



January 2007

Foreign language education at elementary schools in Japan: Searching for solutions amidst growing diversification

Yuko G. Butler

University of Pennsylvania, ybutler@gse.upenn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://repository.upenn.edu/elmm>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Butler, Yuko G., "Foreign language education at elementary schools in Japan: Searching for solutions amidst growing diversification" (2007). *Asia-Pacific Education, Language Minorities and Migration (ELMM) Network Working Paper Series*. 3.
<http://repository.upenn.edu/elmm/3>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <http://repository.upenn.edu/elmm/3>
For more information, please contact libraryrepository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Foreign language education at elementary schools in Japan: Searching for solutions amidst growing diversification

Keywords

decentralization, micro-language policies, Japan, diversity, spread of English, foreign language education reform

Disciplines

Education

Foreign Language Education at Elementary Schools in Japan: Searching for Solutions Amidst Growing Diversification

Yuko Goto Butler

*Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA*

Hoping to achieve the current Japanese administration's goals of decentralisation and privatisation, the Japanese government has granted substantial latitude to local governments and individual schools as part of its recent reform of foreign language education. In introducing English at elementary schools, micro-language policies have been actively enacted at the local level along with slow but somewhat tactical top-down policies. The driving force behind the implementation of English in Japanese elementary schools is not simply a desire to prepare students for a global economy but also a result of multiple social and political factors. The most fundamental challenges that EES in Japan currently faces relate to issues of equity and growing diversity.

doi: 10.2167/cilp115.0

Keywords: decentralisation, micro-language policies, Japan, diversity, spread of English, foreign language education reform

Introduction

Hoping to achieve the current Japanese administration's goals of decentralisation and privatisation, the Japanese government has granted substantial latitude to local governments and individual schools as part of its recent reform of foreign language education. In 2002, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT)¹ allowed local governments and individual elementary schools to conduct foreign language activities of their own choosing so long as these promote international understanding. While foreign language activities have been almost exclusively focused on English, the Japanese government does not acknowledge English as an official academic subject at the elementary school level. As of March 2006, there remains no central policy regarding any of the following: whether or not foreign language instruction itself should be introduced; how it should be introduced; which language(s) should be chosen; who should teach these languages if they are introduced; how curricula should be developed; or how resources should be secured and allocated. All of these decisions have been deferred to local administrative bodies such as local boards of education and individual schools.

Various foreign language education policies have been prodigiously developed and implemented at the local and/or micro levels (e.g. at local schools, communities, boards of education, and local governments). These have yielded substantial diversity in practice at elementary schools. While some have introduced Japanese-English immersion bilingual programmes, others have no English or other foreign language activities at all. Such diversity has led to heated debate among educators and the general public over whether or not English should have been allowed to be taught at elementary schools in the first place, and whether the central government should make English a mandatory academic subject and ensure a degree of uniformity.

In March 2006, a panel consisting of members of MEXT's Central Council for Education (CCE, an advisory council for the minister of MEXT) proposed that English should be compulsory for 5th and 6th grade level students (with students receiving one hour of instruction per week). However, the panel made it clear that English should not be an academic subject such as Japanese language arts and mathematics; instead it should remain part of the curriculum known as general integrated studies. This means that no grades or evaluations will be involved in English classes, although the implications of this recommendation for actual classroom practice are largely uncertain. If the CCE makes a formal recommendation based on the panel's proposal, MEXT will include English in the current revision of the national curriculum, and English may easily become compulsory within the next few years.

Both the planning process that MEXT uses for language-in-education, as well as their policy implementation process, appear to be unusually slow when compared with those of other neighbouring East Asian countries such as South Korea and China that have exercised stronger top-down direction and leadership. However, if one examines carefully the process of introducing English at the elementary school level, MEXT's approach reflects unique and complicated top-down and bottom-up dynamics. Both the dynamics that have influenced this approach, as well as the growing diversity of the educational environment which MEXT faces, lead us to conclude that MEXT's approach can also be interpreted as a somewhat less explicit yet tactical means of introducing English at the elementary school level.

This paper aims to examine how policies regarding English at elementary schools (EES)² have been formulated at the central and local levels, and how top-down and bottom-up forces have influenced policy decisions. It also examines how such policy decisions at different levels relate to other prominent social and political issues, and argues that the introduction of EES in Japan is not simply due to the spread of English and the advance of the global economy, but is also driven by multiple social and political factors in Japan. However, I also argue that such policy decisions at the central and local levels have been almost exclusively made based on the interests of the Japanese-speaking majority, and that the interests of the rapidly increasing body of language minority children and their communities have not been reflected in this process.

The organisation of this paper is as follows. First, I provide a brief description of the historical and social context of English education in Japan, followed by an examination of the process of implementing English at elementary schools. Next, I examine how policy decisions are related to various social and political

factors in Japan as well as the influence of globalisation. Finally, I discuss the meaning of MEXT's current policy proposals (i.e. making English compulsory but not acknowledging it as an academic subject) and its potential effects on English education in Japan. My analyses are based on various governmental documents, schools reports, published academic papers, media reports, conference presentations, materials distributed at workshops for teachers, and my own field observations of selected schools which I conducted during the academic years spanning 2003 to 2005.

The Historical and Social Background of English Education in Japan

As I have argued elsewhere (Butler & Iino, 2005), the history of modern English language education in Japan can be characterised by the alternating importance of learning English for practical purposes and learning English as an academic subject in order for students to pass entrance exams to advance to higher education. The former has been driven by various external forces and the latter has been driven by the system in Japan for tracking Japanese-speaking students as they matriculate through the educational system.

Modern foreign language education in Japan began with the Meiji Restoration in 1868 when Japan ended its long period of international isolation. With the belief that the role of education was to advance modernisation (which was frequently interpreted to be Westernisation), the government introduced foreign language education (teaching European languages such as English, French and German) as a means of absorbing information from abroad in order for Japan to become a modern state. Foreign language education thus served a very practical purpose. Higher education itself was mostly offered through foreign languages. Arinori Mori, the first Minister of Education, emphasised the economic power of English-speaking nations and the need for Japanese to acquire English in order to maintain Japan's sovereignty (Mori, 1873, cited in Suzuki, 2002). By the 1890s, foreign language education was established at the secondary school level and beyond, with English being the principal foreign language.

After the victories of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Russo-Japan War (1904–1905), the rise of nationalism led to a renewed emphasis on Japanese language education. Under the slogan of 'Education in Japan in Japanese', foreign teachers and texts were replaced by Japanese teachers and Japanese texts. Higher education came to be offered primarily through Japanese. English, however, preserved its role as a means for the pursuit of higher academic education. What was demanded of students was not to acquire proficiency in conducting academic work in English per se but rather to demonstrate their overall intelligence through grammar and vocabulary learning and translation exercises using English. As the Japanese military gained greater power in politics, English also began to be viewed as the language of Japan's 'enemies', and English education underwent a period of neglect which lasted until the end of World War II.

The conclusion of World War II brought with it an 'English boom'. Japanese administrators and civilians now needed to acquire a practical command of English in order to communicate with US occupation forces. Under the

occupation government established by the US military, the Japanese educational system was re-established as a 6-3-3-4 system, with six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school (with compulsory education ending at 9th grade), three years of high school, and four years of college (or two years at junior colleges). Foreign language education became part of the curriculum as an elective from junior high school and beyond (English was offered almost exclusively until the high school level), once again driven by external forces and the need to rebuild the nation.

However, once Japan recovered from the destruction of World War II and entered a prolonged period of economic revitalisation, English once again came to be emphasised as an academic subject in the pursuit of higher education. English became a core, high stakes subject which students needed to acquire in order to enter high schools and colleges, and the grammar and translation method came to dominate English language education.

As Japan's economic power developed and international business took on an increasingly important role, a number of political and business leaders began to express their concerns over the fact that the exam-based English education system was not preparing Japan to fully compete in international business and technological innovation. Kubota (2002) argued that *kokusaika* ('internationalisation'), which became a prominent topic of discussion in the 1980s when Japan's economy reached its zenith, was simply a reflection of Japan's efforts to assimilate Western ideas while it tried to maintain and promote 'Japaneseness' or Japan's distinct national identity. In the discourse over *kokusaika*, many began calling for an English education programme that placed more emphasis on practical communicative skills. The discussion around introducing English at the elementary schools level began under such a climate.

The Process of Introducing English at Elementary Schools

Within the context of the abovementioned historical and societal development, two ideological conflicts have framed the discussions regarding the introduction of EES: (1) the study of English for practical purposes versus the study of English as an academic pursuit; and (2) assimilation with the world outside Japan while at the same time trying to maintain a distinct Japanese identity (i.e. *kokusaika*). While it is generally agreed that Japanese should acquire higher communicative competency in English, there has been substantial disagreement with respect to whether the introduction of EES will indeed help Japanese do this without falling into another form of exam-oriented, grammar and translation-based English education. How to strike a balance between Japanese and English language education is another concern within the greater discourse regarding *kokusaika*. Opponents of EES argue that elementary school students should focus on Japanese language education in order to establish a healthy and strongly distinct identity as Japanese nationals (e.g. Otsu, 2004; Otsu & Torikai, 2002). The result is that the Japanese government has been presented with these conflicting claims as it tries to reform its educational policies. If English is to be taught at elementary schools in a way that accommodates these claims, the Japanese government would need to ensure that it would contribute to improving communicative competence

while avoiding traditional grammar and translation-based instruction, while at the same time not sacrificing Japanese language education and not inadvertently promoting *kokusaika* in their educational policies.

Without having a clear blueprint for what EES should look like in practice, the Japanese government has taken slow and careful steps towards introducing EES. The process of introducing EES so far can be divided into three time periods as described in further detail below. These periods were characterised by: (1) initial discussions regarding EES; (2) planting the seeds for the introduction of EES; and (3) preparations for making EES compulsory.

With Japan's centralised educational system, researchers have often observed that Japanese educational reforms are executed largely through top-down channels, with policy decisions flowing down from MEXT to prefectural governments, municipal governments and schools and teachers (e.g. Markee, 1997). Observers have found evidence for some degree of reverse information flow from lower levels up to the central government (i.e. feedback loops) in this system, which makes the reform process function somewhat more flexibly than might otherwise appear to be the case (DeCoker, 2002). As we will see below, however, the introduction of EES presents a far more complex case than has been documented in other educational reforms in Japan. Growing diversification at the lowest levels appears to have changed this dynamic and the role of MEXT in the educational reform process in this instance, with bottom-up forces becoming much more influential over the actual implementation of EES policies.

Initial discussion of EES (early-1990s to 1997)

As mentioned above, the initial discussions regarding introducing EES came to the fore in the 1990s as a response to repeated criticisms by business and political groups of English education for not helping Japan respond to the needs of a globalising world. In the late-1980s, as part of *kokusaika*, the government launched the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, and began sending English-speaking foreign nationals to secondary schools as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) in order to promote communicative-based English education and international exchange at the local level.³ The JET programme itself was initiated in a highly top-down manner (McConnell, 2000). Various educational problems became a focus of national concern, including bullying, school violence, absenteeism, and psychological stress due to the competition fostered by the entrance examination system. The Ministry of Education (MOE, the predecessor of MEXT) responded by initiating a policy known as *yutori kyoiku* ('eased education') in the 1980s. The national curriculum (the Course of Study) implemented in 1992 continued to support the *yutori kyoiku* approach. One of the hallmarks of the *yutori kyoiku* policy was that the content of study and the number of class hours were substantially reduced, meaning in turn that it would not be easy to introduce any additional subjects to those already being taught under the curriculum introduced by this policy. Meanwhile, beginning in the early-1990s, Japan entered a long period of economic contraction which challenged some of the domestic conceptions of Japan's identity. The MOE faced the difficult task of promoting *yutori kyoiku* while at the same time being pressured to change English education by the business and political communities as well as academia.

It was under these circumstances that a private advisory committee for MOE started discussing the possibility of introducing EES. The MOE began exploring ways of introducing EES in 1992 by assigning two public schools to serve as pilot schools. It asked these two schools to start experimental English activity programmes. By 1996, MOE had assigned one pilot school for each prefectural government (47 altogether). The CCE, the advisory council for MOE, then presented a proposal in 1996 to MOE that individual schools be allowed to conduct foreign language conversation activities of their own choosing during the 'integrated general study period', a three-hours-per-week instructional period which was originally intended to promote individualised and flexible curriculum as part of the *yutori kyoiku* policy. Notably, the CCE did not propose making English an academic subject, nor did it specify the content of the instruction; they simply referred to these as 'English activities' as opposed to 'English language education' or any number of potential alternatives. Seeing a likelihood that this proposal would soon be implemented, a number of local governments (both at the prefectural and municipal levels) independently began preparing for a new policy direction. These bodies assigned pilot schools of their own and started searching for their own individual English activities.

Planting the seeds for the introduction of EES (1998–2001)

In 1998, MOE released the New Course of Study. The New Course of Study (implemented in 2002) adopted the CCE's proposal and allowed individual schools to introduce foreign language activities of their own choosing as part of 'international understanding' but *not* as an academic subject. While MOE continued to promote the *yutori kyoiku* policy, some college professors and educators expressed concern over a perceived decline in academic performance among students, and criticised the *yutoi kyoiku* policy. This in turn began a protracted and heated debate over the future of educational reform in Japan. According to Matsukawa (2004), this debate over the decline of academic performance influenced the introduction of EES in two ways: (1) it stressed the importance of basic Japanese language arts and maths skills at elementary schools rather than EES; and (2) it questioned MOE's approach of promoting English activities as part of the period of integrated general study at elementary schools, criticising this approach for being ambiguous and purposeless. I would add to this commentary that the debate itself also raised public awareness concerning additional educational services that might go beyond the formal curriculum or that could be provided by the private sector and other community-based actors.

It was also around this time that the Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century (an advisory board for the Prime Minister which was independent from MOE) suggested the possibility of making English a second official language in Japan in the future (Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century, 2000). Judging by the remarks made by one of the commission's advisory members (Funabashi, 2001), the primary intent of this provocative proposal appeared to be to stimulate discussion of more revolutionary changes in English education in Japan. This proposal differed in many ways from 'English as an official language' proposals and policies observed in other East Asian regions. In Japan's case, this was not an attempt

to avoid giving power to a specific language group in a multilingual society by making a neutral language an official language (as might be the case in Taiwan), nor was it an attempt to directly promote international business and trade (as was the case of Jeju island in South Korea). One of the other inferences we can draw from the Commission's proposal is that the central government in Japan clearly does not always act as a unitary entity when it comes to making decisions about reforms.

Meanwhile, MOE began giving greater autonomy to local governments and communities with respect to EES around this time. In 1999, MOE made a budgetary request (189 million yen (approx. US\$1.7 million) for the 'Promotion of Children's English Learning within Communities' (PCELC) in order to promote various locally-initiated foreign language activities and events. PCELC allowed the private sector and non-profit organisations (NPOs) to participate in such projects. Accordingly, this may be considered as one limited form of outsourcing of English education to the private sector and community-based actors. In response to PCELC, 32 local governments and agencies were initially given permission to begin locally-based instructional programmes.

MOE also changed the pilot school system at the start of the new millennium. Up until around 2000, MOE had traditionally assigned schools pre-identified topics for instruction and experimentation. Under the new system, individual schools (or groups of schools) could apply through municipal governments to receive permission to conduct various educational experiments based on their own interests. Budgetary support was expanded sharply from 500,000 yen (approximately US\$4500) per school in 1999 to 6 million yen (approximately US\$55,000) per school in 2000. In 2001, 33 additional schools (out of 103 applicants) were selected as pilot schools, including three schools which proposed to introduce English language education as an academic subject (as opposed to English activities as part of 'international understanding').

Prior to the implementation of the New Course of Study in 2002, MEXT introduced a number of plans to support schools and teachers, including the publication of a resource manual entitled *Practical Handbook for Elementary School English Activities*. While this resource was published by the central government, many of the practices established in schools were in fact formulated at the local level. A number of pilot schools took the initiative in developing materials and lesson plans, and in trying out new instructional approaches. Information from these pilot schools was circulated among schools through open classroom presentations, reports prepared by pilot schools, and other more informal channels.

Preparing to make EES compulsory (2002–2006)

The New Course of Study (officially implemented in 2002) allowed schools to introduce English activities from 3rd grade and beyond, and asked home-room teachers to be responsible for such activities. Home-room teachers were not foreign language teaching specialists by training and the majority of them did not feel confident in their English proficiency (Butler, 2004). Moreover, little in the way of comprehensive teachers' training in English instruction was available for home-room teachers. MEXT encouraged team-teaching (MEXT, 2001) but left the implementation of team-teaching almost entirely up to individual

schools and teachers. In order to assist home-room teachers, MEXT decided to start sending a limited number of JET participants to selected elementary schools and to allow English teaching certificate holders at the secondary school level to teach at elementary schools. Such efforts were part of a master plan for Japan's English education that MEXT proposed in 2003 entitled the 'Action Plan to Cultivate Japanese with English Abilities'. However, these efforts by the central government fell far short of meeting the needs of local governments and schools. Local governments aggressively hired native speakers as Assistant Language Teachers through a number of different means: some have been hired through local private placement agencies while others have been hired simply through personal connections. The qualifications of these individuals vary substantially in terms of educational background, teaching experience, and motivation for becoming teachers.

One of the statistics released by MEXT (2006) puts the current situation in perspective: while 121 native English speakers were sent to elementary schools through the JET programme in 2005, the numbers of native speakers hired by prefectural and municipal governments in 2005 were 206 and 1809 respectively. Budgetary limitations have led many schools to share native speakers with other elementary schools or nearby secondary schools. In 2005, while MEXT did not offer any teachers' training programmes in EES, 7478 teachers participated in locally organised in-service teacher training programmes at the prefectural level and 28,678 participated in such programmes organised at the municipal level. Although these numbers are still relatively small, one can clearly see that the instructional support for teachers has been largely initiated and provided at the local level rather than the central level. It is also important to note, however, that the provision of such services at the local level has also led to substantial diversity in the types of support provided to teachers.

In tandem with efforts at the local level, another key influence on the introduction of EES has come from the broader policy framework introduced by Prime Minister Koizumi's administration. The Koizumi administration promulgated a policy of structural deregulation and decentralisation to stimulate the economy. As part of this effort, the Koizumi Cabinet authorised certain local governments (at both the prefectural and municipal levels) to act as 'Special Zones for Structural Reforms' (SZSR). Although these local governments have received no budgetary support from the central government, SZSRs can initiate innovative projects that might otherwise have been constrained by existing regulations. Successful cases can in turn be implemented nationwide. In the field of education, a number of local governments have taken this opportunity and started their own English-language education curricula which deviate from the New Course of Study. For example, Ohta City established an English-Japanese immersion school (offering classes from 1st to 12th grade level) in which all subjects except Japanese language arts and social science are taught in English by native English-speaking teachers. Kanazawa City developed their own unique English language curriculum (3rd to 9th grade levels) and created English textbooks for their students. Ginowan City started offering their teachers (from the elementary school level to the high school level) in-service training on partial English-Japanese immersion instruction. All of these efforts have become possible despite the fact that the current Course of Study only allows

schools to introduce foreign language activities such as conversation activities, but not teach English as an academic subject, from 3rd grade onwards.

Related to the spread of in-service teacher training programmes offered at the local level, selected local governments have begun actively creating peer networks, as it were, among themselves as well. Kyoto City organised the 1st National Conference on the Practice of English Activities at Elementary Schools in 2004. In 2005, Kanazawa City organised a national conference of local governments authorised as SZSRs in education. By 2004, more than 90% of the elementary schools in Japan indicated that they had already conducted English activities (MEXT, 2005a). One should keep in mind, however, that despite all the efforts that have been expended on teacher training and creating networks among governmental bodies at the local level, there remains substantial diversity in how English is actually implemented and that the majority of schools still have English activities for less than one hour per week.

A final point worth mentioning with regard to the implementation of EES is that there has been substantial public discussion over whether or not English should in fact be taught at elementary schools and, related to this, whether it should be taught as a mandatory academic subject in those cases where it is introduced. Private opinion polls have indicated that the majority of parents support EES (e.g. Benesse Center for Future Education, 2004), but only half of the teachers polled to-date have seen the effects of introducing EES (MEXT, 2005b). It appears clear that MEXT did take public opinion into account based on the series of discussions among the members of the advisory council for MEXT (MEXT, 2005b). In March 2006, as already mentioned, this advisory council made a final proposal to MEXT that English activities should be compulsory for 5th and 6th graders. However, the advisory council did not propose making English an academic subject because it felt it was premature to do so nationwide.

The Complex Reasons Underlying the Decision to Implement EES

In the previous section, I illustrated how top-down and bottom-up forces have influenced each other in the policymaking process and in the actual implementation of EES in Japan. In this section, I examine the underlying reasons for introducing EES, and argue that the decision has been made not simply because of concerns regarding the spread of the global economy but also because it is driven by a number of complicating factors. Such driving forces include: (1) the power of English in the global economy; (2) the generally positive attitude towards the English language among most Japanese; (3) a prevailing sense of dissatisfaction with existing English language education; (4) the role of English as a measure of one's academic abilities within the Japanese education system; (5) the role of English as a political platform for some local government officials; (6) the role of English as an attractive 'selling point' for certain schools under the school choice system in selected areas; (7) the (unwarranted) perceptions of English as a potential solution for communication-related behavioural problems; and (8) growing concerns about ensuring equal access to EES in different regions and among different socio-economic groups.

First, there is no doubt that the economic and political advantages that English language capability brings in the global economy are a major driving force for Japan to change its foreign language acquisition policy. The literature indicates that non-English mother tongue countries see the economic and political benefits of English as a global language and that this is a major cause of the spread of English (e.g. Fishman *et al.*, 1996; Spolsky, 2004) rather than simply the result of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). In Japan, it is indeed true that the discussion of EES began largely as a response to pressure from business and political sectors; they had repeatedly called for changes to Japan's English education in order to be competitive in both business and politics globally. MEXT has stated that it believes it is necessary for Japanese children to acquire sufficient communicative command of English in order to survive in the increasingly globalised 21st century (MEXT, 2003), and that it views English education reform as one of the strategies for stimulating the nation's economy. The fact that neighbouring East Asian countries have also started introducing EES in recent years may have had some effect on Japan's policy as well, given the growing number of publications in Japan on English language education in other Asian countries in recent years.

Second, the generally very positive attitude towards the English language among Japanese has been another force driving EES. In Japan, there is little of the sense that English is a threat to the Japanese language, unlike what has been observed in other non-English mother tongue countries such as Sweden (Hult, 2005). This may be partially due to the fact that the Japanese language has been so dominant in Japanese society, while minority languages have been suppressed. Moreover, since Japan has never been colonised by either English or other foreign-language speaking nations in the past (with perhaps the sole exception being Okinawa, which was occupied by the US for over a quarter of a century after World War II), English has been associated with positive images.⁴ A good command of a foreign language has been often associated with elites and thus has been an object of admiration within the society (Suzuki, 1999). The general public therefore has had little objection towards accepting English as part of the school curriculum.

In this respect it is interesting to note that the population of Okinawa, which was under US rule for 27 years after World War II, has shown a different attitude towards English. The US planned to implement English from the elementary school level in Okinawa during its rule over the island, but its repeated attempts were not successful due to strong resistance from Okinawa people towards what was perceived as the language of its overseers. At the same time that Okinawans participated in movements calling for a return to the Japanese state and demonstrated increasing nationalism, English at elementary schools was denied even though Okinawans fully acknowledged the value of the English language for themselves (Oshiro, 2005). Having officially become a part of Japan for a number of years, Okinawa took full advantage of the policy granting autonomy to local governments and actively began implementing innovative English programmes which deviated from Japan's central policies. At the same time various revitalisation movements calling for the resuscitation of native Okinawa languages have also gained strength.

Third, there is a prevailing sense of dissatisfaction with existing English language education among the general public. Many Japanese share the feeling that they cannot speak English well despite years of learning English, and hope to see some changes in the existing system. Early foreign language instruction is often seen as one of the possible solutions. With a folk belief that children can easily pick up languages, there appears to have been a strong (though potentially unwarranted) expectation and desire for EES, particularly among parents (Wada, 2004).

Fourth is the role of English as an academic pursuit within the Japanese education system. English remains a very high stakes subject at the secondary school level and beyond, and as such, English is a major determinant of one's future educational path and career within society. English for communicative purposes (or 'English for practical purposes' mentioned at the beginning of this paper) has been emphasised in the curriculum, and efforts have been made to change the English portion of entrance examinations. For instance, listening tests have recently been included in the national college entrance exam (the Center Test) starting from 2006. However, the washback effects of such efforts are not yet known, and in fact, many educators have expressed scepticism over the impact of these efforts on English pedagogy in Japan (e.g. Lokon, 2005). Indeed, observers have reported that grammar and translation instruction still dominates at the secondary school level (e.g. O'Donnell, 2005). Within such a context, parents have expressed concern over the fact that some elementary schools and local governments have begun teaching English as an academic subject while others have yet to do so.

Fifth, in advancing the central government's policy of decentralisation, EES has increasingly been used as an attractive political platform for local government officials. EES has proved to be a strong campaign tool for canvassing votes. Innovative English programmes, such as the English-Japanese immersion school in Ohta City and the locally-developed English textbooks used in Kanazawa City, often came about as a result of the efforts of local governmental officials who had demonstrated strong leadership. While such innovations may lead to unique educational successes, differences in the views expressed by local government leaders and local schools/teachers regarding how best to implement such programmes have often underscored divisive issues.

Sixth, EES also can serve as an attractive selling point for certain schools. As part of the central government's policies of deregulation and the liberalisation of education, more and more local governments have employed a 'school choice' system wherein parents are free to choose a school within their local district. Individual schools therefore need to present parents with their own educational visions and programmes, and they are now increasingly held accountable for the outcome. Innovative EES programmes can therefore become a part of schools' strategies for attracting parents and students. In some schools, parents in turn have become heavily involved in EES activities.

Seventh, there appears to be some unwarranted (or perhaps even unreasonable) expectations of EES as a solution for certain communication-related social behavioural problems in Japan. Educators and policymakers in Japan have been concerned by a number of youth-related issues, including youth who neither

study nor are employed ('Not Employed, Educated or in Training' or NEET) and youth who have chosen to withdraw from society and essentially lock themselves away in limited spaces such as their own bedrooms (*hikikomori* 'social withdrawal'). Such issues have often been associated with a lack of communication skills and social adjustment abilities among young Japanese.⁵ Coupled with the strong promotion of communicative competence in English language education, some in Japan have come to expect that students can develop communication skills through EES, especially through interactions with foreign teachers. Although it may sound unusual, one can frequently find descriptions in pilot school reports stating that children began greeting people vigorously after introducing English activities, and that children came to understand how enjoyable it could be to communicate with others through interacting with native English speakers.⁶

Lastly, MEXT has to consider issues regarding the equality of access to English education, as EES has increasingly become diversified by regions and schools. English teachers at secondary schools find it very challenging to teach English if they have to accept students from multiple elementary schools with different EES programmes. Unequal access to English education by socio-economic status has also become a concern as well. Parents who cannot afford to provide their children with private English lessons have expressed their desire for compulsory public English education services.

As we have seen above, different actors in Japan (MEXT, local governments, schools, teachers, parents and so forth) have different motivations for introducing EES. The discussion of EES has been driven by multiple factors and is not simply based on the economic and political advantages of English as global language. However, it is critically important to point out that the language-in-education planning of EES in Japan has been based on the very limited 'language-as-a-resource view' (Ruíz, 1984) that prevails among the Japanese-speaking majority. Although efforts have been made in some local programmes to promote multiculturalism, the multilingual perspective in language education has been largely missing. Multilingualism in Japan essentially means English-Japanese bilingualism (Kubota, 2002), and the language-in-education planning of EES has been based on this narrow view as well.

The number of foreign residents living in Japan has grown rapidly, particularly since changes in Japan's Immigration Law were made in 1990. In 2003, 1.91 million foreign residents registered in Japan (comprising 1.5% of the total population in Japan). This represents a 50% increase compared with 10 years ago (as opposed to a 2% increase in the number of Japanese citizens). Accordingly, the number of school-age non-Japanese speaking children has grown rapidly, and it is estimated that over 20,000 students need special assistance with Japanese as a second language. However, the language and educational services provided for these children have remained very limited (Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2005). In order to justify EES, some local governments have argued that a greater command of English will enhance communication among linguistically diversified communities within Japan. However, the overwhelming majority of foreigners living in Japan and their school-age children do not come from English-speaking countries. Among students who do not speak Japanese as their first language and who are enrolled in Japanese schools,⁷ 36% speak

Portuguese, 24% speak Chinese, 15% speak Spanish and 9% speak various Filipino languages as their first language, while only less than 3% of such students speak English as their first language (MEXT, 2005c). Policy discussions of EES have been based almost entirely on the perceived benefits for the Japanese-speaking majority. In the local policy making process regarding EES, there has been little discussion of the possibilities of introducing foreign languages other than English that might otherwise serve more direct community needs. The opinions of such language minority members have been almost completely ignored in the discussions of how to implement foreign language education at elementary schools.

Potential Effects of MEXT's Current Decision Regarding EES

As mentioned previously, a panel of the CCE most recently proposed introducing English education (one hour per week) as a compulsory but not academic subject for 5th and 6th grade levels. The details of how this might be done in practice have yet to be specified. When foreign language activities were first implemented as part of fostering international understanding but not as an academic subject per se, it created substantial confusion and diversity in the interpretation of the policy at both school and local government levels (Butler, 2005). This most recent proposal also allows for multiple interpretations. The compulsory but non-academic status for 5th and 6th grade levels may mean that all schools have to conduct some form of foreign language activities but that no assessment will be required. However, given the fact that 75% of the schools have already found some way to reserve time for English activities from 1st grade level onwards (MEXT, 2006), and that schools are increasingly expected to be held directly accountable to the public (as is the case in the school choice system in some areas), what this proposal means in practice is very unclear. One may even speculate that this proposal is simply one step to be taken before making a transition to English as compulsory academic subject at the elementary school.

By taking such a measured pace, it may very well be that MEXT is trying to warn the general public not to have too many expectations towards EES (Wada, 2004). The slow steps taken here may also indicate MEXT's intention to avoid direct criticism from those who are concerned with the decline in academic achievement in other core subjects such as maths and Japanese language arts. MEXT also appears to be buying time to ensure that local governments come up with their own English programmes and secure resources for these independently. The Japanese education system is characterised by time lags between advisory boards' proposal submissions to MEXT and the subsequent releases of new curricula (i.e. the Course of Study), and also by lags between the release and the official implementation of such new curricula. As we have seen already, in the case of EES, many local governments and schools started preparing for the new curricula even before these were to be officially implemented. As a result we can see some problems and challenges that have emerged from the introduction of English activities even before the official implementation date. In this respect, MEXT appears to be utilising some of the information gained widely from such local governmental experiences in each step of their nationwide policymaking process.

The policymaking and implementation process of EES also nicely illustrates how the roles of the national curriculum and MEXT have changed in the Japanese educational system. After receiving repeated criticisms of its *yutori kyoiku* policy, MEXT decided to allow schools to teach content beyond what was regulated in the Course of Study in 2003. The introduction process for EES illustrates how the role of the Course of Study has shifted to something approximating a minimum guideline rather than a national standard. The role of MEXT in the educational policymaking process has also changed accordingly. At least in the case of EES policymaking and implementation, the role of MEXT has been as a facilitator and gatekeeper for local policies rather than as a central decision-making body. While it is nothing new for MEXT (or its predecessor, MOE) to negotiate with local governments and teachers in the process of making and implementing policies, the top-down force exerted by MEXT in the introduction of EES has become much more covert and MEXT itself has been much more tactical in its manoeuvrings.

While it is not clear whether MEXT plans to make English a compulsory academic subject at the elementary school level in the near future, more and more local governments and schools have already started preparing for teaching English as an academic subject. However, it is important to note that such local-level preparations do not necessarily go smoothly. One can see various complications within many local governments. In some areas, there are disagreements between governments at the prefectural and municipal levels over how best to run English programmes (e.g. between Gunma Prefecture and Ohta City). One can also occasionally observe cases where older pilot schools are unable to interact effectively with other non-pilot schools in the same district or SZSRs with regard to their newly implemented English programmes. In addition, given the fact that many of the more innovative English programmes were introduced by local government leaders who had demonstrated strong leadership abilities, it is uncertain whether such innovative programmes can be continued once new leaders are elected in their place.

Whatever approach towards EES that Japan eventually takes, there is no doubt that EES will influence English teaching at the secondary school level and beyond, and that secondary schools can no longer ignore EES. Teachers' networks are also expanding across regions and across school levels. Selected local governments have taken the initiative in making English curricula consistent from the elementary school level to the secondary school level. While curricular consistency is an indispensable first step, that in itself is far from sufficient; it is also necessary to have instructional consistency and close communication between elementary school teachers and secondary school English teachers. Even if EES could provide students with innovative and unique English learning experiences, as long as English education at secondary schools retain traditional instructional approaches, students will face difficulties in making a smooth transition in their English learning from the elementary school to the secondary school level.

The most fundamental challenges that EES in Japan currently faces relate to issues of equity and growing diversity. As mentioned before, substantial diversity in curricula, instructional approaches and resource availability for EES across regions raises the issue of unequal access to language education in

the public school system. The disparities in the quality of EES instruction are partially due to the lack of sufficient professional guidance for teachers and local administrators and also partly due to local governments' financial abilities. Recall, for instance, that SZSRs do not receive any financial support from the central government; local governments need to secure the funding to conduct such projects. The private sector has aggressively expanded its marketing to young English learners. Schools themselves also frequently ask private entities and individuals to help conduct EES instruction. The growing diversity in EES practice makes parents nervous because English is still a high-stakes subject for going on to high school and college. Some parents may start providing their children with private English lessons while others may not be able to afford to do so. Ironically, language minority children largely belong to the latter group. If MEXT continues to give greater freedom to local governments without ensuring a certain level of uniformity in the quality and practice of EES, the result would be the creation of a substantial disparity in access to foreign language education by region and social class, ultimately leading to an achievement gap.

There has been substantial discussion regarding the relationship between neo-liberalism, the current policy of deregulation, and the recent educational reforms in Japan (e.g. Iwaki, 2004; Miyadera, 2006). In the neo-liberal approach to education, education itself should be efficiently provided under the governance of the free market. Those who support neo-liberalism in education welcome lesser degrees of control by the central government and accept differences in educational services and outcomes as a result of the different services that students or their parents choose to receive. In Japan, however, deregulation and individualised educational services appear to be over-promoted without assuring equal access to education for all. No accountability measures for EES are available for either parents or students in order for them to be able to make autonomous choices regarding educational alternatives in the first place. While it is highly debatable whether the neo-liberal approach to education itself works well in Japan, it is clear that potential achievement gaps in English cannot be justified or attributed to the results of the free market mechanism under current policies. MEXT must therefore balance a fine line between providing individualised education that meets the increasingly diverse needs of students in a changing world, while at the same time avoiding the creation of a system of discriminatory education.

Finally, more attention must be paid to the growing number of language minority students in Japan. If English is the language that is to be introduced as a mandatory subject, it is critical to consider how teachers can teach students the value of language minority students' languages and cultures and how to promote multilingualism through their English activities. Sufficient professional support will be indispensable in making this possible.

While EES is facing significant challenges, one exciting development that should be noted is that we can begin seeing more and more non-native English speaking individuals from abroad (e.g. Chinese-born teachers) who are acting as English language teaching assistants at elementary schools throughout Japan. This may be related to the fact that EES started primarily as a form of promoting international understanding rather than as language study per se. It is also

partially due to the fact that it is not always easy for elementary schools to hire enough English-speaking teachers from Inner Circle (Kachru, 1982) countries, even if they wish to do so.

However, assuming that children in Japan will have an increasing number of opportunities to use English with other non-native English speakers as well as with native English-speakers as globalisation continues to spread, it is important for them to be familiar with varieties of English and to develop sufficient skills to communicate with speakers of EIL (English as an international language). Non-native English speaking teachers from abroad may also be able to serve as role models for their English learning. While the introduction of varieties of English is still controversial in many EIL teaching contexts (Kuo, 2006), as is how best to help learners increase their mutual intelligibility while maintaining their group identity, one could argue that raising their awareness of such matters is a first step towards achieving successful international communication. While there are no official statistics available to confirm this observation, my field research has indicated that elementary schools are indeed hiring more and more non-native English speaking teachers from abroad. If this is indeed the beginning of a larger trend, it could signal a tacit welcome to varieties of English in English classrooms, and in turn could eventually impact on English education at the secondary school level and higher if it continues.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described some of the ways in which policies regarding EES have been formulated at both the central and local levels, and how top-down and bottom-up forces have influenced the formation of such policies in Japan. As part of its recent policies of decentralisation and deregulation, the central government has granted significant autonomy and freedom to local governments with regard to English education. As a result, a number of bottom-up forces have become very influential over both educational practice and the central government's ongoing policymaking process itself. I have also tried to show how the introduction of EES was driven not only by the global economy and the spread of English, but also by multiple social and political factors in Japan.

Faced with growing diversity at the local level, MEXT appears to have played a role in the process of introducing EES that was different from what has traditionally been observed. While MEXT has promoted and facilitated local efforts, it needs to assure equal access to educational services for all children in Japan regardless of their place of residence, socio-economic background, or linguistic background. MEXT needs to secure a certain level of uniformity in the quality of EES across regions and a level of consistency in practice over time, and thus it needs to provide both financial and other support to local governments and schools that need assistance in this regard.

Japan's EES policy is in the midst of drastic change. One can no longer characterise Japanese policymaking as 'immobilism' (Schoppa, 1991). Many exciting and innovative experiments have been taking place on a trial-and-error basis at the local level. However, information gained through such experiences is typically only circulated locally at present, and schools and teachers in other regions

have yet to be able to fully access and utilise such information. Perhaps it would be advisable for MEXT to take the initiative to synthesise such information and make it available for teachers and schools nationwide. Indeed, there is no need for all of the schools in Japan to go through the same trial-and-error steps in trying to identify those types of EES instruction that best meet the needs of their students and communities.

Correspondence

Any correspondence should be directed to Associate Professor Yuko Goto Butler, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, 3700 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6214, USA (ybutler@gse.upenn.edu).

Notes

1. The Ministry of Education (MOE) changed its name to Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology (MEXT) in 2001.
2. Foreign language education programmes at the elementary school level can be largely classified into the following three types (Met & Rhodes, 1990): (1) Foreign Language Experience/Exploratory (FLEX) programmes; (2) Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) programmes; and (3) Language immersion programmes. FLEX programmes are usually short-term programmes and their main focus is on enhancing students' awareness of different languages and cultures. FLES programmes aim to develop fluency in the target language mainly in the oral domain. In immersion programmes, the regular curriculum is either entirely or partially taught through the target language. In Japan, while a growing number of schools are teaching English through FLES programmes (and immersion programmes in some exceptional cases), the English activities that MEXT suggests are closest to FLEX programmes in principle. In the present paper, English at elementary schools (EES) can refer to any of the three types of programmes mentioned above, given the diversity of EES programmes that have been initiated at the local level.
3. The JET Program started inviting native speakers of German and French in 1989, and native speakers of other languages such as Chinese and Korean from 1999, to serve as assistant language teachers of their native languages. However, the number of such individuals has been very limited; they comprised only 0.4% of the total number of JET participants in 2001 (MEXT, 2002).
4. During the relatively shorter period of the US military occupation of mainland Japan, English quickly gained in popularity. For example, a practical English conversation booklet called the 'Anglo-Japanese conversation manual' sold more than 3.6 million volumes in 1945. After the extended wartime period, mainland Japanese of the time saw English as a window that opened towards a brighter democratic society (Asahi Newspaper, 1995).
5. While youth who might be considered as NEET in many Western countries are often seen as being placed in this category because of societal problems, NEET in Japan are often thought of as essentially self-selecting into this category due to individual problems such as low motivation to either associate with other people or to join the workforce (Honda *et al.*, 2006).
6. For example, H Elementary School in Tokyo (the school name remains anonymous) indicated in its school report that their students tended to have limited social networks due to the small size of the school, and that their students in general were not good at expressing their thoughts and feelings well. The school believed that English activities would help their students develop general communicative abilities because the students should be able to feel a sense of achievement and joy if they could experience successfully communicating with others in English. Similar remarks are often found in other school reports as well.

7. There is a growing number of students who are neither enrolled in Japanese schools nor enrolled in ethnic schools, but the number of such students remains unknown at present (Tezuka, 2006).

References

- Agency for Cultural Affairs (2005) *Chiiki nihongo gakushu shien-no jujitsu* [Japanese for Communities: Improving Support for Learning]. Tokyo: Agency for Cultural Affairs.
- Asahi Newspaper (1995) (ed.) *Nichibei kaiwa techo-wa naze uretanoka?* [Why did the 'Anglo-Japanese conversation manual' sell well?]. Tokyo: Asahi Bunko.
- Benesse Center for Future Education (2004) *Gakko kyoiku-nitaisuru hogosha-no ishikichosa* [Parental opinions about school education]. On WWW at http://benesse.jp/berd/data/hogosya_isiki/2004/pdf/isiki.pdf. Accessed 5.5.06.
- Butler, Y.G. (2004) What level of English proficiency do elementary school teachers need to attain in order to teach EFL? Case studies from Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. *TESOL Quarterly* 38 (2), 245–278.
- Butler, Y.G. (2005) *Nihon-no Shogakko Eigo-o Kangaeru- Aja-no Shiten-karano Kensho-to Teigenn* [English Language Education in Japanese Elementary Schools: Analyses and Suggestions Based on East Asian Perspectives]. Tokyo: Sansedo.
- Butler, Y.G. and Iino, M. (2005) Current Japanese reforms in English language education: The 2003 'Action Plan'. *Language Policy* 4 (1), 25–45.
- DeCoker, G. (2002) What do national standards really mean? In G. DeCoker (ed.) *National Standards and School Reform in Japan and the United States* (pp. xi–xx). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fishman, J.A., Rubal-Lopez, A. and Conrad, A.W. (1996) *Post-imperial English*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Funabashi, Y. (2001) *Eigo kouyougoron-no shisou* [Thoughts about making English an official language]. In Y. Suzuki (ed.) *Ronsou: Eigo-ga Kouyougo-ni naruhi* [Debate: The Day When English Becomes an Official Language] (pp. 38–51). Tokyo: Chuoukoron.
- Honda, Y., Naito, A. and Goto, K. (2006) *NEET-tte iuna!* [Don't Call Them NEET!]. Tokyo: Kobunsha.
- Hult, F.M. (2005) A case of prestige and status planning: Swedish and English in Sweden. *Current Issues in Language Planning* 6 (1), 73–79.
- Iwaki, H. (2004) *Yutori kyoiku-kara kosei rouhi shakai-e* [From Yutori-Education to an Idiosyncratic Society]. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo.
- Kachru, B.B. (1982) Teaching world Englishes. In B.B. Kachru (ed.) *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures* (pp. 355–365). Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Kubota, R. (2002) The impact of globalization on language teaching in Japan. In D. Block and D. Cameron (eds) *Globalization and Language Teaching* (pp. 13–28). London: Routledge.
- Kuo, I.-C. (2006) Addressing the issue of teaching English as a lingua franca. *ELT Journal* 60 (3), 213–221.
- Lokon, E. (2005) Will the new Center Test make English language education more communicative in Japanese high schools? *The Language Teachers* 29 (11), 7–12.
- Markee, N. (1997) *Managing Curricular Innovation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Matsukawa, R. (2004) *Asuno Shogakko Eigokyoiku-o Hiraku* [Opening the Way for Tomorrow's English Education at Elementary Schools]. Tokyo: Apricot.
- McConnell, D.L. (2000) *Importing Diversity: Inside Japan's JET Program*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Met, M. and Rhodes, N. (1990) Elementary school foreign language instruction: Priorities for the 1990s. *Foreign Language Annals* 25 (5), 433–443.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2001) *Shogakko eigokatsudo jissen-no tebiki* [Practical Handbook for Elementary School English Activities]. Tokyo: Kairyudo.

- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2002) *JET puroguramu kihon mondai kentoukai houkokusho gaiyou* [A Summary Report on the Examination of Fundamental Issues Regarding the JET Program]. On WWW at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/13/11/011121.htm#mokuji. Accessed 25.8.06.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2003) *Regarding the establishment of an Action Plan to Cultivate 'Japanese with English Abilities'*. On WWW at <http://www.mext.go.jp/english/topics/03072801.htm>. Accessed 25.8.06.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2005a) *Shogakko eigokatsudo jittchi chosa-ni tsuite* [A Study of Current Practices in English Activities at Elementary Schools]. On WWW at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/siryu/015/05071201/005/003.htm. Accessed 28.7.05.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2005b) *Gaikokugo senmonbukai dai 7 kai gijiroku, haifushiryu* [Panel on Foreign Language Education, 7th meeting, Table of contents and handouts]. On WWW at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/siryu/015/05071201.htm. Accessed 10.5.06.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2005c) *Gaikokujin jidou seito kyoiku-no genjo-to torikumi* [The current status of educational efforts to support foreign students]. On WWW at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/shotou/029/shiryu/05070501/s014.htm. Accessed 28.08.06.
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport, Science, and Technology (MEXT) (2006) *Shogakko eigo katsudo jittshi jokyo chosa kekka gaiyou: Heisei 17 nendo* [Summary results of English activities at elementary schools in 2005]. On WWW at http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo3/siryu/015/05071201/005/003.htm. Accessed 20.3.06.
- Miyadera, A. (2006) *Kyoiku-no bunpairon* [The Distribution of Education]. Tokyo: Keiso Shobo.
- O'Donnell, K. (2005) Japanese secondary English teachers: Negotiation of educational roles in the face of curriculum reform. *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 18 (3), 300–315.
- Oshiro, K. (2005) Waga chiiki-no eigo kyoiku-no torikumi: Okinawa-hen [Our region's approach to English education: The case of Okinawa]. *STEP Eigo Joho* [STEP English Information] 3/4, 76–17.
- Otsu, Y. (2004) (ed.) *Shogakko-deno eigo kyoiku-wa hitsuyo-ka?* [Do We Need English Instruction at Elementary Schools?]. Tokyo: Keio University Press.
- Otsu, Y., and Torikai, K. (2002) *Shogakko-de naze eigo?* [Why English at Elementary Schools?]. Iwanami Booklet No. 562. Tokyo: Iwanami.
- Phillipson, R. (1992) *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century (2000) *Nihon-no furontea-wa nihon-no naka-ni aru: Jiritu-to kyochi-de kizuku shinseiki* [The Frontier Within: Individual Empowerment and Better Governance in the New Millennium]. Tokyo: Kodansha. Also on WWW at <http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/21century>.
- Ruiz, R. (1984) Orientations in language planning. *NABE Journal* 8 (2), 15–34.
- Schoppa, L. (1991) *Education Reform in Japan: A Case of Immobilist Policies*. New York: Routledge.
- Spolsky, B. (2004) *Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suzuki, T. (1999) *Nihonjin-wa naze eigo-ga dekinaka?* [Why Aren't Japanese Good at English?]. Tokyo: Iwanami.
- Suzuki, Y. (2002) *Ronsou: Eigo-ga Kouyougou-ni naruhi* [Debate: The Day When English Becomes an Official Language]. Tokyo: Chuoukoron.
- Tezuka, Y. (2006) Tabunka kyosei shakai-ni muketa nihon-no kadai [Problems that Japan faces with regards to 'Multicultural Society']. *Gaiko Forum* 215, 60–63.
- Wada, M. (2004) Shogakko eigo kyoiku, gengo seisaku, taishu [English language education at elementary schools, language policy, and the general public]. In Y. Otsu (ed.) *Shogakko-deno Eigo Kyoiku-wa Hituyo-ka* [Is English Language Education at Elementary Schools Necessary?]. Tokyo: Keio University Press.