Face work in academic settings: A case of Japanese students of English

Masako K. Hiraga

1. INTRODUCTION

Interlanguage pragmatics reflects the increasing interest in understanding the social and pragmatic aspects of second language acquisition. Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993: 3) define interlanguage pragmatics as 'the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language.' The present study attempts to analyse the nonnative speakers' use of linguistic action patterns from the perspective of their face wants(1) with special reference to the specific discourse genre of academic tutorials in Britain and Japan. The genre orientation gives a clearer delineation of the role and status of interlocutors on the one hand, and of the socio-cultural assumptions presupposed in the interactional settings, on the other. The interaction between tutor and student is likely to depend on deep laid assumptions regarding educational culture and this will have effects both on the kinds of things that are expected to be said, i.e., ideational content, and how the interlocutors are expected to interact with each other, i.e., interpersonal content. The contours of 'face' that are manifested in this situation will have evolved from these two sets of expectations. It is hoped that by focusing on 'face' as defined by Brown and Levinson (1987: 61)(2) in the specifically motivated context of the tutorial, these normally implicit features of cultural motivation will
be made more explicit and can explain and therefore help preempt the occurrence of difficulties in cross-cultural communication in academic settings.

The present research was prompted by the perceived difficulties of Japanese students studying in the arts in Britain, as to what was required from them in response to their tutors' questions and comments (for overview of the difficulties, see Hira and Turner 1996b; for the problems of analytic elaboration, see Hira and Turner 1995, and Turner and Hira 1996; for the differing face perceptions and the problem of justification, see Turner and Hira 1995). Incorporating the results of our former study on face work (Hira and Turner 1996a), which dealt with the presentation of and the response to the face threatening acts (FTAs) in the British and the Japanese native-language tutorial contexts, the present study tries to analyse the responses to the same FTAs in EFL situations. The specific FTAs looked at were criticism and suggestion, which occurred most frequently in the tutorials. The same discourse completion test as in our prior project (Hira and Turner 1996a) was administered to the EFL informants in two categories: (i) EFL informants with an experience of studying in an English-speaking country for more than one year; and (ii) EFL informants without studying abroad. The results of EFL informants were compared in terms of their face wants with those in the target language data and in the native language data.

2. METHOD

2.1 Data Collection

From authentic data gathered by audio- and video-taped tutorial sessions between Japanese students and British tutors, and set against similar situations in both their native and target languages, a discourse completion test (DCT) was devised with several situations widely occurring in both British and Japanese academic contexts for the hope of large-scale data collection. This paper deals with three of the situations thus tested in order to show the differing face wants of the British, the Japanese and the EFL students. The DCT situations are tutor-initiated exchanges, where the predominant illocutionary force is criticism, suggestion, and request for clarification, although the first situation also implies a suggestion, the second also implies criticism, and the third also implies criticism. From the point of view of Brown and Levinson's formulation, the three exchange situations might be expected to threaten both the positive and negative face of the students.

The DCT prompts were as follows:

A. You're reaching the end of your course and are discussing the final term paper with your tutor.

Tutor: You haven't written very much, have you?

B. You're having a discussion with your tutor about your recent work.

Tutor: I think you're doing good work. What would you say if I suggested you made the concluding section a bit shorter?

C. You're discussing with your tutor the essay you have written about the work of a certain author.

Tutor: When you wrote this [pointing to a particular sentence], were you implying that you agreed with the author or were you criticising him?

The linguistic forms of the tutor utterances, derived initially from authentic data recorded in tutorials mainly in the arts in Britain, were formulated for the purpose of greater applicability in the informants of different disciplines. The discourse completion test was administered to the following four groups of informants:
23 British informants (E)  
60 Japanese informants answered in Japanese (J)  
53 Japanese informants of EFL without experience of study abroad, answered in English (EFL(J))  
17 Japanese informants of EFL with experience of study abroad, answered in English (EFL(E))

The informants were students and tutors in a range of disciplines, incorporating the arts and the sciences. The level of English of the EFL informants varied from intermediate to advanced. In the Japanese context, the situations were translated into Japanese and administered to be completed in Japanese.

2. Coding

The DCT answers were analysed within a shared analytical framework to see the workings of face in the response to FTAs by the students. The coding scheme is based on the four-way combination of either acknowledgment of or resistance to the speech act X, Y, Z, either explicitly or implicitly. Each take-up was interpreted either as attendance or threat to the positive or negative face of the interlocutors, according to the nature of the speech act in question. Strategies deployed by the students in the realisation of acknowledgment of or resistance to X, Y, ... fell into similar patterns with some variations, according to the situations and the speech acts (for the details of coding formulations, see Hiraga and Turner 1996: 612-614).

The responses to DCT prompts revealed that the informants employed more than one strategy in certain combinations in the three situations tested. Hiraga and Turner (1996a: 615-616) identified the following five characteristic ‘scenarios’ or ‘student types,’ corresponding to the weighing of face attendance employed by the informants in the situations of criticism and/or suggestion:

1) CONCILIATORS basically follow what the tutor was saying. Their notable characteristic is that they do not show resistance to criticism. Instead, they either acknowledge the criticism or show commitment to the suggestion.
2) NEGOTIATORS try to balance the attendance and the threat towards the positive face of the tutor and towards their own positive face. The most typical negotiation scenario is that they use acknowledgment of criticism and/or suggestion as a softener to mitigate the force of a potential threat to the positive face of the tutor, while defending their own positive face by resisting the criticism.
3) DEFENDERS are primarily concerned with protecting their own positive and negative face, and attend to the positive face of the tutor only secondarily. Hence, they tend to show resistance to criticism.
4) RESIGNERS give up trying to develop their ideas or projects by resistance to suggestion, although they acknowledge criticism in order to show their attendance towards the positive face of the tutor.
5) NON-ELABORATORS simply respond to a question at its face value. They neither acknowledge criticism, nor resist criticism or suggestion.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Face Wants in the British and the Japanese Native Informants

The percentage of the strategies employed in each situation by the British and the Japanese native informants is indicated in Table 1 (see p. 262).

There are marked differences in the use of strategies between the British and the Japanese native informants. The most notable Brit-
Table 1. Strategies Employed by British and Japanese Native Informants (%) (B/n=23, J/n=60)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

British; 1-Japanese; n=number of informants; Sit-Situation; Inf=Informant; Ack=Acknowledgment; Resist=Resistance; ex=explicit; im=implied; hst=hesitant. Bold-face numbers show frequency larger than 50%.

ish characteristic across the situations is resistance to criticism and suggestion. On the other hand, the most notable Japanese characteristic is explicit acknowledgment of suggestion, particularly in Situation B. It can be interpreted that the British tendency to resist criticism reflects the attendance to their own positive face, and the tendency to resist suggestion shows the attendance to their own negative face. By contrast, the Japanese tendency to acknowledge the suggestion, particularly by showing commitment, is interpreted as the attendance to the positive face of the tutor, as well as accepting the threat of their own negative face.

Both informant groups used more than one strategy per situation; namely, 2.2 strategies by the British informants and 1.6 by the Japanese informants across the situations. Responses of the informants in each situation can be classified into several representative scenarios by the combination of strategies. Table 2 indicates such classifications in terms of the distribution of the student types as defined in Section 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Types</th>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>British Natives (n=23)</th>
<th>Japanese Natives (n=60)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCILIATOR</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGOTIATOR</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFENDER</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIGNER</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-ELABORATOR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The British informants and the Japanese informants indicate a sharp contrast in the dominant student types, particularly in Situations A and B, which are marked by bold-face numbers. Hiraga and Turner (1996a) analysed in detail the differences between the British and the Japanese native data in terms of the student types. The most dominant student type in the British informants is the DEFENDER, who does not acknowledge criticism or suggestion, and show resistance to criticism. In the face work with the tutor, the DEFENDERS are primarily interested in defending their own positive and negative face. They are attending their own positive face wants even at the cost of threatening the positive face of the tutor by resisting the criticism, notably by way of giving justifications such as: ‘Actually I have done a lot of reading and have extensive notes.’ The DEFENDERS also resist suggestion by stating reluctance or difficulty, e.g., ‘I find it difficult to pad it out and make it longer,’ and therefore, they attend their own negative face.

On the contrary, the DEFENDER is not a dominant student type in the Japanese data. It is the CONCILIATORS that characterise the Japanese informants. The CONCILIATORS, not showing resistance to criticism, acknowledge the criticism or show commitment to the suggestion. They are primarily attending the positive face of the tutor at the cost of threatening their own positive face by agreeing
with the tutor (e.g., 'No, I haven't written much'), or admitting difficulty (e.g., 'I did my best, but this was all I could'), or threatening their own negative face by showing commitment to the suggestion (e.g., 'That's no problem. I'll rewrite it').

The comparison of the British and the Japanese native data will be further elaborated in relation to the EFL data in the following two sections.

3. 2. Face Wants of EFL Informants

The percentage of the strategies employed by the two groups of EFL informants is indicated in Table 3, as in the same manner as the British and the Japanese native data.

Table 3. Strategies Employed by EFL(E) and EFL(J) Informants (%)
(EFL(E)/n=17, EFL(J)/n=53)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(E)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(J)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>(E)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(J)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>(E)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(J)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(E)=EFL(E); (J)=EFL(J); n=number of informants; Sit=Situation; Inf=Informant; Ack.=Acknowledgment; Resist.=Resistance; ex=explicit; im=implicit; hst=hesitant. Bold-face numbers indicate frequency larger than 50%.

Table 3 shows that the EFL informants employed similar strategies regardless of their experience of studying abroad. A slight difference between the two EFL groups is the resistance to criticism across three situations. The EFL(E) informants who have been exposed to an English-language educational culture showed a higher frequency of resistance to criticism than the EFL(J) informants without studying abroad. However, as indicated in Figure 1, the occurrence of resistance to criticism in EFL(E) informants is about the same frequency as in the Japanese data in all the three situations, and not as much as in the British data. This probably means that the EFL(E) informants have acquired a linguistic means to express resistance to criticism in the target language; e.g., by giving justification; nonetheless, this does not necessarily signify yet that their exposure to English educational culture has contributed to acquiring the socio-cultural patterns of thought. On the other hand, the results in the EFL(J) data, in particular, do not display the resistance to criticism, probably because they are not familiar with this strategy either pragmatically or linguistically.

The strategies occurred in combination in each of the three situations in the EFL data, too. In the same analytical manner, the student types are identified and calculated as shown in Table 4 (for definitions of each student type, see Section 2.2).
Table 4. Student Types of EFL Informants (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Types</th>
<th>FL(E) (n=17)</th>
<th>FL(J) (n=53)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A  B  C</td>
<td>A  B  C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCILIATOR</td>
<td>56  64  20</td>
<td>80  67  32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGOTIATOR</td>
<td>19  0   13</td>
<td>10  14  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFENDER</td>
<td>25  36  20</td>
<td>6   19  6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESIGNER</td>
<td>0   0   0</td>
<td>2   0   0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-ELABORATOR</td>
<td>0   0   47</td>
<td>0   0   61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bold-face numbers indicate notable differences between the British and the EFL groups.

There are two major dominant student types in EFL informants: the CONCILIATORS and the NON-ELABORATORS. In Situations A and B, the CONCILIATORS are dominant. As Figure 2 indicates, the same tendency is detected in the Japanese informants in Situations A and B, too. The CONCILIATORS are conveying that they agree with the tutor in what he/she has said, often at the cost of losing their own positive face wants. They might further show their attendance to the positive face of the tutor by threatening their own negative face wants by their commitment to following the tutor’s suggestion or advice. It can be said that the EFL informants indicate the similar face wants as the Japanese informants, possibly due to a transfer of preferred pragmatic patterns in the native language. Although the difference is very subtle (see Fig. 2), the dominance of the CONCILIATOR is the least in the EFL(E) informants in comparison with the EFL(J) and the Japanese.

Another dominant student type occurred in Situation C, in which
the NON-ELABORATORS shared a half of the informants, as indicated in Figure 3. This prominently characterises the EFL data. The NON-ELABORATORS are simply replying to the question (i.e., 'When you wrote this, were you implying that you agreed with the author or were you criticizing him?') at its face value. The prompt is syntactically a simple 'either-or' question, but pragmatically ambiguous. It is a request for clarification at its face value; but, it can also imply a criticism regarding the clarity of the sentence that the student wrote. The dominance of the NON-ELABORATOR in the EFL contexts could be that they either deliberately ignored implied criticism, or were unaware of any implied criticism. Obviously, the DCT results cannot answer which of the above was the case in the present data. However, the retrospective interviews often reveal that in the EFL context, the students are less prepared to interpret implied messages, particularly when the prompt is linguistically simple. It seems that the EFL students are content with their understanding on the linguistic level, and they do not process what has been said any further in order to interpret implied messages. In addition, there is a general tendency that the Japanese informants and the EFL informants elaborate less than the British informants (for the detailed discussion on elaboration in cross-cultural academic settings, see Hiraga and Turner 1995, and Turner and Hiraga 1996).

A notable difference between the EFL(E) and the EFL(J) informants can be seen in the DEFENDERS. Fig. 4 shows that the EFL(E) group has more than twice as many DEFENDERS as the EFL(J) group in all the situations. Since the DEFENDERS are the dominant student type in the British data, this tendency of the EFL(E) informants can be interpreted as an influence of their exposure to the English educational culture in which it is common that the students initially attend their own positive and negative face wants by resisting criticism or suggestion.

3.3. Student Types and Face Work

The following section summarises the findings in terms of student types identified in the responses to the DCT.

(1) CONCILIATORS

The CONCILIATORS do not show resistance to criticism; but, they acknowledge the criticism or show commitment to the suggestion. By agreeing with the tutor's criticism, the CONCILIATOR students basically concede to lose their positive face; but at the same time, they attend to the positive face of the tutor. In the DCT results, more than 50% of the Japanese native and EFL informants are classified into this category in Situations A and B (see Fig. 2). In addition, the CONCILIATOR students often
threaten their own negative face wants by indicating their commitment to following the tutor’s suggestion or advice on how to improve what was criticised. This ‘committal’ tendency was strong both in the EFL(E) and EFL(J) data, and in the Japanese native data. For example, in responding to ‘You haven’t written very much, have you?’ a typical EFL(J) CONCILIATOR student would say, ‘No, I haven’t. I’m sorry that I lacked for my own efforts [acknowledgment of criticism by showing regret]. I’ll do my best if you give me another one week, I promise [acknowledgment of suggestion by showing commitment].’ The emphasis on commitment seems indicating of ‘effacement’ of negative face, which concurs with the claim of Ide (1989), Matsumoto (1988, 1989), and Mao (1994) that negative face does not exist in group-oriented cultures.

2) NEGOTIATORS

The NEGOTIATORS both acknowledge the criticism or suggestion and show resistance to criticism. They are trying to weigh up attendance to the positive face of the tutor by acknowledging the criticism or suggestion, as well as attendance to their own positive face by resisting the criticism. Thus, they use acknowledgment of criticism and/or suggestion as a softener to mitigate the threat to the positive face of the tutor.

For example, in Situation A (“You haven’t written very much, have you?”) where the potential force of criticism is the strongest, a British student would say something like: No [acknowledgment of criticism], but I feel I’ve covered all the main points adequately [resistance to criticism by displaying justification]. Can you suggest areas I may have unwittingly left out [acknowledgment of suggestion by seeking further instruction].’ In the Japanese contexts, both native and EFL, the NEGOTIATORS showed a tendency to commitment, too. For instance, a EFL(E) student would say, ‘No, I haven’t finished my paper yet. As I want to write a very good

paper, I’ve been trying to find data as much as possible so far. I know the deadline is coming soon, but I’m sure I can complete my paper at the deadline.’

3) DEFENDERS

The DEFENDERS show resistance to criticism, without acknowledging criticism or suggestion. They are primarily interested in defending their own positive and negative face. As discussed in Section 3.2, the DEFENDER is the dominant student type in the British data (see Table 2). Defense of the positive and negative face wants by the British students show up in way of justifying their actions on the ideational basis. They would say in response to criticism, ‘I made an effort to keep the essay succinct and to the point,’ or in response to suggestion, ‘I could try that, but I wouldn’t want to take out any of the substantive points.’ They are claiming their defence on academic grounds by referring to the values such as ‘succinctness,’ ‘substantive points,’ etc.

In the Japanese data, both native and EFL, there were fewer DEFENDERS. There is also a difference in the ways in which they defend their positive or negative face. A Japanese informants would say, ‘I’m considering it now’ (J-native); ‘Yes, but I did my best, Sir’ (EFL(J)); or ‘Would you tell me the reason?”(EFL(E)) Over all, they tend not to justify their resistance on the ideational basis. Rather, they defend on the interpersonal basis either by mitigating the force of resistance by vague or neutral messages, by stressing on the general attitude, or by seeking instruction (For further discussion on justification in both educational cultures, see Turner and Hiraga 1995).

4) RESIGNERS

The RESIGNERS show resistance to suggestion, although they acknowledge criticism. There is a few cases of this type in Situation A in the Japanese and EFL(J) data. For example, they resist a
tutor's suggestion of writing some more by saying, 'I couldn't write by any means. I'm sorry.' They are declining to take up the tutor's suggestion by stating inability — a willing loss of their positive face.

(5) NON-ELABORATORS

The NON-ELABORATORS simply respond to the tutor's prompt, and do not elaborate anything further. As discussed in the previous section, they are dominant in EFL(E) and EFL(J) in Situation C (see Fig. 3). In actual tutorial situations, however, the follow-up prompts are immediately addressed if the student does not elaborate. Therefore, non-elaboration itself does not relate to the face work as much as the other attitudes of the dominant student types.

4. CONCLUSION

Observation of the authentic data and the DCT results confirm that while the British students primarily deal with their own face wants, both positive and negative wants, the Japanese students show more concern to the positive face of the tutor at the cost of losing their own, both in native language and in EFL. As indicated in Fig. 5, the British students are dominantly defenders whereas the Japanese students, both native and EFL, are conciliators. It is also characteristic to Japanese informants that the consiliators showed a strong tendency to commitment, which is oriented toward the effacement of negative face of the students.

A major difference between the native groups and the EFL groups is that there is more non-elaboration in the EFL contexts for both pragmatic and linguistic reasons. A notable difference between the two groups of EFL informants is that EFL(E) informants with an experience of studying abroad display more attendance to their own positive and negative face than the EFL(J) informants who had not studied abroad. The proportional distribution of dominant student types in Fig. 5 indicates that there is a striking similarity between the Japanese native and the EFL(J) informants. It is speculated that the EFL(J) students transfer their own Japanese dealings of face work in the English-speaking situations.

In the context of academic tutorials, it appears that underlying assumptions and expectations are different in terms of the face wants of the students. With regard to interlanguage pragmatics, I believe that the differing perceptions of face and differing dealings of face work among the informant groups will help preempt cross-cultural misunderstandings and difficulties caused by unawareness of such differences. It might be the case, for example, that the tendency of the Japanese EFL students to attend the positive face of
the tutor at the expense of their own would give an impression of passivity or lack of self-confidence in the British context, whereas in the Japanese context, they would simply be perceived as polite and appropriately deferential. More work needs to be done to clarify the subtlety and complexity of face work and to develop realistic and practical programs for awareness building not only for the EFL students but also for the tutors who interact with the EFL students.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Joan Turner, at Goldsmiths College, University of London, for her collaboration in the entire project, and for her invaluable comments and constructive criticisms on this paper. This research was supported in part by a grant (1994-97) from the University of the Air, Japan, for which I would like to express my gratitude.

Notes

(1) For general discussions on face work in cross-cultural communication, see Morisaki and Gudykunst (1994) and Ting-Toomey and Crocoft (1994).

(2) Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) define 'the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself, consisting in two related aspects: (a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction -- i.e., to freedom of action and freedom from imposition; and (b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants.'

(3) Authentic data contained 5 British tutorials (video-taped tutorials of 7 students and 2 tutors); 11 Japanese tutorials (8 video-taped tutorials of 8 students and 1 tutor, and 3 audio-recorded tutorials of 3 students and 3 tutors); and 20 EFL tutorials (video-recorded tutorials of 20 students and 3 tutors) in addition to observational notes over 60 tutorials. The levels of English of the EFL informants vary from intermediate to advanced level.

(4) The assessment of the language level of the informants was based on a representative sample (20%) of the students for whom we had either TOEFL or IELTS scores. We estimated that a minimum score of 480 (TOEFL) and 5 (IELTS) was intermediate.

(5) In order to assess what a Japanese tutor was likely to have said, 38 informants were asked to change the tutor's utterance to what they thought was most likely to be said. The original DCT prompts in English reflect the general attitude of British tutors to attend the positive and the negative face of the students by redressive actions accompanying the FTAs, e.g., their use of the fall-rise tag question (in Situation A), prefacing what might be construed as a criticism with a positive statement (in Situation B), hypothetical modality for the introduction of the suggestion (in Situation B) and more subtle lexis (implying) and the either/or question to ease the focus onto the problem area (in Situation C). When changes were made to what the Japanese tutors might have said, these were all in the direction of greater forthrightness. In all the three situation tested, the reformulations seem to be indicative of there being less need to attend to the positive and negative face of the students in the Japanese context. For more detailed discussion about the nature of tutor-initiated exchanges, see Hiraga and Turner (1996a).

REFERENCES


English as a Language for International Communication: An Asian Perspective

Nobuyuki Honna

1. Introduction

English has become a very important language in Asia. It is a working language for intranational and international communication in many parts of the region. According to a report, 350 million people speak English for various purposes in Asia, a number that is larger than the combined populations of the United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia where English is a native tongue for many citizens.

However, the spread of English in Asia does not necessarily represent the transplantation of American English, British English, or any other Native-speaker Englishes in the region, not to mention their cultures. Rather it means that English is being increasingly de-Anglo-Americanized, and that new varieties of English are being established to reflect Asian ways of life.

In much of Asia, English is no longer a colonial import. Throughout the region, English is the language of culture, politics, and, above all, business. English-speaking Asians claim English as their own language. Filipino poet Gemino Abad says, “The English language is now ours. We have colonized it, too.” In India, students want to learn “the kind of English used by educated Indians,” rather than American English or British English.

Asian Englishes are diverse, however, with different social roles