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Notes and comments by

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English language teaching started in 1883 as form-focused teaching. It gradually has developed into culture-focused teaching of English as an international language. The focus is now on becoming an intercultural speaker of English, which includes: caring and sharing, a sense of responsibility, and an unbiased and non-judgmental approach to difference.

Problems: lack of teaching materials and opportunities. A 2013 project outlined in Professor Park's presentation is meant to help develop resources such as textbooks, but also lesson models, good practice teaching videos, and curricula for culture teaching.

This project aims at helping solve a problem Professor Park termed "the problem of native-speakerism", which has resulted in, first, low confidence of language teachers who think they lack native speaker competence. Second, native-speakerism has led to the so-called English divide. Wealthy parents who believe in the superiority of native-speaker-like Englishes send their children to private schools that cater to this market, which further damages the reputation of public schools and non-native Englishes.

However, in my view, the main strength of the presented approach lies in its open-mindedness. Teaching and learning English(es) are primarily seen as a means to understand a world that is conceived as multi-cultural and diverse.

CELEA President Professor Wen Qiufang and her team

This contribution focused on intercultural ability which includes 1) sensitivity (or awareness) to difference, 2) tolerance or respect of others, and 3) flexibility in dealing with potential conflicts during communication.

Definition of culture needs to be operationalized for the design of teaching materials. It comprises four dimensions of “language” (language & culture): 1) topics, 2) situations, 3) discourse, 4) linguistic means, the list taking us from dimensions that are quite separable from natural languages to those that are not. But in the end, teaching intercultural ability comes down to mindsets, procedures, and materials such as textbooks, one of which is “Reading across cultures, Street food around the world”, which encourages learners to both open themselves to the world around them and to compare other cultures to their own Chinese culture.

What I consider a rich point in this presentation is the moment in the “iPresent” movie where the Chinese young lady, during a rather investigative and intrusive interview on Chinese knowledge about Western paintings, asked the grumpy old Western interviewer whether he, in turn, knew anything about Chinese paintings.

JACET Professor Masaki Oda

English teaching in Japan also started as form-oriented teaching. In the process of including culture-oriented views, many questions confront the Japanese language educator. How, for example, would Africa, China, India, and Korea have to be addressed in textbooks? what to teach in English classes? Does it include inner-circle varieties only or also World Englishes and ELF? First and foremost, English is seen as a stepping stone to learning additional languages.

How to teach English in East Asia and Japan? Of course, appropriate methodology is key, and it includes foci on student culture, classroom culture, social context, and multi-dimensional assessment. But who does, could, and should teach English? The answer lies in a wise blend

of teacher profiles, wise in terms of the affordance of an increasingly globalized, but multilingual world.

In my view, this presentation documented a highly reflective analysis of the key problems related to teaching culture in English classes in East Asia and beyond.

General Comments from AILA perspective

As we have seen in these three presentations within the AILA East Asia Symposium, but also throughout the range of presentation at the 54th JACET Convention, applied linguistics matters in all domains of everyday and professional life. From playing and learning right up to communication on the job and in public: we use language to understand and shape our world. Whereas applied linguistics is best known in many parts of the world for its work on language learning and teaching, it is concerned, too, *more broadly* with language and language use.

By definition, applied linguistics investigates the repertoires of strategies and practices that individuals or communities use – for example, at school, in everyday life and at work – and then searches for ways to develop those repertoires through teaching and learning. In doing so, applied linguistics has developed sub-disciplines related to fields whose language use is socially significant and noticeably different from language use in other fields.

Examples of such sub-disciplines include: language policies, intercultural communication, national language capacity, but also organizational, legal, forensic, clinical, and media linguistics.

Why do applied linguists focus on certain fields of language use, such as teaching and professional domains? Why is it socially relevant to investigate language, identify language-related problems, and solve them?

On a micro level, language use may be seen as linking linguistic units to produce or understand utterances. On a macro level, however, the way we express ideas in words and

understand those words reflects the way we think and the way we organize our actions and our surroundings. People interact primarily through language. In technical terms: the situated activity of language use shapes and is shaped by individuals' and collectives' totality of experiences, social settings such as families, educational institutions, or workplaces, and contextual resources such as the cultures we live in and contribute to.

Moreover, the majority of people around the globe master the communicative and linguistic challenges of everyday and professional life not only in several varieties within *one* language, but in *two* or *more* languages. Individual multilingualism as well as the pattern of linguistic diversity of a particular region display common characteristics, but are also shaped by local and situational factors. Like any other region of the world, East Asia has its multilingual issues, affecting not only the countries concerned, but also the entire region and the world at large.

Thus, language is an interface to people's mental and societal worlds. Knowing how people speak in which domains of their lives and in which of their regional contexts helps us understand them. Understanding is the first step towards improvement. And improving their repertoires of language use means fostering their ability to reflect and act in an increasingly globalized, multilingual world.

As the vice-president of AILA, I invite all of us to take advantage of opportunities such as the AILA East Asia Symposium to broaden and share our perspectives on language and communication issues. I encourage you to continue to support applied linguistic activities in East Asia – preferably by including neighbouring AILA affiliates in Singapore and Malaysia –, and beyond. Let me close by wishing you an enjoyable and stimulating AILA East Asia Conference in 2016 and a long future of fruitful collaboration within AILA.