

An overview of English as a global phenomenon: implications for the English classroom in the Japanese context

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ABSTRACT: More than thirty years have passed since Larry Smith proposed his ‘ETL’ (English as an International Language) paradigm, and during those years newer paradigms from various view points have been presented with regard to English as a global phenomenon. This paper examines some of those literature published after the assertion of EIL by Smith, including partially Smith’s, and consider the implication for English language education in Japan. First, we survey Kachru’s ‘Three Concentric Circles’ and his paradigm of ‘WE’ (World Englishes) in relation to Smith’s EIL. Second, we outline the paradigm of ‘ELF’ (English as a Lingua Franca) proposed by Jenkins and Seidlhofer comparing with EIL. Third, we give an overview of Birch’s paradigm of ‘AE’ (Academic English), especially paying attention to her taking notice of the variation of the registers from formal to informal on the World Englishes spectrum. Lastly, taking into account of all the things stated so far, we propose that Academic English as a lingua franca might be an acceptable candidate for the model of English classroom in the Japanese context, meaning that it would be more practical and efficient in the achievement of goal in terms of methodology and time to put more emphasis on reading and writing formal English than listening to and speaking informal colloquial English.

Key words: English Language Education, Academic English, Intercultural Communication

1. Introduction

Nowadays few would disagree that English has spread all over the world, both geographically and in terms of the number of its users and learners. It has undeniably become an international language or a global language. But why is English and not some other? There are many explanations, but Crystal⁽¹⁾ states that one of the primary reasons for the spread of English is :

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English was the language of the leading colonial nation—Britain. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was the language of the leader of the industrial revolution—also Britain. In the late-nineteenth century and the early twentieth it was

the language of the leading economic power—the USA. As a result, when new technologies brought new linguistic opportunities, English emerged as a first-rank language in industries which affected all aspects of society—the press, advertising, broadcasting, motion pictures, sound recording, transport and communications.

Beyond that, in the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first, English has also been the main language of computer technology and the Internet. The combination of political, economic and cultural influences, plus technological superiority acquired during successive centuries has resulted in a great increase in the number of and geographical spread of English speakers, especially non-native ones who use it for international and intranational purposes. These factors and others also contributed to the diversity of English within the total package of ‘Englishes’, which led to the coining of terms such as English as an International Language (EIL); World Englishes

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(WE); English as a Lingua Franca (ELF); International English (IE); and Global English (GE), often used interchangeably. Some scholars recognize them as nearly identical, whereas others define them as slightly different from one another in their assumptions and focus.

This raises the question of which variety of English should be the model for the English language education in the various linguistic and sociocultural contexts of the world. However, our concern here is the Japanese context, where the people can basically lead their entire lives without needing English on a practical level. Of course, there are some exceptions, such as interpreters, translators, international businesspersons, and so on. However, the rapid pace of internationalization makes facility with the English language desirable, if not required, politically, economically, culturally, and technologically. This leads to the logical question of which variety of English should be taught, learned, and used here in Japan and worldwide.

In linguistic and sociocultural contexts such as those of Japan, China, Korea, Thailand, Greece, and Poland—none of which was colonized by Britain or USA—the type of English language chosen for teaching and learning has logically been called English as an Foreign Language (EFL), whereas English as a Second Language (ESL) has been taught, learned, and used in formerly colonized countries, such as India, Singapore, Nigeria, and so on.

However, in accordance with the increase in the use of English and number of its speakers, English has become the common language of a great number of different nations to facilitate interaction in government, academic, industrial, business, religious, cultural, social, and athletic contexts. This has led to the development of a functional concept of English as a global phenomenon, and Larry Smith⁽²⁾, after extensive deliberations and due considerations, has proposed the concept of EIL (English as an International and Intranational Language). This acronym derives from Smith's term for a combination of English as an International Language (EIL), that is to say, an aggregate of various varieties of English from around the world used for communicating internationally with people of different nations, and second, as an Intranational Language, used by people of the same non-English-speaking country as a common language. The function of EIL is quite different from those of EFL or ESL, which are usually grouped together under the term ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages).

Ihara and Watanabe⁽³⁾ examined Smith's ideology

of English as an International Language and its implications for English language education in Japan. This led to the following seven implications:

First, the language to be taught is 'EIL varieties', with the ultimate goal of being international communication; second, international communication should be in both written and spoken forms; third, both native and non-native speakers of English can benefit from effective interaction in international communication; fourth, 'EIL varieties' are recommended for effective communication between nationals of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds; fifth, the emphasis should be placed on the cultures of countries of interest to students, or on ways to learn about different cultures and develop a greater tolerance for cultural differences; sixth, the variety of English to be chosen can be any "educated English" so long as it conforms to the students' needs and interests; and, seventh, the performance target is "phonologically intelligible English", "grammatically acceptable English", "semantically identifiable English", and "sociolinguistically appropriate English".

These suggestions indicate that, since English is used for international communication, there must be a shift from a native-speaker-dominated to any-speaker-oriented perspective. This, then, is the "perspective of EIL", which is considered to be the best candidate for ensuring the equality and equidistance in international interactions and empowerment of all users of English, especially people for whom English is not their first language.

However, more than thirty years have passed since Smith proposed his EIL framework, and during those years newer paradigms from various viewpoints have been presented.

This paper examines some of the literature published after the initial advocacy of EIL by Smith, including some of Smith's own later work, and reconsiders the implications for English language education in Japan.

2. Kachru's Three Concentric Circles

Contemporaneously, while Smith⁽⁴⁾ analyzed the state of English as a global phenomenon, and advocated a new philosophy of EIL, Braj Kachru described the spread of English in the world and proposed the pioneering Three Concentric Model of English language. It is often said that it is still an important first stepping stone for the classification of Englishes, and also remains one of the most influential models for organizing the varieties of English in

the world. However, although it is, in a sense, a revolutionary description of the spread of English in the world, it is also criticized by some researchers, and its drawbacks and modifications are presented below.

According to Kachru⁽⁵⁾, the outline of the Three Concentric Model of English language is as follows:

“The spread of English may be viewed in terms of three concentric circles representing the types of spread, patterns of acquisition and functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages: the inner circle, the outer circle (or extended circle), and the expanding circle. In terms of the users, the inner circle refers to the traditional bases of English—the regions where it is dominated by mother-tongue varieties that are primary languages—the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand”, and is regarded as ‘established varieties’ or ‘norm providing’.

The outer (or extended) circle, historically, “involves the earlier phases of the spread of English and its institutionalization in non-native contexts”, and is said to be ‘institutionalized varieties’ or ‘norm developing’. “The political histories of the regions where institutionalized varieties are used have many shared characteristics: these regions have gone through extended periods of colonization, essentially by the users of the inner circle varieties. The linguistic and cultural effects of such colonization are now a part of their histories, and these effects, both good and bad, cannot be washed away.

Numerically, the outer circle forms a large speech community with great diversity and distinct characteristics. The major features of this circle are that (a) English is only one of two or more codes in the linguistic repertoire of such bilinguals or multilinguals, and (b) English has acquired an important status in the language policies of most of such multilingual nations. For example, in Nigeria it is an official language; in Zambia it is recognized as one of the state languages; in Singapore it is a major language of government, legal system, and education; and in India the Constitution recognizes English as an ‘associate’ official language, and as one of the required languages in the Three Language Formula implemented in the 1960s. In functional terms the institutionalized varieties have three characteristics: first, English functions in what may be considered traditionally ‘un-English’ cultural contexts. And, in terms of territory covered, the cross-cultural spread of English is unprecedented among the languages of wider communication used as colonial languages (e.g.,

French, Portuguese, Spanish), as religious languages (e.g., Arabic, Sanskrit, Pali), and as language varieties of trade and commerce (e.g., pidgins or bazaar varieties). Second, English has a wide spectrum of domains in which it is used with varying degrees of competence by members of society, both as an intranational and international language. Third, English has developed nativized literary traditions in different genres, such as the novel, short story, poetry, and essay”.

“The expanding circle brings to English yet another dimension. Understanding the function of English in this circle requires a recognition of the fact that English is an international language, and that it has already won the race in this respect with linguistic rivals such as French, Russian, and Esperanto”. “The geographical regions characterized as the expanding circle do not necessarily have a history of colonization by the users of the inner circle”. This circle is currently expanding rapidly and has resulted in numerous EFL varieties of English which may be called ‘performance varieties’ or ‘norm dependent’. “It is the users of this circle who actually further strengthen the claims of English as an international or universal language. This circle encompasses vast populations of such countries as China, the USSR, Indonesia, Greece, Israel, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Zimbabwe”, and so on. (As for the figure of this Three Concentric Circles, see Kachru⁽⁶⁾.)

Kachru’s Three Concentric Circle model, that is, inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle, may appear to be nearly equivalent to the traditional model, that is, English as a native language (ENL), ESL, and EFL each. However, the former model can be said to be a newer view of the spread of Englishes in the world than the latter one where there remains a native-speaker-dominated view that shows a differential dichotomy between ENL and ESOL, since the former does not involve the dichotomy between native and non-native speakers, and indeed English native speakers are visually neither placed at the top of this model nor privileged. In that sense, Kachru’s model may be preferable to the traditional one.

However, is it true that English native speakers do not have the highest hierarchy nor that they have the hegemony to lead non-native speakers in that they are not placed at the top of the Three Concentric Model? Actually, the inner circle is not drawn at the top of the model because this model is drawn as a plane figure, not as a three-dimensional one, however, it *is* placed in the center of the circle. Precisely, the word ‘inner’ itself implies ‘core’. It is true that English is English even if it is referred to as EIL, WE, ELF, IE, or GE.

There remains a dilemma associated with English language imperialism, touched upon in Ihara and Watanabe in 2021, accepting Phillipson⁽⁷⁾ and Tsuda⁽⁸⁾ to some extent.

Another criticism, arguably a crucial one, concerns the linguistic reality. This Three Concentric Model can be considered to have limitations that reflect the reality of English use across linguistic and sociocultural contexts in these two respects:

1) oversimplification of demarcations between the three circles, and 2) overlooking of the rapid increase in the use of English in the world.

As for the former, the demarcations between these three circles may no longer be so clear-cut as Kachru maintains; certainly fuzzy or grey areas exist. Furthermore, some varieties of English such as Jamaican and South African are not classified in any of the circles, as Kachru himself acknowledges them⁽⁹⁾. Would these two varieties be classified in the inner or the outer circle?

Kachru refers to the inner circle as ‘native varieties’ or ‘established varieties’ and the outer circle as ‘nativized varieties’ or ‘institutionalized varieties’, calling both of them ‘World Englishes’ (WE) afterwards. Then, what is the actual difference between them? Would it be that the English in the inner circle is native, indigenous, and so established, but the English in the outer circle was transplanted from the inner circle, and it was nativized, indigenous, and so institutionalized? Kirkpatrick⁽¹⁰⁾ states as follows:

..... A fourth criterion is also based on prejudice. This criterion suggests that a native variety of English is somehow superior to a nativised one. Some people feel that the older a variety is, the better it is. Native varieties are older and thought to be ‘purer’ than nativised varieties. The idea that varieties of British English are somehow purer than later varieties is very difficult to support, however. Is Cornish English purer than American East Coast English? In the context of varieties of English, age does not bring with it superiority. Nor can we say that the older a variety, the purer it is. Even the earliest form of English had mixed and many parents. Around the fifteenth century these parents produced a variety of English that was a truly mongrel language, made up of a mixture of Latin, Greek, French Germanic and Anglo-Saxon forms.

If it is difficult to find rational criteria for classifying varieties of English as native; it is easier to classify them as nativized. I suggest that the difference between varieties of English can be

explained by the fact that they are all nativized.

Then, should not people who speak the English variety in the outer circle be included in the inner circle because of their variety of English? Yes, they *could* be included. Surely, the English variety in the outer circle is not their first language, but rather their second language. Even so, the second language could be nativized and therefore be included in the inner circle, although it has developed in a context peculiar to its cultural and sociolinguistic background and reflects the cultural and pragmatic norms of its speakers.

However, in spite of the above, there is also the assumption that a person will speak the language they learn first better than languages they learn later, and that a person who learns a language later cannot speak it as well as a person who has learned it as their first language. In this regard, Kirkpatrick also states, “But it is clearly not necessarily true that the language a person learns first is the one they will always be best at, ...”, and provides some examples in which the names are pseudonyms. One of them is as follows:

Claire was born in Sicily and migrated to Australia when she was eight. As a child she learned Sicilian as her first language/mother tongue and standard Italian as a second language. When she arrived in Australia, she started to learn English. She is now 40 and has been in Australia for more than 30 years. The language that she learned third, from the age of eight, is the language that she is now best at. Her second-best language is Standard Italian and her third is Sicilian. In other words, what was her first and mother tongue is now a language that she does not speak as well as the other languages she speaks. She is a so-called native speaker of Sicilian but one who does not speak it well. She is a so-called non-native speaker of English, but speaks it fluently. The language she speaks best is a language that she only started to learn once she was eight. Claire is by no means an unusual example. There are many people who have what I shall call a ‘shifting L1’. Indeed in immigrant communities it is common. It is also common in multilingual societies,

The assertion and example above imply that the outer circle can emerge into the inner circle and that, in some cases, it is difficult to define who owns English as a first language and who owns it as a second language. This also means that there are

cases in which the inner and outer circles can be inclusive of each other or overlap. Thus, it can be said that Kachru's demarcation between the inner and outer circles are oversimplified, and a grey zone does exist; Moreover, Kachru⁽¹¹⁾ also acknowledges that this is true of the demarcation between the outer and the expanding circles, stating that "The outer circle and the expanding circle cannot be viewed as clearly demarcated from each other; they have several shared characteristics, and the status of English in the language policies of such countries changes from time to time. What is an ESL region at one time may become an EFL region at another time". Malaysia might be a good example of this, as Malaysian English has been evolving from an ESL into an EFL since English lost its status of official language there and became an associate official language in 1967, followed by the appearance of Bahasa Malaysia (or Bahasa Melayu) as a state language in 2007.

As for the overlooking of the rapid increase in the use of English in the world, it relates not so much to the outer circle as to the expanding circle. Although McKAY⁽¹²⁾ states that "one of the advantages of Kachru's model is that it highlights the unique development of English in these three contexts", but she also points out that "the drawback of this categorization is that today many countries in what Kachru terms the Expanding Circle (e.g. Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands) have many more English-speaking bilinguals than countries of the Outer Circle where English has an official status (e.g. the Gambia and Rwanda)".

Kachru regards the inner and outer circles as having stable or developing norms regarding "users" and the expanding circle as having no norms in terms of "learners". Nevertheless, we can easily infer them from terms used in his writing such as "established", "norm-providing", "institutionalized", "norm-developing", or "endonormative", and "performance", "norm-dependent", or "exonormative". Actually, in the expanding circle, wherein the actual use of English cannot be reflected in daily life, the functions and registers of English are highly restricted, as in Japan, China, Korea, and others. The English varieties in this circle are often seen as far removed from the inner circle core and marginalized. However, as Crystal⁽¹³⁾ states, "There is much more use of English nowadays in some countries of the expanding circle, where it is 'only' a foreign language ..., than in some of the countries where it has traditionally held a special place". The "some countries of the expanding circle" that he references are Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands,

mentioned by McKAY above. This means that there is rapid increase in the use of English in the world, and that this spread is inexorably filtering into the expanding circle. Considering the recent rapid development of the computer and Internet, this trend seems irrefutable and undeniable.

Obviously, contexts and attitudes are heavily influenced by the political, economic, technological, educational, linguistic, and sociocultural situations of the periods. This, in turn, affects the English varieties in the expanding circle, ranging from those of countries which have many English-speaking bilinguals (Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands) to countries which have very few English-speaking bilinguals, except for experts and professionals (as in Japan, China, and Korea). Nonetheless, it is an actual linguistic reality that English functions as a *lingua franca*—which is to say, English as a *Lingua Franca* (ELF)—both inside and outside the expanding circle as a result of the rapid increase in the use of English in the world. We are now at the point where we cannot overlook this linguistic reality.

No one should underestimate the importance of Kachru's having analyzed and classified the types of spread, patterns of acquisition, and the functional domains of English across cultures and languages. Furthermore, as Seidlhofer⁽¹⁴⁾ states, "...no alternative models and terms that have been put forward have gained widespread acceptance and currency in the literature. So far, the Kachruvian terms have remained well established, even in the writings of those that have voiced incisive criticism of them". However, at the same time, when we take into consideration what was stated above, we cannot help but recognize that Kachru's Three Concentric Model does not completely reflect nor comprehensively describe the actual situation of English in the world today. This might be because he was primarily concerned with the outer circle, which includes his native India, and he wanted to describe that circle and assert its social and linguistic institutionalization and legitimacy. In other words, it is possible to say that there might have been some unintentional bias in Kachru's model.

3. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

3-1. EIL, WE, and the ELF Jenkins and Seidlhofer propose

It is commonly accepted that the concept of English as a *Lingua Franca* began with Jennifer Jenkins' *The phonology of English as an international language* published by Oxford University Press in 2000, followed by Barbara Seidlhofer's 'Closing a

conceptual gap: The case for a description of English as a lingua franca' in *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 11 in 2001.

ELF is similar to EIL and WE, and these three have for some time been used as general cover terms for uses of English stretching right across the inner circle, outer, and expanding circle contexts, but some researchers define them as being slightly different from each other in their assumptions and focus.

The first fixed, systematic proposal of the idea of English as a global phenomenon might be attributed to the idea of EIL which Larry Smith referred to in the book he edited called *Readings in English as an International Language*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, in 1983. As Ihara and Watanabe⁽⁵⁾ mentioned in Chapter 1, we can say that EIL is not simply an aggregate of various varieties of English from around the world used for communicating internationally with people of different nations. Going beyond that, by rights it should facilitate international communication that is as fair and neutral as possible within the framework of English usage. Toward that end, it accepts any variety of English that is taught, learned, and used, so long as it is an educated one, whether native or non-native, nativized or performed, local or global, and functionally official or unofficial. In that sense, EIL might be considered an attempt to reach intelligibility or convergence in the midst of the diversity that exists within the framework of English usage, since English no longer belongs exclusively to its native speakers. As Smith's oft-quoted aphorism so rightly proclaims, "There is no room for linguistic chauvinism"⁽¹⁵⁾ in international communication.

Moving chronologically, the second fixed, systematic proposal of the idea of English as a global phenomenon might be attributed to the ideology of WE. Although the coinage of the term 'WE' can be attributed to Kachru's Three Concentric Model, his main focus, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is on the outer circle and its social and linguistic institutionalization and legitimacy. So it seems that World Englishes refers to inner and outer circle varieties only, and excludes the expanding circle ones simply because they are "performed" and "norm-dependent" since they have no intranational use and so have not developed sufficiently as to have their own functions and registers, much less their own norms. This could be easily assumed from the excerpt below⁽¹⁶⁾:

...The Expanding Circle includes the regions where the performance varieties of the language are used essentially in EFL contexts... varieties that lack official status and are typically restricted

in their uses.

Whereas WE is inner- and outer circle-oriented, ELF should be, in itself, oriented toward any speaker of English. As Jenkins⁽¹⁷⁾ states, "a lingua franca is a contact used among people who do not share a first language, and is commonly understood to mean a second (or subsequent) language of its speakers", whereas Seidlhofer⁽¹⁸⁾ prefers to think of 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". However, it is worth noting that the ELF which both Jenkins and Seidlhofer propose tends to be focused on the expanding circle, although they assert that there are some misconceptions about their view of ELF. But it is, at least, a fact that they began their study with gathering and analyzing data from English users in the expanding circle.

In any case, as McKay states⁽¹⁹⁾, "It is in the Expanding Circle where there is the greatest potential for the continued spread of English". That therefore implies the inevitability of the continued spread of English interactions. However, the continued spread of English interactions has evolved from implication to certitude; it has already become undeniable reality. Besides, it refers to interactions not only between persons of expanding circle and the inner circle countries, or between those of expanding circle and outer circle ones, but also between people of expanding circle countries. Furthermore, those in the latter situation have been and continue to be increasing quite rapidly.

It was only natural that the continued spread of English interaction in the expanding circle created the ELF situation and fostered circle diversity. Why? Because as English came to be used by new communities and cultures in the expanding circle, it was shaped and altered by those encounters such that it could be used by local and international communication; thus, the ELF situation was created. Then, those ELF users developed their own markers of identity, and expanding circle diversity was born. This phenomenon is similar not only to that of the outer circle, but also to the inner circle. As we mentioned in Chapter 2, when we think of the fact that English itself was a truly mongrel language, comprising an admixture of Latin, Greek, French Germanic and Anglo-Saxon forms, we may say that English itself was English as a Lingua Franca, that is to say, ELF, in the Britain of those days. As Mufwene⁽²⁰⁾ states, if "native Englishes, indigenized Englishes and English pidgins and creoles have all developed by the same

kind of natural restructuring processes”, then we can also say that not only English but all languages develop as a result of contact with other languages; most differences are simply a result of degree of contact and amount of influence. ELF also has a robust ecological dynamism, and so it must be admitted that the diffusion this dynamism creates can impair international communication.

This must have been one reason that Jenkins⁽²¹⁾ tried “exploring the phonology of English from an international perspective” without depending on inner circle norms. First, she examined “how speakers of English as an International Language (EIL) behave phonologically”, describing and analyzing “data drawn from lingua franca contexts”. Second, she reconsidered “the problems of mutual phonological intelligibility and acceptability with the aim of facilitating the use of EIL”. (In those days, Jenkins used the term EIL instead of ELF). Thus, finding that being able to pronounce some sounds is not necessary for international intelligibility through ELF, she proposed “the establishing of a set of ‘nuclear norms’ (the Lingua Franca Core) for all L2 speakers of English (and receptively for L1 speakers also)”. The hope was that “outside this nuclear core, speakers would then be unconstrained in their use of L1 features of pronunciation, in other words, of local phonological norms”. She further postulated that “once such a phonological core has been identified, a far more realistic approach to phonology within ELT pedagogy will be able to be advocated and implemented”.

On the other hand, Seidlhofer⁽²²⁾ carried out extensive empirical work on the linguistic description of ELF at the level of lexicogrammar, trying to identify the Lingua Franca Core which is needed for ELF. She used data captured in the VOICE (Viena-Oxford International Corpus of English) which is a computer-readable corpus of EFL consisting of one million written words of spoken ELF from technical, educational and amusement fields and various speech event types. She analyzed them and selected from the viewpoints of what is necessary or not necessary linguistically, what is useful or insignificant for international communication, what is teachable or learnable for non-native speakers, and so on, leading to a better understanding of the nature of ELF.

EIL allows any variety of English to be taught, learned, and used as long as it is an educated one, and tries to find a way to reach intelligibility or convergence among diversity within the framework of English usage. At first glance, it seems that the ELF that Jenkins and Seidlhofer propose is monocentric and ignores the polymorphous nature of the English

language worldwide, because the ELF establishes a single lingua franca norm called “the Lingua Franca Core” to which all users should conform. However, that is a misconception because there are core areas and non-core ones in the ELF they propose, and, as Seidlhofer⁽²³⁾ explains:

...while the core areas are indeed norms to be conformed to (although determined by NNS rather than NS communication needs), the non-core features are free for (NNS) regional variation, thus ‘allowing the speakers’ identities to “shine through” while still ensuring mutual intelligibility’.

Judging from the above, we can say that the ELF they propose could be defined as a very rigid and systematic proposal of the idea of English as a global phenomenon. It offers non-native learners, based on data from the English users in the expanding circle, an alternative to the prescriptive native speakers-oriented norm, in order to contribute to the diversity of Englishes, yet conforms them to the norm to some extent, in order to ensure mutual intelligibility in international communication.

It is difficult to predict whether the ELF that Jenkins and Seidlhofer propose will be acknowledged as a genuinely international means of communication, one that is teachable and learnable in the classroom. But there is perhaps hope of communication if the majority of English users in the expanding circle would do as Jenkins⁽²⁴⁾ suggests in the following:

... if ELF is one day codified and its status as a legitimate means of communication is acknowledged, then we shall be able to talk about Teaching English of Speakers of Other Languages: teaching the ELF of proficient L2 users themselves. If ELF were to be established and recognized in this way, it is reasonable to suppose that the majority of English users in the expanding circle would rethink their attitudes and identities, and choose to learn and use this kind of English because it would be to their advantage to do so. And in doing so, they would be asserting their own claims to the ownership of the language as a genuinely international means of communication.

3-2. Academic English as a lingua franca

As for the functional concept of the English as a global phenomenon, many other linguists, applied linguists, sociolinguists, and English language

pedagogists also present their own ideologies, classifications, definitions, or paradigms. For instance, Kirkpatrick⁽²⁵⁾ defines World Englishes as those indigenous, nativized varieties that have developed around the world and that reflect the cultural and pragmatic norms of their speakers, and refers to the use of English as a lingua franca as the global use of English by people for whom English is not their first language. The definition of his WE corresponds to that of Kachru, and the reference to his ELF to that of Jenkins and Seidhofer.

However, Birch⁽²⁶⁾ presents a different paradigm from those of Smith, Kachru, and Jenkins and Seidhofer regarding English as a global phenomenon. She, taking into account Prodomou's global perspective on English⁽²⁷⁾, considers the English of today, that is, English as a global phenomenon, to be English as a Global Language. She further divides it into World Englishes (WE), English as a lingua franca (ELF), and Academic English (AE)⁽²⁸⁾.

First, let's look at her WE, which she says is:

... the broad-based English that refers to a language used by many people the world over. This English has varieties that range from local to global, standard to non-standard, or halting to fluent. It has different users, mother tongue monolinguals, second language learners, and bilingual and multilingual users. People use English for many purposes, from the integrative purposes of immigrants, refugees, and people who wish to participate actively in a globalized culture, to the instrumental purposes of entrepreneurs, students, and politicians who want to increase their social and economic capital through language learning.

As a result, Birch differentiates her WE from Global English (GE) thusly: Whereas GE represents the paradigm in which 1) English as a language of wider communication cannot be separated from its imperialist past, and 2) there is one standard language that is used internationally, her WE represents one in which there is no standard global English variety, but rather, multiple varieties. It follows that her WE is also different from International English (IE) proposed by Randolph Quirk in that his IE is postulated based on native speaker norms.

Second, her ELF "refers to a spoken variety of English used as a medium of communication among speakers of various levels of proficiency". Third, her AE is "the forms and varieties within World Englishes that will empower learners to accomplish

the professional or educational purposes they have set for themselves. This is the English of the classroom, Academic English (AE)".

Moreover, Birch⁽²⁹⁾ more particularly differentiates WE into three areas of common ground: 1) English as a lingua franca as the intersection of speakers who use English, 2) the shared problem of diglossia that spoken and written versions of English are inevitably distant from each other, creating learning difficulties, and 3) Academic English where there are consensus features of language for those who wish to speak and write fluently and accurately in a professional or academic setting, and these features set the goals for Academic English in the classroom.

Let's consider these three areas one by one. As for English as a lingua franca, Birch, quoting from Firth⁽³⁰⁾, Meierkord⁽³¹⁾, Lichtkoppler⁽³²⁾, Seidhofer⁽³³⁾, and Mauranen and Ranta⁽³⁴⁾, puts the characteristics of English as a lingua franca together. An outline⁽³⁵⁾ is as follows:

The characteristics of ELF simply emerge from a combination of the speakers and their first languages, their proficiency in English, and situational factors. From the analyses of ELF conversations on the telephone, ELF talk can be described as "fleeting", with fluid norms because the participants are often insecure about what the norms were. Participants use a strategy of ignoring problems as long as comprehension was successful. ELF speakers use shorter turns and more non-verbal communication, and numerous repetitions. ELF is becoming a unique variety of English with its own phonological and syntactic features, and not a mistaken-ridden form of Standard English. For instance, an ELF can be seen as an entity whose features of usage transcend first language influence and levels of proficiency. The features are those that attract a lot of attention from English teachers, and yet don't interfere with successful communication, like omitting the third person singular present tense on verbs, interchanging the relative pronouns *who* and *which*, using definite and indefinite articles in unconventional ways, overuse of generic verbs like *do*, *have*, *make*, *put*, *take*, and using redundant expressions like *discussed about* and *black color*. However, the English spoken as a lingua franca in academic settings may be distinguished from ELF with the acronym ELFA.

With regard to diglossia in World Englishes,

first, some comments are needed because the term ‘diglossia’ that Ferguson coined for the first time in Word, 15, pp. 325-340, in 1959 was used to refer to the use of two different varieties of the same language by the same speaker in separate socially-determined contexts. Thus, it seems that the term ‘diglossia’ corresponds quite closely to the use of registers which are, in Birch’s words, the different words and grammar used in different types of situations, for example in telephone conversations, spontaneous speeches, personal letters, fiction, official documents, and academic prose. As one might expect, each situation correlates with different vocabulary and syntactic choices that the speakers / writers make. Furthermore, this diversity is reflected in the World Englishes spectrum, which is much the same as the native English language spectrum, which ranges from the informal, spoken, emotion-related, suggestive, and concrete varieties of English, such as telephone conversations on one end of the continuum to the formal, written, informational, explicit, and abstract ones, such as academic prose on the other.

Birch takes notice of the variation of the registers from informal to formal on the World Englishes spectrum, and the WE users’ s ability to choose linguistic features appropriate for the type of communication they are trying to achieve, especially the ability to choose more formal written English, since her final purpose in English language education is to teach consensus English grammatical features in the classroom effectively. Additionally, she points out that successful mastery of the more formal registers happens only after many years of schooling. This inevitably leads to the English of the classroom, Academic English (AE).

As regards Academic English, Birch⁽³⁶⁾ explains it in relation to World Englishes spectrum and its consensus features. A summary is as follows:

Within the diversity of World Englishes, more formal written Englishes share areas of agreement about forms and usages. Formal written Englishes are both internal and external to local or regional varieties. They are internal because when people speak of Jamaican English, they are referring to a continuum of varieties from informal speech with local vocabulary and structures to formal Jamaican writing which is probably indistinguishable from British English writing. Everywhere, the local varieties of English are each a microcosm of a global situation with diverse spoken usages on one end of a spectrum and similar written usages on the

other. There are features of English that educated speakers consider the most likely and probable in Academic English. These features are called consensus features, not because everyone agrees with them but because their high likelihood and probability are shown by statistical studies. In any consensus there may be disagreement and lack of harmony among individual opinions and judgements, but over all there is some agreement and solidarity behind these norms of usage. Because of the consensus on the features of formal written usage at one end of the World Englishes spectrum, there appears to be a common external variety of Academic English.

Furthermore, Birch⁽³⁷⁾ takes into consideration new trends in grammatical theory reflecting scientific traditional grammar, structural linguistics, and transformational grammar, new trends in second language acquisition, and global trends in English grammar pedagogy. Based on those, she details general consensus features with examples chosen from more formal and stable spoken and written English in World Englishes, referencing some diversity within AE. They are consensus grammatical features of AE at the levels of morphemes, words, major phrases, noun phrases, modifiers, verbal constructions, sentences, complex sentences, and discourse, creating a grammatical microcosm of Academic English as a lingua franca.

Thus, we can say that Academic English is so specialized and conventionalized because of its consensus features that it is not the native language of anyone, but rather a completely different variety of English, that is, Academic English as a lingua franca. Practically speaking, in the global situation it can be said that most writers of English in business, legal, political, and academic societies follow the AE norms, since, to avoid misunderstanding, they must make their message comprehensible to readers without the benefit of context.

However, there may be those who say that some English speakers in the inner and outer circles are privileged or may find it easier to learn AE because their native or nativized English is similar to it. But there are some linguistic challenges everyone who intends to read and write AE must go beyond. That is a problem of what Birch refers to as diglossia in World Englishes. As she indicates⁽³⁸⁾, in fact everyone faces linguistic obstacles when it comes to learning to write and speak AE, in contrast to his or her colloquial varieties. For instance, grammatical obstacles like making proper word choices, using grammatical forms

accurately, and formulating complex sentence patterns create a formidable barrier between AE and colloquial varieties of English.

As for this diglossic barrier that English users who intend to read and write AE must surmount, Birch⁽³⁹⁾ illustrates the types of writing that they need along the two dimensions of proficiency and carefulness (As for the figure of this types of writing, see Birch⁽⁴⁰⁾), and explains them as follows:

Bisecting this figure is a line that demarcates two registers of English with different norms and characteristics. On one side of the diglossic barrier, formal writing is carefully written, closely monitored, accurate, complex, and compressed. On the other side, informal writing is spontaneous, lightly monitored, and simple. English users the world over find themselves immersed in a diglossic situation in which the standards for speech and writing and the different registers complicate learning.

Such being the case, we can say that Academic English not only values rigid and highly conventionalized norms because of the necessity of intelligibility, but also must be a neutral cultural and linguistic space, one that downplays the idiosyncrasies of authors and researchers for the sake of highlighting their ideas, theories, and research. This results in the preference, for example, for increased use of shorter and more compressed noun or prepositional phrases and hierarchically embedded relative clauses in order to increase carefulness and tightness, or for frequent use of descriptive and impersonal styles, such as passive voice sentences, in order to increase detachment and objectivity. Therefore, it is important to note that Academic English can be taught in the classroom at least when both accuracy and strictness are needed, but at the same time, it should be remembered that, as Birch⁽⁴⁰⁾ indicates, “while not everyone wants to write or read such compressed texts, it is clear that English users who intend to read and write Academic English must be prepared for linguistic challenges that go beyond what they would need to be successful ELF speakers”.

So far, we have reviewed some paradigms of English as a global phenomenon, including Smith’s and those that followed. Now, taking into account everything stated thus far, let’s turn our attention to what can be implied from them.

4. Conclusion: the Implication

We are not arguing for British or American English nor for the use of either in education. Rather, we advocate for English as a global phenomenon (EGP) and its use in the realm of education. It goes without saying that, in the EFL educational setting, both British and American English are valid and each has its own merits, especially in understanding British and American culture, history, politics, literature, and above all lifestyle, in order to promote smoother exchange. However, as stated in Ihara and Watanabe⁽³⁾, our stance is that British English education and American English education should be conducted at the tertiary level of education, for example, as a British or American studies major in university, technical or vocational school, etc., although EGP education may also be carried out at that level, if desired. However, when we think of the general English courses in elementary and secondary schools, judging from the status quo of English use in the world and the equality of international communication, it is now appropriate to change the model of English and its content (including teaching methodology of English language education of Japan) to EGP education.

When considering EGP and EGP education, we inevitably fall into the dilemma of antinomy: one being concern about equality, equidistance, fairness, and neutrality in international communication, and the other about intelligibility and smooth, easy understanding in international communication. In other words, the dilemma regarding international communication within the English-using framework is the dichotomy between divergence (being as equidistant as possible) and convergence (or intelligibility) which are diametrically opposed.

As for the former concern, all the paradigms presented in this paper, EIL, WE, ELF, and AE seem to endeavor to realize international communication with as little inequality as possible each from its own proper perspective. As long as English which derives from an ethnic language with its cultural and linguistic backgrounds in England is used for international communication, any of these paradigms might allow for as much English divergence as possible.

More problematic is the latter concern, that is, ensuring mutual intelligibility in international communication. EIL advocates ‘educated English’ with more emphasis on intelligibility, grammatical acceptability, and social appropriateness. Kachru’s WE emphasizes “native varieties” or “established varieties” in the inner circle and “nativized varieties” or “institutionalized varieties” in the outer circle.

Jenkins and Seidlhofer's ELF proposes "the Lingua Franca Core" with non-core features to some extent, and, finally, AE presents "the consensus features of language" that go beyond diglossia. These all differ in their assumptions, focuses, and goals, but have in common an attitude of caring about the speaker's identity. However, we have to admit that these paradigms are rather loosely and vaguely defined, except for AE. For example, what is "educated English" specifically? Would it be really possible for "institutionalized varieties" or "Lingua Franca Core" to dependably ensure international intelligibility? No one can say for sure.

In the Japanese context where there are fewer reciprocal exchanges in English and, therefore, actual English use cannot be reflected in daily life, the goal in the English classroom is to give students international communication competence, including enhanced intercultural understanding, whether it be culture specific, culture general or both.

Moreover, it is true that Japan is and will continue to be internationalized, but the reality is that inside the country, few Japanese have the chance or the need to listen to and speak English, except for those who use it professionally. Even English instructors have little opportunity or incentive to use it on a daily basis. Furthermore, in the English classroom of Japan, English study takes place from as few as two hours a week (in elementary schools and some high schools) to four or five hours (in junior high schools and some high schools). Thus, exposure to authentic English (especially spoken English) is low and there is little opportunity to cement what is learned through repetition, as the syllabus requires relentlessly moving on from lesson to lesson due to time constraints and exam pressure. This means that it is far too easy to put more emphasis on reading and writing formal English and less on listening to and speaking informal colloquial English. Furthermore, it is important to note that once students learn to read and write formal English with its grammatical consensus features, it will hold good in most cases in the future, not only at formal business, legal, political, and academic level, but also at informal daily life colloquial level.

Taking into account these linguistic, sociocultural, and educational situations in Japan, AE might be acceptable as a model for the English classroom in the Japanese context. AE has the consensus features of lexicogrammar and is not the native language of anyone, which seems to ensure both as much intelligibility and equidistance as possible, although it goes without saying that we should strive to make Japanese students aware of the diversity of English

worldwide through the textbooks and teaching materials we provide.

As stated above, we maintain that AE manages to ensure intelligibility much more than EIL, WE, and ELF under its lexicogrammatical conformity. However, it is also important to note that when we produce that AE, cultural features will inevitably and unavoidably appear in textual organization and textual preferences, as Mauranen, et al.⁽⁴¹⁾ asserts. That is also the reality of linguistic dynamism and diversity.

Anyhow, it should be remembered that all the English users, natives or non-natives, should carry out international communication with a firm attitude of Smith's oft-quoted aphorism, "There is no room for linguistic chauvinism"⁽¹⁵⁾.

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