Japanese communicative English

and English as a Lingua Franca

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1. Introduction

With an increasingly globalized market, English as a L*ingua Franca* (henceforth ELF) has caused for an increased demand for communicative English language capabilities among non-native English speaking countries. ELF moves away from the norms determined by native speakers (henceforth NS) of English, and aims to incorporate the mother-tongues of those who use it as a *linga franca.* However Japan has been a country that preceded this need for English as a major competitor in the global economy. But with an ever growing reliance on intercultural communication, a growing demand for a communicative command of the English language has risen. Japan is already known for its grammar-translation methods of studying English (Seargeant 2008, 128), however too much focus on this type of education has caused several issues in the growth of command of the English language as a tool for face-to-face intercultural communication.

In this study I will examine the current status of ELF research, the issues impacting the Japanese education of English from a communicative standpoint, and what kind of effect an ELF based approach would do to alleviate these issues. I have formulated the following research questions to guide my investigation:

1. *What are major factors inhibiting Japanese society from effective acquisition and utilization of communicative English?*

2. *Which of these factors can be improved or alleviated by using an ELF approach?*

2. English as Lingua Franca

2.1 World Englishes

Traditionally there have been three classifications of English when talking about English language education: English as a native language (ENL), English as a second language (ESL), and English as a foreign language (EFL) (Jenkins 2003, 4). In ENL English is the mother tongue of the majority of individuals in a country. In ESL English is a widespread language used within a country, often due to old colonies owned by the U.S. or U.K.. In EFL English is more often than not only studied in school, and sees little to no day to day use. This model does imply that individuals in an ESL or EFL country should strive to imitate a "standardized" English. However over time it has become apparent that there are many varieties of English, many of which are not covered within this model.

Kachru (1985, 1992) provides a better model in World Englishes (henceforth WE), which draws three distinct circles. The inner circle represents the people who live in areas where English is used as their primary form of communication, such as mother tongue speakers of English, e.g. Canada, U.S., U.K., Australia. The outer circle represents the people who live in areas where English is used by bilinguals or multilinguals. Often English is an official language in these countries next to their mother tongue, e.g. India, Singapore. The expanding circle represents the people who live in areas where English is scarcely used in day to day life, but can come up as form of international communication, e.g. Japan, Taiwan, Korea. This model still is not all-inclusive, and it has been noted that it lacks the flexibility to adjust to the ever changing social landscape

(Yamada 2015, 28), however it suffices to depict current geographic areas within this discussion.

Where this model mainly falls short is that WE still sees the inner circle speakers' English as the ideal form of English that all should strive for, ignoring the many different variations and dialects even present in inner circle countries. Lowenberg comments on this:

> "[L]ess consideration has been given to a variable that is much more central to the sociopolitical impact of proficiency assessment ..., the norms of Standard English. Rather, an implicit, and frequently explicit, assumption has been that the universal target for proficiency in Standard English around the world is the set of norms which are accepted and used by highly educated native speakers of English." (Lowenberg 2000, 67)

Thus the WE model does not accept expanding circle forms of English as legitimate variations by themselves. The WE model also fails to encompass the complex nature of the English language. The lines between inner and outer circle are blurring, and a role which Yanno calls the "functional native speaker" has risen to prominence (2001, as cited in Fang 2017, 60). A new paradigm was developed from the WE model though, which is ELF.

2.2 English as a Lingua Franca

The definition of the ELF model has changed significantly over the span of time since it's relatively new introduction, however for the purpose of this study I will confine myself to the latest definitions (Fang 2017, Jenkins and Leung 2017, Matsuura et al. 2016, Toh 2016), which I will go into greater detail here. The definition of ELF can be explained as "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option" (Seidlhofer 2011, 7), as roughly 80% of English speakers are

non-native, the majority of which come from the expanding circle (Jenkins 2008). Though it should be noted that ELF can "also include interlocutors from the Inner and Outer Circles, and can indeed take place in these contexts" (Seidlhofer 2004, 211). The focus of ELF thus lies on utilizing the fluidity and diversity of the English language. It exists to deal with communication barriers created by cultural differences, accents, dialects, and variations. It values communication strategies and accommodation between interlocutors to achieve mutual understanding and communication, without using native forms of English as standard norm.

As one of the major proponents of ELF, Jenkins sums up the major differences between the ELF and EFL approaches:

"– ELF belongs to the *global Englishes* paradigm in which all Englishes are seen as sui generis rather than as attempts to approximate a NS version, whereas EFL belongs to the *modern foreign languages* paradigm, ... with the goal of learning being to approximate the NS of the language as closely as possible.

– ELF therefore takes a *difference* perspective as contrasted with the *deficit* perspective of EFL. That is, differences from native English may be seen as legitimate variation according to ELF, but always as errors according to EFL. This is not to claim that ELF speakers are by definition proficient ... [T]here is a sociolinguistic distinction between ELF learners' errors and the innovations of proficient ELF users...

– ELF's metaphors are of language *contact and evolution*, whereas EFL's metaphors are of *interference and fossilization*

– ELF sees code-mixing and code-switching as bilinguals' *pragmatic strategies*, while EFL sees them as evidence of *gaps in knowledge*" (Jenkins 2011, 928; her italics).

An important distinction to make here is that, even though native English speakers are not

excluded, they are required to accommodate to their interlocutors as much as their interlocutors

accommodate to them, rather than being setting the norm. This alters the power relations

normally present in interactions between native and non-native English speakers, where

normally the NS would have the upper hand. ELF does not aim to codify itself as another variety

of English, but allow its users to mold it to their own uses, without it having to be sanctioned by

NSs (Fang 2017). This method treats English more as a shared communicative resource,

accommodating where necessary in order to attain communication.

2.3 Communication through ELF

Rather than identifying individual linguistic features of ELF, more recent research has

shifted towards pragmatic skills. As aforementioned, accommodation is the most important of

these pragmatic skills. However, Jenkins points out, examining linguistic features still allows for

empirical evidence of pragmatics in ELF (2011). Using the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of

English (henceforth VOICE), Jenkins gives several empirical examples. For a phonetic/

phonological example, she mentions the regular substitution of the voiceless and voiced 'th',

with /t/ and /d/ or /s/ and /z/ respectively. Word stress also seems to differ consistently from

native forms of English, placing stress on the phonetically longest syllable in the word, such as '-

ate' in 'educate' (Jenkins 2011, 929). Most importantly, she mentions that "[i]n none of these

features have the phonological/phonetic adjustments been found in the research to cause

intelligibility problems, except in very isolated instances" (Jenkins 2011, 929). In fact, it has been

noted that in more instances NSs of English are the cause of a break in communication, due to

their inexperience in adjusting their communication to interlocutors from different cultural and

linguistic backgrounds (Chopin 2014, Fang 2017, Jenkins 2008, 2011, Phillipson 2003).

Examples of lexicogrammatical or morphological include: changing uncountable nouns

into countable ones (e.g. softwares, evidences); interchangeable use of 'who' and 'which' (e.g. 'a

paper who will be published'); and zero marking of third person singular -s in the present tense

(e.g. 'he make very tasty sandwiches') (Jenkins 2011, 929). Interestingly, it has been noted that

non-native English speakers are aware of their omission of third person singular -s and is not

attributed to lack of knowledge, but are knowingly omitted. This became clear when they

changed their speech pattern when dealing with NSs, using the third person singular -s, as they

knew it was stigmatized by these speakers (Dewey 2007, 84). The VOICE corpus is largely

devoted to such ELF interactions (and available free of charge on their website), which contains

many more examples. However the point is not to establish specific a new linguistic variety to

oppose those established by the NS paradigm, but to provide examples of accommodation, desire

for alignment between interlocutors, and use of multilingual resources such as code-switching. As

Jenkins and Leung explain; "contingent variability [is] ELF's defining feature" (2017, 106). These

tools allow ELF users to be able to communicate in a wide array of multilingual situations,

express their identity through their use of language, and allow for accumulation of

communicative experience, even when they lack confidence in their command of English.

2.4 Criticisms

Due to the inherent differences between the ELF and EFL approach, there is a healthy

amount of skepticism among scholars towards ELF. The essential issue is written within the

names, as many cannot differentiate between a foreign language and a *lingua franca*. The ultimate

goal of foreign language learning is to attain a native-like level of competence, which is entirely

unnecessary, and in many cases very much unattainable (Jenkins 2006, Seargeant 2008,

Seidlhofer 2011). Thus ELF takes a different approach and sees variations as difference, rather

than deficit, sees code-switching and mixing as pragmatic strategies, rather than gaps of

knowledge. Such agency is often freely given to NSs, whereas non-native speakers (henceforth

NNS) are chastised for not adhering to norms. Such standards do nothing but assign superiority

to NSs for no reason, other than being born in an inner circle country.

Another major criticism is that ELF is nothing more than an interlanguage, or that it

promotes the concept of 'anything goes'. For the former, it is often still assumed that native-like

competence is the goal, which it is not. The latter criticism is a misconception mostly based on

habitually seeing 'errors', where they are in truth variants, based on solid empirical evidence

(Jenkins 2006, 141). Furthermore, there are definitely non-proficient ELF speakers. Rather than

ELF being another variety of English, variability is core feature of ELF (Firth 2009). Thus, a skilled

ELF user is not someone who has mastered a predefined archaic form of English that was set in

stone, but "someone who has acquired the pragmatic skills needed to adapt their English use in

line with the demands of the current *lingua franca* situation" (Jenkins 2011, 932).

Most importantly, ELF is not meant to replace EFL entirely. The goal is not to be able to

seamlessly assimilate oneself into a native English environment, but to allow for communication

within areas where neither party shares an L1. Most NNSs of English are entirely aware of the

differences in comparison to their native counterparts. However, within different native English

forms, different rules are adhered, which express parts of the user's identity and culture. The

same is true for NNSs of English. These differences can be seen as deficiencies or as variations,

but that should be up to the speakers themselves, which they often see as both fields of

individuality *and* fields for improvement (Jenkins 2008, 28-34). English has evolved as the global

language, asking why someone would wish to learn it has been called "a mostly pointless exertion

of energy" (Seargeant 2008, 122). However the way of thinking which the U.K. and U.S. cling on to

is "*more suited to empire* than they are to a modern, globalised world and *we are at risk of*

becoming outdated. Where once we directed the spread of English around the world, *we are now*

just one of many shareholders in the asset that it represents" (Jenkins 2008, 40; her italics).

3. English in Japanese education systems

The English language has been posited as one of the driving forces of an ever increasing globalizing economy. However, despite being one of the world's leading economies, Japan has been notorious in sporting a low level of control over the English language. In 1978, scholars from the US, UK and Japan contributed to the first substantial English work on the English language teaching in Japan; *The Teaching of English in Japan.* In this work it is determined that "reading comprehension skills are fostered, while hearing and speaking skills are less stressed", while "English usage within Japan was largely limited to the translation and critical study of foreign works" (Koike 1978, iv). Almost 20 years later, little had changed effectively, and former US ambassador to Japan, Edwin O. Reischauer, "listed Japan's miserable performance in English teaching as one of the seven wonders of the world." (Honna 1995, 57). However, since 1989, the Japanese ministry of education, culture, sports, science and technology (henceforth MEXT) has attempted to use educational curriculum reforms to promote the English communicative competence of students within the Japanese educational system (Yoshida 2003).

In March 2009 the latest reforms were released in the form of Course of Study guidelines. These guidelines stated that "[English] *classes, in principle, should be conducted in English*" (MEXT 2010, 3) and that explanation of English grammatical rules and terminology should "*be minimized*" (MEXT 2009, p.43). Yet in 2016, Japan ranked 27th/28th (shared with Cambodia) out of 31 participating Asian countries in the TOEFL (test for English as a foreign language) scores (ETS 2017). Seargeant points out that English is a determining cultural force in Japan (2008, 122) and that the Japanese people are woefully aware of their inadequacies in communicating in

English (126). MEXT (2003) even acknowledged this in their action plan to cultivate "Japanese

with English Abilities".With more importance being placed on English due to the 2020 Olympics

in Tokyo, and the ever growing importance of the internet, I will examine the individual aspects

of how the English language is learned in Japan, and how it is used in practice.

3.1 Compulsory education

English language classes have been part of the compulsory curriculum for junior and

senior high schools since 1998 (Tanabe 2003). Though technically this is reserved for "Foreign

language" classes, yet due to the stress of the importance of English, other languages have been

completely phased out (Yamada 2015, 4). Language teachers have even been found in expanding

circle countries to default to English as subject of choice, as declining birthrates reduce job

security for teachers, so they specialize in compulsory subjects and try to set themselves apart

(with near native-like proficiency) in order to secure their position (Curran and Chern 2017,

143). Yet in Japan, English language education at high school and university level is

predominantly done through teacher-fronted explicit grammar rule explanation (Sakui 2004,

Mochizuki and Ortega 2008, Browne and Kikuchi 2009, Yamada H. 2010, Tsukamoto and Tsujioka

2013). Sakui suggests that there are two forms of curriculum; an idealized documented version as

prescribed in the Course of Study Guidelines, and a realized version which emerged from

implementation of the curriculum in actual classrooms (2004, p.155). The reason for this divide

has several factors: (1) An undemanding teacher qualification system, which allows university

graduates to start teaching in junior and senior high schools with very little teaching training,

with little additional training once employed. (2) A large focus on preparing students for entrance

examinations for senior high schools or universities, which are viewed to treat English almost as a dead language like Latin, where the focus lies on explicit grammar rule memorization and translation. (3) A lack of experience and confidence in the teachers' own abilities to communicate and teach in English effectively (Sakui 2004, Underwood 2012a and 2012b, Sakamoto 2012, Tsukamoto and Tsujioka 2013, Yamamoto 2013 and Kobayashi 2013b). The result of this style of education is a populace that is capable of reading and writing English messages at an acceptable level, however incapable of understanding or producing acceptable spoken English by any native standard.

3.2 Commercial education

Supplementary classes in English are offered by third party providers and there are exchange programs to learn English in a native English speaking country. Choi conducted research on the effects of such training abroad on labor market outcomes in Korea, which he mentions shares many traits with the Japanese labor market (2015, 13). The result of this research was that while the students who had studied English abroad had significantly better positioned jobs after graduation, this was only relevant for students who came from a non-elite university. Furthermore, the costs of such a training abroad carried large personal monetary costs, allowing only the specific group of students who could not enter an elite university, but who's family had the financial capabilities to send their children abroad to gain any significant benefit from such a training (Choi 2015). Domestic additional English language training in Japan is offered by so called *eikaiwa* [English conversation] companies, some of which are major

franchises. The results of these *eikaiwa* institutes are often recorded through a TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) score. In fact, Kubota reports that according to the Educational Testing Service in Japan, 99,4% of surveyed companies use TOEIC as form of testing English language competence among new and existing employees (2011a, 250). However previous studies have not found TOEIC scores to correlate with English speaking and writing capabilities (Chapman, 2003). Meanwhile, *eikaiwa* franchises advertise their teaching materials and services through promised TOEIC preparation, causing the third party providers to suffer from the same shortcomings as compulsory English language education.

3.3 University education

When it comes to university level education, one would assume no further explicit grammar based examination would lie in the future of students aspiring to graduate. However much of university level English language education is also influenced by students being able to pass the TOEIC test with a suitable minimum score. Ever since the implementation of TOEIC exams in Japan in 1979, the amount of influence the TOEIC test has had on the university English language curriculum has been ever increasing (Uchiumi 2014, 24). Although many universities have their own specialized tests prepared, many still include TOEIC, or at least support for TOEIC problems during or after classes. Whether such an importance on TOEIC exams is warranted for post-graduate students will be discussed in the next chapter, it is important to acknowledge the effect this test has on university level education. Information on goals set by TOEIC are sometimes even included in the syllabus, including "minimum scores" if one would be able to

pass the subject that semester (Uchiumi 2014, 25). There are many more international tests and even a Japanese specific English language proficiency test, however TOEIC requirements are often tied to positions within companies or as an excellent inclusion on freshly graduated students' résumés (more on this in the next chapter as well). The TOEFL test is actually acknowledged to be better suited for students' interests, however exam fees, ease of participation and ease of comparison to other candidates are quoted as factors which lead to favoring TOEIC (Uchiumi 2014, 26). TOEIC however is primarily focused on business level English and contains a large amount of business related contexts and lingo that many students may be foreign to. This inadvertently leads to more cramming in order to fully understand these exams, rather than a motivation to attain a higher level of command of the English language.

4. English language capital conversion

Conversion of communicative language capabilities into personal economic and social gain has been prevalent in several of expanding circle countries (Pei-Chia 2011, Choi 2015). In this section I will use the Bourdieusian approach of cultural capital to examine how effectively English language capabilities can be converted by native Japanese into personal economic and social gains. I use the the cultural capital approach because language and cultural capital have always been linked and have formed several specific distinctions such as linguistic capital and language capital (Omoniyi 2014, 14).

4.1 Cultural capital

Bourdieu's concept of forms of capital expands on the idea that there is more than just economic capital. The other forms of capital have been defined as cultural capital and social capital (1986, 46). Beyond this there is also a form of capital called symbolic capital, which provides legitimacy to the other forms of capital in the eyes of individuals (1987, 4). Social capital comes in the form of recognition from society, such as a title of nobility, whereas symbolic capital is determined by the worth that, for example, your close neighbors attribute to this title of nobility. Cultural capital however comes in the form of knowledge, be it material or not. Bourdieu describes cultural capital as having three states: the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalized state.

The embodied state represents a long-lasting disposition through a process of education

and cultivation (Bourdieu 1986, 47). As such it takes time and effort to acquire this knowledge. Thus, it cannot be bought or inherited, but there is still a cost tied to its acquisition and its distribution can be limited based on factors such as social ranking. The difficulty of acquisition compared to the demand can create scarcity and thus social capital. The embodied state of the English language in Japan comes in the form of pure knowledge of the language. Cultivation of this knowledge starts early in compulsory Japanese education, however flawed it may be. This suggests there is a demand for the English language, however such compulsory education does diminish its scarcity. In order to create social capital out of the English language in its embodied state, one must go beyond the level that would be expected of an individual in Japan.

The objectified state represents material objects within their environment which in itself represent cultural capital. For example, a painting within an art collection forms cultural capital for the owner. The object and environment are thus intrinsically linked to determine their worth. Language is not represented in the objectified state, however knowledge of the English language can create objects which hold cultural capital, such as translations of written works like business documents.

The institutionalized state is a form of the objectified state, but confers original properties on the cultural capital it presumes to guarantee (Bourdieu 1986, 46). For example an academic degree depends on the value an institution has given to it, so its holder has value. The institutionalized state of English as cultural capital in Japan gains legitimacy as it has been promoted as the international business language needed to jump-start the Japanese economy once again by MEXT. It is often represented in Japan as test scores as aforementioned. TOEIC scores can be utilized to gain symbolic capital with possible employers or superiors. It can also be

utilized to gain social capital among ones' peers or possibly economic capital by using these scores as basis for a promotion.

Considering this representation of language as cultural capital, the goal of this chapter is to determine how well the different states of English as cultural capital can be converted into other forms of capital by Japanese people in Japan. Although Bourdieu mentions social class as a limiting factor in which one can cultivate or convert cultural capital, Bourdieu has been criticized for not considering other factors such as gender (Robinson & Garnier, 1986), race and geographical location (Omoniyi, 2014). Class plays a large part in the cultivation of English language capabilities and the ability to convert this into a higher form of employment, as show in the case of South-Korea (Choi 2015). At the same time, merely being of a race seen as the "superior other" or "inferior other" in certain Asian countries such as Taiwan (Pei-Chia 2011, 1679) can result in a much easier or harder conversion of capital within that specific geographical location. In the term "cultural ghettoization", as coined by Pei-Chia, you can gain so much social capital in one area, that this becomes your defining feature (Pei-Chia 2011, 1688). This can severely hamper ones prospects of alternative career path improvements. Thus, will look at which aspects of individuals' lives contribute or detract from the ability to convert English as cultural capital into other forms of capital.

4.2 Case Studies

By looking at interviews conducted by Kanno (2000) and Kubota (2011a) I delve into two specific cases of native Japanese who attain a higher level of English language capabilities than is offered by the curriculum offered by MEXT. Afterward I will continue and see how these capabilities can be used in cultural capital conversion within the Japanese job market.

4.2.1 *Kikokushijo*

After the economic boom in Japan in the 1960s, more and more business men were sent abroad for long-term assignments as part of international business strategies. Due to the length of these assignments, many brought their families along. Children who accompanied their parents overseas are called *kaigaishijo*, and those who returned to Japan after the assignment was done are called *kikokushijo*. After the initial group of *kikokushijo* reentered the Japanese education system, several issues were found. Although they followed classes abroad, the difference between educational systems were apparent. Furthermore the cultural differences caused for serious friction with both classmates and teachers. The result was that *kikokushijo* were seen to have an academic handicap for their age and here were several reports of bullying by both classmates and teachers. Recurring topics that were the cause of this bullying was behavior considered "non-Japanese"; signs of frankness and individuality, shrugging shoulders instead of articulating "I don't know" when asked a question, wearing different clothes and signs of fluency in foreign languages such as English (Fry 2007, 132-133). As a result of this reported behavior and lacking academic results in comparison to their fellow students, society largely emphasized the shortcomings of *kikokushijo* while ignoring their advantages in other fields. In order to combat

this disadvantage MEXT took several steps to ease the reintroduction to Japanese society. Special schools called *hoshuko* were built to accommodate *kaigaishijo* in large cities outside Japanese borders that had a high rate of Japanese business employees being sent there. As most *kikokushijo* would have completed or were close to completing the senior high school level of education, specialized university entrance exams were issued for all universities to accommodate *kikokushijo,* which were considered to be significantly easier than the normal entrance examinations (Kanno 2000, Fry 2007). Over time, the discourse around *kikokushijo* changed, showing them as being best equipped for dealing with an increasingly globalized economy. Universities took pride in taking in *kikokushijo* students as it gave them an international image (Fry 2007, 134). This change in discourse however seems to be entirely aimed towards the public, as the look on *kikokushijo* themselves still seems to be focused on their disadvantages rather than their advantages. Kanno also argues that they are seen as "proclaiming their otherness" for personal benefit, whereas in reality this is a misinterpretation of their own struggle with identity (Kanno 2000, 374).

Through interviews, Kanno (2000) explores the personal disadvantages and advantages several *kikokushijo* have faced. For example the case of Sawako, a *kikokushijo* who lived in the United states and Canada until she finished high school, who was accepted into a prestigious university based on her *kikokushijo* background. She mentions how out of place she felt due to the significant difference in academic level between herself and her peers (Kanno 2000, 367). She made friends, however they quickly grew intolerant of her "otherness", such as usage of English when she did not know a word in Japanese:

One day when she was riding in a car with a few of her peers, she asked the driver if he

was going to "parallel-park". She used the English expression because she did not know the

equivalent in Japanese. Her peers fired back, "What are you using English for? Say it in

Japanese. Show-off (kakko-tsukenna yo)!" (Kanno 2000, 367).

In the case of Kikuko, she did as much as possible not to stand out as *kikokushijo* once she

enrolled into a Japanese university. This is a technique known as *gaikoku hagashi* [stripping your

"foreignness"] where one acts like they never left Japan in the first place. Kikuko downplayed her

own English language capabilities, and showed her knowledge of Japanese popular culture at the

time. It was even mentioned that "…when she inadvertently slipped into English in front of her

peers once, her immediate reaction was to apologize for her unseemly behavior." (Kanno 2000,

371).

In the case of *kikokushijo*, it seems that their status has a direct negative influence on social

and symbolic capital. Despite their physical appearance, their behavior and speech patterns are

enough to socially ostracize these students. They were seen by their fellow Japanese as "us-

become-other" (Fry 2007, 133) and were never able to utilize their cultural capital (specifically in

embodied state) to convert it into other forms of capital. In fact, it is entirely possible that their

cultural capital in institutionalized state was harmed by this, due to the acknowledgment of lower

hurdle university entrance exams thanks to their *kikokushijo* status, making their university

degrees worth less than that of a degree held by a non-*kikokushijo* Japanese student. How this

translates into the workplace and job acquisition will be handled in chapter 4.3.

4.2.2 English language learning beyond the compulsory education level

Another source of Japanese people with an English language level beyond that of the level offered by compulsory education are those who seek out extra English language training after or during employment. Kubota (2011a) interviewed several employees of both big and small companies in lighter and denser populated areas. He also interviewed several business managers who oversee multiple employees and further recruitment for their company and asked about their English language capabilities and requirements. The statistics from his interviews that are most notable at first are the large number of women compared to men who participate in individual English language learning (Kubota 2011a, 252), and their reasoning for joining these classes: Expanding social circle and seeking romantic involvement with foreign speakers of English (also known as *agogare*) (251-252). Immediately it is evident that the purpose of joining these classes is to convert cultural capital gained in these classes, be it in embodied state or institutionalized state, into social and symbolic capital, rather than converting it into economic capital through higher level of employment. There are some of those who were interviewed who sought to attain a higher level of English competency for this reason, or for gaining a higher TOEIC score, but this underlying reason of increasing ones' social circle was ever evident.

One of these cases is that of Daichi, a male worker who quit his job to learn English abroad. Once returned to Japan he highly emphasized his English language capabilities and TOEIC score, to little success (Kanno 2011, 253). Once he rephrased his resume, he was able to land a job at a good company and even managed to attain his dream: be stationed abroad in the United States. Interestingly it was not his English skills that landed him this position, it was his initiative in his performance of his work and motivation that urged his employer for this promotion. Daichi

mentions specifically that the level of English of his fellow employees was scarce, regardless of working for an internationally stationed company, and that there was no pre-departure training for employees stationed overseas. The reason given for this lack of training is that the company expected workers to attain communicative language skills on-site). In this case, the embodied state cultural capital of Daichi did little to acquire his goal of economic capital, even though he attained it in the end. It was his already present human capital that urged his promotion.

Another case is that of Misaki, a female worker who quit her clerical job in order to improve her English level to become an English language teacher. One of her main objectives was a TOEIC score of 730, which was the minimum required for the position. Her hope was to escape the male dominated workplace that she had worked in for 7 years (Kubota 2011a, 254). Eventually she managed to reach her goal and was employed by a private program where she taught together with a native assistant language teacher, a common phenomenon in Japan. This however did not result in successful conversion of cultural capital into economic, social or symbolic capital. Her wages were but a third of what she earned as a cleric before joining the supplementary English language program. Furthermore, her native assistant, who required no training as teacher, earned twice her own wage. She was never thanked by the parents of the children she taught, this was exclusively aimed towards the native English speaking assistant. In fact, she was not recognized as a competent teacher until it became known that she had married a white American man she had met at the *eikaiwa* company where she had studied English. Misaki considered this bias based on her nationality and native language status "offensive and ludicrous" and thinks it extends towards hiring practices as well. Although her cultural capital in the embodied state did end up converting into her desired position as English language teacher, she

did not gain any economic capital (in fact it cost her economic capital), whilst her cultural capital in the institutionalized state (her TOEIC score) was merely a requirement for this position. The main reason why she was able to acquire social capital was through the reinforcement of the supposed natural superiority of her white native-speaking husband by the mothers of her students.

4.2.3 Use and worth of English during employment

In further interviews with employees and employers from companies with varying degrees of international business, Kubota reports the following (2011a, 255-257):

- The number of employees with good English communicative skills across all companies is very low, ranging from sub 20% to sub 1%
- There is a greater need for competent local language speakers than there is for competent English speakers. Especially speakers of Mandarin and Cantonese.
- The majority of English communication is through e-mail. One manager even mentioned that a standard high school level of English suffices to deal with these e-mails.
- The level of English of employees is not a factor in the decision to send them abroad or not. They are expected to learn the required level of English at that location. Additional training is rarely offered, and if it is, it is outsourced.
- TOEIC scores are not a factor for promotion, even for those positions that require the employee to take the test. Managers do however consider TOEIC to be a sign of interest for self-improvement shown by the employee.

Many of the interviewed employees however do mention specific jobs that require a large amount

of English to Japanese translation. These positions are called *haken*, pertaining that it is not a permanent position, wages are lower and contain none of the benefits a regularly contracted worker receives. Furthermore, the majority of these *haken* workers are women (Kubota 2011a, 249).

Considering the issues listed above, the English language capabilities of graduated *kikokushijo* and students of English beyond the regular curriculum does not allow for easy conversion of their cultural capital in the embodied state into economic capital. While there is some need for English language speakers, this need can be easily fulfilled by below average levels of English, or they result in positions that are inferior to those that require other skills. In fact, cultural capital in the form of Chinese languages can result in easier conversion into economic capital, as this is not as prevalent in Japanese standard curriculum (Kobayashi 2013a, 272). Nor does the improved English language state of cultural capital result in promotions or a higher chance to be positioned abroad. The institutionalized state of English as cultural capital does provide some merit; superiors might see this as a sign of willing to work to improve oneself, however the level of commitment seems to be irrelevant beyond a certain point.

4.3 Concluding remarks on case studies

Through analysis of interviews with *kikokushijo* and Japanese who studied English beyond the required curriculum I examined the possibility of converting their English language capital into economic and social capital. In its embodied state, English language capital has not resulted into successful economic capital conversion, and in the cases where it is possible, this conversion was

overshadowed by other forms of human capital or resulted in significantly less worthwhile positions than if focus was put on different skills. Even conversion into social capital seems difficult, and the cases of some *kikokushijo* and that of Misaki, it has negatively influenced social capital. Although some visit English language classes in order to expand social circles, this is treated much the same as one seeks to expand a social circle by joining a cooking class (Kubota 2011a, 252). In the cases of English language teachers of Japanese nationality, English language as cultural capital in its embodied state is a requirement for economic capital, rather than converting it into economic capital. Here the cultural capital of an individual seems to be overshadowed by prejudices based on gender, race and geographical location (Kubota 2011a, 254-255, Kobayashi 2013a, 277). Conversion of English language capital from the institutionalized state into economic seems possible to a certain degree, however it is seen as a sign of willingness to improve oneself (i.e. symbolic capital) rather than a desirable skill.

If successful cultural capital conversion of the English language seems simply not worthwhile at best, the question that begs to be answered is why such a high level of importance is laid upon additional conversational skills of the English language by MEXT, and why foreign (mostly white male) native English speakers are preferred as teachers when they have no teaching experience or teaching educational requirements? I will delve deeper into the answer to this question in the next chapter.

5. Japanese perceptions of English

During the 1980s and 90s, Japan moved from the concept of *kokusaika* (internationalism) to *guroobaruka* (globalism). The Nakasone administration was the first to put *kokusaika* rhetoric in their official documents during the mid 80s. It began seeing regular appearances in the wording of policy, and other international initiatives such as the JET (The Japan Exchange & Teaching Programme) program were established (Seargeant 2008, 134). However, Nakasone's intentions lied closer to strengthening national values through comparison, and were often seen as overtly racist by many in the international community (Chira 1987). But globalism soon took the forefront, with promotion of borderless societies, stressing more and more on the importance of English as an international form of communication (Kubota, 2002). This causes English to be directly linked to the world's distribution of wealth, power, and privilege (Yamada 2015, 7), which means that much of this wealth, power, and privilege lies within the hands of NS of the English language. Obvious links lie with colonial history of the primary English speaking countries, as its presence spread English to such a level that it can take this place as international language. However this leads to NNSs of English outnumbering NSs by a vast margin. Furthermore, the spread of English becomes a threat to local cultures, as they might be absorbed or at least put in conflict with an ever increasing global English presence. So how can English be considered "the international language", when it clearly favors NSs, who are in the minority, and possibly disadvantages those that wish to spread their own culture, but have to do it through means that is foreign to them? Below I will discuss the different aspects of the ideology of English

as form of international communication, and what it does to those who are forced to deal with it

in Japan as an expanding circle country.

5.1 English ideology

An ideology can be seen as "a way of viewing the world, a complex of ideas, various types

of social practices, rituals, and representations" (McLaren 2003, 79). This can mean that these

concepts can be seen as common sense or natural, so as Yamada puts it: "ideology reflects

interests of social groups but it works through and on individuals" (2015, 8). When mediating

their classes, teachers often use this common sense together with materials provided by the

school, such as textbooks, and required curriculum. Though one would like to believe schools are

neutral, but they are in fact "inherently political, as an arena in which various groups attempt to

institutionalize their cultures, histories and visions of social justice" (Apple 1999, 11). So

whoever has the most influence on the ideology taught through schools, and the required

materials used in these schools, has the power to determine how aspects (such as the English

language) are represented in their culture. As aforementioned, prime minister Nakasone had

definitive nationalist goals set with his party's international rhetoric, and had a major hand in

Japan's educational reforms during the 1980s and 90s. His party established the Ad Hoc Council

on Education (AHCE) during 1984, who tried to reform the education system in order to cultivate

a sense of belonging to a "unique ethnic tradition" (Okano and Tsuchiya 1999, 210). This AHCE

consisted entirely of business professionals, political bureaucrats, and Nakasone's personally

selected intellectuals (Yamada, 2015). No educational or pedagogy specialists where included,

and the majority of the reforms were centered around western educational approaches. This of

course included the idea of the western NS as the upper level of command of the English language. But as pointed out in chapter 4, the focus was less on communicating with other countries through English, but as Kubota explains: "to affirm Japanese distinct identity rather than local ethnic and linguistic diversity" and "balances a tension between the promotion of English and nationalism" (2002, 17). Hashimoto (2000) went as far to argue that Japan's national identity is reflected in its English language education, and that without absorbing western speaking norms, Japan still gains the power that is linked to the English language . However the Japanese English education system is still based around the western NS as an example of the highest level of competence.

5.2 Case studies

By looking at interviews and surveys conducted by Yamada (2015) and Appleby (2013) I delve into two specific cases: Japanese students of the English language in the higher levels of Japanese education, and NSs of English as language teachers in a commercial environment respectively. Afterwards, I will examine the effect of the view of English in Japan has on its students and teachers.

5.2.1 Student surveys and interviews

Yamada has extensively pointed out the lack of realistic and diverse situations in English language class textbooks, approved by MEXT and used in Japanese junior and senior high schools and universities (Yamada M. 2010, 2011, 2015). Examples include the use of English at a

hamburger shop between a Japanese worker, a Japanese girl and two native English speakers (Yamada 2015, 72). In this situation, the Japanese girl and the two native English speakers are friends, and the girl is showing them around Japan. But it is entirely unrealistic that they keep on using (native-like) English when confronted with a Japanese worker and ordering food. Normally, the Japanese girl would act as an interpreter and translator for ordering food, providing a realistic situation of intercultural communication. Instead it displays a situation that gives the impression that English at the native-level is used and understood by everyone. This greatly advantages English speakers over non-English speakers, and can cause a sense of inferiority or a feeling of insecurity about their English proficiency within Japanese students.

In order to establish the perception of Japanese students of the English language that these textbooks might create, Yamada surveyed 163 graduate and undergraduate students, and interviewed nine of these for greater details (Yamada 2015 79-92, 94-117). Of the survey respondents 60% were female, 39% were male, and 1% unknown. They all majored in comparative culture studies. Among these 71% had traveled abroad, of which 89% primarily visited inner circle countries, and 81% of which stayed less than a month. As for their plans after graduation, 37% mentioned planning to work as an English language teacher in Japan, and 49% planned on working or studying abroad. This indicates many of the participating students have an international mindset. Moreover, they had English language classes throughout their different levels of education.

When asked about what kind of countries and cultures they learned about during their English language classes, it comes as no surprise that inner circle countries compromise the largest percentage at 67%. When asking which specific countries they learned about, as far as

expanding and outer circle countries were concerned, only 17% mentioned countries that were

not part of East Asia. Yamada promptly points out the lack of outer circle countries mentioned

(Yamada 2015, 82) and even though "Africa" and "Africans" were mentioned, none were able to

name any countries within the continent.

Perhaps most telling among these survey results is the percentage of participants who

thought the materials used in English language classes were irrelevant to their daily lives; 49%.

While 48% did consider them relevant, the rest did not answer. Additionally, 40% of participants

found English to be useless when it comes to their daily lives. This comes as no surprise, as when

asked for how often they communicate with English speakers in Japan, over 33% mentioned

never having had the chance to use English. Over 36% did communicate with English speakers

weekly or more often, however the vast majority only had the chance to speak with an English

speaker once a month or even less often. When comparing these answers to those for the

question "How often do you communicate with non-Japanese speakers in Japan?" the answer

"almost every day" and "once a week" scored much higher for communication with non-Japanese

speakers than with English speakers. Yamada rightfully mentions "English did not necessarily

serve to facilitate all international communication" (Yamada 2015, 84). In fact, 39% of

participants were against using English in Japan altogether.

This does not seem strange considering over 77% of participants were little or not

confident at all with their English communication skills. This correlates with studies done on the

self-perception of the English language teachers about their own English language capabilities

(Sakui 2004, Tsukamoto and Tsujioka 2013, Underwoord 2012b, Yamamoto 2013). Furthermore,

58% of participants did not feel English language classes improved their capabilities of speaking

or listening to English, and 54% were at least somewhat dissatisfied (11% of which were strongly

dissatisfied) with the English language classes they received in general.

When asked about diversity in and discrimination (based on race and/or ethnicity) in

Japan, 57% considered Japan multicultural, and 77% considered discrimination to occur.

However when asked who were the target of such discrimination, most students were only

mainly aware of discrimination in Japan towards *Zainichi* Koreans or Asians other than Japanese.

Zainichi are descendants of (mainly Korean) immigrants who arrived and lived in Japan before

1945. The other two indigenous minorities in Japan received little recognition among the

participants; *burakumin* and the Ainu received the highest number of "I don't know" answers of

all options available (29,4% and 18,4% respectively). The least amount of perceived

discrimination was towards Europeans and North Americans; 69,9% and 55,2% of participants

disagreed at least somewhat respectively.

Based on these results, I infer that participants acknowledge they learned about multiple

countries and cultures, but Anglo American cultures seemed predominant. Moreover, there seems

to be a perception that European and North American people face less discrimination or

prejudice based on their race or ethnicity. Knowledge of outer and expanding circle countries

were scarce aside from Japan itself and its close neighboring countries.

Most importantly is the perception of lack of confidence in participants' own English language

capabilities, the irrelevance of English language classes to their daily lives, and the lack of

opportunity to use English in their day to day lives. This can cause English language classes to feel

irrelevant and unattractive and can cause students to lose motivation in learning English or even

make it feel unattainable to begin with.

English language classes are being given earlier and earlier in compulsory Japanese

education, and since 2011 have been introduced into 5th and 6th grade of elementary school.

Since then, 38% of all 5th and 6th graders have come to dislike the English activities, and lead to a

decrease in motivation to learn English reading and writing (Hojo et al. 2017). Especially the lack

of ability to be able to use English in your day to day life can cause students to treat English as a

hurdle during education which needs to be overcome through cramming for exams, rather than a

language that can be used as a tool for international communication. Yamada calls for including

English language classes to include diversity (both national and international) to inform students:

> "Based on these responses, teaching about the issues of race and ethnic relations,
>
> including the discussion of prejudice and discrimination, should be incorporated in the
>
> EFL classroom in order to avoid misconceptions and misunderstanding about English
>
> speakers and promote successful intercultural communication in the language" (Yamada
>
> 2015, 91).

In the interviews conducted with nine students after the survey, the consideration that

Japan is multicultural was accepted by seven participants, but as one of the two who disagreed,

Hiroshi, put it: "I do not think of Japan as *tabunka* (multicultural), but rather, I think of the United

States. In my image of *tabunka shakai* (multicultural society), it sounds far away from the

Japanese society." (Yamada 2015, 97). Still, all participants acknowledged that the Japanese

economy is reliant on international trade, and as such should try to accommodate to

multiculturalism. Yet when it came to suggesting to teach about diversity and different cultures in

class, many participants were skeptic; their English classes were mostly dedicated on grammar,

translation and vocabulary. One went as far as saying "I don't think my past English classes

helped me acquire the English language" (Yamada 2015, 100). Even those who had experienced

and were motivated by cross-cultural experiences were concerned about teaching such things

after having first-hand teaching experience:

> "In my classes, some students are unable to spell all the alphabets and memorize English
>
> words ... In reality, I cannot teach cultures. The only thing I can do is to teach English
>
> grammar and vocabulary. Ultimately, the goal of many junior high schools is to have
>
> students pass entrance examinations and get into high schools. So we tend to focus on
>
> teaching English grammar and vocabulary."

As mentioned in chapters 3 and 4, once these students reach high school they will learn little

more about culture there, as they have to be prepared to pass entrance examinations for

university, and once there they prepare to pass TOEIC examinations. Taking and passing

examination is called *juken* in Japan, and Yuko, one of the participants, points out this is one of the

leading reasons why students are disinterested in or unmotivated to learn the English language

(Yamada 2015, 102-103). So much importance in English language classes is placed on *juken*, that

many perceive it as cramming without learning to use the language itself. Yet, in concordance to

the findings of chapter 4, many of the participants consider command of the English language an

one of the most important qualification for employment. One participant, Akira, mentions

Rakuten and UNIQLO's requirement for "their employees to communicate in English in the

workplace" (Yamada 2015, 104) as one of the major reasons.

Yamada considers the following to be the most relevant points emerging from these interviews (Yamada 2015, 108-112):

1. Command of the English language is indeed important. Many different cultures use English to communicate to others, and this can enrich your own understanding of those cultures.

2. Avoid the stereotype that most foreigners in Japan can speak English. Many Japanese people have the assumption that one must speak English with white foreigners, which causes many to avoid contact due to insecurities about their own English language capabilities.

3. There is a need to overcome a sense of inferiority for not being able to speak English (properly). If one assumes that all foreigners speak English, and English is linked to success (e.g. "high TOEIC scores will secure you a good job"), this reinforces the opposite idea of multiculturalism, it reinforces Anglo-American superiority.

4. Teach in English language classes explicitly about the diversity of its users and the diversity in uses of the language itself. In the current classroom only the "American way" is taught. Realize there are different forms of English, and teach that Japan has its own form, and how one can use it.

5. Define clear goals why one should teach or study English. Most Japanese students never questioned why they should study English beyond *juken*. This causes them to cram it and forget it. Give examples on how it can be used in their daily lives.

5.2.2 *Eikaiwa* teacher interviews

As mentioned in chapter 3, commercial institutions called *eikaiwa* offer English language

classes beyond that of high schools and universities. However in chapter 4.2.2 it became clear

that the intentions of many of those students who sign up for these classes do not do so to

increase their English language capabilities. Their clientele are largely female and their goals have

are more social in nature: expanding social circles and involvement with foreign men (Kubota

2011a, 251-252). The concept of *akogare* (desire, longing) is used often when it comes to these

companies, especially towards native English teachers. Kubota mentions that this is reflected in

"the business interest of the *eikaiwa* industry which commodifies and exploits whiteness and

native speakers" (Kubota 2011b, 473) and that to students of *eikaiwa* companies there

"[d]eveloping linguistic skills as an investment to increase cultural capital is not their primary

concern" (480). Here I will analyze interviews done by Appleby (2013) with eleven western white

male teachers employed at *eikaiwa* companies in Japan to gain a deeper understanding of how

these men are "commodified" and "exploited", and how they perceive themselves in such a role.

This area is often avoided due to the stigma attached to male teacher and female student

relationships and their connection to workplace sexual harassment. Yet all the participants in

these interviews were entirely aware of them being used as occidental commodity (Appleby

2013, 137). Japan's poor conditions for women in professional and domestic gender hierarchies

are reflected in low international gender equity scores such as World Economic Forum Global

Gender Gap Report (2016) and UNDP Gender Inequality Index (2016). Appleby calls the *eikaiwa*

industry practices "an enlightened and liberated alternative to [these] traditional gender

hierarchies" (Appleby 2013, 127). Marketing of such companies even advertise "the activity of

English conversation as an eroticized, consumptive practice" (Bailey 2006, 106). This is often achieved by pairing Japanese women with western white male teachers. However the promotion of *eikaiwa* companies does not only extend to potential students, but also to teachers. The advertisement (primarily in Australia due to close geographical location) to these teachers is almost a self-driving narrative: They prefer white males, and since there are few around in Japan, the job security is very high. Furthermore, the advertisements seem to flaunt the teachers not needing *any* requirements for the position. As one of the interviewed teachers mentions, lesson plans are provided by the school and are very rigid (Appleby 2013, 135). They are then encouraged to fit the bill of expectations of their students as foreign white male: Be bright, loud, smiling, and happy (Appleby 2013, 136), similar to practices expected of fast food chain restaurants employees: little to no prerequisite skill set needed, and smile a lot.

This did lead to a large amount of attention from women that many of the foreign teachers did not receive in their own country (Appleby 2013, 135). However past their initial feelings, the teachers realized they were hired more as sexual symbols than as English teachers, even though many had English teaching qualifications. One of the teachers named Eddy had the following to say about it:

It is in some ways—it's—I don't know, it's kinky, ...suggestive. You find yourself being sexualised, I guess, by the company. Sex sells, to use an old adage. (Appleby 2013, 137)

They mention that this shines through in the ambiguous policies encouraged by the *eikaiwa* companies: Officially teachers were not allowed to socialize with students outside of the classroom, but individually the teachers were encouraged to exactly that. This is not an issue until one of the students complains, and thus becomes a commercial liability (Appleby 2013, 139).

However many of the interviewed teachers stayed away from such practices and preferred to keep a clear distinction between their professional and personal life. Yet even then their agency was often called into question due to those who did not share their integrity. Due to the "no experience required" clause, many applicants had a "marked lack of interest in pedagogy", and they found they were surrounded by other western males who were "in Japan for the girls", and not because "they wanted to teach" (Appleby 2013, 141). There is even a popular comic strip called Charisma Man, aimed at western expats in Japan (www.charismaman.com), who depicts an average if unpopular western male turn into a charismatic ideal depiction of heterosexual masculinity, whom is adored by Japanese women, but despised by his "archenemy" the Western woman. The interviewed teachers all admitted to have or have had a colleague that follows the Charisma Man stereotype (Appleby 2013, 140), and while they wish to distance themselves from these colleagues, they are also aware their position exists in large part due to this stereotype. Prioritizing teaching English over socializing during class entirely clashes with the commercial interests of the *eikaiwa* companies. As such, one teacher admits that "[Employers] don't expect you to stay very long, they don't want you to stay very long ...You were a novelty value" (Appleby 2013, 143). And the *eikaiwa* companies pay well for this novelty value. As shown in the example of Misaki in chapter 4.2.2, her native English speaking colleagues earned much more than she did as non-native English speaking teacher, regardless of her qualifications and their lack of qualifications. However this career path is not a fruitful one, as there are little to no growing or promotion opportunities (Appleby 2013, 143) and little to no transferable skills in their home country (Pei-Chia 2011, 1688).

Through the use of exclusively western white male teachers as NSs, these *eikaiwa* companies propagate the idea the image of the ideal Occident, which does not lead towards greater command of the English language, except perhaps for better preparation to take standardized tests such as TOEIC. Appleby concludes: "Here, an embodied hegemonic masculinity was identified: an extroverted and eroticised White Western ideal for male teachers, produced as a commodity for Japanese customer-students" (Appleby 2013, 144). Although likely not intentional, this does put westerners, especially white men, on a pedestal. This can attribute to the sense of insecurity of many Japanese (former) learners of English, and can add to the sense of one's own inferiority as pointed out by Yamada (2015) and Pei-Chia (2011).

6. ELF in Japan

During compulsory Japanese education, Japanese students are required to take many English language classes, which focus on passing university entrance examinations. The Course of Study Guidelines issued by MEXT dictate that classes should focus on communicative language teaching (MEXT2010, 3), yet no support is given to implement such a curriculum (Sakui 2004). This does not seem odd given the lack of required qualifications for a English language teaching position, and many teachers have shown a lack of confidence in even their own ability to communicate in English (Sakui 2004, Underwood 2012a and 2012b, Tsukamoto and Tsujioka 2013, Yamamoto 2013, Kobayashi 2013b). Based on the interviews conducted by Yamada, it does not seem like this is likely to change in the future (Yamada 2015, 101), and her surveys showed the majority of students with EFL teaching aspirations already had little to no confidence in their English communication skills already (Yamada 2015, 84). Once in university, English language education is heavily influenced by TOEIC (Uchiumi, 2014), which is believed to give students a better chance on the job market, but in reality has very little effect on employment or promotion (Kubota 2011, 257). Helping increase TOEIC scores are also used as promotion for *eikaiwa* companies (Kubota 2011, 250), which are primarily commercially driven and hire western native English speaking teachers without any teaching experience as commodity for the Japanese customer (Appleby 2013). This leads to very little, if any actual communication practice using the English language. It also posits the western (preferably white male) 'other' as an unattainable ideal of English language proficiency. Below I will discuss the advantages of an ELF system to improve on these issues.

Even outside the ELF perspective it is known that Japan's English education focuses too much on the U.S. in their attempts to strive towards internationalization at first, and globalization later (Yamada 2015, 119). Japan has a wide array of diversity within its own borders (MOJ 2012). The current method of Foreign language teaching (which in the Japanese context means English language teaching) completely ignores this diversity (Toh 2016, 363), and is stuck in a hegemony of "native speakerism" (357). By moving away from this native ideal, and focusing on communication with international communities that can be found within Japan itself, students are given direct real life examples of how they can use English in their day to day lives. It will allow for connection with minority groups in Japan, which have often gone largely unnoticed or ignored by the classes that focus on intercultural communication (Yamada 2015, 98). Communication experiences provided by these connections will put student and their interlocutors on an even level, rather than having a native English speaker judge them from a hierarchical level that the students will never be able to reach. They would learn communicative skills that are transferable to professional applications later in life, beyond that of the *yakudoku* (grammar-translation) skills that Japan is already known for.

There is evidence that other expanding circle countries have already made their mark on the international market *due* to their international level of English, not *despite* it (Jenkins 2008, 42). Such real life applications can also help with student motivation issues, which have plagued the compulsory English language education that occur from the grade school level on (Hojo et al. 2016), and restore confidence in using English in real life situations (Matsuura et al. 2014). Perhaps most important of all, this approach facilitates the practice required for the brain to consolidate L2 processing routines (Odlin, 1989), which allows for the acquisition of implicit

knowledge which can be rapidly accessed, which is required for fast and fluent communication

(N. Ellis 2006, R. Ellis 2006, Ellis and Bogart 2007).

6.1 ELF and Japanese

In a study conducted by Matsuura et al. (2016), the intelligibility and comprehensibility of

Japanese use of English was measured, and pointed out several Japanese-specific issues that

would require attention when adopting an ELF based educational approach. A well known

example is the lack of phonemic variation in the Japanese language, such as lack of difference

between /f/ and /v/, or between /r/ and /l/. However as mentioned in chapter 2, these cause

little to no intelligibility problems. Problems only arise once phonological change happens to such

a level that a word becomes indistinguishable from another word; Japanese pronunciation of the

word 'fork' often happens in the form of /hoku/, which can be construed as 'hawk' (Matsuura et

al. 2016, 11). Context is an important factor here, and comprehension techniques such as recasts

can quickly determine intention through accommodation. More problematic however are

prosodic errors caused by epenthesis. Due to the structure of the Japanese language, vowels are

added between consonants, such as the word 'strike' being pronounced /sutoɹɑiku/. These errors

have been proven to cause more intelligibility problems than phonetic errors (Matsuura et al.

2016, 5). As such, epenthesis should be a major point of focus for ELF education to increase

communicability. Another important factor are those nativized words in the Japanese language of

English origin. Around 40% of 10,000 newly added words to the *Kojien* (a popular Japanese

dictionary) have been reported to be nativized words (Honna 2008). Due to these words often

being written in *katakana*, the orthographic system used to write 'foreign words', they are

immediately recognized as loan words. Yet not all these nativized words are of English origin,

which can create the illusion among Japanese speakers that they are speaking English when using

these terms (Matsuura et al. 2016, 5). An example is the word 'chak' (チャック), pronounced

/⌒tʃɑku/, meaning 'zipper'. Due to its *katakana* spelling, many assume that it is a word known

among English speakers, whereas its origins come from an early brand of zippers in Japan

(Nishio; Iwabuchi and Mizutani 1986). Pointing learners of ELF to the origins of nativized words

should allow for less misunderstanding, and even broaden ones field of ELF communication, as

many nativized words are shared with other neighboring Asian countries (Matsuura et al. 2016,

15).

6.2 Challenges

One of the major challenges in ELF as form of education is the method by which it can be

tested. Construct validity has been the primary criterion in psychometrically oriented

standardized testing (Jenkins and Leung 2017). A construct has been defined as "to be the

specific definition of an ability that provides the basis for a given assessment or assessment task

and for interpreting scores derived from this task" (Bachman and Palmer 2010, 43). Jenkins and

Leung define the abstract competence of ELF as "the ability to convey and negotiate meaning to

achieve communicative goals" (Jenkins and Leung 2017, 112). Yet ELF is inherently variable, so

formulating assessments and tasks based on this variability or on defining specific

communicative goals will be challenging. Options include focusing on assessment of

accommodation strategies or performance related tasks. Implementation would be up to

international examination boards, however these have been noted to address findings in ELF

research with little to no action (Newbold 2014), possibly due to current testing being

commercially lucrative. Furthermore, current English language testing based on NS norms are

marketed as "international". The view of NS norms will likely be a cause of opposition when

planning for implementation in general education settings.

Another important challenge to moving toward ELF-based education is differences in

sociocultural background. Some nativized words are shared among certain expanding circle

countries, which can help understanding in communication between interlocutors from those

countries. However sociocultural backgrounds and context can cause misunderstanding precisely

due to these shared nativized words. Matsuura et al. gives us examples in the form of the word

'mug cup' (pronounced /mɑgu kɑ-pu/), where the context had a negative influence on the

interpretation of the Indonesian interlocutors. The word was embedded in the sentence 'My

brother gave me a new mug cup for my birthday.'. Although the interlocutors were familiar with

the term 'mug', a mug does not seem to be a particularly typical birthday present in Indonesia,

and therefore many misconstrued the meaning (Matsuura et al. 2016, 16). In treating these cases

during classes, focus should be put on accommodating and negotiating more so than explicitly

teaching all the different sociocultural meanings across all neighboring countries.

6.3 Implementation of ELF in Japan

Some Japanese universities have taken notice of the ELF paradigm, and have started

revisiting some of their English language policies. One such example is Tamagawa university,

which started the Center for English as Lingua Franca (www.tamagawa.ac.jp/celf/about/).

However, as one of the participating teachers, Toh mentioned, the program still relied on

""expert"native speakers" (Toh 2016, 356) and that "the discourse about English teaching had changed, but the actual content of courses had not" (361). Thus it is important to acknowledge old pitfalls which might impact future ELF programs. Old habits die hard, so it is important to be vigilant to not let "icons like the "four skills" and "English only" regimes burrow their way into ELF programs, whether through hegemony, inertia or human design" (Toh 2016, 365).

An important aspect of this is to limit the percentage of teacher-fronted classes, which are a large portion of current English classes in Japan (Sakui 2004, Mochizuki and Ortega 2008, Browne and Kikuchi 2009, Yamada 2010, Tsukamoto and Tsujioka 2013). Compernolle provides examples by showing measurable competence among students in the maturing state, through dynamically administered strategic interaction scenarios (Compernolle 2014). This would require much more individual attention per student from teachers. McMurray provides a possible method to alleviate the extra workload this would entail. Borrowing from Health Care Team Management Models, McMurray suggests on top of a teacher, to add a remedial teacher, teaching assistant, student assistant, and a learning assistant (McMurray 2016, 161-164). The teacher would still be considered the main organizer of the classroom, materials and curriculum. The student assistant is a hired (upper grade) student there to relieve the teacher of menial tasks, and to make other students comfortable and be a mediator between students of different ages. The remedial teacher is not a full-time teacher, but acts as a outlet to use English outside of the classroom. Rather than pushing students to learn more and more, remedial teachers are there to help students catch up to the main curriculum if they feel they feel their high-school education or current level of skill is insufficient. Teacher assistants, often postgraduate students, are there to help organize the class with the teacher, but assistance to students is on a more personal level.

Learning assistants can be international students, which provide informal situations to practice

the target language. An important note is to not focus too much on acquiring native English

speakers as learning assistants.

7. Conclusion

Through analysis of several interviews, surveys, studies, and presentations I have examined the educational, sociological, linguistic, and perceptive effects of the current native-centric English language education in Japan on its current and former students. The findings throughout this thesis provide the following answer to my first research question:

1. What are major factors inhibiting Japanese society from effective acquisition and utilization of communicative English?

Educational:

1. Compulsory education driven by teacher-fronted explicit grammar rule explanation, due to pressure to prepare students for entrance examination. These teaching practices, cause students and teachers alike to view studying English to equate to cramming, rather than the acquisition of useful skills

2. A disconnect between Course of Study Guidelines issued by MEXT, and the resources provided by MEXT for teachers to properly implement these guidelines in actual pre-university classrooms.

3. An undemanding teacher qualification system in compulsory education.

4. A general focus on test scores, even when these tests do not correlate with increased communication proficiency.

5. Third party *eikaiwa* companies whose primary concern are commercial, and hire underqualified (preferably white male) NSs of English, to sell as commodity rather than facilitate acquisition of communicative proficiency.

Sociological:

1. Inability to convert English language knowledge as cultural capital into economic or symbolic capital.

2. A higher emphasis on prejudices based on gender, race and geographical location, than on expertise or skill in the professional setting.

3. A higher emphasis on professional skills other than English language proficiency by managers, even when English language proficiency is relevant.

Perceptions:

1. An overemphasis on NSs as norm for English, even in the form of international communication.

2. Insecurities with Japanese speakers of English due to the stereotype that all (western) foreigners speak flawless native-level English.

3. A view that command of the English language is irrelevant to day-to-day life due to lack of information on Japan's own diverse communities.

4. No definition of why students should learn English, causing the tendency to cram for exams and forget shortly after they passed them.

My second research question follows up to see how the use of the ELF approach might alleviate or overcome above inhibitors to effective acquisition and utilization of communicative English in Japanese society.

2. Which of these factors can be improved or alleviated by using an ELF approach?

Educational:

For compulsory education (from grade school to senior high school), the Course of Study Guidelines issued by MEXT would need to include curriculum for ELF based communication classes, and provide teachers with the facilities and time to enact such a curriculum.

At the university level it is possible, provided enough assistance is given to teachers (McMurray 2014) provided that NS norms and old regimes do not burrow their way in (Toh 2016). Furthermore, reliance on third party examinations such as TOEIC needs to diminish as they do not provide English communicative proficiency (Chapman 2003), and only minimal increased chances for employment or promotion (Kubota 2011).

For third party companies, ELF will only have an effect if it proves to be commercially lucrative. A more important factor here is for compulsory education to educate students on diversity and break the stereotype of Anglo-American superiority.

Sociological:

Knowledge of ELF as cultural capital would allow for a much more rigid conversion into economic or social capital. Graduated students can include actual international communication through English on their résumé. Whether this will result in increased or higher employment or promotion goes beyond the scope of this study, but one can clearly see the possible commercial benefits of employees with such a skill set.

Prejudices based on gender or geographical location would be largely unaffected based on

current research. However, should ELF be included in compulsory curriculum, knowledge of

Japan's diverse minorities would hopefully reduce the prejudices based on race.

Perceptions:

     If implemented properly, ELF based education would greatly diminish the naturally

attributed Anglo-American superiority and NS norms of English. Students would be given the

tools to develop their own speech patterns, increasing confidence and motivation to speak. This

results in many more opportunities to practice their English, which will allow for implicit

knowledge acquisition to take place.

     Given time and an increased will to interact with others in English, students might come to

realize not all western foreigners have such a impeccable command of the English language.

Students will come to realize there is more to English than the "American way", and that Japan has

its own form of communication through English.

     An implementation of ELF in the Japanese setting will face challenges, not to mention

dissenting voices who stand by the NS norms. Special attention should be given to epenthesis, as

it has proven to be a barrier to international communication (Matsuura et al. 2016). Additionally,

prominent nativized words need their origins explained in order to avoid miscommunications.

     An important distinction to make is that the ELF approach should not completely replace

current English educational practices. I personally see them as an addition to current English

language curriculum, or perhaps as replacement for current communicative language teaching

classes. The Japanese grammar-translation method is well known internationally, and is still an

important part of current Japanese professional work methods (Kubota 2011a, 253). Japan still

has many diplomatic and economic relations with inner circle countries, and these working

methods need not be affected by the introduction of ELF. Additional communicative English

classes aiming for native-like competence might be required depending on the field of study, such

as international law or fields of engineering.

Due to the limitations in length of this study I have left out certain topics, such as; whether

English is even the suitable language for a *Lingua Franca* in Japan, Shohamy's views on common

issues afflicting language policy (for more information, see Shohamy 2006), or Hall's idea on

'Englishing' - a method for testing what people can do with language (for more information, see

Hall 2014). Furthermore I must acknowledge my own educational history, Where I have both

actively pursued and depicted a native-level of English as desirable trait.

Overview of abbreviations used

ELF   English as a *Lingua Franca*

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

L1   First language

L2   Second language

MEXT   Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

NS   Native speaker

NNS   Non-native speaker

TOEFL   Test of English as a Foreign Language

TOEIC   Test of English for International Communication

VOICE   Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English

WE   World Englishes

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