

BOOK REVIEW

English as a Lingua Franca in Japan: towards multilingual practices, edited by Mayu Konakahara and Keiko Tsuchiya, Cham, Switzerland, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, xxvi + 358 pp., 109,99 € (hardback), ISBN 978-3-030-33287-7

English as a Lingua Franca in Japan: Towards Multilingual Practices, edited by Mayu Konakahara and Keiko Tsuchiya, is the latest volume on the growing phenomenon of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in the Japanese context. By drawing on multilingualism as a conceptual lens through which to investigate language practices and language attitudes, the edited volume addresses how ELF is positioned, perceived, and practiced in various settings in Japan. It also considers English language teaching and learning in the Japanese context in a new light through a shift in focus from adherence to native-speaker norms to ELF users' creative and flexible use of multilingual resources of which English is only a part. The edited volume is a timely and valuable addition to the expanding body of work on ELF in Asia, providing refreshing insights into the use, teaching, and learning of ELF in the Japanese context in particular.

This volume gathers together a selection of well-written papers covering a wide spectrum of interesting and tightly interrelated topics on ELF in the Japanese context, including language education policies, ELF communication in academic and business settings, language users' and learners' perceptions of ELF, and ELF-oriented pedagogies. In addition to Chapter 1 by Konakahara and Tsuchiya which provides a clear and thorough overview of the existing ELF research in the Japanese context, the rest of the edited volume is organised in five parts.

Part I considers ELF in relation to language policies and English-education guidelines in Japan from historical and political perspectives. In Chapter 2, Hino considers the place of English in Japan in Kachru's three-circle model. He suggests that the linguacultural features of Japan that are of particular relevance to ELF education are awareness of internationalization, quest for equality, orientation toward indigenization, and need of models. He argues that eclecticism, as an additional traditional Japanese value, will be especially useful for teaching ELF in Japan, which would mean in practice integrating different paradigms in an attempt to incorporate Japanese culture in ELF education. In Chapter 3, Iino reviews the language policies in Japan and highlights the marginal position of ELF in the dominant discourse where English as a Native Language (ENL) still reigns supreme. He argues that status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning are necessary to effectively achieve the goal of deliberate intervention in English language use and language teaching in Japan. He also suggests that different stakeholders, including educators, researchers, administrators, and politicians, should be involved in applying ELF research findings into practice. In the next chapter (Chapter 4), Suzuki discusses the impact of the rise of competency-based education and global human resource development on the reform of the education guidelines in Japan. She highlights the conspicuous absence of the notion of ELF in the educational discourse and argues for a move to a multilingual approach from a monolingual one in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Japan. In Chapter 5, Ishikawa draws upon Larsen-Freeman's (2018) complex theory to conceptualise both ENL and ELF as complex adaptive devices in the Japanese context. He discusses the place of a monolingual Standard English variety in the ubiquitous multilingual environment and suggests that there could be a close connection between the seemingly contradictory pair of monolingual Standard English and English as a Multilingua Franca through the lens of complexity theory.



Part II includes several empirical studies on ELF in academic and pedagogical settings in the Japanese context. In Chapter 6, Shino investigates how homeroom teachers, assistant language teachers, and pupils interact with one another in order to enhance mutual understanding through ELF. She finds that the use of accommodation strategies, such as codeswitching and repetition, by the homeroom teachers and the assistant language teachers in team-taught English lessons, could help to ensure the pupils' understanding and create a space where the pupils can observe the teachers' use of ELF in interactions in the classroom. In Chapter 7, Harada and Moriya examine the use of ELF in lectures given by three professors in the field of applied linguistics. Their findings show that ELF lectures show unique linguistic characteristics not common in first-language English lectures, including the use of more repetition and hesitation markers, as well as the presence of different interactive features. In particular, the frequent use of examples and paraphrases may be conceptualized as lexicogrammatical simplification strategies and accommodation strategies respectively, both of which seem to be used by the three professors to negotiate and co-construct meaning in ELF in the educational setting. In Chapter 8, Nogami investigates the changes in Japanese students' perceptions of ELF through study abroad programmes. In particular, she investigates how they perceive themselves as English learners/users through study abroad experiences and whether their study abroad experiences bring about changes in their attitudes towards the English language. Her findings indicate that study abroad in an ELF context may not provide students with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self as an ELF user, but the extensiveness and quality of social networks that the students develop can play a significant role in changing the students' attitudes towards the English language. Chapter 9 by Konakahara examines the implementation of an ELF-oriented module for Japanese undergraduate students in two Japanese universities and the changes in their attitudes towards ELF. She finds that while many students evaluated their own English negatively at the start of the semester, their attitudes gradually changed to more ELF-oriented as a result of the implementation of the ELF-oriented module. In particular, the key factors in transforming the students' attitudes include their explicit knowledge of the numerical significance of non-native speakers of English, the fuzzy definitions of native English speakers and ENL, the problematic nature of native-speakerism, and the pragmatic strategies used in ELF communication.

Part III focuses on the use of ELF in business and institutional settings in the Japanese context. Chapter 10 by Otsu examines instances of small talk in business ELF (BELF) between a Japanese businessperson and a Malaysian hotel clerk. By using a conversation analytic approach (Cogo 2009), Otsu shows how the interactants successfully negotiate meaning through ELF. Her study also finds that the interlocutors prioritise communication effectiveness over native-speaker correctness and co-construct the ELF interactions by flexibly utilising the linguistic resources at their disposal. Chapter 11 by Takino investigates Japanese business people's language practices and their cognitive processes of their multilingual use of BELF and Japanese. Her study finds that English is not used as a monolingual language by the Japanese business people, but that they draw upon their multilingual repertoires to facilitate and accommodate BELF communication in their unique sociolinguistic environments. In Chapter 12, Tsuchiya examines business people's use of multilingual resources and translanguaging in the practice of mediation during a BELF lunch meeting at a Japanese trading company in Southeast Asia. By combining corpus analysis and conversation analytic approaches, Tsuchiya's study reveals that the mediators position themselves in multiple linguacultural communities during the BELF meeting by (re)negotiating their self-oriented cultural identity and the identity ascribed by others. In the next chapter (Chapter 13), Nozawa focuses on the use of repetitions in ELF interactions in simulated medical consultations at a Japanese medical university. She finds that the repetitions for expressing cognitive empathy in primary care

consultation in ELF can function as an accommodation strategy, which can help ensure both successful delivery of cognitive empathy and elicitation of important information.

Part IV includes reflections on ELF research in Japan and provides future directions of ELF research from the lens of multilingualism. In Chapter 14, Oda expresses his critical stance on the English-education policy in Japan which shows a general lack of awareness of ELF and multilingualism. He argues that the power of policymakers, i.e., the Japanese government, the role of media discourses, and the general public's limited access to the relevant information about ELF are the major contributing factors that shape the current norm of learning and teaching English in Japan. Chapter 15 by Yano offers a critical examination of Japanese people's admiration for the West and calls for the need to promote the use of their linguacultural resources in ELF interactions. He argues that the current ELF research findings can potentially liberate Japanese people from the straitjacket of native-speakerism. Chapter 16 by Seidlhofer and Widdowson convincingly points to the need to re-conceptualise the traditional assumptions underlying language learning, particularly the notion of learner error. They argue that language learners should be taught how to put the resources of English to expedient use as an international means of communication, rather than how to approximate native speaker norms. They also argue that English teaching in Japan should be ELF-informed so that it can serve its claimed educational purpose and justify the global prominence of "English" as a subject in the curriculum.

In Part V, the concluding chapter by Tsuchiya discusses the ELF studies covered in this volume with special reference to the construct of pedagogic device. She frames the ELF studies in the Japanese context as pedagogic practices and considers three key questions: "What pedagogic knowledge about ELF has been distributed?"; "What pedagogical discourses have been constructed by the researchers for the legitimacy of ELF?"; and "What pedagogic practice for ELF-oriented education has been transmitted and how?". She also offers implications for the implementation of ELF-oriented pedagogy and envisions that ELF as a pedagogic device will lead to potential pedagogic transformations for future generations in Japan.

Overall, this edited volume is clearly written and highly structured. It offers a comprehensive and updated picture of the latest developments of ELF research in Japan. It is certainly a valuable contribution to the growing body of research on ELF in the Asian context and will serve as a useful guide for researchers by offering possible research directions and methodologies for future ELF research in multilingual contexts. I have enjoyed reading every chapter in the volume, and in particular, the edited volume has inspired me to reflect upon the relationship between language, ideology, and education in relation to ELF more deeply. I would recommend the edited book to researchers who are currently engaged in research on ELF, World Englishes, multilingualism, language education, language policy, and language planning.

References

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/21698252.2020.1819520>

