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Introduction

Recent trends towards the promotion of English as an International Language (EIL) suggest that second language learners of English should not direct their energy towards acquiring a model of 'native speaker' English. Kachru (1985) outlines the roles of English in the global context as three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle refers to countries where English is used as a first language, such as Britain and North America. The Outer Circle refers to countries where English is used as a second language, such as India and Singapore. The Expanding Circle refers to countries where English is studied as a foreign language, including Japan and China. Because of the increasing number of English varieties in the Outer and Expanding Circles, English may no longer simply be conceived of as the language of Inner Circle countries, but rather as an international language.

The general direction of language policies in Japan has, in contrast, been in a different direction. The concept of EIL has not been supported by government policy, public education systems, or the private educational sector. The majority of Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in Japanese public schools are from America and Britain, and the administration of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme targets specific native speaker features of language including Inner Circle

pronunciation as a pedagogical objective (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, 1994). Similarly, the version of English practised in the *eikaiwa* (English conversation) business in Japan has been criticized by Kachru, since it directly promotes the English language as a tool of communication with ‘native speakers’ (cited in D’Angelo, 2003). In the area of cultural studies, the study of intercultural understanding has also been primarily focused on Anglo-American cultures (Honna & Takeshita, 1998).

At the same time, the importance of English language performance is becoming increasingly recognized in Japan. A government search committee in 2000 commissioned a report which proposed that English should be regarded as the second official language of Japan (Hashimoto, 2002, p. 65). The rationale behind this proposal was that the Japanese people should be required to acquire English for the purpose of communication in order to participate more fully in a range of international contexts. When the purpose of learning English is viewed in terms of providing for the international needs of the Japanese community, a range of issues concerning the maintenance of Japanese cultural identity arise. Hashimoto, for example, discusses whether teaching English can be simultaneously related to: “a certain mechanism to maintain specific aspects of Japaneseness” (2002, p. 64).

The purpose of the present study is consequently to further consider the significance of maintaining Japanese cultural identity as a vital component in the acquisition of English. If the present language learning goals in Japan were to be realigned in terms of the EIL model, the purpose of language learning could be viewed in terms of the acquisition of ‘Japanese English’ as one particular variety of the Asian Englishes developing in the Expanding Circle of the World Englishes framework. Furthermore, the relevance of conforming to Inner Circle models of language development as a primary pedagogical objective in Japan becomes highly questionable.

Literature Review

The aspect of language learning which is most readily identified as pertaining to a variety of language is pronunciation, although criticism of pronunciation has been considered somewhat pedantic since the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT). According to the CLT paradigm, communication of the message rather than a focus on technical details (including aspects of pronunciation) is the primary purpose for language learning. If the speaker is intelligible, the content of the message can be effectively communicated and the purpose for language learning has been achieved. Pronunciation is generally also considered as one of the areas of English which is most difficult to change due to early critical period effects (see : Long, 1990 ; Nunan, 1995). Jenkins even argues that : “some aspects of the L 2 phonology appear to be unteachable” (2000, p. 107). The current EIL framework suggests that speakers of English as a first language (L 1) should not expect second language (L 2) speakers to conform to their norms in areas such as pronunciation, since English is no longer their exclusive property.

Agreement on this issue appears to be widespread in academic circles, and is described by Matsuda as : “the shift in the power and the ownership of the language” (2003, p. 483). More specifically, Ito argues that “. . . today’s English is no longer an inviolable property of English-speaking people” (2002, p. 36), and refers to the current direction as the “deanglicisation of English” (2002, p. 38). Kachru also comments on this major realignment of the notion of the English language : “English is acquiring various international identities and thus acquiring multiple ownerships” (1986, p. 31). McKay concurs, “. . . as an international language, English belongs to no one country or culture” (2003, p. 39). Brady and Shinohara (2003) go further to argue that English should be labeled as an ‘additional language’ rather than a ‘foreign language,’ because the term ‘additional’ implies a

form of cultural ownership which does not occur in the term ‘foreign.’ However, it has also been questioned whether using English as a means of communication will grant equal status to all varieties of English: “Like ‘global English’, the notion that English serves as a neutral lingua franca is a dangerous myth. Natives and non-natives do not play on a level playing field” (Phillipson, 2002, p. 14).

Japanese English as a Regional Language Variety

A fundamental question arises as to whether Japanese English should be recognized as one of the varieties of East Asian Englishes. In contrast to Japan, other countries which have adopted English as an ‘additional language’ have typically developed their own version of English, which is also used as the language form in the local community :

‘Pidgin’ English is understood amongst the native Hawaiian people and it also enables them to effectively communicate with the English-speaking foreigners who are occupying their homeland. ‘Singlish’ is an effective form of English communication amongst the people of Singapore and their English-speaking world trading partners, business associates and tourists China is a developing nation and well within its rights in developing a form of English that best suits the needs of its general population when communicating with one another as well as native speakers and others who use English, while insisting on a more refined English only for its official translators and such professionals as lawyers, accountants, scientists and medical doctors. (Qiang & Wolff, 2003, pp. 34-35)

The issue of whether a Japanese variety of English will emerge sometime in the future has also received a mixed reception in recent years. Some researchers are in

favour of the development of a distinctly Japanese variety of English (e. g., Suzuki, cited in Kubota, 2004 ; Kachru, cited in D'Angelo, 2003) :

Professor Kachru feels that such a Japanese variety, which is the product of hybridization, lexical innovations, and acculturation, does exist. This controversy will continue to rage, yet one cannot deny that Japan will inevitably continue towards developing its own variety. (D'Angelo, 2003, p. 96)

Honna and Takeshita (1998) proceed further to argue that Japanese English is more easily acquired than American English, and is also a more desirable language form for Japanese learners. In contrast, Yano makes the substantial point that English cannot be viewed in the same regard since it will never become a 'lingua franca' in Japan :

Unlike Europe, Japan is a typical country where English is and will certainly stay a foreign language in that it will function only as a means of communication with non-Japanese in international settings. It will probably never be used within the Japanese community and form part of the speaker's identity repertoire. There will not be a distinctly local model of English, established and recognizable as Japanese English, reflecting the Japanese culture and language. (2001, p. 127)

There is also a tendency by many Japanese to view Japanese English as a 'low competency' form of English, rather than as a language variety in its own right. Hashimoto, for example, discusses Oohara's viewpoint : "Comparing the situation in Japan with the case of *Singlish* in Singapore, she argues that *Janglish* is not the

English of Japanese people because whenever Japanese people describe their English as Janglish it is used as an excuse for their incompetence in English” (2002, p. 68). Morrow (2004) takes a more ambiguous viewpoint, arguing that Japanese English is characterized by specific rules of discourse that: “provide strong support for accepting JE as an independent variety of English” (2004, p. 93). However, he considers that negative attitudes held by the Japanese towards Japanese English tend to create barriers towards the acceptance of Japanese English as an alternative language variety.

Preferences for Other Varieties of English

English language students in Japan are most frequently exposed to American English, but the need to expose them to a variety of Englishes is also recognized (Goddard, 2001). Studies have consequently been conducted investigating students’ preferences for different types of English. In one study, Humphries (1995) asked 94 Japanese students’ about their preferences for the pronunciation of eight varieties. In the first survey, the students listened to recordings of the accents but were not informed of the origins. The most common preferences were for the following accents: 20% North American, 16% British RP, 13% Scottish, and 13% Australian. He changed the second survey by informing the students of the origins of the various accents, and received minor variations in the results: 20% North American, 19% British RP, 12% Scottish, and 13% Australian. The results of both surveys indicated that the most common preference was for North American English, followed by British RP. The increased preferences for British RP in the second survey can perhaps be associated with the effect of labeling the accents.

Some studies on Japanese students’ preferences for varieties of English have included Japanese English as an alternative form. One study of 311 freshmen college students in Japan found that 47% preferred American English, 24%

preferred 'English with a Japanese accent', 14% responded that the specific accent didn't matter, and 12% of the students preferred British English (Benson, 1991, p. 41). A comparatively large number of students in Benson's study (38%) appear to have been uninterested in following native speaker pronunciation norms, since they either indicated a preference for Japanese English, or they were unconcerned about the specific variety.

In contrast, quite different results were found by Matsuda (2003) in her study of the attitudes of 33 Japanese 12th grade high school students. In response to the survey statement, "Japanese should speak Japanese English" Matsuda found that 3% of the students strongly agreed, 3% agreed, 13% were undecided, 32% disagreed, and 48% strongly disagreed (p.493). She concluded that "... nativization of English was not perceived as a manifestation of Japanese culture and identity but either as 'incorrect English' or, in cases of English loanwords and Japanese-made English, as part of the Japanese language" (2003, p. 493).

Matsuura, Fujieda, and Mahoney (2004) conducted a survey which compared the attitudes of 660 students and 50 teachers towards English in Japan. In response to the statement, "Students do not have to mimic the Americans and British (for example) because there should be a Japanese English," 12% of the students responded 'agree' and 12% responded 'somewhat agree', while 36% of the teachers responded 'agree' and 30% responded 'somewhat agree' (p.478). Matsuura et al. attribute the lower rating by the students to negative connotations associated with the term 'Japanese English', in contrast to the higher level of awareness of the Japanese teachers concerning the legitimacy of different varieties of English. A similar observation was made by Matsuda: "the increased role of non-native English users in defining and shaping EIL does not seem to have been accepted as widely among the lay users of EIL as it has among scholars" (2003, p. 484).

Another study by Shaw investigated the variation in attitudes towards English

by final year Bachelor degree students in three different countries (Singapore : 170, India : 342, Thailand : 313). One survey item referred to the students' preferred model of English, with the following choices being offered :

- (1) like the British
- (2) like the Americans
- (3) like the Australians
- (4) in our own way
- (5) like educated non-native speakers from other countries (1983, p.31)

The Singaporeans and Indians indicated a preference for speaking English 'in their own way' (39%, 47% ; p.3), whereas the Thai respondents indicated a preference for British English (49%), with a distinct minority indicating a preference for speaking English their own way (3 - 4 % ; p.31). Shaw argues that the different attitudes concerning local varieties of English depends to an extent on the role of English in the national language policy in the respective countries. In both Singapore and India, English is an official language recognized by the government, and yet in both of these countries a preference is evident for the local variety of English. In Thailand however, English is not an official language and there is also limited recognition of the validity of a local version of English.

Research Method

Survey Instrument

What model of English do Japanese university students wish to acquire ? We were interested to discover whether our students would prefer to speak Japanese English, rather than Inner Circle models, potentially as a mechanism for preserving their own cultural identity when speaking a foreign language. Hence we produced a one page survey investigating the students' preferences and distributed this to our

students in ten university classes. We wrote the survey in English, and asked a Japanese colleague to translate it into Japanese. The Japanese text was added to the English survey items, so that the students received a bilingual version of the survey instrument. The item on the student survey relating to language varieties asked : “Which variety of English do you wish to learn ?”, and provided the following five alternatives : ‘Japanese English,’ ‘British English,’ ‘American English,’ ‘Other (please specify : _____),’ ‘No preference’. The bilingual version of the survey question is provided for reference purposes (see : Appendix).

Student Profile

The survey was administered to ten university classes attending two universities (one private university and one national/semi-privatized university) in western Japan. A total of 202 students completed the survey, with most students being at the first- and second-year levels, but also including some third- and fourth-year students. The ratio of female-male students was approximately equivalent, with the students

Table 1 . Student Profile

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Faculty</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Year Level</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Fem</i>	<i>Total</i>
English A	Agriculture	Biological Resources	1 st Year	12	08	20
English A	Engineering	Computer Science	1 st Year	20	01	21
English A	Engineering	Mechanical Engineering	1 st Year	20	00	20
English A	Humanities	English	1 st Year	08	24	32
English C	Agriculture	Biological Resources	2 nd Year	02	18	20
English C	Education	Information Science	2 nd Year	06	15	21
English C	Engineering	Civil Engineering	2 nd Year	14	01	15
English C	Humanities	English	2 nd Year	07	20	27
English C	Medicine	Nursing	2 nd Year	02	15	17
Oral English II	<mixed>	<mixed>	2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th	04	05	09
TOTALS				95	107	202
PERCENT				47	53	100

also being drawn from a range of faculties and departments at the universities, including both English and non-English majors. The student profile for this study (see : Table 1) hence matched our purpose of investigating a student body that broadly represented a cross-section of a ‘typical’ university population.

Survey Administration

During our development and administration of the survey instrument, the lack of familiarity of ‘Japanese English’ as a language variety (see : ‘Japanese English as a Regional Language Variety’, preceding) became apparent. The term *Japanese English* was difficult for both our Japanese colleagues and students to interpret. We had intended it to simply mean a local variety of English, like Singaporean English or Indian English. However, our colleague who translated the questionnaire was perplexed as to how best translate this item, since there was no equivalent expression in Japanese that was familiar to the students. We eventually decided it would be best represented as ‘English with a Japanese accent’, thus using the same terminology adopted in Benson’s (1991) study. However, we regard our usage of this translation as a form of simplification necessary for the process of survey administration, since the term ‘Japanese English’ encompasses a range of language shifts and discourse modifications, of which phonological shift is the most obvious change (see : D’Angelo, 2003 ; Morrow, 2004). Our Japanese colleague suggested that Japanese English suggested low proficiency English, although clearly this was not our intended meaning when we produced the survey. Furthermore, during the survey administration the first author overheard students talking in Japanese about this same issue. The students were confused because they thought the term referred to English which was *umaku nai* (‘not good’). The concept of Japanese English as a variety of English appears not to have been understood by some students taking the survey, and this difficulty may have had a major bearing on the responses.

Survey Results

The highest response group in the survey was American English (51%), with fewer than half as many students selecting British English (20%), and a small proportion of students (4 %) indicating a preference for Japanese English (see : Table 2). There was a high frequency of responses to the 'No Preference' selection (19%), which occurred almost as frequently as the second response group (British English). The four 'Other Variety' responses received on the survey were for Australian English (two responses) and New Zealand English (two responses). These two additional varieties could be included as options in future surveys, although very few students have nominated these preferences in the current survey. Seven invalid responses were also received, all for the 'Other Variety' item, with students misreading the question either in terms of alternative languages (German \times 1 ; Spanish \times 1 ; Korean \times 1) or the type of language class (conversation \times 4).

When the survey results are represented in graphical format, the major differences between the students' preferences become apparent (see : Figure 1). There are three distinct levels of response evident in this study. First, 'American English' dominates the students' preferences, receiving more than twice as many

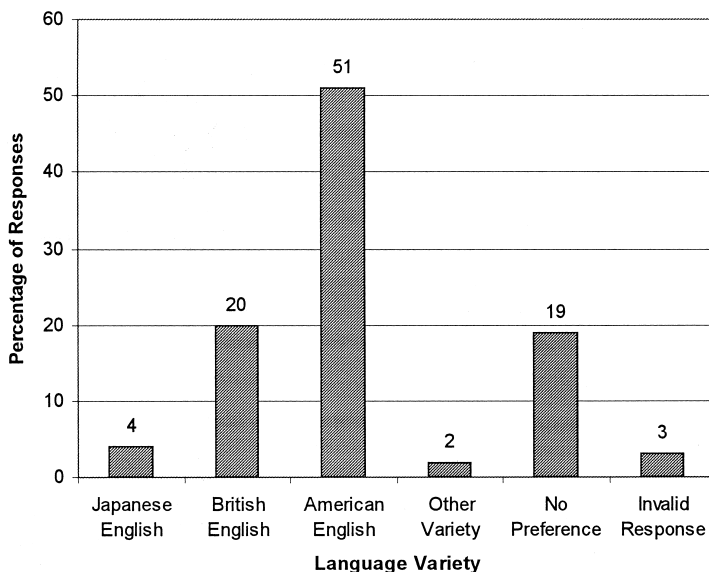
Table 2. Language Variety Preferences

<i>Language Variety</i>	<i>Raw Score</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Japanese English	09	04
British English	41	20
American English	103	51
other variety	04	02
no preference	38	19
invalid response	07	03

nominations as any other category. At the second response level, 'British English' and 'No Preference' have each received a substantial response pattern. Finally, the three other response categories ('Japanese English,' 'Invalid Response,' and 'Other Variety') have each attracted minimal responses.

When we compare the present results to previous research, the high preference for American English (51%) is comparable to Benson (1991), in which 47% of students selected American English, but much higher than Humphries (1995), who found 20% of students selected American English in his two surveys. Mixed results have also been determined for British English, with our study (20%) receiving similar results to Humphries (1995), who found 16% and 19% support for British RP in his two surveys. In contrast, Benson (1991) found considerably less support for British English (12%), but considerably more support for Japanese

Figure 1 . Language Variety Preferences



English (24%) than our study (4 %). The high preference for Japanese English found by Benson was also evident in Matsuura et al (2004), who found that 24% of students and 66% of teachers supported the notion of Japanese English as a regional variety. The markedly lower frequency of preferences for Japanese English in our study is, however, consistent with Matsuda (2003), in which 6 % of students agreed that Japanese people should speak Japanese English. It would be interesting in future research projects to investigate the 'Japanese English' category to gain insight into the students' reasons for their choices. The status of Japanese English could, for example, be investigated as to whether the students perceive it as a regional language variety or alternatively, as a developmental stage in the acquisition of an Inner Circle form.

The other result that requires further comment is the high number of 'No preference' selections in our study. While many students have indicated a lack of interest in following any specific variety, there may be types of underlying preferences which were not determined by our survey. Four students checked both the 'American English' and the 'British English' selections, so they were officially recorded as 'No preference,' although they were in fact indicating an equal preference for either of the two major varieties which was not offered on the survey instrument. Another student indicated a preference for any of the native-speaker varieties by checking the 'No preference' selection, and annotating on the response sheet: "but no Japanese English". Possibly other students taking our survey also had similar inclinations, but they were unable to express their preferences since they were not offered as specific options on the survey instrument. Further research could investigate these types of questions to provide insight into the reasons for the students' selections in the current study.

Further Discussion

The low level of support demonstrated by the students in our study for Japanese English is particularly significant in light of the current directions of the English and International Language movement. Furthermore, our results are at variance with Benson (1991), who found that 24% of Japanese students nominated Japanese English as their preference for a specific variety of English, as well as Matsuura et al (2004), who found that 24% of students and 66% of teachers also supported the idea of Japanese English. Consequently, it is important to consider why the notion of a local model of English has received such a poor response in our study. The first point relevant to this discussion relates to the difficulties experienced by our Japanese colleagues and students with the meaning and translation of the term 'Japanese English' (see: 'Survey Administration', preceding). The lack of an equivalent terminology in the Japanese language which embodied the semantic concept of Japanese English as a form of Asian English, together with the possible association of low proficiency, suggests to us that the identity of Japanese English as a distinct variety of English was a new concept to many students taking the survey. The students did not have a preference for Japanese English because instead of recognizing it as a current language variety, they perceived it is a low proficiency form. Our observations during the survey administration procedures also directly support Oohara's view (cited in Hashimoto, 2002) that Japanese English may be viewed as a form of low proficiency English, as well as Morrow (2004), who argued that the attitudes of the Japanese may tend to reduce the acceptability of this language variety.

Interesting parallels can also be drawn between studies involving Japanese subjects and previous research conducted in other language contexts. In Kachru's (1976) study of language preferences in India, another Inner Circle variety of

English (British English) received the majority of preferences (67%), while American English received just 3 % of the nominations (1976, p. 230). Similarly to Benson (1991), Kachru found that the notion of a local version of English was very well supported by the survey population, with Indian English receiving 27% of the preferences. In contrast, the present study has yielded similar results to the study of Thai subjects in Shaw (1983), where a lack of support for the local variety of English was also evident. Only 3 – 4 % of the respondents indicated a preference for the local variety of Thai English, which is strikingly similar to the 4 % level of support for Japanese English in the current study. Shaw's study also found a 49% level of support for British English, which is comparable to the 51% support for a different variety of Inner Circle English (American English) in the current study. In these two countries, where English is widely studied but is not an official language, there appears to be little support for the development of a local variety of English. This is in contrast to Singapore and India where English is an official language, and where surveys in both countries indicate solid support for the local variety of English. Consequently, the significance of Yano's (2001) argument that Japanese English is unlikely to take root as one of the regional varieties of English because it is not used between Japanese people as a form of *lingua franca* becomes apparent.

The cultural composition of Japanese society is another factor relevant to this discussion. While Japan is clearly a multicultural society (see : Noguchi, 2001), it differs from many other countries in terms of the scale of multiculturalism. It is, for example, a different type of multicultural society from Australia, where (according to the 1991 national census) 22% of citizens were born overseas, and another 20% of citizens had at least one parent born overseas (Smolicz, 1994). In countries with high immigration like Australia, there is a weaker association between ethnicity and monolingualism in a particular language, arguably because of

assimilationist pressures. This contrasts with the situation in Japan, where a greater tendency is evident to associate a particular language and ethnicity (e. g., the commonplace presumption that people with a western appearance are monolingual English speakers who come from America). This tendency also serves to reinforce the notion that English is a language owned by Inner Circle speakers, rather than an international language form.

The Promotion of Inner Circle Models of English in Japan

It is also highly significant that Inner Circle models of English continue to be heavily promoted in Japan. The perception of English as a phenomenon owned and promulgated by native speakers receives support in many subtle ways throughout both educational contexts and commercial industry in Japan. Language schools which sell English as a commodity to be learned by Japanese people use marketing techniques drawing on images of Westerners who will share their expertise in English. The widespread use of advertising on posters and in trains similarly promotes these kinds of images as providing a model of English attainment. In order to promote EIL, speakers from the Expanding Circle should be featured more prominently.

We believe that the promotion of Inner Circle English has also been perpetuated in Japan by several other major industry forces. One area worth mentioning involves the high level of institutional support provided for major “gate-keeping tests such as TOEIC or TOEFL” (Kubota, 2004, p.23), in which Inner Circle speakers are typically presented as the model of attainment. Great importance in Japan is attached to students’ scores in these tests, with schools and employers sometimes providing reward systems for students and employees to attain high performance levels. The advice frequently given for improving test scores clearly demonstrates the primary focus on the Inner Circle models of English, through references to

'normal' English and 'daily communication,' albeit in overseas countries :

In the listening parts of the TOEIC test, speech moves at a fairly normal rate. In daily communication, English speakers talk at approximately 140 to 160 words per minute. This is about the same speed range that you will hear on the TOEIC test. (Stafford-Yilmaz, 2004, p. 15)

Learners are also typically urged to develop listening comprehension of specific features of 'natural' connected speech and 'routine' language behavior, with an overseas model of native-speaker language use once again represented as the goal to be attained :

The rate of speech in the listening section of the TOEIC is fairly natural. As such, it includes contractions and elision, which are routine in normal spoken English To tackle these features, learners of English should practice listening to normal English speech : native speakers in conversation, TV shows, radio, and the audio portion of some commercially available textbooks. (Stafford-Yilmaz, 2004, p. 15)

In striking contrast, the development of a distinct form of Japanese English has not received adequate attention either in Japan or internationally as a variety of Asian English. It is hardly surprising that students consider the native speaker to be the model of English language attainment, given the status of the EFL industry and the prevailing industry forces. However, the appeal of much of the present marketing of Inner Circle speakers directly conflicts with the present aims of EIL, and it is unfortunate that the EIL movement is also not currently recognized or endorsed at an appropriate official level in Japan. This situation could be remedied

by realigning the current marketing trends to represent the interests of Japanese people communicating effectively in a range of business and social settings with speakers from other Expanding Circle countries. The major international language tests could also be realigned to develop the image of high proficiency local speakers and instead of promoting English as an Inner Circle language model, focusing instead on the promotion of a new international variety of English (see: Jenkins, 2000). Perhaps Japan could follow the example of France, which has just introduced international English as a core subject in their “new back-to-basics syllabus” (Bremner, 2004, p. 24).

Conclusions

The major findings of our student survey are not unexpected, and confirm the results of previous studies. The preference for American English, as also reported by Benson (1991) and to a lesser extent by Humphries (1995), is predictable based on the prominence given to American English in the Japanese education system, and the general appeal of American culture to the Japanese since the Second World War (e. g., see: Ito, 2002, p. 38-9). The students’ second preference for British English, as consistent with the results of Humphries (1995), is also predictable given the prestige of Britain in Japan and the heritage of the English language.

The survey results in two areas of our study require further investigation. Firstly, the high frequency of ‘No preference’ responses is unexpected but can be interpreted in terms of the goals and purposes of the CLT movement. Since EFL students are fundamentally interested in learning English for the purpose of communication, the specific variety of English they study is of secondary concern. The more important purpose is to develop English skills to communicate with a range of people from different countries and in different situations. On this basis,

CLT is currently focused on exposing students to a range of target language varieties, rather than on promoting an exclusive focus on any single culture, with many textbooks from the major publishers providing exposure to native speaker models from several different countries. Another factor which may have contributed substantially to the high 'No preference' response is that many students attending university have had insufficient personal experience of the differences between the English speaking countries to be able to identify with any particular host culture. Although the students have been maximally exposed to models of Inner Circle English and culture during their education, this is not a suitable basis for continuing the same exclusive focus in future years, and could perhaps be regarded as a form of over exposure. Administrators of the JET Programme over the past decade have accordingly ensured the selection of candidates from a pool of native English speaking countries for deployment as ALTs across Japan (CLAIR, 1994). Furthermore, the students' frequent selection of 'No preference' could imply support for EIL rather than Japanese English, which has not been established as a local variety. This preference may indicate awareness that no single variety of English is more important than the others, but rather that every variety is important. This issue deserves to be pursued in more depth in a subsequent study.

The second surprising survey result concerns the very low frequency of nominations for Japanese English which, combined with the preference for Inner Circle models of English, tends to suggest a general lack of support for Japanese English as a language variety. Mixed results in this area have been reported by previous research studies. Our survey results are similar to the results found by Matsuda (2003), but differ from the results in Benson (1991) and Matsuura et al (2004). Our finding can also be compared to Shaw (1983) since both Japan and Thailand are members of the Expanding Circle of EIL countries, and in both studies very limited support was found for the local variety of English. However, the

overwhelming preference for Inner Circle varieties evident in our study is contrary to the current direction of the English as an International Language movement. We can only conclude that the notion of English no longer being the property of Inner Circle speakers, as advocated by Brady and Shinohara (2003), Ito (2002), Jenkins (2000), Kachru (1985, 1986), Matsuda (2003), and McKay (2002, 2003), is not supported by the student population represented in this survey.

We believe that the minimal preference for Japanese English is instead a consequence of the situation in Japan where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) rather than as an international language (EIL). Perhaps also this result is a reflection of a domestic language context in which English is never likely to gain the status of a lingua franca (see: Phillipson, 2002; Yano, 2001). If the views of the students in our study are representative of general university populations in Japan, it appears that there is presently little support for a local variety of English, and that native-speaker models will continue as the primary focus of language attainment. The perception of English as an Inner Circle language is also perpetuated by industry forces throughout Japan, including the focus on a specific target language variety by major education systems and the historical context of the foreign language education program in Japan. However, public attitudes to the concept of 'Japanese English' may change in the future if EIL principles are more widely promoted and become accepted in educational and governmental institutions. Moreover, given the difficulty of attaining native-speaker norms, and the inappropriateness of these models as truly international tools of communication, EIL is deserving of more official support in Japan, and should replace EFL as the focus of English language achievement.

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Appendix

Student Survey

A. Which variety of English do you wish to learn? Please circle one of the following :

(下に挙げたどのような英語を学びたいですか。一つに○をして下さい。)

1. Japanese English (日本語のアクセントのある英語)
2. British English (イギリス英語)
3. American English (アメリカ英語)
4. Other (please specify : _____) その他 (特定して下さい。)
5. No preference (特になし)