

Global Communication

第6号

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武蔵野大学グローバル教育研究センター紀要、*Global Communication* 第6号をお届けいたします。

平成27度も振り返れば、世界各地で大地震、異常気象による自然災害に加えて、テロ、難民問題と、多くの難問に苦悩した年でした。その一方で、木村氏、梶田氏のノーベル賞、ラグビーの五郎丸、ジャンプの高梨、世界体操の日本男子と、日本では若手選手の活躍に熱狂した年でもありました。

今回、寄せられた論考も、英語、日本語、中国語の若手教員から、日ごろの教育活動の中で抱いた疑問に答えるものが多く寄せられました。紀要は、個々の教員の責任において発表されるものですので、粗削りな部分もあるかと思いますが、今後、新たな研究成果につながる芽も多く散見されます。皆様からのご批判、コメント等によって精査され、価値ある研究成果につながっていくこと、そしてそれが最終的に教育に生かされること、そのような道筋を作ることが紀要の使命であると思います。

今後も引き続き、研究成果発表の機会を多く設けることで、健全なグローバル化の進展の一助となるよう、ともに精進、努力していきたいと考えております。

(山本)

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Tokyo 2020 – ELT in Transition Generally and Particularly

2020 東京オリンピックに向けて英語教育を考える

Anne C. Ihata

Introduction

ELT as a whole is currently undergoing transformation in Japan, mostly becoming increasingly business/workplace oriented as a result of the ongoing recession. This research relates to the special ELT situation facing educators mainly in Tokyo, as the city prepares to host the 2020 Summer Olympics. There are potentially great opportunities in terms of student motivation and employment, and most educators and administrators are keen to capitalize on this over the next few years. However, there seems to be divergence of opinion on how best to do this, which could limit the effectiveness of any special programs that are devised. It seems pertinent to examine this situation, ideally at both a macro level across schools and a micro level taking one institution as a more concrete reference.

This paper reports on the first step in a grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) process – the assessment of preliminary data in order to refine and, if necessary increase, the questions to be used in a ‘final’ survey to collect a much larger body of data that will form the basis for solid conclusions regarding attitudes or opinions. It forms part of a project that was started together with a student of the author’s, who is currently a high school teacher in Tokyo¹. The scale of this particular study is, by its very nature as a preliminary investigation, on a rather small scale.

Method and Subjects

In essence, a simple survey of teachers’, students’, and administration staff’s opinions regarding current directions in English language teaching (ELT) in high school and university in Japan was conducted, and the results analyzed for the possible significance of differences. However, its main purpose, at this stage, was to elicit a variety of responses that could be analysed for patterns of thinking, and used to form the basis of a future more

refined survey that would ask subjects to select from a fixed range of alternatives, with ideally four to five distractors for each question. The initial questionnaire consisted of mainly open-ended questions, in order to better assess the range of ideas likely to appear in responses.

The research questions posed by the researcher, employed at the university level in both teaching and administration, were

- 1) What are the needs that English education at the tertiary level should be focusing on now?
- 2) Is there a difference in perception of needs between administration and teachers?
- 3) How do students themselves view the situation?

There was a need to allow respondents to express their opinions in relation to not only the possible difference of emphasis between high school and university level instruction (in view of the time frame from now until August 2020), but also as to whether or not the special situation regarding being an Olympic host city/country warranted additional or different attention paid to English language teaching.

Questionnaires were distributed randomly to administrative personnel in two departments, where work involves regular contact with teachers and students or promoting the university to potential students; full-time faculty and native English speaking teachers in the author's department (of Global Communication), and via email to a number of native speakers teaching at other universities in Tokyo; and students in the author's English for Language Teaching and Linguistics seminar, during the first semester in 2015.

A total of 22 completed questionnaires were collected from 8 university teachers (teaching in 2 different co-educational institutions in Tokyo), 5 administrative staff members (all from the same university), and 9 students, also from the same university. The students were all either seniors or juniors in the department of Global Communication, and the teachers were all (by random chance) native speakers of English, or near-native non-Japanese nationals. At this stage, no further information regarding age, gender, or individual circumstances of the subjects was collected, since the aim was, as mentioned above, to generate content which could later be refined for a more scientifically exact survey, in accordance with a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, *ibid.*). In all subject categories, there was a mix of genders, so that any bias in that direction would be unlikely to skew the results significantly in any way.

The actual questions posed in the survey were:

1. What do you think English language teaching in Japan should focus on from now on (a) at high school level, (b) at university level? (If they are the same, please write only once).
2. Do you think there should be any special emphasis in the period leading up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics? Yes No

If 'Yes', what should the emphasis be on? Why?

Findings

Since high school English teaching, in fact most high school education, focuses fairly narrowly on preparing students for the university entrance examinations, it was to be expected that there would be an overall tendency to distinguish the goals of secondary and tertiary English education, although the direction to consider the particular needs for the Olympic host city/country could potentially have affected this perception. In practice, as can be seen from Table 1 below, although this expectation was borne out in the results, the degree of distinction varied considerably across the three target groups.

Table 1: Perception of Need to Distinguish Goals for High School and University English Language Education

	Distinct responses	Not distinguished	Invalid response²	Total
Teachers	62.5% 5	25% 2	12.5% 1	8
Administrators	100% 5	0	0	5
Students*	44% 4	33% 3	22% 2	9
All Respondents	63% 14	23% 5	14% 3	22

* The total percentage is only 99% here, since the fractions are infinities that do not warrant rounding up.

University students were the least likely to consider different aims for high school and university language teaching, while administration personnel were the most likely to distinguish them. This may reflect the young people's more recent experience of the examination system and their desire to improve things, since they mostly distinguished between 'basic grammar' or 'reading and listening' as necessary for high school students, and 'practical English, such as speaking and writing' or 'communication skill' as requirements for university learners. Those among them who did not distinguish two sets of aims tended to mention the need for 'practical English' to be taught at secondary school, with one of them specifying that this meant skills that could help them to write an essay in the language. This has particular relevance for university students, whose writing skills tend to be the weakest, and unfortunately the most neglected, of the four basic skill areas.

Teachers also included writing in their recommendations, whether they distinguished goals for high school and university or not, with one in each group clearly mentioning it. One (who distinguished) considered it a goal for high school teaching to have the students become "able to talk and write about things within their immediate purview (their interests, family/

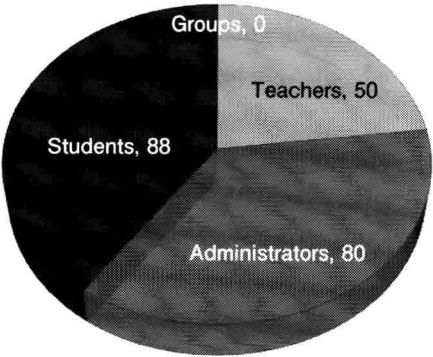
friends, work/study, etc.)”, and the other saw the need to build knowledge and skills as contributing to enabling learners to express themselves in speech or writing, especially to be able to “write logical, cohesive essays and carry on an intelligent cohesive conversation on a wide range of topics”.

The administrators’ group also favoured a change of focus in high school towards more practical skills, such as speaking, although they emphasized the need for providing communication opportunities and encouraging reading skills at university level. The need for reading and writing abilities at this level was associated with the need to read academic works and benefit from study abroad programmes offered by the university. Actually, the only reference to writing among them mentioned it only in passing — “They should read English books to write reports and theses, so they need reading skills.”

That the administrators did not refer to writing skills may reflect their perception that the focus on the coming Olympics will require competence in face-to-face communication rather than in writing. However, as we can see from the above example, they are also concerned about students making good use of the many study abroad opportunities that the university now offers them. Although we might expect that the teachers would also have this in mind, it is not so likely to be a preoccupation for them, since they are not generally involved in the organization or running of such programmes and particularly their financing, as the administration personnel subjects here are.

Perhaps one of the most significant findings overall in this preliminary study was in the responses to Question 2, where there was a marked difference of opinion with teachers on one side and administration personnel and students grouped much closer together (see Fig. 1 below) on the other. Teachers were equally divided between whether they felt that special emphasis was required in English education in the period leading up to the 2020 Olympics or not, but there was very definite support for it among administrators (80%) and students (88%).

Fig. 1: ‘Yes’ Responses to Q2 by Main Category of Respondent
(Numbers represent percentages of the total population in that category)



A more detailed breakdown of these results, in terms of actual numbers involved, is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Responses to Q2 by Main Respondent Category

	Yes	No	Total
Teachers	50% 4	50% 4	8
Administrators	80% 4	20% 1	5
Students*	88% 8	11% 1	9
All Respondents	73% 16	27% 6	22

* The total percentage is only 99% here, since the fractions are infinities that do not warrant rounding up.

This is a point of difference that deserves serious attention, because although we clearly have a majority of all concerned perceiving a special window of opportunity here for emphasizing a strongly-felt need to improve the teaching and acquisition of oral communication skills, those at the point of delivery of teaching have a much weaker sense of this timeliness. Interestingly, in the reasoning behind their expressed ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ responses, there is much agreement among them. However, the teachers generally feel that Japanese students should be encouraged to learn English because it is necessary or useful for them in their later lives, especially in the workplace but not limited to it, not solely because of this one short-lived opportunity. Those favouring a special effort between now and 2020 emphasise the potential wealth of real-life experiences that will be available to motivate learners in a way that is often hard to achieve in everyday study activities in Japan.

The students themselves are well aware of this, and keen to make the most of the chance offered, it seems. Most of their responses regarding the reason why they think English education needs a special focus now closely resemble the following example: “A lot of foreign people will pay attention to Japan. So, Japanese should speak English about Japan, and so on.” This echoes the general trend in administrators’ reasoning, several of whom mentioned the importance of being able to explain Japanese life and culture through English to overseas visitors.

Only one of the students differs to any extent on this point, by stating that the English education they have received up to high school has focused on reading, writing, and grammar, so that they have had little practice in speaking the language and feel that they have little ability in that area, and this is why they need special emphasis on communicative skills now. It is a response that finds echoes in both administration and teaching staff responses. The issue is perhaps expressed most clearly and succinctly in one of the responses

from a teacher at another university:

“It is a very complicated situation, however success measured by exam scores that do not focus on communicative ability and fluency of expression, but instead test linguistic analysis and knowledge of grammatical rules, are the main reasons for the majority of Japanese students not being able to communicate effectively in English.

Actually, an education system that teaches one thing (linguistic analysis), and then expects another result (fluency of expression and communicative skills), is totally unfair.”

However, this should not distract us from the evidence that, even among the teachers, the support for the idea of seeing the 2020 Olympics as a special opportunity is not negligible. Half of them accept that this is a unique occasion to motivate learners in an EFL situation that all too frequently leaves many of them quite baffled as to why they have to struggle with the complexities of such a different language and its associated culture.

Conclusions

If we return to the research questions posed on page 2, I believe that we may be able to give some tentative answers to them. There are differences between teaching and administrative personnel in terms of what they perceive student needs to be at this time in Japan. Yet, as I have mentioned, there may actually be more agreement at a fundamental level than is apparent in the surface of responses. Educators in general, and perhaps language specialists in particular, are naturally inclined to a long-term view of skills education, one that sees the abilities inculcated as tools for lifelong use. Administrators are more keenly aware of the need to demonstrate return on investment, and therefore to produce apparently meaningful results in a limited time frame. That the students themselves keenly wish to seize upon the current opportunity to promote oral communication-focused teaching and practice should, surely, be given weight in this debate. This would seem to answer the question of where the main emphasis should be in tertiary English education for the time being, although ongoing needs to promote both traditional and visual or media literacy should not be neglected. They have a significant part to play in our students' lives as the world continues to shrink, not only in Olympics year.

Notes

1. Details available upon request.
2. Invalid responses included answering 1 (a) with “at high school level”, as though the question had asked them to choose between high school or university as the appropriate time to learn English.

References

Strauss, Anselm L. and Juliet Corbin. (1997). *Grounded Theory in Practice*. Sage.

Sociolinguistic Awareness and Intercultural Competence in English-medium Classes at Japanese Universities

日本の大学の授業における社会言語学的意識および異文化間能力
—英語を媒介語とした授業において—

Chad Hanashiro and Troy McConachy

Abstract

Within the context of globalization and the increasing demands on the current generation of university students to develop intercultural competencies, there is an important question as to how sociolinguistic content can be approached in English-medium classes at Japanese universities. This paper considers the role of sociolinguistic knowledge and awareness as a component of intercultural competence, and discusses some of the aspects of sociolinguistic awareness which are particularly relevant within the Japanese context.

Introduction

The advance of globalization and the concomitant increase in interactions between individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds has led to increased awareness amongst political and educational decision-makers of the strategic importance of developing the intercultural competence of its citizens. The Japanese government is no exception to this trend. In fact, the Japanese government has come to frequently refer both directly and indirectly to the concept of globalization, and clearly situate it as the background against which foreign language and intercultural competencies should be developed. This current framing of language education as a crucial part of the Japanese government's strategic response to globalization has occurred against the backdrop of the increasing trend for Japanese companies to seek "global human resources". However, those who work in the Japanese tertiary context are all but too aware of the fact that there is often a disconnect between the aims of the government, the perceptions of classroom teachers and the goals of

students. Although many students enrolled in Japanese universities recognize the importance of learning English and other foreign languages, it is also a fact that many perceive classroom language learning as a means to an end – that end is getting higher scores on international proficiency tests. Thus, it can be said that time spent in the classroom does not automatically translate into real communicative abilities, nor to intercultural competence. For this reason, there is a need for educationalists to seriously consider exactly how students can be encouraged to develop awareness of the importance of language as a tool for intercultural communication and the capacities needed for constructive engagement with culturally diverse others. This paper focuses on the role of sociolinguistic knowledge and awareness as a component of intercultural competence, by discussing some of the aspects of sociolinguistic awareness which are particularly relevant within the Japanese context.

Sociolinguistic knowledge as a component of intercultural competence

Since the construct of communicative competence came to be widely accepted within language teaching, sociolinguistic knowledge has generally been understood in terms of the knowledge that language learners need in order to be able to use the target language in situationally appropriate ways (E.g. Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; van Ek, 1986). Influential models of intercultural competence (E.g. Byram, 1997) have drawn on these models in their attempts to incorporate sociolinguistic knowledge as a component of intercultural competence, but the specific relationship between sociolinguistic knowledge and intercultural competence has not been well articulated (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; McConachy & Liddicoat, In Press). If we broadly understand intercultural competence as the ability to effectively manage communication with interlocutors from various cultural backgrounds, then the aspects of sociolinguistic knowledge required clearly extend beyond the conventions of the target language. In fact, we suggest that for intercultural competence it is necessary to make a distinction between sociolinguistic *knowledge* and sociolinguistic *awareness*. Although this is an extremely thorny area in epistemological terms, the concept of knowledge implies that there is an abstract informational structure that the individual is able to comprehend, such as perceiving parts of a system, the rules underlying the system, and the interaction of the parts according to the rules. In contrast, awareness is informed more by a constructivist epistemology, and is not limited to whether one has internalized static informational structures, but that one has a heightened awareness of how people perceive aspects of language use in social context and the kinds of value judgments that are tied to it. Importantly, it also includes reflexive awareness of one's own perceptions of sociolinguistic meanings and the roles played by language in society more broadly.

(McConachy, 2013). Intercultural communication itself is not simply a matter of individuals from different cultures coming to the act of communication and enacting pre-programmed cultural behaviors. It is a dynamic site of sense-making and accommodation to the other which transcends the affordances for meaning of one particular cultural system. It is our position that Japanese university students who aim to participate in intercultural communication through the medium of foreign languages are in need of sociolinguistic *awareness* which, while going beyond sociolinguistic *knowledge* of a particular language, will nevertheless enable them to reflect on sociolinguistic dimensions of the languages they encounter.

In order for students to acquire intercultural competence within the context of the globalization and the internationalization of higher education, we argue that there are two main areas of awareness which are important: 1) conceptual understanding of the nature of language and identity and 2) the implications for society of an increase in individuals who possess diverse linguistic and cultural resources. In the sections following we first of all situate the concept of identity within a constructivist paradigm, and then we focus specifically on the intersections between identity and multilingualism in the realm of the globalizing workplace, education, and society. We further connect this discussion to aspects of sociolinguistic awareness as a constitutive element of intercultural competence.

Identity as a discursive phenomenon

With the particular attention to globalization recently, the concept of identity is one that has increased in salience in the minds of individuals around the world. Traditionally, many have considered identity as something derived primarily from one's group affiliations, most obviously one's nationality. Since the birth of the modern state, many people have taken national affiliation for granted as a primary resource for identity. Although there are certainly many people who later become citizens of foreign countries, one's national identity is often perceived as static and enduring due to the way it becomes deeply engrained in early life through participation in social practices such as national-anthem singing (Joseph, 2004). It is worth pointing out that even for people who do not have a strong sense of their identity being defined by their national belonging, an encounter with groups or individuals from different countries can generate sudden patriotic urges, such as in the case of international sports competitions. In this sense, attention to one's national belonging as an identity resource is triggered through salience of in-group/out-group boundaries – in this case, national boundaries. Beyond national affiliation, age, gender, occupation, and a wide range of sociological variables also constitute one resource for identity construction. To a certain extent, meaning and value are ascribed to such social categories at the macro level by

societal “consensus” based on historically transmitted taken for granted assumptions. However, it is important not to underestimate the work by individuals at the micro level to define what it means to be a woman or man, doctor, teacher, teenager etc. It is recognition of this potential of individuals to define their own reality within the context of concrete activity with others which is at the root of sociological perspectives such as symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, which are predicated on constructivist epistemology.

The globalization which has occurred in recent decades has contributed to the fracturing of our conception of individuals as being inherently tied to neatly bounded collectivities from which we draw our identity, and helped highlight the constructed, self-reflexive aspects of identity (Williams, 2010). Although the nation-state is still a primary reference point for many, identity is increasingly construed as a dynamic entity which is continually shaped by one’s participation in a range of communities and discourse practices (Kramsch, 2010). In this way, constructivist views of identity see the self as something which is always provisional – constantly being reconstructed through the exercising of agency in our ways of acting and talking. In fashionable terms, it is through discourse – through participation in meaningful social interaction – that we become a subject. Discourse consists of the range of speech events which individuals use to “get things done” in daily life and, through mutual coordination of activity, to position ourselves in relation to others, construct relationships, and use these relationships as a context for defining the self. For foreign language learners, the foreign language is much more than a structural system; it is an assemblage of cultural practices semiotically encoded in linguistic symbols. This system provides many affordances for individuals to index aspects of self and relate to others in new ways through incorporating certain linguistic practices of the target language into their communicative repertoire. However, this is not something which is necessarily appreciated by language learners themselves. When encountering foreign interactional practices there is much room for stereotyping of target language speakers. For example, some Japanese people learning English might assume from the fact that interaction in English places a lot of emphasis on friendliness and displays of egalitarianism (Wierzbicka, 2006), that politeness is therefore absent in English. This assumption is then projected on to native English speakers. Conversely, those learning Japanese as a foreign language may assume that because the Japanese language has a distinct honorific language (*keigo*) and usage of indirect phrases is preferred, Japanese are inherently “polite”.

In order for students to decenter from such ethnocentric analyses of foreign interactional practices, there is an important role for training students to consider the intentions of individuals in concrete instances of interaction and reflect on how interactional choices are both reflective of and constitutive of the contexts in which individuals interact (McConachy,

2015). This can begin to suggest to students that individuals do strategically position themselves in their interactions based on a host of considerations. Moreover, in the case of multilingual individuals, it can be seen that there is strategic use of code-switching and blending of interactional features from different languages (Rampton, 1998). In other words, bilingual and multilingual individuals transcending national level communication styles, which is a clear illustration of foreign language acquisition adding new, complex dynamics to communication. This supports the argument that the reality of language use cannot be expressed in terms of stereotypes based on communication style or cultural background, because interaction of bilingual/multilingual speakers is complex and contextual. In short, what is important for language learners is awareness of how language is used to index affiliations in particular social groupings and how we use language as a strategic tool for impression management and positioning ourselves in interpersonal relationships.

Multilingualism and identity in the globalizing Japanese workplace

In the current age, it is particularly important for individuals to contemplate the societal implications of the increase in bilingual/multilingual individuals, including how such individuals can contribute to society. The current global economy is characterized by the utilization of capital for projects and networks across national boundaries. However, the current economy is not only global, it has become what is often referred to as a “knowledge economy” (Williams, 2010). Within a knowledge economy, specialist knowledge functions as a kind of capital which is used to improve the efficiency of services, or as a product in its own right. Work within the knowledge economy requires a high degree of semiotic manipulation – or the use of signs – for constructing and decoding meanings, such as in branding, marketing, and a range of other communication modalities. In this sense, many of those who engage in the knowledge economy function, at least to some extent, as “symbolic analysts” (Reich, 1991). Within this context, those who are able to operate effectively across multiple languages and cultures are in particular demand. It is suggested that multilingual individuals with high degrees of intercultural competence are able to more flexibly negotiate across contexts and forge synergies.

Within the Japanese context, however, the value of multilingual individuals from diverse backgrounds is not always recognized. For instance, Disco Inc. (2014) did a survey which asked 493 companies about their reasons for hiring foreign students. One section of the survey shed light on the positive and negative effects of hiring foreign students. The top three positive effects are creating a stimulating environment for Japanese workers (66.7%), understanding the advancement of globalization (64.4%), and improving intercultural understanding (52.9%). On the other hand, the top three negative effects are trouble from

cultural differences (60.9%), misunderstandings caused by language barriers (57.8%), and a heavier workload for departments which accepted a foreign employee (54.7%). It is clear that Japanese companies want to hire foreign students and that foreign students have the potential to bring about positive changes to the foreign workplace. However, what is limiting the realization of this potential at the moment is the excessively narrow perspective that cultural differences are a source of trouble rather than a source of opportunity, and the preferred expectation is that foreign employees will perform and behave in the same manner as Japanese workers (Moriya, 2012). The university students of today are the workers of tomorrow. In this sense, they have a key role to play in transforming the mindset in Japanese companies into one which recognizes the crucial importance of multilingual ability and the dynamicity and potential for creative synergies that comes with cultural diversity and to use languages for exploiting the potential of global economic markets. As an aspect of sociolinguistic awareness, being aware of some of the dynamic ways languages are being used in the global marketplace, as well as how successful international companies manage linguistic and cultural diversity within the workplace. If individuals graduate from Japanese universities armed with multilingual skills and a sense for the ways these skills could be utilized to facilitate interaction across linguistic and cultural boundaries within the Japanese workplace, this will be highly advantageous in terms of increasing international competitiveness of companies and the Japanese economy as a whole. From this perspective, sociolinguistic awareness, as a component of intercultural competence, is a highly valued commodity.

Multilingualism and identity in the educational realm

Outside of the workplace, sociolinguistic awareness can play an important function in the educational and societal realm as well. Particularly pertinent in this respect is awareness of the various contexts in which bilingualism/multilingualism is achieved, specifically whether it is in formal or informal contexts. In Japan, there are individuals who have become highly proficient in foreign languages as a result of formal study, while there are others – sometimes referred to as “returnees” – who have acquired languages in naturalistic contexts before then returning to Japan. With the rising number of returnees from overseas attending universities in Japan, there is more interaction between these returnees and Japanese students, who have learned English through formal instruction. However, returnees’ integration, or re-integration, into the Japanese learning environment has proven to be difficult (Clavel, 2014). The reason for this is returnees are linguistically and culturally diverse and this diversity causes identity clashes. That is, many returnees face difficulty in choosing how to align themselves when faced with oppositional categories such as “Japanese” or “Non-Japanese”. Even the concept of “returnee” carries with it the implication that

something is not only “different”, but something that is at the same time “missing”. Kobayashi (2008) emphasizes support for children who are living or who have lived in the United States should not be based on “American”, “Japanese”, or “returnee” stereotypes. In other words, recognizing a certain student’s background of living abroad and also continuing to develop his or her unique identity will create a more enriched learning environment for all. Therefore, if educators in Japan had a better understanding of how natural language acquisition affects identity development in children, interaction in the classroom could shift from returnee-integration to intercultural-fusion. From this situation, students should learn that acquiring language in different environments affects learner identity, and this makes interaction dynamic. This is why learning to recognize and accept a person’s unique identity and also being able to adapt oneself to different interlocutors will lead to more wholesome and meaningful interactions.

Multilingualism and identity in the societal realm

Another important area to develop sociolinguistic awareness of is the impact of the sociocultural context and societal attitudes on language attrition. Additive bilingualism indicates that a person keeps full ability of their L1 while they acquire/learn their L2. On the other hand, in subtractive bilingualism, a person will lose ability in their L1 while they acquire/learn their L2 (Bell, 2014). An example related to this concept is if the Japanese government moves toward accepting foreign immigrants to cope with Japan’s declining population and predicted labor shortage. The first generation of immigrants will have to learn Japanese. In this situation, adults would show little to no language attrition because they would have acquired enough proficiency in their L1; however, children might display language attrition because they have not acquired high proficiency in their L1 and there might not be support for their L1 in Japan. Furthermore, the offspring of the first generation will more than likely acquire their parents’ L1 and also acquire Japanese; thus, becoming bilingual. One important topic is how Japan should accommodate immigrants if immigration to Japan becomes a reality. The Japanese government and general public will need to be understanding and flexible toward accepting foreign languages and cultures entering society. From these concepts and examples, students can visualize how an environment change can affect language acquisition/attrition and identity construction of multiple generations. Additionally, regarding the topic of immigration, students also have the opportunity to consider how immigrants can culturally and linguistically affect society and also what society should do to accommodate immigrants.