

研究ノート

The Promotion of “English as ‘the’ International Language” (ETIL) in English Textbooks for High Schools in Japan

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how the discourse of “English as ‘the’ international language” (ETIL) is promoted in English textbooks for senior high schools by analyzing the materials dealing with English.

The English-related topics play an important role in terms of encouraging students to study and use English, “the international language” as a communication tool. At the same time, however, there is still a tendency in Japan to regard English as the language of America or Britain. Thus, the contradiction arises between the discourse of “English as the international language” which gives a special privilege to English and the idea of linguistic relativism which promotes equality among all languages.

First, I have provided the analysis of language-related materials and argued how they strengthen the perception that English is the only international language and operates as just a neutral tool for communication. Second, I have argued that there is an ideology to give a special privilege to English in the practice of English conversation. In addition, the ideology of English is reproduced in the discourse of “English as the international language,” which justifies giving a special privilege to English.

Based on the above analyses, I have concluded that English textbooks provide

one of the most important chances for students to develop their ideas of English and other languages without giving a special privilege to English or Western ways of thinking.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how the discourse of “English as ‘the’ international language” (ETIL) is promoted in English textbooks for senior high schools by analyzing the materials dealing with languages.

Although language education in Japan has changed from what Smith (1981) calls the “chauvinism” of English into something that gives due consideration to such as multilingualism, World Englishes (Kachru, 1985), there is still a tendency in Japan to regard English as the only international language, or the language of America or Britain. This is reflected in the fact that many of the Japanese characters that appear in the textbooks use English primarily in conversation. Thus, there is a discrepancy between the ambiguous interpretation of EIL (English as an International Language) in English textbooks in Japan and the idea of considering English as the language of America or Britain.

The concept of EIL or EIAL (English as an International Auxiliary Language) developed by Smith (1976) is often mistaken as being synonymous with the concept of “English as ‘the’ International Language” (Hino, 2001) or ETIL. This tendency is still seen in English textbooks for high schools in Japan in spite of the increasing materials that deal with non-English-speaking countries, as mentioned above. However, it is necessary to understand the real meaning of EIL rather than ETIL, specifically shown in Hino’s (2001) comments, “EIL stands for English as ‘an’ international language, not English as ‘the’ international language” (p.40). As Japan is one of the Expanding Circle countries (Kachru, 1985), many of Japanese people do not always use English in their daily lives. Besides, there are many people who use not only Chinese or Korean but also Portuguese. In fact, Ainu and Ryukyuan languages are also used in Japan. However, it is not easy for students in Japan to study other languages as well as English in the current English education. If studying English is a window for meeting languages other than our

mother tongue, encouraging students to know linguistic relativism, it would be useful for students to think about how Japanese people use English in Japan as one of the Expanding Circle countries. In this study, the linguistic relativism is defined as to realize the importance of the mother tongue and its coexistence with all different types of languages.

To analyze what images of English are drawn from the textbooks, and are likely to affect learners' ideas of English, first, language-related materials are analyzed. In addition, how they promote the idea of ETIL as only a neutral tool for communication is argued. Second, an ideology of giving priority to English (e.g., Tsuda, 1990; 2003; 2005; 2006, Oishi, 1990) is discussed. The analysis of them suggests that English textbooks should encourage students to develop an idea of linguistic relativism without giving priority to English and Western ways of thinking in using English.

2. Literature Review of the Japanese Ideas of English in English Textbooks

Erikawa (2008) states that Japanese people have taken in the Western culture through the process of studying English. Hino (1988) points out that “nationalism on the part of the non-native speaker shifts the cultural orientation away from the Anglo-American framework.” Matsuda (2002, 2003) argues that many English learners—and even some teachers—still perceive English as the language of the “Inner Circle” (Kachru, 1985), and therefore learn English to access the Inner Circle culture (Matsuda, 2002).

Nakamura (1989), who wrote the English textbook, *New Crown*, suggests that there is an ideology of colonialism and in such, a tendency of giving priority to English in English textbooks.

As for the use of English, Kachru (1983) suggests that “non-native users ought to develop an identity with the local model of English without feeling that it is a ‘deficient’ model” (p.85). Besides, there are essential suggestions, as Hino (2005) states, that EIL should be used as a means to express the user's own ways of thinking beyond the cultural restriction of English or Western paradigm and through the process of a “de-Anglo-Americanization of English” (Kunihiro, 1970,

p.3). Therefore, in this paper, these points of view offer keys to analyze language-related materials in the English textbooks.

The discussion will be advanced from the point of the contradiction of the idea between EIL and ETIL, as well as the Japanese ideas of English. As Smith (1981) argues, “when any language becomes international in character, it cannot be bound to any one culture” (p.27). Thus, the analysis along this line would certainly shed light on some obviously unsolved problems in the field of English education, like the inferiority complex students have when speaking English, and thereby contribute to overcoming these problems.

3. Method

The English textbooks used in high schools are chosen because they play an important role in shaping students’ idea of English; additionally, more detailed topics about languages can be analyzed than those available in the junior high school curriculum and texts.

From the point of view of language-related materials, there are 36 MEXT¹-approved “English I” textbooks in which topics about languages especially linked to EIL are included. The total number of chapters in the textbooks is 210, out of which 19 chapters (approximately 9.1%) are language-related materials. Although this represents a small percentage out of 210 chapters in total, they reflect the Japanese ideas of English in what kind of materials are chosen and how the conversation practices, which demonstrate examples of the way English is used in everyday life, are conducted among characters in English textbooks..

In this paper, language-related materials deal with such topics as EIL, multilingualism, the language difference, communication gap, and endangered languages. Among them, five English I textbooks are chosen in this paper as English textbooks are appropriate with which to analyze the discussion of the Japanese ideas of English. The way of setting up conversation practice, in which characters use English in communication, is examined as well.

4. Analysis of Language-Related Materials

4.1 An Issue Related to the Legitimacy of ETIL

This section examines how the discourse of ETIL is promoted in English textbooks for senior high schools by analyzing the language-related materials.

According to Matsuda (2002), World Englishes research informs us that “many interactions in English today take place exclusively among ‘non-native speakers’ of English.” She gives a commentary for the results of World Englishes research that “the assumption that EFL speakers learn English in order to communicate with native English speakers and learn about their culture does not always hold true anymore” (p.439). Besides, she suggests that textbooks and EFL curriculum should represent such use of English (p.439).

It is also true that, as Hino (1988) points out, “cultural contents are certainly not restricted by the values of native-English-speaking countries” (p.312) in the currently used textbooks.

The next conversation example (1) shows the situation where a Japanese student talks with a Malaysian student studying in Japan using English.

(1) Fatima: Some people speak Malay, or Chinese... or another language.

There are many ethnic groups in my country.

Hiroshi: Oh, really? Then how can you talk with each other?

Fatima: We use our national language, Bahasa Malaysia. And sometimes English.

Hiroshi: How come?

Fatima: Each ethnic group has its own language.

Hiroshi: Is English a common language?

Fatima: Well, many young people can speak some English. What about Japan? Do all the people speak only Japanese? Do only Japanese live in your country?

(*Vista I*, p.20)

This material shows that English as EIL is used for convenience besides the

national language, Bahasa Malaysia, in a multilingual country such as Malaysia. Likewise, there is a clear lesson that English, or ETIL, is truly a useful tool of communication between non-native speakers of English.

Another relevant point here is that the Malaysian student's question may become a chance for learners to know that there are many foreigners who cannot use either Japanese or English. At least, the question posed by the Malaysian student, "Do all the people speak only Japanese? Do only Japanese live in your country?" would help the learners to know that not only Japanese but also some other languages are used in Japan. For example, there is a passage in the textbook *Exceed I* which reads, "Some people say, 'We speak only one language in Japan.' But this is not so [*sic*]. In Hokkaido, some people speak Ainu" (p.11). In fact, there are some "languages" that are not considered to be a "language" but a "dialect," and therefore encourage the erroneous assumption made by Japanese people that Japan as a nation with a single language. In addition to containing these "dialects" such as the Ainu language and Ryukyuan languages, Japan has come to be one of the most multilingual countries in the world, where languages such as Chinese, Korean, and Portuguese are often spoken. The future challenge would be to raise students' awareness of these issues through language education.

Next are the circumstances surrounding conversation practice. Japanese students talk with foreign students in English—not only from the English-speaking countries but also from non-English-speaking countries. For example, when a Japanese student, Ken, is talking with a Korean student, Seung-mi, about an exhibition of photographs of the 20th century, their conversation happens as follows:

- (2) Ken: Do you remember the mother carrying her dead child wrapped in cloth? That photo struck me the most.
 Seung-mi: Yes, I remember it. It really feels sorry for the mother.
 Ken: It's terrible that such small children are dying.

(*Crown I*, p.120)

In the next conversation (3), Hanako studying in India talks with her friend, Raj.

(3) Hanako: Could you do me a favor, Raj?

Raj: Yes, what is it?

Hanako: I'm having trouble with my math homework.

Raj: Well, you're asking the wrong person. I'm not good at math.

(*Exceed I*, p.90)

These conversations above show the image that English is as a useful tool of communication between non-native speakers of English.

4.2 What Kind of English should We Model after for “the International Language”?

As previously mentioned, the legitimacy of ETIL is shown for students through their study of English textbooks. However, the issue we would like to highlight here is that American English and British English are still seen as the standard varieties (Matsuda, 2002).

Compared to characters from non-English-speaking countries in conversations (1), (2) and (3), a girl in conversations (4) and (5), Nancy, is blonde and a very European-looking girl, although there is no detail regarding her origins. What is drawn from the conversations (4) and (5) is the misunderstanding between the Japanese-English word, *wasei eigo*, and proper English word. In this material, Miki, a Japanese girl, talks with Nancy, who stays in Miki's home:

(4) “*konsento*” ?

Nancy: This microwave doesn't work. I can't cook anything.

Miki: Did you check the “*konsento*”?

Nancy: Consent? “*Konsento*” is a Japanese word. In English, people use “outlet.”

(5) “*baikingu*” ?

Miki: We will go to a “*baikingu*” tonight.

Nancy: Biking? I don't have a bike.

Miki: No, no. I meant “Viking.”

Nancy: Viking? Are there pirates in Japan?

(*Viva English! I*, p.27)

There are some remarkable points in these conversations. First, it is not clear whether Nancy uses Japanese in communication with Japanese people during her stay in Miki's home. Second, what Nancy said shows the priority she places on the English point of view or English dominance. For example, Nancy mistook the *katakana* word, “*baikingu*,” for “biking” or “Viking” for “pirates.” Nancy seems to stick to her English point of view and this conversation ends in Nancy's correcting Miki's “error,” as if Miki were regarded as a “failed native speaker” (Cook, 1999, p. 195). According to Kameda (2012), “the same word has an entirely different connotation when translated into an Asian language” (p.9, translated by the author). Furthermore, researchers' suggestion of “before registering a negative emotional reaction to words and phrases, Westerners should consult their interpreter for help in understanding the words' connotations” (p.9, translated by the author) applies here.

Thus, it would be better for students to revise their thinking of “international English” as a language that is separated from native speakers while studying English textbooks so that they can seek for “the understanding of various ways of seeing and thinking, cultivating a rich sensibility, and enhancing the ability to make impartial judgments” (MEXT, 2003). If English as EIAL would be used on their value, good communication would require efforts to achieve a good human relationship and the use of mutual or fair language from the points of view of Globish or “the Lingua Franca Core” (Jenkins, 2000).

Third, a problem about pronunciation becomes clear. Nancy implies that the *katakana* word “*baikingu*” is not accepted as the word meaning “viking.” Cook (1999) points out that “the measure of success in L2 learning is often held to be the amount of foreign accent—the extent to which people's pronunciation conforms to native standards” (p.195). If English language learners have to retain a feeling of inferiority until they can speak like native speakers despite being proficient in English except for pronunciation, it would be a shame because they would worry about failing to use “correct” English (e.g. Jenkins, 2000, p.8; Kramsch, 1993, p.9). Regarding a pronunciation model, English textbooks in Japan have CDs recorded by native speakers, most of whom are American or British people. As Matsuda & Friedrich (2011) suggests, “to expose students to different varieties of English” is

necessary to increase “students’ awareness of English varieties” (p.338).

Furthermore, the studies about “possible ‘West-bias’ in popular pedagogical assumptions and practices in the field of ELT” (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011, p.332) have been further explored by other scholars (e.g., McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). It would be useful for students to use English with a Japanese approach (Hino, 2011), which would encourage a more positive toward English. This suggestion would provide an effective motivation for learners in their study of English.

5. Discussion

5.1 The Problem with Promoting English Using Native Speakers’ English

Despite this supporting evidence, as discussed before, English appears to be a useful tool for communication among non-native speakers as well as with native speakers. However, the question is whether students should study English as the only language for communication in a country like Japan where, as Smith (1976) points out, “the use of English may be of little importance as an auxiliary language” (p.38). Besides, the ability to model the sound of native speakers’ English often fails to provide a sense of accomplishment in English education.

From the analyses above, the following results were obtained: English textbooks strengthen the idea of ETIL, and there is an ideology to give priority to English in the practice of English conversation. Moreover, the model of ETIL is American or British English. Therefore, the problem is that such a belief, as Naka (2006) suggests while citing Cook (1999), creates “an unattainable goal for L2 learners” (p.185) and “a sense of inferiority, which turns out to be their reluctance to communicate in English” (Naka, 2006, p.28, translated by the author).

It is clear that, as Hino (1988) points out above, non-native speakers of English have increased in English textbooks and many of the conversation practices are shown with Japanese people talking with native speakers as well as non-native speakers using English. However, it would strengthen the image that English is the tool of communication among non-native speakers. In short, English as “the” international language is promoted.

Moreover, names of the characters such as Nancy, Betty, Bob, John are often

seen in textbooks, and most of the teachers are characters represented as being from America or Britain. Table 1 shows that many of the characters with whom conversations are held in the text are people from English-speaking countries, including the Expanding Circle or those who have English names, though a lot of names from non-English speaking countries are there.

Table 1. People with whom Japanese Students Talk²

	Names of the Characters
English I	Ahmed (Iran), Ai-ling, Amy (Canada), Ann, Andhini, Andy, Beth, Betty, Bill (Australia), Bob (America, exchange student from California), Brown (ALT from America), Carol, Chris (America), Cathy, Cindy, David, Emily, Fatima (Malaysia), Green (teacher), Habiba (Nigeria), Jack, James, Jaya (the Philippines), Jeff (exchange student from California, America), Jeffrey, Jenny, Jenson, Jim, John (exchange student from Australia), José, Joseph, Judy (exchange student from Canada), Justin, Kalei Kealoha (teacher from Hawaii), Kimani (Kenya), Kukrit, Lee, Lisa, Lucy (teacher, exchange student from America), Lynn, May, Mark (America), Mary, Matt, Meg, Meiling (Malaysia), Michael, Mike, Nam (Vietnam), Nancy, Naomi (America), Natcha (Thailand), Pane, Peter, Saki, Sam (America), Saranyaa, Seung-mi (Korea), Susan, Ted, Tom, Tommy, Tony, White, Wichai (Thailand)
English II	Adam, Adel, Ann, Anna, Anne, Baker, Ben, Beth (America), Bill (America), Bob, Boyes (teacher), Brown, Carol, Catherine, Cathy, David, Dick, Emma, Eunsook (Korea), Fatima (Malaysia), George, Grace, Green, Jamila, Jeff (America), Jenny, Jim (exchange student), John, Judy, Ken, Lee (teacher), Lucy, Marco, Mark, Mary (American student studying abroad), Mbeki (South Africa, teacher), Meiling (Malaysia), Nadia, Niko (Finland), Raj (India), Paula, Peter, Pun (Cambodia), Rana, Rose, Sam, Santos (Brazil), Silvia, Smith, Steve, Susan, Tom (studying Japanese), Tony, Yang (China)

Note. The nationality or his/her position is made clear when such information is added in the materials.

The image drawn here is that English is still a language of English-speaking countries, rather than a language used by non-native speakers of English. Furthermore, conversation practice shows examples that English is used between Japanese people and non-Japanese people. The matter to be considered is how English is interpreted and under what circumstances English is used. Furthermore, special consideration should be given to the following. In “3 Syllabus Design and Treatment of the Contents” (MEXT, 2003), the materials encouraged are:

- a) Materials that are useful in enhancing the understanding of various ways of seeing and thinking, cultivating a rich sensibility, and enhancing the ability to make impartial judgments.
- b) Materials that are useful in deepening the understanding of the ways of life and cultures of Japan and the rest of the world, raising interest in language and culture, and developing respectful attitudes to these elements.

As English textbooks virtually act as media for students to enhance “the ability to make impartial judgments” and raise “interest in language and culture” through studying languages, materials in textbooks are shown to develop a view of language without giving priority on English. Furthermore, it is important to develop “respectful attitudes” to language and cultures by showing materials in which people basically use their language when they are in their country. Also in the conversation about *katakana* words between Miki and Nancy discussed above, the problem that should be considered is that Nancy focuses on correcting Miki’s mistakes or thinking from the standpoint of Western values without trying to understand the meaning of *katakana* words. In order to cultivate “a broad perspective,” students should learn that English is, if necessary, useful as an international language. Such attitude toward English or languages leads students to understanding linguistic relativism.

Although those materials above give an image of giving priority in English, there are materials, on the other hand, that give a chance to become aware of languages other than English. The next example (6) shows the importance of a mother tongue or local language. The following passage from the material about “Pūnana Leo,” or the Hawaiian language, shows the idea that English is not the absolute language in communication; rather, one’s mother tongue is most important:

- (6) You may wonder why Hawaiians are so eager to maintain their native language. I think the answer is that language is more than just a means of exchanging information. We see the world around us through the window of our language (p.57).
English is useful for communication in many parts of the world, but

your mother tongue is an important part of your identity....I want you to remember that your mother tongue is the most important language in the world (p.58).

(Crown I)

The writer, a Hawaiian assistant language teacher, is teaching English in Japan. She is talking to her students about Hawaiian history and languages. Besides, she also refers to the Ainu, about which she adds an explanation that “the Ainu people have lost much of their language and culture” and “they are trying to revive their traditions” (p.58). Matsubara (2010) points out that, from his study about the decline and revitalization of indigenous languages in Hawaii, the meaning of referring to current states of Hawaii would be to have an interest in the misery of minority languages or endangered languages and “domination of a single language” or “the concentration of English” (pp.8-9). These kinds of examples would be useful for students in order to form their own linguistic relativism.

The next passage suggests the importance of the local language and the local people’s way of thinking. A doctor who went to Sierra Leone and Afghanistan to give medical help talks about international cooperation projects, as follows:

(7) Interviewer: But why did you learn the local language?

Dr.Yamamoto: I think it’s education that counts in international cooperation. But we shouldn’t educate [*sic*] by pushing modern or Western civilization on people in developing countries. They have their own way of living and we should respect that I learned the local language to communicate more with them and to know more about their culture.

(Onstage I, p.64)

From this passage, we learn the importance of understanding the local cultures through learning their language. Dr. Yamamoto offers a suggestion on how international contributions should be; he mentions the importance of education in international cooperation as well, insisting that “we shouldn’t educate [*sic*]

by pushing modern or Western civilization on people in developing countries” (p.64)³. Such perspective would be useful to know diversified points of view of languages and cultures, however, the number of the materials is small and they are contained with the conversation practices that emphasize the use of English as the international language (Ishikawa, 1998).

5.2 The Issue Stemming from the Promotion of ETIL

The above analyses raise the question about forming the Japanese ideas of English. Firstly, with these validities of using English as “the international language” among non-native speakers of English being instilled in students who continue to study English, no need for using their mother tongues would arise; thus, it follows that their mother tongues would be neglected or disused by the students (Tsuda, 2006). Such cases of what Benu (2005) called “self-orientalism” would promote an attitude that Japanese people are willing to communicate in English with not only native speakers of English but also with non-native speakers in their home country.

Secondly, it would be difficult for students to know the growing importance of multiple languages in addition to English, thus hindering “the understanding of language and culture” toward multiethnic neighbors in Japan. It follows that students could not achieve cross-cultural understanding, co-existence, and co-prosperity with other ethnic groups. It is said that many foreigners, not only from English speaking countries but also from non-English speaking countries, faced the lack of information to survive after the huge earthquake in Japan on March 2011. Furthermore, it was difficult for the latter people, in particular, to share prompt and accurate information because much of the information was given in the languages, Japanese and English. The idea of ETIL is accompanied by an assumption that “people in the world use English to communicate” (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p.594).

As Crystal (1997) suggests that the global status of language “can be achieved either by making it an official language of the country or by a country giving special priority to English by requiring its study as a foreign language” (p.2), this idea is not always effective in a country like Japan. Furthermore, Japan is

a country where English is infrequently used in the daily lives of most people, compared to those of many Outer Circle countries where English is used as a second language in a multilingual country.

As a result of the analyses of English textbooks, what is highlighted is that the discourse of ETIL is promoted with the image of English is as a neutral tool for communication. To encourage students to think about how languages should be dealt with in Japan like one of the Expanding Circle countries, they should be given a chance to relativize languages, cultures without a Western point of view so that they can live with English and other languages and use languages from his/her point of view.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored how the discourse of “English as ‘the’ international language” (ETIL) is promoted in English textbooks for senior high schools by analyzing the materials dealing with languages.

From the discussion above, we can conclude that language-related materials in English textbooks strengthen the discourse of English being the only international language. Besides, there still exists an ideology that gives priority to English in the practice of English conversation in textbooks.

Without a doubt, not only materials about English-speaking countries but also those of various counterparts, are dealt with in textbooks and the topics about World Englishes, endangered languages, minority languages, etc. come to be included at the same time. However, the role of English as “the international language” is still promoted in the materials in which international students communicate, providing little chance for Japanese students to think of the importance of their mother tongue. Even if English is regarded as EIL, it can be said that its model would be, more often than not, American or British English. In addition, some materials still show the Western point of view, so that it becomes an obstacle in equal communication with native speakers of English.

The promotion of English as ETIL in English textbooks analyzed in this study is problematic in terms of the formation of the Japanese ideas of English. The factors

discussed above would encourage students to think internationalization only in relation to the West and become indifferent to other cultures or languages. In other words, students still continue studying English in relation to native speakers' English and with a feeling of inferiority.

A further direction of this study will be to provide more insight regarding the students' idea of EIL, ideas of languages without giving priority to English and Western ways of thinking alone, so that students can deepen their understanding of different cultures and linguistic relativism along with studying English.

What people in Japan, one of the Expanding circle countries, need to reconsider is an attitude toward English language and a multi-language environment. In short, it is important to realize the importance of the mother tongue and its coexistence with all different types of languages considering that our living environment is different from that of the Outer circle countries, where many of the people need English as a second language in their daily lives.

Thus, English textbooks provide one of the most important chances for students to develop their ideas of English and other languages. The role of textbooks that encourages students to study not only English language but also linguistic relativism remains as a matter of importance to be discussed further.

Endnotes

- 1 MEXT: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
- 2 Names of the characters are quoted from 36 MEXT-approved English textbooks.
- 3 What he points out is that international contributions are often made under the premise that, as Suzuki (2002) states, “modernized developed countries are models for developing countries” (p.120, translated by the author).

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日本の高校英語教科書における「国際語としての英語」の位相

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キーワード：国際語としての英語、拡大円、英語の教科書、英語観、言語相対主義

要旨

本研究は「国際言語としての英語」という価値観が、高校の教科書にどのように反映されているかについての分析を通して、日本の英語教育の課題を明らかにするものである。

海外では、多言語主義や World Englishes などといった観点から様々な言語を問い直す動きが広がる一方、日本国内では、国際言語として英語を優先的に学習する風潮が根強い。

英語が必ずしも生活言語ではない国内では、メディアを除けば、学校の英語教科書が、学習者のイメージを規定している。特に会話練習は、英語が使用される状況を学習者に疑似体験させる意味で影響が大きい。

そこで教科書の題材の分析を通じて、教科書から読み取れる英語の価値観を明らかにした。分析の結果、英語は他の言語に優先して使用されること、英語圏の価値観を反映した教材を通して英語が国際語として教えられているということがみとめられた。また、様々な言語への意識を育てる言語教育の窓口としての教科書における課題を明らかにした。

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