

論文の内容の要旨

論文題目 Changing Roles of Corporate Business Language Training
in the Context of Globalisation in Japan:
A Longitudinal Organisational Ethnography

(日本のグローバル化を見据えた企業ビジネス英語研修の役割：
企業内エスノグラフィーを用いた縦断的研究)

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Study motives

This dissertation looked at the discourse of Englishnization in Japanese companies in order to gain insights into further curriculum development for corporate in-house English training. Currently, an increasing number of Japanese companies are eager to introduce English education as a part of global human resources development strategies. I referred to this company in-house English education as *Business English as a lingua franca* (BELF) training in this dissertation. It was commonly reported that such BELF training contributed to helping trainees develop their pure linguistic proficiency of English. English being considered a *de facto* lingua franca, maintaining linguistic infrastructure to use English for business purposes will apparently play a key role in proceeding with further globalization. However, proficiency growth does not necessarily result in the improvement of business communication efficiency. I have observed in many such companies that policy makers have not fully understood how employees with higher English proficiency should be training to be able to function in the sphere of global business using BELF. This dissertation, in light of this, shed light on one Japanese engineering company and discussed the following three points for gaining insights into further BELF training curriculum development: 1) “What do situated Japanese BELF trainees do?”, 2) “How is BELF situated among and (pragmatically) used by the Japanese BELF trainees?”, and 3) “What can the Japanese BELF trainees tell us?”

Theoretical framework

As its theoretical framework, this dissertation employed 1) ecological perspectives, 2) (intercultural)

communicative competence, and 3) rapport management. Looking at the focused BELF discourse from ecological perspectives allowed me to take a holistic view on how BELF is situated and used in the community of practice. To analyse this community practice, researchers are advised to focus their attention on how participants utilise intercultural communicative competence to get the job done; not on evaluating participants' linguistic proficiency based on the L1 standard. Besides, as it is one of the BELF communication success criteria, how participants manage rapport and enhance *Wa* (discourse harmony) through the interaction should also be looked at.

Prior studies in the relevant discipline have observed how Japanese communicate with their non-Japanese counterparts using English as a medium of communication. Some researchers, however, critically responded that the conventional studies had focused heavily on investigating how to communicate with L1 speakers effectively. They also recommended that future study, based on ethnographic approaches, observe discourse strategies for L2 speakers to mutually deal with BELF communication. The above discussion guided me to establish the following methodology.

Methodology

Since 2010, I have been involved in corporate training programmes in several Japanese companies, the focus of which includes awareness raising activities for global business communication. In this dissertation, I focused on a pre-OJT training at an engineering company, Crescendo Corporation (written in pseudonym). The pilot study was conducted in 2013, and the main study in 2014. The OJT participants are expected to experience one-year foreign-based OJT in order to develop their global business competence. After the OJT, they are expected to play a key role in proceeding with the organisational globalisation strategies, in which Englishnization is a must. Being a corporate trainer, I have conducted an ethnographic, participant observation to familiarise myself over the on-going issues in this company for seven years as of April, 2017.

Data were collected through my corporate training. As a part of awareness raising activities, the participants were asked to do stimulated conversation tasks to quasi-experience what it is like to use English for business communication. Their performance was videotaped and later transcribed for a conversational analysis and its subsequent stimulated recall. The participants were asked to comment on their performance for raising their awareness of their L2 performance. In addition, focus group interviews were conducted to compare all participants' perspectives over their performance.

The above methodological design contains some potential limitation. First of all, the non-authenticity of this communication needs to be revisited. Due to the traditional exclusivity, I dealt with difficulty having an access to any naturalistic meeting data. As its alternative, I used stimulated conversation as the data for this study. Furthermore, Englishnization being in its preparatory phase at this company, it is unrealistic for the Japanese participants to speak English to do business with each other even as of the date of data collection. Having all said that, reality anticipates that this English-speaking discourse even among

Japanese employees at this company will be quite common in ten years. This study is thus considered informative in determining the policy of corporate training and further globalisation in Crescendo Corporation and beyond.

Data analysis

My participant observation suggested that four types of learners were normally chosen as pre-OJT candidates; male senior engineers, male senior sales reps., male junior engineers, and male junior sales reps. In general, senior employees volunteer to enroll in the pre-OJT training to expand the possibility of their future career path. Meanwhile, junior employees are recommended to take part in this training course as a part of global human resourced development strategies of the company. This variation in participants' motivation depending on their motivation naturally creates different learning styles. The current pre-set curriculum, however, provides trainees with relatively controlled, unified and standardised learning contents with the L1 English pragmatic norm as the basis of studying. Since the trainees' needs of learning vary, the sole reliance on the L1 English standards will eventually lead the participants to communication dilemma in their actual communication site during their OJTs and beyond.

The qualitative interviews with the participants suggested that, due to their *Shafū* (organisational discourse), engineers are usually in a higher position in the social hierarchical strata; sales reps. in an inferior position to them. My pilot study, in this light, sheds light on the pragmatic behaviour of these four types. Through the initial analysis, five types of pragmatic behaviours were found noteworthy; they were 1) showing disagreement, 2) receiving disagreement, 3) consensus-making, 4) clarification-responding, and 5) paralinguistic elements (i.e., laugh and silence). The subsequent main study indicated the correlation between business experience and the varieties of employed pragmatic patterns. The pragmatic pattern of exhibiting disagreement could highly represent the collective mind-set of Japanese. While showing disagreement, interactants exhibit its key statement with a relatively small number of words; around 10-word range (or, sometimes much shorter). The pragmatic pattern of expressing disagreement commonly includes hesitation, pause and silence. In addition to this pattern, participants often picked out a minor negative detail that everybody else in Discourse could agree upon when they show disagreement. This strategy may probably allow other participants, especially disagreement takers, to scaffold the floor of disagreement givers. Whilst disagreement, dominant figures tend to hold the floor, and relatively young participants are expected to be relatively dormant.

Successful disagreement was also found to be a joint endeavour between disagreement exhibitors and receivers. The pragmatics of disagreement by Japanese should normally occur as a social co-construction of meaning between a disagreement giver and its taker. The data analysis also suggested that, largely due to the listener-oriented nature of Japanese communication style, scaffolding while receiving disagreement facilitated disagreement-giver's utterance, frequently resulting in co-constructing *Wa* within the community of practice. Participants would rather negotiate disagreement than express disagreement. Besides, participants perceived

unnecessary pressure while receiving clarification requests and achieving consensus. It was observed that a consensus was often formed based on collective paralinguistic performance, such as group laugh and silence, instead of verbal clarification procedure.

It was also noteworthy that participants with more intercultural communication experience exhibit more complex use of communication strategies, regardless of business experience. Some experienced participants even dynamically switched their positions between disagreement showers and receivers depending on situations. Such pragmatic manoeuvre was found to be a communication strategy in order to manage rapport within the community of practice the participants are involved in, which eventually results in developing *Wa*.

The follow-up focus group interviews suggested that the participants, though not perfect, achieved reasonable understanding over the pragmatic behaviours, the patterns of which were found in the above analysis. The interpretability of their L2 interaction can possibly be guaranteed by the *Kuki*-reading literacy within the discourse community. But at the same time, *Kuki* is found to be not monolithic even among Japanese participants. This dissertation, in this light, suggested the possibility to provide an alternative definition of *Kuki* literacy. *Kuki*, though it primarily refers to the pragmatic sensitivity of Japanese people, could also be defined as the tolerance for pragmatic ambiguity. Using ambiguous pragmatics among Japanese, especially for harmonious disagreement, enables the room of multidimensional (or, sometimes even diametrically opposing) interpretations to be left open so as to enhance *Wa* in discourse.

Meanwhile, this obscure pragmatics will become an issue when non-Japanese participants are involved in their interactions. The interviews with other non-Japanese corporate trainers suggested that the pragmatics patterns that Japanese participants employed, though they said they could understand, would probably be quite uninterpretable for those whose familiarity with Japanese language and culture are limited.

Conclusion

This dissertation observed the mechanism of (mis)communication by Japanese when English is used for business purposed in the context of globalisation in Japan. This dissertation provided insights into future corporate training curriculum in Japan. Not only corporate trainers, but also corporate-policy makers, human resources officers, and non-Japanese business people who show interests to conducting business with Japanese can potentially benefit from the research findings. Researchers of business discourse analysis are strongly advised to base their future research on this dissertation and explore the possibility to transfer the research findings to their own discipline.