start at elementary school instead of at junior high school. These English lessons at elementary school will at least at the outset be limited to only one hour a week, and just for fifth and sixth graders. Still, this new curriculum has not been free from objections, some of which were voiced by leading Japanese teachers of English themselves. In addition to relatively convincing criticism that elementary school teachers have not been provided with the necessary training for teaching English, a controversial claim has been made by some teacher-scholars to the effect that the teaching of English at elementary schools will be tantamount to a reduction of learning opportunities for the native language (e.g. Y. Saito 2005).

As to higher education in Japan, we see an increase in the number of graduate schools, especially in the field of science and technology, where students can pursue their advanced degrees with no knowledge of Japanese as long as they are proficient in English. Not only are the students allowed to write their dissertations in English, which has not been uncommon even in the conventional system, but the classes are taught in English, and discussions are carried out in English. The international programme of frontier biotechnology at Osaka University, as an example, offers such a curriculum. In fact, according to admission information for this five-year course for master’s and doctoral degrees, sponsored by the Japanese Government, the only language requirement for prospective students is to have “a good command of English,” with no mention of their ability in Japanese (Osaka University 2009a). The establishment of the international graduate programmes, pioneered by the graduate school of technology at Tokyo University in 1989, suggests that the Japanese education system, which has traditionally been monolingual, is under pressure to respond to the need for English as an international language.

Further exploring the case of Osaka University, one of the major national institutions of higher education in Japan, the university leadership has recently been urging their schools and departments, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels, to promote the number of classes taught in English, even in regular programmes. One recent example is a workshop for its faculty members entitled “Communicate and learn with the world: For effective teaching and learning in English,” held in July 2009 (Osaka University 2009b), which is aimed at helping the professors, in various fields including human, social and natural sciences, to teach their classes in English.

The purposes of offering the academic courses in English at this university are two-fold. One is to attract more students from abroad, and cater to their linguistic needs, in accordance with the Education Ministry’s policy to increase the number of foreign students in this country. The other
aim, which is more interesting, is to provide the Japanese students with opportunities to practise English. Although this university policy is not the one that has been proposed by language teaching specialists, this method of learning English could be taken as a form of content-based approach.

In terms of the pressure to use English even inside of Japan where globalization is relevant, the academic circles of applied linguistics are not an exception. For example, for the first time since their foundation over 40 years ago, the Japan Association of College English Teachers (JACET), an affiliate of AILA, recently issued a notice in the call for papers for their annual convention, as an answer to the tide of globalization, that the presentations should in principle be given in English (JACET 2009). It may be added here that the majority of presentations and discussions in most academic conferences in the country, including even those of English language teaching, have traditionally been carried out in Japanese. This fact illustrates the strong tradition of scholarship in the native language of this country, which has been in practice for more than a thousand years (Hino 1992). This new policy by the JACET has stirred some controversy among its members. Some have claimed that it would be much more efficient and natural to present and discuss in Japanese, given the reality that most of the participants at their conferences are Japanese.

All these moves for the use of English even inside of Japan in a way present an ironic picture. The status of English as a second language is a legacy of the colonial past in many countries in Asia and Africa. With the proposal for authorizing English as a second language in Japan, it almost looks as if the Japanese now regret that they have never been colonized by Britain or the USA. In fact, Otani (2007:83–98) equates this proposal with other ‘pro-Western’ movements in the history of Japan, such as the claims made by political leaders Arinori Mori in 1873 and Yukio Ozaki in 1950, to designate English as the national language in place of Japanese. Likewise, teaching subject matter in English instead of Japanese may seem like returning to the rather primitive teaching practice more than a hundred years ago, where most of the academic subjects had to be taught with textbooks written in English, simply because teaching materials in Japanese were not yet available.

There have been harsh criticisms against the increasing presence of English among the Japanese, no less strong than the well-known arguments on ‘linguistic imperialism’ such as by Phillipson (1992). Most notable is the one by Tsuda (e.g. 2003), who warns against the menace of “the hegemony of English” for Japan. He argues that the pressure to use English, such as the aforementioned teaching of English at elementary schools, will lead to an erosion of the Japanese culture, or even some mind-control. This criticism is debatable on the basis of the fact that English nowadays is a tool of multicultural communication rather than a means of expressing Anglo-American culture.

Teaching English as a de-Anglo-Americanized language of self-expression

With respect to this dichotomous conflict between English and Japanese, or globalization vs. indigenous values, then, what should be and will be the course Japan is heading for?

First of all, it may be pointed out that a conspicuous sociohistorical pattern of this country is that it does not directly absorb foreign cultures but takes them in through its domestic filters. Things that are foreign to Japan are accepted only after they go through an indigenization process. Although indigenization or nativization is essentially a universal phenomenon, this tendency is often considered to be especially strong in Japan, as analyzed by many Japanese scholars, such as noted economist Iwao Nakatani (2006). In my observation, this cultural template is symbolized, for instance, in the Japanese interpretation of baseball, in which the runners are expected to steal as many bases as they can even when their win is already certain, an act criticized for being unfair in the original American version. Another example, which is closely related to our field of expertise, is the yakudoku tradition (Hino 1992) by which foreign language texts are considered read only after they have been translated into the native language. The yakudoku method is a deeply rooted sociolinguistic
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convention in Japan, which dates back to over a thousand years ago when Japanese started studying Chinese, and is still alive and well in the teaching of English in Japan today. Anglo-American values, or varieties of values represented in World Englishes nowadays, are not directly imposed on Japanese readers of English, but are accepted via their own local interpretation. Putting aside an argument as to whether the yakudoku method is an appropriate approach to the learning of English today, this Japanese attitude towards foreign cultures seems to indicate that the fear for invasion of indigenous values by English might be a little bit of an overreaction, as far as the reception of English is concerned. It should be noted, however, that the issue of production models of English could be quite another matter, as discussed below.

A solution, or at least mitigation, for the dilemma of English as a global language and Japanese as an expression of indigenous values is the teaching of English as a de-Anglo-Americanized international language. This form of English language education deals with Englishes that are based not solely on the values of the native speakers but on a diversity of values including those of Japanese culture. As for the production of English by the Japanese, this position means to “speak English with Japanese mind” (Nishiyama 1995). There is recently a growing interest in this idea among educators of English in Japan.

Japan has in fact a relatively long history of seeking its own models of English, essentially independent of the major schools of thought such as EIL (Smith 1976, in its early form), World Englishes (B. Kachru 1985), and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Jenkins 2000). As early as 1928, lexicographer Hidezaburo Saito expressed his hope for an English of Japan's own in the preface of his Japanese-English dictionary:

The mastery of a language has for its final object the expression of the exact light and shade of meaning conceived by the speaker. In a word, the Japanese speaker of English should be original … In short, the English of the Japanese must, in a certain sense, be Japanized. (H. Saito 1928: Preface)

Around 1970, when the Japanese were faced with the growing need for a tool of expressing themselves in international communication, some Japanese scholars pointed out that English could be used as a means of expressing Japanese values rather than Anglo-American culture. Masao Kunihiro, with his proposal for “eigo no datsu-eibeika” (de-Anglo-Americanization of English), is the one who first used the word kokusai-eigo (International English) in Japanese, making him an EIL pioneer largely unknown outside of Japan. His observation was as follows:

It seems possible to say that de-Anglo-Americanized English, rather than the one deeply embedded in the Anglo-American culture, more efficiently communicates our own feelings and our original patterns of thought. (Kunihiro 1970:262, translation mine)

This work by Kunihiro has not only been read by academics and language professionals but also by a great many learners of English in Japan, with its sale of approximately 750,000 copies. With view to the fact that it was not until the mid-1970s that the concept of de-Anglo-Americanization of English became a hotly debated subject in the academic circles at the world level (B. Kachru 1976; Smith 1976), it is remarkable that the Japanese public were already intensely discussing this idea in 1970. This also shows how strong the Japanese sentiment is towards English as an international means of expressing themselves.

Another pioneer thinker in EIL for the Japanese is Takao Suzuki, who expressed the following views approximately at the same time as Kunihiro:

It would be strange, as we come to use English more extensively, if the features of Japanese English were not internationally recognized. When Japanese people begin to make full use of English, it is
inevitable that the English they use will be ‘Japlish’ which is influenced by the Japanese language.
(Suzuki 1971: 224, translation mine)

This stance by Suzuki may not be readily accepted by scholars of World Englishes. In the World Englishes paradigm, it is generally believed that indigenization of English occurs only when the language is used intra-nationally. However, among the proponents of EIL in Japan, it is assumed that indigenization of English could take place through its international use. This position was reiterated, for example, by Takesato Watanabe:

As Japanese people use English actively, without regarding the Anglo-American English as the only model, an original means of international communication for themselves will emerge. (Watanabe 1983: 9, translation mine)

This claim leads us to the controversial issue of models of English for the Expanding Circle including Japan, which is discussed in the next section.

It must be pointed out that some confusion is observable in the above discourses by the proponents of Japanese English between two seemingly independent factors, that is, the ‘linguistic features’ of Japanese English and the ‘cultural content’ expressed in Japanese English. However, it is my position that these two are not really separable. Adequate expression of a certain cultural values requires linguistic features, including phonological, grammatical, lexical, discoursal and pragmatic aspects, to come with it, just as Singapore English functions as a vehicle of Singaporean culture with linguistic features of its own.

However, it needs to be admitted that Japan has so far been largely unsuccessful in identifying their original production models in terms of specific linguistic features. As the abovementioned EIL philosopher Kunihiro put it in several of his lectures around the year 2000, “there are many samples, but no models”. Indeed, Japan has a number of skilled users of English whom learners can turn to as a reference, but at the moment there are still no systematic and comprehensive production models available for them.

Feasibility of an indigenous model of English for the Japanese
According to the Kachruvian Three Circles framework, Englishes in the Expanding Circle such as Japanese English are regarded as “norm-dependent,” or reliant on external norms, unlike the “norm-developing” varieties in the Outer Circle such as Indian English (B. Kachru 1985: 17). This view of Expanding Circle varieties has constantly been repeated by World Englishes scholars. Below are two such examples:

A speaker of English in the Outer Circle will be careful to speak English in a way that will make his or her cultural identity clear. In the Expanding Circle, on the other hand, the ideal goal is to imitate the native speaker of the standard language as closely as possible. … Keeping a native standard in the Expanding Circle does not seem to present problems. (Andreasson 1994: 401–402)

The question of a model is often discussed with reference to spoken English and it is usual to make a distinction between EFL and ESL situations. For the former, it is usual to advocate a native model, but for the latter, enlightened opinion will support the need to use a non-native model. (Bangbose 1998: 8)

It is true that Expanding Circle users of English, unlike their Outer Circle counterparts, hardly find it necessary to express their indigenous values in English in domestic situations, but they obviously need to do so in their communication with the outer world. The fact that Expanding Circle users normally do not speak English among their fellow country people, which is often emphasized in the WE theory in denying the need for local models of English for the Expanding Circle including Japan
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(e.g. B. Kachru 1976:235; Muñoz 2008), would not be considered to be directly relevant, in the eyes of the Japanese advocates of EIL such as Suzuki and Watanabe mentioned above, to the issue of models of English for expressing oneself in international settings.

One of the recent approaches to the teaching of English for international communication, which seems to have the potential of serving as a theoretical basis for Japanese English, is ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) proposed by Jenkins (e.g. 2000, 2007). The concept of ELF, though highly controversial in many respects, centers around the Lingua Franca Core which is meant to ensure international intelligibility, with an emphasis on the need for interactions between non-native speakers. Although ELF studies are often believed to be limited to the areas of phonology, a number of research projects from ELF perspectives have been undertaken recently in various other domains, such as lexicogrammatical, discoursal, sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects (cf. Seidlhofer 2009:241).

In seeking original models of English for the Japanese, ELF seems to be especially significant on two counts. One is that ELF makes no discrimination between Englishes in the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. By exploiting 'non-core' features to express their identities, speakers in both circles can equally enjoy their own varieties of English. In fact, as Jenkins herself put it, ELF is “an attempt to extend to Expanding Circle members the rights that have always been enjoyed in the Inner Circle and to an increasing extent in the Outer” (Jenkins 2006:38). In my interpretation, the other salient characteristic of ELF is that this approach would not necessarily presuppose 'national' varieties. Under the ELF paradigm, users of English would be free to speak their individual varieties as long as they hold on to the core features to ensure international intelligibility. If this is the case, ELF gives the Expanding Circle a major advantage, since a lot of the current discrimination between the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle comes from the view that the former consists of established national varieties unlike the latter.

On the other hand, ELF seems to have its own limitations. For example, a careful look at the Lingua Franca Core reveals that all the core features (e.g. Jenkins 2002:96–97) in ELF are still based on native speaker English. That is, ELF is, at least in its current form, may not be exactly free from native-speaker centredness.

It is not easy to predict at the moment how promising the ELF approach will be in terms of the Japanese quest for their own models of English. However, it surely has some important implications for the construction of a new framework for EIL, of which Expanding Circle varieties are a part along with Outer Circle varieties.

Based on available studies combined with my own experiences in the use of EIL, I have proposed, in Hino (2008:21–24), a tentative production model of Japanese English for international communication, which describes some linguistic, sociolinguistic and paralinguistic features. The list is far from comprehensive, but is hopefully a meaningful start for devising an educational model of Japanese English which is intended to be capable of expressing Japanese values and also be internationally comprehensible. As for phonology, for example, I argue that syllable-timed rhythm, with few elisions, linking, assimilation and reduction, should be recommendable. Here, syllable-timed rhythm, a natural rhythm for Japanese users of English, is regarded as an identity marker for the Japanese, which is also often more intelligible than stress-timed rhythm in EIL communication involving non-native interlocutors (Jenkins 2000; Deterding and Kirkpatrick 2006).

With regard to the grammar of Japanese English, I suggest that we should accept the Japanese interpretation of present perfect, definite/indefinite articles (Komiya 2007), singular/plural forms, etc. The Japanese usages of those grammatical items differ in a subtle manner from those of native speaker English, reflecting the Japanese world views shaped through their cultural experiences.

As for expressions, idioms that are deeply embedded in the Anglo-American culture are not recommended, such as "It's not cricket" which hardly makes sense to the Japanese. On the other
hand, expressions which convey indigenous Japanese values are encouraged as long as they are comprehensible, such as “in a forward-looking manner”. Another example is the Japanese custom of always distinguishing older and younger siblings. For the Japanese who have been raised to be conscious of seniority, one cannot be just a “brother” or a “sister”, so to speak. In their conceptual framework, it has to be clearly stated if he or she is an “older brother/sister” or a “younger brother/sister”, even when Americans perceive no need to make a distinction between these two.

Concerning discourse features, I propose that a transfer of Japanese text organization to English writing should be acceptable, as a reflection of Japanese thought patterns. Thus, the writing style that Hinds (1990:98) calls “delayed introduction of purpose”, which is also often characterized by non-assertiveness with an emphasis on harmony (Y. Kachru 1997: 58–59), is permissible as an option for Japanese learners of English. In conversational discourses, Japanese characteristics such as frequent back-channel cues are allowed to be retained, which is a sign of respect for others that is highly valued in the Japanese society.

In this model of Japanese English for international communication, sociolinguistic rules are also relativized vis-à-vis native speaker norms. For instance, in contrast to the usual practice in English conversation classes taught by American teachers, where students are so often encouraged to call each other by their first names regardless of seniority, first-name calling is not considered a norm even among close friends in this educational model. Also in non-verbal domains, Japanese bowing instead of handshakes, for example, is presented as a possible form of greeting, depending on some situational factors.

This pedagogical model of Japanese English — though some of its features still need to be tested for international intelligibility — is what I have been applying to my classrooms with the IPTEIL method discussed later in this paper. It is hoped that this idea will be further developed into a more comprehensive form so that it can fully serve as an educational alternative to the conventional American or British models.

**EIL philosophy in the public school system in Japan**

The conflict for learners of English between indigenous values and Anglo-American values is especially evident in the cultural content of teaching materials. I discuss in Hino (1988) that the cultural components of English textbooks in Japan had been changing like the swing of a pendulum between the two extremes, until some balance was achieved. During World War II, in which Japan fought against the Allied Forces including Britain and the USA, the one and only official English textbook for the public school system in Japan those days was filled with indigenous Japanese values by deliberately excluding Anglo-American cultures under the censorship by the Ministry of Education. In terms of cultural content, this may look like an EIL textbook on the surface. However, its exhibition of Japanese nationalism was so strongly ethnocentric that the basic idea of this book was obviously incompatible with the cause of English for international communication today. Below is an example:

> When we get up, it is still dark. We stand in a line, turn towards the Imperial Palace and bow. We thank our soldiers and sailors for their brave deeds. We pray for our success in war.
> 
> *(Eigo, reprinted in Kawasumi 1978)*

After the war, in turn, the cultural content of English textbooks, written in accordance with the course of study set by the Ministry of Education, came to reflect Anglo-American values in an overwhelming manner. Even in the 1960s, Anglo-American culture was still predominantly represented in junior high school textbooks. A typical example is as follows:
Uncle: It’s half past two now. Where shall we go next?
Roy: I want to see the British Museum.
Uncle: All right. I often go there to read.
Roy: Is it a library?
Uncle: Yes, it is. It’s a museum, too. You'll find a great many books there. Many people go there to study the fine arts, too. It’s the biggest museum in the world. I have a friend there. (New Prince Readers 2, 1968: 42)

Junior high school English textbooks in those days mostly centred around the life of American students, describing American culture and American values. As shown in the example above, even when the leading character went abroad, Britain was chosen to be most appropriate for cultural description in the English textbook. It was also a norm that interactions should take place between native speakers of English. In short, English was regarded as nothing but a means of expressing Anglo-American culture. Japanese learners of English were expected to talk, think, and act like Americans.

In contrast, English textbooks nowadays deal with non-native English speaking cultures including that of Japan. Below is an excerpt from a recent junior high school textbook:

Ryo: Was Hong Kong always a big city like today?
Jing: No, it wasn’t. It was a very small village once. But now, it is famous for business and sightseeing.
Ryo: Which places are good for sightseeing?
Jing: Well, let’s see … I like Victoria Peak. The night view from there is beautiful. (Total English 2, 2002: 16)

Ryo is one of the leading characters in this textbook, a Japanese junior high school student just like its intended readers. This textbook is aimed at expressing the student’s own values rather than those of native speakers of English. Another character is Jing, a non-native speaker of English from Hong Kong, who talks about her own culture. In fact, the cultural content of today’s junior high school textbooks is not restricted to Anglo-American components, but it represents a diversity including both native and non-native English speaking cultures. Presenting interactions between non-native speakers as in the example above, which was unimaginable 40 years ago, is also quite normal in textbooks these days. It is clear, at least as far as the cultural content of textbooks is concerned, that English language education in Japan today reflects the concept of English as an International Language (EIL) or that of World Englishes.

The Courses of Study set by the Ministry of Education, which includes guidelines for the content of textbooks for primary and secondary education, has legal binding force for textbook writers. That is, the selection of cultural components of textbooks described above is based on the national policies of the Japanese government. After going through a number of revisions after the war, the current Courses of Study for junior and senior high schools states that teaching materials should deal with matters such as “the daily lives, customs and habits, stories, geography, and history of people of the world, especially those who use English, and the Japanese”. As to the selection of materials, the Courses of Study cites the importance of helping the students deepen their understanding of the lives and cultures of “the world and our own country”. In other words, it is a governmental policy to understand not only native but also non-native English-speaking cultures through English and to express Japanese values in English. In this respect, the concept of EIL is clearly a national policy of Japan.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Education has not made their position very clear in regard to the issue of production models. For a senior high school EFL class called “Oral Communication”,
the current Courses of Study states that “Language materials, in principle, should be based on the present-day standard Englishes. However, it should also be taken into consideration that varieties of English are used as a global means of communication” (translation mine). With this regulation, tolerance of the diversity of English is encouraged, according to an official notation of the Courses of Study given by the Ministry of Education (1999:27–28). However, the meaning of “the present-day standard Englishes” is rather ambiguous. I have translated it here as plural “Englishes”, in reference to the above notation by the Ministry of Education which describes it as “not monolithic, and representing a diversity in various respects, especially in such areas as pronunciation and lexicons” (translation mine). Yet, the Education Ministry goes on to say in the same explanation that “this regulation does not require that varieties of English be given to the students as the models of learning” (translation mine). Although certainly progressive compared to the conventional stance of ELT, this official interpretation of the Courses of Study in practice seems to be leading the textbook writers and the teachers to the same old American or British English after all, at least for the production models.

The recent diffusion of EIL philosophy in Japan is observable also in the employment of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) for English in the public school system. In 1989, as was reported in the Yomiuri newspaper, there was only one non-native English speaking ALT in Japan for the subject of English (then called AET), who was from the Philippines. I interviewed her on a radio English education programme for which I served as the host. Asked what she thought of the reality that all the AETs but herself are native speakers of English, this AET from the Philippines appealed to the Japanese listeners as follows:

So, I think Japan should also open their minds, you know, not to close their minds, you know, thinking that the right English is only American or British English. It’s really quite unfair. (English for Millions, broadcast on 5 January 1990)

It still took Japan more than several years before her vision began to come true. Until 1996, as ALTs for English, the Japanese government only hired applicants from the US, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Ireland, reflecting the traditional notion that only native speakers can provide appropriate language models for learners. In 1997, the Japanese government finally opened the JET programme (ALT programme) to non-native speakers of English. In 2008, Japan had 99 ALTs from South Africa, 17 from India, 48 from Singapore, 46 from Jamaica, etc. (JET Programme 2009). They are still a minority in the total of over 4,000 ALTs, but their presence is gradually getting to be accepted in public schools in Japan.

Tagawa (2008) reports on the case of a public junior high school in Hyogo Prefecture, where an ALT from India is naturally received by both students and colleagues, with no one questioning her credentials as a model speaker of English. Moreover, outside the JET program sponsored by the central government, these days we quite frequently encounter non-native English-speaking ALTs employed at local levels. In a public elementary school in the Kyoto area, where the teaching of English is already regularly practised for the 5th and 6th graders in accordance with the policy set by the local city board of education, I was able to observe recently (in June 2009) that an ALT from Russia was also positively received by the students and Japanese teachers as a model speaker of English. The fact that she comes from the Expanding Circle was not considered to be a negative factor in any respect.

In sum, non-native speakers of English are in the process of gradual integration into the English teaching staff in public schools in Japan. It could be expected that the presence of non-native English-speaking ALTs with their own varieties of English would help Japanese students realize the positive value of Japanese English of their own.
Classroom practice in English as an International Language

The teaching of EIL, for expressing Japanese values in English and for understanding a diversity of cultures through English, is gradually beginning to be practised at various educational settings in Japan.

The aforementioned radio programme *English for Millions*, a major English education programme broadcast all over Japan for which the present writer was the lecturer from 1989 to 1992, can probably be called a forerunner for such educational practice in EIL. In a series of programmes aired once a week from 1989 to 1990, I invited non-native English-speaking guests from various countries, namely, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and France. Using my Japanese English, I discussed a range of topics including environment, education, human rights, politics and economy with these speakers of English from a diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Hino 1989–1990).

I had three primary purposes for this radio venture twenty years ago. One was to expose Japanese learners of English to varieties of English. As Smith and Bisazza (1982) found, experience in exposure is one of the keys to international understanding. Another aim was to show examples of NNS/NNS interactions in English, which was becoming increasingly common in actual international communication and yet whose significance was hardly recognized by teachers and learners of English those days. Still another purpose was to give a certain confidence to Japanese learners of English by demonstrating that Japanese English, my own variety of English, is internationally communicative, capable of expressing indigenous values while maintaining international intelligibility.

Although English teaching programmes on the radio and TV are abundant in Japan, it had been unimaginable before then to have regular talk-show programs with non-native speakers of English. As most other phases of English language education in Japan, radio and TV programmes for teaching English in Japan were largely based on the traditional premise that both productive and receptive models of English should be those of native speakers. This new radio project was only made possible by my luck of having a director and a producer for this programme who were both open to innovative ideas. In deciding on the selection of speakers, I made a point of inviting guests not only from the Outer Circle (Malaysia, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, in this case) but also from the Expanding Circle (France, in this case) to make my stance clear that I do not discriminate between Englishes in the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle.

The responses I received from the listeners of this radio programme were mostly positive, which included comments such as “This programme, which gives us opportunities to listen to varieties of English, is really rare and valuable.” and “I was surprised to find that non-native varieties of English are often easier to listen to than native-speaker English.” There was only one letter which expressed a clearly negative opinion, which said “I don't want to listen to such strange English as Filipino English,” but this response actually further convinced me of the importance of this education programme which was intended to help the listeners eliminate such prejudice against non-native varieties of English.

An example from this radio talk which stimulated a lot of responses from the listeners concerns the English expressions used by the guest from Bangladesh in response to my invitation for his radio appearance. Although this conversation was not recorded, we took it up in our radio talk (broadcast on 10 November 1989) since his reply, based on his Islamic faith, was an ideal example of non-Anglo-American cultural expression in EIL. The original dialogue was as follows:

Japanese host: Could you come to the studio next Wednesday?
Bangladeshi guest: Well, maybe.
Japanese host: I beg your pardon?
Bangladeshi guest: I don't know, but I will try.
This university student from Bangladesh explained on the radio that it would constitute a blasphemy to God (Allah) if he made a future promise to humans, because he believed that the future is in the hands of Allah. Indeed, in accordance with his religious faith, "Maybe" and "I don't know, but I will try" must have been the most appropriate expressions, which are in effect tantamount to "Sure" or "Certainly" in native-speaker English. In other words, he was performing the speech act of agreeing in a way which conformed to his important cultural values. Imposing American or British expressions such as "Sure" or "Certainly" on this student, which had been taken for granted in conventional ELT, would be a serious invasion of human rights for him. Anglo-American English has been largely formed upon the Judeo-Christian tradition, and is not always appropriate for expressing Islamic values. As the host for this programme, I called on the Japanese audience to follow the example of this Bangladeshi youngster in his worthy attempt to express his own cultural values in English rather than using American ways of thinking.

Twenty years after this radio programme, in my university EFL classes in Japan for first and second year students, I use a method which I call IPTEIL, or the Integrated Practice in Teaching English as an International Language (Hino 2006, 2007). This method, which is a type of content-based language instruction, is an integrated approach in several aspects, especially in the sense that it attempts to integrate the notion of EIL with multiple pedagogical concepts including Global Education, Media Literacy Education, and Legitimate Peripheral Participation, among others.

Teaching materials for IPTEIL are authentic materials, i.e. a variety of web newspapers that are read in class real-time, combined with satellite TV news videotaped on the morning of the class day. In class, we start by watching the TV news, such as *Channel NewsAsia* (Singapore), *ATV* (Hong Kong), *ABS-CBN* (Philippines), *CNN* (US), and *BBC* (UK). *Channel NewsAsia*, for example, covers daily news which mainly involve speakers of Asian varieties of English. It also provides a lot of authentic NNS/NNS interactions, such as international exchanges between Singaporean anchors and reporters from such areas as India, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Japan. In this way, my students witness living examples of the reconciliation of indigenous values and English as a global language. After watching the TV news, taking advantage of the CALL room connected to the internet, I lead the students to read about the same news topic on the web newspapers, integrating listening and reading skills. In order to train Media Literacy based on Critical Thinking, we compare and contrast newspapers around the world which differ in their perspectives, such as *CNN* (US), *BBC* (UK), *Channel NewsAsia* (Singapore), *Al Jazeera* (Qatar), *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel), *IRNA* (Iran), *The News* (Pakistan), *Bangkok Post* (Thailand), *The Standard* (Hong Kong), *People's Daily* (China), *The Korea Herald* (Korea), *The Standard* (Kenya), and *NHK* (Japan), among many others. Across these news media all over the world, syntactic differences are limited, but they present a wide variety of cultural values, reflecting the diversity of EIL or World Englishes. For example, we compared the following articles by *CNN* and *Al Jazeera* on the new Pope’s inauguration sermon:

> During his homily, the new pontiff said he wished to reach out to Jews and “believers and non-believers alike” and asked for prayers from the St. Peter's Square onlookers as he assumed “this enormous task”. (*CNN* 24 April 2005)

> In his inaugural ceremony, the new pope has praised Christianity’s common heritage with Jews but has taken no notice of Islam. (*Al Jazeera* 24 April 2005)

From the *CNN* coverage, readers get the feeling that the new Pope spoke to the whole world beyond religious differences, while the *Al Jazeera* article gives the impression that the Pope simply ignored Muslims who do not share the Judeo-Christian tradition. Students are surprised to find that the same event, the same speech in the above case, can be interpreted and reported even in the opposite...
ways, depending on the viewpoints of each media. They learn a diversity of cultural values represented in Englishes in the world.

IPTEIL is basically an attempt to provide the learners with opportunities for Legitimate Peripheral Participation in the community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991) in EIL. I try to make this possible with a task that is commonly shared by any user of EIL, which is to watch, read, and talk about daily news. Through real-time news on the Internet, I invite my students to join me in the real world of EIL.

When there are foreign students in addition to local Japanese students, the IPTEIL class takes on a clearer nature of the “community of practice in EIL” (Hino 2003). Native English-speaking students are normally exempted from EFL classes, but I welcome those Inner Circle users of English to stay in my IPTEIL class. In fact, it is an important principle of EIL that its learners include native speakers of English as well as non-native speakers (Smith 1978; Kubota 2001). For example, a student from New Zealand has expressed to me that he enjoyed learning about the varieties of viewpoints in this class. We have also had foreign students, though still limited in number, from countries such as Malaysia, China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, and Thailand. It is hoped, with the increase of international students, that the IPTEIL class will be a true realization of the community of practice in EIL, where local Japanese students, international students regardless of their native languages, and also the teacher as their leader will share their views and experiences so as to learn from each other (Hino 2003).

A fact that may prove the value of IPTEIL is that an award known as “Osaka University Award for Outstanding Contributions to General Education” was given eight times to the teaching with this method during the period 2002 to 2008. This would be a rare example world-wide of an official award for classroom teaching in EIL or World Englishes. This award, decided upon every semester on the basis of the students’ evaluation questionnaire and reviews by the faculty committee, is a highly competitive award, yielding the competition rate of approximately 1% every time. At the most recent occasion (fall 2008), for example, only 12 teachers were chosen out of the 1,187 teachers of this large national university. The reasons for giving the award to IPTEIL, officially cited by Osaka University (2009c), include the following, which shows that EIL aspects of this method are highly evaluated:

Gained recommendation from overwhelmingly many students, by introducing them to varieties of English and leading them to analyze world events from multiple perspectives, through activities such as comparing the viewpoints of various news media real-time. (For Spring Semester, 2008; translation mine)

“Varieties of English” and “multiple perspectives,” found in the above evaluation, are key concepts of EIL and World Englishes. This is an example in which a major institution of higher education in Japan is beginning to appreciate a new type of English language teaching that is founded on the recognition of varieties of English with a diversity of cultural values. The fact that this approach has proved to be very popular among students also looks promising for the future development of EIL education.

There are of course teaching practices other than IPTEIL which are successful at the university level. In the current IPTEIL practice described above, personal and direct contact with other users of EIL from different cultural backgrounds are still rather limited. Waseda University offers such opportunities with the technology of TV conferences, an approach known as Cross-Cultural Distance Learning (CCDL). In an example reported by Ueda et al. (2005), 20 students from Waseda University in Tokyo engage in discussions via TV conference with 20 counterparts from Korea University in Seoul. Ueda et al. explain one of the aims of this project as follows:
Students who have been exposed in person to the styles of English communication by Chinese or Koreans, which are influenced by their cultures, would be in an advantageous position to better understand their English, compared with those who have not had such chances. This activity should be also meaningful as an effort to help Chinese and Korean people become familiar with the styles of communication in Japanese English. (Ueda et al. 2005: 171. translation mine)

This educational project at Waseda University could be viewed as an attempt to create a community of practice, a constructivist notion mentioned earlier, in which participants learn from each other through interactions. CCDL is a suggestive example in terms of future prospects for the teaching of EIL.

Chukyo University, with its college of World Englishes, has also been holding TV conferences for the purpose of teaching EIL through authentic interactions. Most recently in 2009, for example, undergraduate students at Chukyo University had two talk sessions, one with Chinese diplomats and the other with Indonesian military officers, both of whom were studying at RELC in Singapore. The development of information technology is indeed opening new possibilities of EIL education.

Conclusions
The conflict between indigenous and foreign values has been a problem in the language attitudes of the Japanese, which is becoming even more serious with the tide of globalization today. One way to ease this tension, if not the final solution, is to employ the teaching of EIL, or de-Anglo-Americanized English for multicultural expression. In fact, Japanese users of English have long been struggling to express their own values in English for international communication. The concept of EIL is also exerting increasing influence on traditionally EFL classrooms in Japan.

The fact that the world’s first independent college of World Englishes and also the first autonomous graduate school of World Englishes were founded in this country, in 2002 and 2006 respectively at Chukyo University, is a salient example to show the keen interest among Japanese users of English in expressing indigenous values through English. The Chukyo leadership has stated on several occasions, such as at the Chubu Chapter meeting of JACET in December 2008, that they would like to see Japanese English with its own norms, rather than to settle with the classic definition of ‘exonormative’ Expanding Circle varieties of English in the World Englishes paradigm. In this sense, the Chukyo position may be, despite their school name, actually closer to what I define as EIL (Hino 2001, cf. Tupas 2006: 174, 180–181) than to World Englishes. Chukyo University has recently even opened an EIL course for their affiliated senior high school as a test case. At the moment, they are running a short-term course, in which senior high students are introduced to the concept of EIL and also given chances to engage in EIL communication.

On the other hand, although Japan has been quick to adopt a diversity of cultures including their own as the content of teaching materials in English, they have not been able to come up so far with a comprehensive production model with specific linguistic features, which remains a difficult job in EIL education in this country.

It is true that Japan is faced with many other serious problems in language policy today. It should make a last-minute effort to maintain aboriginal languages like Ainu. Japan must also ensure language services for foreign residents, such as Portuguese and Spanish for those from Latin America. Developing and diffusing EIL education is just one of the tasks that Japan must tackle in regard to the urgent sociolinguistic need that it is facing. However, it cannot be denied that English for international communication is an indispensable linguistic skill for the Japanese in this age of globalization. The Japanese need to understand a diversity of values expressed in both native and non-native varieties of English, and also to express their own thoughts, rather than Anglo-American values, in English. The teaching of English as an International Language is an answer, if not the panacea, to the dilemma of indigenous values and global needs.
Notes
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References


