Integrating an ELF perspective to English education in Japan: Motivational challenges and opportunities

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The primary role of English in the world today is as a lingua franca, yet this reality is largely ignored by current educational practice in Japan. This paper considers two ostensibly diverse areas of research – the use of English as a global lingua franca and language learning motivation – and hypothesises that a lingua franca approach to English education is both consistent with the realities of language use in the twenty-first century and current understandings of how languages are learned. The paper concludes by proposing several concrete steps for educators and researchers that may facilitate the integration of an English as a lingua franca perspective into English education in Japan.

Keywords: motivation; globalisation; English education, self concept,
          lingua franca

Introduction

Concurrent to substantial re-evaluations of the nature and ownership of English, recent years have witnessed significant reappraisals of how learners identify with and ultimately learn the language. The vast majority of the world's users, learners and teachers of English have little or no connection to the language's Anglo-American core, yet in many parts of the world English is still being taught and learnt with reference – and deference – to these 'native-speaker' models.

In this mainly conceptual paper, I will attempt to fuse two ostensibly diverse strands of theory and research with the aim of providing an overview of current understandings of the motivation to learn English as the language of globalisation, with particular reference to the local Japanese context. Firstly, I will

consider contemporary theorisations of English as a global lingua franca and then I will attempt to contextualise changing perceptions of the motivation to learn a foreign language within this framework. Finally, I will identify directions for future research and pedagogic practice implied by these theoretical developments.

English as a global lingua franca

In this section I consider recent theoretical controversies and insights into the changing role of English within the context of globalisation. To do this, I first discuss the concept of globalisation itself and then move on to an examination of some of its links with language and language learning.

Theories of globalisation

Globalisation is an everyday term commonly found across a broad range of discourses. There appears to be a consensus that the process of globalisation is an unstoppable, perhaps inevitable, one. Globalisation is often regarded as a purely economic phenomenon but its manifestations are apparent in disparate areas of our lives, from the food we eat to the clothes we wear, from the sporting events we enjoy to the music we listen to. A common perception of globalisation is that it is simply another term for Westernisation; globalisation is nothing more than an instrument of Western, especially the United States, interests. As a means of imposing a Western hegemony, globalisation seeks to standardise, to homogenise, other cultures. Such a view of globalisation portrays the non-Western (non-American?) participant as a passive, unwilling party to the process; globalisation is seen as disempowering those who defy its advance. On the other hand, there are those that argue that this is a far too simplistic view. Block and Cameron (2002, p.3), in a review of the literature relating to globalisation and language, discuss a "synergetic relationship between the global and the local as opposed to the dominance of the former over the latter." They employ Robertson's (1995) term *glocalization* to describe this synthesis of the global and the local; globalisation manifests itself in various forms unique to individual local contexts.

Given the scope and nature of globalisation, discussions have been wide-ranging and interdisciplinary. However, in the literature specific to language education and globalisation, Dewey and Jenkins (2010), drawing on Held *et al.* (1999), identify three principal attitudes towards the process: *hyperglobalist*, *sceptic*, and *transformationalis*t. A hyperglobalist position would maintain that globalisation is the defining phenomenon of the age we live in, cutting across national borders, diminishing the role of the nation state, and radically changing the ways in which people identify and interact with each other, with locally based systems and practices at the mercy of relentless global forces. On the other hand, a sceptic would contend that globalisation is nothing new, that it is essentially a myth or at most the mere extension of consistent historical processes. A transformationalist would probably have more in common with a hyperglobalist in regarding globalisation as unprecedented. However, the key point of departure would be in perceptions of the relationship between the global and the local; a transformationalist is more likely see a creative tension between the two rather than the inexorable march of global forces at the expense of the local. An illustration of the transformationalist view is provided by Graddol (1997, p. 33), who claims:

> "Globalisation is probably the most significant socio-economic process affecting the world … globalisation seems to create new, hybrid forms of culture, language and political organisation: the results of global influences meeting local traditions values and social contexts."

Globalisation and English

The spread of English is not merely a consequence or product of globalisation, it is an integral part of the process, an 'accompanist' to the 'march' (Pennycook, 2003). In the next section of this paper, I would like to consider how scholars have responded to these shifting linguistic landscapes.

Post-Anglophone Englishes

The twentieth century world order was founded upon the central unit of the nation state, and this nation state was constructed around the principle of national

self-determination and the bonds of a common language. The pillars of nationality, culture and language are inextricably linked in such a worldview. It is unsurprising that this system of organisation extended into the field of language learning. Language education was regarded as a unidirectional process, with learners attaching specific target nationalities and cultures to a target language. Within this framework, the ownership of English was assumed to lie unquestionably with its speakers in the Anglo-American core.

Perhaps the earliest significant challenge to the absolute authority of Anglo-American models of English came from Kachru's (1986) widely cited model of concentric circles. At the centre of Kachru's model is an inner circle of norm-providing countries, such as the UK or US, where English is primarily used as a first language and has spread through immigration. This inner circle is complemented by an outer circle of norm-developing countries, such as Nigeria or India, where English is fundamentally a second language serving certain institutional functions within that country and in this context the language has spread mainly through colonisation. The final component of this model is the expanding circle of norm-dependent countries, such as Japan, China or Russia, where English exists predominantly as a foreign language spreading through education.

Kachru's original model began life as a tentative proposition yet, largely as a result of its clarity and intuitive appeal, became "the standard framework of world English studies"(Yano, 2001, p. 121). On one level, it is possible to criticise the model for employing a description of language use strictly in terms of the nation state. It is somewhat ironic in light or our earlier discussion of the diminishing role of the nation state that we use a model based around this construct to describe the use of English in a global context and can we really apply such a uniform, blanket description of language use to countries as huge and diverse as India or China? Another weakness lies in the model's simplicity; is it appropriate to equate the use of English in the so-called expanding circle countries of Europe with other expanding circle countries such as China or Brazil? (see Seidlhofer *et al*., 2006). Nevertheless, despite its flaws, Kachru's model served as a useful device for

initiating discussion of the realities of English use in a post-colonial world and for systematically describing the plurality of 'Englishes'.

The publication of Phillipson's *Linguistic Imperialism* in 1992 proved to be the catalyst for a furious debate about the nature of English and its global spread (see Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994; Brutt-Griffler, 2002). Although covering a broad and often contentious theoretical spectrum, the various critical analyses of the growth of English during this period shared a common insight; simplistic notions of English as a language tied to specific geographic and cultural locations were redundant to serious discussions of the learning and use of English in an era of accelerated globalisation.

Perhaps the next milestone in discussions of 'non-native' Englishes was an empirical one. Jenkins (2000) made a powerful case for a phonological description of English separate from 'native-speaker' norms, proposing a Lingua Franca Core (LFC) based upon analysis of 'non-native' interactions. Her highly influential argument was that these 'native-speaker' norms were irrelevant to language use that did not involve 'native speakers' and this lead was taken up by scholars in other parts of the world (see Kirkpatrick, 2010a; VOICE, 2009), who began to describe systematically how 'non-native speakers' use English to interact with each other.

World Englishes and English as a Lingua Franca movements

Within the discourse of English in the global context, it is possible to observe two, not always sympathetic, dominant research paradigms: World Englishes (WE) and English as a lingua franca (ELF). Although the dialogue between the two camps has often been heated, many outside observers still conflate the two. Perhaps the clearest point of departure between WE and ELF is in how they approach the expression of local identity in the use of English. 'World Englishes' (WE) scholars (see, Bhatt, 2010; Canagarajah, 1999; Kachru *et al.*, 2009) tend to be concerned with the use of English in post-colonial contexts and with versions of English firmly grounded in local cultures. In contrast, the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) movement, theoretically situated within the transformationalist view

of globalisation (Dewey and Jenkins, 2010), is concerned with Englishes emerging from communication between individuals from different linguistic backgrounds.

The ultimate concern of this paper is with the motivation to learn English in the Japanese educational context, and within this context the expression of local post-colonial identity and culture through the use of English is not a major factor. For this reason, I will concentrate my discussion on the impacts and implications of ELF on the motivation of Japanese learners of English.

Before moving on to a detailed discussion of the motivation to learn English as a global language it is necessary to point out that acceptance of ELF has been far from uncontroversial. Phillipson's term *Lingua Frankensteina* (2008) neatly encapsulates some of the principal concerns; Frankenstein's monster was created with the best, altruistic intentions yet developed into an uncontrollable, destructive force. This is a criticism developed by Holliday (2009), who argues that while much of the impetus behind ELF research has come from well-intentioned academics at the Centre of the English-speaking world, there has been little real consultation with learners/users at the Periphery. In essence, ELF may represent an unwanted imposition on learners and educators. Holliday questions the right of the Centre to decide what is best for others and to arbitrarily prescribe what may be regarded as a defective and limited form of English.

Advocates of ELF would argue that ELF gives learners both a stake and a voice in the construction of their own norms, freeing them from the absurdities of the 'native speaker fallacy' (Phillipson, 1992b). Critics would counter that learners and users have no meaningful sense of ownership of ELF, possibly regarding it as nothing more than an inherently deficient interlanguage.

Summary

Globalisation can be viewed as either an opportunity to be embraced, allowing people to break free from the stifling restrictions of nationality and tradition, or it can be construed as a threat, removing the security of familiar local networks and imposing an unwanted external uniformity. However one regards

globalisation, it is difficult to disagree with the claim that the spread of English is an integral part of this process with profound implications for our understandings of identity, language and the motivation to learn a language. Kramsch (1999, p. 131) identifies the issue of identity as being crucial to learners of English in the context of a globalising world: "The global spread of English challenges learners of English to develop both a global and a local voice." In the next section of this paper, I intend to consider how recent theorisations of language learning identity and motivation may help explain how learners cope with this challenge.

Changing perceptions of language learning motivation

In recent years there has been a major paradigm shift in how the motivation to study a foreign language has been conceptualised and researched. For most of its brief history language learning motivation research and theory has tended to focus on a narrow range of issues, often relating to questions of ethnolinguistic group identity. However, parallel to, though not a direct consequence of, theorisations of the plurality and diversity of Englishes, L2 motivation researchers have begun to embrace the complexity and unpredictability of human behaviour.

The social psychological background to L2 motivation theory

Prior to the 1990s, the L2 motivation research agenda was largely shaped by the work of Canadian social psychologists Gardner and Lambert (1972). Starting in the late 1950s, Gardner and Lambert pioneered the systematic investigation of language learning motivation. A central tenet of this social psychological approach was that language learning is essentially different from other forms of learning; language learning involves more than the mere acquisition of a body of knowledge or a set of skills since it also requires a corresponding willingness to identify with members of another ethnolinguistic group. Gardner and Lambert hypothesised that learners' attitudes towards the target language, its people and cultural values would have a significant influence on their motivation and ultimate success in learning a language.

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of the social psychological

approach to the research of language learning motivation is the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations. An integrative orientation emerges from a personal interest in, or identification with, the target language and culture, while an instrumental orientation concerns the pragmatic value and advantages, such as improved career prospects or educational opportunities, associated with success in the target language. The essential hypothesis was that integratively motivated learners are more likely to be successful language learners in the long term. There exists a significant body of largely correlational studies testing this hypothesis, conducted both by Gardner and his associates in Canada and a number of independent researchers in other parts of the world. While findings have been mixed (for a review, see Masgoret and Gardner, 2003), there was a broad consensus that some form of emotional identification with the speakers and values associated with a particular language plays a significant role in the motivation to learn that language.

English, globalisation and integrativeness

By the 1990s, a combination of dissatisfaction with the limitations of the social psychological framework and a growing awareness of concepts within mainstream motivation psychology research led to a "motivational renaissance" (Gardner and Tremblay, 1994) producing lively discussion amongst scholars and an extraordinary flowering of the research agenda (see Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford and Shearin 1994).

The initial thrust of these attempts to reshape the L2 motivation research agenda was to align L2 motivation theory with mainstream educational psychology. However, by the turn of the millennium a further challenge to the dominant paradigm was beginning to emerge. Recognition of the role of English as a global lingua franca meant that Gardner's concept of integrativeness, based around notions of group affiliation and identification with the speakers and values associated with a particular language, was becoming increasingly anachronistic (see Coetzee van Rooy, 2006; Dörnyei *et* al*.,* 2006; Lamb, 2004) for learners of a language with no geographically defined community. Implicit in the social psychological approach is

a world view consisting of "homogeneous and monolingual cultures, or in-groups and out-groups, and of individuals who move from one group to another" (Pavlenko 2002, p. 279). Pavlenko challenged some of the monolingual and monocultural assumptions of the social psychological approach to L2 motivation, arguing that for most individuals group membership is not static, it can be fluid, dynamic and complex, with the possibility of multiple memberships. Further empirical challenges to established theory emerged from contexts as a diverse as Hungary, where very few learners have direct contact with native speakers of English and Csizér and Kormos (2009) found the construct of integrativeness highly problematic, and Japan, where Yashima presented 'international posture', an "interest in foreign or international affairs, willingness to go overseas to stay or work, readiness to interact with intercultural partners, and [...] openness or a non-ethnocentric attitude toward different cultures" (2002, p. 57), as a revised notion of integrativeness that was more appropriate to the new status of English.

The challenge posed to established L2 motivation theory by the global nature of the English language was rendering a model of motivation based on membership of fixed language communities obsolete. New concepts or terminology were no longer sufficient; new research paradigms were required.

Self based conceptualisations of L2 motivation

In recent years there has been a pronounced move away from linear models of motivation towards an appreciation of the complexity and unpredictability of human behaviour. Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) offers a bridge between traditional, social psychological approaches and a newer socio-dynamic perspective, providing the most comprehensive current theorisation of the motivation to learn a foreign language.

The origins of the L2 motivational self system can be traced to two key concerns that had troubled Dörnyei. Firstly, dissatisfaction with his own process model of motivation (Dörnyei and Otto, 1998), a dissatisfaction that persuaded Dörnyei of the need to develop a comprehensive framework of L2 motivation that

embraced the dynamic and often messy nature of language learning rather than attempting to analyse it in artificially discrete components. A second concern was the problem of integrativeness, which, as discussed earlier, did not make any sense in learning contexts where there was no language community to integrate with. A more satisfactory explanation of the emotional identification with a language was required.

The L2 motivational self system combines two strands of self psychology theory: possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Oyserman *et al.*, 2006) and self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987). Possible selves are visions of the self in some possible future state and these visions represent the individual's assessments of his or her potential, expectations, hopes and fears. The L2 motivational self system offers two sets of self guides: an Ideal L2 self and an Ought-to L2 self. The Ideal L2 Self stems from the attributes that an individual would like to possess as an L2 user. The learner also develops an Ought-to L2 Self, which represents perceived obligations and responsibilities to others as a language learner. A third experiential component, the L2 Learning Experience, is included and this is largely a function of the learning environment and learners' perceptions of their language learning successes and failures. A significant part of the motivation to learn a language comes from the individual's constructions of these self guides and especially where there is a discrepancy between the learner's perceived actual condition and an Ideal L2 Self. Dörnyei argues that the power of imagination and the intensity of these visions of the self initiate and sustain learning. It is important to stress that these visions represent more than idle fantasy or mere wishful thinking; Dörnyei outlines a number of conditions that are essential for the activation of these self guides. Figure 1 summarises and explains some of these conditions.

A future self image ...

... must be sufficiently different from current self	(If there is no perceivable gap between the current and possible selves, then no additional effort is required.)
… must be plausible	(Possible self images must be realistic, not pure fantasy, in order to produce a motivational response.)
… must be in harmony with social environment	(If social norms clash with the future self image, then it is likely to be in conflict with the ought-to self.)
… must be regularly activated	(The future self image must be a part of the individual's working self concept.)
… must be accompanied by procedural strategies	(Learners need a 'roadmap' consisting of plans and self-regulatory strategies.)

Figure 1: Conditions for the activation of future self guides

Dörnyei's L2 motivational self system represents a huge theoretical advance. One of its great strengths is in the way it links established concepts from educational psychology to a body of empirical work specific to language learning. However, for the purposes of the current discussion, the significance of this framework lies in how it explains language learning motivation not in terms of affiliation or identification with some external language community but as a form of self realisation.

Implications for pedagogy and research

The primary goal of this paper is to situate recent research into language learning motivation within the broader context of shifting perceptions of the role of English as an international language, to consider the possibility that these two apparently unconnected bodies of research share certain common roots, concerns, and possibilities. A further goal is to consider these issues within the specific realities of the Japanese English learning context.

The Japanese English educational context – pedagogic norms and models

Several observers (see, Kubota, 2002, McKenzie, 2010; Ryan, 2009; Seargeant, 2009) have pointed to the key role that English education plays in the formation of

identity beliefs of young Japanese people; English education serves as a means of reinforcing a strong sense of national identity through the presentation of a linguistic/cultural other. Given that current theorisations of language learning motivation stress the importance of the self-concept, what does this mean for a version of language education based upon the construction of a cultural other? Referring back to some of Dörnyei's conditions for the successful activation of motivational self guides, it is difficult to imagine how these conditions can be met within the current Japanese English learning framework. For example, the condition that L2 self beliefs should be in harmony with the social environment seems inconsistent with a version of English insistent on portrayals of conflict and dissonance between the Japanese social environment and the English-speaking world. This is supported by McVeigh (2002), who employs the term 'fantasy English' to describe how much language learning in Japan is accompanied by implausible notions far removed from the realities of learners' lives.

There is a strong case that the presentation of English within the current Japanese education system acts as an impediment to motivated behaviour. The overriding theme of much English education in Japan is the representation of English as the 'cultural other'. The motivational challenge for those involved in English education in Japan, as indicated by current motivational theory, appears to be to present a version of English that enhances the learner's self-concept rather than threatens it. In practice, this would require some form of reconsideration of the broader discourse of English education in Japan, with less attention paid to 'cultural' differences or 'cultural' misunderstandings and a greater focus on Japanese learners as active, legitimate members of a global English-speaking community.

A lingua franca is almost by definition a dynamic entity in a constant state of flux, whereas educational policy is often concerned with codifying and standardising. This tension between the urge to standardise and the constantly changing reality of language use represents a huge challenge for education policy makers. Traditionally language policy makers have sidestepped this challenge by ignoring the dynamic realities of language use and relying solely upon an idealised,

perhaps even fossilised, 'native speaker' as the target of language learning. McKay (2009, p. 238) asserts that, "Reliance on a native speaker model as the pedagogical target must be set aside." The inevitable retort to this is to ask what alternatives are available. One possibility is to consider a 'Near Peer Role Model' (NPRM) (Dörnyei and Murphey, 2003) approach, which would offer English learners both psychological and linguistic models closer to their existing self-concepts. NPRMs are consistent with both the motivational literature, in that they provide learners with models that seem desirable and plausible, and with ELF descriptions of the English use that situate lingua franca users of English as responsible for the development of their own linguistic norms. In the Japanese educational context, this would require the explicit elevation of Japanese users of English over 'native speaker' models.

Teacher education

Matsuda (2009) identifies teacher education as key to the integration of an ELF perspective into mainstream language education; teachers are both a significant part of the problem and a crucial element to its solution. The majority of practising language teachers are products of a cognitively based theory of language learning centred around an idealised 'native speaker'. As such, 'non-native speaker' teachers are likely to view themselves as inherently deficient users of a language. A dependence on 'native speaker' norms as the only legitimate target "undermines language learners and fails to help them take ownership of the language" (Snow *et al*., 2006, p.265). This dependence may also undermine teachers. A further obstacle is that currently practising language teachers are likely to have a significant investment in the existing system; much of their professional status and self-esteem is derived from prevailing practice and they may be resistant to change.

In a review of some of the key issues and challenges relating to ELF and professional development Snow *et al*. (2006, p. 274) offer the following goals for teacher preparation in lingua franca settings:

    i.   Expose teachers to varieties of English beyond the Inner Circle;

    ii. Help to deconstruct the myth of the native speaker and offer

participants opportunities to recognise themselves as intercultural speakers;

iii. Integrate methodologies that are valued in the local context and reflect students' actual needs and interests;

iv. Be guided by local conceptualisations of what constitutes professionalism;

v. Encourage collaboration between local and outside experts.

Persuading teachers educated by, and with a vested interest in, the current system to consider the possibilities offered by an ELF approach is likely to prove a significant challenge. For this reason an evolutionary approach, gradually integrating ELF concepts to existing structures, may be a more productive path than a more radical, confrontational one.

Educational materials

A further issue, discussed by Kirkpatrick (2010b), is that of teaching materials appropriate to English as a global language. Teaching materials based upon the idealised 'native speaker', which also privilege Anglo-American cultural practices, are out of step with the realities of the use of English in lingua franca contexts; educational materials need to take into account language as it is actually used and needed by learners. Kirkpatrick suggests harnessing the potential of a growing body of empirical research into the use of ELF, such as Jenkins's LFC and the Vienna Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE, 2009), as the foundation for the development of materials appropriate to local context. Drawing on some of the findings of the VOICE project, he outlines key lexico-grammatical features of ELF that vary from standard Anglo-American usage:

i. the non-marking of the third person singular with '-s';

ii. interchangeability of the relative pronouns, 'who' and 'which';

iii. flexible use of definite and indefinite articles;

iv. extended use of 'general' or common verbs;

v. treating uncountable nouns as plural;

  vi. use of a uniform question tag;

  vii. use of demonstrative 'this' with both singular and plural nouns;

  viii. use of prepositions in different contexts appropriate to global status of English.

Kirkpatrick's central argument is that these ELF variations should not be regarded as deficient, that they should legitimised and promoted through teaching materials. Teaching materials should be endorsing and supporting local variation of a global language, not denying it.

Assessment

A final consideration, and perhaps the crucial factor in the acceptance of ELF within mainstream language education, is how ELF models are integrated into language assessment frameworks. In contexts where formal education plays a leading role in the use and spread of English, testing is crucial in setting the learning agenda. What is taught in classrooms is often dictated by what appears on tests; the washback effect of tests can be as important as their reliability and validity.

         In a survey of a number of internationally recognised proficiency tests, Davies *et al*. (2003) found bias discriminating against those who use English primarily as an international language. In such cases, these tests – Davies *et al.* focus on the TOEFL, but their key criticisms are applicable to other major tests – were not functioning as accurate measures of English proficiency. The implication being that more attention needs to be paid to the particular requirements of assessment in ELF settings. Elder and Davies (2006) remind us that ELF settings are from uniform and following from this, given the realities of international education, it would be impractical and perhaps even undesirable to move towards a fragmentation of proficiency measurements unique to individual local contexts. Instead, they identify a need for assessment instruments to 'accommodate' ELF contexts and towards these ends they make several concrete proposals. Chief amongst these proposals are: 1) a rejection of strict adherence to 'native speaker' norms in the construction of texts; 2) texts used in the construction of tests should be vetted for bias against ELF

users, with particular care being taken in respect to assumed background knowledge; 3) lexical items or structures that are likely to be unfamiliar to ELF users should be avoided; 4) a more active role for ELF users in the construction and rating of tests, as they have a greater familiarity with and understanding of emerging norms.

In most ELF contexts, formal education is a major factor in the learning and acquisition of English. In such circumstances, status and authority is largely bestowed upon a variety of English through its position as the object of high-stakes tests. As long as ELF norms remain outside the scope of mainstream assessment instruments, there is little chance of widespread acceptance.

Attitudes and awareness

This paper is predicated on the argument that a recognition and utilisation of ELF models will enhance learner motivation, and by implication facilitate successful learning. Consistent with recent theorisations of language learning motivation, ELF offers 'non-native' users a greater role in the construction of linguistic norms and the overall ownership of the language. However, Holliday's (2009) criticism of ELF as merely another form of externally imposed orthodoxy is a valid one that calls into question that motivational link between ELF and the language learner.

At the moment, the link between ELF and enhanced motivation is little more than an intuitive, hypothetical one. Before disposing of the bathwater of current English education practices, far more needs to be known about the baby itself. The immediate challenge for researchers is to investigate the degree to which the discourse of ELF is consistent with the self-concepts of language learners. We know very little of what learners in ELF contexts actually think about their own learning and how they identify with the target language. To these ends, substantial inquiry, both quantitative and qualitative, needs to be conducted into the attitudes and beliefs of all parties involved in English education in ELF contexts.

Summary

In this paper, I have provided an overview of two strands of applied linguistics research and argued that, while no cause-effect relationship is implied, their simultaneous development is indicative of a broader tendency to accept the complexity of language learning, both the non-linearity of the learning process and the plurality of language itself. The unique role of English within globalisation forces us to challenge conventional assumptions of language and a language community, and these shifting interpretations of the nature of language affect our understandings of the learning process. Nowhere is this more evident than in the theorisation of the motivation to learn a language.

In ELF settings such as Japan, conventional L2 motivation theory, with its notions of fixed, static language communities, has always been problematic; target language communities are so far removed from the learning environment as to be meaningless. However, recent theories of L2 motivation based around ideas of self realisation offer the possibility of genuine solutions to long-standing problems associated with English education in Japan. One such possibility is the prospect that the integration of an ELF perspective may offer Japanese learners both linguistic and psychological models closer to their own self-concepts, enhancing motivation and eventually performance.

The challenge to integrate an ELF perspective into language education in Japan is a long-term and daunting one. However, it is a challenge that cannot be deferred indefinitely. It is understandable that Japan is reluctant to abandon the monolingual, monocultural model of national identity that served it so well during the latter half of the twentieth century. However, the realities of twenty-first century flows of commerce, information and people means that this model is no longer sustainable.

I would like to conclude by suggesting four concrete steps that could contribute to the integration of an ELF perspective into English education in Japan: 1) research needs to be conducted to investigate the attitudes and beliefs of learners, teachers and administrators connected with English education in Japan; 2) at a

macro level, efforts need to be made to promote models of English that emphasise Japanese speakers of English rather than 'native speaker' models, thus reinforcing English as a part of the self-concept of Japanese learners; 3) at a micro level, teachers and those involved in curriculum design need to exploit the findings of a substantial body of research into ELF use in the design and construction of teaching materials; 4) finally, and perhaps most crucially, both at a macro- and a micro- level, assessment and testing must pay greater attention to ELF variation.

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