English Language Education Policy and Practice in Japan Based on a Comparison between Japan and the Philippines: An Overview for Filipino English Teachers

Shigeru OZAKI

Abstract

The goal of this article is to inform Filipino English teachers why so few Japanese people can speak English well. To that end, the article discusses policies implemented by Japan to improve English language education, comparing Japan and the Philippines whenever appropriate, so that they will be able to understand their Japanese students better. One of the most significant reasons why Japanese people in general cannot speak English well is that they rarely have the opportunity to speak it in Japan since the country has never been colonized by an English-speaking country; English is not used as an official, second, or educational language unlike in the Philippines. However, the Japanese government has been attempting to educate students to be fluent in English in a number of ways: introducing English to elementary schools, changing the content of the Course of Study and the entrance examination system, and designating some schools as a super English language high school or a super global high school. The article concludes with a discussion of both advantages and disadvantages of teaching English in English and adopting it as a medium of instruction across other subjects. These strategies are a major reason why Filipino people can speak it well, and they can possibly improve Japanese people's English dramatically.

Keywords: Japan, the Philippines, English education policy, entrance examinations, medium of instruction

1. Introduction

Whenever I come to the Philippines, the locals say to me, "Few Japanese people can speak English," without knowing why this is the case. There are a large number of both offline and online English schools for Japanese people based in the Philippines (Ozaki, 2011; Ozaki, 2015). However, when I talk to English teachers from the Philippines who teach Japanese people regularly, it seems that even they do not know much about English education and the status of the English language in Japan, although it is crucial to know about them in order to fully understand and help their students. It is thus essential for Filipino teachers to learn about English education policy and practice in Japan. This article therefore aims to explain the historical and current context of English language education policy in Japan, comparing it to

that of the Philippines whenever appropriate for the purposes of clarification to the readers of this article from the Philippines. However, it should be noted that this article does not go into the details of the status quo of English education in the Philippines since the other two presenters in the discussion group to which I belonged explained this in their presentations. I hope this article will be a first step to connecting the Philippines and Japan through English language education, to which the conference title aspires. In explaining English education policy in Japan, I will mainly address the following three questions:

(1) Why can so few Japanese people speak English well?
(2) What policies has Japan recently implemented in order to improve English language education?
(3) What are the advantages and disadvantages of using English as medium of instruction for English subjects and subjects other than English?

There have been relatively few studies comparing Japan and the Philippines from the viewpoint of the English education system: Kawahara (2005) compared *oyatoi gaikokujin*, i.e., Western scholars invited to Japan by its Government to educate university students in the 1800s to catch up with Western countries, especially in terms of modern technology, and the *Thomasites* or English teachers sent to the Philippines by the U.S. at the time of colonization. Nakahara (2011) made suggestions on improving English education in Japan on the basis of a comparative study with the Philippines. Nakahara (2008) also compared the Philippines and Japan in terms of the importance of English for work and people's overall level of competence. In addition, Ozaki (2015) discussed the beginnings of English education in both of these countries. This paper draws on the major points of these studies as well as some other literature where relevant and further adds its own discussion of historical and current issues to the debate.

This article first explains one of the most fundamental reasons why so few Japanese are able to speak English; second, historical facts are outlined to support the explanation; third, the current situation of English education in Japan and future policies proposed by the Government are described; and finally, two crucial issues that are important to improve Japanese people's English, namely, teaching English in English and adopting English as a medium of instruction (EMI) across other subjects are discussed.

2. One of the Main Reasons Why So Few Japanese People Can Speak English Well

In Japan, English is used by very few people, who are mainly the elite; and most Japanese encounter it only as a school subject. The majority of Japanese people rarely have the chance or necessity to use or speak English in their daily lives, unlike in the Philippines, where English has commonly been used as an official language, a second language (especially for business and commerce), and an important medium of instruction for various subjects. For example, Nakahara (2008, p. 46) found that only 4.67% of the Japanese respondents in his study used English in their work, by comparison with 80.04% of the Filipino counterparts. Consequently, in Japan it is not easy to make English language education more oriented to oral communication skills, as learners rarely speak or hear English either inside or outside school.

Nakahara (2008, p. 45) also asked both the Japanese and Filipino respondents to evaluate their English according to the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The self-evaluation scores

out of 100 were as follows: for the Japanese—listening (30.15), speaking (26.63), reading (36.82), and writing (27.44); and for the Filipinos—listening (89.01), speaking (84.30), reading (92.16), and writing (88.89). These figures clearly show a lesser confidence in English skills among the Japanese than the Filipinos. It should be noted that in Nakahara's study, the Japanese participants even lacked confidence in their skills of reading and writing, which can be attributed to the fact that most of the Japanese rarely read or write English in their daily lives, despite considerable attention being given to these skills at school, especially to the former.

The negative washback of entrance examinations, i.e., their influence on education, many of which do not have oral communication components, leads English language education in Japan to be even less oriented to oral communication. The goal of many Japanese secondary school students and their teachers is for the former to pass entrance examinations and enter prestigious universities (Ozaki, 2012), but not to be able to use English in their daily lives since there is little opportunity to use it in Japan. In contrast, the washback effect of entrance examinations on English education in the Philippines is unlikely to be as strong as in Japan, since it is counterbalanced by the use of the language in daily life.

3. Brief History of English Education: Japan and the Philippines

In 1808, a British battle ship arrived at Nagasaki Port in Japan, demanding that the local government supply it with food, water, and fuel (Kawazumi, 1978). In 1809, the Japanese Government ordered a few Japanese-Dutch interpreters to learn English for national security (Sato, 2002). This marked the beginning of English education in Japan (Imura & Wakabayashi, 1980). On the other hand, the Philippines was colonized by the U.S. in 1898, and English was introduced and spread throughout the islands upon the establishment of the public system in 1901 (Bautista, 2001). Most of the American teachers, known as *Thomasites*, were assigned to primary schools, and English became the medium of instruction (Bernardo, 2008; Kawahara, 2005; Martin, 1999). Thomasites also trained Filipino teachers to be able to teach in English (Misch, 2013). Hence, from the very beginning, English has been used by only a minority in Japan, while in the Philippines, it has been spoken by a majority; and this situation has not changed.

However, English was once a medium of instruction even in Japan. In the Meiji Era (1868–1912), it became used at the university level (Kawahara, 2005; Reesor, 2002) because the Japanese Government invited foreign scholars, particularly from the U.S. and Britain, to modernize the country; and those who came from English-speaking countries gave lectures in English (Kawahara, 2005). Thus, Japan had already adopted EMI a long time before the Philippines. However, only an elite minority were educated in English unlike in the Philippines, and the popularity of EMI did not last very long, since a great deal of literature was translated into Japanese so that students would be able to study various subjects in their own language. Consequently, English gradually became merely a school and entrance examination subject (Imura, 2003).

Another important historical fact is that the U.S. failed to make English the official language of Japan after the Second World War, although they had occupied the country for a while and had sought to do so (Kawahara, 2005). In contrast, the U.S. enforced EMI when it colonized the Philippines (Bernardo, 2008).

4. Brief Description of the Educational System in Japan

Before discussing the current situation of English education in Japan, this section briefly outlines its basic educational system to provide a broader context for the current situation and proposed plans for reform.

Compulsory education in Japan starts from elementary school (6 years), followed by junior high school (3 years), after which 97% of the students (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.a) go on to senior high school (3 years) . In 2015, a further 56.5% went on to attend either 2-year colleges (5%) or 4-year universities (51.5%) (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.b). Formal English education at public schools does not currently start until junior high school.

5. Current English Language Education Policy and Practice in Japan

This section explains what is stated in the Course of Study, one of the most important English education policy documents revised by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) approximately every 10 years, which presents what should be taught and learned at elementary and secondary schools. The following subsections summarize the main points of the Course of Study (as of 2015) and critically evaluate them from the viewpoint of practice, whenever necessary. The source of the main points is indicated in parentheses under the subsection title.

5.1 Course of Study for Elementary Schools

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.c)

While English is not specifically mentioned as a subject in the Course of Study, it can be incorporated into a course entitled Foreign Language Activities, to which 35 classroom hours (45 minutes per hour) are allocated per year in the fifth and sixth grades. The overall objective is to provide a foundation for pupils to positively develop communication skills through familiarization with the very basics of foreign languages and cultures, as in singing songs and playing games using English.

One problem is that the subject does not currently provide the pupils with an adequate grounding in English to meet the demands of the next educational level of junior high school, which is an issue that both policy makers and implementers need to address and that concerns one of the plans proposed by the Government to be discussed in Section 6.3.

5.2 Course of Study for Junior High Schools

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.d; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.e)

English should be taught for 140 classroom hours (of 50 minutes) in each year, totaling 420 classroom hours over the course of 3 years, during which time approximately 1200 words are taught. The overall objective of foreign language education at junior high schools is to develop the students' basic communication abilities in the four skills (speaking, listening, writing, reading), deepen their

understanding of language and culture, and foster a positive attitude toward communication through foreign languages. More specific objectives of English education at junior high schools are as follows:

1. To enable students to understand the speaker's intentions when listening to English.
2. To enable students to talk about their own thoughts using English.
3. To accustom students with reading in English to enable them to understand the writer's intentions.
4. To accustom students with writing in English to enable them to write about their own thoughts.

One problem is that it is not feasible to achieve all these objectives within 140 classroom hours a year, especially because students need a relatively high level of reading skills for senior high school entrance examinations. Consequently, the third objective of reading is most likely to be focused on in actual classes due to the limited time available.

5.3 Course of Study for Senior High Schools

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.f; Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.g)

The Course of Study states that individual schools can decide on subjects and the number of units for graduation. However, some subjects are compulsory, and students must obtain a minimum of 74 units in total to graduate from a senior high school. While there are six English courses listed in the Course of Study, only Communication English I is compulsory, comprising 3 units (equivalent to 105 classes of 50 minutes), which can be reduced to 2. The titles and objectives of the six courses listed in the Course of Study are as follows:

1. Basic English Communication
   To develop students' basic abilities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language.
2. English Communication Ⅰ
   To develop students' basic abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information, ideas, etc., while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language.
3. English Communication Ⅱ
   To further develop students' abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information, ideas, etc., while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language.
4. English Communication Ⅲ
   To enhance students' abilities such as accurately understanding and appropriately conveying information, ideas, etc., and enable them to use such abilities in their social lives, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language.
5. English Expression Ⅰ

To develop students' abilities to evaluate facts, opinions, etc. from multiple perspectives and communicate through reasoning and a range of expressions, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language.

6. English Expression Ⅱ

To further develop students' abilities to evaluate facts, opinions, etc. from multiple perspectives and communicate through reasoning and a range of expressions, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language.

It is not easy to achieve all these objectives, especially due to the negative washback effect of entrance examinations mostly focusing on reading skills, as well as the limited time available. Especially speaking skills can be easily neglected since university entrance examinations rarely have speaking tasks. The Course of Study further states that various language activities in all these courses should be conducted in English. This policy statement is crucial to improving English education in Japan through increased exposure to the language, which is one factor accounting for the difference in English proficiency between the Japanese and the Filipinos (Nakahara, 2011). In the Philippines, EMI has been implemented for a range of subjects, including math and science. Consequently, Filipino students are exposed to a large amount of English, which enables them to speak the language fluently. EMI may therefore be the best way to improve English skills in Japan, an issue that is discussed in detail later with regard to relevant Government policy proposals.

6. Policies for Improving the Current Situation

This section covers the Japanese Government policies for improving the current situation: super English high schools, super global high schools, plans to improve English education for globalization, and entrance examinations. After summarizing the policies, the following subsections critically evaluate them, whenever necessary.

6.1 Super English Language High Schools (SELHi)

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.h)

This policy was implemented between 2002 and 2009, with 169 schools selected as super English language high schools in 2009. The goals of this policy were the development of writing and speaking skills; evaluation methods; and cooperative relationships between elementary, junior and senior high schools, and universities; etc.

Positive results concerning SELHi students included their improvement in the four skills and vocabulary acquisition, increased exposure to English, participation in extracurricular activities related to English, and higher motivation to learn English. Positive results concerning teachers included their development of objectives, syllabuses, and materials that could be shared across schools, teaching ability and evaluation methods, teaching English in English, and English environments outside school, etc.

6.2 Super Global High Schools

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.i)

This policy evolved from the super English language high schools and was implemented from 2014 for a period of 5 years, with 56 schools participating in 2014. The objective is to educate students to be global leaders with an interest in social issues and the role of education, high communication ability, and good problem-solving skills, as necessary in the international community. Specific methods of achieving these objectives are fieldwork with overseas high schools, overseas study tours to present results, academic workshops with international students at Japanese universities, and the active use of foreign teachers and returnee Japanese teachers.

It seems that the focus of super global high schools is to educate students to be able to play active roles using English in the international community rather than merely improving their language skills, which had been the goal of the super English high schools. This new objective reflects the Government's positive attitude toward English as a language of international or intercultural communication, beyond merely representing a set of symbols for expressing oneself. As of yet, the positive results of these schools are unknown.

6.3 Plans for Improving English Education for Globalization

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.j)

Some plans for improving English education to cope with globalization were proposed by the Government on 13 December 2013, on the basis of which an expert committee was formed for further discussion (at nine meetings from February to September 2014). The following goals were set: The Course of Study should emphasize what students can do using English. Elementary schools should start Foreign Language Activities in the middle grades, cultivate a positive attitude towards writing and reading in the higher grades, and make English a formal subject in the higher grades in order to teach it systematically, paying more attention to the connection between elementary school English education and junior high school counterpart. Junior high schools should teach English in English, emphasize practice in conveying one's thoughts and feelings without placing too much focus on the Grammar Translation Method, and introduce more advanced language activities, such as presentation, discussion, and negotiation. Senior high schools should introduce students to language activities on a variety of topics. In summary, the two major goals were to start teaching English at an earlier age and to get students to use it more.

Although the Government has been trying to improve English education by introducing it into the elementary school education, it is questionable whether earlier English education will dramatically improve students' English proficiency. Proponents of this idea often refer to the Critical Period Hypothesis (Nakabachi, 2007). However, learning English only a few times a week is unlikely to have the same effect as living in an English-speaking country and being exposed to the language for many hours every day (Nakabachi, 2007). Kanatani (2007) insists that learning English for many years from elementary school is not very effective unless students are taught the language frequently enough to master the basics and that neither elementary or junior high schools allocate enough class hours to English.

On the other hand, those who are against the idea of introducing English education into elementary schools often claim that children will lose their ability in their own language (Nakabachi, 2007). This idea is similarly misconceived, since learning a foreign language only a few times a week is unlikely to influence the students' first language competence, unless the number of Japanese classes is reduced to accommodate the English classes (Nakabacji, 2007). Therefore, this policy is not likely to have any dramatic influence on students' competence in either English or Japanese, although it may encourage students to make continuous efforts to improve their English language skills.

6.4 Policy Concerning Entrance Examinations

Before discussing the actual policy, this section will first provide a brief overview of the university entrance examination system and its importance for high school English education in Japan.

There are three major types of universities in Japan: national, municipal (prefectural or city-run), and private universities; there are different types of entrance examinations. The influence of tests on education, often described as washback, is considerable in senior high school English education because teachers must prepare their students for these entrance examinations ("Koukou Rishuu Busoku," 2006; "Nyuushi Taisaku," 2006; Otagaki, 1996; Ozaki, 2012; Watanabe, 2004). The results of university entrance examinations are critical, since graduates of prestigious universities tend to have a bright future in terms of their careers. However, the content of entrance examinations does not always match official English education policy that is stated in the Course of Study; this gap leads to a disparity between policy and practice (Ozaki, 2012). Therefore, changes to university entrance examination content could greatly contribute to English education at school. Although Watanabe (2004) has found that teachers' beliefs can mediate the washback of entrance examinations, his finding does not deny the significance of entrance examinations. In contrast, in the Philippines the washback of English entrance examinations is unlikely to have as strong an effect on high school English education as in Japan, due to the prevalence of English in everyday life. It is a very important language as an official language, medium of instruction, and second language especially in business and commerce. For example, there are a large number of call centers for clients living in English-speaking countries (Keitel, 2009) and online as well as offline English schools (Ozaki, 2011; Ozaki, 2015) there; they provide Filipinos with good job opportunities. In other words, students are motivated to improve their English whether or not they take entrance examinations.

6.5 New Form of Entrance Examination

(Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.k)

The Government is now planning to implement *Daigaku Nyuugaku Kibosha Gakuryoku Hyoka Tesuto* (provisional name), which means a scholastic ability test for university applicants. The new test aims to comprehensively assess each of the four skills, thereby also including the productive skills of speaking and writing, e.g., through interviews and writing tasks. The Government is correspondingly planning to revise the Course of Study to present objectives that suitably integrate the four skills from elementary school onwards.

The above-mentioned idea seems good; however, the autonomy of individual universities needs to be taken into consideration with respect to their entrance examinations. Currently, most applicants to a large number of private universities take tests created by individual universities, although some private universities allow their applicants to choose to take either their own tests or the national standardized test. Since the application fees for private university individual tests are a major source of university income, it is highly unlikely these universities will give up their own entrance examinations. This means that the number of students who will receive positive washback from the new test will be limited.

In addition to the new form of entrance examination, English proficiency tests created by private corporations can be used as entrance examinations. According to Obunsha (2016, p.1), 110 (14%) out of 764 universities were planning to utilize such tests for their entrance examinations for the year 2017. While this may appear to be a good idea, as they often integrate the four skills and can be taken more than once a year, the goals of private company tests do not always match those of university entrance examinations, which aim to measure applicants' achievement on the basis of the Course of Study. For example, the goal of the TOEFL is to examine whether applicants' English proficiency is of a sufficient standard to follow university or graduate school level instruction in English-speaking countries. Therefore, the content is far removed from the Japanese high school English curriculum.

7. Adopting EMI

Comparing English education in Japan and the Philippines as well as reviewing the status quo and future plans of japan lead to the key issue of adopting EMI, which would dramatically increase the students' exposure to the target language. The following two subsections therefore discuss both the views for and against EMI for English and other subjects.

7.1 Teaching English in English

Erikawa (2014) argues that individual teachers should have the freedom to decide whether to use English or Japanese depending on the situation; therefore, enforcing a policy requiring all teachers to teach in English is a questionable practice. However, without this policy, teachers may not opt to use English in their classes; if teachers do not use it, students also may not use it (Ozaki, 2015). In the Philippines, people were forced to use English as the medium of instruction by the U.S.; otherwise, they would not have adopted it as the educational language (Ozaki, 2015). Erikawa (2014) continues that there is no evidence for the effectiveness of instruction given in English. In contrast, Ozaki (2015) presents the counterargument that in order to be competent in English, learners must receive plenty of opportunity to practice and use it, the benefits of which are clear when we consider the situation in the Philippines. Given that English is not an official or second language in Japan, one of the most practical ways to increase exposure to the language is to implement EMI in English education, thereby maximizing opportunities for its use also by students within limited classroom hours.

However, a concern of EMI in English classes is that students may not be sufficiently proficient to understand the teachers and follow their instruction (Terashima, 2009). Furthermore, students cannot

express themselves even when they have questions, which may cause them to get frustrated and give up learning the language. Nakahara (2011) maintains that Japanese should be used for low-level students and complex grammatical explanations. Ozaki (2015) suggests that teachers should teach in Japanese first, gradually reducing the amount of its use to English only either at high school or in university courses for English majors, namely, in the case that the washback effect of entrance examinations prevent this from feasibly being undertaken earlier on. MEXT needs to take this into consideration when they state that English should be taught in English.

Terashima (interviewed by Boku and Sen, 2013) claims that it is not only students but also teachers who struggle with their English proficiency: Few Japanese teachers of English have sufficient competence in the language for EMI, and the Government has not allocated sufficient funds to teacher training. For example, as of 2015, the National Center for Teacher's Development only offered study tours to the U.S. or UK to 30 English teachers for 2 months (National Center for Teacher's Development, n.d.), although there used to be 6-month and 12-month programs (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.l). The Government should provide more English teachers with the opportunity to study in English-speaking countries, both preceding and during the course of their employment, at least partially covering their expenses.

Furthermore, the Government needs to hire teachers with a better command of English, although this may require reform of the whole educational system in Japan, given the varied roles and duties of Japanese secondary school teachers, such as developing curricula, taking care of club activities, organizing school events, disciplining students, counseling those with problems, and even supervising their private lives to some extent, since schools are also seen as accountable for their students' behavior even outside of school.

Making effective use of assistant language teachers (ALTs) is one way to support teachers with insufficient English ability, without the requirement of extensive funds. As of 2015, there are 4,404 ALTs participating in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme (Council of Local Authorities for International Relations, 2015). The JET Programme is part of the foreign language policy of Japan, which invites young adults from various countries to teach at elementary, junior high, and senior high schools. However, not all schools are able to make use of them on a regular basis since there are 20,852 elementary, 10,557 junior high, and 4,963 senior high schools as of 2014 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, n.d.b). Furthermore, if Japanese teachers of English do not have a good command of English, it is difficult for them to communicate, make teaching plans, and teach classes with ALTs, many of whom do not understand Japanese. On the other hand, if they do, they can use English in their classes without depending on ALTs. Thus, training Japanese teachers to obtain a good command of English is critical to improve English education in Japan. If it is too costly or unrealistic to subsidize study abroad for teachers in English-speaking countries, the Government should nevertheless offer them more practice out of school hours or during vacations, utilizing the numerous ALTs throughout Japan. This would also minimize the cost to their personal lives since they would not have to leave Japan or be separated from their families.

7.2 Adopting EMI for Other Subjects

In the Philippines, English has been a main medium of instruction across various subjects. This is one of the main reasons why a large number of Filipinos have had regular opportunities to use the language and become fluent in it. In Japan, with the exception of the Meiji Era (1868–1912), when English became a medium of instruction at the university level, English has been relegated to a school subject. This is one of the most significant reasons why relatively few Japanese people have the chance to use or speak English regularly and have consequently been unable to develop their practical English skills.

The biggest hindrance to EMI is that there are not many teachers who can actually teach various subjects in English in Japan. This poses problems even for Japanese teachers of English. In the Meiji Era, the Government invited scholars from the U.S. and Britain to Japan, who educated Japanese university students in English (Imura, 2003). However, there are so many more universities now that it may not be feasible to invite so many people from English-speaking countries to teach at different educational levels. In the Philippines, Thomasites, who were native speakers of English, not only taught various subjects to Filipino students in English but also trained Filipino teachers to use English as a medium of instruction (Misch, 2013). In addition, approximately 200 Filipinos were sent to the U.S., and they majored in various subjects such as law, medicine, or veterinary science at universities (Gonzalez, 2008). Consequently, the Philippines no longer have any need for teachers who are native-English speakers.

Another concern is students' insufficient English ability to follow instruction given in English. They are likely to have an even harder time than when they are taught English in English since the difficulty level of academic instruction in non-language subjects tends to be higher. Thus, teaching English in English can be a good first step on the path to EMI for subjects other than English. Another solution to the problem is to teach the same or similar content in Japanese first, and then in English later (Ozaki, 2015).

When we address the idea of adopting EMI, we need to not only consider the students' improvement in their English proficiency but also their understanding of the subject matter and their academic achievement, as Terashima (interviewed by Boku and Sen, 2013) claims. Filipino students' level of academic achievement in math and science is not as high as that of Japanese students (Nakahara, 2011). This result, at least partially, comes from Filipino students' insufficient proficiency in English, which is their second or third language yet used as the medium of instruction (Yanagihara, 2007). In fact, some researchers (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramey, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 1997; Walter & Dekker, 2011) found that minority language students who were educated in their own language achieved higher academic goals than those who studied in a second or third language. Terashima (interviewed by Boku & Sen, 2013) insists that it is not easy to develop creativity and critical thinking in a second or foreign language for high-level discussion. This is a reasonable criticism since it is difficult to train students to think analytically, logically, and critically at a high level in a language that they are unable to fully understand or produce. It is almost impossible to acquire CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) in a foreign language; learners' logical thinking ability is negatively affected by the lack of CALP (Kawahara, 2005). Constantino (n.d.) explains this issue, referring to the educational system of the Philippines:

A foreign tongue as a medium of instruction constitutes an impediment to learning and to thinking

because a student first has to master new sounds, new inflections, and new sentence constructions. His innermost thoughts find difficulty of expression, and lack of expression in turn prevents the further development of thought. (p.13)

In fact, the Department of Education in the Philippines decided to implement a policy to educate children in their mother tongues, which may support the development of their cognitive and academic abilities faster than when educated in a second or third language (Burton, 2013). Japan can learn a great deal from the Philippines in this regard, since the latter has been using English as a main medium of instruction for over 100 years.

The medium of instruction in schooling may be merely one of the factors contributing toward the technological and economic development of a country, since there are many other countries whose people are educated in their own languages that have not developed to the extent of Japan. Terashima (interviewed by Boku & Sen, 2013) compares Japan and Korea with respect to the relationship between English and the countries' development, noting that although the average TOEFL score of the Koreans is much higher than that of the Japanese, Japan outweighs Korea in terms of the number of Nobel laureates. He further makes the point that young Japanese people can find a job without a high command of English in Japan. They are very lucky since they do not have to rely on someone else's language. The prosperity of a country and its living standards obviously do not depend on the number of fluent English speakers, which should be borne in mind when discussing whether Japan should drastically change its English language education.

Nakahara (2011) claims that subjects other than English itself should not be taught in English at any educational level, except for schools recruiting students with exceptionally high English ability. Some Japanese universities have a department or faculty in which all or most of the courses are taught in English, and the number of such universities has been increasing. Admitting that English is unnecessary for most Japanese in their daily lives, including their careers, Ozaki (2015) suggests that some university courses should be offered in English, especially to English majors whose main academic goal is to attain high English proficiency. Using English for different subjects will dramatically widen students' vocabulary as well as topic range, and they will be able to discuss diverse issues in English. It may also be beneficial to offer some courses in English for majors of other subjects, such as science or commerce, who can be anticipated to need English for their future career.

8. Conclusion

Currently, relatively few Japanese can speak English fluently, since there is little opportunity or necessity to use the language in their daily lives. This is one of the main reasons why it is difficult to make English education more focused on oral communication. However, the goal of English education should be to enable students to use English in both written and spoken communication because it has become the most commonly used international language; and some, if not many, of the students will use it in the future. Moreover, nobody can predict exactly who will make use of English in the future; therefore, English education should attempt to prepare all students to be able to use it. In order to achieve this goal, both educators and policy makers should do their best to improve English education overall. Nevertheless, this

requires some careful handling, since improvement of pupils' foreign language competence might affect the development of their cognitive and academic abilities if EMI is enforced across the curriculum. Furthermore, having a large number of people with a fluent command of English does not necessarily lead to a country's prosperity.

In aiming to improve English education, the Japanese Government and educators can learn a great deal from the Philippines, both positive and negative, since it has a long history of an educational system enabling a large number of people to use English as a second language in their daily lives.

References

Bautista, M. L. (2001). Studies of Philippine English: Implications for English language teaching in the Philippines. *Journal of Southeast Asian Education*, *2*(2), 271–295.

Bernardo, A. B. I. (2008). English in Philippine education: Solution or problem. In M. L, S. Bautista, & K. Bolton (Eds.), *Philippine English: Linguistics and literacy perspectives* (pp. 29–48). Hong Kong, China: Hong Kong University Press.

Boku & Sen. (first names unknown; 2013, November 16). Terashima Takayoshi moto Gifu daigaku kyouju "guroobaru jidai no eigo o kangaeru: 'Gaikokujin kyouin' 'eigo de jugyou' wa nani o motarasuka" [A former professor of Gifu University considers English in the global era: What will classes taught in English by foreign teachers bring?]. *Kyoto Daigaku Shinbun*. Retrieved from http://www.kyoto-up.org/archives/1905

Burton, L. A. (2013). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education in the Philippines: Studying top-down policy implementation from the bottom up* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, U.S.A.

Constantion, R. (n.d.). *The Miseducation of the Filipino*. Retrieved from https://nonlinearhistorynut.files.wordpress.com/ 2010/02/miseducation-of-a-filipino.pdf

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. (2015). *Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme*. Retrieved from http://jetprogramme.org/ja/countries/

Erikawa, H. (2014). *Gakushuu shidou youryou no "eigo no jugyou wa eigo de" wa naniga mondai ka?* [What is the problem about "teaching English in English," which is stated in the Course of Study?]. Retrieved from http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/gibson_erich_man/35111649.html

Gonzalez, A. FSC. (2008). A favorable climate and soil: A transplanted language and literature. In M. L. S. Bautista, & K. Bolton (Eds.), *Philippine English: Linguistics and literacy perspectives* (pp. 13-22). Hong Kong, China: Hong Kong University Press.

Imura, M. (2003). *Nihon no eigo kyouiku 200 nen* [English education in Japan for the past 200 years]. Tokyo: Taishokan Shoten.

Imura, M., & Wakabayashi, S. (1980). *Eigo kyouiku no ayumi: Hensen to asu eno teigen* [History of English education: Suggestions as to changes and future]. Tokyo: Chukyo Shuppan.

Kanatani, K. (2007). Nihon no eigo kyouiku kinmirai: Gakkou kyouiku no baai [Near future of Englsih education in Japan]. *Eigo Kyouiku Kenkyuu*, *30*, 1–8.

Kawahara, M. (2005). *Makkaaasaa ga kita hi: Hachigatsu juugonichi kara no hatsukakan* [The day when General MacArthur came: Twenty days from August 15]. Tokyo: Ushioshobokojinsha.

Kawahara, T. (2005). A comparative study of the Thomasites and the oyatoi gaikokujin: Foreign teachers and their language teaching. In D. T. Dayag & J. S. Quakenbush (Eds.), *Linguistics and language education in the Philippines and beyond: A Festschrift in honor of Ma. Lourdes S. Bautista* (pp. 305–319). Manila, Philippines: Linguistic Society of the Philippines.

Kawazumi, T. (1978). *Nihon eigakushi 2* [History of English in Japan 2]. Tokyo: Taishukan.

Keitel, R. S. (2009). *Innovation in borderless distance learning of English*. Paper presented at the 13th UNESCO-APEID International Conference World Bank-KERIS High Level Seminar on ICT in Education.

Koukou Rishuu Busoku: Hanmei shita koto [Lack of credits at upper secondary schools: What has been found. (2006, November 1). *Mainichi Shimbun*. Retrieved from http//www.mainichi-msn.co.jp/shakai/edu/tanni/news/20061101ddm0120400 410

Martin, P. I. M. (1999). Language and institution: Roots of bilingualism in the Philippines. In M. Lourdes, S. Bautista, & G. O. Tan (Eds.), *The Filipino bilingual: A multidisciplinary perspective (Festshrift in honor of Emy M. Pascasio)* (pp. 132–136). Manila, Philippines: Linguistic Society of the Philippines.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (n.d.a). *Koutou gakkou kyouiku* [Upper secondary education]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/kaikaku/main8_a2.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.b). *Monbu kagaku toukei youran (Heisei 27nen ban)* [Surveys conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology] (year 2019). Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/b_menu/other/__icsFiles/ afieldfile/ 2016/01/18/1365622_1_1.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.c). *Shougakkou gakushuu shidou youryou* [The Course of Study for elementary schools]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2009/06/16/1234931_012.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.d). *Chuugakkou gakushuu shidou youryou* [The Course of Study for lower secondary schools]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/chu/

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (n.d.e). *Chugakkou gakushuu shidou youryou eiyakuban* [The Course of Study for lower secondary schools in English]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/04/11/1298356_10.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.f). *Koutougakkou Gakushuu Shidou Youryou: Sousokuhen* [The Course of Study for upper secondary schools: General Rules]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/component/a_menu/education/micro_detail/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2010/12/28/1282000_01.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.g). *Koutougakkou gakushuu shidou*

youryou eiyakuban: Gaikokugo [The Course of Study for upper secondary schools in English: Foreign languages]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/new-cs/youryou/eiyaku/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/04/11/1298353_9.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.h). *Suupaa ingurisshu rangeeji haisukuuru (SELHi) ni tsuite* [About super English language high schools (SELHi)]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp /a_menu/ kokusai/gaikokugo/1293088.htm

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.i). *SELHi no jigyou gaiyou oyobi seika* [About SELHi project and its result]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/kokusai/gaikokugo/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2011/10/12/1293088_1.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.j). *Guroubaruka ni taioushita eigo kyouiku kaikaku jisshi keikaku ni tsuite* [About plans to improve English education for globalization. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/25/12/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2013/12/17/1342458_ 01_1.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.k). *Atarashii jidai ni fusawashii koudai setsuzoku no jitsugen ni muketa koutougakkou kyouiku, daigaku kyouiku, daigaku nyuugakusha senbatsu no ittaiteki kaikaku ni tsuite* [Unified reform of upper secondary education, tertiary education, and entrance examinations to realize ideal connection between upper secondary schools and universities that suits a new age]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/toushin/__icsFiles/afieldfile/2015/01/14/1354191.pdf

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. (n.d.l). *Shiryou 5 chuu koutou gakkou eigo kyouin eno kenshuu ni tsuite* [Handout 5: About training for lower and upper secondary school English teachers]. Retrieved from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chousa/shotou/082/shiryo/attach/1302510.htm

Misch, M. (2013). *Philippine English*. Santa Cruz, CA: Grin Verlag.

Nakabachi, K. (2007). Shougakkou eigo kyouiku ni taisuru kitai to huan [Expectation and anxiety regarding Elementary School English education in Japan]. *The Bulletin of the Institute of Human Sciences, Toyo University, 7*, 163-173.

Nakahara, K. (2008). Importance of English proficiency in business: Situations in Japan and in the Philippines. *Kanto Gakuin Daigaku Keizaigakkai Kenkyuu Ronsyuu Keizaikei, 234*, 41–59.

Nakahara, K. (2011). Some keys to improving Japanese English education: What parts of the Philippines' education system should we follow? *Kanto Gakuin Daigaku Kyouyou Gakkai Shizen Ningen Shakai, 50*, 27–53.

National Center for Teacher's Development. (n.d.). *Eigo kyouiku kaigai haken kenshuu* [Overseas training for English teachers]. Retrieved from http://www.nctd.go.jp/ centre /training/leader06.html

Nyuushi taisaku ga saiyuusen nanoka: Rishuumore [Do they put the highest priority on entrance examination preparation?: Lack of credits for graduation]. (2006, October 27). *Nishinihon Shimbun*. Retrieved from http://www. nishinippon. co.jp/nnp/colum/syasetu/20061027/20061027_001html

Obunsha. (2016, November 30). *Ippan nyuushi hen Eigo gaibukentei nyuushi riyou daigaku gabaizou*

[General entrance examinations: the number of universities that utilize private company English proficiency tests doubles!]. Retrieved from http://eic.obunsha.co.jp/pdf/exam_info/2016/1130_1.pdf

Otagaki, M. (1996). Daigaku nyuushi to risuningu [University entrance examinations and listening]. *Genius Clipper, 13*, 8–9.

Ozaki, S. (2011). Learning English as an international lingua franca in a semi-English- speaking country: The Philippines. *Asian EFL Journal. Professional Teaching Articles, 53*, 51–60.

Ozaki, S. (2012). *Content and perceived washback of Japanese university English entrance examinations in terms of international understanding* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). The University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia.

Ozaki, S. (2015). What can Japan learn from English language education in the Philippines?: Beginning of English Education. *Takushoku Language Studies, 132*, 1-24

Ramirez, J. D., Yuen, S. D., & Ramey, D. R. (1991). *Longitudinal study of structured English immersion strategy, early-exit and late-exit transitional bilingual education programs for language-minority children*. Retrieved from http://www.ncela.us/files/rcd/BE017748/Longitudinal_Study_Executive_Summary.pdf

Ressor, M. (2002). The bear and the honeycomb: A history of Japanese English language policy. *NUCB journal of Language Culture and Communication JLCC, 4*(1), 41–52.

Sato, Y. (2002). Looking back [*sic*] the history of learning and teaching foreign languages in Japan: Reconfirming of the purpose of learning and education of English in Japan. *Gihu Joshi Daigaku Kiyo, 31*, 43–52.

Terashima, T. (2009). *Eigo kyouiku ga horobirutoki: Eigo de jugyou no ideorogii* [When English education dies: Ideology of teaching in English]. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten.

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (1997). *A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement*. George Mason University, CREDE (Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence). Retrieved from http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/CMMR/CollierThomasComplete.pdf

Walter, S., & Dekker, D. (2011). Mother tongue instruction in Lubuagan: A case study from the Philippines. *International Review of Education, 57*(5-6), 667-683.

Watanabe, Y. (2004). Teacher factors mediating washback. In L. Cheng, Y. Watanabe, & A. Curtis (Eds.), *Washback in language testing* (pp. 129–146). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Yanagihara, Y. (2007). A study of bilingual education in the Philippines: Difference in pupils' degree of understanding between learning mathematics in Cebuano and English. *Keiai Journal of International Studies, 19*. 175–201.

About the author

Shigeru OZAKI, PhD is Professor of Foreign Language Education and Head of the Department of the English Language, Takushoku University, Tokyo, Japan. His research interests include language testing, language education policy, and education for international education. Email: sozaki@ner.takushoku-u.ac.jp