

# How Globalism is Represented in English Textbooks in Japan

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## Abstract

This paper explores the portrayal of countries and cultural elements in Japanese EFL high school textbooks, which may contribute to students' awareness of the varieties of English and understanding of other cultures. Based on 's three concentric circle model of English in the world, (examined three textbooks from Japan in order to identify the extent to which English languages varieties and cultures are presented to EFL students. The textbooks used were approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in 2001 and have been used in Japanese high schools since April 2002. The findings reveal that these three textbooks are likely to emphasize mostly inner circle countries at the expense of Outer circle countries, and to a lesser extent, Expanding circle countries. This suggests that certain changes to English textbooks in Japan should be implemented in order to increase students' awareness of the varieties of English spoken in Outer and Expanding circle countries.

## Introduction

Materials used in the classroom, including textbooks, are influential gateways to learning a language and understanding other cultures. This paper explores the portrayal of the countries and cultural elements in Japanese EFL textbooks used in high schools, which contribute to students' awareness of the varieties of English as well as students' understanding of international cultures. (will analyze three textbooks used in Japan in order to demonstrate how English languages varieties and cultures are presented to EFL students based on 's three concentric circles model.

## Diversity of English in The World

As English spreads as a dominant international language, countries can be categorized into three groups (inner circle countries, Outer circle countries, and Expanding circle countries) (Schulz, 2007). According to (Schulz, 2007), each of the three circles represents different types of spread, patterns of acquisition and functions of English in a diversity of cultural contexts; (Schulz, 2007). (inner circle countries, such as Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, English is acquired and spoken as a first language by the majority of people) (Schulz, 2007). The Outer circle refers to countries such as India, Kenya, the Philippines, and Singapore, which represent the institutionalized non-native varieties of English in the regions that have passed through extended periods of colonization; (Schulz, 2007), (Schulz, 2007).



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(In Expanding Circle countries such as Russia, Korea, China, and Japan, English is learned as a foreign language (EFL) and is used for international communication, such as in business, diplomacy and tourism; +) (Crystal, 1987, p. 17)

As Figure 0 and Figure 1 illustrate, the total number of English users categorized in the Outer and Expanding Circles exceeds that of the Inner Circle. This means that the number of English users is rising around the world and the number of non-native speakers of English exceeds that of native speakers. The increasing number of non-native speakers of English suggests the need to expose Japanese EFL students to many varieties of English other than the English spoken in Inner Circle countries. From this perspective, Matsuda (1991) stated, "Even if one variety is selected as a dominant target model, an awareness of different varieties would help students develop a more communicative view of the English language; +p. 10. (In other words, it is very important for English language learners to be aware that there are many varieties of English and to know that understanding these variations would be beneficial for international communication.)"

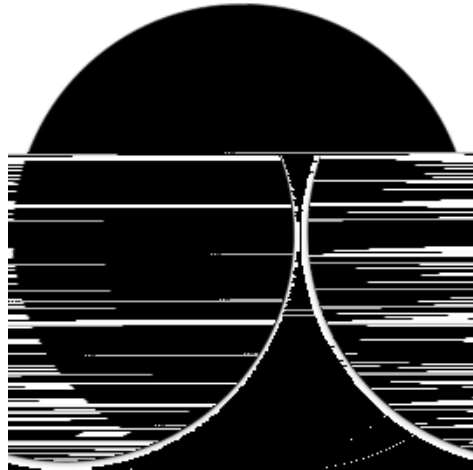


Figure 1 The Three Circles of English (Adapted from Crystal, 1987, p. 17)



1, emphasis added. This is notable in that cross-cultural understanding has been receiving more attention and is becoming a main goal of English education in Japan.

#### Textbooks' Role in Establishing Learners' Perception of Language

English textbooks have a very strong impact on learners' attitudes toward language and culture because textbooks play a pivotal and immediate role in transmitting linguistic and cultural knowledge. It becomes clear how important textbooks are when one takes into account the fact that Japanese people rarely use English in social settings. (In other words, most Japanese EFL learners have limited to no opportunities for exposure to English in their daily lives.) (Indeed,

choose to skip the exercise portions of the text books in order to supply the students with exercises tailored to the students' levels. Such words include place names such as France and Kyushu (Japan), names of foods such as pho (Vietnam) and sushi (Japan), and people's names such as Tutankha (Egypt) and Nelson (South Africa). (I did not include words like English that do not indicate or reference a specific country.) (In regards to photos and illustrations of people, places, objects, and animals, when a particular character appeared on a single page more than once, I counted it as one appearance.) (I did not count photos of generic places, objects, and animals because such things cannot be associated with a particular country.) After collecting the data, I categorized the numbers according to each country and organized them using hierarchical grouping of English-speaking countries.

Table 0

List of Text Books Surveyed

Title	Author
100 Essential English Words for Communication	Suken Shuppan
1000 Essential English Words for Communication	Tokyo Shoseki
21st Century English Words for Communication	Sanseido

Findings

Figure 1 shows the percentage of each of the three concentric circles of English-speaking countries that are represented (including Japan) in the three textbooks. The total number of words, photos, and illustrations that are marked are shown in Table 1.

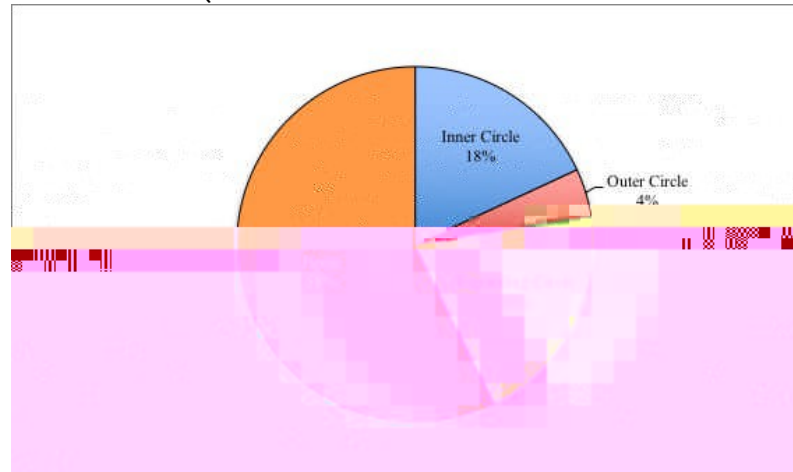


Figure 1 Representation of Countries in the Three Concentric Circles

As can be seen in Figure 1, the elements such as pictures, illustrations, and words that refer to Japan are dominant (82%). The dominant representation of Japan is a common phenomenon among these three textbooks. The second most represented circle is the Expanding Circle, which includes Korea, Vietnam, Egypt, and Turkey. (The third largest is the Inner

\*ircle, which includes the >%S, En land, and Australia +08N-% The percenta e of the only two Outer \*ircle countries found in the text"ooks, South Africa and Ohana, is nota"ly low +2N-% Of all Outer \*ircle countries, only South Africa and Ohana were represented in . o t +Nishimitsu et, al% . /02- and 1" 16ard+ iyota et, al% . /02- respecti\$ely%

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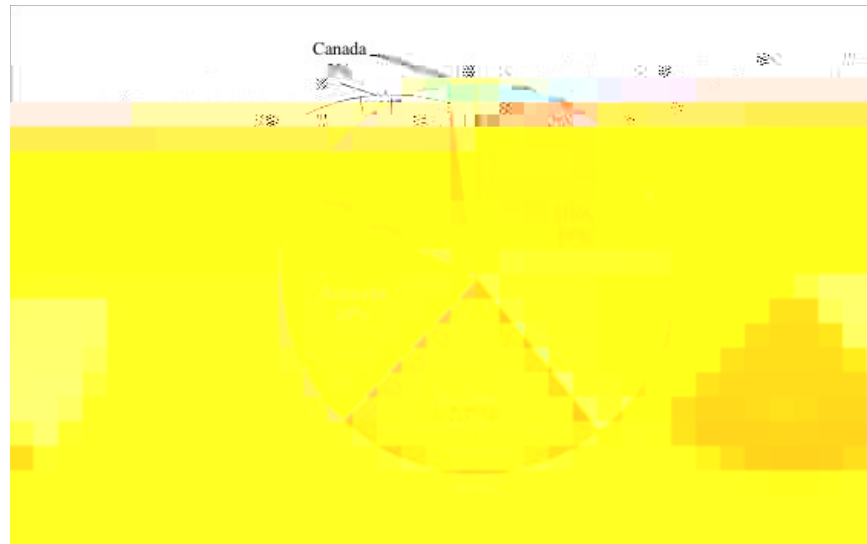


Figure 1. Representation of countries in the inner circle

Table 1 shows the detailed number of references to countries in the inner circle in the text books. While the USA is represented among three text books, only one inner circle country was mentioned once in the text.

there are only four references to Outer \*ircle countries (Ohana-, while *Ōta + ' aneko et, al%* . /02- does not contain any references to Outer \*ircle countries at all%

**Table 2**  
Representation of Outer \*ircle countries in the Textbooks

Textbook	Pictures (Illustrations)	Words	Total
<i>Ōta</i>	2	00	0B +7N-
<i>Ōta + ' aneko et, al%</i>	0	1	2 +. 0N-
<i>Ōta</i>	/	/	/ +/N-

Kamanaka's +. //<- study also revealed that 9the countries in the Outer \*ircle appear the least frequently in English textbooks%. Ce also stated +. //<-, 9Althou h many of these nations are important trading partners for Japan in the modern world%% little information on these countries is available to students through English textbooks%. (n Kamanaka's study, the percentage of Outer \*ircle nations mentioned in high school textbooks was 0/N +. //<-% Figure 1 shows that Outer \*ircle countries in high school textbooks used in . /02 were represented at a mere 2N% Kamanaka mentions in his research that according to ) E, T guidelines 9there are no detailed instructions about which nations should "e included in the textbooks%. (n nearly 0/ years since Kamanaka's research, the representation of nations in the Outer \*ircle has decreased in high school learning materials% Dhile a <N drop may not seem like much of a decrease, the fact that the representation of Outer \*ircle countries was already sparse is a cause for concern%

**Representation of Expanding \*ircle countries**

As mentioned earlier, Expanding \*ircle countries dominate among the three concentric circles, apart from Japan, in the textbooks +. /N in Figure 1-% There are many different Expanding \*ircle countries identified throughout the textbooks, and each one can "e categorized into one of the following 3\$e regions: Asia, Europe, Africa, South America, Other Hemispheres, and Japan%

**Table B**  
Expanding \*ircle countries Base Region

*ountries	Number of times represented
Asian	10 +7N-
European	. = +8N-
African	02 +2N-
South American	0/ +1N-
Other	< +. N-
Japan	. B0 +2N-



Table B shows the striking number of items associated with Japan +.B0-, which is approximately eight times that of Asian countries such as Turkey, Vietnam, and Korea +10-% This is because the contents of each lesson in the textbooks are oriented by making connections with Japanese and international cultures. That is, the textbooks compare and contrast Japanese culture with cultures of other countries. Represented the third highest is the European region, which includes Germany, France, and Italy +.-% Table C illustrates which countries are represented in each of the three Japanese EFL textbooks surveyed excluding Japan-%

Table C

Countries in European Region Identified in Textbooks Circulating in Japan

Country	Frequency	Country	Frequency	Country	Frequency
France	2	China	8	Egypt	0
Netherlands	1	Korea	2	Turkey	0
Portugal	1	Thailand	1	Vietnam	1
		Greece	1	Ecuador	1
		France	0	Germany	8
		Germany	0	Italy	8
		Spain	0	Sweden	2

and also, 100% (in addition, the percentage of Expanding Circle countries is 20% completely outnumbers that of Inner Circle countries + 20%.

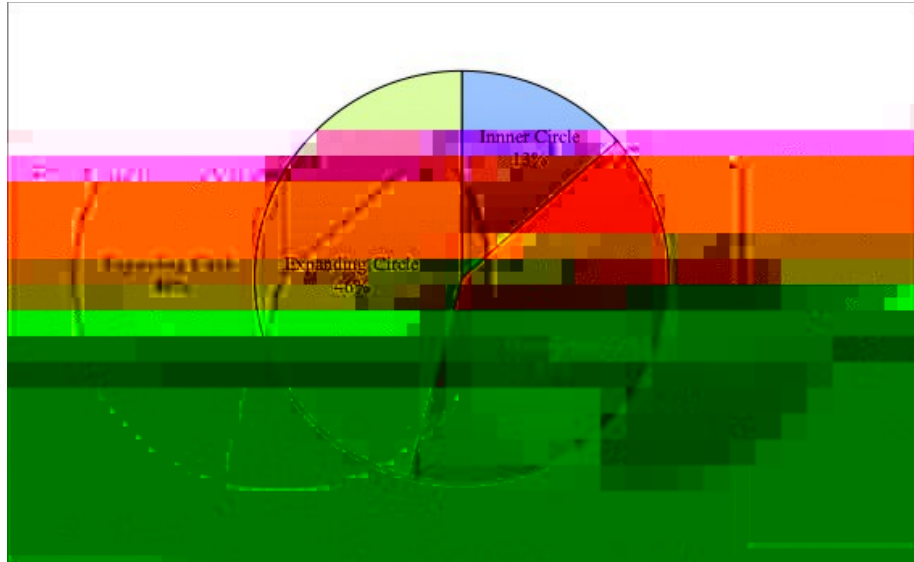


Figure 9: Representation of countries in the Expanding Circle

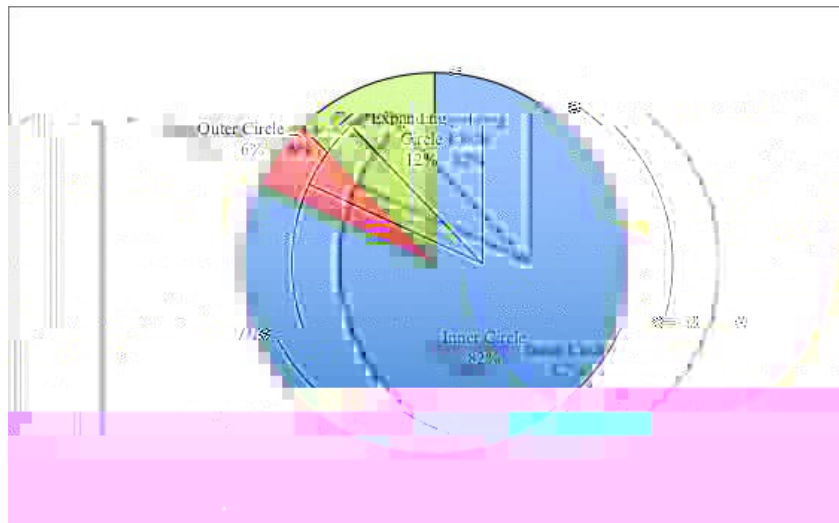


Figure 10: Representation of countries in the Outer Circle

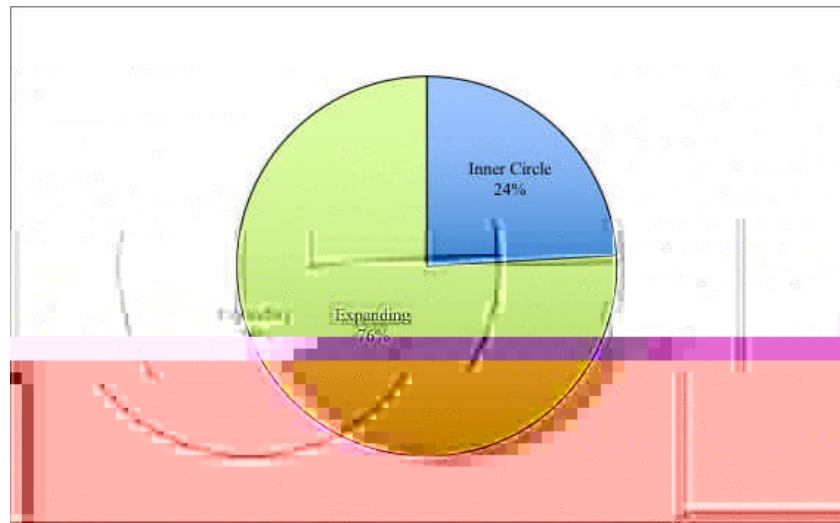


Figure 1. Representation of countries in Japanese EFL textbooks

This finding suggests that the opportunities for students to encounter information that cultivates their awareness of varieties of English and international cultures depends crucially on which textbook is chosen and used in their English classroom.

#### Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, three Japanese EFL textbooks used in 10th grade classrooms were analyzed. The findings revealed that these three textbooks are likely to emphasize both Expanding and Inner Circle countries by using items which refer to countries within these two circles, whereas the distribution for Outer Circle countries is noticeably low. In addition, this limited representation of the Outer Circle can result in students mistakenly believing that English speakers from the Outer Circle play only a peripheral role in the English language community (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001).

This study also revealed that the United States is dominantly represented within Inner Circle countries, whereas the representation of elements associated with Canada is quite low (13%). Moreover, there were no references to New Zealand in the three Japanese EFL textbooks. This extensive representation of the United States is likely an influencing factor in Japanese EFL learners' perception of English as "an American language" (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Laufer and Hulstijn insisted that one of the main reasons for this perception of English comes from greater levels of exposure among Japanese students to L0 form of English at all levels of the Japanese educational systems, including textbooks.

Regarding Outer Circle countries, only two countries were identified through the textbooks and the number of items was relatively low. A similar result emerged from Kamanaka's study ten years ago (1998) in which the percentage of representation of Outer Circle countries is low. Kamanaka (1998) advocated that, "it would be better if more information on these Outer Circle countries were provided in the textbooks" (p. 10) to make students aware of the existence of diversity in English, which could enhance their communicative view of English.

Regarding the Expanding Circle, there were two major regions in this circle: Asia and Europe. The total number of these two regions is nearly double the total number of the other



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About the author+