

The committee reviewing Yoichi Sato's thesis, titled *Changing Roles of Corporate Business Language Training in the Context of Globalisation in Japan: A Longitudinal Organisational Ethnography*, met from 19:00 to about 21:30 on Thursday, November 16, 2017, in Collaboration Room 4, Building 18, Komaba Campus, University of Tokyo. The members of the committee were Professor Tom Gally (chair), Professor Seiko Fujii, Associate Professor Yo Usami, and Associate Professor Alexander Gilmore of the University of Tokyo and Professor Misa Fujio of Toyo University. Mr. Sato's presentation and the committee's questioning of him were open to the public, while only the members of the committee were present for their deliberations, which began at about 21:00.

The result of those deliberations is as follows. The committee concluded that the thesis is an important contribution to research on language training in corporate contexts and that it has applications to both the academic field of applied linguistics and to nonacademic stakeholders. The theoretical framing of the study was good, as it incorporated several different but interlinked methodological and conceptual approaches. The empirical data were gathered carefully and analyzed rigorously, and the study's conclusions were well-argued and convincing. The committee noted in particular the importance of the thesis's emphasis on language education that takes into account the needs and characteristics of second-language users rather than merely assuming a native-speaker standard. The study therefore both provides a model for future research on language teaching in business and other contexts and offers guideposts to innovative and effective approaches to language teaching.

The committee also noted, however, several areas in which the thesis could have been stronger. Although one motivation for the study was the impact of globalisation on language use and training in business contexts, the author's view of globalisation was too narrowly focused, considering only the Japanese business situation. In addition, his conclusions would have been stronger if he had obtained comparative data, particularly about his subjects' spoken interactions when using their first language (that is, Japanese) and about interactions among people who actually use English as a lingua franca in business contexts. The lack of comparative data seems also to have led to overgeneralizations about "Japanese pragmatics."

More data, and a more rigorous conversational analysis, would have been useful for analysing disagreement and clarification requests, especially between speakers of English from different linguistic backgrounds. The fact that all participants shared the same linguistic and cultural background raises doubts about whether the author was really observing “lingua franca” use of English. Finally, the author should have mentioned that the “harmonious disagreement” that he observed could have been a byproduct of the role-play situation.

Despite these weaknesses, the committee unanimously concluded that the thesis’s many strengths make it of sufficient quality for the granting of a *Hakase (Gakujutsu)* degree to Yoichi Sato.