

English Language Teaching in Japan as a Localized Pedagogy: The Implications of the World Englishes Perspective

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English language teaching (ELT) practice in Japan has almost invariably been on the defensive, criticized from both inside and outside of the country for its Anglo-American, native-speaker-centered textbooks, persistence in *yakudoku*, or translation-based methods, reportedly less-qualified teachers, and other reasons. Increasing recognition of the term 'world Englishes' (WE) in recent years has provided yet another ground for those calling for an overhaul of the materials, teaching personnel, and pedagogy. With its emphasis on recognizing the validity and legitimacy of varieties of English around the world, WE challenges the longstanding tradition of Japan's ELT, which almost exclusively focuses on the native-speaker, or more precisely, American, model and gives scant attention to users and the use of English elsewhere.

Such criticism, however, seems to disregard an important fact of ELT in Japan: that there are a plethora of teaching materials produced locally, teaching personnel educated and trained locally, and teaching methodologies developed locally. In other words, the appropriation and localization of ELT, which the framework of WE aims at, seems to have already been achieved to the extent that the local culture and language are well involved in the teaching practice. In light of this concern, this paper, after briefly reviewing the theoretical framework of WE, critically examines the pedagogical implications of the WE framework for ELT in general and in Japan in particular. Analyzing the viability and scope of the proposed options for incorporating the WE perspective into ELT in the Japanese context will reveal that many of the proposals seem to regard the concept merely as further support for the increasingly popularized com-

municative-oriented pedagogy, thereby paradoxically reinforcing the Anglo-American orientation of Japan's ELT. Recognizing the significance of the WE perspective, this paper will argue that a better appreciation of the locally developed ELT practice would be more consistent with the framework, which originally aims at ELT with an 'endonormative' rather than an 'exonormative' model.

The Conceptual Framework of World Englishes

The origin of the concept of world Englishes dates back to the year 1978, when, by "just a coincidence," two conferences were held only three months apart under the theme of English as an international and *intra*-national language (Kachru, 1982a, p. xiii). The topics discussed ranged from the sociolinguistic and political contexts of the former Anglophone colonies to the continued use of English and the processes of its 'nativization' and 'acculturation' in those communities to the description of the functions and features of the varieties of English that had gained increasing recognition among sociolinguists (Kachru, 1992c, p. 1). The outcome of the first conference, which took place at the East-West Center in Hawaii and was compiled in Smith (1981), put forth the term "English as an auxiliary language," or EIAL, while the second, organized by the linguist Braj B. Kachru at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, led to the publication of *The other tongue* (Kachru, 1982c), "the earliest edited volume" on WE (Brown, 2001, p. 372), marking the beginning of studies on the varieties of English in non-ENL (English as a native language) environments. Kachru, who is now widely credited with propounding the concept, has since contributed to theorizing and developing it into an academic field through his numerous publications (see pp. xxi–xxxvii in Thumboo, 2001 for an exhaustive list of Kachru's publications up to 2001).

The Kachruvian WE framework first and foremost presupposes that there exist in the world different varieties of English, all of which, whether native or non-native, should be considered equally legitimate linguistic varieties with systematic and autonomous structures. Rejecting the notion of a single normative, standard English, Kachru calls these varieties 'world Englishes' instead of other terms referring to the international use of Eng-

lish such as 'global English,' 'world English,' or 'international English,' as they do not adequately reflect the sociolinguistic reality that "formally and functionally, English now has multi-cultural identities" (Kachru, 1992b, p. 357). Kachru divided these varieties of English into three subgroups represented by three concentric circles along the traditional distinction among ENL, ESL (English as a second language), and EFL (English as a foreign language) communities and labeled them as the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle respectively. The innermost circle refers to the "traditional cultural linguistic bases of English" (Kachru, 1992b, p. 356), including the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, where English is the primary language. It is estimated that there are roughly 329 million people who belong to this circle (Crystal, 2003, p. 65). The Outer Circle represents the areas in Asia and Africa in which, as a result of colonization by Anglophone countries, "institutionalized non-native varieties" emerged (Kachru, 1992b, p. 356) through language contact between English spoken by the colonizers and the indigenous languages spoken by the locals. These varieties of English, whose speakers now amount to about 430 million, are distinguished by lexical items taken from local languages and grammatical features, pragmatic conventions, and phonological elements influenced by them. The outermost circle refers to the societies where "performance varieties" of English are used (ibid.) in limited domains such as academic circles, diplomacy, trade, and other contexts of international communication. The diversity in sociolinguistic contexts across countries and in individuals' proficiency makes it difficult to determine the number of English users in this circle, and the estimates range from 500 million to one billion. It is at least clear that there is an ever increasing number of those who aspire to master the language often associated with socioeconomic success and higher status in these societies, hence the term the *Expanding Circle*.

While the Inner-Circle varieties of English are in general considered as standard kinds of English, the Outer-Circle varieties, or the non-native, second-language varieties, tend to be regarded as second-class English. Kachru calls the former the "Norm-providing varieties" that "have traditionally been recognized as models since they are used by 'native speakers'" and

the latter the “Norm-developing varieties” that are “both endo-normative and exonormative” and are used in regions where there has been a “conflict between linguistic norm and linguistic behavior” (Kachru, 1985, pp. 16–17). Not only do the speakers of the Inner-Circle varieties deem the Outer-Circle varieties to be inferior or unsophisticated, but the speakers of the nativized, institutionalized varieties of English often consider, or are made to regard, their own varieties as substandard. It would easily be imagined that those in the Expanding-Circle countries such as Japan, Korea, or elsewhere rarely opt for the indigenized varieties as their models when learning English. It was against this inequality, or what could be called ‘linguistic discrimination,’ that Kachru and other scholars took a stand propounding the new paradigm of world Englishes, behind which lies a highly political motivation to justify the continued use of English, the language of the former colonizers, for intra-national communication in the newly independent nations.

World Englishes and the Classroom

The aim in propagating the WE perspective has primarily been to reconceptualize the Outer-Circle varieties of English by advocating their linguistic validity and legitimacy as equal to the Inner-Circle Englishes, thereby giving the ESL users “pride in their Englishes” (Smith & Sridhar, 2001, p. xviii) and liberating them from the long-imposed Anglo-American norm, against which their varieties had been regarded ‘deviant.’ The main focus thus being on the *existing* varieties of English in the Outer Circle, it has been considered appropriate by many WE researchers that “the emphasis in world Englishes research should initially be on justifying the very existence of world Englishes and their viability” (Bamgbose, 2006, p. 654).

It is nonetheless a mistake to assume that the applied aspects of WE as a theoretical framework have been overlooked until quite recently. The regularly held WE colloquia at the Teachers of English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) International Conferences during the years following the 1978 conventions provided an arena where theory-building was promoted and accelerated along with “empirical research and a consistent link back to language education” (Brown, 2001, p. 373). In

1982, the same year when *The other tongue*, the first anthology on WE, was published, Kachru contributed to the journal *ERIC/CLL News Bulletin* an article entitled “Teaching world Englishes” (Kachru, 1982b), later expanding it into a full chapter in the revised edition of the aforementioned book. His emphasis on the pedagogical importance of WE highlighted in both of the articles and other publications (see e.g., Kachru, 1992c) derives from his awareness that:

The implications of the internationalization of English have yet to be reflected in the curricula of teacher training programs, in the methodology of teaching, in understanding the sociolinguistic profile of the language, and in cross-cultural awareness. (Kachru, 1992b, p. 355)

According to Kachru (*ibid.*), the internationalization of the language which is demonstrated in its nativization and acculturation in various contexts, in its linguistic innovations and literary creativity, and in the expansion of its cultural identities provides a basis for the WE approaches to language teaching and teacher training he proposes.

Citing in many occasions (e.g., Kachru, 1982b; Kachru, 1992c; see also Kachru & Nelson, 1996) the topics to be considered in teaching world Englishes and incorporating the WE perspective in the language classroom, Kachru (2003), with particular reference to the Asian context, expands on them under several categories. The first issue is the *sociolinguistic profile* of English, under which theme some awareness of the following topics is encouraged to help students relate their learning of English to the real world of Englishes;

(a) an overview of world Englishes in the global contexts within the historical and cultural contexts of the Three Circles of Englishes. (b) The major Asian and other varieties of the language, their users and the functions that English performs. (c) The users of English as their first (and only) language, and English as an additional language (e.g., L2, L3, L4) in multilingual and multicultural contexts (e.g., Singapore, India, Philippines). (*ibid.*, p. 15)

Secondly, in order to contextualize the users and functions of varieties of English, the textual and visual materials are employed to enrich *variety 'exposure' and 'sensitivity'* through, for instance, discussing in class shared and non-shared features of “selected—and relevant—varieties” (ibid.). Third, *attitudinal neutrality* should be cultivated among the learners. The focus in class may be on one specific variety, but emphasis should be added, as Kachru asserts, to “awareness of *functional and pragmatic* validity of other selected varieties” in various contexts such as business, social interaction, and media (ibid.). Fourth, the *range and depth of uses* may be demonstrated through discussions on and illustrations of cultural and social conventions of different varieties in use such as greetings, persuasion, and apologies. The varying degrees of range and depth of Englishes used in different sociolinguistic contexts invalidate such claims that Language for Specific Purposes (LSP), or functionally determined genres, is applicable across all cultures, which constitutes another discussion topic in class (ibid., p. 16). In addition, the focus should also be on the issues of *intelligibility and interaction across varieties* within and between the three circles of Englishes. Lastly, Kachru calls attention to the *bilingual's creativity, contexts and intelligibility* and claims that it is insightful to have the learners study and analyze literary texts written in English by Asian and African writers (ibid.).

Profound and thought-provoking as they may be, the curricular proposals described above may better be regarded as the grand design or ideas that Kachru puts forward as a way of applying the WE framework to the classroom rather than as practical solutions for everyday class activities, since many of the issues, such as the linguistic feature analysis, genre analysis, and literary studies, would seem for many language teachers far beyond the scope of their classroom. Taking Kachru's suggestions as a starting point and summarizing the succeeding series of research efforts on the teaching of WE (see, e.g., Baumgardner & Brown, 2003; Brown, 1995; Görlach, 1999), Baumgardner (2006) divides different approaches broadly into two categories: “(1) stand-alone courses in world Englishes at the tertiary level; and (2) English language courses which incorporate a Kachruvian philosophy of language” explained earlier¹ (p. 661).

The first possibility is to teach WE as a theory, that is, as a

theoretical framework in linguistic and applied linguistic, or even postcolonial, fields of research. It is needless to say that the assumed students in this case must have some cognitive and intellectual foundations in the relevant areas and thus should be discriminated from language learners in English classes. To discuss this approach would carry us too far away from the purpose of the present paper, which focuses on WE in ELT. It should just be mentioned here that there have been an increasing number of coursebooks designed specifically for introducing WE (e.g., Jenkins, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Melchers & Shaw, 2003; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008) and books on English as an international language in general (e.g., Crystal, 2003; Graddol, Leith, Swann, Rhys, & Gillen, 2007; McArthur, 1998) that are available for use in TESOL preparation classes, courses in applied linguistics, and possibly as part of general English studies curricula.

The second approach, which is to conduct English language education under the WE paradigm, may be further divided into two sub-approaches: namely, teaching English using varieties of English as models, on the one hand, and teaching a codified variety of English with the WE perspective, on the other. Kachru, Baumgardner, and other influential scholars advocate the use of Englishes as a set of linguistic samples in the ELT classroom, calling for a dynamic, 'polymodel' approach to teaching English rather than a native, 'monomodel' approach (see, e.g., Kachru, 1990 [1986]). Baumgardner (1987), for instance, used English-language newspapers locally published in Pakistan as pedagogical aids in teaching adult Pakistani learners of English. The contrastive analysis of grammatical structures that appear in newspaper articles is incorporated in class activities in order to raise the students' awareness regarding the differences between native-speaker varieties of English and Pakistani English, the forms of which, though variable, "are not manifestations of random usage or errors" but part of a "unique and productive dialect of English" (*ibid.*, p. 248). While this approach is central to the discussion of WE education in the Outer Circle, it may not be a viable option for the ELT classroom in the Expanding Circle, for the teaching of varieties of English presupposes the existence of a developed local variety of English widely used and accepted in the speech community and requires "advanced students" (Kachru, 1992b, p. 360), presumably at the tertiary level, who are

knowledgeable enough to become conscious of the differences between native varieties and their own variety and capable of a contrastive analysis between the two if assigned as a task in class. In an Expanding-Circle environment like Japan, English rarely functions as a language of intra-national communication, thus being unlikely to develop into a new regional variety that could serve as a local model to be adopted in the English classroom. As Kirkpatrick points out, in attempting to adopt a local variety of English in the classroom “a major drawback arises if the local model has not yet been codified and there are no grammars and textbooks or materials based on the local model” (2007, p. 191). Moreover, it is generally agreed that the average attainment level reached by most learners is lower in EFL countries than in ESL countries, and thus it could easily be assumed that the learners in Expanding-Circle classrooms are not ‘advanced’ enough to deal with different varieties of English that could be as unfamiliar as the so-called standard English, of which they are regarded ‘varieties.’

An alternative approach would be to choose a codified variety as a model but to facilitate the students’ understanding of the historical, cultural, and societal contexts where the English language was placed in the past and is at present and to stress the value of local languages, cultures, and social conventions at the same time. This approach, for one thing, discourages the use of teaching materials produced by the British and American ELT industries as they only advantage native-speaker teachers and disadvantage non-native-speaking teachers and their students, who “simply do not see themselves in the texts they are using” (Baumgardner, 2006, p. 664). Textbooks with an emphasis on the issues relevant to the students would thus be preferred to the Anglo-American ones, which revolve around American, British, Australian, or Canadian characters in settings unfamiliar to the students.

In the same vein, the use of the mother tongue in the classroom is encouraged, and a bilingual approach is considered the method of preference in contexts where the goal of learning English is not to approximate its native speakers but to become a competent bilingual in English and the mother tongue. Many Western-derived ELT methods, including some versions of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), due in part to a student

body composed of immigrants from diverse linguistic backgrounds, suggest that English should be the only language used in the classroom. Such a principle “ignores the productive ways in which the mother tongue can be used in class,” depreciating the resources that students bring to the classroom, i.e., “their fluency in another language in which they have already learned to use communication skills and strategies” (McKay, 2002, p. 112). Phillipson (1992) coined the term ‘native speaker fallacy’ for the underlying idea that “the ideal teacher is a native speaker” (p. 185) who is “the best embodiment of the target and norm for learners” and “intrinsically better qualified” than a non-native (p. 194).

It has repeatedly been pointed out by Kachru and other WE scholars that not only do non-native speakers of English now far outnumber its native speakers, but also their purposes of acquiring English have shifted from interacting chiefly with native speakers and understanding Anglo-American cultural values to communicating with fellow non-native users of the language. This linguistic reality contests the validity of the notion of ‘native speaker’ itself and the supposed ‘intrinsic’ supremacy of native-speaker teachers of English, not a few of whom are monolinguals and thus less qualified to prepare students for the communicative situations they are likely to encounter. Non-native speaker teachers, on the other hand, are bilinguals who are themselves successful language learners and thus better able to provide models as users of English as an international language. Medgyes (1992) contends that non-native English-speaking teachers, while never achieving native-like competence, have many advantages: “they can teach learning strategies more effectively”; they are more knowledgeable about how the English language works and thus can be better informants for learners; they are “more able to anticipate language difficulties”; they can be “more empathetic to the needs and problems” of their learners; they can “benefit from sharing the learners’ mother tongue” (pp. 346–347). It then follows that a minimal requirement of teachers of English as a second or foreign language would be that “they should have proven experience of and success in foreign language learning, and that they should have a detailed acquaintance with the language and culture of the learners they are responsible for” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 195). Baumgardner

(2006) stresses the point in a more decisive way by stating that “the English teacher in Outer- and Expanding-Circle classrooms *must* have a knowledge of both source and target languages” (p. 670).

The use of CLT and other teaching methods that derive from Inner-Circle-based SLA research has also been challenged on the grounds that they are often culturally insensitive and inappropriate for local teaching contexts. The study conducted by Burnaby and Sun (1989), for instance, shows that there are signs of strong resistance among Chinese university English teachers to the implementation of CLT for various reasons. The teachers in the study reported that their students regarded the method as inadequate to prepare them for the traditional national examinations, which tend to be discrete-point and structurally based, thinking that “many of the activities common in communicative language teaching seemed like games rather than serious learning” (p. 228) compared to the traditional teaching methods. More practical issues such as the large class size, limited class hours, and insufficient resources and equipment impose further constraints on implementing what the teachers perceive as the “Western language teaching methods” (ibid., p. 219). Similar problems have also been reported by Li (1998), who interviewed Korean secondary school teachers attempting to adopt CLT in their English language classrooms. In addition to the difficulties arising from the educational system, such as large classes, grammar-based examinations, and insufficient funding and support, the students’ low English proficiency and lack of motivation to develop communicative competence as well as uneasiness and hesitancy about class participation make it further difficult and even pointless to adopt CLT in their classes. Furthermore, the teachers interviewed in the study have revealed deep anxiety about their own ‘deficiency’ in spoken English and in strategic and sociolinguistic competence, assuming themselves to be unqualified to conduct a communicative class. These and other studies have at least made it clear that not one method will meet the needs of all learners, given the diversity of local cultures and contexts of learning. From the WE perspective, therefore, it would be more desirable to reassess the local contexts and expand the locally developed teaching methods that take into account social, cultural, economic, and often political factors

rather than to embrace and espouse the materials, methodology, and professionals fostered and disseminated from the Inner Circle.

We have thus far discussed the two versions of ELT based on the principles of WE: one approach in which varieties of English are treated as part of the target models and the other in which a codified variety is taught with due respect to the multicultural reality of the English language and with emphasis on local languages and cultures. It should quickly be added, however, that there is not a clear division between the two sub-approaches: rather, the two form a continuum or cline, the point on which varies depending on the purposes for which the students are learning English, which variety or varieties are appropriate for their desired goals, at what level they currently are, and by whom they are being taught, using which type of materials available in the environment where they are situated. In other words, ELT with the WE perspective is in essence the exercise of locally appropriate (or appropriated) pedagogy, in which greater emphasis is placed on the students' culture, their mother tongue, and the teacher who shares the same linguistic background with them. Such a practice would entail that "Teaching for native-like 'mastery'—and the images of subjugation it evokes—is replaced by teaching for communicative competence, that is, providing learners with the wherewithal to locate themselves in the real world" (Berns, 2005, p. 87).

World Englishes and the Classroom in Japan

With the increasing popularity and recognition of the concept of WE in Japan, not a few researchers and educators have called for an overhaul of what they perceive as the "Anglophile English teaching program" (Honna & Takeshita, 1998, p. 117). Honna Nobuyuki, who has been actively popularizing WE as a chief editor of the journal *Asian Englishes*, asserts that the objective of English education in Japan should be shifted from native-like mastery to a more realistic goal of developing a 'Japanese-style English,' through which the Japanese can express their views and ideas, promote Japanese culture and tradition, and provide up-to-date information about their country to a wider audience in the world (Honna, 2003; 2006). He and his coauthor Takeshita

claim that the unrealistic, “nativist” goal “should be held largely accountable for the present low achievement” and for “Japanese students’ passive attitudes” to using English as a means of international and intercultural communication (Honna & Takeshita, 1998, pp. 118–119). Studies have shown that Japanese students, college and high school students alike, indeed have a strong preference for native-speaker, especially American, English as their model, unquestioningly associating the term ‘native speakers of English’ with those born and raised speaking the language in Britain, America, and other Inner-Circle countries (e.g., Kubota, 2004; Matsuda, 2003). It has also been pointed out that English textbooks used in Japanese secondary schools focus overwhelmingly on the users and use of English in the Inner Circle and only occasionally on those in the Outer- and Expanding-Circle countries except Japan (see, e.g., Matsuda, 2002b; Yamanaka, 2006). As Kachru (2003; 2005) and other WE researchers see these Anglo-centric attitudes as problematic, Japanese scholars and teachers have also come to criticize the conventional objectives, teaching materials, and pedagogy and urge the necessity of incorporating the WE perspective into Japan’s ELT (e.g., Kamiya, 2008; Otsubo, 1999).

It is an irrefutable reality that there is what could be called “native-speakerism” (Holliday, 2005) and an all-too-prevalent Anglo-American-centricity among Japanese learners and teachers of English, which may hinder their learning and teaching and cause unnecessary anxiety for them. It would be a mistake, however, to decide that Japan’s ELT needs a drastic and immediate reform in line with a WE framework that aims at locally appropriate pedagogy without an eye on the actual teaching practice, for there in fact is evidence of localization of ELT in Japan. The discussion in the previous section has established that, in ELT with the WE perspective, emphasis should be on the students’ culture, their mother tongue, and the teacher who shares the same linguistic background with them. It could be argued then that, in ELT in Japan, adequate attention has been paid to Japanese culture, the Japanese language has been used in the classroom, and Japanese teachers of English have been primarily responsible for teaching and providing a role model for their students. The localization of ELT in Japan can be discussed from three aspects: teaching materials, teaching personnel, and teach-

ing methodology.

Teaching material

Textbook analyses occupy an important place in the arguments about ELT with the WE perspective, as “language textbooks are vital resources for imparting the social values of one group to another and for transmitting desired ideological and sociopolitical preferences” (Kachru, 2005, p. 192). It is thus argued that the representation of users and use of English in the textbooks “may be an important source of influence in the construction of students’ attitudes and perceptions” to the target language (Matsuda, 2002b, p. 196). As mentioned earlier, English textbooks used in Japanese secondary schools have been criticized from the WE perspective as they are unevenly focused on American and other Inner-Circle cultures with little or no emphasis on the use and users of English in Outer-Circle contexts². Yamanaka (2006), for instance, examined the frequencies of cultural items in nineteen English textbooks that had been approved by the Ministry of Education and used at secondary schools in Japan and found that there was “a marked lack of emphasis on nations in the Outer Circle” compared to the countries in the Inner Circle, of which the USA appeared most frequently, followed by Britain (p. 72). In terms of representation of English use and users across the three circles, Matsuda’s analysis of EFL textbooks for seventh graders revealed that native English speakers from the Inner Circle were depicted as the primary users of English and that the portrayal of English use, both intra-national and international, in the Outer and Expanding Circles except Japan was “only sporadic” (Matsuda, 2002b, p. 196). She also noted that the representation of international use exclusively among non-native speakers was considerably less than that involving native speakers, which she believes does not reflect the reality of the worldwide spread of English.

It should be pointed out, however, that both of the studies discovered that Japan, its societal contexts, culture, and people, receives emphasis equal to or often greater than that on the Inner Circle. Yamanaka (2006) maintains that “Japan dominates cultural items” in English textbooks for both junior- and senior-high schools. Similarly, Matsuda (2002b) found that Japan was the most common context of English use in five of the seven text-

books she analyzed as well as in the overall distribution in all the textbooks combined. Moreover, the majority of the main characters in the textbooks are Japanese, many of whom are students learning English just like the audience of the books (see Matsuda, 2002b, pp. 189–190).

There are other studies that provide a diachronic, though not comprehensive, perspective on national and international topics included in English textbooks in Japan. Muroi (2006), comparing the high-school English textbooks currently in use with those used from 1999 through 2003, summarizes her findings in four points: 1) the proportion of the lessons concerning Japan increased by 10% to 20%; 2) the lessons exclusively on Anglophone countries decreased from 37% to 22%; 3) the lessons on global issues such as environment, peace, human rights, and arts and sciences slightly increased from 15% to 19%; 4) the topics involving both Japan and non-Anglophone countries appeared for the first time in the current textbooks, though the proportion is still a low 8% (see also Muroi, 2004). These shifts in topical orientation indicate, as she maintains, that English is now considered an international or global language rather than a foreign language or the language of the Inner-Circle countries. Hino (1988) looks further into the history of English textbooks in Japan and asserts that the 1964 Olympics held in Tokyo can be seen as a turning point in ELT policy and practice in the country, the international event greatly expanding the cultural perspectives of the Japanese. The official curriculum guideline revised around the time (Ministry of Education, 1969) stated that the new objective of learning English should be to develop language awareness and cultivate the understanding of different ways of living and views of people in foreign countries, including those who use English in their daily lives, crossing out the former wording “native speakers” and “native-English-speaking countries.” This shift in cultural emphasis was reflected in various textbooks published and used from the late 1960s through the 1980s (Hino, 1988). The *New Prince Readers* (1968) included a description of German culture and values, the *New Crown English Series* (1984) covered the history and societal contexts of Singapore and Malaysia, and the *New Horizon English Course* (1986) featured Africa in one chapter, to name just a few examples. The aforementioned Yamanaka (2006) also indicated that the textbooks

she analyzed, particularly the ones for senior high schools, included chapters that involved such Outer-Circle countries as India, Singapore, the Philippines, and South Africa and some Expanding-Circle countries, including China and Korea. All these observations seem to suggest that English has been represented in teaching materials as a tool for international communication and thus disagree with Kachru's criticism that Japan's ELT views English "exclusively as an access language to American or British culture" (Kachru, 2005, p. 83). Nor is it the case in Japan that students "simply do not see themselves in the texts they are using" (Baumgardner, 2006, p. 664).

Kachru and other WE researchers see it as problematic that English users and use in the Outer Circle have not fully been represented in the ELT curriculum in Japan, and it is a valid concern, considering the political motive behind the propagation of the very concept of WE as we have seen earlier. It should at the same time be kept in mind that the sociolinguistic reality of the Outer Circle may not constitute locally appropriate teaching material for most Japanese learners of English, who, like many EFL students in other countries, "study English for no obvious reason other than because they are required to do so" (McKay, 2002, p. 114) and thus feel uncertain about the need for or relevance of the target language in their lives. There is one further point to be made: representing Asian and African countries as if they are 'English-speaking' nations and depicting people in those regions as English users through emphasizing their use of English instead of their local languages should also be questioned as to whether such representations truly contribute to cultivating language awareness and promoting 'international understanding,' which the official guidelines proclaim are the objectives of ELT in Japan. Denying the existence of different varieties of English and rejecting the speakers' claim to their legitimacy are problematic from the WE perspective; however, it would be equally problematic to send the message that "English has become a global language which is used for interacting with people *all over the world*" (Yamanaka, 2006, p. 72, emphasis added), disregarding the fact that "if one quarter of the world's population are able to use English, then three-quarters are not" (Crystal, 2003, p. 69).

In addition to the issue of cultural representation, some have

also pointed out that English textbooks in Japan are almost exclusively based on American English in terms of linguistic representation. According to Matsuda (2002a), in the beginning EFL textbooks the sentences in the main texts and exercises follow the syntactic and morphological rules of American English, and the vocabulary items and their spelling are based on American conventions. She notes that exposure limited to American English would deprive the students of a valuable opportunity to learn about different varieties of English used in different parts of the world and may lead them to view varieties of English as deviant and deficient out of confusion or surprise when they encounter unfamiliar kinds of English use and users. We have argued in the previous section, however, that the disadvantages may outweigh the advantages in attempting to incorporate regional varieties of English in the context where there are no grammars and textbooks or materials that are based on the local varieties relevant to the students (Kirkpatrick, 2007) and where the students' attainment level on average is not expected to reach a level high enough to deal with different types of structural patterns, lexical items, or spelling and pronunciation conventions. It should thus be considered justifiable in the Expanding-Circle countries including Japan to opt for an exonormative, codified variety of English whose grammars and dictionaries as well as teaching materials and reference tools are readily available for teachers and students. Even if any doubt remains about the exclusive adherence of English textbooks in Japanese secondary schools to Anglo-American values, at least one thing is certain: none of the global coursebooks published by the Anglo-American ELT industries that are more often than not disfavored by WE educators have played any part in secondary-school ELT in Japan; instead, only domestically produced textbooks have, whose primary authors are Japanese teachers of English³. More attention should be given to the fact that, from as early as 1897 on, Japan entered the "era of domestic textbooks," replacing the imported textbooks with Japanese original ones (Imura, 2003), and has continued to produce its own ELT materials.

Teaching personnel

Who should be responsible for teaching English in Japan inevitably involves the issue of models, i.e., which varieties of English

should be adopted to expose the students to and to what extent the learners are expected to approximate those models. While Kachru (1992a) himself admits that “[o]ne cannot disagree that the criterion of ‘native-like’ control is appropriate for *most* language-learning situations” (p. 52), he and other WE advocates contend that such a goal for performance should be reconsidered against the value of non-native models in the context of teaching and learning English, a language that has come to fulfill different functions and roles in linguistically and culturally diverse societies. It has been argued from such a standpoint that non-native English-speaking teachers should play a dominant role in the ELT classroom in the Outer Circle as well as in the Expanding Circle.

Although Japanese teachers of English, i.e., non-native speaker teachers, have assumed the primary responsibilities in the ELT classroom in Japan, some WE proponents do not seem to be satisfied with the situation, insisting that ESL-speaker teachers whose mother tongue is neither English nor Japanese “are rarely seen transmitting their learning experience to Japanese students” (Honma & Takeshita, 1998, p. 118). Morrow (2004) similarly argues that it is highly desirable to employ “teachers who are speakers of one of the Outer or Expanding Circle varieties” (p. 88) in order to expose Japanese students to different varieties of English and provide them with a positive role model. Kachru (2005) also maintains that appointing “qualified teachers familiar with other varieties . . . , for example, Filipinos in Japan” to teach English would help the students develop “‘sensitivity’ towards other accents” through “‘variety exposure’ to the real world of world Englishes” and eventually “overcome the ‘native speaker’ syndrome” (p. 90). Recent statistics show that there are in fact some non-Inner-Circle speakers of English who have come to Japan to serve as assistant English teachers from such countries as India, Singapore, and Jamaica, though it is not clear whether the number will increase and whether this reflects the recognition and acceptance of the WE perspective in ELT policy-making in the country (Yamada, 2005).

The advantages of employing ESL-speaker teachers in Japan, however, should carefully be weighed vis-à-vis its disadvantages for Japanese learners of English. Being successful language learners themselves, not only can ESL-speaker teachers

provide a positive model of language learning, but they would also better foresee and tolerate the language difficulties of their students than monolingual native-speaking teachers. Moreover, they can provide a tangible image of users of English as an international language in multicultural settings and help their students develop awareness and tolerance of different varieties of English and the diversity in their use and users. Nevertheless, they lack one of the above-cited traits that constitute “a minimal requirement of teachers of English” in the EFL environment: “a detailed acquaintance with the language and culture of the learners they are responsible for” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 195). The ESL-speaker teachers who do not share the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their Japanese students may have difficulty in anticipating and coping with the problems that derive specifically from the differences between English and Japanese. Coming from an Outer-Circle environment that greatly differs from the Japanese EFL context, the ESL-speaker teachers may also find it hard to relate their learning experience to that of their students, many of whom see little real need to learn English other than to pass the examinations awaiting them. Furthermore, without a shared resource of a mother tongue, it can easily be imagined that the ESL-speaker teachers resort to English, the target language, as language of instruction in class. Such a classroom is nothing but an English-only classroom employing the so-called Direct Method, which, as Y. Kachru notes, has been proved ineffective in many Asian countries including Japan (Y. Kachru, 2003).

The issue of model is also relevant to the problems of audio material that the previous section on teaching material left untouched. Gray (2002) takes up the issue of language sounds accompanying ELT textbooks in his critical analysis of what he calls ‘Global Coursebook’ that the Anglo-American publishers produce particularly for the EFL market. One of his interviewees, a Catalan teacher of English, makes an important point by questioning the meaning of “inclusivity,” showing his concern that the mere inclusion of characters of different races and ethnicities does not so much matter to his students as the non-native accents, or more precisely the lack thereof, that the recording assigns to these people (*ibid.*, p. 163). A similar point can be made about the ELT materials in use in the Japanese classroom;

that is, while almost all of the textbooks feature Japanese people as their main characters, many including people of other ethnicities, races, and nationalities, the variety of English they speak, or the language sounds recorded in the accompanying CDs and cassettes, is without exception what is generally considered to be native-speaker, in many cases American, English. The aforementioned study by Matsuda indicates that the pronunciation guides included in most of the English textbooks for Japanese seventh graders also represent the phonology of American English (Matsuda, 2002a).

Some WE researchers have a different view, putting more emphasis on the oral input produced by teachers. Baumgardner (2006, p. 667) argues that “the form that is taught (at least orally) by default is often a localized or dialectally influenced variety” used by teachers who are sometimes unaware that what they produce is different from international Standard English but nonetheless provide a language model for their students. This view is well articulated in the words of a high school English teacher in Japan who said in an interview that “[m]y students get one variety of English—mine” (Goddard, 2001). From the WE perspective, therefore, the teacher’s English is “authentic English” (Tanabe, 2003, p. 137), and the ‘model’ is “above all the teacher’s usage” (Melchers & Shaw, 2003, p. 191). It is after all Japanese teachers of English educated and trained in Japan who are in charge of ELT in Japan and who continue to provide the model for their students in the everyday classroom. Although the benefits that reside in diversity among teaching staff are undeniable, and though the positive effects that follow the variety of exposure would be profound, it seems to be more consistent with the WE perspective to devote resources to train and retrain prospective and in-service Japanese teachers of English to become highly qualified professionals who, in addition to an extensive knowledge of the target language and their own language and culture, have acquired a critical awareness of the global spread of English and its implications for their teaching.

Teaching methods

Recent proposals and attempts to reform ELT in Japan have focused on the implementation of a more ‘communicative’ syllabus in response to ever-growing criticism that the traditional

grammar-focused instruction has not helped Japanese students develop communicative competence in English. The official curriculum guideline currently in effect, which is apparently based on the notional-functional syllabus, strongly encourages the implementation of “communicative activities” in which students actually use the target language to share their thoughts and feelings, explicitly directing the instructors to minimize analyses and explanations of language elements (MEXT, 2003b). Moreover, the government has recently approved a new guideline for senior-high schools that requires the language of instruction basically be English, starting from the academic year 2013. These drastic reforms are all in line with the Strategic Plan and the following, more concrete Action Plan to ‘cultivate Japanese with English abilities’ announced by the education ministry in 2002 and 2003 respectively as all-embracing plans to improve the system and practice of the teaching of English, which they define as a “common international language” essential for “living in the 21st century” (MEXT, 2002).

Although the ELT policy in Japan has shifted to a more communicative orientation, this does not necessarily mean that, as Berns (2005) claims, teaching for communicative competence has replaced teaching for native-like ‘mastery.’ It seems to be the case in fact that the communicative orientation has paradoxically reinforced the native-speaker orientation among policy-makers and educators in Japan, strengthening the popularly held belief that ‘authentic,’ real English for communication is the language spoken by native speakers. The above-mentioned Strategic Plan specifically aims to promote “hiring of native English speakers as regular teachers” who participate in English classes in junior- and senior-high schools (MEXT, 2002). The Action Plan gives the rationale for the proposal as follows:

a native speaker of English provides a valuable opportunity for students to learn *living English* and familiarize themselves with foreign languages and cultures. To have one’s English understood by a native speaker increases the students’ joy and motivation for English learning. In this way, the use of a native speaker of English has great meaning. (MEXT, 2003a, emphasis added)

The Japanese government's emphasis on the Direct Method with strong focus on developing communicative competence shares with the WE perspective the notion of English as a tool for international communication but apparently contradicts WE in its continued and reinforced reliance on native speakers.

As we have argued above, the advantages of non-native-speaking teachers are increasingly recognized, and the implementation of the Direct Method has been challenged and proved unsuccessful in many Asian contexts. In largely monolingual EFL classes like those in Japan, in which students "would naturally use their mother tongue to communicate in so-called 'real' interactions," it is particularly difficult to create 'authentic communicative situations' where real messages are exchanged necessarily in English (McKay, 2002, p. 114). Moreover, Y. Kachru points out that CLT and other English teaching methodologies that encourage the use of the target language and not the mother tongue in the classroom tend to "produce users of English who are passive and unsure of themselves as speakers and writers" (Y. Kachru, 2003, p. 40). For the teaching of English as an international language with the WE perspective, she asserts, "[u]sing Japanese for English teaching is not only desirable, it is of immense relevance and advantage" (ibid., p. 41).

In the case of Japan, there is a recognizably unique tradition called *yakudoku*, or translation method, which has its roots in the study of Chinese classics. This method has received a barrage of criticisms starting from those in the late 1880s to those by the supporters of the Direct Method, Audio Lingual Method, Communicative Approach, and other 'imported' approaches. However, the persistence of the translation method to this day cannot be attributed only to the indolence or conservatism among Japanese teachers of English. Hino Nobuyuki, a prominent scholar who supports ELT with the WE perspective, appreciates the significance of *yakudoku* as well as *ondoku* (reading aloud), regarding them as instances of "locally-appropriate methodologies" as these traditional activities are, "though with their own limitations, . . . in line with some vital sociolinguistic factors in Japan" (Hino, 2003, p. 69). The renewed attention and appreciation of these methodologies, therefore, should be consistent with the original foci of the WE paradigm, which calls for emancipation from the Anglo-centricity of ELT practice.

Conclusion

We have discussed the ways to incorporate the WE perspective into ELT in general and particularly in the Japanese context. This critical analysis has revealed that the localized, appropriated, pedagogy advocated in the WE paradigm seems to have been realized already in Japanese English education. In the EFL environment of Japan, in which most students see little real communicative need to use English in their daily lives and have rarely seen the language as part of their linguistic repertoire, a codified 'cotemporary standard English' would suffice to provide them with the necessary grammar and vocabulary that would form a basis for practical communication if the need arises in the future, although, as the current curriculum guideline explicitly states, "consideration should also be given to the fact that different varieties of English are used throughout the world as means of communication" (MEXT, 2003b).

Assigning ESL-speaker teachers a primary role and using varieties of English as teaching material would only divert time and resources from much-awaited reform of teacher training and impose an added burden on many lower-level Japanese learners of English. Moreover, focusing only on some elements of the WE framework such as the prioritization of communicative competence and practical command of English has, contrary to its original call for de-Anglo-Americanization, intensified the native-speaker orientation in Japan's ELT and may in fact alienate Japanese teachers of English who have been the primary agents of local education. What the WE framework can provide for ELT in Japan, therefore, would not be another ground for criticism and for calls for reform as just another theory to be imported in Japan; it would be a new perspective to reevaluate and re-appreciate the significance of the conventional teaching practice that has historically developed in the particular local context of the country.

Notes

1. The present article, following Baumgardner's categorization, does not

- cover how the WE component can be incorporated in TESOL and other teacher training programs. For discussion of this issue, see, e.g., a series of Brown's works (Brown, 1993; 1995; 2002).
2. For a critical review of English education at the university level in Japan, see, e.g., Kachru (2005, Ch. 4). Some recent attempts by Japanese educators to incorporate the WE perspective into university English classes can be found in Hino's EIL teaching (see, e.g., Hino, 2003; 2007) and the newly established Department of World Englishes at Chukyo University (see, e.g., D'Angelo, 2005; Morrison & White, 2005; Yoshikawa, 2005).
 3. Such made-in-Japan English textbooks have sometimes invited criticism of their errors and 'unnatural' English usage and even become a subject of ridicule, which may in fact suggest that the phrases and sentences that appear in the textbooks have also come to be appropriated, or Japanized, so to speak.

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