

# Reviews

***Global Englishes in Asian Contexts: Current and Future Debates.* Kumiko Murata and Jennifer Jenkins (Eds.).  
Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. ix + 233 pp.**

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English, despite being an oft-used word, is still listed by a number of dictionaries as uncountable, and indeed, if one tries to pluralize it in MS Word, it is highlighted as an error. With the number of people who speak English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) now outnumbering those for whom it is a first language (Crystal, 1997), this book offers valuable insights into the spread of English into various Asian contexts and the phenomenon known as World Englishes (WE). *Global Englishes in Asian Contexts: Current and Future Debates* provides a concise discussion of the use of English in Asia (an ever expanding usage region which sometimes includes Middle Eastern countries), New Zealand, and Australia. Divided into four parts, comprising 12 essays written by well-known researchers in the field, this comprehensive book is an ideal springboard for research and discussion.

Part I, “Understanding Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca in Asia” defines the notions of WE, English as an International Language (EIL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and their inter-relationships. The idiom principle—the combination of words in phrases in the interests of effective communication—is covered extensively, and turns out to be the unifying theme of Part I. Such phrases not only help to facilitate shared meaning but also serve to establish rapport and to identify speakers as members of the in-group, and are thus markers of shared territory. The idiom principle attempts to account for language which does not fit what Sinclair (1991) calls the “open choice principle.” The idiom principle illustrates that semi-preconstructed phrases exist, which constitute single choices, even though

they seem to be analyzable into segments. In her essay related to the idiom principle, Jenkins describes the notions of accommodation and code-switching, which she argues are often performed by ELF speakers in order not only to compensate for gaps in knowledge but also to signify group membership and solidarity. She concludes by claiming that in the future, people occupying the top of the English language hierarchy will not be native speakers (NS) but bilingual speakers “who have the skills to function comfortably in multilingual situations” (p. 52). Linked succinctly to this idea is Smith’s discussion of a recurring theme in *WE: understanding across cultures*. He discusses the notions of comprehensibility, intelligibility, and interpretability and argues that all three are crucial if cross-cultural understanding is to occur. The chapter ends with several practical suggestions on how to improve understanding in *WE* contexts. The first part of the book raises some very interesting questions, namely that of whether or not nonstandard varieties should be taught, answers to which can be found in Part II.

In Part II, “Cultural Identity, Ideology, and Attitudes in English in Asia,” Hung’s exploration of how Shaw’s *Pygmalion* might have been written in Singaporean English highlights the standard-vs.-nonstandard debate and turns out to be the *pièce de résistance* of the book as it encompasses the questions the book seeks to answer: Should we, as language teachers, teach a standard variety of English or should we expose learners to nonstandard varieties? Will regional varieties of English suffice? The answer unfolds in the next eight chapters, and the unequivocal answer is that we must pay heed to both the culture and the learning context of our learners. At first sight, Hung’s essay is a subtle attack on the Singaporean government, which opposes the use of Singlish, a nonstandard variety of Standard Singapore English. It serves, however, as an attack on any government or institution which seeks to prescribe a certain language variety. Mamoru places this in the Japanese context in Chapter 6 with an examination of Japanese English for EIAL (English as an International Auxiliary Language), wasting no time in explaining the necessity that nonnative speaker (NNS) English be clearly differentiated from NS English. Similarly, Park argues her case from a Korean culture-specific perspective, predicting that not too far in the future Korean English will become a recognized glocalized (globalization + localization) variety. As such, she advocates the need to teach this variety not only to Korean English learners but to business people from outside Korea. She concludes by saying that certain forms, phrases, grammar, and sentences should be regarded as norms as long as they are understandable (p. 97). Essentially, importance should be placed on making oneself understood.

Part III, “Englishes in Asian Academic and Business Contexts,” could be of value to teachers involved in teaching scientific writing, business English, and English in advertising. Indeed, the unifying thread of this unit is English in academic and business contexts. Yamuna Kachru looks at academic writing in WE in the Asian context, arguing for the need to recognize the cultural conventions and values found in scientific writing, which she claims are not necessarily universal. Gill discusses standards and realities of English in the Malaysian workplace, and Bhatia discusses English in Asian advertising and in the teaching of WE, highlighting the use of English found in advertising.

The fourth and concluding part, “The Future of Englishes: A Paradigm Shift?” discusses Asian Englishes in the Asian age and the challenges faced by users of English in the Asian region, principally India and China. Pennycook discusses what he calls plurilithic Englishes, or the avoidance of regional reproduction of authority, and power of NS and, conversely, the lack of integrity and comprehensibility. After examining Kachru’s well-known model of concentric inner, outer, and expanding circles making up WE, Pennycook concludes by proposing a more fluid model which includes language users and their individual contexts. Finally, Yano discusses the future of English and the need to move beyond the Kachruvian three-circle model, describing a new wave of regional standard Englishes (RSEes). He illustrates how English in Asia has evolved and will continue to do so.

One of the book’s strengths is its accessibility; the arguments, while seemingly complex and multifaceted, are easy to understand. However, some chapters add nothing new to the existing literature. In a field which is already saturated, one cannot help but wonder whether this book will be lost among those which offer a less diluted discussion of specific contexts. Personally, I found Mamoru’s chapter, “Japanese English for EIAL,” to be informative and useful because it is all about context, echoing the notion that not only should we pay attention to learners’ culture and learning context, but also that Asia may be too large to cover comprehensively in only one volume. However, this book does exactly what it sets out to do in the Introduction from Murata and Jenkins. It provides readers with a good understanding of the spread of English throughout Asia.

## References

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***Young Learner English Language Policy and Implementation: International Perspectives.* Edited by Janet Enever, Jayne Moon, and Uma Raman. Reading, UK: Garnet, 2009. 248 pp.**

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Over the past 30 years, teaching English to young learners (TEYL) in primary schools has become increasingly common all over the world. Governments recognize that globalization means the labour force will need foreign language skills in order to compete in the international marketplace. The introduction of compulsory foreign language classes for Japanese fifth and sixth grade pupils in April 2011 is a further example of this change.

*Young Learner English Language Policy and Implementation: International Perspectives*, edited by Enever, Moon, and Raman, is the proceedings of a conference held in Bangalore in 2008 which aimed to facilitate the sharing of experiences, broaden perspectives, and influence future policies in the introduction of English as a foreign language in primary schools. The book is organized into three sections: The first section includes the three keynote presentations from the conference; the second presents 12 national case studies of implementations of early English programmes; and the third section includes 12 smaller scale innovations, experiments, and projects. In addition, the editors have written an excellent introductory chapter that provides an overview of the current challenges and issues in TEYL. The chapter ends with a list of 12 recommendations for developing policy and implementing English as a foreign/second language in primary schools.

Johnstone's keynote (Chapter 3) expands on the introductory chapter by providing a useful set of conditions for success in TEYL programmes. Johnstone makes an interesting but somewhat controversial point about including reading, writing, and grammar at age 7 or 8. This, he argues, helps children think analytically and strategically in their learning. An associated idea is to raise learners' awareness of their success, which increases their motivation and encourages them to monitor their own learning. Together, the introduction and this chapter provide an excellent overview of and potential solutions to problems facing policy-makers and practitioners in TEYL.

The chapters in the rest of the book describe challenges that have arisen once innovation has been implemented and the ways in which these challenges have been addressed. The book poses an implicit question about what the role of each stakeholder—local education authorities, principals and teachers, teacher-trainers, external agencies, and organizations—should be, and how they should collaborate to create successful English teaching in primary schools.

As Goto Butler notes in Chapter 2 about Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, a typical challenge is the mismatch between a curriculum influenced by Western thinking (e.g., communicative or task-based language teaching) and the local educational culture. For example, Turkey's revised curriculum introduced English from Grade 4 in 2006 and is described as being constructivist and learner-centred (Chapter 8). However, a survey conducted with 52 primary English teachers in 2007 showed that classes were still largely teacher-centred and a constructivist approach had not been adopted. This mismatch is echoed in other countries such as India (Chapter 9) and China (Chapter 15).

Teachers clearly need help to adjust their classroom approach if major changes to the English curriculum are not based in local educational culture. Many of the chapters end with a call for more and improved teacher training. In contexts where textbooks are produced or selected by central government, teachers need long-term training in methods suitable for implementing the books in ways which are consonant with their existing practices; their training is more likely to be successful if it includes such an element of cultural continuity.

A further key responsibility for teacher trainers is to provide student-teachers with problem-solving approaches such as reflective practice, action research, and exploratory practice. These approaches give teachers a way of examining issues in their own teaching and arriving at solutions that may help them bridge the gap between the imposed curriculum and their classroom reality. As part of pre-service training, this would fall under the remit of university lecturers who, in their role as researchers, could also usefully conduct studies in local schools. For example, a small pilot study in Oman, described in Chapter 17, assessed a primary English reading programme and improved it by adding a phonics element. In Turkey, a case study approach to innovations in the primary English curriculum used a questionnaire, classroom observations, and interviews to provide a profile of teachers, on which to ground suggestions for improvements to the system (Chapter 22).

The idea that materials can help to train teachers in TEYL methods emerges in a number of papers. The teacher's book accompanying the students'

course book was redesigned in Oman to include tasks that teachers could combine at their own discretion (Chapter 17), thus facilitating more teacher decision-making and control over lesson planning. In the publishers' forum, reported in Chapter 25, it was argued that materials may help train teachers by providing rationales for activities and not just the activities themselves. Such materials design allows minimally qualified teachers to teach English while encouraging their decision-making, autonomy, and development, and means that teachers with basic English ability can maximize their students' output.

Teachers can also be supported in a variety of social interactions; a number of interesting examples are described. In Cameroon, for example, the national English teachers' association compensated for a poorly planned and under-funded national bilingualism policy by running workshops in primary schools to help Francophone teachers teach English (Chapter 10). In Nigeria, a series of radio programmes provided teacher development to practitioners who would otherwise have received none; the programmes had an estimated 70 million listeners (Chapter 23). This was one of the very few chapters to deal with technology in TEYL, and this is an area which could easily be further developed by teachers' associations, universities, and others, particularly as a way of supporting teachers.

There are a number of recurring challenges in introducing TEYL programmes, for example, teachers' abilities in English and familiarity with suitable teaching techniques, training teachers and teacher-trainers, curriculum design, materials, and assessment. This book illuminates many of these areas with fascinating accounts of innovations from around the world. Teachers of fifth and sixth grade pupils across Japan are now teaching English to their students, perhaps for the first time. Although this book provides little for them in the way of direct assistance, it is hoped that teacher educators will draw inspiration and ideas from the varied English language education policies and programmes presented.

***EAP Essentials: A Teacher's Guide to Principles and Practice.***  
**Olwyn Alexander, Sue Argent, and Jenifer Spencer. Reading,**  
**UK: Garnet, 2008. viii +379 pp.**

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*EAP Essentials* is written by EAP (English for Academic Purposes) practitioners for EAP practitioners. It has not been written as a resource tool for academic research, though there are enough references to satisfy this demand. It is also not a pedagogical tool to take to the classroom for clarification during teaching time. In the introductory material, the aims and intentions of this text are outlined. These aims include bridging the gap between theory and practice, emphasizing reflective practice, and providing the same kind of support and guidance that you might gain from working alongside an experienced EAP teacher.

The book has 10 chapters: "The Context of EAP," "Text Analysis," "Course Design," "Reading," "Vocabulary," "Writing," "Listening and Speaking," "Critical Thinking," "Student Autonomy," and "Assessment." The concept of reflective practice, which suggests that learning through action is a continuous process, acts as a framework for interacting with this text. Each chapter provides hands-on tasks to be completed by the reader. This encourages reflection on what has been introduced and, moreover, allows the reader to contextualise this approach with personal experiences. The end of each chapter gives several relevant references that can be pursued later. There is also a CD-ROM containing photocopyable resources for classroom activities and teachers' notes, which are conveniently signposted throughout the text where the activities relate to the discussion and theme.

The practical tone of the book, grounded in EAP discourse, focuses on the relationship between EAP teachers and students. Actual comments and reflections of anonymous students are included, reinforcing the reflective dimension of each chapter, and suggesting that EAP practitioners carefully consider the specific academic requirements of their students. EAP has a long tradition of focusing on writing to raise awareness of academic conventions and enable students to prepare for specific discourse communities (Tribble, 2009). The field has not, however, clarified as successfully other methodological aspects of EAP. For example, it has been suggested that EAP

has focused on *what* needs to be taught and *why* it needs to be taught with less emphasis on *how* it needs to be taught. The authors bring this discussion to a practical level with concrete examples of appropriate materials and the *how to* of designing materials (Watson-Todd, 2003).

Chapter 3 develops the salient theme of focusing on the practical teaching context in EAP through needs analysis while providing a context specific framework. By identifying the different constraints on course design and needs, the authors suggest that decisions regarding course design should rest firmly in the hands of the teachers. The authors broaden this discussion by exploring the *how* of EAP-context specific methodology, with the purpose of designing a coherent syllabus. Case studies and authentic teaching materials help readers evaluate and reflect on this process throughout the chapter.

The next part of the book examines the four skills and vocabulary. Each chapter balances the academic research dimension with suggested activities and case studies related to the skill. In the reading section, for example, the complexities of research article abstracts are considered. The book does not shy away from difficult and complex areas of EAP and examines these topics through a process of case study analysis and follow-up reader activities. In the vocabulary chapter, the authors highlight the necessity of teaching both general academic vocabulary and subject-specific vocabulary.

Writing (Chapter 6) is, as the authors acknowledge, “the most crucial of the skills needed in an academic context, where written texts are the main means of communication” (p. 178). This section highlights the expectations of content teachers (who are not ESL/EFL teachers) in terms of what they want students to be able to perform in relevant disciplines. The analysis is developed through actual comments about the difficulties students have when doing writing for the first time, which include “I don’t know the correct academic style” and “A dissertation for me is a completely new thing” (p. 178). Students’ comments about teachers’ expectations of student writing at the university level, together with actual comments from teachers, add relevance to the discussion and support its focus.

The listening and speaking chapter provides a detailed analysis of academic lectures. It discusses the complexities of lectures; this approach is helpful in building an understanding of the structure of lectures in particular disciplines. These complexities are addressed in the designing of listening tasks, which promote awareness raising and developing bottom-up and top-down listening strategies to support and overcome linguistic difficulties during lectures. The chapter also focuses on developing skills to recognise content relationships in lectures.



The final three chapters of the book look at critical thinking, student autonomy, and assessment. These are a welcome addition to the discussion of EAP course design and relate to the overall focus on academic study skills developed in the book. Throughout these chapters, the authors acknowledge the importance of reflective teaching and learning as a means to understand and respond to the challenges of academic contexts. The emphasis on reflection supports a general recognition in ELT that practitioners must analyse their own teaching and students must analyse their own learning.

*EAP Essentials* has much to offer one who has little formal training in EAP teaching. It explains relevant theoretical aspects of EAP for less experienced teachers and delivers on its aims to link theory and practice through reflection. Furthermore, through the support and guidance of experienced practitioners, the book outlines some very practical solutions to the challenges of teaching EAP. This practitioner emphasis will satisfy experienced teachers' desires to gain insights into other teaching contexts. Overall, the book is a welcome addition to a rapidly growing discipline that requires further clarification regarding approaches and methods.

## References

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***The Age Factor and Early Language Learning.* Marianne Nikolov (Ed.). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2009. 424 pp.**

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The importance of children's English education has been recognized widely in countries where English is learned as a second or foreign language. This compilation of research into how the age factor interacts with other factors in a variety of educational contexts offers a clear, broad perspective of the age factor in early language learning. The book comprises 17 chapters that

examine early language learning and teaching in Europe, Asia, and North America. Nikolov has put together an excellently edited volume to explain how context contributes to early language teaching and learning.

The first two chapters examine mainstream SLA research trends, giving novice teachers and researchers of young language learners a general scaffolding within which to place SLA. The next four chapters focus on the assessment of young learners. Curtain (Chapter 3) introduces a variety of approaches to assessment of early second language learning in the USA such as the Early Language Listening and Oral Proficiency Assessment (ELLOPA), the Student Oral Proficiency Assessment (SOPA), and the CAL (Center for Applied Linguistics) Oral Proficiency Exam (COPE). Comparing these common assessment instruments according to grade level, program, and test format gives readers a useful outline of different types of assessment for young language learners. In Chapter 4, Inbar-Lourie and Shohamy compare the effectiveness of two models of teaching in distinct educational contexts. The first model comprised expert EFL teachers who taught only English to young learners while in the second model, teachers were generalists or homeroom teachers. Inbar-Lourie and Shohamy suggest that teachers need to take into account a different formative assessment construct which includes not only language but also a content focus. In Chapter 5, Jalkanen investigates an early total immersion program with KATE (the Kuopio Assessment Tool for English) and concludes that early total immersion is an appropriate methodology for young language learners. These studies identified the need to use appropriate assessments depending on the levels of learners, purpose of the program, and teachers' qualifications.

Chapters 7 and 8 examine how age impacts on language learning over time. In Chapter 7, Muñoz draws on results from the BAF (The Barcelona Age Factor) project, a longitudinal study from 1995 to 2004 with the aim of exploring age-related differences and attainment of language. Her study confirmed that older language learners outperformed younger learners in the beginning stage. Furthermore, young learners did not show a long-term advantage within 9 years (1995 to 2004), which is the opposite of the prevalent findings that younger starters attain higher levels of language proficiency. Kasai (Chapter 8) investigates how age plays its role in acquiring English /l/ and /r/ sounds with Japanese children and adult learners. Results showed that whereas there is an age effect in production of those sounds, there is no age effect in discriminating between them. The critical period of language learning has been debated as a limitation of SLA. These two studies displayed that "the younger, the better" in second or foreign language learning does not seem to fit all instructional contexts.

The next two chapters look at individual differences (attitude, motivation, context, and aptitude) in early language learning. Djigunović (Chapter 9) explores attitudes, motivations, strategies, and anxieties of learners in early language programs. Strikingly, within individual differences in early language learning, the role of teachers stands out among those variables but is not considered as important as individual factors. Mattheoudakis and Alexiou in Chapter 10 highlight socioeconomic factors in early language learning. The findings show that there are significant differences between eastern and western schools. However, it is notable that several of the teachers' opinions and beliefs about children from low-income families were not confirmed by the findings. Therefore, the authors stress that teacher beliefs or expectations of certain children may contribute to students' ultimate achievement of language learning.

From Chapter 12 to Chapter 17, this book delves into the macro-level of language teaching and learning: curriculum, language policy, and language choice. Wang (Chapter 12) and Moon (Chapter 13) investigate teacher attitudes toward curriculum change in China and Vietnam respectively. Even though teachers themselves may support an innovative curriculum, prevailing conditions such as a heavy workload, large classes, and a lack of teacher training make some changes an unrealistic goal for English language learning and teaching. Peng and Zheng (Chapter 14) also point out a mismatch in language policy and the language classroom in China. Although the Chinese Ministry of Education emphasizes learners' communicative competence and the application of communication strategies, students and teachers used English very infrequently when faced with language difficulties in the classroom. Rather, students simply used a Chinese word to overcome any communication challenge. These three chapters apparently reflect the reality of second language teaching and learning in EFL settings. What teachers perceive to be an innovative teaching methodology may be limited by the broader social context, such as national curriculum and high stakes tests, rather than a teacher's self-will.

Looking across all 17 chapters, two weaknesses appear. The depth of data analysis to reach the conclusions that the authors make remains in question. Comparing research procedures and research design, many of the studies spend relatively little time discussing either the data analysis of their work or the findings. Furthermore, it would have been more practical if the authors included pedagogical implications that related to their research findings. Current and future teachers expect to read how those research findings can be used to improve their teaching practice. Therefore, researchers need to make an effort to link theory and practice.

Despite these two criticisms, this book makes a contribution not only to SLA, but also to early language learning in different contexts. Indeed, the book deals with crucial issues in SLA as well as how those issues can be interpreted for young language learners in different educational contexts. As mentioned, it is hard to find appropriate research-based books that focus on young language learners. In particular, a compilation of research in EFL contexts is not easy to find. Therefore, I would recommend this thought-provoking book to all those interested in teaching English to young learners in either ESL or EFL contexts. It is a valuable read to see what is happening in countries where foreign languages are taught to young learners.

***Sociocultural Theory in Second Language Education: An Introduction Through Narratives.* Merrill Swain, Penny Kinnear, and Linda Steinman. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2011. xvii + 174 pp.**

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Many of us have long been searching for an effective introduction to sociocultural theory (SCT) for our graduate and undergraduate students, to scaffold them into working conceptualizations that they can grow with. Apparently, the authors of this volume also could not find one, so they wrote it. Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman have created a user-friendly text that not only scaffolds readers gently into the essential concepts of SCT, but does so in the entertaining and captivating mode of narratives.

The book starts off with a brief narrative about Vygotsky's work and life and then an introduction dealing with SCT in SLA through narratives. Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman rightly deal immediately with the readers' question, "Why stories?" They answer thoroughly, devoting four pages to their arguments, with perhaps the most important being that we remember stories better than anything else: "Stories have the quality of 'stickiness' that lasts after discrete bits of information are forgotten" (Heath & Heath, 2007, p. xi). The narrative turn, just like the social turn in SLA, is still occurring on many campuses and across many disciplines. The authors then narrate the

process of producing the book: “We elicited/solicited the narratives in circumstances separate from the conception of this textbook, and then studied these narratives to demonstrate particular SCT concepts-in-context” (p. xiii). They also emphasize that “this is not research *on* narrative; rather it is achieving/seeking understanding of phenomena (SCT concepts) *via* narratives” (p. xiii, italics in the original).

The first seven chapters deal with some of the primary concepts in SCT, clearly marked and allowing those with particular questions about these concepts to go straight to the topic of their concern: mediation, zone of proximal development (ZPD), languaging through private and collaborative speech, everyday concepts and scientific concepts, interrelatedness of cognition and emotion, activity theory, and assessment. Each chapter starts with key terms (also glossed at the end of the book), key tenets of the primary concept as it informs SCT, and the context of the story. The main part of the chapter is of course the narrative (by a language learner, teacher, or in an interview format), followed by the authors’ interpretations (something like a movie director’s scene commentary on a DVD) which, as they note, are often a story about the story.

The authors end each of these chapters noting allied concepts, controversial issues, key studies, and questions and implications for research and pedagogy. All references are at the end of the book following a useful glossary. In addition to the primary concepts they also use, exemplify, and gloss many others such as scaffolding, communities of practice, affordances, agency, genesis, and the genetic method. The layout of the book is also very user friendly and attractive, especially the first page of each chapter, which gives an overview of the chapter with bullet points.

My favorite two stories were “Madame Tremblay” (Chapter 2, illustrating the ZPD) and “Grace” (Chapter 5, illustrating the interrelatedness of cognition and emotion). While the post-study analyses are extremely stimulating, the narratives as the primary material are captivating. I took to “Madame Tremblay” because it was written by a university student about her French immersion schooling in fourth grade in a vivid literary style with great humor and confusion (which may be difficult for nonnatives). “Grace,” on the other hand, was a part of a 2-hour interview with a woman who had grown up as a Greek in Canada (speaking Greek at home), left at 24 to teach English in Greece for 20 years, and returned to Canada to start graduate school in her mid 40s. The sense that she was an outlier in both places and not a native speaker of either language created emotions and identity issues that many long-time-abroad speakers feel. With these stories as data,

readers also get the idea that SCT can deal with real people, problems, and possibilities-in-context.

Chapter 8, the last chapter, invites readers to participate in interpreting two narratives the way the authors did in the previous chapters. After having read the authors' interpretations in the previous seven chapters, the SCT concepts actually start jumping off the page at you; you really want to talk to someone about them and share your conceptualizations and analyses. The book ends with a short Discussion section where the authors themselves reflect on what they learned in writing the book (walking their SCT reflective talk), which must have been interesting for them and something I would like to see more authors do.

As an academic book, this breaks the mold of abstract and depersonalized information being coldly calculated and measured and explained. Instead, it invites the reader into the experiences of a first-person narrative, with which we often identify, and then further invites us to reflect with one of the authors as they analyze the narrative. The book is itself a meta-mediational tool, using mainly stories as the mediational means to explain SCT concepts such as mediation. It is itself a ZPD constructing tool that I believe will stimulate much languaging and eventual appropriation.

Swain, Kinnear, and Steinman have produced a text whose effective scaffolding of complex knowledge might easily be modeled by many other authors. I would love to see books using this narrative approach about, for example, complexity and chaos theory and ecological linguistics. I was able to use the book this fall in two introductory graduate school classes on SCT and I found it provided useful organization to the course and accessible readings for students. I think I could easily use it with undergraduates, but only advanced level undergraduates if they are nonnative speakers of English. I have been recommending it to my colleagues at universities and to all my previous graduate students as well. My only complaint is why didn't we have such a book sooner?

## References

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***The Social Psychology of English as a Global Language: Attitudes, Awareness and Identity in the Japanese Context.***  
**Robert M. McKenzie. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer, 2010. xi + 210 pp.**

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As Kachru (1985) showed when presenting his model of world Englishes, the *outer circle*<sup>1</sup> and *expanding circle*<sup>2</sup> have historically looked to the *inner circle*<sup>3</sup> for guidance on English norms. Accordingly, inner circle native speakers came to be deferred to as exponents of central, norm-providing “standards,” with nonstandard varieties correspondingly marginalized. More recently, with the world post-modernly de-centered, there has been increasing scrutiny of the very notion of standard, accompanied by a fresh appreciation of varieties hitherto devalued. Within the field of second language acquisition (SLA), this has meant conveying the worth of such varieties to students who might otherwise absorb inner circle myths of superiority.

It is in this context that McKenzie, in the work under review, observes the particular prestige still accorded in Japan to inner circle English and, with a view to reform, invokes social psychology to explore Japanese attitudes to and awareness of English varieties.

Organizing his book into six chapters, McKenzie devotes Chapter 1 to the worldwide spread of English and English in Japan specifically, Chapter 2 to the concept of *attitude*, and Chapter 3 to previous attitude research. An empirical study is outlined in Chapter 4 and Chapters 5 and 6 discuss its findings and their implications. Finally, appendices provide a transcription of the study material together with statistics related to follow-up analysis.

Chapter 1 begins by reviewing how English achieved its global status. The author adopts Kachru's model and then describes the place of English in Japan's education, media, and society. Chapter 2 introduces social psychology terminology and explores the concept of attitude before considering the importance of language attitudes in SLA and sociolinguistics. Chapter 3 lays theoretical groundwork for the study, detailing approaches to the measurement of language attitudes and reviewing research on attitudes of native speakers, nonnative speakers, and Japanese, specifically towards English and its varieties.

Chapter 4 describes the study, first laying out the research questions, which relate to learners' ability to identify varieties of English, their attitudes to those varieties, social variables significant in these attitudes, and attitudes towards their native language. McKenzie describes how and why he chose for evaluation speakers of Midwest and Southern U.S. English, Scottish Standard English and Glasgow Vernacular, and moderately accented and heavily accented Japanese English. He then details background variables (gender, exposure to English, regional provenance, self-perceived proficiency in English, and attitudes towards varieties of Japanese), describes his informants (558 Japanese students), and introduces his research instrument's four parts: a verbal-guise study, dialect recognition questions, a map exercise for recording perceptions of Japanese dialects, and a questionnaire concerning background variables. A pilot study is also reviewed.

In Chapter 5, McKenzie reports his findings, including that overall the inner circle speakers were ranked higher than the expanding circle (i.e., Japanese) speakers. Finally, Chapter 6 examines broader implications of the findings at considerable length in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 4 and points the way to future research.

Interestingly, this book is a re-edition, with little change, of a doctoral thesis with a quite different title, namely *A Quantitative Study of the Attitudes of Japanese Learners Towards Varieties of English Speech: Aspects of the Sociolinguistics of English in Japan*. Arguably, this is the more appropriate title as although social psychology is important in this work, the detailed explanations relating to it are, as stated in the thesis outline (McKenzie, 2006), intended to contextualize the Japan study. One objection we might have with the later title concerns its inclusion of the word *identity*. While noting implications for identity, we found no specific treatment of identity as an issue.

That this book was written by a PhD candidate required to demonstrate relevant knowledge may have much to do with its encyclopedic approach. There are no fewer than 358 references, and the text almost constantly cites one or another of them. The same thoroughness is evident in the definition of even common terms and in the very detailed coverage of the research study.

All this erudition and care ensures a densely informative text, yet it is far from being dispassionate, instead manifesting a strong sense of mission. McKenzie's central conviction is that Japan exhibits the same "native speaker ideology" that social psychology has identified as a universal phenomenon (p. 144), but in a particularly marked form. In Japan, he believes, inner circle English (mostly in its British or American standard forms) has been



endowed with a persuasive aura of prestige and correctness. He advocates that provided intelligibility remains, students might be exposed “to as wide a range of (native and nonnative) English speech varieties as possible” (p. 161). In this position, there is evident fair-mindedness. If standards are ideological constructs, McKenzie may be seen as speaking for truth and justice in exposing and deposing them. And for sure, there is much evidence, duly cited in Chapter 1, to support his contentions that standards *are* ideological constructs and that Japan *has* hitherto privileged inner circle English and favored stereotypes of native English speakers.

The main objective of McKenzie’s survey corresponds to these perceived realities. He resolves to determine “to what extent English language learners in Japan consider nonstandard or regional varieties of inner circle varieties of English as acceptable models for learning” (p. 68). For this investigation, he chooses a quantitative approach, which he sees as having multiple advantages over qualitative studies, mainly through the potential for statistical analysis and a reduction in researcher subjectivity. Significantly, his approach bypasses informant subjectivity through indirect investigation of covert attitudes that subtend variety preference. Degree of preference is assessed according to two dimensions now cardinal in social psychology: *competence* and *social attractiveness* (where the former term, often used interchangeably with *prestige* and *status*, has little to do with the *communicative competence* of SLA). Consistent with earlier findings, McKenzie’s survey sees that informants deem inner circle speakers as having greater competence (status, prestige), seemingly demonstrating the strength of a native speaker ideology in Japan. Meanwhile, nonstandard inner circle speakers were held to be more socially attractive and achieved higher scores overall, implying that learners may accept them as alternative models.

Coherent though all the foregoing may seem, it can be questioned on two counts. First, with outer circle English excluded, the survey evidence appears insufficient to conclude that expanding circle speakers consider inner circle English the most competent. Second, the exclusive focus on attitudes to explain variety preference, together with the envisioning of reform on the basis of attitude findings alone, leaves no evident place for alternative, mindful criteria for variety choice. It is true that McKenzie refers to instrumental motivation in discussing other researchers, but there is no evident place for it in his own schema. Indeed, significantly, learner agency is mentioned only briefly in his book, almost as an afterthought. Focusing instead on the subconscious, McKenzie laudably aims to bypass falsehood and reveal factors the individual may not perceive or admit, but this also precludes statements

of truth. As a result, his characterization of learners tends toward caricature. With learner autonomy abstracted, any preference for inner circle varieties, and the dominance of these in the education system, can be attributed systematically to ignorance, mystification, and the assimilation of stereotypes. This is evident, for example, in the treatment of Japanese female learners, whose preference for native forms is tightly ascribed to the native speaker ideology, leading McKenzie to argue somewhat cavalierly that these women should be specifically “targeted” for re-education (p. 155). In short, for all the objectivity McKenzie accords his approach, it in fact tendentiously opens the way to a confirmation of a simplistic view. His survey can only give an ideological account of variety preference. In this regard, his project contrasts with recent efforts by others (e.g., Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) to express learner motivation anew in cognitive constructs.

If McKenzie oversimplifies his case theoretically, he also does little more than skirt around the practicalities of implementing the reforms he desires. For example, even if his advocacy of a range of English speech varieties in the classroom were to gain traction (which is itself far from sure), it would open up thorny issues of teacher capabilities, materials choices, and especially study time limitations.

Despite our reservations, we admire McKenzie when he remains modestly close to his implicit exigency of fairness. His most valuable message is that there remains an enduring native speaker ideology that can deeply and prejudicially influence students’ attitudes to English varieties. Teachers who heed this message will beware of transmitting that ideology and instead inform students of how current standard forms achieved their primacy through political and economic power.

All in all, this book instructs both deliberately and despite itself. It is a work of meticulous, exhaustive research, lucidly written, vastly informative, and with a valid stated objective: analyzing Japanese learners’ attitudes to English varieties in order to help provide a “methodological framework for the study of ideological forces” (p. 21) operating in English-learning communities, as well as to develop recognition of peripheral varieties. In this, we see much to commend. All the more regrettably, the primary focus on covert attitudes, apt as it may be in a book on social psychology, becomes controlling, and both enables and emboldens a confirmation bias that diminishes the enterprise. “Ideological forces” are normally associated with the dominant center, but this work shows how the periphery likewise develops rhetoric in its own interest.

**Notes**

1. Comprising ex-colonies of Britain and the United States.
2. Comprising countries where English has had no historical administrative role.
3. Comprising countries where most people are native English speakers.

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