

Native-Speakerism or English as a Lingua Franca?:

On the Future Direction of English as a Foreign Language Education in Japan

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1. Introduction

The Japanese government has recently advanced a series of academic reforms in terms of the English language policy in pursuit of more “practical” English. For instance, in 2013, the Liberal Democratic Party, the ruling political party constituting the Cabinet, proposed that, in the future, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) would be used as one of the requirements to enter and graduate from universities (“Use TOEFL,” 2013). In addition, the National Center for University Entrance Examinations commonly known as Daigaku Nyushi Center has decided that the standardized preliminary examination of English for university admissions will be structurally “modified” in 2021 to put more emphasis on test takers’ communicative skill (“The announcement,” 2018).

While whether this kind of valorization of practical English is pedagogically effective or not remains unclear, many universities in Japan have started introducing “new” English education programs as a response to the aforementioned government-led reforms in English education. Consequently, in the Japanese educational landscape, in particular at university level, investing resources in communicative EFL (English as a Foreign Language) courses seem to have become an irreversible trend (Sugino, 2014).

To assess this trend, this paper will focus on the two ELT (English Language Teaching) programs respectively implemented at two universities in the greater Tokyo area: Global Teaching Institute (GTI) at Tokyo International University (TIU) and English as a Lingua Franca Program (ELFP) at Tamagawa

University (TU). I encountered these programs when I attempted to make a list of ELT programs at Japanese universities for my research about EFL education in Japan. As will be discussed later, many of them are not unlike GTI, which is promoted as a program where students receive language instruction primarily from native English-speaking teachers (NESTs). In contrast, although there exists such a preference for NESTs in the Japanese EFL context, ELFP challenges and counters the notion of native-ness.

GTI and ELFP significantly differ from one another in terms of teaching philosophy and practices. In this paper, by comparing them, I will suggest the more desirable option between the two. Precisely because the trend of EFL education—with emphasis on practical English—at university level in Japan is apparently irreversible, this paper aims to show the future direction that should be preferably taken within this trend.

For this purpose, the argument will be developed in the following manner. In the first place, I will briefly discuss the methodology used. In so doing, the data that are used in this study will be identified. Secondly, this paper will introduce and analyze GTI and ELFP and compare them with one another by respectively focusing on their website. Subsequently, in order to achieve a balanced assessment of these ELT programs, I will also point out and attend to some criticisms that my analysis may be going to elicit. Finally, this paper will be concluded with the discussion about the limitations of this study and some suggestions for future study.

2. Methodology

Since this is a research paper intended to contribute to the field of critical applied linguistics, its argument will be made in conversation with the extant literature. More specifically, prior studies about the notions of native-speakerism and English as a lingua franca (ELF) will be referred to. In order to do so instead of creating an independent subsection about the extant literature, I will introduce those prior studies when appropriate, as the argument develops. They are crucial to this study in the sense that, while one of the two ELT programs subscribes to native-speakerism, the other is informed by ELF.

In terms of analytical approach, a comparative style was taken. As will be discussed later, the ELFP at TU is a very rare program in the Japanese educational landscape, which consciously opposes the notion of native-speakerism that privileges native English speakers (NESs) by defining their nativeness as the qualification to teach the English language. This ELF-based ELT program was juxtaposed with GTI at TIU to show that, while native-speakerism is still being practiced in Japan as in the case of the latter, another path of EFL education such as the former might be possible and worth exploring.

For this comparison, the websites of these two ELT programs were chosen as the sites of investigation. I focused on them because, in the age of the Internet, websites are used by universities as one of the most important resources to promote their programs to the general public for the purpose of recruiting prospective students. In other words, websites are access points for those students to gather information. This is also true for researchers. In fact, it is on the websites of GTI and ELFP where each program's language ideologies are respectively highlighted in detail.

GTI and ELFP were selected in the following procedure. In the first place, I checked several websites of ELT programs offered at university level in Japan, including the ones offered at Baiko Gakuin University, Hakuoh University, Meiji University, Nagasaki University, Niigata University, Rikkyo University, Sojo University, and other universities. In this process, I found the recurrent pattern that NESs were privileged as EFL instructors. GTI was selected as one of the case studies of this paper because it typifies this pattern, or the native-speakerist trend in the Japanese educational landscape. As for ELFP, since it stood as an exception in such a trend, I analyzed this ELT program as the other case study. Taking a critical position against native-speakerism, ELFP is explicitly advocating for ELF-based English education at university level in Japan.

The objective of this paper is to give a structural account of each of the said programs. Therefore, by closely reading their websites, I presented how these programs have been designed based on what kinds of discourse in detail. At the same time, the compositional features of the websites, including how the visual and textual elements were arranged, were carefully studied to

clarify the language ideologies respectively undergirding and reinforced by these two ELT programs.

To this end, a multimodal approach of data analysis was taken. Multimodality is the use of various modes of communication (e.g., linguistic, visual, aural, spatial, and gestural) to relay meaning (Arola, Sheppard, & Ball, 2014). Following the intersemiotic complementary framework for multimodal discourse analysis (Royce, 2007), this paper examined how those various modes of communication were made use of in tandem with one another to create the websites and to promote these ELT programs.

The analysis of this paper proceeded from an inventory of visual images and closely related lexical items producing the same semantic meanings. In particular, I focused on the rhetorical expressions recurrently used on the websites of GTI and ELFP to respectively identify their language ideologies. Subsequently, the ways in which those texts were associated with and reinforced by certain visual images were teased out. By engaging in this kind of multimodal analysis, this paper revealed what is discursively constructed as preferable or even natural through the said websites.

Although there are some prior studies which discuss the trend and potential future of EFL education in Japan (Abe, 2017; Fujiwara, 2017), not many of them focus on specific programs, much less on their website. This paper is one of the first attempts to critically further this discussion by applying the analytical framework of the multimodal approach to specific case studies.

3. An ELT Program That Centralizes NESTs and Their Authentic English

TIU established its ELT program GTI in 2012 to allow its students to learn “practical English communication skills” (GTI, n.d.-c). It constitutes a part of the Department of Language and Communication, which is committed to improving its students’ proficiency in English as well as globalizing them (TIU, n.d.-a). In short, this department aims to produce graduates who will be able to make an impact in international society (Ibid.).

Although GTI is supposedly global, as its name literally indicates, its website promotes this program to prospective stu-

dents as something entirely American. For instance, it defines GTI as “the English education directly imported from the U.S. (アメリカ直輸入の英語教育)” with the photograph of a white male EFL instructor speaking (supposedly in English) to two Japanese female college students (see GTI, n.d.-a). In addition, almost all of the faculty members of GTI are from the United States. As of August, 2018, the program consists of 46 EFL instructors and only four of them are non-American citizens: one from Canada, two from Britain, and one from Sweden, who has received her MA in TESOL in Seattle, Washington (GTI, n.d.-b). One can argue that this is because TIU has a partnership with Willamette University, which is located in Oregon, U.S. and GTI is administered, in part based on this partnership (GTI, n.d.-d). However, its relationship with this university has not necessarily affected the demography of the faculty members of GTI; many of them are not related to Willamette University in any way in terms of education or profession but are simply from all over the U.S. The program’s website specifies this point: “the faculty members of GTI are locally hired in the U.S” (GTI の教員は、米国で現地採用しています。) (GTI, n.d.-a). Although the recruitment advertisement for the program’s positions does not list nationality as one of the requirements (TIU, n.d.-b), being an American is still a highly preferred, or even de facto qualification at GTI.

According to the education philosophy of GTI, there is a positive correlation between students’ exposure to the English of NESTs and students’ progress in terms of the proficiency of English, as one of the program’s strengths is said to lie in the following point:

By being exposed to the English of native English-speaking teachers everyday, students become less uncomfortable with English. Eventually, they become able to express their opinions in English and to practically communicate with others in English.

(毎日ネイティブの英語に触れることで英語への抵抗感がなくなり、英語で自分の考えを発表したり、英語でディスカッションしたりといった実践的なコミュニケーション力が身につきます。)(GTI, n.d.-c)

As such, GTI asserts that mere interaction with NESs on a daily

basis allows students to acquire practical English communication skills. In this way, this ELT program is promoted as “effective” (TIU, n.d.-a).

From this perspective upholding greater exposure to authentic English, the term “NESTs” (ネイティブ教員) is frequently and emphatically used on the website of GTI:

- GTI is an English education institution...consisting of NESTs (GTI は、...ネイティブ教員による英語教育組織です。)
- Several learning opportunities such as an “English Lounge” where students can independently talk with NESTs and “Academic Advising” where students can prepare for and review the class with NESTs on a one-to-one basis are offered (ネイティブ教員と個別に会話ができる「English Lounge」、ネイティブ教員とマンツーマンで授業の予習、復習が出来る「Academic Advising」など)
- Students can have conversations in English with NESTs in a relaxed atmosphere (ネイティブ教員とリラックスした雰囲気では英会話を楽しめる)

In these texts, the English lessons offered by NESTs of GTI are valorized. In other words, the importance of interacting with NESTs is repeatedly emphasized as one of the most important venues for improving one’s English proficiency.

In addition, NESTs’ supposed positive influence is visually reinforced. Along with the aforementioned photograph, on one of the web pages of GTI, other photographs in which NESTs—mostly Caucasian-looking ones—teaching college students English are captured and presented (see GTI, n.d.-c). In this web page, while the native advantage is upheld as the important asset in teaching practical English communication skills with the aforementioned texts, it is also naturalized through the images in which Japanese students seemingly enjoy having conversation with NES-looking instructors; the tandem work of these texts and images is sending the message: “You are going to master practical English because you are going to be exposed to NESTs and their authentic English”.

Based on this analysis of the website of GTI, it can be argued that this ELT program subscribes to the language ideology called native-speakerism. This language ideology assumes that native

speakers from “inner circle” countries that are made up of “the traditional cultural and linguistic bases of English”, in particular Anglo-Saxon countries allegedly being in charge of providing the norms in terms of the English language (Kachru, 1992: p. 356), are the bearers of “authentic” English, and that greater exposure to it, through its native speakers, is the most effective way to acquire English.

In this section, this paper has revealed that GTI is a case study of an ELT program based on native-speakerism. In the section that follows, I will focus on another ELT program, ELFP implemented at TU. Conceptually undergirded by the ELF framework, it constitutes a kind of counter-example of GTI. By investigating the website of ELFP, this paper will descriptively identify its characteristics.

4. An ELF ELT Program

TU initiated ELFP in 2012. It was originally intended for the students of the College of Humanities and the College of Business Administration (TU, n.d.-a). Over the years, this program has been expanded. Since 2015, ELFP has become a required course for all the students of all colleges of TU (Ibid.).

Contrary to GTI, ELFP does not valorize nativeness. Instead, as will be discussed later, the program’s website criticizes those ELT programs at many other universities which are designed to make students aim to master the English spoken by NESs from Anglophone countries such as the U.S. and Britain. The program’s website emphasizes the importance of learning English as a lingua franca, or “a variety of Englishes that are used for communication purposes by people whose L1 is not English” (共通の母語を持たない人同士のコミュニケーションに使われる英語) (TU, n.d.-d).

ELFP is a very unique ELT program. As has been discussed so far, in the Japanese educational landscape where there is an overwhelmingly strong preference for NESTs, universities are moving in the direction of attracting NESTs as language instructors and creating ELT programs in line with the ideology of native-speakerism. In fact, ELFP is the very first program in Japan, which is based on the notion that English is not owned only by NESs but is a language that is used and developed by a

variety of groups of people all over the world (Ibid.).

ELFP is also introduced as an ELT program through which can “truly globalize its students” (真のグローバル人材を育成する) (Ibid.). According to the program’s website, which builds on the extant literature of critical applied linguistics such as Graddol (2006), 80% of English speakers are NNEs and thus, “it is inefficient to aim to master the English that is spoken by only 20% of the entire English speaking population within a limited period of time” (限られた期間で 20% しかいない母語話者の英語を目指すことは現実的ではありません) (TU, n.d.-d). In addition, it is explained that, in the contemporary globalized world, “‘practical English’ means a form of ‘English that allows one to communicate with a greater number of people who use (a variety of) Englishes’” (「使える英語」とは「英語を使用するより多くの人と意思疎通が出来る」英語) (Ibid.). Based on this kind of argument informed by the notion of ELF, the program’s website promotes ELFP as one focusing on the 80%, or NNEs, and thus as one better fitted to the current, actual situation of globalization.

Instructors working at ELFP are from a variety of countries including Japan, the U.S. Britain, Ireland, Australia, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria, Brazil, Canada, China, Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore (TU, n.d.-b). The program’s website also carefully notes that they are multilinguals. The languages spoken by these instructors include Japanese, English, Italian, German, Turkish, Bulgarian, Portuguese, Chinese, Cantonese, Korean, Thai, Tagalog, Macedonian (Ibid.). All of them have received an education related to TESOL at MA level and almost all of them have experiences of studying abroad for a long-term period and learning foreign languages other than English (Ibid.).

Unlike GTI where America is the only reference point, ELFP emphasizes the importance of diversity. On the program’s website, it is pointed out that instructors working at ELFP not only teach English but also introduce their own experiences in many countries all over the world (TU, n.d.-c). In this ELT program, “students are going to deepen their understanding of a variety of cultures by looking at them from a wide-ranging perspective, while learning English for global communication” (グローバルコミュニケーションのための英語を学ぶと同時に、幅広い視点から様々な文化に触れ、理解を深める) (Ibid.). ELFP does not confer a privi-

leged position on the U.S. but rather pays attention to other cultures and countries regardless of whether they are Anglophone or not.

This kind of “multicultural” and “multilingual” perspective is visually reinforced on the program’s website. While it is heavily text-based, 15 photographs are inserted on the website of ELFP to introduce and promote the program. Many of them are shots of facilities; only two of them capture scenes in which instructors interact with undergraduate students (see TU, n.d.-a and TU, n.d.-c. In these two photographs, an NES-looking instructor and an NNES-looking instructor are respectively featured while they are interacting with Japanese college students. These images are significant in the sense that they show how ELFP resists native-speakerism by showing that their students receive a fine EFL education not only from NESTs but also from NNESTs. In fact, these two photographs are embedded in the aforementioned texts affirming the ethnic and linguistic diversity of instructors.

So far, this paper has introduced two university ELT programs in Japan and identified their undergirding language ideologies by investigating their websites. Consequently, the following is revealed: ELFP at TU makes a contrast with GTI at TIU in the sense that, while the latter subscribes to native-speakerism, the former counters it through the promotion and use of ELF. In the discussion that follows, I will suggest which of the two is more appropriate as the path that EFL education in Japan should follow.

5. Native-Speakerism or ELF?

Since both GTI and ELFP do not release statistical information about students’ achievements in any form, it is not possible to meritocratically measure the effectiveness of these two ELT programs. In addition, it is probably meaningless to do so because to measure students’ “progress” by, say, the increase of their TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) score cannot fully reflect what students would learn at GTI or ELFP. Instead, I am much more interested in how the education philosophy of each ELT program may pedagogically affect students. Therefore, when comparing GTI and ELFP, this paper will focus

more on the conceptual differences between them to examine what it would respectively mean to receive native-speakerist or ELF-based English education.

5–1. The Pedagogical Baselessness of Native-Speakerism

What is important to note here in the first place is that GTI's claim for a correlation between students' exposure to the English of NESTs and students' progress in terms of their proficiency in English is a fallacy. To clarify this point, let us briefly turn to the research conducted by Levis et al. (2016).

In order to find empirical evidence against the belief, or the myth that exposure to authentic English, through its monolingual native speakers, is the most effective way to acquire English, Levis et al. (2016) explored the effects of the teachers L1 on students' accentedness and comprehensibility, which are considered the "last bastion of native speaker privilege" (p. 918). This study compared two pronunciation classes which ran for 7 weeks and were separately taught by an NEST and an NNEST. The researchers found that teachers' language background (i.e., native or nonnative) makes no significant impact on students' overall improvement in accentedness and comprehensibility. Interviews with students revealed that, although they rated both teachers positively in teaching pronunciation, they believed that having an NEST would improve their pronunciation "in much the same way one catches a cold, through exposure alone" (p. 916). This suggests that the students' beliefs are misguided because "learning pronunciation is likely to be dependent upon factors other than whether the teacher is an NNEST or an NEST" (Ibid.). All in all, Levis et al. revealed that, while a native-speakerist bias is strong in the context of EFL, it is nothing but a bias; there is no positive correlation between students' exposure to the English of NESTs and students' progress in terms of the proficiency of English. Simply put, learning English is not like "catching a cold" (Ibid.).

As pointed out just above, the area of pronunciation is defined as the "last bastion of native speaker privilege". This means that the myth that NESTs are naturally suitable for the ELT is completely debunked in any other area of the English language acquisition. There is literally no study that empirically proves that NESTs are inherently better as English instructors

just because their L1 is English.

Instead, in the field of critical applied linguistics, leading scholars (e.g. Jenkins, 2016; Seidlhofer, 2011) have argued that the model for EFL learners are NNESTs who are proficient in English as L2 and share L1 with the EFL learners. Contrary to this finding, GTI promotes itself by putting so much emphasis on the program's orientation toward nativeness. In fact, as has been discussed so far, on the website of GTI, NESTs are uncritically represented as the better option for students to look up to in learning English.

Upholding NESTs/the English of NESTs as that which EFL learners should aspire to is pedagogically baseless to the extent that it would potentially hinder the language learning of Japanese learners of English (JLEs). As Fujiwara (2017) argues, since L2 learners' English is always already under the influence of their L1, it is impossible, detrimental, and even psychologically distressing for JLEs to aim to attain native-like English; it may make them internalize the hierarchization of English in which the English of inner circle countries is erroneously valued over other kinds of Englishes, and may unnecessarily and unjustly make JLEs feel that their Japanese English is inferior, compared to so-called authentic English (p. 59). This hierarchization is clearly harmful and, as the analysis so far suggests, it is this hierarchization that the EFL education of GTI may be contributing to.

5-2. Native-Speakerism as a Form of Racism

What is also important to note here is that native-speakerism is a language ideology under which non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs) are marginalized as deficient English language instructors, as opposed to NESTs who are considered the yardstick of authentic English (Holliday, 2005). It is also defined as a "neo-racist ideology" (Holliday, 2014), or a "prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination, typically by or against foreign language teachers, on the basis of either being or not being perceived and categorized as a native speaker of a particular language" (Houghton and Rivers, 2013 p. 14).

This definition points to the danger of ELT programs dictated by native-speakerism in the Japanese EFL context.. It is known that JLEs tend to show a strong preference for NESTs

(Kavanagh, 2016; Yphantides, 2013). For instance, Sugimori (2016) reports that some JLEs who were enrolled in the English-only program at a university in Japan expressed negative attitude toward NNESTs: while aspiring to be able to speak native-like English, these JLEs made a discriminatory remark—"I can't understand their English because of their accent"—against Russian and Singaporean instructors despite the fact that their English is completely articulate and intelligible (p. 145). In other words, these JLEs attribute their inability to comprehend to the other kinds of Englishes spoken by NNESTs. In contrast, according to Sugimori, these JLEs would not blame NESTs when they are not able to comprehend what NESTs say. This anecdote illustrates that ELT programs undergirded by and reinforcing the ideology that NESTs are the bearers of the authentic English can be harmful because an EFL education based on the aforementioned hierarchization of English would not challenge but rather only exacerbate JLEs' negative attitude toward NNESTs: the native-speakerist approach would reinforce the racist belief which is already professed by some JLEs

Therefore, it can be argued that GTI's EFL education model subscribing to native-speakerism is far from the ideal path that should be aimed for in the Japanese educational landscape. Structurally speaking, unless some courses that consciously and proactively emphasize the importance of recognizing other kinds of Englishes spoken by a variety of NNESTs all over the world are integrated into GTI's curriculum, there would be a danger that this ELT program ends up being a program that only fosters negative, even racist attitudes among its students toward other kinds of Englishes.

However, these courses are not offered at GTI. Its curriculum mainly consists of the courses about communication such as "communication basic, communicative grammar, speech basic, and communication core" (GTI, n.d.-c); at this ELT program, no course about ELF or the variety of Englishes is taught. Although "intercultural communication" is highlighted as one of the strengths of GTI by its associate director George Hays in the program's promotion video (see TIU, n.d.-c), the only intercultural course that is available is "Introduction to American Society". Considering this emphasis on America in terms of curriculum along with the aforementioned overwhelming preference for

American EFL instructors, it can be said that GTI has been designed in a way to make students primarily interact with so-called American culture and American authentic English. In other words, this ELT program is a program, which is likely to reproduce, circulate, and strengthen prejudiced, incorrect assumptions about other Englishes rather than actively challenging those assumptions.

5-3. Disclaimer

As a kind of disclaimer, let me emphasize here that I am not attempting to demonize NESTs employed and working at GTI or, by extension, in ELT professions in Japan. I do not doubt that many of them are highly qualified as EFL teachers. Some of them may be even opposing native-speakerism in actual classroom settings by introducing the concept of native-speakerism and critical inquiries into this issue. Here, I am only problematizing the harmful language ideology based on which GTI is structured and promoted.

Not to demonize NESTs is particularly important because, in a way, they are also marginalized. It is true that, as reported by several scholars, being an NES is still considered an important qualification in the ELT labor market in Japan (Mahboob 2004; Ruecker and Ives 2015). There is an overwhelmingly strong preference for NESTs in terms of recruitments for EFL positions at university level. However, it is also true that NESTs are peripheralized in some Japanese universities. For instance, as Houghton (2013) points out, since they are hired as supposedly authentic bearers of English who only teach the language, it is often the case that NESTs “are simply not expected, required or welcome to play any part in the day-to-day functioning of” universities (p. 12). In other words, some NESTs “are shunned to the sidelines, restricted to an existence within foreign enclaves crafted for purpose in a manner that reaffirms their symbolic role as authentic foreigner” (Ibid). As such, native-speakerism can be and is often adversarially implemented against NESTs in Japanese educational landscape.

Although it is difficult to conclusively determine whether NESTs working at GTI are systematically peripheralized at TIU or not, it can be still empirically argued that tenured positions are not necessarily prepared or open for them. In fact, almost all

of the faculty members of this ELT program are working on a limited term. According to the recruitment advertisement for instructor positions at GTI, NESTs are employed for a term of one year, which is renewable up to five years and yet they do not get tenure (TIU, n.d.-b).

The peripheralized position of the NESTs working at GTI is also detectable in the larger structure of TIU. As pointed out previously, this ELT program is under the Department of Language and Communication. Interestingly, while GTI predominantly consists of non-tenured NESTs, the tenured faculty members of the department who institutionally run the university are mainly Japanese—ten out of 13 tenured positions of a department that proactively advocates for globalization are occupied by Japanese nationals. It is as if NESTs are indeed restricted to the foreign enclave called GTI.

Consequently, it can be said that, not only pedagogically but also institutionally speaking, GTI, which is based on native-speakerism, is far from a better model for EFL education. As discussed above, it cannot be more pedagogically effective just because its students are to be exposed to NESTs and their authentic English. Rather, this can be harmful for JLEs. And yet, the website of GTI caters to the JLEs' desire for NESTs that Mahboob (2004) identifies by featuring and privileging NESTs and their English for the sole purpose of selling its native-speakerist program. In such a manner, NESTs working at GTI are once again marginalized: represented not as qualified language instructors but as authentic foreigners, they are made use of to construct and promote a marketable ELT program.

5-4. ELF as a Possible Path

Compared to GTI, ELFP implemented at TU would be ethically more appropriate and better fitting to the reality of the contemporary globalized world. In the first place, applicants for the latter's ELT positions are not screened out for the reason that they do not have a certain nationality. In addition, ELFP's approach, by definition, fosters the understanding of other kinds of Englishes spoken by NNEs, or toward NNEs themselves, by acknowledging their Englishes not as "inauthentic" but as "legitimate means of communication" (Kubota, 2016). Considering the contemporary linguistic diversity in terms of the English lan-

guage, ELFP, which questions the alleged superior status of the so-called authentic English used in inner circle countries, would be one of the possible and better options that should be taken.

In addition, not only ethically but also pedagogically speaking, this ELT program is more desirable. This point is emphasized in the following statement made by the program's director to problematize the misguided pedagogy through which to make students aspire for native-like English:

Without much critical awareness, students are made to aim to master the English spoken by NESs. As a result, they fall into a vicious cycle: students are blamed for not being able to masterfully imitate NESs' English and subsequently, they give up learning English without feeling that their English can be useful (安易にネイティブ・スピーカーの英語の習得を目標として、それを完璧に模倣出来ないことが責められ、結局英語が役に立つという実感を味わうことなく挫折してしまうという悪循環に陥り失敗に終わる) (TU, n.d.-a).

ELFP is designed to avoid this kind of psychological distress accompanying EFL education dictated by native-speakerism. Instead of upholding NESTs/the English of NESTs, this ELT program focuses on the actual processes through which JLEs are going to learn English. In other words, at ELFP, it is intended to improve students' English as something legitimately spoken by NNEs without making JLEs feel inferior about their Japanese English.

Other scholars have also agreed on the pedagogical advantage of ELF-based ELT programs. For instance, Yoshida (n.d.) argues for it by claiming that "when the English teaching materials recorded by NNEs were used in some high school classrooms in Japan, students became more confident in their ability to speak the English language and the amount of their communication in English increased", compared to when native-speakerist listening materials were used. In this sense, in terms of pedagogy, it can be argued that promoting the advancement of other kinds of Englishes in the EFL context is more beneficial and thus ELFP is the more desirable path to be pursued.

However, whether or not the EFL education based on the philosophy of ELF is going to be widely implemented in the Jap-

anese educational landscape in future is unforeseeable. As pointed out previously, being the first ELT program which puts emphasis not on NESs but on NNEs in terms of both education and hiring practices, ELFP is far from the mainstream where NESTs and their so-called authentic English are uncritically upheld. In addition, it is even possible that ELF-based ELT programs will elicit some criticisms. In the section that follows, this paper will think through possible criticisms that these programs might receive, if implemented.

Possible Criticisms and Challenges

While recognizing NNEs' ethical commitment and contribution to a variety of Englishes, this paper has no intention of uncritically celebrating ELF-based ELT programs just because they are taught by NNEs. Pursuing this line of thinking, in this section, I will attend to some "challenges" that may be found in these programs, ranging from some crude and nonsensical ones to some more acute ones.

As an example of a crude criticism, there is a widely shared concern among JLEs that their English pronunciation will be badly influenced by the accented Englishes spoken by NNEs. For instance, this kind of concern is often expressed by JLEs who are planning to join short-term study abroad programs in the Philippines to learn English. As Parba and Morikawa (2018) point out, many of the websites of the language schools in the Philippines mention such concerns as voices from JLEs. However, since language learners' L2 is influenced by their L1 rather than external factors such as language instructors' accentedness (Benson, 2002), it is baseless and even nonsensical for JLEs to think that NNEs' Englishes have contagious and damaging effects. What is more, to undermine the accented Englishes as undesirable or even detestable compared to so-called authentic English is already discriminatory.

Some would also argue that the reason why NESTs predominantly overwhelm NNEs in the ELT labor market in Japan is because, compared to the latter, the former have natural advantages in the ELT professions and thus constitute a group of naturally stronger candidates for ELT positions. However, as discussed previously, this kind of myth is empirically debunked:

that one is an NES does not make her/him a better English instructor.

The imbalance between NESTs and NNESTs in the ELT labor market in Japan is largely attributable to discriminatory hiring practices. In fact, as briefly mentioned above, these have been well documented (Mahboob 2004; Ruecker and Ives 2015). It is highly unlikely to encounter a recruitment advertisement that does not require an applicant to be an NES or to have at least near-native level English language proficiency. As Rivers & Ross (2013) point out, in the pre-employment stage, while NESTs are privileged, NNESTs are marginalized because of their non-nativeness. It goes without saying that NNESTs should not be discriminated against based on where they are from and what kinds of Englishes they speak. Rather, NNESTs should be measured by the teaching qualifications that they have and their performance as language instructors. And yet, NNESTs have faced discrimination precisely because they are not NESTs and are often not given the chance to prove that they are equally, or better, prepared to teach English.

While this kind of racist claim stereotypically categorizing NNESTs as inferior is easy to refute, other kinds of more acute and worthwhile criticisms can be made about ELF-based ELT programs. An example would be the one related to the aforementioned problem of foreign enclaves in universities. This is because not only NESTs but also NNESTs can be peripheralized and made use of to construct a facade of a favorable globalized atmosphere to sell ELT programs or promote universities in the education market in Japan. In other words, there is the possibility that some universities would hire a variety of English instructors from a variety of countries not to promote and practice ELF but only to attain a look of globalization.

To avoid the problem of the foreign enclave, the labor conditions of both NESTs and NNESTs—in particular, the ones who are non-Japanese citizens—need to be checked and safeguarded. It has been reported (Hayes, 2013) that some universities in Japan use the language requirement in Japanese to block the pathways for non-Japanese citizens to pursue their career by conflating Japanese language skills with Japanese nationality. This means that some non-Japanese applicants' proficiency in Japanese is automatically considered insufficient for certain ten-

ured positions just because they are not Japanese nationals. This kind of arbitrary and discriminatory use of the Japanese language requirement needs to be abolished. Instead, the criteria for this requirement should be clarified and objectively set precisely because there is the obvious need for sufficient proficiency in Japanese to play any meaningful part in the day-to-day functioning of universities in Japan.

There can be also another kind of criticism about the emphasis on “communication” in EFL education in Japan. Some scholars (Abe, 2017; Saito, 2007) argue that too much emphasis on communication and mastering conversational English have undermined Japanese college students’ proficiency in English. Although it is impossible to determine whether their claim is empirically true or not because these scholars offer no data to prove this argument other than their own experiences as EFL instructors, it is still worth considering. For instance, pointing out the fact that the amount of reading in English assigned to Japanese college students has significantly reduced at the expense of conversational courses, Abe (2017) cautions that younger JLEs have become less capable of comprehending complex English sentences over the years. While it is possible that he and other scholars are simply being nostalgic about “the good old days”, it still makes sense to be concerned if it is really the case that the skill of reading English has become undervalued because of the overemphasis on communication.

Therefore, what is important to note here is not to solely put emphasis on practical English for the advancement of ELF-based ELT programs. In the case of ELFP, it would not be enough if this ELT program only valorizes the practical communication skill of English that allows its students to have conversations with speakers of a variety of Englishes. Along with the practical conversational skill, other linguistic skills also need to be nurtured so that students can have more meaningful interactions in English in the globalized world.

Limitations and Future Research

In this paper, while introducing and analyzing two ELT programs respectively implemented at two universities in Japan by examining their websites, I have identified two directions of EFL

in the Japanese educational landscape. One is exemplified by GTI at TIU, which is more on the side of the mainstream dictated by native-speakerism. The other is the case of ELFP, the very first ELF-based ELT program in Japan that TU initiated. The comparison between these two programs indicates that the latter is ethically and pedagogically more appropriate and realistic path that EFL education in Japan should follow in the future, despite the fact that there are some potential challenges even with this direction. To conclude this paper, I will attend to the limitations pertaining to this study and suggest some future research possibilities.

Since this paper mainly attends to the websites of GTI and ELFP as the sites of investigation, its argument remains at the conceptual level. In other words, it is the frameworks of these two ELT programs and the ways in which they are promoted online that are analyzed in this paper. Therefore, actual classroom activities are not within its focus. In future research, these will be also investigated to discuss a) how the hierarchization of English that is inadvertently or deliberately reinforced on the website of GTI is enacted (and possibly challenged) in the actual classes taught by NESTs and b) how the framework of ELF upheld on the website of ELFP is put into practice by NNESTs in their ELT program.

In addition, in this paper, I was not able to engage in a long-term tracking project through which to follow the vicissitudes of students' perceptions of English during their participation in these two ELT programs. To empirically determine what kinds of effects both GTI and ELFP have upon students, it is preferable to continue this study, or to do long-term ethnographic research vis-à-vis the programs' students. In particular, in future research, how students' attitude toward NESTs/NNESTs has (or has not) changed over time will be investigated to measure the impacts of GTI and ELFP.

In order to further look into the problem of foreign enclaves in universities, hiring practices at TIU and TU and, by extension, in the Japanese educational landscape in general will need to be extensively examined. This paper positively introduces ELFP as the desirable direction for the EFL education in Japan without delving into issues of working environment and structure. In future research, data about how non-Japanese citizens are being

employed will be collected and analyzed to more comprehensively evaluate the ELFP, or to investigate whether or not this ELF-based ELT program truly lives up to the philosophy of ELF.

As pointed out in the introduction, the trend toward the communicative EFL education in Japan seems to be irreversible. It is likely that Japanese universities will invest more resources in EFL education aiming for practical English. In the face of such a trend, I hope that this study will raise a question about the native-speakerism based on which many ELT programs are being designed at present, and will change the course of Japan's EFL education to one that is more contextually embedded and sensitive to the diverse needs and interests of people in a globalized world.

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