［招待論文］

Moving Past Native-Speakerism in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Japan

日本の英語教育（ELT）における 過去のネイティブスピーカー中心主義の変革

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Abstract: This paper discusses the need for diversifying English Language Teaching (ELT) in Japan both by providing and empowering more realistic language user models for students as well as using materials that more closely reflect the current status of English in the world. Japanese ELT field continues to operate under the native speaker fallacy principle which in turn creates a native speaker learner fallacy for students which hinders students' language learning progress. This paper also suggests practical and pedagogical ways to move past native-speakerism in Japanese higher education English classrooms.

　この論文では、学生向けのより現実的な言語ユーザーモデルの提供と強化、および世界の英語の現状をより厳密に反映する資料の使用の両方を通して、日本における英語教育 (ELT) の多様化の必要性について説明します。日本のELT分野は、ネイティブスピーカーについての誤った原則に基づいて運営され続けています。これは、学生にとってネイティブスピーカー学習者への誤解を生み、学生の言語学習の進歩を妨げます。この論文ではまた、日本の高等教育の英語授業における過去のネイティブスピーカー中心主義を変革するための、実用的で教育的な方法を提案します。

Keywords: English language teaching, Japan, native speaker fallacy, English as lingua franca
英語教育、日本での英語教育、共通言語としての英語

1 Introduction

In addition to compulsory English education prior to entering university, most university students in Japan continue studying English, either because it is a requirement or because they choose to do so. At the same time, the role of English is rapidly changing in the world as the spread of English continues. English is everywhere, spoken almost by everyone. English used to be viewed as belonging to the countries where it is spoken as the official language, mainly USA, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. However, today, it has become the official or unofficial language in many more countries, and it is spoken as the unofficial *lingua franca* all over the world.

With English everywhere, it is hardly surprising that the Japanese university students also feel the need to continue improving their English skills. While the landscape of English is changing, the English classrooms in Japan continue to look the same. Most of the university English classes in Japan are still mainly taught by native speakers of English because the misconception that native speakers make the best English teachers is still prominent in Japan, despite the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) making strides to move away from this outdated belief. Most of the job advertisements for Japanese university English teaching positions still outline the requirement of being a native speaker of English, or near-native speaker of the language. The Japanese university English classrooms do not reflect the reality of English in the world considering that about 80% of the English teachers in the world are non-native English-speaker teachers (NNESTs) (Canagarajah, 2005).

The changing landscape of English should be reflected in Japanese English Language Teaching (ELT) as well. There is a need to diversify the English user models Japanese students are exposed to. Also, equally importantly, more has to be done to empower the Japanese English teachers who are considered inferior to the native speaker teacher. Both the teachers and the materials used in classrooms need to reflect the current reality of English use more accurately. This paper will firstly discuss the phenomenon of native-speakerism in English language teaching in Japan

which has resulted in what the author calls a native speaker learner fallacy. It will then discuss non-native English teachers in Japan, both the challenges they face and the strengths they bring into the classroom. The paper will then examine the current situation of English in the world by discussing English as Lingua Franca. The paper will conclude with a brief discussion on how to move past the native-speaker idealism in the language classroom.

2　Native-speakerism in English language teaching (ELT) in Japan

2.1　The Native Speaker Fallacy

There is still a strong prevalence of native speaker ideology in Japanese ELT even though the field of TESOL is moving towards post-native-speakerist ideology. Robert Phillipson (1992) famously coined the concept of "native speaker fallacy" to describe the misconception that native speakers of English make the best English teachers. Holliday (2006) argues that the native speaker ideology asserts that native speakers of English are the only legitimate speakers of English embodying "Western culture from which spring the ideals of both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (p. 385).

Considering the characteristics of many English teachers in Japan, most of whom come from a country where English is spoken as the mother tongue, it is evident that the native speaker fallacy is alive and well in Japan. Rivers (2011) has theorized that the ideal native English speaker teacher (NEST) in Japan embodies four crucial traits: linguistic, racial, behavioural, and cultural. Linguistically, they are monolingual in English and possess innate knowledge of the language they own. Racially, they are Caucasian and come from one of the countries where English originated from. Behaviourally, they are fun teachers; they are friendly and open entertainers, and culturally, they embody the stereotypes Japanese have about people from that country.

Takaesu and Sudo (2018), both of whom are Japanese English teachers in a Japanese university, hypothesize that Japanese students' preference for native speaker

English teachers is rooted in the fact that in junior high and high school, they have been taught the basics of English by Japanese teachers and now they expect to learn from "real teachers who have correct pronunciation and native understanding of the language" (p. 168). This desire results in students viewing Japanese teachers of English to be less qualified than native speaker teachers, even if their qualifications surpass those of native speaker colleagues.

2.2 Native speaker learner fallacy

I have written elsewhere about the *native speaker learner fallacy* which results from the unrealistic learning model that English learners in Japan have, the native speaker (Matikainen, 2018). I have argued that Japanese English learners have a deeply rooted belief that in order to be competent language users, they should sound like a native speaker of English. Obviously, this is unattainable. Because of this fallacy, students are hesitant to learn and to use English because they know they will never achieve this unrealistic goal.

Focus of English language teaching in Japan should shift to developing students communicative working knowledge of the language, including intercultural awareness. The fallacy that the native speaker is the only appropriate language user model for Japanese learners needs to be abandoned, but in order for this to happen, a change in thinking needs to take place amongst administrators, educators, and the students themselves. In addition, as suggested by Romney (2010), this should have a vital role in teacher education. This is crucial in Japan especially, where many Japanese English teachers do not have confidence in themselves as competent language users, possibly because they have also experienced the *native speaker learner fallacy* when learning English. Bouchard (2018) found that the Japanese English teachers in his study consider native English speaking teachers as the ideal references for students for language and culture, based on them viewing themselves and native speakers as monolingual individuals.

2.3　Non-native English teachers

Teachers who do not fit the ideal mold of a NEST face challenges in their everyday life despite having unique strengths as English language teachers. Both teachers who are foreign but considered non-native speakers and Japanese teachers of English may experience their professional legitimacy questioned. Ng (2018) carefully details his experience of having his professional identity challenged as a Singaporean EFL professional at a Japanese university. Despite his qualifications of having a doctorate in education and long teaching career around the world, in Japan, his students at first did not embrace his Singaporean English accent but instead, complained about it to the administration. Because of this, he felt under enormous pressure to perform well, better than his 'native speaker' colleagues who he felt were not scrutinized as much. Eventually, through much reflection, he identified that his strength lies in his own language learning experience and in students being able to identify with that. He realized that: "Despite my non-native status, my students viewed me as a successful language learner with complex language awareness and a confident speaker of English" (Ng, 2018, p. 9).

Perceived weaknesses of non-native English teachers include inferior pronunciation and knowledge of the target language, unfamiliarity with the native English culture, unpopularity amongst students, and weaker professional credibility (Matikainen, 2018).

On the other hand, some of their strengths include being a role model, being able to share personally used language learning strategies rooted in theory with students, having a high sense of empathy and sensitivity to student needs, and a deep explicit knowledge of the target language (Matikainen, 2018). Similarly, Lipovsky and Mahboob (2010) found that "NNESTs attracted positive evaluations for their teaching of literacy skills and knowledge and teaching of grammar, highlighting the fact that these skills are independent of linguistic skills, as they can be learned" (p. 172). They also found that NNESTs were highly valued for their "teaching methodology, stemming from their own experience and skills acquired as language learners" (p. 172). They also found that students appreciate the empathy NNESTs had

for them and value them as language user role models.

As a non-native English teacher, "I help my students see and experience how English can enrich one's life journey. For many students, this stirs their deepest motivations for learning English: the possibilities of new relationships, the acquisition of new knowledge, the adventures of foreign cultures, the dream of new worlds" (Matikainen, 2018, p. 176).

Takaesu and Sudo (2018) also point out some of the strengths of non-native speaker teachers, such as themselves. Some of these include the personal experience and knowledge of the linguistic challenges of learning English and the ability to serve as direct role models to students which can in turn help motivate them in ways that native speaker teachers are unable to do. Ahmar Mahbood (2010) insightfully declared, "The [Non-Native English-Speaker Teacher's] lens...is a lens of multilingualism, multinationalism, and multiculturalism. It takes diversity as a starting point in TESOL and applied linguistics practice and research and questions the monolingual bias in the field," (p. 1).

2.4　Moving past native-speakerism ideology

Placing English teachers on the native/non-native dichotomy is becoming obsolete today. Kunschak (2018) observes that, "Japan still seems to follow the monolingual model albeit with some modification as evidenced by the ministry's directive of developing English with Japanese characteristics that hints at openness toward lingua franca philosophy," (p. 162). She also points out that Japanese students tend to be hesitant to use their English due to their belief that they are deficient language users; they tend to focus on what they cannot do rather than what they are able to do.

Moving forward, there is a need for an updated ideology. Derivry-Plard (2018) stresses the importance of a "multilingual paradigm for plurilingual/pluricultural language teachers" (p. 144). The categorization of language teachers as native or non-native speakers is obsolete today, which is what the current monolingual paradigm does. She argues that this is especially true for English because of the growing need

of recognizing World Englishes and ELF which has led to the decline and invalidity of the 'native speaker' model. This paradigm, according to Derivry-Plard, is "comprehensive and inclusive and accounts for broader perspective and better understanding of the linguistic field and the linguistic markets" (p. 143).

3　English as Lingua Franca (ELF)

Coupled with the changing landscape of English speakers, there has arisen a need to develop a theory to comprise of its role in the world as it relates to teaching English. Several theories and concepts have become central in this discussion, including World Englishes, English as Lingua Franca (ELF), and English as an International Language (EIL). ELF has become extremely popular in the field of TESOL and in language teaching in general. For example, in Japan, Tamagawa University has established the English for Lingua Franca (ELF) center that provides the compulsory English education campus-wide. They also actively recruit English teachers whose native language is not necessarily English, teachers who come from multilingual backgrounds.

Several definitions of ELF has emerged; for example, Firth (1996) defined it as, "a contact language between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (p. 240) while Jenkins (2014) has defined it as "English when it is used as a contact language between people from different first languages (including native English speakers)" (p. 2). Seidlhofer (2011) defines ELF 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" (p. 7).

Simply put, ELF primarily distinguishes itself from the traditional field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in that EFL learners mainly learn the language to communicate successfully with native speakers of English while ELF learners learn the language to successfully communicate with diverse language users for intercultural communication (Jenkins, 2014). On the other hand, ELF and World Englishes have more in common. As Jenkins (2014) points out, "both paradigms

share an ideological perspective that sees the kinds of English resulting from the global spread of the language as existing in their own right and as means of expressing their speakers' identities, rather than as failed attempts to emulate ENL [English as a Native Language] and acquire NES [Native English Speaker] identities" (p. 27). She does point out the difference between World Englishes and ELF; whereas World Englishes is concerned with post-colonial nations, ELF is not concerned with national boundaries.

One important consideration for English teaching within the ELF sphere is that much variation and hybridity is to be expected which leads to the question as to what constitutes an error. (Jenkins, 2014). Due to the assumption that "ELF represents a more inclusive communication-focused approach to language than traditional exclusive bounded-variety approaches, errors can no longer be defined in terms of departures from one particular set of norms" (Jenkins, 2014, p. 38). This is why the next crucial step for envisioning post-native speakerism in English language teaching is to consider the teaching pedagogy and materials used in the classroom.

4 Pedagogy for post-native-speakerism

4.1 The need for ELF Teaching Pedagogy

Hino (2018) has rightfully pointed out that one of the problems moving past native-speakerism is the lack of pedagogy and materials available to English teachers because most of English language teaching in Japan has been rooted in American English. The teaching materials reflect this as well. He points out that as long as "models, materials, and methodologies simply remain Anglo-American, teachers have no choice but to end up with enhancing the same old aspiration among learners toward the English of native speakers" (p. 217). Hino also explains that teaching about World Englishes, EIL or ELF is not enough; we need to find a way to teach ELF. This is the challenge that we are facing as we attempt to move past native-speakerism in ELT. He outlines four methods for post native-speakerism pedagogy: using simulated role-plays which involve English as an international language, exposure to English as Lingua Franca or international language, a content-based

approach to teaching English as a world language, and participation in the community of English users around the world. Hino (2018) also provides three practical examples from his own teaching for achieving the aforementioned principles: firstly, a talk show involving Japanese students and speakers of non-native varieties of English; secondly, using all four skills in examining news from various news media around the world; and thirdly, interaction between Japanese students and international students. With all these activities, the pedagogy behind them was an attempt to move past native-speakerist teaching materials in English teaching. These activities allow the Japanese students experience English outside of the Anglo-American framework they are accustomed to. Hino (2018) stresses the importance of such concrete pedagogy if we are to move past native-speakerism in the English language classroom.

4.2　English courses at SFC

Here at SFC, we are making strides towards the post native-speakerism methodology but we still have a long way to go. We do have some English teachers who do not fit the mold of the native speaker, such as teachers from Africa, Asia, or Europe teaching English courses. However, only having such teachers is not enough. In addition to having a range of teachers representing variety of Englishes, the teaching materials should correspond to the language students will be exposed to in today's world.

Personally, in my Project English classes, I aim to expose the students to World Englishes and to non-native varieties of English. For instance, in my listening classes, which use TED talks, I purposefully choose TED talks from non-native speakers of English. The main aim of doing this is to change the students' mindsets. For example, when I show the TED talk of Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish girl, in my class, many students comment on her strange accent because it sounds different from what they are used to. She is clearly understandable but students get confused and discouraged because it is not what they are used to. This is the aim of ELF pedagogy, making students aware of different varieties of English beside native varieties of

English. In addition, in my reading classes, for example, I expose my students to news reports from media around the world, discussing and pointing out the linguistic differences, yet the message stays the same and understandable to the students.

5   Conclusion

In Japanese EFL classrooms, we need to move past native-speakerism. Rivers (2018, p. xiii) points out that:

"The concept of native-speakerism continues to impact the lives of many teachers regardless of variables such as supposed language status, country of origin and race or any other deployment that divides rather than unites individuals within and across educational domains."

He argues that this field needs to focus on three specific issues to move forward; firstly, the faulty concept of native-speakerism negatively affects many teachers professionally, and as a consequence, personally; secondly, the concept of native-speakerism has been prominent in ELT but needs to be reexamined in a wider context compassing other academic fields as well; thirdly, that the concept of native-speakerism does not have a sensible place and in fact, will be inaccurate, in the modern globalized world (Rivers, 2018, p. xiii).

Clearly, the arbitrary native/non-native dichotomy that has become especially outdated in today's world used in TESOL is part of the problem. Therefore, I have suggested replacing it with a different concept, such as *an expert language user* of a language that could apply to both native and non-native speakers. These *expert language user* teachers have the necessary experience and qualifications to help students reach their language learning goals, whether they are native or non-native speakers of English. Moving past these arbitrary labels is crucial.

In conclusion, Seidlhofer (2011, p.6) observes:

The phenomenon of English as the first truly global language, and globalization with its consequences for how we now live and communicate, is bound to lead to such a shake-up of our traditional ideas of what constitutes 'a language' and 'legitimate speakers' that the terms themselves will simply become obsolete. so

my own feeling is that, after so much agonizing about the terms 'native' and 'non-native', the problem will actually resolve itself in that new and appropriate words will emerge. It may well be that in the not too distant future we will be wondering why we ever thought that we needed these terms.

It is time for Japanese ELT to move forward, in order to prepare Japanese students for the reality of English outside of the classroom and outside of Japan.

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