

日本人学生の「英語」イメージ

溝 上 由 紀

Japanese Students' Images of English

Mizokami Yuki

1. Introduction

As I have argued in detail in my other work¹, what is called 'truth' or 'common sense' in society, or what I defined as 'Dominant Discourses' work to direct non-dominant people to consciously and unconsciously consent to the conditions of their own subordination by accepting the dominant value judgments; and thus do dominant people maintain their hegemony, or legitimise existing social relations and power differences. Dominant Discourses thus function to fix and justify existing dominant/dominated relationships and discriminating/discriminated relationships in society.

In contrast, what I defined as 'Institutionalised Discourses', which are influential binary oppositions in society, function at a deeper level than Dominant Discourses. What I mean by deeper level is that Institutionalised Discourses strongly bind our practice of Discourses in society. The relationship between Dominant Discourses in society (or the Discourses of 'truth' or 'common sense') and Institutionalised Discourses (or the binary oppositions) is that Dominant Discourses are like the 'surface structure' that is always presented visibly and explicitly whereas Institutionalised Discourses are like the 'deep structure' that implicitly controls Discourses in society in order to perpetuate the existing social situation. Dominant Discourses are repeatedly articulated and uttered by both dominant and even suppressed members of society in order to make sure of consensus, while Institutionalised Discourses are not articulated explicitly because arguments such as 'Men are superior to women.' and 'The native English speaker are superior to others.' are seen as ethically wrong in terms of 'political correctness'.

Institutionalised Discourses will be reinforced whenever Dominant Discourses gain consensus and approval by members in society. For example, the Dominant Discourse that 'Men and women speak differently', which is depicted as a neutral, scientific truth, may function to reinforce the man/woman Institutionalised Discourse and the accompanying discrimination against women. In this paper, I shall deal with a Dominant Discourse which is extensively articulated currently in this modern world. That is,

the 'English as *the* World Language' Discourse which essentially plays a crucial role in reproducing and maintaining certain forms of social discrimination such as linguistic, racial and ethnic discrimination. The 'English as the World Language' Discourse seems to have become cemented as unchallengeable knowledge and gained the status as 'that which is obvious' or 'that which everyone takes for granted' in today's world.

Here it should be emphasised again that at the deeper level of the Dominant Discourses, there exist certain Institutionalised Discourses. In the case of the Dominant 'English as the World Language' Discourse today, which is the surface structure, such Institutionalised Discourses as the English language/other languages division, white people/other people division, Anglo-Saxon/other races division and West/others division are embedded as the deep structure. Obviously these Institutionalised Discourses contain ideologies such as English-centrism or Anglocentrism.

Japan is one of the countries belonging to the 'Expanding Circle' in Kachru's categorisation² where English is learnt as a foreign language. In the Meiji era, as I have argued elsewhere³, English was so radically demanded by people that some claimed that Japan should adopt English as its national language. This sort of argument seems to be still existent in Japan nowadays. Note that in 2000 an advisory panel to the then Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo suggested that Japan should talk about the possibility of making English the second official language of Japan because English is the World Language. In such a situation, both by briefly looking at the Japanese school textbooks of English and by asking Japanese students what their images of English are through questionnaire and interview, I would like to investigate if the 'English as the World Language' Discourse and the hidden Institutionalised Discourses are internalised in young Japanese people's way of thinking today.

2. A brief analysis of junior high school textbooks

School education can be seen as one of the influential institutions that may reinforce the Dominant Discourses. In this section, in order to examine if the Anglocentric ideology is expressed in junior high school textbooks, I would like to briefly analyse the English textbooks used in the junior high schools in Japan where English is almost compulsory for everyone. Needless to say, textbooks are not free from the ideologies of the writers and the nation, so it must be significant to look at the ideologies embedded in the textbooks. There are seven 'authorised' English teaching textbooks in Japan at present, and all have the book 1, 2 and 3 according to the student year in junior high school. I obtained all seven kinds authorised in the year 1996 and used until the academic year of 2001. These are: New Horizon English Course (NH), New Crown English Series (NC), The Columbus English Course (CE), One World English Course (OW), Total English (TE), Sunshine English Course (SE) and Everyday English (EE).

I counted the numbers and names of countries and regions that each textbook refers to in English in the reading passages. The result was: NH 15, NC 35, CE 22, OW 16, TE 8, SE 22, EE 11. Especially NC

refers to many countries in the world from Japan, the Inner Circle countries (America, the U. K. etc.), European countries (France, Spain, Switzerland etc.), Asian countries (Korea, Malaysia, Nepal etc.), African countries (Kenya, Egypt, Sudan etc.) and the Middle East (Iraq, Saudi Arabia etc.) to South America (Mexico, Chile, Peru etc.). TE only refers to 8 countries (America, Australia, Canada, Malaysia, Singapore, India, Japan, Kenya), but it refers to Asian and African countries such as India, Kenya, Malaysia and Singapore, instead of becoming too Anglocentric and Eurocentric. NH, which 56% of the students claimed that they used in junior high school, refers to 15 countries (America, Canada, Scotland, England, Japan, Singapore, Bangladesh, Korea, China, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Brazil). It can be said that NH extensively refers to Asian countries.

Incidentally, the older NH (authorised in 1980, in which the page quantity is virtually the same as the newer one) refers to 9 countries and regions: Japan, America, Canada, Australia, England, Switzerland, Poland, Algeria and Egypt. Inner Circle countries and European countries are more extensively referred to here. No Asian countries except Japan are referred to. Comparing current junior high school English teaching textbooks with a textbook of about 20 years ago, I could argue that recent textbooks are trying to express a far fairer world view following the 'national curriculum standards' set by the then Ministry of Education in Japan discussed later. The recent textbooks perhaps convey the message that there are many countries in the world that people should learn about rather than paying attention to only America, Britain and other Inner Circle countries.

According to the 'national curriculum standards' for junior high school (*Chugakkou Gakushu Shidou Youryou*) announced in 1989 by the then 'Monbusho' (= Ministry of Education, which is currently called Monbukagakusho, or the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) and carried out from the academic year of 1993 until 2001, English teaching textbooks should be chosen on the grounds that (1) they help deepen international understanding from a wide point of view, help raise awareness as Japanese living in the international world and help develop the spirit of international cooperation, (2) they help deepen interests in languages and cultures, and help create an attitude of respect for these languages and cultures and help develop generous minds and (3) they help deepen understanding of the lives and cultures of the world and their own country, help widen the international view, and help develop fair interpretational ability (Monbusho, 1989, 4, my translation). Such a detailed reference to the choice of the contents of textbooks appeared for the first time. To interpret this, it seems that the intention of the curriculum is to deepen understanding of various countries in the world and Japan. In this sense, I may argue that the recent textbooks are much more appropriate than some textbook of 20 years ago.

3. What Japanese students think of English

In order to know how deeply the Dominant 'English as the World Language' Discourse and the

accompanying Institutionalised Discourses are rooted in young Japanese people's minds, I conducted a survey on the image of English in Aichi Konan College where I am working for. The subjects were 106 students who were taking any one of my three optional English courses in the college. Their fields of study varied from Living Design, Senior Dietitian, Food and Nutritional Sciences, Social Welfare and Liberal Arts to Early Childhood Education. There was nobody who was majoring in English. Most of the subjects were freshmen (age 18 or 19) in the college. The survey was conducted from April to May in 2002 through a questionnaire. I followed up the questionnaire survey by interviewing 5 of the participants in September, 2002. The informants consisted of 4 female students (Ms. K, Ms. U, Ms. M and Ms. S) and 1 male student (Mr. T). I interviewed Ms. K and Ms. U (Interview 1), and Ms. M and Ms. S (Interview 2) in pairs and I conducted a one-to-one interview with Mr. T (Interview 3). Each interview lasted one and a half hours. Mr. T majors in Food and Nutritional Sciences, and all the female students major in Early Childhood Education and they all joined the college's summer English tour to Canada in July 2002. The interviews were conducted in Japanese. I shall illustrate what they said in the interviews about what they think of English and the West in English translation from time to time.

Having grasped that English textbooks of today refer to many countries in the world, I first of all asked in the questionnaire:

(a) About which countries do you remember learning in English classes in junior and senior high schools? Write all the countries you remember.

The results were as follows:

Table 1: Countries students remember learning about

country	number of students	%
America	68	64
Australia	30	28
Canada	19	18
Britain	18	17
Singapore	13	12
Japan	10	9
Brazil	9	8
India	8	8

As can be seen, the majority of the students remembered they learned about America at school. As I have shown previously, many countries are referred to, both English-speaking and non-English-speaking, in the junior high school textbooks. Nevertheless the countries ranked the highest four are all

limited to the Inner Circle countries. As possible reasons for this, what I inferred is: (1) even though the school textbooks contain issues about Asian and African countries, these units tend to be skipped in the classes in schools; (2) the Japanese students are more interested in America and other Inner Circle countries than other countries so they listen in classes well when dealing with the Inner Circle countries and remember more about those countries; (3) the English teachers in junior high schools and senior high schools tend to talk about America and other Inner Circle countries more ardently than about the Outer and Expanding Circles in the classroom, because while they know about these countries well due to their experience of studying abroad or traveling, they do not know much about countries other than Inner Circle countries. Concerning these points above, let me cite some of the students' comments made during the interviews.

(Extract from Interview 1)

Myself: Which countries do you remember learning about during junior and senior high school years?

Ms. K: Australia, America. . . and. . . I don't recall much.

Myself: Which textbook did you use in junior high school?

Ms. K: New Crown.

Myself: Then you learned about Kenya, for example, didn't you?

Ms. K: Oh, yes, yes. I now remember 'jumbo', their greeting word.

Myself: What did you think when you first learned about Kenya then.

Ms. K: It was good. Because of the textbook, I could get to know about Kenya, where otherwise I might not have known for life.

Ms. U: I've learned about China. I don't remember what was about.

Myself: Do you remember anything that your English teachers told you about foreign countries in the classroom?

Ms. U: Well, my teacher in charge when I was a 10th grade was an English teacher. He said he had been to London to study, and he sometimes talked about London. But I really don't remember anything concrete about what he said about London.

Myself: Why do you think the students tend to remember more about America, Australia and other 'Western' English-speaking countries than other Asian and African countries?

Ms. U: Because of the quantity of the information, I suppose.

Ms. K: Yes, we can know about aborigines and Ayers Rock in Australia, and things about America almost everyday on TV.

What these words might slightly suggest is that my inference (1) is not plausible but that inference (3) may be likely. As for inference (2), I cannot say whether it is plausible or not; according to the students

it is the mass media rather than school education that may have influenced them.

In the questionnaire, I asked the students about their image of countries in the world, the questions of which are not directly related to English classes at school. During the questionnaire, I orally made clear that the students could include Japan, although I did not state so in the questions themselves.

(b) Of which countries in the world do you have a positive image? Write three countries and write your images of them.

The answers were as follows:

Table 2: Countries that students have a positive image of

country	number of students	%
Australia	47	44
America	39	37
Switzerland	27	25
France	25	24
Italy	24	23
Canada	24	23
Britain	19	18
Japan	17	16

(c) Of which countries in the world do you have a negative image? Write three countries and write your images of them.

The answers were:

Table 3: Countries that students have a negative image of⁴

country	number of students	%
America	43	41
Afghanistan	31	29
China	20	19
North Korea	18	17
Pakistan	13	12
Africa	12	11
India	9	8
Russia	9	8

Looking at the above eight countries ranked highest in each question respectively, we may note the

following things. First, of the eight countries where the students have a positive image, seven countries are so-called 'Western' countries, which many Japanese tend to consider as white people's countries. Their typical images of these countries are: Australia has a lot of 'wild nature' (mountains, sea), 'unique wild animals' (koalas, kangaroos), 'wide land' and 'peace'; America has 'freedom', 'wide-open space', 'wealth' and 'friendliness'. Some students refer to the country as 'having everything' and 'cool'; Italy and France have images of 'gourmet', 'fashion', 'art', 'beautiful buildings and beautiful people'. Switzerland and Canada have images of 'wild nature' and 'peace'. Britain has images of 'dignity', 'freedom', 'the Queen', 'solemn buildings' and 'tea'. One student refers to Britain as 'having a cool image similar to America which is just great!' Their typical images of Japan is as a country of 'peace', 'good people' and 'own country'. Overall, it seems that my Japanese informants adore the so-called Western countries much more than countries in other parts of the world.

Next, let us look at the countries for which they have a negative image. Interestingly, America, which is ranked second in the countries having a positive image, is ranked worst here. They claimed that America has images of 'guns', 'dangerous place', and 'terrorism'. Mr. T was one of the students who answered America in this question. Let me quote what he said in the interview.

(Extract from Interview 3)

Mr. T: I hate America because Americans are too proud by thinking themselves as the center of the world. America has too much power now.

Myself: You seem to be very critical of America.

Mr. T: I'm critical to other Western countries, too. White people think that they are the center of the world. Well, I mean, I always try to be neutral. I think all the countries should be equal.

Myself: Can you tell me what influenced you? For example, did your former English teachers teach you such critical way of seeing the world?

Mr. T: No, it was not my English teachers. I'm very much influenced by comic books, I think, such as 'Oishinbo' and 'Kamui-den'. I read a lot of comic books which deal with social problems.

Myself: So what do they tell you, for example?

Mr. T: For example, at the international conferences, our country is called 'Japan'. But my country is not 'Japan', it is 'Nippon'. Japan is the English name. We should be called 'Nippon' at the international meetings. Because America is dominating the world, we are called by the English name. Some comic books teach me that we should treasure our own country.

Looking at other countries in Table 3, it could be suggested that the students' images of countries are very much influenced by the current international situation: America, Afghanistan and Pakistan were given negative images because of the then ongoing 'wars'. Some students mention that North Korea has

an image of 'kidnapping', and Africa has a image of 'poverty'. Overall, except America and Russia, many countries ranked here are non-Western countries. Let me show the students' comments regarding this.

(Extract from Interview 1)

Myself: Are there any countries you are interested in now?

Ms. K: Australia.

Ms. U: New Zealand. One of my relatives is there. I also long for Europe.

Myself: Why?

Ms. U: Because Europe has a luxury and high-class image. I'd like to go there one day.

Ms. K: Yes. And America always looks so cool.

Myself: What about Asian countries, such as China and South Korea.

Ms. K: I have very bad images of them. These countries scare me.

Ms. U: Yes, the media image of them is always scary.

Myself: Really? For example?

Ms. U: Like synchronised performances by all the people, kidnapping . . .

Myself: That's North Korea, not South Korea or China, right?

Ms. U: I can't differentiate.

Ms. K: I can't tell either.

Myself: Anyway, what about African countries?

Ms. K: People in Africa seem nice.

Ms. U: Yes, maybe. But honestly speaking, I have no image of Africa.

(Extract from Interview 2)

Myself: Are there any countries you are interested in now?

Ms. S: Switzerland. It has a clean image. And France. I'd like to go shopping there.

Ms. M: I'd like to go to Italy for shopping. I'd like to go to Europe. I'd like to see there once. I'm interested in Hawaii, too.

Myself: What about Asian and African countries?

Ms. M: I'd like to go to Korea someday. But I'd go there after having seen Europe and other Western countries. Honestly speaking, I don't want to go to the countries where there are many black people. They have a scary image.

Ms. S: Is that so? I'd like to go to Egypt and other African countries. I'd like to see elephants and lions.

Myself: Which countries do you have a scary image of?

Ms. M: New York and Korea.

Myself: New York is not a country, you see. It's America. And you've just said that you would like to go

to Korea.

Ms. M: Oh, North Korea, then. I'm mixed up.

Ms. S: China has a bad image. I hear scary news about China every day.

Ms. M: Yes. Kidnapping, for example.

Myself: Are you really talking about China? You mix up China with North Korea, maybe.

Ms. S: Maybe. I'm not sure. Anyway, Asia has a scary image.

Myself: Well, Japan is part of Asia, too.

Ms. M: I heard the students of North Korean schools in Japan are very scary.

The interviews suggest that the students admire or at least have a quite positive interest in the 'Western' countries such as Australia and France. On the other hand, the interviews also suggest that the informants have some negative images of some Asian countries, perhaps because of the media images. However, most of them cannot actually differentiate our neighbourhood countries, such as South Korea, North Korea and China. What was striking was that one student admits that she does not even have any image of Africa. Thus it may be plausible to say that the interviews point towards the existence of the 'West/others' Institutionalised Discourse among some Japanese students.

Next I asked the students about their image of English and that of other languages.

(d) What is your image(s) of the English language? Write anything.

The responses varied but I have summarised them as follows:

Table 4: Students' images of English

response type	number of students	%
Type 1 difficult/poor at it	57	54
Type 2 cool	46	43
Type 3 World Language	32	30
Type 4 just a tool of communication	4	4
Type 5 other	6	6

The answer can be classified in the following four categories: Type 1 is 'difficult', 'poor at it' and 'hate it' sort of answer; Type 2 is 'just cool', 'cool if I can speak', 'I want to speak it' sort of answer; Type 3 is 'World Language', 'International Language', 'I can communicate with everybody in the world by English', 'I can't catch up with the world if I can't speak' sort of answer; Type 4 is 'just a tool for communication', 'just another language' sort of answer; and other (Type 5). Some students stated two or

three of the above. For this question, it is not surprising that many students claim that English is difficult and that they are poor at it. Aichi Konan College is not one that a student who has gained extremely good grades at high school goes to. Thus it is no wonder that students of the college had not succeeded in learning English well through schools, and that they think of English as difficult.

The significance here is that although they have not acquired English well on the one hand, on the other they hope to speak English because (1) they think it 'cool' to be able to speak English and/or (2) English is the world's common language. The four female interview informants all said that after having been to Canada they strongly hoped to speak English. Let me cite some of what they said.

(Extract from Interview 2)

Myself: Has your image of English changed after having been to Canada?

Ms. S: Yes, I began to really hope that I'm able to speak more English.

Ms. M: I long for English more now. I also long for bilingual people. It's really cool if I can fluently communicate with foreigners.

Myself: So did you start anything to be bilingual?

Ms. M: No. But when I have children, I will make them bilingual.

Ms. S: Me, too.

The result of this questionnaire survey and the interviews may suggest that the Dominant 'English as the World Language' Discourse and the 'English/other language' Institutionalised Discourse are internalised even by non-elite Japanese students. Also it can be inferred that an English-studying trip to Inner Circle countries itself may accelerate the internalisation of the 'English/other language' Institutionalised Discourse. However, let me mention that there is an exception such as the following.

(Extract from Interview 3)

Mr. T: English is just one of the many languages.

Myself: So I can say that you do not long for English at all like some other students?

Mr. T: I don't particularly long for English. There are many countries and places where English is not spoken.

Myself: But as a teacher I can say that you are quite good at English compared with most of other students.

Mr. T: Yes, I like English. Actually I have been learning English since I was an elementary school student. But it doesn't mean that I long for English. I value all the languages. I'm trying to be neutral.

Some of the Japanese students' longing for the West and the English language was illustrated in the result of the following question.

(e) Suppose if you could be born again, which nationality and mother language(s) would you like to have?

Table 5: Nationality and mother language(s) students would like to have
(The figures in the table stand for number of students.)

language \ nationality	Japanese	American	British	French	other Westerners	others	not specified	total
Japanese	32			1				43
English	4	16	11	1	11		2	45
bilingual (Japanese/English)	7				1			8
French				5	1			6
other Western languages					7			7
others						4		4
not specified					1		2	3
total	43	16	11	7	21	4	4	106

Table 5 above shows that many students want to be born again as a Japanese whose mother tongue is Japanese, rather than being born as an English-speaking American for example. However, seen from another perspective, it shows that whereas 41% (43) of Japanese students want to be reborn as a Japanese, 52% (55) of students want to be reborn as a Westerner. The typical reason why they want to become a Japanese or a Westerner is, according to what they wrote, 'Japan is a safe country', or 'Westerners (= most of the students refer to them as 'gaijin-san') are cool, beautiful and having a good figure' respectively.

Note that for most of the Japanese, the typical image of the *gaijin-san* is Western, white, blond and having blue eyes and a good figure. The following is what two female students said in the interview:

(Extract from Interview 2)

Ms. M: Western girls all seem very pretty!

Myself: Did you see any beautiful women in Canada?

Ms. M: Yes. My host mother was so beautiful, for example. Her eyes are big, and she has very long eyelashes! And her nose! It's so long. Japanese' faces are flat and ugly. In Canada, I got depressed every time I looked at the mirror after looking at Canadian women's faces. They are beautiful even without makeup, but I cannot go outside without makeup.

Ms. S: If I could be born again, I would like to be a half Japanese and half Western, who can speak

both English and Japanese. I must have a chiseled and beautiful face, a long nose and a good figure.

Myself: So you want to have an 'Western' appearance.

Ms. S: Absolutely! Absolutely!

Myself: But at the same time you still seem to be wishing to keep 'Japanese-ness' in your cultural and linguistic background. Does it come from your love for being Japanese now?

Ms. S: I don't know. I just can't imagine being somebody other than Japanese.

What is illustrated in the students' words is that some Japanese people tend to feel inferior especially in terms of appearance, to white Western people. In contrast, no student actually expresses his/her cultural inferiority complex: far from that, they often express their love of the Japanese country and culture such as 'Japan is safe and peaceful' and 'Japanese culture is unique'.

Moreover, while 31% (33) of students want to be reborn as a native Japanese speaker, 42% (45) of students want to be reborn as a native English speaker. The typical reasons for the former choice are; 'Japanese is my familiar language' and 'Japanese is a respectable language only unique to Japan', and those for the latter are; 'English is the World Language' and 'English is cool'. It can be indicated that as well as the students' longing for Western people's appearance, their longing for the English language as the 'cool' World Language is fairly strong, although some students in fact express strong pride in being a Japanese speaker as a Japanese.

Of all the nationalities and languages they referred to, only three students chose a country other than Western countries and a language other than Western languages except Japan and Japanese: three students claimed that they want to be reborn as a Chinese whose mother tongue is Chinese. One student claimed that any language and nationality would do.

4. Conclusion

I have looked at junior high school English textbooks, and then I reported the results of my survey on Japanese students' images of English. In my former paper⁵, I reported that the strong reasons for studying English for the Japanese students were integrative⁶ rather than instrumental. The then Japanese informants admitted that their love for English-speaking countries and peoples, and interest in the cultures of these countries were the strong motivating forces for studying English. In the same vein, the above examination of junior high school English textbooks and that of the Japanese students' images of English may tentatively suggest that even though school textbooks try not to be too Anglocentric nowadays, the literacies of the Dominant 'English as the World Language' Discourse and the Institutionalised Discourses of 'English/other languages', 'white/others', and 'West/others' are well acquired by some students. It can also be inferred that the students may have acquired these literacies not through school (textbooks,

teachers) *per se* but through the media or direct contact with people in Inner Circle countries. Certainly more investigation is necessary to conclude how their way of thinking has been so constructed.

Notes

1. See Mizokami (2002).
2. Kachru (1992) categorises the spread of English across the globe in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer (or Extended) Circle and the Expanding Circle. The Inner Circle refers to the traditional bases of the English language, that is, the regions where it is the primary language such as Britain, the U. S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The members of this group are native speakers of English. On the other hand, the Outer Circle designates the regions of former British and American colonies such as Singapore, Malaysia, India, the Philippines and Hong Kong where English has expanded in non-native contexts. In such countries as India and Nigeria, English was imposed in colonial times, and it has been successfully transplanted and still serves a range of intra-national purposes. The Expanding Circle involves Japan, Korea, China and France etc. where English is learnt as the primary foreign language.
3. See Mizokami (2001).
4. In this counting, since many students mistakenly wrote 'Africa' for the question, I include Africa here dealing with it as if it were the name of a country, although Africa is actually not the name of a country.
5. See Mizokami (2003).
6. It is usually argued that there are two types of motivation that people have in learning a foreign language: instrumental and integrative. The instrumental motivation refers to the individuals' interest in acquiring sufficient communicative ability to satisfy their own specific goals, usually economic targets. By contrast, the integrative motivation refers to the individuals' desire to associate themselves ever more closely with a target community to the point of assimilating to it (Ager, 2001, 109).

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I would like to thank my referees for their comments regarding this paper.

Early Childhood Education Department
 Aichi Konan College
 172 Ohmatsubara, Takaya
 Konan 483-8086, Japan