

Language Teaching in a Globalised World: Evolution of English Textbooks in Japan

Keywords

EFL, Japan, textbook, language education

Biographical Note

Naoko Hosokawa is a project lecturer at the University of Tokyo, and she examines the relationship between language and identity from a sociolinguistic perspective. She holds a PhD in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford. Her recent publications include "Loanwords and Japanese Identity: Inundating or Absorbed?" (Routledge 2023).

References

1. Apple, M. W. (1993). *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. New York: Routledge.
2. Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
3. Hashimoto, K. (2000). "Internationalisation's 'Japanisation': Japan's foreign language education and national identity." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 21 (1): 39-51.
4. Hinton, C. (2012). *Cosmopolitan education: Building on a biological inclination for care in a globalized world*. In Chiesa, B.D., Scott, J., & Hinton, C. (2012). *Languages in a Global World: Learning for Better Cultural Understanding* (pp.409-426). Paris, France: OECD Publishing.
5. Seargeant, P. (2009). *The Idea of English in Japan: Ideology and the Evolution of a Global language*. Bristol UK, Tonawanda, NY, and Ontario, Canada: Multilingual Matters.

Abstract (500 words)

Abstract (300 words)

This paper investigates how the focus of English language education in Japan has evolved in conjunction with shifts in Japanese national identity over the past seventy years. English is the first foreign language learned by the majority of the Japanese population. Despite this widespread engagement, the level of English proficiency has consistently fallen short of satisfactory standards. In response to this challenge, the Japanese government implemented a comprehensive reform of English education in 2020. This reform mandated that English classes be made compulsory in elementary schools and increased the total number of hours dedicated to English instruction throughout the nine years of compulsory education. However, the reform was not solely characterised by an increase in class hours. It also involved a significant revision of English textbooks to place greater emphasis on Japanese culture. What do these changes imply regarding the perception of globalisation within Japanese society? To explore this question, the study provides an overview of the historical development of English language education in Japan since the post-war period. Employing the methodology of qualitative discourse analysis, the paper scrutinises major English textbooks in Japan, focusing on the nationalities of the main characters and the geographical settings of the main stories. The analysis reveals a growing representation of Japanese characters and an increasing number of stories set in Japan within these textbooks. Based on this finding, the study argues that the emphasis of English language education has shifted from cultural input to cultural output. While this transition can be interpreted as a move toward knowledge ownership that empowers learners beyond passive consumption, educators must remain vigilant about the

risk of limiting students' perspectives to a singular national culture, which could hinder their development of a more cosmopolitan worldview. This potential risk will be explored further in future research.

Hauptautor: HOSOKAWA, Naoko (University of Tokyo)

Track Klassifizierung: Research Papers