Where does WE fit? Theoretical and practical considerations in integrating the world Englishes paradigm into Japanese higher education

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the value of incorporating the world Englishes (WE) framework, or a pluricentric approach to the dissemination, nativization, and diversification of English, into the Japanese higher education curriculum, either as part of the general education requirements across majors, as a foundation course component for English majors, as a requirement for the teacher certificate program (TCP), or, preferably, all of the above. To substantiate the argument, this paper will first present a literature review on the rationales and principles of WE education and its practical applications in different contexts, and then, based on previous studies and the author's teaching practice, identify possible obstacles to the integration of WE in college education in Japan, focusing on the issues of pedagogical efficacy, resource availability, and curricular consistency. The analysis aims to address the gap between scholarly discussion on WE and the actual classroom situation in the university context to encourage a "constant reciprocal relation between theory and practice" (Pennycook, 2001, p. 3).

1. INTRODUCTION: A PARADIGM SHIFT

English has become a global language; it is now spoken daily by millions of people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and is learned by an even greater number of people across the globe. Today, non-native users of English far outnumber native speakers (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). The intranational use of English rarely involves native-speaking interlocutors. The English used by non-native speakers is influenced by their local languages and cultures and shows phonological, morphological, and grammatical variations, in addition to lexical

and pragmatic innovations and other systematic differences compared with the traditional native-speaker varieties. The demographic and structural changes that the English language has undergone have urged many scholars to call for a "paradigm shift" in research and pedagogy (Kachru, 1992b). There are many linguistic studies on the various varieties of English, which are comprehensively called world Englishes (WE), and these studies provide grounds for treating native- and non-native-speaker varieties of English equally. The notion of "native speaker" has itself been questioned. Kachru (1998), for example, proposed a distinction between "genetic nativeness" and "functional nativeness." He suggested that non-native users of English be referred to as functional native speakers because they identify themselves as native speakers of their own nativized varieties of English with their respective established linguistic norms.

In the field of English language teaching (ELT), researchers and educators have challenged the traditional assumptions that all learners aspire to attain native-like fluency in order to communicate with native speakers and integrate into native-speaker culture (e.g., Brown, 2012; McKay, 2012; Matsuda, 2012a). Given its premise that the majority of English learners become bilingual or multilingual users of English, the native-speaker model is no longer tenable in most learning situations (e.g., McKay, 2002; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Marlina & Giri, 2014; Matsuda, 2012c; Sharifian, 2009). As McKay (2012) states, "For those individuals who use English essentially as a language of wider communication alongside one or more other languages they speak, achieving native-like competence is often not necessary or desired" (p. 29). ELT professionals are now faced with the need to reassess their curriculum, instructional materials and models, teaching methodology, testing procedures, and teacher-training programs to develop a locally "appropriate pedagogy" (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996).

The paradigm shift in ELT is also becoming an issue of urgent concern for practitioners, policymakers, and teacher educators alike in Japan, where the language instruction focus is shifting from English as a foreign language (EFL) to English as a lingua franca (ELF). For example, the latest 2017 edition of the official curricular guideline *Course of Study* stresses that English is widely and diversely used as an everyday means of communication across the world (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), 2017, p. 30). In explaining the rationale for the newly added teaching English through English (TETE) policy, the aforementioned guideline suggests that exposure to different varieties of English, including the one spoken by Japanese English

teachers of English, helps students deepen their understanding of ELF and increase their confidence in their own English use (ibid., p. 96). The need to (re-) educate teachers to accommodate a pedagogy with an ELF focus is also recognized. The core curriculum for teacher training, which was developed in 2017 by a project team commissioned by MEXT at Tokyo Gakugei University, requires that pre- and in-service teachers complete coursework to understand the historical changes undergone by the English language and the sociolinguistic realities of ELF (Tokyo Gakugei Daigaku, 2017, p. 114).

Despite these language changes in policy documents, however, actual practical innovations have been slow to follow. Shiroza (2020a) discursively analyzed the relevant ELT policy proposals and identified the continuing and implicit "native-speakerism" therein (Holliday, 2005). Textbook analyses consistently confirm the predominant status of American English as an instructional model, regardless of the fact that the visual representation of the characters in English textbooks is diversifying (e.g., Kawashima, 2009; Matsuda, 2002, 2003; Takahashi, 2014). As Suzuki, Liu, and Yu (2017: 496) note, "NS [native-speaker] English is presented as a lingua franca and students learn this for international communication." Matsuda (2017) shows that teacher trainers are not enthusiastic about incorporating Englishes into their teacher certificate program (TCP) curriculum because they consider exposure to varieties of English "desirable but not necessary." Honna and Takeshita (1998) have long advocated for the development of a local model of English for Japanese leaners, without which the native-speaker target would continue to hinder such learners from becoming competent and confident users of English as a global language. Native-speaker propensity is not just evident in ELT; it also permeates other facets of the Japanese education system (D'Angelo, 2012; Houghton & Rivers, 2013; Kavanagh, 2016)

The gap between the theoretical discussion on WE and actual classroom practice is not easy to bridge. A curriculum overhaul of Japan's ELT as a whole may be too high an aim to attain in the foreseeable future, as this involves a number of issues that must be addressed, such as the development of materials, methodological improvement, and necessary changes in teacher education and employment, as well as in the assessment scheme. However, a slow but steady change may follow by first fostering informed and reflective educators and policymakers through university education that equips students with knowledge and understanding of the sociolinguistic realities of English and raises their critical

language awareness (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017). Indeed, integration of a course or two at college is a feasible option that will exert a tangible impact on students' perceptions and offer a point of departure for change with a concrete goal in mind. This substantiates the need, which this paper attempts to address, to reflect on practical considerations for incorporating WE components into higher education in Japan. In the upcoming sections, we will first review the relevant literature on the WE framework and its pedagogical implications and describe different ways to incorporate the WE perspective into tertiary education. This will be followed by a discussion on practical issues in the Japanese context, such as pedagogical effectiveness, resource availability, and curricular consistency.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

2.1 The Kachruvian framework of world Englishes

As Kirkpatrick (2014) notes, "Although many different varieties of English have been spoken for several centuries, it is only surprisingly recently that the field of study that has become to be known as World Englishes has been established" (p. 33). Many researchers in the field agree that the term "world Englishes" emerged as an outcome of two international conferences held in 1978, one at the East-West Center in Hawaii and the other at the University of Illinois, both of which were thematically focused on the native and non-native use and usage of English as an international language (Smith, 1981; Kachru, 1982 [1992]). Braj B. Kachru, an Indian-born linguist specialized in the use of English in his native Kashmir and the organizer of the second conference, summarizes the significance of the term as follows:

> The term symbolises the functional and formal variations, divergent socio-linguistic contexts, ranges and varieties of English in creativity, and various types of acculturation in parts of the Western and non-Western world. This concept emphasizes "WE-ness," and not the dichotomy between *us* and *them* (the native and non-native users). (1992b, p. 2)

During the ensuing four decades, numerous academic articles and books have been published on the study of world varieties of English, reflecting interdisciplinary and integrative approaches.

Kachru has been acknowledged as a protagonist in the theory-building and

establishment of WE as an academic discipline, which is often referred to as the Kachruvian framework of WE. His influence is most notable in categorizing Englishes into three concentric circles, the inner, outer, and expanding circles, which correspond to English as a native language, English as a second language (ESL), and EFL contexts, respectively. The new terminology was intended not just to replace the traditional dichotomy between native and non-native speakers but also to represent "the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional domains" of English across cultures and languages (Kachru, 1985, p. 12). The primary aim of the Kachruvian framework is twofold: promote descriptive studies of newer varieties of English primarily in the outer circle countries in order to establish their linguistic systematicity; and liberate their speakers from the traditional mono-model conceptualization of English and elevate their status to speakers of nativized varieties of English. By documenting the "uniqueness of various varieties of English," scholars subscribing to the WE framework have sought to "argue that such varieties should be seen as legitimate and standard in the local context" (McKay & Brown, p. 6).

However, Kachru's model has received criticism for various factors, including its alleged native-speaker centeredness, its dependence on nation-based categorization (Mahboob & Szenes, 2010; Pennycook, 2010; Saraceni, 2009), the apparently heavier focus on the outer circle compared to the expanding circle (e.g., Hino, 2018), and the relatively static classification and resultant negligence of intra-circle variations and inter-circle mobility (Canagarajah, 1999). Addressing these critical reflections, scholars have proposed and promoted different terms and perspectives to describe and conceptualize the expanding range and functions of the English language (see, e.g., McArthur, 1998; Jenkins, 2014). These include, among others, global/world English, English as an international (auxiliary) language, ELF, and new/newer Englishes. Nevertheless, the Kachruvian framework's significance has not waned. The three-circle model still provides a convenient starting point for discussion about the global spread of English and its repercussions in diverse areas. In addition, the term "world Englishes," with its plurality of English, is able to straightforwardly express the pluricentric and multifaceted nature of the language, whereas ELF, English as an international language (EIL), and other similar notions that use the "English as..." construct are not as conspicuously discernible from the mono-model conceptualization of English, such as International English (e.g., Trudgill & Hannah, 1982) in the singular and World Standard Spoken English (Crystal, 2003), to name just a few.

Although the plural form of English is not new in a purely lexicographical sense (Shiroza, 2014), the Kachruvian framework has given it a new meaning with undeniable substance.

In fact, "world Englishes" can be considered an umbrella term that covers a wide range of established and emerging approaches to the study of diversity in English (Bolton, 2005). Jenkins (2007) also suggests that WE and ELF are not mutually exclusive, since both involve speakers from all three circles of English use. In a similar vein, Kubota (2012) collectively labels different frameworks and academic approaches to theorizing the diffusion and diversification of English, including WE, ELF, and linguistic imperialism, as "anti-normative paradigms." The WE paradigm, in essence, argues for the recognition of both existing and emerging varieties as being equal to the established inner-circle ones, thus promoting "the importance of inclusivity and pluricentricity in approaches to the linguistics of English worldwide" (Bolton, 2005, p. 204). As it is beyond the scope of this paper to scrutinize the terminological gaps between WE, ELF, and other competing concepts, the author follows Bolton (2005) in regarding WE as an overall approach to the varieties of English that subsumes EIL and ELF in order to emphasize pluricentricity and the dynamic nature of language development. As such, this paper uses the terms "paradigm," "framework," and "perspective" accordingly to refer to the Kachruvian approach described in this section.

2.2 Pedagogical applications of the WE framework

As a WE protagonist, Kachru has repeatedly discussed the pedagogical implications of the WE paradigm in relation to both language classrooms and teacher training courses (e.g., Kachru, 1992b, 1997, 2003). His concern about the importance of educational issues is well articulated in the following quote:

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

Numerous scholars have endorsed the "paradigm shift" in the teaching and learning of and about the English language (e.g., Kirkpatrick, 2007, Matsuda, 2012c; McKay & Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Sharifian, 2009). These critically aware

researchers agree on the need to raise teachers' and students' awareness of the sociolinguistic realities of English as well as on the need to challenge and change the traditional dependence on inner-circle varieties as the instructional model, thereby better guiding learners to become independent and proficient users of English in international contexts. Understanding the realities of English involves more than just recognizing that the emergence and establishment of various Englishes is a result of different historical settings; it also requires critical reflection on the positive and negative outcomes of the internationalization of English. In addition, teachers are held responsible for demonstrating that so-called Standard English is not the only norm by providing learners with the opportunity to interact with a variety of English forms and speakers. These activities, in turn, prepare students for "the growing demand for global communication," which necessitates developing the ability "to listen to and comprehend diverse varieties of English for business, travel, study and other purposes and simultaneously make themselves understood in international communication" (Kubota, 2012, p. 56).

In providing a comprehensive review of the WE framework in educational contexts, Baumgardner describes two approaches to teaching WE: 1) "stand-alone courses in world Englishes at the tertiary level" and 2) "English language courses which incorporate a Kachruvian philosophy of language" (2006, p. 661). The Kachruvian philosophy of language, in his definition, entails acknowledging ownership of English as shared among all its speakers regardless of the variants, endorsing plural models in the classroom as opposed to focusing exclusively on the traditional native-speaker model, and understanding that language evolves and changes in each local context (ibid.). The second approach, which is simply put as WE in ELT, can be divided further into two sub-approaches—teaching *in* Englishes and teaching English *with* WE in mind—depending on the extent to which localization occurs in areas such as models, materials, methods, assessment, and teacher education. These two should be considered not as independent options but as forming a cline of approaches, where diverse teaching practices are positioned at different points. At one end is an English language classroom where a local teacher speaks and teaches localized English using locally produced materials that reflect the local variant and evaluates students according to the local English standards. In another classroom, at the other end, where traditional Standard English is taught, adjustments would be made by, for instance, covering the diversification of English around the world as a lesson topic and introducing various Englishes as supplementary teaching materials.

Different researchers and practitioners have proposed different terms, including ELF-aware pedagogy (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015) or ELF-informed pedagogy (Seidlhofer, 2015), teaching English as an international language (TEIL) (e.g., Hino, 2018; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2018), and global English language teaching (GELT) (Galloway & Rose, 2015). Although there are various terms, the central focus is invariably placed on raising students' awareness of the diversity in English, developing their tolerance for varieties of English, and fostering their confidence in their own variety. Matsuda (2019) notes that this approach to ELT in practice typically promotes the following:

> exposure to, awareness of, and respect for different varieties of English and their users, focus on communication strategies to negotiate linguistic differences, use of and critical engagement with the cultural materials form diverse sources, and understanding of the politics of EIL among teachers and students. (p. 146)

An increasing number of practitioners have attempted to apply this approach to their classrooms at different levels of education (e.g., Lee, 2012 in a high school context; Hino, 2018 in a university context). Nevertheless, most discussion about WE-informed ELT is still considered only at the abstract level (Matsuda, 2012a). In addition, many researchers have pointed out barriers to integrating WE in ELT, including the lack of teaching materials and teachers' adherence to the Standard English model (e.g., Galloway & Rose, 2015; Shiozawa, 2020). Moreover, major stakeholders, such as sponsors and parents, in addition to teachers and students, have exhibited strongly favorable attitudes toward the traditional ELT practices that center on standard varieties of English (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2017, p. 7).

This recognition brings us back to the first approach to teaching WE, namely stand-alone courses in WE in tertiary education. Higher education can thus be considered a potential place to produce future policymakers who will develop WE-informed ELT policies, English language teachers who will bear the responsibility for putting such policies into practice, and high-stakes test makers who will develop assessment schemes. Kachru (1992b) outlines the aspects of WE that should be addressed in teaching a WE course as follows: 1) sociolinguistic profile, 2) variety exposure, 3) attitudinal neutrality, 4) range of uses, 5) contrastive pragmatics, 6) multidimensionality of functions, 7) expansion of canons, and 8) cross-cultural intelligibility (p. 10). First and foremost, a WE

course should give an overview of the sociolinguistic realities of the language and its diverse varieties in the global context. It can focus on select major varieties and their uses and users, highlighting the difference between English in monolingual versus multilingual contexts (Kachru, 1992, p. 10). In addition, the course should entail an introduction to particular native and non-native varieties and the variation within varieties as well as a discussion on the legitimacy of such varieties on their own terms, hence the development of "attitudinal neutrality." Furthermore, the range of use of specific varieties is to be discussed and contrasted in relation to various pragmatic contexts (e.g., "apologies, condolences, obituaries," etc.) and various functional contexts (e.g., "the media, literary creativity, administration, government and the legal system"). The "literary, linguistic, and cultural implications" should be explored on the basis of an expanded understanding of canons in English. Finally, the issue of international and intranational intelligibility is relevant in discussing the "implications of the diffusion and multilinguistic and literary identities of English" (ibid.).

Kachru, in a "state-of-the-art" article in 1992, suggested that, compared with the 1970s, it has become easier to answer the question "What are the resources for teaching world Englishes?," and he introduced numerous publications for the purpose. More than 30 years after, we have even more resources at hand, from introductory resource books (e.g., Jenkins, 2014; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Melchers, Shaw, & Sundkvist, 2019) to area- and issue-specific studies, to four comprehensive handbooks (Filppula, Klemora, & Sharma, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2010; Nelson, Proshina, & Davies, 2019; Schreier, Hundt, & Schneider, 2020). However, the surge in published resources does not necessarily mean a simultaneous increase in WE courses. Many of the experiential studies have focused on the inner-circle context of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) (e.g., Eslami, Moody, & Pashmforoosh, 2019; Galloway, 2017a; Kubota, 2001; Rose, 2017). These efforts, or what Eslami, Moody and Pashmforoosh (2019) call "WE intervention," stem from a shared recognition of the urgency of providing pre-service teachers from inner-circle countries with knowledge about the WE paradigm to better prepare them for future classrooms populated by culturally and linguistically diverse students (Ates, Eslami, & Wright, 2015). However, TESOL programs do not constitute the only site that necessitates WE intervention if the diversifying student body is to be better served. Sadeghpour and Sharifian (2019) address the imperative to promote the WE perspective among teacher educators, curriculum designers, and test

developers, collectively “ELT stakeholders,” to “pave the way for teaching English as a pluricentric language” (p. 254).

3. WE IN TERTIARY EDUCATION IN THE JAPANESE CONTEXT

There is a growing consensus among informed professionals in college education that Japanese university students should be equipped with knowledge and understanding of global Englishes regardless of their motivation to pursue a teaching career. The rationales behind this include that instruction on Englishes contributes to promoting linguistic equality, developing students’ identity as English users, and raising their “global awareness” (e.g., Hino, 2018, see also Yoshikawa, 2016; Shiozawa, 2020).

First, understanding the fundamental tenet of WE that all Englishes are equal entails an awareness of the disparities and discrimination between the standard language and the dialects, and those between their respective speakers. Exposure to varieties of English uses and users teaches students that the native-speaker standard is not the only norm, nor is it even uniform. Acquiring this knowledge and understanding develops their tolerance of non-native Englishes and better prepares them for future interactions in English, where their interlocutors are more likely to be fellow non-native English users than native speakers. One of the primary objectives of WE education thus lies in fostering “unbiased attitudes towards all varieties of English” (Hino, 2018, p. 22)[i]. It must be noted, however, that equality among Englishes does not guarantee “equality with English” or “equality to English.” In other words, pursuing the former may result in exacerbating the inequality among languages and inequality in terms of access to resources available for and by acquiring English (Phillipson, 1992; Kubota, 2012).

Second, knowing that the majority of English users are bilinguals and multilinguals who use the language as an additional resource helps learners recognize that it is possible, or even desirable, to represent their lingua-cultural identity through their own use of English. Given their experience of the conventional ELT that centers on the idealized native-speaker standard, many Japanese students may have internalized the assumption “that English belongs to the Inner Circle, and that others are expected to conform to Inner-Circle norms and remain in a peripheral position in international communication in English” (Matsuda, 2012b, p. 172). WE instruction in a university setting should thus

begin by challenging students' preconceptions about the users and uses of Englishes and aim at fostering their sense of ownership with respect to English. Third, advocates of WE education argue that learning about Englishes will also lead to increased awareness about various global challenges, such as human rights, world peace, and environmental protection (Hino, 2018; Yoshikawa, 2016). Hino (2018) suggests that teaching and learning about EIL share the underlying purpose of promoting international understanding and cross-cultural awareness with so-called "global education," which offers the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and action essential for responsible citizenship in a global age (see Cates, 2002).

There are at least three options for integrating WE instruction in colleges in Japan. The first is to devote an entire department to the study of WE, as in the case of Chukyo University's Department of World Englishes, which teaches courses about a variety of issues related to the study of WE and offers a compulsory study tour in Singapore, as well as other study abroad opportunities, thereby improving "students' comfort level in international settings" (D'Angelo, 2012, p. 127). This approach provides comprehensive coverage of the academic discipline of WE and is intended for a particular set of students who supposedly come to the department with a pre-existing interest in and motivation to learn about the diversity in ELF. On the other hand, as D'Angelo (2012, p. 132) admits, it is a "long-range project," to which some resistance should be expected, both in terms of its philosophy and its actual implementation.

The second option is to provide WE instruction for those whose major is broadly categorized as English studies, including those aspiring to become English teachers in secondary schools. This approach allows WE-informed educators to reach a wider audience comprising members who have a defined interest in the sociolinguistic realities of English. For example, in Galloway (2013), students majoring in English were targeted for global Englishes instruction. Galloway (2013) concluded, based on questionnaire surveys and interviews, that the participants clearly enjoyed the course and developed an "awareness of non-native English" and "the English spoken in Japan" as well as "confidence as speakers of a recognisable variety of English" (p. 801). In a similar vein, the present author offered a semester-long elective course for English majors (the course was also open to other majors) as an introduction to global Englishes. Using Galloway and Rose (2015) as a primary textbook, the course covered key topics, including the historical background of the global spread of English, the positive and negative

consequences of the internationalization of English, linguistic features of diversified Englishes, and pedagogical implications of the WE perspective, among others. In addition to the focus lectures, the students were assigned a task that required them to choose one variety from the three circles of Englishes and conduct research on its historical background, linguistic characteristics, societal and educational functions, and other relevant topics; they presented their findings in groups and compiled an individual term paper. Pre- and post-instruction surveys showed that these activities apparently helped students gain a critical perspective on the internationalization of English and foster tolerance for the diversity of English (Shiroza, 2020b).

Another alternative is to incorporate the WE paradigm as part of the general education requirements in a college-wide program. While this would allow many students to be introduced to the WE framework, the focus may need to be restricted to awareness-raising instead of incorporating, for example, contrastive linguistic analyses of given varieties of English. An online syllabus search showed that some colleges, such as Osaka Prefecture University and Seikei University, offer independent courses on world Englishes in their general education curriculum, while others list courses that dedicate a unit or two to WE (e.g., Meiji University and the University of Hyogo). Recent studies have shown that WE-focused courses have positive impacts on students' attitudes toward the diffusion and diversification of English around the world. Tanabe (2015) reports on a WE course that was offered as a general education component and on the students' attitudinal changes before and after taking the class. The questionnaire revealed that the students developed more affirmative attitudes toward "Nihon-eigo" (Japanese English), while their uncritical appreciation of native-speaking English teachers became more neutral. Likewise, according to Kojima (2017), the students changed some of their negative attitudes both toward different varieties of English and toward their own accent after taking the WE course. These studies, however, also present some challenges to be solved. The next section will consider some of these difficulties in WE education in the Japanese university context, drawing from the author's own educational experience as well as from previous studies.

4. PRACTICAL ISSUES IN STAND-ALONE WE COURSES IN JAPAN

As noted above, the inner-circle context features the most in many of the studies

on stand-alone WE courses, in which several common barriers have become prominent, namely the difficulty in challenging the conventional way of thinking about English, the distance between understanding the theory of WE and applying it to teaching practice, and the lack of teaching materials that can address both of these issues (e.g., Galloway, 2017b; Rose, 2017; Sharifian & Marlina, 2012). While these challenges may apply to every endeavor involved in teaching WE, they are worth discussing from a more context-specific perspective, which is what the following section attempts in relation to Japanese higher education.

4.1 The issue of attitudinal bias: Are WE interventions justifiable?

The first problem involves how to evaluate the teaching efficacy of WE instruction. D'Angelo (2012) suggests that the department-wide WE curriculum at Chukyo University, though "revolutionary" (p. 133), requires a long-term perspective. This is partly because it takes time for "old-timers" in the faculty to fully accept the WE paradigm, especially in a country with a strong native-speaker propensity. In addition, some issues of a nature that is more specific to Japanese colleges have been pointed out, including the difficulty in consensus building with regard to curricular innovation as well as the burdensome workload that reviewing and improving the program places on faculty (ibid.). If implementation takes place slowly in a college-wide effort, it appears that it will be even more challenging to influence students and teachers through exposure to WE via a mere semester-long course or even a few units featuring lectures with different themes. Many previous studies have noted the difficulty in effecting attitudinal changes among students. Artes, Eslami, and Wright (2015), for example, admit that "changing students' perceptions takes more than a semester" (p. 499). Similarly, in the Japanese context, Kojima (2017) reports that while WE instruction alleviated students' adverse attitudes toward Japanese-accented English and gave them some confidence in their own English use, the overwhelming majority remained positive about their aspiration to become fluent in native-speaker English, even after learning about the non-native varieties of English. Suzuki (2010) also points out that knowledge about non-native-speaker varieties does not necessarily lead to learners' acceptance of such varieties as equal to native-speaker varieties.

The present author also identified a case in which students who enrolled in a WE course exhibited continued intolerance of, or antipathy toward, their own local variety, while simultaneously showing increased awareness and acceptance

of the diversity in English. The fact that pre- and post-instruction survey questions on "Japanese English" consistently elicited negative impressions among native Japanese-speaking students suggests that they may have been unable to fully relate the concepts of nativization and acculturation of English with their own existential issue. Their topic choices for their presentations and written assignments also indicated their perception: while the students who selected inner and outer circle countries covered specific local varieties of English and explored their history, linguistic features, and social acceptance, those who chose expanding circle countries almost exclusively focused on the teaching and learning of English as a "foreign" language, mainly discussing how cases in other countries inform Japan's ELT toward faring better in the (inner circle-based) global rankings of English proficiency. Although partly attributable to how the textbook and the course content were structured and presented, the students' partial interest in expanding circle issues implies that a more substantial effort is necessary to challenge the convention of using inner-circle speakers as a yardstick.

It should also be noted in this context that WE education does not explicitly aim to alter students' perspectives instantaneously, nor is it desirable to intend to do so. Students are not blank slates waiting to be written on. In addition, attitudes are dynamic and fluid constructs that evade an essentialized understanding via a single attempt at surveying. Further, there is an ethical dilemma: if a one-time WE intervention is successful in changing participants' attitudes, such attitudes may be more susceptible to another conversion, including reversion to the monocentric conceptualization of English. At the same time, any allegation of "indoctrination" should also be avoided. The key, as Bayyurt and Sifakis (2017) propose in relation to EIL teacher education, is not to force them to "accept a dogma and radically change the way they think about teaching, learning, assessment, and communication," but rather to guide them to reflect more extensively on these issues, "always with reference to their own specific contexts" (p. 13).

4.2. The issue of materials: Available but unsuitable?

Some scholars have attributed the difficulty in promoting global Englishes instruction to the paucity of teaching materials (e.g., Galloway, 2017b). However, the lack of materials seems to be becoming less of an issue in seeking to incorporate WE into tertiary education. Recent years have seen the publication of a wide range of resource books that can be adopted in general education contexts

(e.g., Galloway & Rose, 2015; Jenkins, 2014), as well as those intended for more specialized purposes, such as TESOL programs (e.g., McKay & Brown, 2016). Introductory textbooks for university-level students (e.g., Shibata, Naka, & Fujiwara, 2020) and teacher educators (e.g., Otsubo, 2017; Shiozawa, Yoshikawa, Kurahashi, Komiya, & Shimouchi, 2016) are also available in Japanese. In addition, exposure to authentic, real-world varieties of English has become much easier thanks to the wide availability and accessibility of online media platforms. A quick Google search on Singaporean English, for instance, returns hundreds of webpages that provide detailed descriptions of the variety as well as video clips that feature actual interactions among its everyday users.

It might be more precise, then, to say that the scarcity lies in guidelines or guidance for selecting materials that are suitable and appropriate for the local teaching context from the vast sea of authentic textual and sound samples of Englishes from around the world (see Matsuda, 2012b). In fact, without a guiding principle, an attempt to expose students to living examples of newer varieties of English, however well intentioned, may end up fortifying stereotypical reactions to "non-standard" Englishes as "peculiar" and "funny" deviations. Numerous video clips on online video-sharing sites introduce localized varieties of English with a touch of comedy. To take just one example, one of the most watched videos on YouTube that can be found with the search phrase "Indian English" introduces native English speakers laughing while learning about lexical innovations in the variety after failing to guess the meanings of words and phrases that are commonly used with very different meanings in Anglo-American English (e.g., Asian Boss, 2015). When introducing "nonstandard Englishes," as Miyagi, Sato, and Crump (2009) suggest, "teachers should be careful not to encourage learners to be judgmental" toward these varieties (p. 269). Instead, they should "take advantage of this opportunity to help their students realize that what counts most in using English (or any language, for that matter) is not how one sounds but what message he/she wants to convey," so that Japanese students can build confidence in their own English variety (ibid.).

Nevertheless, it is particularly difficult to present samples of the English varieties in the students' own linguistic community. They are often seen to be stricter when judging the English spoken by those with their same linguistic background. In the case of Japan, where "Japanese English" tends to be associated with poor pronunciation (so-called *katakana* pronunciation) and pseudo-English vocabulary (so-called *wasei-eigo*, or made-in-Japan English) (see, e.g., Shiroza,

2008; Stanlow, 2005), college students view the local variety negatively (Shiroza, 2020b). Countless television show segments that feature Japanese local celebrities revealing their poor command of English are uploaded on the Internet, apparently inviting viewers to laugh at "typical Japanese English" (e.g., akabane04, 2017). On the other hand, there are other clips that present Japanese persons who apparently grew up in English-speaking countries as model English speakers, thereby reinforcing the conceptualization of "bilinguals," which refers to those who are native speakers of two languages. It is thus more challenging, and yet more urgent, to demonstrate model speakers of Japanese English who are not caricatures or the target of ridicule.

One alternative is for Japanese professors to reappraise their own positive contribution as model users of a localized variety of English. In fact, many faculty members are active participants in the English speech community, making full use of English as a part of their linguistic repertoire and engaging in research activities and publishing their scholarly achievements. Moreover, non-Japanese professors from non-native English-speaking backgrounds have much to offer in the presentation of pluricentric models of English. An interesting effort to diversify language instructors can be found in the University of Tokyo's compulsory academic writing program, where the teachers' educational and linguistic backgrounds include outer circle countries, such as the Philippines and Singapore, and expanding circle countries, such as Japan, Spain, and Brazil (ALESS and ALESA program, n.d.). With the expansion of English medium instruction (EMI) programs, non-native English-speaking non-Japanese academics are likely to play an increasingly significant role in Japanese universities. Examples include the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Yamanashi Gakuin University, where a professor with Iranian and Malaysian educational backgrounds offers a course on WE as part of the interdisciplinary arts curriculum. Needless to say, careful consideration should also be given to more fundamental issues, such as the concentration of learning resources in English, resulting in the loss of higher education opportunities in local languages.

4.3 The issue of curricular consistency: Where does WE fit?

The third issue that is worth discussing in relation to Japanese contextual constraints on the integration of WE in higher education is how to reconcile the principles of the WE framework and the overall English studies curriculum in Japan, which traditionally centers on Anglo-American culture and literature. As

Suzuki (2010) notes, "Instruction in the diversity of English can affect student teachers' views of English[,] but its effects may vary depending on their past social and educational experiences of being exposed to (knowledge of) L2 speakers' English" (p. 151). Most Japanese students developed their beliefs during school education that taught only standard American/British English for international communication. Thus, their certainty with regard to Standard English is "so entrenched that it is very difficult for it to be transformed by limited instruction" (ibid., p. 152). Their attachment to traditional standards and hesitation to change are not their problems per se, but rather the product of the curricular contexts in which they are placed, the entire educational context in which the curriculum is situated, and the larger society that surrounds educational institutions.

The lack of consistency between the conventional curriculum and the incorporation of the WE paradigm is most prominent in the context of English-related majors and the TCP therein. Traditionally, secondary school English teachers in Japan were predominantly English language or English/American literature graduates. As a result of the various higher education reforms that have taken place over the past 30 years, a number of English literature departments were dismantled, many of which have been reorganized into faculties with one, or a combination of a few, of the following keywords in their name: "international," "global," "intercultural," and "communication." However, a perusal of course catalogs, faculty demographics, and the list of study abroad partner institutions indicates that the American and British cultures continue to occupy an important position in these schools. To take one example, Tokyo Woman's Christian University recently established Kokusai Eigo gakubu (literally "Department of International English" but officially translated as "Division of English"), which houses the same teaching staff from the former Department of Literature and Culture in English. Although the official website claims that the new Division "offers students an opportunity to learn English as a universal language" (School of Arts and Sciences 2018, n.d.), its compulsory study abroad program limits students' destinations to six inner-circle English-speaking countries: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. Similarly, at the aforementioned Department of World Englishes at Chukyo University, which is a pioneer in terms of its endeavor to integrate the WE paradigm into tertiary education, the professors who joined the university faculty before the department was launched reportedly "still do not 'buy into' the

paradigm" (D'Angelo, 2012, p. 132).

Furthermore, English major students and those in TCP are often less sensitized to the diversity in English despite, or because of, their keen interest in the study of English and a career path in ELT. As Matsuda (2017) points out, those enrolled in teacher preparation programs are "the successful products of English language and language arts curricula that are based on the traditional view of English" (p. xv). It is likely that they have been encouraged to aim for native-like fluency and indeed were "probably more successful in doing so than their peers" (ibid.), evidenced by their eventual decision to pursue a teaching diploma in English. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that students with a good command of English are often more skeptical about the legitimacy of nativized Englishes and are also more explicitly dubious about their pedagogical application. The new perspective offered by the WE paradigm can be "threatening (although it could also be liberating and empowering for some)" because its challenges to and criticism of the conventional education system may seem to dismiss and deny their "past effort and investments in language learning," which constitute a crucial part of their identity (ibid.). Thus, the WE-informed TCP should not only aim to raise awareness about the sociolinguistic realities of English but also provide a necessary scaffolding for learners to critically reflect on their own learning experience and bridge the gap between their existing knowledge and the actual practice of teaching EIL. Now that understanding of EIL has become a requirement in the core curriculum for the English teacher training course (Tokyo Gakugei Daigaku, 2017), achieving and improving curricular consistency is an urgent task for curriculum organizers and teacher educators.

The next step will be to review the entire university curriculum, including non-English majors and general education requirements, from the WE perspective. It is particularly important to seek consistency between the proliferated idea of English as a global means of communication and the actual teaching policy and practices in the English skills classes that are compulsory in many universities and are commonly taught either by Japanese or native English teachers. The popular demand for EMI programs and TETE in general has led to more universities advertising the increased involvement of native-speaker English teachers. However, because the WE paradigm highly values local languages, cultures, and social conventions, the use of students' mother tongue in the classroom is not discouraged; rather, "a bilingual approach is considered the method of preference in contexts where the goal of learning English is not to approximate its native

speakers but to become a competent bilingual in English and the mother tongue" (Shiroza, 2014, p. 246). Here, another dilemma emerges: employing more non-native English-speaking non-Japanese faculty members entails the expansion of monolingual English classrooms, where students' mother tongue may be deemed useless. Banal as it may sound, there should be continuous efforts to strike a balance between pluralism in English and the plurilingual philosophy in the WE paradigm.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper has highlighted the significance of incorporating the WE framework in the local context of Japanese higher education, reflecting both on the theoretical underpinnings and the practical considerations. It argued that WE instruction contributes to raising awareness about the profile of English as a global language, promoting a pluricentric view of language, and helping learners develop an identity as English users. By acquiring knowledge about diverse users and uses of English across the world, students can critically review their own learning experience and, for some, the future challenges of teaching English as an international language. This paper has also discussed the barriers and issues to be addressed in implementing the WE-informed curriculum, such as how to evaluate and present authentic materials in Englishes in the classroom, how to assess the effect of WE interventions on students' perception, and how to ensure curricular consistency with the WE philosophy. Adding one or two WE courses is a feasible starting point, with the long-term goal of overhauling the entire curriculum, particularly that of TCP. It goes without saying, however, that such an attempt presupposes a supply of informed and interested educators and institutional support to facilitate critical reflections and continued cross-checking with regard to its efficacy in "addressing the needs of future users of English as an international language" (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2012, p. 26). Given that Japanese universities are striving to internationalize and beginning to serve an increasingly diversifying student population, knowledge and acceptance of WE is becoming, or has already become, a must-have for every student regardless of their current major or future career.

[i] Hino maintains that the WE paradigm "has some reservations" about treating Englishes from the expanding circle as being equal to those from the outer circle, while the concept of EIL does not discriminate between the two (2018, p. 22). However, as explained earlier, this paper posits that the Kachruvian framework of WE fundamentally subscribes to equality among all varieties across the three circles, regarding it as an all-inclusive approach to the study of Englishes.

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