

# Explorations in Teacher Education

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**Special Issue: Exploring the Edges of World Englishes**

**This month in...**

**2 *Explorations in Teacher Education***

**Conference Reviews**

**6 14<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Japan Association for Asian Englishes**

James D'Angelo

**16 Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom: Have World Englishes arrived in Japan?**

Alan Thompson

**26 Take advantage of your Achilles heel! The raison d'être of World Englishes**

Kim Hee-in

**28 Voices in World Englishes: A Kaleidoscopic View**

Tina Ferrato

**44 International English and the Anglo-American Hegemony: Quandary in the Asian Pacific Region**

Gregory Hadley

**51 Publishing Guidelines for *Explorations in Teacher Education***

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## Special Issue: Exploring the Edges of World Englishes

“English is more and more becoming the property of anyone in the world who can use it with effectiveness, and is becoming less and less connected with one or several dominant cultures. ... I am optimistic that Japan and other countries around the world will form close bonds, and that English will be the tool that helps us understand and tolerate one another better. Japan needs to make major steps forward in developing a high level of proficiency in its own recognized variety of English.” (Sakai, 2003, p. 1)

The papers in this special issue on World Englishes arise out of two thought-provoking conferences held in December 2003. On December 5<sup>th</sup> was the 14<sup>th</sup> *National Conference of the Japan Association of Asian Englishes*, and on the next day was the *Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom*. Both were held at the Nagoya campus of Chukyo University, sponsored by their Colleges of World Englishes. The conferences served as an introduction to the ideas associated with World Englishes, an update on the latest thinking, and a platform for Japanese and Japan-based linguists to discuss their recent research.

This special issue seeks to provide a snapshot of the ideas offered at the conferences. James D'Angelo of Chukyo University reviews the *National Conference of the Japan Association of Asian Englishes*, and Alan Thompson of Nagoya University of Business and Commerce the *Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom*. Together these articles give a substantial introduction to the two days. Kim Hee-in, an undergraduate student from Nanzan University, outlines her positive response to the notion of World Englishes, from a student's perspective. Tina Ferrato of Tokai University links the ideas of the two conferences together, and offers answers to a number of questions that many teachers and teacher educators may have about World Englishes. Finally, Gregory Hadley of Niigata XXX offers a more critical perspective on World Englishes, and English as an International Language. Together, these five articles

should provide a solid introduction to World Englishes, and illustrate its relevance to our classroom teaching and teacher educating.

The guest lecturers at the conferences are the most prominent and distinguished thinkers in the field – Dr. Braj Kachru, Mr. Larry Smith, Dr. Yamuna Kachru, Dr. Paroo Nihalani, Professor Takao Suzuki, Professor Nobuyuki Honna, and Professor Nobuyuki Hino. The conferences were a feast of ideas that challenged many participants' beliefs and understandings about the role of English(es) in the world today, and the role and potential of language teachers in fostering a broader tolerance and acceptance for lingual diversity.

The authors in this special issue raise a number of themes. Although it is difficult to capture the breadth of their ideas, I would like to briefly preview some of them here, and so introduce some of the main issues of World Englishes. Before doing so, I will note that many of the authors very carefully debate and define terms such as 'World Englishes' and 'English as an International Language'. To define them here in a few sentences would be unfair to the authors' intentions, and to the complexities of the issue, so I will invite you to explore these ideas yourselves in the articles.

The first theme explored by authors is that English is clearly continuing to be diffused around the world. In the process, it is being adapted to the needs of different countries. Inevitably, as English internationalises, it also diversifies. All languages change over time, and particularly languages that are put to as many different uses, in as many different contexts, as modern Englishes are. The legitimacy of these local, 'nativised' varieties of English should be recognised. The unique elements of Japanese English should therefore be granted more legitimacy.

The second theme is that the 'capacity of English' as a language is much greater than what native speakers have explored. Languages have an almost infinite capacity for structural and functional expansion, but no language has used up its inherent potentiality. Newer varieties of English are playing an important role in expanding and enriching the present capacity of English. The portion that native speakers have explored is substantial but by no means complete; there is still a lot to be

exploited by non-native speakers, who will develop certain aspects of the language that have not been touched by native speakers. Teachers should therefore be aware of areas of 'linguistic creativity' displayed by students, and encourage them.

The rise and role of 'Asian English' forms the third, perhaps controversial, theme. Sanseido in 2002 published a *Dictionary of Asian Englishes*. This effort, to categorise and record different varieties of English, helps to legitimise them, and demonstrate how they are enriching English. This process should be seen as part of maintaining and developing national identity, and more importantly, learner identity, particularly as Japanese English speakers are often characterised as having inadequate confidence. However, a number of fallacies often underlie language learning in Japan: 'proper' English is American or British English; varieties outside these 'Inner Circle' forms are deficient or 'interlanguage' varieties; and sociopragmatic competence should also be modelled upon Inner Circle forms. The result is that Japanese learners often do not even think to look for their own 'voice', in contrast to the Singaporeans, who prefer to use Singaporean English to express their own identity. Teachers should encourage students to be confident of their own form of English, and use it to indicate local sociopragmatic conventions, values, and traditions, and to develop a positive learner and speaker identity. Adaptation to local need and greater freedom of expression, not mimicry of dominant cultures, should be the aim of language education.

The issue of the 'native speaker' forms the fourth theme. The definition of the native speaker must broaden, from just Inner Circle speakers from countries like the U.S. or England, to competent speakers from Outer Circle countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and India. Other thinkers have pointed out that some non-native speakers are more competent in the target language than the ostensible native speaker, and that the competent non-native speaker is a more appropriate role model for students, given that students are more likely to communicate with non-native speakers in the future.

The notion of World Englishes has significant implications for teachers and teacher educators, and this is the fifth theme. Firstly, students should be exposed to a wide variety of Englishes. This both helps them appreciate the diversity of English, prepare for future communicative encounters, and also lessen their felt need to develop

native-like pronunciation. Textbooks such as *J-Pops* contain numerous spoken examples of speakers from many different countries. Secondly, in a diverse English speaking world, it is the responsibility of the hearer to engage with the speaker to construct the meaning of an interaction. Students need to learn and practice appropriate communication strategies to negotiate meaning. Thirdly, future teachers need to be reassured that they do not need to speak like a native speaker to be 'competent'. Rather, they need to find their own voice; by doing so, they will be better role models for their own future students. Lastly, Japan's language education policy is out of step with World Englishes, for a number of reasons: it prioritises grammatical competence over sociolinguistic, discourse, or communicative competence; it calls for 'modern standard English' for Oral Communication classes, neglecting the diversity of contemporary Englishes; and it specifies that AETs must be 'native speakers of English' rather than simply 'competent speakers of English'. A more critical approach is called for.

The final theme is a more specifically political one – the cultural and linguistic hegemony of the U.S.. Some thinkers argue that America is no longer a good role model for Japan, so Japan must detach itself from its 'infatuation' with the States. However, this assumes that it is possible to separate the message from the medium; that is, that English can be used while staying free of global English culture's discursal influences. Others argue the futility of this – Japan's linguistic and cultural borders have been fatally compromised through the onslaught of American English via satellite, entertainment media, and the Internet. Re-defining English as an 'International Language' is an attempt to de-nationalise and de-politicise English, and divest American hegemony from its claim on the English language. However, there are many pitfalls in doing so, and it may be better to adopt the World Englishes approach, which explicitly acknowledges the dynamic cultural, political, historic, and economic diversity and significance of language.

I hope that you enjoy this thoughtful issue of *Explorations in Teacher Education*.

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Sakai, Sanzo. "Greetings from the College Dean." Program Booklet. *Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom*. College of World Englishes, Chukyo University, December 7, 2003. p. 1.

## **Conference Review**

### **14<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Japan Association for Asian Englishes**

James D'Angelo, Chukyo University <dangelo@lets.chukyo-u.ac.jp>

The *14<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Japan Association for Asian Englishes* (JAF AE) was held on the Nagoya campus of Chukyo University on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2003, in conjunction with the Chukyo University Department of World Englishes *Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom* held on the following day. JAF AE holds its conference twice a year, and whereas the primary language is usually Japanese, on this occasion all papers were delivered in English. This was due to the attendance of many of the leading figures in the field of world Englishes, including Professors Braj B. Kachru, Mr. Larry Smith, Professor Yamuna Kachru, and Professor Paroo Nihalani. JAF AE is quite close in its philosophy to the International Association of World Englishes (IAWE), so it was appropriate to combine the two events. Both groups support the diffusion of English around the world, and the recognition and development of legitimate local, 'nativized' varieties of English, in which international intelligibility is achieved, yet national identity is maintained.

#### **Opening Ceremony**

The Opening Ceremony began with greetings from Sanae Tsuda of Tokai Gakuen University, and remarks from conference chair Hiroshi Yoshikawa of Chukyo University, Department of World Englishes Dean Sanzo Sakai, and JAF AE President Nobuyuki Honna of Aoyama Gakuin University, who introduced the keynote speaker, Mr. Larry Smith: coeditor of the journal *World Englishes*, former dean of the East/West Center at the University of Hawaii, and one of the seminal figures in advancing the concept of Intelligibility in world Englishes.

#### **Keynote Address**

Mr. Smith delivered a rousing ninety-minute keynote in his impressive rhetoric. Currently President of Christopher, Smith and Associates, a cross-cultural leadership consulting firm, he used the date of the conference, 12/06/03, as a sequence with one

number missing '09,' to determine the number of issues he would address. It was a major address by a major figure, so the bulk of this review will be devoted to summarizing his nine issues, in order of least to most important.

### **World Englishes and Asia**

Issue number 9 was 'Other National Associations for Asian Englishes.' He said we must congratulate ourselves on the development of so many organizations, but warned that there is very little connectivity among them. He called the organizations 'united in purpose, but scattered in organization,' and expressed the hope that these magnificent threads be woven into a great tapestry. Highlighting the need for leadership in the still controversial area of Asian Englishes, he said we can be a symphony, but are in search of someone who will 'step forward as the maestro.' Smith followed with issue number 8, the 'Threat of the Hegemony of English in Asia.' He warned of the ELT publishing empire, and said to be cautious about the term 'EIL' (English as an International Language). He warned, 'I'm not promoting the study of English. Not me! If there's an International English, I don't speak it!' We need the 'es.'

Issue number 7 was 'The Place of Kachru's Three Circles.' Here, he reminded us of how the Kachruvian model contributed to redefining the discourse in the field. 'Native' was replaced by 'inner circle,' and 'expanding circle' replaced the term ESL. Several key points Smith made were that there is some movement in these circles (take the case of Malaysia going from outer to expanding and now trying to rejoin the outer), and that language professionals need to know how English is used successfully in Asia. He credited former Prime Minister Obuchi with proposing that English become an official second language in Japan, saying that Obuchi knew it would be shot down, but just wanted the debate over what Japan needs to do to be taken more seriously in Asia.

### **Classroom Issues**

Issue 6 involved 'English Teacher Selection and Training.' Smith stressed that teachers need to be aware of how often and for what purposes English is being used in Asia. He mentioned that although ambassadors Mansfield and Baker mention the Japan/U.S. alliance as most important for the U.S., if Japanese can only be successful in dealing with Americans, that's a disservice. More than pronunciation and intonation, it's

the 'conventions of communication' that matter. He described an American in Bangkok who was invited to a banquet at the royal palace and replied, "Sorry, I have to go to Seoul three days before," and offended his host. A Japanese might have responded "How nice of you to invite me!" and waited till after to decline. In this vein, Mr. Smith applauded Professor Honna and JAFEA's efforts to hold a trip each spring to a different part of Asia to learn about English education and use in the region. JAFEA traveled to India in 2002, the Philippines in 2003, and will go to Taiwan this year. These trips help to educate teachers and raise awareness about how and why English is used around Asia. They also build an understanding of the ways in which English is adapted to the needs of different countries, helping to bring tolerance of variety, and to decrease over-dependence on Anglo-American cultural perspectives: all factors that can help teachers to better evaluate existing materials, and to rethink them with a sensitivity to World Englishes.

Issue number 5 was entitled "Developing Materials for Teaching World Englishes." He called for providing students with 'interactive experiential simulations.' These would be simulations of interactions between speakers from different 'expanding circle' countries. How will Japanese interact with Vietnamese? How will Cambodians interact with Koreans? Smith has incorporated these simulations in work at the East/West Center in Hawaii, and used them in evaluating students. Please contact him if you wish to learn more.

He also stressed being aware of the 'e-literatures' of such writers as Roger Rao, Arundate Roy, Anita Desai, R.K. Narayan, Catherine Lim, and Chinua Achebe. Issue number 4 involved 'Approaches, Methods, and Techniques of Teaching.' Smith quoted Otto Jespersen, "There is no royal road to language learning." He stressed not getting caught up in the latest method. If students are motivated, interested in the materials and lessons, and have enough contact time, the learning will happen. Teachers and students should encourage one another to do what we all find productive: thus promoting a student-centered classroom in which tasks are tailored to fit the needs and interests of individual students. I would like for Smith to have fleshed-out this idea more, because it has strong implications in the areas of goal setting and deciding on methods and materials. We in Japan are currently under pressure to produce better results for our



students, but at the same time, we must take teacher and student individuality into account. I believe what Smith is saying is that being too prescriptive with our teachers can be harmful, but at the same time, he needs to explain more about how to avoid that while still responding to the institutional demands for quantitative results.

Issue number 3 was on 'Evaluation and Testing of English.' Smith states that 'enumeration does not equal evaluation,' and that we should put the 'value' back in 'evaluation.' Something as basic as culturally specific 'forms of address' are truly valuable. Americans regard it as an intrusion when Thais ask 'Where are you going,' but Thais are frustrated with Americans asking 'How are you?' "Why ask me again in the afternoon; why do you care so much about our health??" Tests should include competencies to avoid these missteps. Smith also challenged the dominance and misuse of culturally specific tests such as TOEFL, and said they can only be changed through economic pressure. We need to present a united front to get some features of Asian Englishes introduced. He stressed that these changes must begin with small steps.

### **Standards and Models**

Smith's Issue 2, was 'The Role of the Native Speaker of \_\_\_\_\_ English.' He gave the example of Professor Yamuna Kachru as a native speaker of Indian English, from her area. He furthered his point, that, Anne Pakir of the National University of Singapore is certainly a native speaker of Singaporean English. Maria Lourdes S. Batista is a native speaker of Philippine English. We must learn to broaden the notion of 'native speaker.' More and more, especially in 'outer circle' countries where English has some sort of official status, English is taught by highly proficient local people who should be considered native speakers of, for example, Singaporean English. In fact, in Singapore, Singaporeans teach most content classes, from elementary school on, in English from various first-language backgrounds. They are highly educated and speak a variety of English that may be considered native, within that context. Thus it is an error to think of native speakers of English as only those from inner-circle countries such as England, Canada and Ireland, and the English of those from Malaysia and India as somehow 'imperfect.' Thus, native speakers in Japan must consider that their English is not superior, and must be more open to English teachers from countries such as Nigeria,

Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Japanese students must also learn to have a more realistic understanding of whom they will be interacting with in English, and ultimately, Japanese themselves must begin to reassert their role as English-speaking English teachers in the ELT classroom. Confident in their own variety of Educated Japanese English; Japanese themselves should be teaching Oral Communication at the University level. Professor Nihalani of the University of Brunei has mentioned that in Singapore, where he was on the faculty of the National University, British teachers were finally all required to have PhD's in linguistics, or were given their walking papers.

Finally, Smith's issue number 1, was 'Standards of Excellence.' There is no one standard, but standards do exist. Smith is 'not interested in being standardized,' but his example, "I miss too much my mother," is not acceptable Educated English. At the sentence level, we have to stay true to subject/verb and noun/pronoun agreement. While there is no one standard, we have to decide the model for our classes, yet still be aware of varieties. Beyond grammatical form, Smith argues for 'strategic competence' as being of great importance. We need to make a change when something's not working. He gives an example of a trip to the Japanese consulate in the U.S. His visa for Japan had expired and he was to fly to Tokyo the next day. He was tense, and matters became worse when he heard the conversation of the man in front of him in line with the clerk. She told him it would take 5 days to get a visa and he left in a huff. Mr. Smith then was called to the counter and he apologetically said, "It seems that I have allowed my visa to expire," accepting blame for his ignorance. The clerk told him to have a seat and within five minutes he had a new visa!

### **JAF AE Members Meeting**

The members General Meeting and lunch followed Mr. Smith's keynote. Professor Aikawa discussed the financial situation of JAF AE, and gave a power-point presentation on the upcoming trip to Taiwan. It was unfortunate that most 'native speakers' left the room once the meeting in Japanese began. I feel that to teach here in Japan, we must all understand the local language as well.

## **Paper Presentations**

The afternoon session began with a series of paper presentations. Ayako Shibata of the University of London led off with a paper entitled, 'Does receptive English teaching motivate learners' attitudes towards international communication? Ideologies in governmental curriculum guidelines.' Ms. Shibata critiqued the latest English language education policy in Japan and found serious gaps in the government's understanding and the sociolinguistic realities. She mentions that the governmental guidelines call for 'modern standard English' for Oral Communication classes. Regarding hiring of assistant teachers, they specify 'native speakers of English.' She also finds that accuracy-oriented words prevail, indicating that grammatical competence is considered more important than sociolinguistic, discourse, or communicative competence. This topic was addressed later in the day by Professor Yuko Takeshita, and again the following day by Professor Yamuna Kachru. Ms. Shibata also found that a 'receptive' attitude seems to be more important than a productive one.

In the next paper, Setsuko Oda of the International University of Health and Welfare presented a study of Japanese University students' beliefs about English pronunciation as a starting point to raise their awareness of English as an international language. Ms. Oda found playing a tape of different varieties of English helped many of her students come to realize the existence of such varieties for the first time, and may have helped lessen their anxiety about developing native-like pronunciation. Having more materials of this nature will play a major role in the future in helping Japanese teachers and students to realize that English belongs to every country and that it belongs to Japan as well.

Professor Alan Thompson of the Nagoya University of Commerce and Business followed Ms. Oda. Thompson presented the results of an ongoing experiment of having teacher-training students actually teach some varieties of world Englishes. His aim is to raise awareness among his students and to have them recognize the distinctive features of different varieties. Thompson found that his experiment has confirmed the axiom that 'the best way to learn something is to have to teach it!' Preliminary results of his study indicate that there is still much work to be done to educate 'naïve' students who still,

“doubt the efficacy of using models developed for intranational Englishes (e.g. Singaporean) when describing international varieties (that spoken in Japan, Korea, etc).”

Professor Judy Yoneoka of Kumamoto Gakuen University then presented a survey of six artificially simplified Englishes (ASEs), with vocabularies in the range of 1000 words. She reminds us that English as an International Language (EIL) is, like any standard, ‘an idealization that is not actually spoken by any single person.’ By studying such ASEs, such as ‘Simplified English,’ which was developed for the Aerospace Industry, or Voice of America Special English, Yoneoka’s hope is to apply ASE solutions towards building a new framework for characterization of EIL. In other words, by studying the efforts that were made to develop simplified Englishes, we may be better able to understand what are the key ‘core’ components of English that are necessary for international communication. Even though such a thing as English as an International Language does not exist (see Larry Smith’s issue #8 above), if it were to exist, what might it look like?

The next paper, by Professor Shi Jie of the University of Electro-Communications in Tokyo, looked at decoding the ‘Chineseness’ in college English textbooks in China. She employed a research ‘instrument’ which she used last year to analyze the ‘Chineseness’ in Ha Jin’s novel *Waiting*. The instrument involved looking at address terms, proper terms, proverbs and sayings, terms of cultural reference, terms of political reference, spoken discourse, written discourse, and curse words and obscenities. Her findings indicate that there is a strong sense of ‘Chineseness’ in these texts, and a priority on explaining Chinese culture to foreigners, which is in contrast to English texts in Japan that often focus on learning about western culture. While there is a certain propaganda focus here, these texts nevertheless may fit more closely with a world Englishes concept that English be used as a medium to communicate the local ‘message’ of the host culture. For us teaching in Japan, the same type of criteria might be applied to look at the writing done by Japanese, to see where the ‘Japanese-ness’ comes in, and thus to begin to see what unique lexical or semantic developments may be part of an educated Japanese English.

## **Final Symposium**

With the paper presentations completed, the conference continued with a symposium on 'English as an Asian Language and Japanese Contributions,' chaired by JAF AE general secretary Tina Tajima. JAF AE President Nobuyuki Honna proposed some action proposals for English as an Asian Language. He applauded the SEAMEO RELC (Southeast Asian Education Ministers' Organization's Regional Language Centre) in Singapore as making major strides to promote English in Asia. Professor Honna explained that as English internationalizes, it also diversifies. He calls such diversification 'the price you have to pay' for internationalization. He presented a diagram which illustrates that as English is diffused, it is adapted to local needs. This process is also called enculturation, nativization or indigenization. Professor Honna then demonstrated some of the lexical and semantic creativity seen in the region and explained concepts such as 'reduplication' which are common in local varieties. He provided another diagram which shows that the 'Capacity of English' is much greater than what native speakers have explored, and that newer varieties of English are playing an important role in expanding and enriching this capacity. Professor Honna concluded that while "the concept of English as an Asian language is new in Japanese educational quarters...it gets smoothly accepted into business sectors." Businesspeople have the direct experience of using English widely in Asia that educators may be unaware of. He called for JAF AE to provide leadership by promoting its scholarship in this area to a wide range of people, echoing the point made in Larry Smith's keynote. For teachers, Professor Honna's points require that we reconsider the Japanese produced by our students and be on the lookout for areas of budding creativity. This required a re-evaluation of our approach of how 'errors' are viewed.

Following Professor Honna, his coauthor on several major writings, Professor Yuko Takeshita of Toyo Eiwa University, spoke on the Ministry of Education's (MECSST) new plan to develop 'Japanese with English Abilities,' which was taken up again by Professor Yamuna Kachru the following day. It is valuable to have Professor Takeshita's English version which outlines many of the main points of this plan. She outlines many of the positive measures, such as basic requirements for English teachers (TOEFL 550, TOEIC 730), and also the stress on 'teaching in English' rather than just teaching English.' She nevertheless finds the plan lacking in elucidating how to go about

developing Japanese who can ‘display intellectual leadership in the global society.’ She stresses that there must be more consistency in teaching activities as students move up through the levels. Teachers at university level should know what their students studied in high school and before. This has great relevance to the situation of the native-speaker teacher in university, who has traditionally known little about the English educational practices at the high-school level.

The panel was concluded with a paper by Professor Masao Aikawa of Wakayama Shin-Ai Women’s Junior College comparing English education in Taiwan and Japan. He is also organizing the March trip to Taiwan. The trip will be led by Professor Honna, and will include visits to an elementary school, National Taiwan Normal University, and lectures by Dr. Liao, Hsien-bao (Commissioner at the Department of Cultural Affairs) and Dr. Chen Su-chiao (Professor at National Chia-ya University).

Professor Aikawa’s paper points out that while Japan and Taiwan each share American English as the prime source of educational input, when dealing with one another, Japanese and Taiwanese must negotiate an ‘agreeable variety’ of English between themselves. In addition, the countries within Asia should not ignore the other countries’ English language goals, because one country’s precedent can contribute to another country’s future planning. Professor Aikawa advocates that JAF AE play a leading role in helping to diffuse the idea of English as an Asian language throughout Asia.

The final paper was a report by Professor Tetsuya Enokizono of Akita Prefectural University on the significance of the 2002 Sanseido Dictionary of Asian Englishes, which he and other members of JAF AE compiled. These efforts to categorize and record different varieties of English help to legitimize them and demonstrate their enriching of the capacity of English referred to by Professor Honna. Professor Enokizono describes the dictionary as ‘epoch-making’ and outlined many of its strong points. The dictionary has at least two illustrative sentences for each entry, provides katakana symbols for access by people with limited English ability, and many entries provide word origins and etymology, as well as informative columns which provide cultural and historical background. He hopes that the dictionary will sell well, and believes that with Asia

providing technological leadership in many fields, people from the West will need to understand the Englishes of Asia, in a more egalitarian way.

### **Critical Evaluation and Wrap-up**

The day was completed with concluding remarks from Professor Yasutaka Yano of Waseda University, President of the IAWL Japan, who assessed the papers and speeches. Professor Yano had praise and criticism, and reminded us that the JAFAL conference is an opportunity for the academic work of young scholars to be rigorously evaluated by major figures within the Japanese linguistics community. Professor Yano was highly complimentary of the studies done by Judy Yoneoka and Shi Jie, and less complimentary of those papers which did not adequately explain their goals and did not seem to provide a methodology or framework to look at their data. It reminds us that studies which contribute to our understanding of Language Acquisition must be structured and clearly defined, in a way that allows for some meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

### **Conclusion**

This was perhaps the finest conference which JAFAL has put together, and I think much of the credit goes to the fact that it represented just the type of 'working together' which Larry Smith mentioned in his issue 9. With such a major figure as Larry Smith as a keynote, and knowing that the founder and guru of world Englishes, Professor Emeritus of the University of Illinois Braj. Kachru would be the keynote the next day, the Japanese academic community showed its talents and contributions to the field, and provided a wonderful lead-in to the following day. Together, we must all continue to raise awareness and to help Japanese English and other varieties become respected around the world. This is why it is important for such groups as JALT, JACET, and JAFAL not to remain totally separate, but for Japanese academics and non-Japanese academics to have a common forum to exchange ideas and work together towards solutions. It makes me want to continue to improve my Japanese, and to also look for ways to develop young Japanese scholars who are confident in using their own English in the classroom, something which we are presently working at in the College of World Englishes. (Please see James D'Angelo's bio-data on page 50)

## Conference Review

### **Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom: Have World Englishes arrived in Japan?**

Alan Thompson, Nagoya University of Commerce and Business

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The first *Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom* was held at Chukyo University, Nagoya, on 7 December 2003. “World Englishes” (WE) is a term that has been around for at least two decades, along with another expression with a seemingly similar gist – “English as an international language” (EIL). Educators in Japan are well-accustomed to the latter term, as publishers have taken it up as a descriptor of the commodity they package in their textbooks, and educational institutions have used the EIL term to emphasise the international applicability of the language they teach, but the former term (WE) and the ideas it connotes are less familiar. Indeed, there is considerable ambiguity between the terms, as shown up in the name of the college that hosted the workshop – the *Kokusai Eigo Gakubu* is the *College of World Englishes* but could as well be translated otherwise.

It was one of the objectives of this workshop to make the idea more familiar to English language educators in Japan, to answer the question: What are world Englishes (plural)? Further, the workshop aimed to promote discussion of how world Englishes could be presented and used in classrooms.

#### **What are world Englishes (plural)?**

And what is different about saying “English as an international language” (singular)? By way of introduction, I will attempt a brief overview of the genesis of the term and its accompanying field of study.

The term “world Englishes” originally grew out of work by Braj Kachru, Larry Smith and others, who sought to describe linguistic developments and innovations (such as in Indian English) that were “traditionally not focused on” (Kachru, 1973:372-3) in descriptions of English. Kachru wanted to put nonnative varieties of English on a par



with native varieties, arguing that “their distinctiveness developed for roughly the same reasons” (ibid., p.353). The implication was that nonnative varieties (when they are widespread and communicative) are not instances of imperfectly learned English, as they were often held to be, but simply deviated from native varieties (or, had “nativised”) due to the same social and historical processes that change all languages over time. The term “English as an international language” (singular) is believed, by researchers who identify with the WE label, to be less explicit on this point. It merely implies that English can be used across national boundaries, and can thus communicate international ideas and carry diverse cultural meanings. It does not confer validity on diverse varieties, and perhaps suggests a global unified standard for the use of English. Speakers at the workshop were cautious of this term for this reason.

The study of “world Englishes” began as an attempt to *describe* varieties of English as they are practised around the world, not to *promote* varieties. However, as this workshop plainly illustrated, that focus has changed. In an oft-cited model, Kachru (1982) divided the English speaking world into three concentric circles of English use: the Inner Circle of native varieties (Britain, the USA, etc.), the Outer Circle of nativised varieties (India, Nigeria, Singapore, etc.), and the Expanding Circle of widespread use but no yet established variety (almost everywhere else, including Japan). Obviously, the use of the word “expanding” implied a prediction that other varieties of English would develop, and may be interpreted as a promotion of varieties in these regions. In any case, researchers in Japan (and in other parts of the world) have taken this third circle of the model as a statement of what-should-be, and have busily searched for distinctive features that would demonstrate the existence of a Japanese English.

The programme included the most internationally well-known names in the WE field, as well as several of the most active Japanese researchers. Although the two objectives – presenting world Englishes and considering their use in the classroom – and several other themes were interwoven through all of the lectures, for this survey, I will divide the lectures and name the broadest themes as follows:

1. World Englishes in the Japanese context - Keynote speech by Dr. Braj B. Kachru
2. Teaching international competence in world Englishes - Dr. Paroo Nihilani, Dr. Yamuna Kachru, and Mr. Larry Smith

3. Political considerations in using English - Prof. Suzuki Takao

4. World Englishes in Japanese classrooms - Prof. Nobuyuki Honna, Prof. Nobuyuki Hino, Prof. Sanzo Sakai

### **World Englishes in the Japanese context**

Kachru began his keynote speech with the observation that, while “Indians speak English whether you understand or not”, Japanese have some kind of burden which holds them back from using English. This, he said, is due to a mistaken idea that “native” English equals British or American English, or, more specifically, it is due to several fallacies, including: 1) that English is acquired to communicate with native speakers<sup>1</sup>; 2) that British and American English are the model providers for English users worldwide; and 3) that varieties outside the Inner Circle are “deficit” or “interlanguage” varieties. Kachru labeled this the *eikaiwa* ideology, wherein Japanese have an “obsessive infatuation with Western, especially American culture” (Tsuda, 1992:32), and contrasted it with the attitude of Singaporeans, who prefer to use Singaporean English to express their own identity.

Kachru opposed these fallacies with documented, real-world facts. Worldwide, English interlocutors are mainly those who use English as an additional language; English varieties are in fact used to carry local values and traditions; in these interactional contexts it is endocentric models which influence behaviour, not exocentric ones; and innovation and acculturation of English to various contexts continue, and English varieties are not being swept aside by a wave of uniforming EIL.

Kachru calls for a paradigm shift in English education in Japan: modification of theory to make it appropriate for describing WEs, giving relevance to the context of situation; appropriate methodologies for teaching & learning in Asian countries; an ideological shift where adaptation & not mimicry are the aims of English users/learners; & a canonicity shift where Asian English texts are valued & their creation is encouraged.

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<sup>1</sup> “Native” is a problematic word in the WE field. On the one hand, it is necessary to distinguish first language speakers of English who grow up in predominantly English-speaking (and often monolingual) contexts. On the other hand, one does not want to imply that these speakers are primary to speakers of English in the Outer Circle, who use English as one of two or more languages of widespread communication.

These kinds of paradigm shift are certainly necessary, to keep pace with the changed position of English(es) in the world, and to avoid imposing the outdated once-facts that English is the language of the British Empire or the USA. But Kachru seems to have moved beyond description of facts to promotion of facts-to-be. While discussing the challenges of confronting the traditional English canon which still informs much ELT reading material, he asked participants to “write fiction, and write it in Japanese English” (never mind that we haven’t established what Japanese English is, or even if it exists). Does Kachru feel that these paradigm shifts are necessary so that we can more accurately and fairly describe English(es) as it (they) is (are) actually used in the world, or is Kachru calling for these shifts in order to Expand the Circle of diverse world Englishes further? Has the study of world Englishes created its own industry – that of creating more Englishes to study? If one took a scientific rather than promotional stance, one could argue that there are good explanations for why Indians or Singaporeans have developed their own varieties of English but that Japanese seem to have not. Namely, that in Outer Circle countries such as India or Singapore, there is a speech community where English is an essential language. For reasons to do with their history and multethnicity, Singaporeans use English to talk about local issues and culture with other Singaporeans. Japanese do not use English with other Japanese to discuss things Japanese; when they use English it is in an intercultural context. That is an important difference between Outer and Expanding Circle contexts that is being blurred.

### **Teaching international competence in world Englishes**

The next three speakers, while revisiting some of the points above, spoke on the challenges of being a competent English speaker in the real contexts of English use in today’s world, or for teachers, of helping English students attain this competence. Paroo Nihalani reminded us that we live in an age of global connectivity, and identified three facets of our interdependence: entrepreneurial and energetic individuals, the Internet, and English. However, he pointed out Japan’s uniqueness in its disconnectivity, which he presented as a reasonable explanation for the narrow-use of English in Japan, and the lack of Japanese ideas articulated on the world stage. As a target for world Englishes competence, Nihalani suggested that pronunciation be “universally intelligible” and “socially acceptable” (although he acknowledged that these

norms could be the subject of international linguistic conflict at times), he endorsed Larry Smith's assertion that one's English should be "identifiably from their own country", and stressed, in a diverse English speaking world, the responsibility of the hearer to engage with the speaker to construct the meaning of an interaction – a responsibility that is often shirked by those from monolingual backgrounds but taken for granted by multilingual speakers. He also suggested that competence in supersegmentals, such as intonation, should be expected, as such features, and the politeness and other nuances they convey, may be universal. He thus recommended a top-down approach to teaching English for international communication: rather than starting with words and sentence structures, first accustoming learners to the melody and stress patterns through exposure to chunks of communicative English.

The thrust of Yamuna Kachru's talk was that Japanese users of English should be models for English language teaching in Japan. She repeated her husband's dissatisfaction with exonormative approaches to English and English language education, not only in Japan but in many parts of the world. She made the point that some native speakers are not "efficient communicators", especially in cultures with which they are not completely familiar, and that nonnative teachers have the added advantage of being able to act as models of successful English learning. She also encouraged code-mixing in the educational context as it is very common in real communicative contexts, claiming that there was no compelling evidence that code-mixing led to interlanguage and fossilisation of skills.

Larry Smith dealt with the often expressed concern that "it may soon occur that people speaking fluent English may not be intelligible to other fluent users of the language." He stated that this is not a future concern; it has already happened, and is not necessarily a problem. Concurring with Nihalani, he argued that intelligibility is only required between two participants in a speech act, and that, if hearers take responsibility for jointly constructing meaning with their interlocutor, communication will be successful. I was reminded at this point of Kachru's remark that Indian speakers of English talk whether you understand them or not. Of course, the Indian speaker, or any speaker in their habitual speech community, expects to be intelligible, knowing (perhaps tacitly) that the hearer will work with them to make sure meaning is conveyed. Blommaert (1991), in

research with European speakers of English, has observed that language users continually modify their pre-existing dispositions with situation-specific factors and guesses about their interlocutor's intentions, and has shown how this process takes place over the course of a conversation. After several interactions, a consensus develops, and it is in this way that a variety (or micro-variety) of language emerges – at a workplace, or, on a larger scale, in a geographical region. This account of innovation and “nativisation” is actually more nuanced than Kachru's claim that English acculturates to new contexts, in that it shows how the culture, plus situation-specific factors, dynamically contribute to the evolving variety of language. As I will suggest later, it also questions whether nation-states or geographical regions are the best units of analysis for understanding how English varies around the world.

Smith's closing remarks, mirroring Yamuna Kachru's, are relevant for educators in Japan: “Inner Circle variety English speakers cannot claim to be better judges than Outer/Expanding Circle users of what is or is not intelligible, comprehensible, or interpretable to others.” Such an assertion forces us to critically examine the goals of our teaching: With whom will our learners interact? How can we best prepare them for communicative success in those interactions? Perhaps we need to put more emphasis on teaching strategies and giving learners practice in challenging communication situations – inviting foreign students (native and non-native English speaking) to classes (as Hino suggested later), setting up Internet discussion groups with English learners from other countries, and so forth.

### **Political considerations in using English**

Suzuki Takao's animated lecture on the theme of his latest book, *English to Know America, English to Part from America*, formed the *ten* in a perhaps-intentional *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* structure for the workshop. In it, he explored the various dimensions of Japan's complex relationship with English, which (at least since the Second World War) have been bound up in its relationship to America.

Suzuki noted that Japan has had a history of being a disciple, with *gaikoku* as the teacher, choosing its teachers according to what it needed for self-reform. First was China, then Western Europe in the Meiji era, and then America. In the post-war period,

English was necessary as the medium of this learning, and the “infatuation” declaimed by Tsuda was understandable. However, Suzuki contends that this stage of Japan’s learning has long passed – that it should have been recognised at the time of Sputnik shock (when Japan, and the world, learned that it didn’t know enough about Russia). “America is no longer a good model for Japan” – and that Japan should now use English (detached from any American cultural baggage) to critically view its former mentor, and “to learn the weaknesses of America in English.”

Suzuki granted that his advice assumes that the messages can be detached from the medium, that English can be used while staying free of global English culture’s discursal influences (a point with which Pennycook (1994), among others, would argue). However, if WE claims are to be taken seriously, Japan’s English has already taken its own road, and it should be feasible that English be used to “part from America.”

### **World Englishes in Japanese classrooms**

Last in the programme was a symposium made up of Japanese researchers and educators who presented their varying practical responses to the challenge of presenting world Englishes in Japanese classrooms.

Honna Nobuyuki, the founder of the Japan Association for Asian Englishes, is an outspoken supporter of the idea that Asian English, or indeed Japanese English, is the proper goal for study by Japanese students and businesspeople alike, hence his provocative title: “English as a Japanese language.” Using the metaphor of English as a tool, and apparently agreeing with Suzuki that that tool can be detached from its cultural predispositions, he argued that there is no reason English should not be considered, and taught, as an additional Japanese language. (I would quibble with the gratuitous use of the possessive here, denoting only “used in Japan” and not “of Japan”; one might instructively compare “tomato as an Italian food” (foreign but nativised) with “tomato as a Japanese food”.) Citing the Japanese government’s “Welcome Plan” to bring 7 million tourists a year by 2007, Honna outlined three areas in which Japanese need to improve their English skills in order to create a better impression internationally: 1) understanding own culture, 2) explaining other culture, and 3) teaching English as an international language.

Honna's assertion that Japan owns a variety of English, Kachru's exhortations to "write in Japanese English", and the repeated citations of "Expanding Circle varieties" by Smith and others, revealed a preoccupation with country-specific varieties. In fact, not only Kachru's, but many other models of English in the world identify varieties with nation-states. But is Singaporean English so different from Malaysian English as to merit a separate unit of analysis? Despite China's internal diversity, there are precisely three varieties of English identified: Chinese, Hong Kong, and Taiwanese, presumably because these are the regions that are politically (somewhat) independent. I feel that this focus on nation-states may be the Achilles heel for the field of world Englishes. Rather, it might be more accurate to devise a model based on connectivity or speech communities, where, if East Asia has a higher internal connectivity than it does to other parts of the world, an East Asian intercultural English might be discovered. Or perhaps it is more likely that these clumps of connectivity are not geographical at all, in which case we could posit units such as airline workers' English; or a mix of geography, culture, and professional domain – "Southeast Asian Chinese-diaspora media English"?. Moreover, it is unlikely that any speech community is a disconnected, static, closed system, which means that we may be dealing with an amorphous ever-changing English rather than a series of separate Englishes. In any case, such hypotheses would have to be tested by a search for evidence.

Perhaps the most useful presentation of the day was that of Professor Hino Nobuyuki, who described his techniques for bringing Japanese university students in contact with the international English-speaking community. Hino broke with the consensus by stating that he preferred the term EIL to world Englishes, because "we are talking about intercultural and not intra-cultural domestic use." He advocated models and techniques that are receptive to varieties of English, and that encourage the production of students' own cultural values. In writing, for example, he uses models "that refrain from imposing Anglo-American text organization on the students, allowing the expression of Japanese thought patterns." He also explained his technique of using international English radio and television broadcasts *from the same day* to involve students in a current English speech community, as well as other techniques taking advantage of Internet news sources and foreign students at his university.

Finally, Sakai Sanzo, dean of the College of World Englishes at Chukyo University, spoke on the objectives and innovations of their new programme in World Englishes – to teach varieties of English within the range of Japanese English intelligibility, to employ teachers with a full understanding of world Englishes, and to set attainable goals “based on world Englishes.” This was instructive as it showed the challenges that Japanese WE advocates still face – Sakai admitted that the majority of their teachers were “native speakers” – but it also illustrated some positive steps that university departments can take.

### **Have world Englishes come to Japan?**

In the discussion period at the end of the workshop, the question was finally asked, by a Korean participant: “What is Japanese English? If a Japanese goes to America to study and becomes a proficient user of English there, can we call that person a speaker of Japanese English?” Prof. Hino answered that we really cannot say at this point that a Japanese English exists, and that the implication of WE research for him was that Japanese should feel free to use any English they like. Others suggested that some of the main identifiable features of English as spoken in Japan may indeed be educational or interference effects (Larry Smith pointed to the Japanese use of “yes” which resembles the function of “*hai*”), but that we need to be open to the possibility of the emergence of a Japanese English, and use paradigms that allow us to recognise it. Agreed. But the tenor of most of the presentations, and the terminology, seemed to suggest an *a priori* assumption that the English in Expanding Circle countries such as Japan could be treated descriptively in the same way as Outer Circle countries, as if they had varieties of English that were distinctly theirs, their very different sociolinguistic characters notwithstanding, and despite much substantial evidence, or even research, into what these varieties might look like.

What accounts then for the rosy picture that Japan has joined the world Englishes club? It may be that Japanese WE researchers, with their web of Asian and international contacts, and the fact that conferences such as this one were conducted in English, have fostered & presented this image to themselves & to their foreign partners. Additionally, it may be due to the camaraderie of an academic community which, in its necessary career-advancing business of writing papers and giving presentations, does



not challenge itself enough, nor think it convenient to invite its ideas to be challenged. One even gets the sense that a serious search for evidence of Japanese and other varieties has been given up on because it has proved too difficult. There is a significant degree of “mission creep” in this corner of academia, from *description* of English(es) in the world, to *promotion* of (especially Expanding Circle) varieties.

That said, as Braj Kachru pointed out at the beginning of the day, a workshop on world Englishes in the classroom, at a College of World Englishes, in Japan, is a great achievement, because, “it is important for all – even those who disagree with the concept – because these issues must be debated.” Probably every English educator or teacher trainer in Japan has wrestled with the challenge of teaching English that is appropriate to the learners’ expected context of use, and teaching in a way that is appropriate to this culture’s adaptation of English, and to the goal of competence in international English, or Englishes.

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(Alan Thompson’s bio-data is on page 50)

## **Conference Review**

### **Take advantage of your Achilles heel!**

#### **The raison d'être of World Englishes**

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Topics taught in many university departments, such as economics, politics, trade, culture, and so on, have recently become interactively related. Within this international framework, I am in no doubt about the language which also affects our lives - English.

The Workshop on World Englishes, held on 8 December, 2003 at Chukyo University, Nagoya, was about hot issues of English (see D'Angelo; Thompson; and Ferrato). Among those fascinating topics, I was especially interested in the theory of English as an International Language (EIL), outlined by Professor Hino Nobuyuki of Osaka University. This theory, based on the acceptance of cultural diversity and varieties, is called World Englishes. Undoubtedly, it is a wonderful idea; however, I could not stop having doubts about World Englishes theory during the conference.

Based upon my own personal experience, I fear that World Englishes is being blocked from becoming more broadly widespread. First, there are some typical, perhaps stereotyped ideas that non-native English speakers have in mind that native English is the best English. For instance, there are two people who can speak English fluently. One speaks Japanized-English and the other American English. From a Korean's perspective, who is most often regarded as the better English speaker of the two? In my opinion, we non-native English speakers educated in American English from the start, consciously or unconsciously would choose the latter one.

Perhaps the reason for this is that languages and dialects are evaluated based upon an often subjective evaluation of their socio-cultural circumstances. In other words, the standard dialect is given more prestige, so is valued as a high level language in society. However there is often still a stigma attached to certain dialects, and to English spoken by Afro-Americans or Asians.

Given this background, does World Englishes have any likelihood to be promoted? My answer to this question is YES. I strongly believe that World English can be accepted throughout the world, if people are aware of the correct meaning of LANGUAGE. Why was language developed? It is an apparently easy to answer. For communication! Language is created to people can communicate with others. No matter the race, no matter the different cultures, if people can exchange information and views and opinions, communication has accomplished its purpose. Language is just an instrument for people to deliver their thoughts effectively. There does not have to be a pre-ordained objective for people to be perfect speakers.

When I was 13, I started to learn English. That was my first encounter with English in my life. It was totally different from Korean, which is my mother tongue. Its spelling, pronunciation, grammar - everything was new and different for me. At that time, I only had in mind that I wanted to talk like an American, write like an American. That was my ultimate aim defining my English studies before I heard the comment, people who speak English as second-language can not be a native English speaker.? These were very sad and catastrophic words, which at first I did not want to admit.

On the other hand, my teacher later gave me some very important advice. Non-native English speaker can be a native speaker in a hundred years. Which means, as a matter of fact, it is impossible for non-native speakers to become native speakers. However, reading between the lines, even if I make many mistakes while I talk in English, it is okay because I am not a native speaker. I do not have to be perfect like a native speaker, because I am not.

This second comment stimulated me strongly to improve my English with confidence, without any fear of making a mistake. Therefore, I believe that World Englishes reflects this disadvantage and advantage simultaneously. It frees us to try our best, without a heavy burden of expectation. My goal of learning English now is simply to communicate my thoughts and ideas. Have you understood what I mean?

**Kim Hee-in** is presently a junior student in the Faculty of Policy Studies, Nanzan University. Having fun is her principle of learning English.

## Conference Review

### **Voices in World Englishes: A Kaleidoscopic View**

Tina Ferrato, Tokai University <ferrato@keyaki.cc.u-tokai.ac.jp>

*“A monolingual society is on route to extinction.”*

-- Dr. Paroo Nihalani

*“Multilingualism is the way of the future.”*

--Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

## **Introduction**

What are World Englishes? What is English as an International Language? What is English as an Asian Language? What is Global English? What is ‘Glocal English’? What is Japanese English? Who is a Native English Speaker? These are all questions that arise from the exciting discussion that took place at the inaugural Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom held at Chukyo University on December 7, 2003, jointly aligned with the 14<sup>th</sup> National Conference of the Japanese Association for Asian Englishes Conference held on December 6, 2003. It was a thought-provoking and productive conference, conducted in a variety of Englishes, which promises to be the beginning of yet another beautiful pattern woven into the tapestry of Education.

There are as many ways to approach this paper as there are varieties of English in the world. However, my approach is an attempt to provide the reader with a kaleidoscopic view of the many questions raised, answers offered, challenges raised, and perspectives offered at the conference. In this way, I hope to share the wealth mined from this multifaceted concept with others who, like me, are late bloomers to the field of World Englishes.

## **The Framework**

So let’s begin. Let me start with Saturday in order to discuss Sunday, for it is necessary to loop backward before moving forward. Mr. Larry Smith’s fascinating Keynote Speech, “Exploring New Dimensions in Asian Englishes,” provides the perfect framework for a discussion of the workshop; it works as the warp and weft on which to

weave the fabric, the grand design, of the overall conference theme of World Englishes. Smith examined the following Nine Issues in reverse order of importance:

- #9 Other National Associations for Asian Englishes
- #8 Threat of the Hegemony of English in Asia
- #7 The Place of Kachru's Three Circles
- #6 English Teacher Selection and Training
- #5 Developing Materials for Teaching World Englishes
- #4 Approaches, Methods, and Techniques of Teaching
- #3 Evaluation and Testing English
- #2 The Role of the Native Speaker of \_\_\_\_\_ English
- #1 Standards of Excellence (*Program*, p. 3)

Smith presented these nine familiar ELT issues from a new angle provided by the perspective of Asian Englishes, and his presentation challenges educators to revise their professional lives.

Right from the beginning, frame #9, Other National Associations for Asian Englishes, Smith raises questions that demand reflection and action; he asks if Japan is the only country with a National Association for Asian Englishes, remarking that there should be one for ASEAN countries, and that related organizations should unite together in their common goals and purposes. He states, "the International Association of World Englishes and other such organizations seem to be united in purpose, but scattered in organization. We lack 'connectiveness.' We're a strong team, but weak individually. There's no master weaver, no maestro." (Note: Unless otherwise cited, all quotes in this article are taken directly from my notes taken at the conference.) Smith's call: ***Let's Link!***

Moving on to frame #8, the Threat of the Hegemony of English in Asia, Smith raises the issues of regionalism, imperialism, and neocolonialism. (Picture a group of homogenized people all wearing Levi's.) Giving special mention to contributors in the field such as Robert Phillipson, Alastair Pennycook, and Yukio Tsuda, Smith touches upon the increasingly familiar question of linguistic and cultural genocide to simply raise

our awareness of these issues as we embark on a partnership between theory and practice as a newly interconnected body of language teaching professionals.

Turning to Issue #7, The Place of Kachru's Three Circles, first Smith briefly recaps Kachru's Three-Circle Model of World Englishes:

- Inner Circle = places where English is the mother tongue, a 'native' language, that is, ENL (e.g., USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand);
- Outer Circle = places which were formerly colonized, and thus English has a history and serves a variety of purposes in its many institutionalized non-native varieties, i.e., ESL (e.g., Singapore, India, Nigeria);
- Expanding Circle = places where English is not used officially, but it's a principal means of communication for such purposes as international commerce, i.e., EFL (e.g., Japan, Korea, Taiwan). (The definitions provided here are taken from Smith's lecture; for Kachru's original Three Concentric Circles, see *The Other Tongue*, pp. 356-7.)

Smith's point here is three-pronged. First, he draws our attention to the fact that Expanding Circle countries become Outer Circle countries, and vice versa; that is, *the circles move*. Thus, with the global spread of English and the consequent movement of the circles, the future likely holds the development of multiple Inner/Outer/Expanding varieties of English. Second, Smith raises the following question for discussion: "What would we need to do as educators if Japan changed policy and adopted English as an official second language?" (And if you think this is no longer an issue, consider Yuko Takeshita's statement, "The debate on whether to make English an official language in Japan has not come to an end although there seems to be fewer heated discussions than in 2000, when it was first publicized" (*Program*, p. 29).) Such a policy change would shift circles, moving Japan from the Expanding Circle (EFL) to the Outer Circle (ESL). What are the implications? Third, Smith calls on us as educators to change our language, our linguistic use, asserting that "English is an Asian language, and it should be taught as such!" (How many of us write that on the syllabus?)

Finally, I think it is noteworthy that Smith continued on to say that he is cautious about English as an International Language, but not cautious about saying Asian or World Englishes. He said, "I have no campaign whatsoever about people speaking English, but if someone wants to study it, it should be looked at as an international language." He does not believe in a World English. He does not put an emphasis on a particular form of English.

Moving forward to frame #6, the issue of English Teacher Selection and Training, Smith reminds us that there are multiple varieties of English, and that conventions of communication differ from country to country. Again, he challenges us as educators in Asia to *link*, to unite our efforts and actively discover: "What are they doing in teacher training in all of these countries? Let's learn from each other. Let's find out what's going on in the rest of Asia and use it to our advantage!"

Moving ahead to #5, Developing Materials for Teaching World Englishes, Smith's main point is that students should have access to authentic materials from all Three Circles and from literatures in Asian English, mentioning writers such as Raja Rao, Arundhati Roy, Albert Wendt, and Patricia Grace. Above all, he stresses the importance of choosing materials that speak to students.

Turning now to #4, Approaches, Methods, and Techniques of Teaching, Smith reminds us that these designs change with the season, like fads of fashion, so we shouldn't get caught up in any one particular style. He exclaims that educators should encourage one another to do what we each find productive, and he recalls the liberating words of Otto Jespersen: " 'There's no royal road to language learning.'" (Ah, does this mean that even the Almighty Communicative Approach will have its cycle? Personal query.)

Twisting the scope one frame to #3, Evaluation and Testing English, Smith calls on us "to put the 'value' back in 'evaluation.'" He asks us to examine what conventions are worthy of evaluation, and he offers the following starting point in answer: basic information that IS value-laden, such as how to address people in English in other cultures and in other Englishes; greetings; and other formulaic expressions. Our

students should know about these conventions; therefore, they should be tested on them, for if we test them, then we will teach them. This is, of course, one of the oldest intricate designs woven into the fabric of education, is it not?

Rotating now to #2, The Role of the (Native) Speaker of \_\_\_\_\_ English (parentheses his, spoken), Smith encourages us to broaden the concept of ‘native speaker.’ In other words, Singaporeans speak Singapore English; thus, they are (native) speakers of Singapore English. Interestingly, during the post-lecture discussion, Professor Shi Jie challenged this notion; she suggested cutting the word “Native,” stating that a person is only a native speaker of one or two languages. However, I believe Smith’s main point was to focus on the varieties of Englishes. Indeed, this harkens back to Issue #7 and Smith’s challenge for us as educators to change our language and linguistic use.

Pivoting at last to #1, Standards of Excellence, Smith asserts the following beliefs: “There is no Standard English that can be used for the world; there is no worldwide standard for pronunciation; but there is a need to uphold the standards of English grammar.” He is much more open about pronunciation than grammar, but he still contends the need for models. The question is, of course, who and what are the models?

### **The Grand Design**

Moving forward from the framework provided by Larry Smith’s Keynote Speech, I’d like to thread together some of the strands woven across and through the other speakers’ presentations. I hope to provide the reader with a treasure-trove of golden nuggets from various lectures, twisting and turning the kaleidoscope bit by bit for your viewing pleasure. In this way, each reader can slow, stop, or move around the topics and issues and choose the frames and dimensions which are most appealing or strike the strongest chords, resonating deep within, calling for personal reflection, revision, and action.

On Sunday, Dr. Yamuna Kachru began her lecture, “Context, Competence, and Curriculum in World Englishes,” by stating, “I’m a linguist with an interest in language



teaching. . . , but sometimes an outsider’s perspective can trigger some trains of thought. . . .” Indeed! She made some of the most daring statements of all, I felt, but *how* she delivered them was beautiful. Her presentation can be threaded together with many, if not all, of Smith’s Nine Issues; however, it links most tightly with #4 and #6.

For Y. Kachru, the “Context” in her title refers to the teaching and learning of English in Japan, and the “Competence” refers to the ability to use the language to achieve various goals with the language, or with other users of the language. In her opinion, Japan is a bilingual context like in Europe. Tellingly, the entire ideological hypothesis is based on the following: The goal is to speak like a near native, but one can’t do so without being immersed in the Inner Circle. She states that (a) communicative competence is not being achieved, and (b) “the Direct Method fails—it produces passive, insecure speakers.” (Direct method = “language training where only English is spoken in class . . . so knowledge of the host country’s language is often not necessary.” –Handout, p. 2.)

And then she tells her story, the story of how she and Braj learned English. They learned English using the bilingual method, i.e., English was explained to them in their own language. Then she went to an Inner Circle country and used English. She was told, “You speak like a book. She replied, “Of course, I learned from a book.” Her point? Her instruction provided her with a good base, a good foundation. Once this basic linguistic competence is firmly in place, she contends, it won’t take long for the other communicative/social competence to progress. Such a perspective does indeed trigger several implications for English teachers in Japan.

There is an interesting strand attached to frame #3, Evaluation and Testing, which deserves being tied together, too. Briefly, Y. Kachru states that (c) the goal of teaching English for tests (common practice in our ‘context’) leaves students dissatisfied in the short run; and, in the long run, possessing a passive rather than active knowledge of and ability in English. Weaving together the threads of her lecture—(a), (b), and (c) above, as well as her story of learning English—the design that emerges repeats Smith’s: Revise. In its truest sense: a new vision is necessary. What we are doing isn’t working, so let’s try something different. The knot, of course, is that this is much easier

said than done. Y. Kachru challenges: “Redefine. Stop your tunnel vision! Open your mind. Expand your vision. Use your imagination and creativity.” (Can you hear echoes of my query, ‘Does this mean that even the Almighty Communicative Approach will have its cycle?!’)

### **Implications for the Classroom**

So, what can we, as teachers of English in Japan, do differently? At the very least, listening to Y. Kachru’s lecture, two related thoughts struck me. One, she encouraged the use of Code Mixing in the classroom (i.e., mix English and Japanese, but speak as much as you can!); in so doing, she claims, the fear of failure which so many of our students seem to suffer from will dissipate as the semester progresses. There are still many teachers who hold fast to the “Speak English (only!)” Rule or philosophy in the classroom, and they may find her code mixing suggestion shocking: Encourage “Japlish” you say?! Two, Y. Kachru’s comment that “the Direct Method fails” recalled to mind one of the greatest lines I heard at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual TESOL Arabia 2002 Conference: *Critical Reflection & Practice*, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Featured Speaker Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas said, “Monolingual English Teachers are, by definition, incompetent.” Again, not everyone will be happy to read that. Beyond studying and learning Japanese (if we aren’t already doing so, or aren’t already proficient or fluent), we can at least encourage code mixing and code switching in the classroom.

Moreover, looking back to Issue #7, Smith’s challenge for us as educators to change our language and linguistic use, we can do just that—change our language. We can change the wording on our syllabi, courses, and departments, not to mention our everyday language use. As Dr. Paroo Nihalani so beautifully voiced: “Speech is a mirror of the soul. As a man speaks, so is he” (Handout, p. 4). How many of us consistently and repeatedly refer to varieties of English *in our speech* in our classes? What steps are we taking in our daily discourse to help make such a notion a norm? According to Professor Nobuyuki Honna, “The concept of English as an Asian language is still new in Japanese educational quarters. . . .; [let’s help promote] a change in attitudes toward English among its most frequent users (i.e., non-native speakers)” (*Program*, p. 25). Let’s change the way we speak about Englishes.

There are further implications for the classroom. I'd like to highlight two rather specific suggestions advanced at the workshop. First, in terms of teaching writing, Professor Nobuyuki Hino challenges us to "refrain from imposing Anglo-American text organization on the students, allowing the expression of Japanese thought patterns" (Handout, p. 2). He provides very useful illustrations of the differences between Anglo-American and Japanese styles of text organization, as well as their differing underlying values, and concludes by saying that "students in [his] writing class are free to choose their own ways of thinking" (Handout, p. 3). Actually, he began his presentation by playing the following lyrics from Deep Purple's song, "Black Night:" " 'Maybe I'll find on the way down the line that I'm free. Free to be me'" (Handout, p. 1). This is the basic concept of English as an International Language for Hino, and he advocates using any methods, models, and materials that will help promote this feeling of freedom in our students. Acting on Hino's challenge in our teaching practice means redesigning the writing curriculum at most universities in Japan; or, at the very least, increasing its flexibility a great deal.

Second, in terms of teaching pronunciation, Nihalani challenges us to spend less time teaching the smaller units of pronunciation (vowels and consonants), and more time teaching the larger units (intonation, word stress, and rhythm), called supra-segmentals. Specifically, he suggests adopting an 80/20% ratio—with 80% reserved for teaching supra-segmentals. To him, "**HOW** the speaker says something is as important as **WHAT** he says . . . knowing how to move the voice according to accepted patterns of stress and melody" is the key to international intelligibility, to conveying meaning, and to building richer human relationships (Handout, p. 4; bold capitalization his). Nihalani's presentation certainly made this teacher seriously reconsider her English Pronunciation course syllabus (and possibly textbook?) for the upcoming academic year. Indeed, the newly published *Speaking Well: Pronunciation for Japanese Students* (Seido, 2004), with its greater emphasis on rhythm, stress, and intonation, seemingly exhibits a timely arrival on the market.

Going yet a step further, perhaps the most common thread at the conference was a call to **INCREASE INPUT: Expose students to as many varieties of English as possible!** From Smith, the Kachru's, and Nihalani, to Hino, Honna, and Takeshita, each

of the scholars stressed the need to highlight these varieties in our classroom practice—using a variety of relevant materials (textual and audio-visual). Of course, initially there will be some resistance from our students to such ‘non-native’ varieties because many of them continue to hold tenaciously to the belief that the ‘native’ speaker is better, but more on that later.

The good news is, even though we may not be able to provide real, live non-native speakers in the classroom, we can certainly provide examples of their speech. Such material IS available. First of all, it is available in text form, but perhaps not as graded material (use Flesch-Kincaid), nor is there much in Japanese English. In fact, Dr. Braj Kachru pointed out: “If you want to make money, write fiction in Japanese English!” Audio-visual materials with varieties of Englishes are not as readily accessible yet (as far as my limited knowledge); however, even though we may not have access to Hino’s recordings of talks between Japanese and ‘non-native English speakers’ from various countries from his radio show, *English for Millions*, we certainly have “access to a wealth of data on other varieties” at the following useful websites:

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/english-usage/ice/>; (Nihalani, E-mail correspondence, January 6, 2004) and <http://engtap.greatnow.com>. The former site has recordings (and corpora) of several ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ English varieties, while the latter provides recordings of various so-called ‘native’ English-speaker varieties. Both sites should prove useful in increasing student exposure to the vast varieties of English.

Such exposure will raise student awareness, reduce students’ fears and feelings of insecurity, and also increase sensitivity to the diversity of Englishes being celebrated by various cultures around the world. Naturally, not only students, but also teachers, can benefit from this increased exposure because it will enlighten us all to the ever-changing life of English. Like children who grew up in the blink of an eye, seemingly while you weren’t looking, the varieties of English have already taken on lives of their own which many of us professional educators probably aren’t even aware of (or am I merely revealing my own ignorance?!). For example, if you were to pick up a copy of Sanseido’s *Dictionary of Asian Englishes* (2002), before opening the front cover, would you be able to name the varieties of English you’d find inside? And is this important?

## **Shifting the Frame: Welcoming a New Tide of Japanese Speakers of English**

Returning to the grand design of the conference theme, Honna weaves a remarkable new whorl into the overall pattern. He states:

As the spread of English progresses, English is bound to reflect a diversity of disparate cultures. Every language has an indefinite capacity of structural and functional modulation and expansion. There is no language that has used up its inherent potentiality. The portion that the native speakers have explored is very limited. There is still a lot to be *exploited* by the nonnative speakers. Once a language is transferred to nonnative speakers, they start exploring certain aspects of the language that have not been touched by the native speakers. The nonnative speakers explore those areas based on their own linguistic and cultural experiences. (*Program*, pp. 21-22; emphasis mine)

Thus, we can encourage our students to be explorers who sail forth in uncharted waters. We need to expose them to the vast potential that exists in the sea of English. There are many reserves yet to be tapped into in terms of the capacity of English. Once our students glimpse this potential, then we can encourage them to discover what Honna calls the “multicultural enrichments [which] continually enhance English.” (However, I would caution against the use of the word “exploit”—is this a vestige of a colonial Scylla or Charybdis?) Changing our students’ perspectives in this way will help them breathe more easily and relax about their own use of their own variety of English. Confidence springs forth from such a well of freedom, and clearly confidence is a key issue for many Japanese speakers of English.

Most of us are well aware that Japanese students are typically shy, reticent, and unconfident speakers of English. Countless examples and commentaries about this situation flood the field, and the recent Workshop on WE was no exception. In his Keynote Speech, “World Englishes in the Classroom: The Japanese Context,” Dr. Braj B. Kachru began thusly: “[Indians] speak English whether you understand it or not;” but for the Japanese, “English is like a burden. ‘Shall I open my mouth or not?’ There is a lot of psychological burden to carry. Speak American English. Speak perfect English. Otherwise, be quiet.” The next speaker, Dr. Paroo Nihalani, further commented, “Thais

know about 500 [English] words but speak as though they know 1,000; Japanese know 1,000 words but speak as though they only know three.”

Better yet, listen to the voice of a third-year student at the annual speech contest held at my university this past December. She began her speech with the following introduction: “Imagine that you are in Yokohama Station. As you are walking along, a foreigner comes up to you and asks, ‘Excuse me, but how can I get to Narita Airport?’ Would you try to help? Or would you do what many Japanese do, and just quickly hurry away without saying anything, ashamed of your poor English?” (Kakiuchi, p. 1). This student’s speech testifies to the fear and lack of confidence many of our students feel. A summary of her speech reveals what she considers to be the main reasons for this “embarrassing situation” [in Japan]: “the Japanese system of English education is not effective. . . .; [a]mazingly, there are no speaking or listening sections in . . . [our] University Admissions. . . .; Japanese have a strong tendency not to speak out, due to fear of failure. . . .; and many people feel that we don’t even really need English” (Kakiuchi, pp. 1-3). Later, she makes three suggestions to remedy the situation: “Improve the education system. Teachers need to overcome their own fears. . . . and actually teach in English. . . .; we also need to make university entrance exams which include speaking and listening. . . .; [and each of us here today] need[s] to relax and take more chances with our own English” (Kakiuchi, pp. 4-5). Sound familiar? She was not in the audience at the World Englishes conference, but she easily could have been a speaker.

Kakiuchi is in good company, not only with the leading luminaries who spoke at the conference, but also with current scholars. Recent research bears witness to the same calls for reform; for example, Tomoyasu Akiyama argues: “The introduction of speaking tests in the [senior high school] entrance examination would link the aims of the Ministry of Education to the teaching and assessment practice” (p. 135). Of course, this loops back to Smith’s Issue #3, Evaluation and Testing, as well as ties together nicely with Yuko Takeshita’s presentation, “ ‘Japanese with English Abilities—Plan to improve English and Japanese abilities [sic],’ the Present Situation and the Issues for English Teaching and Learning in Japan.” In this, Takeshita states, “The Ministry is

going to add a listening section to the national standardized college entrance examination in 2006” (*Program*, p. 28). Perhaps speaking will be next?

### **The Myth of the Native Speaker**

Takehita’s concluding remarks return us once again to the grand design of the conference:

The government holds that it is quite important for our young generation to acquire communication skills in the global world in the common international language, **English**. It naturally follows that the language **is not the native speakers’ but the property of all citizens of the world** with different cultural, linguistic and social backgrounds. If the English language is recognized by all students and teachers of English in Japan, they will begin to see far more possibilities for communicating in their own variety of English. (*Program*, p. 30; emphasis mine)

Here we can hear echoes of Honna and Smith as mentioned above, yet part of this thread—in bold—deserves more attention. Notice how closely interwoven it is with each of the following comments made by three different speakers at the conference: “English no more is the white man’s burden, but for all of us” (Dr. Braj B. Kachru); “English is owned by all nationalities” (Professor Sanzo Sakai); and lastly, “[English] keeps multiplying, and now it belongs to the world” (Dr. Paroo Nihalani).

Yet the dye of the myth of the Native Speaker still holds fast, as Setsuko Oda’s presentation illustrated. Nearly 90% of the Japanese students in her study expressed concern with perfect (i.e., “native-like”) pronunciation: “they [were] more interested in learning native English and expressed dissatisfaction in listening to such ‘non-standard’ English [during her pilot project]” (*Program*, p. 9). But this is the whole point. We need to “neutralize this attitude” (B. Kachru, Handout, p. 6). Encouragingly, Oda’s study seemingly supports the idea that raising student awareness, as well as having cultural exposure, makes a difference in students’ attitudes:

Results indicate that many students came to realize for the first time the existence of other varieties of English besides natively-spoken English. A few stated that they will feel less nervous speaking English with WE speakers than native speakers; [and those] interviewed subjects who responded that it is not necessary to acquire native-like pronunciation have had some experience of communication in English among non-native speakers of English. (*Program*, p. 9; p. 8)

Clearly, this study underscores the importance of one of Smith's concluding points in his lecture, "English Across Cultures: The Problem of Intelligibility:" "All of us need as much cultural exposure as possible."

Moreover, Mitsuo Kubota's recent article, " 'Native Speaker': A unitary fantasy of a diverse reality," corroborates Oda's findings: "I came to believe that [students'] discouragement is largely due to . . . [their] uncritically believing they need to eventually sound like a native speaker. It is noteworthy that the participants have never been encouraged to see the multiplicity of the concept of a NES" (p. 7). However, his study, like Oda's, is very encouraging, for his results showed that "many participants appreciated the opportunity to explore the concept of NES"; and one student commented: " 'I first realized that the concept of NES is very complex while participating in this research, and that there can be many target models for learning English, not just one'" (Kubota, p. 7). [Note: The conclusion of Kubota's article is a good summary of some of the implications for teaching and learning drawn from the *Workshop on World Englishes in the Classroom*.]

## **Conclusion**

Finally, returning to the first frame of the kaleidoscope, Smith's Issue #9, Other National Associations for Asian Englishes, please look again at his final call: ***Let's Link!*** For me, this particular point, though supposedly the least important, reverberated deeply and strongly throughout the weekend conference and in all of my reflection since; eventually, I coined it "Larry's Link Challenge." To me, his call for unification, for a maestro, or master weaver, has multiple repercussions across all disciplines and indeed throughout the Circle of Life. I see this new chapter of WE (one of the purposes of the



conference, after all) being linked not only with IAWE, JAFEA, and ASEAN, nor just with TESOL, JALT, or ELT, but also with Global Education, Peace Education, and Multicultural Education (or any other name for the same-spirited concept). To me, the interrelated threads of the conference are interwoven with the grand fabric of life.

So, back to the beginning. What are World Englishes? In part, Braj Kachru offers the following: “when we use the terms ‘world Englishes,’ or ‘English as an international language’ [sic] what we mean is that we have acquired a SHARED code of communication” (Handout, p. 4; capitalization his). If we heed the wisdom of our elders and use World Englishes as a “vehicle for a better way of teaching English to students,” as Professor Sanzo Sakai says, then “countries around the world will form closer bonds, and . . . English will be a tool that helps us understand and tolerate one another better” (p. 1). A manifestation that this “vehicle” is already in motion appears in Kasai Masataka’s recent article, “Embracing global education: Advice for Japanese university English classrooms”: “Japanese university English teachers can teach global education by teaching World Englishes in English” (p. 22). Of course, jumping on the WE train now must make people like Larry Smith and Braj B. Kachru chuckle, for they discovered this common thread of interest at two *unlinked* conferences held only three months apart some 25 years ago... (*The Other Tongue*, p. xxiii).

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## Article

# International English and the Anglo-American Hegemony: Quandary in the Asian Pacific Region

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## Introduction

America today is arguably at the center of a growing international hegemony. The United States has invested incredible amounts of resources to the spread of the English Language since the end of the Second World War. With the spread of the Internet, ownership of most international media outlets, and as the recipient of international economic investment as well as having uncontested military capability, American might lends prestige to the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Asia and abroad.

Mastery of the English language now stands both as a means for the elite of various countries to access the world system, and as a barrier to keep all but native speakers out of the highest levels of power. Explicit rewards and implicit threats are meted out to those countries and peoples living linguistically on the edge of America's sphere of influence. Greater access to political, economic and sociocultural opportunities is bestowed upon those who have mastered the English language and conformed to Anglo-American norms. This is the meaning of hegemony: In most cases, hegemony does not rely on coercion, but rather on established power and the consent of the majority of the people in the world to go along with the rewards, benefits and prestige that flow from that power. But for those who question the authority of the American Hegemony, economic marginalization, cultural isolation and, as in the recent cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, full-scale military action await.

## Power Politics: The Struggle for Ownership of English

Some of the strongest opponents of the spread of English originate from Asian Pacific countries with well-established monolingual settings that emphasize correct forms communication, and avoid communicative disharmony. The implication is that the objections against English come from older nationalistic hegemonies that wish to

preserve their hold on to zealously guarded cultural boundaries. While decrying the loss of a linguistic ideal for their countries, linguists and political thinkers alike have failed to accept the political reality of internationalization, which even now is in the process of replacing nationalism just as nation states replaced the earlier political models of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of the results of internationalization has been the compromise of linguistic and cultural borders by the onslaught of American English via satellite, entertainment media, the Internet and the ever-increasing migration of English language teachers. The practice of TESOL, therefore, seems to be intertwined with issues of power politics, especially of who has it and who wants it.

Recently there have been calls in Asia for the teaching of English as an International Language. International English is often defined as English that is spoken both by native and non-native speakers, and a language which is the property of the world instead of the property of the United States. The redefinition of English as an International Language (EIL) is a serious political undertaking, as is all language education at its core. Redefining English as an International Language is an attempt to denationalize English and divest the American hegemony from its claim on the English language. The EIL movement, led by fluent non-native speakers of English in various countries who have been unable to access the higher levels of power in the American hegemony, attempts to create a linguistic powerbase free from American influence.

In places such as Japan, where many quietly feel that their culture, language and national identity are under attack from the forces of American-style English Language Teaching, taking ownership of English in this way is an attempt for Japan's elite not only to contextualize English for their own nationalist aims, but also to begin using English as their own tool of protest and personal expression. As admirable this effort may be, proponents of English as an International Language also need to be aware of certain pitfalls in the venture to separate themselves from the American Hegemony.

### **Pitfalls of International English and the American Hegemony**

One difficulty lies in the terminology of "international." In Western history, Hellenization, and then Romanization were terms used by the Greeks and Romans to describe an increased level of international political and economic integration. A

common language (Greek, then Latin) was central to the goal of unifying vast numbers of people from different cultures and language groups. Because the English language is a fundamental aspect of internationalization, it begs the question of whether internationalization is not really Americanization. While supporters of EIL in Asia state that English must be distanced from the American Empire in order for it to become truly international, it is impractical to simply ignore the fact that the American Hegemony would still benefit greatly from an enthusiastic promotion of EIL. More speakers of English would create a larger market for American products, services and entertainment. International English might speed up the oppressive and relentless flow of people, goods and ideas, and eventually result in the creation of larger versions of the current national socioeconomic rifts, and further the increased marginalization of minority cultures, languages, religions and ethnic groups. It is not a coincidence that George W. Bush's "axis of evil" consists mostly of oriental countries which are non-Caucasian, non-Christian, and which has some of the fewest numbers of English speakers in the world. Historically, when the language of one culture has been introduced into another culture, and if one is more powerful or advanced than the other, then influence, educational practices and styles of learning move one way, from the dominant to the less powerful. This has been the legacy of English language education in Asia, and supporters of EIL should keep this in mind.

In terms of culture and language education, some will still question whether one can or should divorce Anglo-American culture from the English language. Metaphorically speaking, to some, EIL may seem like taking the flavor out of a meal while attempting to preserve its nutritional value, or perhaps of injecting an imported fruit with the flavor of a local vegetable. It may take some time for more students and teachers in Asia to adjust their linguistic palate in order to "swallow" the claims of some who propose EIL-based curricula, and even longer for parents and administrators, who often see the mastery of British or American models of English as having the potential to open doors of opportunity for their learners.

Another pitfall lies in the fact that EIL proponents often call for a return to traditional grammar-based language teaching methods as a means of lessening American influence. American language teaching methods, many state, lessen the

status of the teacher, and create confusion in the minds of learners as to how to operate within their classrooms. They claim that because most learners will not be able to reach the level of a native speaker, EIL should be taught so that learners can communicate only enough to feel friendly emotions towards people from other countries (also known as “comity”). Students are encouraged to maintain the communicative strategies used in their mother tongue for speaking English, and to focus upon reading and writing skills.

The problem with these ideas is that traditional grammar-based teaching is as political an exercise as the potentially-democratic teaching methods of American TESOL. The teaching of grammar is a very authoritarian model. The teacher is the sole expert who controls the flow of information to the learners. The teacher chooses grammatical examples of the language, which modern linguistics has shown to be, at best, only true for some of the time. Grammar tests often demonstrate less about how much the students have acquired English, and more about to what extent they have conformed to the teacher.

In addition, while most of the main proponents of EIL very skillfully use Anglo-American models of English communication and achieved a near-native speaker standard in the language, by not holding their learners up to a similar level, they implicitly encourage learners to acquire a level of English that is far below what they might have had the potential to attain. Asian language learners are caught between two untenable positions: In the Anglo-American Hegemony, learners are encouraged to strive to become like Americans or the elite speakers of their own society, but with little economic or social rewards for their efforts. However, if the learners follow the suggestions of some of today’s EIL proponents, they are literally “kept in their place” by being taught a form of English which is clearly less proficient than the elite members of their society, and are returned to a system of dependence and conformity. The flow of information from the American Hegemony is controlled by the elite, with only the acceptable information to be filtered down to the rest of society. In the meantime, those who seek comity on their own run the risk increased misunderstanding, creating the need for experts to come in to assist in the process of clear communication.

## **The Need for a New Construct**

Neither the supporters of the American Hegemony nor many of the proponents of EIL presently seem to offer much hope for Asian students. English as an International Language does exist, but no one has yet been able to either control it or define what it is in the process of becoming. Continued debate and discussion on the topic of EIL are necessary to form better a better understanding of what it entails. Using American models as a point of departure only serves to bind EIL as a “non-American” form of English. World Englishes, such as those found in Singapore, India or Nigeria evolved only after the collapse of the British Empire, when these former colonies made their own decisions about the uses of English. Perhaps EIL might become an independent reality once American power begins to wane in the world.

However, in the meantime, it must be noted that while the concept of EIL is still a subject of controversy, and rather nebulous to both students and teachers, all of us should anticipate an evolution in the way that English will be taught in Asia. More educators are beginning to suggest ways and means to approach the subject. EIL is coming. When it does arrive, changes in attitudes towards accuracy over fluency, an increase in the creation of materials contextualized for the local culture, greater adaptation to the local culture, respect of non-native speakers of English, and an increased awareness of the political nature of English will be minimum requirements for language teachers of the future.

## **The Quandary for Language Teachers in the Asian Pacific Region**

What are language teachers and students in Asia to do in during this age of the struggle between older hegemonies and the American Empire? The answer, of course, is that it depends upon the teacher and the students.

### *Issues for Teachers*

Whether language teachers serve the interests of the American hegemony, nationalist aims or focus on the local needs of their learners, hinges on the pedagogic beliefs and practices implicit in their lessons. It is felt that Asian language teachers should regularly reflect on *what* they are actually teaching in their classes, *how* they teach the language, and *why* they are teaching English in the first place. Careful



attention needs to be paid to the textbooks chosen, and what type of English (American, British, nativized varieties, or a combination of the three) is being quietly upheld as the ideal for students to model.

Language teachers would benefit from clearly identifying what they believe about the spread of English, and design their lessons accordingly. Regardless of whether they believe in teaching EIL, support an Anglo-American model, or are committed to teaching English as an Islamic language, they should prepare their lessons in way that these goals are met. However, such purpose-driven language teachers should be careful to work in a manner that is respectful to the differing views of others. Language teachers should also be explicit about their political ideology and how those beliefs influence their pedagogic practices. Teachers who state that their educational practices are apolitical should be viewed with skepticism.

#### *Issues for Students*

At a minimum, it is felt that learners should be exposed to a variety of views, types of teachers (bilingual experts and native speakers from the expanding circle countries), and materials that take local as well as Anglophone interests in mind. In light of the developments taking place in the world and the field of TESOL, where appropriate, students should also be given more information about the matters discussed in this paper. For example, language lessons centering on English and actual economic opportunities in their country, possible Anglo-American beliefs in teaching materials, or the political implications of English as an International Language, could help stimulate critical thought about some of the larger issues involved with English language study. Students should be better informed so they can choose for themselves if they want to support or subvert the hegemonic implications of conforming to Anglo-American norms. They should also be made aware of the potential punishments and rewards that may result from their decisions. As well, students need to be made aware of the agenda of many within the elite classes of their society who support English as an International Language. By providing students with greater awareness, they might be empowered to make their own informed choices about the role of English in their lives.

## **Conclusion**

It is recognized that this paper may raise more questions than it attempts to answer. For example, in view of the recurring cycles of history, is imperialism avoidable? Are nation states, with their respective sociolinguistic classes of elite and oppressed, simply smaller versions of what is happening on an international scale? If the continued spread of English is to be construed as an unwelcome development, what can be done to replace it without major disruption on a global scale? Given that the dynamic of empire-building is as ancient as the history of humanity, and if America is deemed to be an unjust, unwelcome cultural and linguistic influence in the world, could the United Nations replace the US? If not the UN or America, then what other alternatives are available? Is it truly possible to go back to a political, economic and linguistic situation of the 1890s, when nation states had greater autonomy in their internal and external affairs? These and more questions await our critical examination.

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