

Using Scale to Bridge the Local and the Global: An Exploratory Case
Study of English in the Lives of Five Okinawan Women

by

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Abstract

This thesis has the dual objectives of: i) reviewing and critiquing several theoretical frameworks currently employed in research on the role of English in globalization; and ii) testing sociolinguistic scales, orders of indexicality and polycentricity (Blommaert, 2010) as an alternative or complementary set of conceptual tools. To determine whether these concepts address a number of limitations found in the currently dominant frameworks, an exploratory case study of the position of English in the lives of five women in the Japanese prefecture of Okinawa was conducted. These women were found to occupy multiple and sometimes conflicting subject positions vis-à-vis English. It is argued that by focusing on local micro practices in addition to macro approaches typically taken, sociolinguistic scales provide a viable conceptual means of bridging the gap between local and global, allowing for deeper understanding of how local experience and practice engages with and is implicated in global discourses of English.

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My wife Maya endured constant discussion, provided endless love and support and heard about and read this document more times than she probably would have liked. My son Leo had to compete with this thesis for my attention in the early months of his life. He probably won't remember this, but still I ask his forgiveness.

List of Abbreviations

AFN – American Forces Network

ALT – Assistant Language Teacher

EFL – English as a Foreign Language

EIKEN – The Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency

EIL – English as an International Language

ELF – English as a Lingua Franca

ELT – English Language Teaching

ESL – English as a Second Language

JET – Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme

JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency

L1 – First Language (commonly known as Mother Tongue etc.)

L2 – Second or Additional Language

MCAS – U.S. Marine Corps Air Station

MEXT – Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology

TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language

TOEIC – Test of English for International Communication

WEs – World Englishes

WSSE – World Spoken Standard English

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Chapter One – Introduction

1.1 Statement of Problem

In recent years, globalization has facilitated the spread and strengthened the influence of the English language everywhere. English today is often considered to be uniquely positioned as a (or the) global or world language, a situation which has triggered extensive debate and discussion of what exactly the function and value of English is and ought to be in many political and geographical spaces around the globe (e.g., Canagarajah, 2000; Crystal, 2003; Holborow, 1999; Jenkins, 2009a; Pennycook, 1994, 2007; Phillipson, 1992, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2004). In efforts both to encourage and discourage the spread and influence of English in its myriad forms, governments worldwide have implemented language policies which often have considerable effects, intentional or not, on local language ecologies. In addition to these political or governmental efforts, researchers, theorists and practitioners in a wide range of fields including linguistics, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the English language teaching (ELT) industry have crafted extensive conceptual and theoretical apparatus for the description and examination of English as a world or global language. Many of these concepts and theories inform the abovementioned policies, and arguably also have profound effects on how English is perceived in particular linguistic ecologies and on the roles that it plays.

A number of researchers in ELT and applied linguistics (e.g., Canagarajah, 2000; 2005; Lee & Norton, 2009) have expressed concern that to date most attempts to understand the relationships between English and globalization focus on global, top-down macro sociopolitical processes at the expense of local knowledge and

experience(s). They claim that this work: often denies voice to local users of English; often takes a narrow view on language policies as exclusively institutionalized and overt; and often relies on an overly simplified and totalizing binary of notions of English where the language is “viewed as either beneficial or detrimental to periphery communities” (Lee & Norton, 2009). Similarly, Pennycook (1994, 2007) and Kubota and McKay (2009) have argued that English as an international or global language is a discursive construction, the academic discussion of which does not necessarily reflect practices on the ground. In a related field, Blommaert (2010) has suggested that the existing vocabulary for the description of sociolinguistic phenomena is inadequate for engagement with language and language-related questions in a globalized world.

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to explore how dominant conceptions of English as a global language by policymakers, academics, and the private sector in what Kubota and McKay call “language industries” incorporate or fail to incorporate local experiences of the functions of languages in particular political and geographic spaces into their work and practice (2009, p. 596). I focus here on the Japanese island of Okinawa as an example case with the following intentions. First, I critically examine a number of influential descriptive models for English in the world. Specifically, I consider how these models and their related concepts inform much of the literature on the position of English in Japan to date, and the degree to which they provide meaningful frameworks for increasing our knowledge and understanding of the diversity of experiences with English around the world. Second, I present Blommaert’s (2010) trio of interconnected concepts –

sociolinguistics scales, orders of indexicality and polycentricity – as an alternative theoretical toolkit that allows us to examine global language trends in a way that incorporates local knowledge and does not ignore either local experience or global mobility. Finally, I present a small-scale ethnography-informed exploratory case study that applies Blommaert's concepts to interview and journal data collected from English speaking Japanese nationals on Okinawa. This qualitative study provides an example of how bottom-up or emic research enables access to a richer understanding of how English is used and positioned in the lives of particular language users in complex ways which often undercut dominant conceptions. The remainder of this chapter contains a brief introduction to the context and background for this example case analysis, an explanation of the rationale for this study, a description of the research questions and the organization of this thesis.

1.2 Context & Background

Kachru's model of three concentric circles (1992b, p. 356) has long been considered the dominant model for description of the spread and distribution of the English language globally, despite being based largely on political or national designations of what constitute separate language communities, and the overly simplistic reduction of a rich diversity of language use into just three sets of language behaviours. These limitations are particularly problematic when the function of English is considered intranationally in local spaces where a number of indigenous and colonial languages can be seen as competing for use in both public and private domains. This is arguably the normal state of affairs in a large portion of the world. In recent years, the complexity of these linguistic locales or ecologies and the ways in

which English factors into them has been incorporated into a range of applied linguistic and sociolinguistic research. In this paper I continue and expand on this trend, beginning with the premise that any study that aims to uncover the position of English in a particular geographic or political space must feature an extensive and in-depth sociolinguistic profile of this space (Matsuda, 2000). This profile must be sensitive to not only how language is distributed spatially, but in time as well – the history of a local space provides a powerful interpretive tool for a study of language position and functions (Bekker, 2003; Blommaert, 2010; Vaish, 2008). What follows is a brief introduction to the context and historical background of Okinawa, which is described in more detail in the next chapter.

Focusing on recent history, Okinawa prefecture (formerly the Ryukyu Kingdom) has undergone great cultural and linguistic turmoil over the last century. Formal annexation by Japan in 1879 began an intense period of cultural assimilation and language shift from the indigenous Ryukyuan languages as part of the programme of Japanese nation building. The early years of the century saw local citizens both resisting and acquiescing to these colonial measures, an ambivalence which facilitated the development of a complex bi-cultural and bilingual Okinawan identity. Official Japanese language policies prior to 1945 systematically marginalized the local Ryukyuan languages (Heinrich, 2004), while at the same time the prefecture and its people somewhat willingly went through a period of rapid Japanization (Taira, 1997; Tanji, 2006).

In the spring of 1945, the main island of Okinawa was the site of the only battle fought in the Second World War on inhabited Japanese soil, resulting in an

estimated 150,000 civilian deaths (Heinrich, 2004). This blow to the population of the rural prefecture essentially ended intergenerational indigenous language transmission. Yet at the same time, the wartime experiences of many Okinawans highlighted Japan's perceptions of them as different from and inferior to mainland Japanese (Allen, 2002), and in the immediate post-war period the American military leadership actively sought to monopolize on this mistrust by promoting the use of Ryukyuan languages in efforts to distance Okinawa from Japan (Hein & Selden, 2003; Heinrich, 2004).

While the American occupation of mainland Japan ended in 1952, Okinawa remained occupied and under U.S. military administration until 1972 - a period during which the occupiers built a number of large army, air force, marine and navy bases. This period also saw many Okinawans embracing their recently acquired Japanese identity as resistance to the newer wave of foreign occupiers. It was initially thought by many Okinawans that reversion to Japan in 1972 would mean a downscaling of U.S. military activities on the island, but today Okinawa continues to remain host to almost three quarters of all U.S. military presence in Japan, a figure grossly disproportionate to its population and area as a percentage of the national totals, with a significant portion of these military installations and bases controversially located in highly populated urban areas (McCormack, 2007).

As a direct result of the large number of civilian casualties during the war, the majority of Okinawans born after the Second World War are for the most part monolingual Japanese speakers. Those born immediately following the war are likely to have some passive knowledge of the Ryukyuan languages, while elderly speakers

form the only cohort that continues to use these languages, principally in the private domain (Heinrich, 2004). A sizeable population of U.S. military personnel, their families and civilian employees of military contractors has for the last sixty-five years provided considerable economic and employment opportunities in the struggling prefecture - 30,000 active personnel are currently stationed on the island, a number easily more than doubled when all affiliated American expatriates are included (Taira, 1997). This ongoing presence arguably creates a need for English as a means of access to these opportunities. It is also important to recognize the potential cultural and linguistic influence of what amounts to a number of exclaves of the most powerful nation globally on a small and densely populated island.

In addition to these local factors, the Japanese national Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) declared English instruction compulsory at middle and secondary levels in 2002 (Gottlieb, 2008). The most recent curriculum, implemented in the spring of this year (2011), requires English instruction for grades 5 and 6, and there is continued discussion of its introduction at the lower elementary levels (Gottlieb, 2008, Kubota & McKay, 2009). English language testing also plays an important role in most national university entrance examinations and course requirements.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

While considerable attention has lately been given to language ideologies and the functions of English in mainland Japan (Gottlieb, 2008; Hino, 2009; Honna, 1995; Honna & Takeshita, 2005; Kawai, 2007; Kubota, 1998; McVeigh, 2002; Seargeant 2005, 2008, 2009; Sullivan & Schatz, 2009) and attitudes towards English among

young Japanese learners (Matsuda, 2000, 2003b; McKenzie, 2008; Ryan, 2009; Sakuragi, 2008), there appears to be only been one study to date that has explicitly focused on the role of English in a particular local language context in Japan (Kubota & McKay, 2009). In recent years there have been repeated calls in the literature for more in-depth analysis of English in Japan and other countries in the expanding circle (for example, Berns, 2005; McKenzie, 2008; Ryan, 2009).

This thesis builds on the body of work listed above while arguing that existing theoretical frameworks and models for the analysis of English in places like Japan and Okinawa construct English as a global language in terms which are often either so macro sociopolitical as to be too abstract to inform descriptions of the actual position and use of English in particular linguistic ecologies, or they are designed with very specific linguistic ecologies in mind, limiting universal application. In addition, there is often a certain amount of mutual exclusivity between these models, as each constructs notions of English and language within particular paradigms. As a result, it is doubtful as to whether many of these models are indeed useful for in-depth examination of English in diverse local contexts.

Considering its unique and often tragic history, the island of Okinawa serves as a particularly meaningful example case for exploring and evaluating the dominant theories at play in the current discourses of English as a global language. Regional biculturalism and a history of local linguistic diversity provide a strong basis for arguments against popular conceptions of Japan as a monolingual, monocultural entity. It is especially pertinent to examine the foundations of status quo claims of homogeneity as Japan's official English language education policy is based on their

premises, as is much of the current academic literature. With this rationale in mind, this thesis has two objectives. First, I review and evaluate the dominant theoretical and conceptual models currently employed in the field and consider their applicability to the Okinawan context. As a supplement or replacement for these models, I propose an adaptation of Blommaert's framework (2010) of sociolinguistics scales, orders of indexicality and polycentricity as a means of determining what constitutes English and English use as well as its local position for a particular group of local citizens. Secondly, as to date there is no existing empirical research on the function of English in the Okinawan linguistic milieu, my study fills this gap by considering perceptions of English by members of a cohort which has only very recently made the transition from a highly policy-regulated regime of English language learning in Japanese higher education into the workforce. By focusing on this group in this particular context I present a meaningful approach to exploring English and English language policy which gives voice to language users from the ground up (Canagarajah, 2005).

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guide this thesis, with the first, empirical question informing and providing the groundwork for the second, theoretical question.

1. What are the dominant discourses of English for this group of Okinawan young people, as reflected in (a) their past and current experiences as English language learners, (b) the role they see English currently playing in their lives and the lives of other Okinawans, (c) their conceptions of what constitutes English and English use?

2. How do the discourses reported above fit with the major frameworks and theories frequently used for discussions of English in a globalizing world?

Although the focus here is on English in Okinawa as an example case, the approach presented is applicable to other local linguistic spaces. In summary, the central aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how Blommaert's framework – with particular focus on the concept of scale - allows for an informed understanding of how a particular group of language users view and engage with English in their particular cultural and linguistic context. It is expected that this research will contribute to the advancement of knowledge both locally on the island of Okinawa, and globally, in terms of theory development and refinement in language policy and planning, ELT and globalization studies.

1.5 Organization

The next chapter features a sociolinguistic profile of English in Japan, followed by a history and description of Okinawa with an emphasis on linguistic, social and economic factors. Chapter 3 contains a review of how the global spread and position of English is typically characterized in linguistic, applied linguistic, sociolinguistic and ELT literature. This review includes the analysis of dominant conceptual frameworks currently employed in research on English in the world with a focus on Japan, and also provides an introduction to some new theory which allows for clearer and more in-depth description and evaluation of linguistic and metalinguistic phenomena in a globalizing world. Chapter 4 contains a description of the design and methodology of the empirical study. Here I explain the selection of the research site, and the participants. I also describe my research methods including both

data collection and data analysis. In addition, in this section I note a number of epistemological considerations, including what it means for this study to be ethnographically-informed. Chapter 5 presents detailed biographical narratives of the participants' engagement with English. Chapter 6 presents and discusses a number of themes that emerged from these biographical vignettes, and considers how the application of Blommaert's concepts reveals the limitations of the dominant frameworks for the analysis of English in the world in current use. I conclude this chapter by discussing what this analysis means in terms of theory-generation for bottom-up studies of English in particular local linguistic ecologies.

Chapter Two – English in Japan/The History and Language Situation on Okinawa

2.1 Sociolinguistic Profiles

Since being popularized by Kachru (1992a), a number of researchers have used sociolinguistic profiles to “shed light on the range of uses a language serves and how these uses evolve in a given context” (Berns, 1990, p. 77) (see for example, Nielsen, 2003 or Nino-Murcia, 2003 for accounts of English in Argentina and Peru respectively). In order to gain understanding of how the English language is situated in a particular linguistic context it is essential to consider a wide range of factors as influential. At the national scale level, this profile outlines the history of English and English language policy in Japan, while at the local level, it presents a picture of the linguistic landscape and history in Okinawa. While the focus of the profile in this thesis is language, it is also important to consider, as Kachru notes, that “the linguistically relevant information is as important as are the political, geographical and economic factors” (1992a, p. 57). A number of other researchers have also made extensive use of historical, social and economic profiling (for example, Taylor-Leech, 2009 on East Timor, and Bekker, 2003 on South Africa).

2.2 English and English Language Education Policies in Japan

Before beginning it is useful to briefly describe the relationship between Okinawa and Japan, as the position of Okinawa in Japan is a complex one. Ethnically distinct from main island Japanese, Okinawans can be seen as maintaining dual identities as members of the Japanese nation and the Okinawan sub-nation, although there is evidence that for younger generations the connection to Okinawa as a nation

is perhaps becoming more and more superficial (Allen, 2009; Taira, 1997). The issue of Okinawan identity is discussed in more detail below, but it is important to note that, at least for the time being, all Okinawans are to a greater or lesser extent, Japanese nationals. As subjects of the Japanese nation-state – in particular, the highly regimented education system – the history of Japan is thus also theirs, yet simultaneously and paradoxically, not theirs.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a variety of foreign nationals and their languages came into contact with Japan; however, the policy of *sakoku* (closed borders) of the Edo period (1603-1868) limited this interaction substantially and prevented any wide-scale influence. Because of *sakoku*, it was not until the 1853 arrival of the Americans and Commodore Perry that there was any significant contact with English (McKenzie, 2008; Stanlaw, 2004). During the Meiji era (1868-1912) and its opening up of the nation, the acquisition of foreign languages – specifically English – was viewed as necessary to the modernization process, so much so that a number of proposals were made for the adoption of English as a national language (McKenzie, 2008; Kachru, 2005). English was established as the main foreign language taught at the secondary level by the 1890s; however, this practice diminished during the early twentieth century with the emerging nationalism and expansionism that led up to the Second World War (Iino, 2010). In the immediate post-war period under American occupation, English instruction was reinvigorated in the education policy: at this time it was “formally an elective but in practice it was virtually obligatory” at the secondary level (McKenzie, 2008, p. 271). Yet it is important to note that for the most part during this period English proficiency was

considered more as “an academic measurement rather than a tool for communication” (Iino, 2010, p. 63). While there has been a shift in recent years towards English instruction for more communicative purposes (see below), *juken Eigo*, literally ‘test English’ continues to play an integral role in the national Central University Entrance Examination. Ryan notes that in preparations for this examination, at the secondary level “English is not merely the most widely taken foreign language subject, it is taken more than any other subject” (2009, p. 408).

One of the most significant education policies in recent years has been the *Action plan to cultivate Japanese with English abilities*, which was proposed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2003, and was implemented shortly thereafter (Butler & Iino, 2005). An explicit aim of this policy was to address criticisms that Japan’s English education “did not meet the various needs of Japan for globalization” (Butler & Iino, 2005, p. 33). The proposed remedy was to set targets for all Japanese nationals, with the expectation that all high school graduates have the ability to communicate in English and all college or university graduates the ability to use English in the workplace (Butler & Iino, 2005, p. 33). Whether these objectives have been met is yet to be determined. In addition, a policy that will “introduce English education in elementary schools” will begin with the new school year in 2011, (Iino, 2010, p. 66).

A frequently voiced concern with the 2003 MEXT action plan (see, for example: Butler & Iino, 2005; Gottlieb, 2008; Kubota & McKay, 2009) is that it promotes ‘English language’ as a synonym or substitute for ‘foreign language’ and advocates exclusive Japanese-English bilingualism – what Kubota and McKay refer

to as “double monolingualism” (2009, p. 613) – as the only language repertoire necessary for communication in a globalizing world. This is particularly troublesome when considered in the light of continual refusal on the part of politicians, policymakers, as well as a large portion of the general public to recognize Japan as a multilingual nation with linguistic diversity within its own borders (Gottlieb, 2008) or indeed to recognize commonalities with their Asian neighbors (Kachru, 2005). It is argued that by promoting the linguistic binary sets of Japanese/national and English/international, this policy not only constructs a narrow in-group identity for Japanese, but it also constructs an idealized foreign interlocutor who does not reflect the diversity of interlocutors potentially found in practice.

In order to understand the seemingly widespread purchase of these beliefs about language the often-related discourses of *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika* are frequently invoked, which are translated literally as “theories on the Japanese” and internationalism respectively (Kubota, 1998, p. 300). These discourses have a long history of popularity in the country. *Nihonjinron* are, in brief, arguments for Japanese uniqueness (Sergeant, 2009). In extreme forms, they are nationalist arguments both against Japanese successfully learning foreign languages and foreigners successfully learning Japanese, based on the assumption of a unique Japanese psychology transmitted only by blood (Kawai, 2007; Kubota, 1998; Sergeant, 2009). Many *nihonjinron* arguments about language and language acquisition are based on premises that go against much of the current research on language and identity in a number of fields, and Kachru has gone as far as identifying *nihonjinron* as a “neo-fascist” concept (2005, p. 75).

Kokusaika and its accompanying rhetoric are often considered as Japan benignly adapting to the realities of globalization: others however, have claimed the concept to be tacitly employed in disseminating *nihonjinron* at the international level (Hashimoto, 2000; Kubota, 1998; Seargeant, 2009; Sullivan & Schatz, 2009). For these researchers, the internationalism that is promoted via *kokusaika* is often narrowly defined according to specific “Japanese needs” and presents “an international image to the international community while still managing to adhere to a nationalist or even isolationist agenda” (Seargeant, 2009, p. 72). An oft-cited example of this is the Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) programme, where native-speaking assistant language teachers (ALTs) assist Japanese English teachers (Matsuda, 2003a; Gottlieb, 2008, p. 146). Curiously, part of the rationale given for these ALTs coming to Japan is for them to serve as cultural ambassadors on behalf of Japan after they return to their home countries. A potentially more problematic aspect of the JET programme is its almost exclusive hiring of teachers from America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand and ignoring English speakers from Kachru’s outer and expanding circles. In 2006-2007, only 238 out of 5057 ALTs were *not* from the inner circle – less than one percent (McKenzie, 2008, p. 274). Indeed, as a number of researchers have noted, the central assumption among English language education policymakers is that “the primary interlocutors for interaction are from the West” (Kachru, 2005, p. 78).

Moving beyond these prescriptions in the education policy, the current functions of English within Japan cover a complex spectrum. In Kachru’s original model for sociolinguistic profiles (1992a), function can be expressed as a cline,

including instrumental functions (“English as a medium of learning”), regulative functions (in “the legal system and administration”), interpersonal functions (“as a link language between speakers of various languages”) and imaginative functions (“the use of English in various literary genres”) (p. 58). This model unfortunately is less than suitable for a context like Japan, where English often appears to play little or no role in any of these categories except the interpersonal. In an attempt to capture the complexity of the position of English in Japan, I instead borrow a descriptive framework from Stroud and Heugh’s work on linguistic citizenship that divides language into four resources: symbolic, material, global, and intimate (Stroud & Heugh, 2005, p. 209). To briefly explain these resources, the symbolic refers to politicized use of language, which considers how users wish to be seen, rather than simply for communicative purposes. The notion of material resources connects language proficiency to economics. As a global resource language is used “to manage the reconciliation of conflict between local, national and transnational trends” (Stroud & Heugh, 2005, p. 212). Finally, as an intimate resource, language contributes to the construction and “recognition of multiple and shifting identities” (Stroud & Heugh, 2005, p. 209). Of note here is that although language should not be seen as primordial to identity, language choices often fuel ethnic and/or national identification in undeniably powerful and meaningful ways (May, 2008).

The symbolic uses of English in Japan are pervasive. While many “young people in Japan regard English as ‘cool’ or ‘fashionable’”, this attitude often has more to do with the attachment to particular cultural products than communicative needs (Ryan, 2009, p. 409; Matsuda, 2000). Seargeant identifies advertising and popular

culture as common sites for what he refers to as “ornamental” use (2005, p. 315). This type of use spills over into the Japanese language in the form of loanwords, a phenomenon which many commentators make repeated note of (e.g., Honna, 1995; Kachru, 2005; Matsuda, 2000; McKenzie, 2008; Seargeant, 2005). The issue of loanwords, however, leads to the difficult question of determining the limits of a particular language. As Seargeant explains: “The English language is not imported whole as a communicative tool, but unpacked and its component parts reconfigured” (2005, p. 316). Looking, for example, at loanwords constructed via back-clipping – for example, /*omuraisu*/ from *omelet rice* or /*masukomi*/ from *mass communication* (Matsuda, 2000, p. 41) - it is questionable whether the new formation can be considered as ‘English’. An additional issue with loanwords is that it is often difficult to trace the etymologies of many of the words often anecdotally claimed as derived from English rather than other European languages. For example, Stanlaw traces /*tabako*/ for *tobacco* back to Portuguese contact in the seventeenth century, and /*biiru*/ for *beer*, /*miruku*/ for *milk*, /*koohii*/ for *coffee*, and /*garasu*/ for *glass* back to Dutch contact during the period of *sakoku* (closed borders) (2004, pp. 46-48); yet many of these words are typically attributed to English language spread. Nevertheless, borrowings from English do carry symbolic weight and can often be traced to positive attitudes towards the cultural content of the source language. (One of the examples I have cited above is particularly salient, with both mass communication and the English language being representative ‘features’ of globalization).

As English has no official position in the public domain in Japan, material functions are limited to international business, international participation in academics, and providing services for foreign tourists and foreign residents (Matsuda, 2000). In the literature to date, the role English plays in international business is rarely explored empirically – these types of claims are usually based on very general and often unreliable data, such as Ethnologue statistics for numbers of native and non-native speakers of English worldwide. As a result, there is very little data available to determine the scope of this function. Similarly, estimates of the prevalence of English as a lingua franca for tourism with native speakers of a range of languages are exactly that: estimates.

In efforts to gain an understanding of the functional scope of English as a global resource in Japan similar data to that I have just mentioned is often invoked. Unfortunately, in the absence of any real statistics, advocates for the importance of English in Japan as a language of international and intercultural communication can rely only on their own optimism and/or projections for the future (i.e. Honna & Takeshita, 2005; Matsuda, 2003b).

Finally, as an intimate resource, while English is obviously used for interpersonal communication, it is less obvious how English use contributes to the construction of identity. It is possible to see symbolic attachments to the language such as those listed above as building identities; however, these attachments have to do more with notions of the language rather than with actual use. The reality is that for Japan, “English is a foreign language, rather than an internal means of communication” (Hino, 2009, p. 104). As such, what small role it does play in

identity construction is perhaps related to *nihonjinron*-type nationalistic sentiments and conceived as a negative or undesirable quality, or, on the positive side, as a bi-product of some language learners' identities as language learners. While a minority of researchers argue for the existence of a distinct variety of Japanese English (for example, D'Angelo, 2005) in the World Englishes paradigm (see below), for the most part it is considered that, not being used as a language for intranational communication, English in Kachru's expanding circle does not play a role in identity construction in the significant ways that it does in the inner and outer circles (Hino, 2009). As such it is difficult to argue on behalf of a unique variety.

In general, English in Japan plays a peripheral role at best (Ryan, 2009, p. 410). Surprisingly, even arguments about the use of English on the internet have less purchase than would typically be imagined: as recently as 2006 Japanese was ranked third in languages used on the world wide web – and Gottlieb argues that the internet in Japan “is likely to remain largely monolingual, except for the instrumental use of English and other languages where required at local government level to facilitate the settlement of foreign residents” (2008, p. 111). Indeed, considering that English is “not a contact language to connect local people”, the role that it plays and the functions it performs in Japan are necessarily limited, particularly in a linguistic landscape dominated by such a powerful and homogenizing language as Japanese (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 594).

2.3 Okinawa: Background and the Language Situation

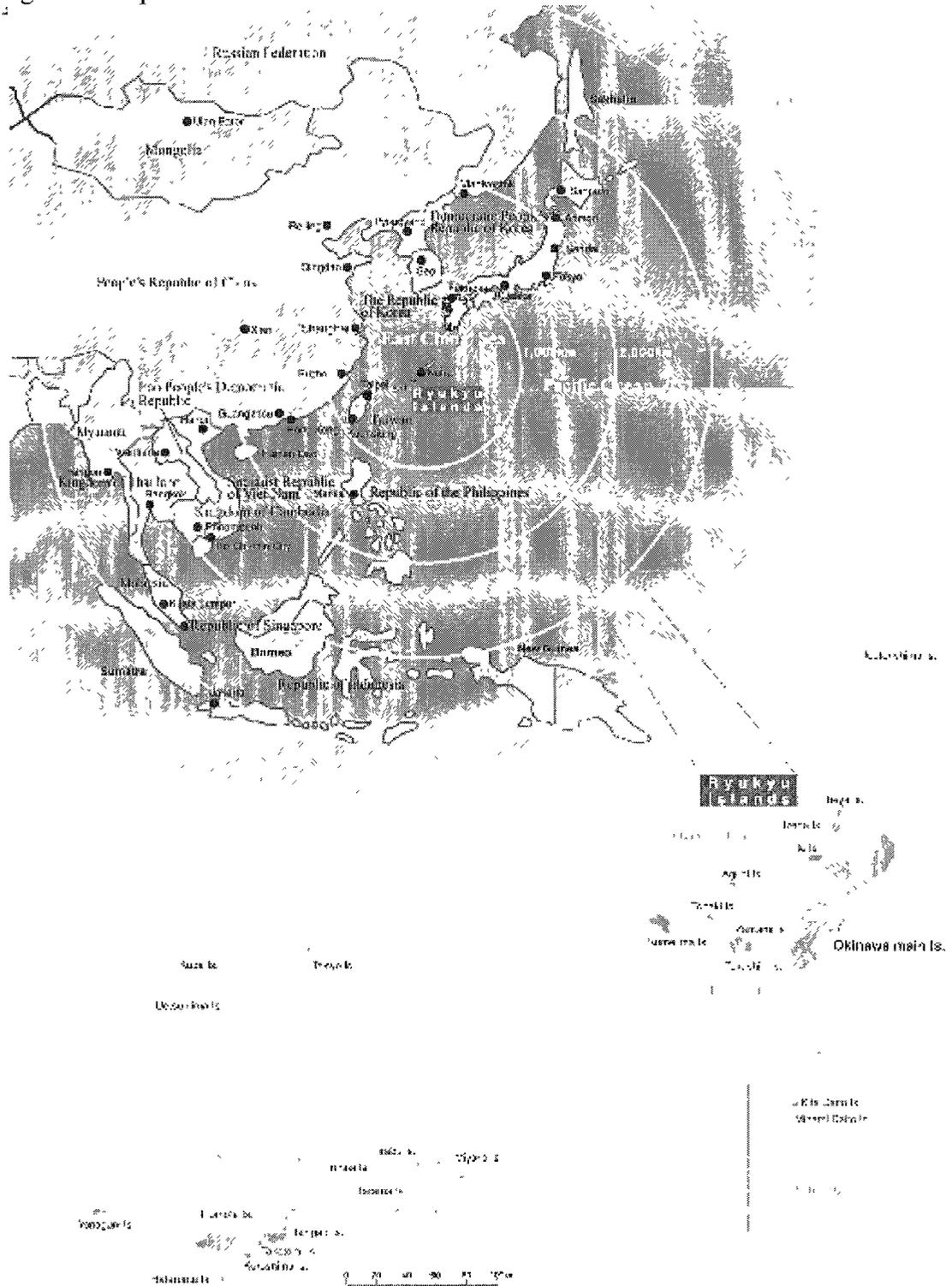
In order to understand the position of English in a particular context, it is necessary to examine the language situation as a product of a complex history of

social, economic, political and linguistic factors. In the case of Okinawa and other sub-nations around the world, it is also necessary to understand the processes by which sub-nations became incorporated within the larger nation, and the past and present status of its citizens within the larger unit. This section provides relevant background information about Okinawa.

To begin with a quick note about terminology, for the duration of this thesis I use the terms Ryukyu and Ryukyuan to refer to geographical, political, cultural and linguistic entities that predate the establishment of the Japanese prefecture of Okinawa in 1879, also keeping in mind that today these remain the preferred terms of local independence movements (Molasky, 1999). The site of research for this thesis is the island known as Okinawa, and when I use the term Okinawa I refer to this island: to refer to the Japanese prefecture of the same name, I use the full phrase ‘Okinawa prefecture’.

Okinawa, the largest island in the prefecture and the Ryukyu archipelago, is a subtropical island located partway between the southernmost Japanese main island of Kyushu, and the east coast of Taiwan (See Figure 1). Its total area is 1,207 square kilometers, over half the total area of the prefecture’s 2,275 square kilometers (Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2008, p. 52), roughly equivalent in area to the city of Hamilton, Ontario. Approximately 1,000,000 people - the majority of the prefecture’s population of 1,382,000 - live on this main island according to data from Statistics Japan for 2011. Okinawa prefecture currently holds the dubious distinction of leading the nation in a number of undesirable statistics – it holds the highest rate of unemployment, highest divorce rate, lowest amount of savings per household, lowest

Figure 1. Map of Okinawa's Location in Asia



Location of Okinawa [Map]. Okinawa Prefectural Government, Public Relations Division. (2008).

prefectural income, smallest manufacturing sector, largest number of American residents and second highest murder rate (Statistics Japan, 2011). Okinawa prefecture has a disproportionately large service sector compared to the rest of the country, accounting for 84 percent of the prefecture's economic output in contrast to just 2 percent for primary industry (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010). The prefecture's main source of income is tourism, with 5.64 million visitors in 2006 – of this total 100,000 arrived from foreign destinations (Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2008, p. 55). The island of Okinawa also plays host to a large number of U.S. military installations and bases whose history is described in more detail below.

The tragic narrative of Okinawa is often referred to as a series of *shobun*, or disposals, where major political decisions have been made without the people being given the opportunity to voice or defend their own interests (McCormack, 2007, p.155; Taira, 1997). An understanding of these events is necessary for an understanding of the social, cultural, political and linguistic landscape on Okinawa today.

In the 14th century the Ryukyu kingdoms became tributary states of China, and according to Kerr, for nearly 500 years after that, “there was a community of Okinawan students continuously in residence in Peking” (Kerr, 1958, p. 134). The decline of the influence of China over the Ryukyuan royalty from the 16th century onward was in direct correlation to the rise of Japan's influence.

From the time of the amalgamation of the three kingdoms on the main island of Okinawa (1429) until annexation (1879), Shuri Ryukyuan – named for the old capital of the kingdom – served as the official language and the lingua franca for the

entire island chain (Heinrich, 2005b). Said to originate from the same parent language as Japanese, the Ryukyuan languages of that era consisted of dialect continuums on the separate islands and in smaller island groups, with large breaks between variety groups – often demarcated by non-Japanese linguists using mutual unintelligibility as an indicator (Heinrich, 2004, p. 154). There is a certain amount of disagreement as to the status of Ryukyuan as a language or group of languages, with many nationalist Japanese scholars also considering the language(s) as inferior dialects of Japanese (Heinrich, 2004). It should be noted, however, that there is no mutual intelligibility between any variety of Japanese and any variety of Ryukyuan (Heinrich, 2005a, p. 62), and it has been argued that “the difference between mainland Japanese and Ryukyuan is very likely larger than that between English and German” (Sanada & Uemura, 2007, p. 357). There is no standard writing system of the Ryukyuan languages: during the era of the Ryukyu Kingdom, official documents were written using Japanese *kanji* (Chinese characters) and *hiragana* (a Japanese-created syllabary derived from *kanji* used for ‘native’ words). A number of scholars have suggested that this lack of a common orthography facilitated colonization by the Japanese, as the Ryukyuanians lacked an ‘imagined community’ at the time of colonization and when mass print media was being popularized around the world (Anderson 2007; Heinrich, 2004).

When the Ryukyu kingdom was conquered and annexed by the Satsuma domain in 1609, the relationship entered into with Japan was complex, as annexation was kept secret from the rest of the world (Kerr, 1958, pp. 159-160). This allowed the

kingdom to continue in relative autonomy, providing Satsuma with the means to circumvent *sakoku*, Japan's closed border policy.

Direct and open Japanese rule in the Ryukyu Islands began in 1872 (Heinrich, 2004; Kerr, 1958). In 1879, the Ryukyu kingdom was formally declared annexed by Japan, and was designated Okinawa Prefecture (Heinrich, 2004; Kerr, 1958). From this point on the newly installed Japanese civil service embarked on a variety of campaigns to promote assimilation and eradicate the indigenous languages including active suppression through the education system, and *hogen fuda*, or 'dialect tags', where students were required to wear a sign signifying that they had spoken a local language (Heinrich, 2004). The only way to get rid of these tags was to pass them on to another student. This practice continued until after the Second World War. Adults were also punished for using 'dialect' in the public domain, particularly in government offices. There is an important point to be stressed about the nomenclature here. In the Japanese language, the languages of the Ryukyus have always been referred to as dialects (*hogen*) rather than languages, a practice that most Okinawans have themselves taken up which continues to this day.

It is crucial, however, to see Okinawa's relationship with Japan in a different light than other subjects of the realm during the expansionism of the early twentieth century. Contrary to the colonized Taiwanese and Koreans, "Ryukyu culture was seen as deriving from Japan's main islands, making Okinawa an intrinsic part of the ethnic nation-state rather than a mere imperial subject" (Molasky, 1999, p. 13). The status of Ryukyuan ethnicity/nationality and culture is ambiguous in the same fashion as that of the Ryukyuan languages as described above. This ambiguity has roots in both local

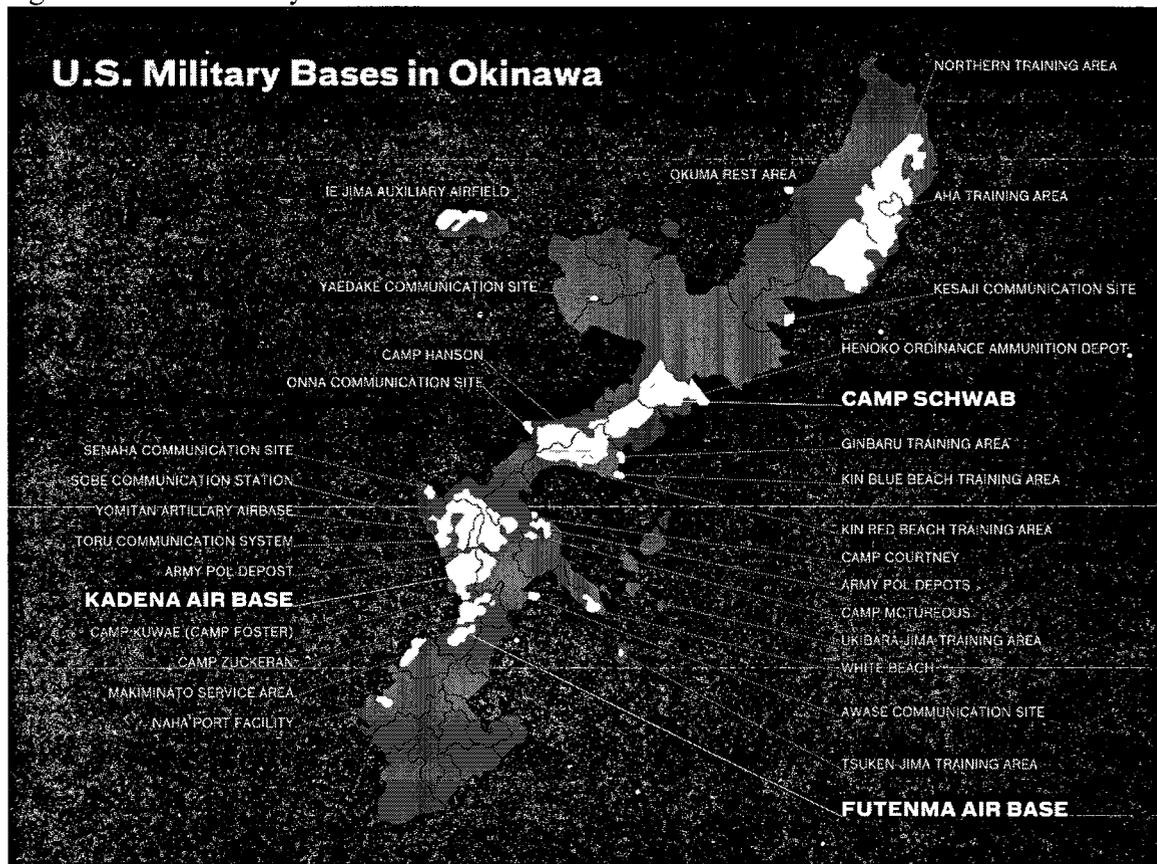
and Japanese discourses of Okinawan identity, resulting in an ambivalence which helps to perpetuate the curious existence of a people who are simultaneously Japanese and ‘not’ Japanese.

The Second World War highlighted the second-class status of Okinawans in the eyes of the Japanese, both in the actions of the emperor to sacrifice the island in defense of the main Japanese islands, and the Japanese soldiers on the ground, who repeatedly executed islanders as ‘spies’, based on their use of Ryukyuan languages (Allen, 2009). By the end of the war, an estimated 150,000 civilians caught in the crossfire between Japanese and American soldiers were dead (Heinrich, 2004, p. 163). The impact of this tragedy on the already fragile ecosystem of dying languages and dialects on the island cannot be overstated: “Natural intergenerational language transmission in the Ryukyuan languages was interrupted from the early years of the US occupation on” (Heinrich, 2005b, para. 25). While the American administration “developed a policy to encourage Ryukyuan independence”, and promoted resumption of the use of the indigenous languages, this initial and purely tactical attempt at distancing the Okinawans from the Japanese failed, and served to establish the opposite in terms of public opinion (Heinrich, 2004, p. 164). In order to resist the newer occupational power, the islanders sought to align themselves with the slightly older occupational power. American propaganda hinted towards the possibility of an independent state (under their sphere of influence) but ultimately only served to establish a greater sense of commonality with the Japanese for the Okinawans, and inadvertently encouraged the exclusive use of a local dialect of Japanese in all public domains (Heinrich, 2004). American efforts to establish Ryukyuan as a language and

an identity were short-lived, as were “school-based efforts to spread English as a second official language” (Heinrich, 2004, p. 165). Because of this disruptive impact of American occupation on Ryukyuan national identity, only in the last twenty years has there been an organized grassroots movement towards activities to reverse language shift (Heinrich, 2005a). Unfortunately, these activities are limited in terms of the domains they impact, particularly in education, where Japanese is by law the only medium of instruction, and language education policies based on theories of *kokusaika* do not “include support for regional and community or indigenous languages” (Maher, 1997, p. 124). In recent years there has been a nationwide surge in popularity of things Okinawan in Japan including popular music and cuisine and to a much lesser extent language (Gottlieb, 2008), but whether this “Okinawa boom” will ultimately assist in language revitalization seems very unlikely (Heinrich, 2005a).

In 1972 the islands were reverted to Japanese control, yet contrary to promises made by Tokyo to Okinawa, the bases remained, and eventually the prefecture came to shoulder a greater burden as bases on the main islands were gradually cut and moved to Okinawa or offshore to places such as Guam (McCormack, 2007). As a form of compensation for the presence of the bases, the national government continues to provide transfer payments and special funding to the prefecture, which, in conjunction with the “distortions in the local economy created by the existence of the American bases” arguably sustain economic dependency on their continued presence (Allen, 2009, p. 195). Today Okinawa contains “74.3% of the total area of bases in Japan” covering 18.4% of the area of the main island (See Figure 2), with

Figure 2. U. S. Military Bases in Okinawa



U.S military bases in Okinawa [Map]. (2011). Retrieved from http://anpomovie.com/OkinawaMap_2.png

bases often located in densely populated urban areas (Okinawa Prefectural Government, 2008, p. 32-3). Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma in Ginowan City (See Figures 3 and 4) has been at the centre of a number of controversies in recent years, including one incident where a military helicopter crashed into a university building in 2004 (McCormack, 2007, p. 160). Despite promises by the Clinton administration in 1996 to return the land on which the base sits within 5 to 7 years, it remains in place 15 years later with failed negotiations for its move contributing to, among other things, the resignation of recent Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama (2009-2010).

Figure 3. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma with Ginowan City in the Foreground.



The Associated Press (2010). *MCAS Futenma* [Photograph]. Retrieved from http://www.marinecorpstimes.com/news/2010/05/ap_marine_futenma_accord_052710/

Of additional concern is the large number (nearly 5000 since reversion) of major criminal offences committed by Americans in Okinawa (Taira, 1997). In recent years, this issue came to a head when a 12-year-old girl was beaten and raped by three U.S. soldiers in 1995, and the entire island rose up in mass protests (Allen, 2009). Sadly, a similar crime was committed in 2008 while I was living there, and the outrage could be felt all over the island. While these incidents ratchet up calls for the removal of the bases, that these protestations are ignored only serves to remind Okinawans of the fact that “the Japanese and US governments have colluded against Okinawa’s interests” for the sake of their own (Taira, 1997, p. 172).

Figure 4. An Aerial View of MCAS Futenma in Ginowan City



Japan Probe (2010). *An aerial view of MCAS Futenma in Ginowan City* [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.japanprobe.com/2010/08/20/move-the-us-bases-to-korea/>

After more than a century of subordination to and occupation by first the Japanese and then the Americans, regional identity for Okinawans is interwoven with these two cultures in complex ways. While “American popular culture, the English language, American media and American military culture all served to influence the nature of Okinawa under American rule” and to a lesser extent up until the present day, this has not been at the expense of Japanese influence (Allen, 2009, p. 194). Although large numbers attend frequent demonstrations against the American bases, there is limited support for the local independence movement - less than 30% based on data from 2008 (Taira, 2008). As Allen (2009) writes:

[Okinawa] remains a complex, post-colonial society shrouded in political ambivalence: a society that was compromised for the sake of ‘regional security’ and that has suffered long-term ‘collateral damage’ (p. 200).

The area’s complex and often tragic history can sadly be seen as exemplary of a large number of locales around the globe. And it is only by considering how history and colonial influence affects these spaces as language ecologies, to the benefit of some languages and at the expense of others that we can develop an understanding of the position of English as a global language in these spaces, and the processes by which it gains this position. In the following chapter I review a number of models and frameworks frequently used in academic discussions of the position of English around the world.

Chapter Three – Models and Frameworks for Describing and Examining the Position of English in the World

Although estimates as to the number of speakers of English in the world today cover a considerable range – with claims including both native and non-native speakers varying from 750 million to well over 1 billion (see for example, Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2009a; Pennycook, 2007), there is little dispute as to the social, political and economic power that the language exerts globally. While some view the ascension of English as the natural and neutral solution to a practical need, others consider it as a problem – among other things, a threat to other languages, and a source of global and local social and economic inequality (Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992, 2009). Questions of how English rose to this seemingly unassailable position and what (if anything) ought to be done about it have given rise to a number of theoretical perspectives for both the description and critique of English in the world. In this section I present and evaluate five of these, considering the role they play in the literature on English in Japan, and the potential they have for framing the study of English in the case of Okinawa. I have adapted the categories outlined below from a schema of frameworks devised by Pennycook (2000, 2001; Lee & Norton, 2009), focusing on those which are relevant for this discussion based on their prominence in the literature on Japan. I have chosen Pennycook's schema due to its popularity as reflected in the frequency with which it is employed by other researchers. The categories discussed here are: *Colonial Celebration* where “the global spread of English is seen as a useful tool for all people” with no apparent negative effects on other languages and their cultural contexts (Lee & Norton, 2009,

p. 278); *Linguistic Imperialism* which focuses on how the spread of English “creates and sustains economic and political dominance” and in doing so threatens local languages (Lee & Norton, 2009, p. 280); *World Englishes*, which promotes the notion of a plurality of Englishes (Kachru, 1992a); *English as an International Language (EIL)*, which considers English as a tool of international communication largely in terms of instrumental functions; and *Postcolonial Performativity*, which views “English as a part of the postcolonial problematic in which resistance and appropriation are integral to local/global relationships (Lee & Norton, 2009, p. 279). (For a brief summary of each of these positions, its strengths, weaknesses and implications, see Table 1.) In addition, I supplement my discussion of these frameworks with a closer examination of four reports on research which consider English in Japan from differing perspectives, providing a closer look at frequently employed theoretical (and to a lesser extent, methodological) apparatus in use.

At this point it is important to mention that a great deal of both the divergence between the frameworks of English mentioned above and their suitability as heuristics stem from the fact that within them there is a broad range of notions as to what English – and indeed more generally language – as a concept actually is. I have deliberately put off defining English so far, as it is my intention with this thesis not to propose yet another definition of English as a language or reified object of study, but rather, following Blommaert, to propose a shift in focus to a study of English considered as resources tied to specific speech acts in specific spaces and times (2003, 2010).

Table 1. Frameworks for Understanding the Global Role of English

<i>Framework for understanding the global role of English</i>	<i>Implications for English and language teaching</i>	<i>Politics, problems, and pitfalls</i>
Colonial Celebration	English is an inherently useful language; teach English as mission to the world	Arrogant appraisal of English and disdain for other languages; colonial politics
Linguistic Imperialism	Homogenization, destruction of other cultures and languages; teach English sparingly	Too powerful a model of structural power; strong on structure, weak on potential effects
Linguistic Hybridity (World Englishes)	Languages and cultures change and adapt; world Englishes; teach multiple varieties	Blindness to threats posed by global forces; model of change as natural; weak theorization of hybridity
English as an International Language (EIL)	English as a functional tool for pragmatic purposes; English as a global lingua franca; English as owned by all of its speakers	Inadequate analysis of the global politics of English
Postcolonial performativity	English as part of postcolonial problematic; cultural politics of resistance and appropriation	Complexity of relations between local and global contexts; potential romanticization of appropriation

Adapted from Pennycook, 2001. For a copy of the original, see Appendix D

3.1 Colonial Celebration

This position is perhaps the oldest, and most “documented and critiqued” (Pennycook, 2001). Those who view the spread of English in this way see no need to problematize the dominant role that English has played in globalization in recent years (Pennycook, 2007). In brief, this position involves considering the language to be “superior to other languages in terms of its intrinsic (the nature of the language) and extrinsic (the functions of the language) qualities” (Pennycook, 2001, p. 56). In the past these intrinsic qualities have often been tied to ethnicity and national identity, and rooted in arguments which connect the spread of English not only to its supposed

superior nature over other (local) languages, but also to the superior nature of English (typically British and American) culture (Pennycook, 1998). While intrinsic arguments rarely surface in academic discussion today, extrinsic or function-based arguments are still quite common. Concerning these, Pennycook warns that uncritical praise of English which exclusively focuses on its usefulness mythologizes the language, detaches it from its colonial past, and is often a part of discussions which fail to consider inequalities of access to it and this usefulness (2007). The pitfalls of an examination of English as purely functional will be considered in more detail in the discussion of EIL below.

Overt colonial celebration is rare in academic literature on English in Japan; however, it has been advocated for and promoted quite frequently in politics, the media, language industries, and popular culture for over a century. An example of an extreme case is what was perhaps the most famous proposal for the adoption of English as the sole national language of Japan by then-Minister of Education Arinori Mori in the late nineteenth century (Kubota, 1998). Mori contrasted the language of “the English speaking race which now rules the world” with “our meager language [Japanese] which can never be of any use outside of our island” (as cited in Kachru, 2005, p. 75). More recently, attempts were made to open a discussion on the designation of English as a second official language in 2000 (Gottlieb, 2008). Referring to this discussion, Hino reports: “ With this proposal for authorizing English as a second language in Japan, it almost looks as if the Japanese now regret that they have never been colonized by Britain or the USA” (2009, p. 106). (Note however that Okinawa arguably has been and continues to be colonized in the form of

permanent U.S. military bases and installations.) It is perhaps also important to point out the parallels between *nihonjinron* arguments and colonial celebration in its intrinsic form. Both positions view language in essentialist terms, and construct identities based on the cultural superiority of native speakers. In the same way that theories of *nihonjinron* (which a number of high ranking government officials continue to support – see Gottlieb, 2008, p. 102) construct Japan as monocultural, colonial celebration contributes to the construction of “an imagined community of educated middle-class” native English speakers (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 614). Exclusive conceptions of ‘the other’ as western peers are made at the expense of non-native English speaking cultures globally, and Japan’s immediate neighbors in Asia in particular.

Looking at Okinawa specifically, while colonial celebration might provide an explanation for some beliefs that Okinawan speakers of English may have, it is certainly less than adequate as a framework for research which aims to describe a full range of local experiences of and with the language. In this context, the language that is more accurately considered in these frank colonial terms is Japanese rather than English (Heinrich, 2005a).

3.2 Linguistic Imperialism

The concept of linguistic imperialism was introduced by Phillipson in his monograph of the same name (1992). The main argument of linguistic imperialism is that “the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47). In mapping this dominance the focus of

his study is on the roles that both British and American ELT agencies have played in advancing their countries' economic and political agendas in the periphery (Holborow, 1999, p. 74). While this work has been invaluable for exposing the previously under-discussed political side of ELT, it has also been criticized extensively for several reasons, including: having a view of language based on linguistic communities as nations (Holborow, 1999, p. 77), and placing an overemphasis on global or macro perspectives at the expense of local agency (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 41). As Pennycook argues, Phillipson's study "lacks a view of how English is taken up, how people use English [and] why people choose to use English" (2001, p. 62). Pennycook also expresses concern that Phillipson fails to demonstrate that linguistic imperialism is more than a symptom of imperialism in general: as such, it is useful for the description of causes, but has little to contribute to a discussion of effects (2001, p. 63). Coming from another angle, Brutt-Griffler argues that the thesis fails to account for language change in language spread, or indeed for agency on the part of language learners around the world (2002). However, probably the biggest weakness of the linguistic imperialism thesis is the fact that it totalizes English as an unstoppable homogenizing force, and in doing so, glosses over so many of the nuances of the positioning of English in diverse contexts. Despite these criticisms, exposing the fact that ELT is rarely (or never) politically benign has been one positive effect of linguistic imperialism as an approach to English in the world.

Looking at Japan, one of the more outspoken critics of English language imperialism writing in English is Yukio Tsuda (Pennycook, 2001; Tsuda, 2000). He

argues that the spread and acceptance of English represents “an uncritical endorsement of capitalism” and western values (as quoted in Pennycook, 2001, p. 58), expressing concern that the ascendance of English to the level of global language gives a disproportionate amount of cultural and political power to those nations to which the language is “historically and culturally connected” (Tsuda, 2000, p. 32). However, he bases these arguments on a primordial connection of language and identity, writing that “language directly relates to our ontological states and constitutes the essential environment for a person to develop an identity” (Tsuda, 2000, p. 34). There is a danger that arguments such as these against the privileging of one language on the global scale can be read as simply arguments on behalf of another. As Pennycook writes, “conservation may easily slide into conservatism”, which leads back to a position not dissimilar from colonial celebration (2001, p. 61). I will touch on this again in my discussion of World Englishes below.

While it is undeniable that a lack of proficient English speakers may have negative effects for Japan in terms of global business, the empirical data referenced in my sociolinguistic profile of Japan indicates that there is little need for defending the Japanese language against English language imperialism more generally. In terms of concerns about ELT agencies, Oda writes:

Japan has never seen any significant presence of agents closely affiliated with the governments of so-called English-speaking countries, like the British Council or the U.S. Information Agency; thus, their influence has been very limited if any (2007, p. 123).

Kawai, translating Yasuda, expresses a concern about linguistic imperialism that is particularly salient for a discussion of English in Okinawa: If “those people who condemn English linguistic imperialism do not scrutinize the Japanese language from a similar perspective [...] their seemingly reasonable arguments will simply promote Japanese linguistic imperialism” (2007, p. 39). In the Okinawan context, as above with the colonial celebration framework, the imperial language is Japanese rather than English, and while linguistic imperialism may provide a meaningful framework for a general discussion of language contact in Okinawa, it is not particularly suited for the specific examination of how English is experienced in the day-to-day lives of Okinawans.

3.3 World Englishes

The world Englishes or “linguistic hybridity” (Pennycook, 2001) framework is based on the idea that there exists in the world a plurality of Englishes, each of which is “equally valid and its speakers equally legitimate” (Lee & Norton, 2009, p. 281). Before considering the strengths and weaknesses of this framework it is useful to briefly discuss Kachru’s descriptive model of English in the world, perhaps the most influential model in academic circles to date, which provides the organizational schema for the world Englishes framework (Jenkins, 2009a, p. 18). In this model, the world is divided into three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle (Kachru, 1992b, p. 356). These circles each represent a different set of “types of spread, patterns of acquisition and functional allocation” of the language (Kachru, 1992b, p. 356). The inner circle consists of nations where English has a history as a so-called native language - in Britain, America, Canada, Australia, and

New Zealand. The outer circle represents those nations that have experienced sustained colonization, such as India and Nigeria (Kachru, 1992b). The expanding circle includes those nations where English has no historical or cultural claim and no official status, such as Japan.

Although these circles have provided the vocabulary for talking about English in the world for the last twenty-five years, many scholars have identified limitations in the model, of which Jenkins (2009a) and Pennycook (2003) have compiled extensive lists. A few of these concerns are salient to my discussion here: First, the “model is based on geography and history rather than on the way speakers currently identify with and use English”, equating political boundaries with linguistic boundaries (Jenkins, 2009a, p. 20). The problem here is that the framework is too rigid and doesn't account for users within a circle who don't conform to the classification of their country. This type of top-down mapping is a weakness the World Englishes approach shares with linguistic imperialism. Jenkins (2009a) provides an example of expanding circle speakers using and seeming to own English in unexpected ways vis-à-vis the model, and it is also possible to imagine the opposite, where citizens are geographically and historically assumed to use English for a wide range of purposes, but in reality do not. Okinawa may prove to be a noteworthy case in this instance: considering that the island essentially was (or is currently) occupied by U.S. military personnel, it is likely that the patterns of acquisition would be much different than, for example, a rural prefecture on the main islands of Japan. An additional problem is that it “implies that the situation is uniform for all countries within a particular circle” (Jenkins, 2009a, p. 21).

Second, there are grey areas between the various circles, as an increasing number of countries are moving towards the centre, from one circle to another (Jenkins, 2009a, p. 20). English functions and patterns of acquisition are likely to be quite different in an expanding circle EU country such as Denmark, which is arguably “in transition from EFL to ESL status” compared to a relatively isolated country such as Japan (Jenkins, 2009a, p. 20). Finally, Jenkins notes the limitations of the model in terms of ranking speakers according to their level of proficiency (2009a). Kachru rebuts this point, citing his suggestion of incorporating the concept of a “cline of bilingualism” (2005, p. 215). A problem I see with introducing a cline here is that it very quickly fractures the notion of a local English in a wide range of local Englishes. It is then difficult for researchers to agree on the spot on the cline where a user’s proficiency stops being what has sometimes been referred to as an interlanguage and starts being a variety. A related issue is the inclusion or exclusion of creoles and pidgins, as well as creative code-switching and neologism. It seems that in efforts to avoid the problem of the political designation of a standard inner circle Englishes, the World Englishes paradigm recreates the problem by simply expanding the number of ‘approved’ standard World Englishes.

While the expanding circle is currently considered to be ‘norm dependent’ in the sense that speakers typically look to the inner circle for their performance models, Kachru advocates for the development of local models, similar to the ‘norm developing’ outer circle (1992b). These local models are then meant to be granted a legitimacy of their own (Sergeant, 2009). In the case of expanding circle Englishes, this legitimacy has a slightly different meaning than that of outer and inner circle

Englishes, where the language is used intra-nationally, and often afforded some degree of official status (for example, India). The Englishes of the expanding circle can be seen more as pedagogical models, which Kachru relates to methods (Kachru, 1992a, p. 48). Curiously however, almost all of the examples in his 2005 discussion of pedagogical models for Japanese English consist of translations of Japanese idioms or concepts into English, and the discussion quickly becomes a digression on the rise of English loan and pseudo-loanwords in Japanese. These types of anecdotal discussions are frequent in the literature, particularly as ‘proof’ of the spread of English, and often overlook the fact that “things that are foreign to Japan are accepted only after they go through an indigenization process [a phenomenon that happens everywhere to be sure, but is] especially strong in Japan” (Hino, 2009, p. 108). Nevertheless, a number of researchers in (and on) Japan, have begun codifying ‘Japanese English’.

One serious problem with the idea of developing models such as these, even as pedagogical models for expanding circle countries such as Japan, is that they are based two claims: one arguably grounded in empirical evidence, but the other purely speculative. There is undeniably a rise in the acceptance of local varieties of English in the outer circle, and understandably so. Considering that there are more outer circle speakers than inner circle speakers of English(es) today, and the fact that many of them are using the language intranationally, those varieties should perhaps be granted local legitimacy as their (local) use is completely detached from the inner circle. But the argument that often follows this is that speakers in the expanding circle also use the language more frequently with speakers of these outer circle varieties rather than

inner circle speakers, as “English has become the main vehicle for interaction among its non-native users” (Kachru, 1992b, p. 357). While this last point I have quoted above is indeed valid depending on the context, this does not prove these interactions to be the main function of spoken English in the expanding circle: there are likely many non-native speakers of English in expanding circle countries who continue to use the language exclusively to interact with inner circle speakers. Kubota and McKay consider the belief in this assumption as systemic, writing that most scholarly discussion of English: “colludes with the idea that English connects people from diverse L1 backgrounds” (2009, p. 594) ignoring other contact languages and L1/L2 speaker combinations. Based on the data I have cited above about the low number of tourists arriving on Okinawa from foreign destinations, it seems more plausible in this case that Okinawa speakers of English use the language almost exclusively to communicate with inner circle native speakers – Americans. Pedagogical models based on the assumption that Japanese English users do not use the language to communicate with native speakers are perhaps unable to prepare these speakers for interactions that they may aspire to.

In the literature on English in Japan the World Englishes paradigm is quite prominent, with a number of both advocates and detractors. An attempt to codify what they call ‘educated Japanese English’ has been made by researchers in the Department of World Englishes at Chukyo University in Nagoya (D’Angelo, 2005; Sakai & D’Angelo, 2005). This research appears to have developed out of the establishment of an English department that is sensitive to recognizing the legitimization of Englishes around the world. They boast that a number of members

of their faculty are outer circle speakers of English (D'Angelo, 2005, p. 329).

Matsuda (2003a, 2003b) also stresses the importance of the inclusion of World Englishes in pedagogy in Japan.

Without explicitly using the term 'World Englishes', Hino proposes the development of a "production model of Japanese English for international communication" (2009, p. 109). Although he argues on behalf of this model under the EIL framework, his proposal includes a call for recognition of outer circle varieties as well as the inclusion of Japanese grammatical features in Japanese English – both of which are commonly called for in World Englishes (Hino, 2009, p. 109). All of these arguments for 'Japanese English' are based on the claim I mentioned above, the refutation of the "assumption that nonnative English speakers learn English in order to communicate with native speakers and learn about their culture, [which] does not reflect the reality of the English language these days" (Matsuda, 2003b, p. 483). Oddly, Matsuda even goes so far as to recommend that "students should have more personal contact with people from other cultures, especially non-US/European" as a part of future pedagogical strategies – perhaps in an effort make actual practice more closely reflect her arguments (2003b, p. 494). Native speaker varieties have been historically privileged largely at the expense of non-native speaker varieties, and while all speakers of English need to do more to acknowledge the idiosyncrasies of other cultures as expressed through linguistic features, different nonnative speakers learn the language with different interlocutors in mind, no matter who researchers would prefer them to be using the language with.

Arguing against a local model, Yano (2001) writes that, in Japan “English is and will certainly stay a foreign language” and there will never be a “distinctly local model of English, established and recognizable as Japanese English, reflecting the Japanese culture and language” (p. 127). This claim is quite telling when contrasted with Hino’s argument that the ‘linguistic features’ and ‘cultural content’ of Japanese English are inseparable (2009, p. 108). Jenkins also reports disapprovingly of Mufwene telling a Japanese audience that “English is a ‘foreign’ language in Japan” and implying “that they needed to acquire American English in order to be successful in their lives” (2009b, p. 53-54). While Mufwene’s comment is perhaps overstating the point, it may have a particular resonance in the Okinawan linguistic milieu.

The largely pedagogical context that discussions of World Englishes in Japan are situated in perhaps reveals the key limitation of the framework for a project hoping to examine the position of English in a particular geographical and political space. Efforts at codifying Japanese English – even if exclusively for pedagogical purposes – act under the assumption that such a variety is indeed legitimate. This variety is then meant to be prescribed as a classroom model in a top-down manner. There are two issues here: first, by making this assumption of legitimacy, researchers and teachers are, in a way, engaging in explicit language planning by imposing a particular standard on learners and speakers in and from a particular context. Ironically, this position is not that far from Randolph Quirk’s in his famous *English Today* debate with Kachru (Jenkins, 2009a, p. 67-68). Second is the problem of this legitimacy itself; as Canagarajah has argued, “mere recognition of a language is insufficient in the quest for legitimacy” (Lee & Norton, 2009, p. 281). Legitimacy is

not something that can be legislated or assigned, but rather, must first develop on its own in language users from the ground up. In this case study of Okinawa I uncover how local non-native speakers of English position the language in their own lives, not how researchers and pedagogical theorists who may or may not have access to local knowledge wish them to (Canagarajah, 2002).

3.4 English as an International Language

Of all of the labels created to summarize and concretize complex concepts for discussing the role and position of English in the world, EIL is perhaps the most elusive and difficult to define. Originally created as a more sensitive alternative to English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the intention of EIL is to capture the reality that “the language is increasingly being used for international communication” (Seargeant, 2010, p. 103) but whether this is inclusive or exclusive of native speakers is often unclear. Highlighting this vagueness, Seargeant writes that “exactly how narrow the functional remit of EIL is taken to be depends on the scholar using the term” (2010, p. 103). For the purposes of this discussion it is useful to isolate and examine a few of the dominant positions that fall under the EIL umbrella, including conceptions of EIL as a variety or register, EIL as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), EIL as a function, and EIL as a paradigm. Whether conceptions of EIL are quite similar to World Englishes (see, for example, Seidlhofer, 2009), or represent a larger category which includes World Englishes (Sharifian, 2009) also varies depending on the researcher.

Seargeant notes that while Widdowson “considers EIL to be a register of English”, other scholars such as McArthur go a step farther and consider EIL an

international variety (2010, p. 103). McArthur endorses an international variety based on the idea of a “manageable ‘standard’ core and a further range of negotiable comprehension”, citing as evidence that, “as CNN, the BBC, and even Microsoft suggest, the community of English users may have fewer problems” than in the past (2004, p. 15). This proposed standard is quite similar to Crystal’s notion of World Spoken Standard English (WSSE) as a currently developing global lingua franca based largely on American English (2003, p. 186). This position has been challenged by many researchers, particularly due to its uncritical promotion of inner circle English as a global standard – McArthur’s seemingly approving reference to American and British corporations as arbiters of this standard attests to this. There are also echoes of colonial celebration in these arguments. However, since Pennycook (1994) and others problematized the concept of EIL, this position has been on the wane in academic discourses of English.

Not to be confused with a standardizing language largely based on inner circle varieties, recent research into English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) has focused on the language exclusively as it is spoken between L2 speakers of English from different L1 backgrounds. As Jenkins notes: “ELF researchers specifically exclude mother tongue speakers from their data collection: in its purest form ELF is defined as a contact language used among non-mother tongue speakers” (2006, p. 160). Described very simply, much of the work currently done in ELF today involves the examination of large-scale corpus data of non-native speakers for similar linguistic features. Still at its early stages, it is proposed that these compiled features will come to form what Jenkins refers to as “an emerging ELF variety” (2009a, p. 143).

Acceptance of ELF has caused considerable debate, with more traditional sociolinguists such as Gollach and Trudgill dismissing these forms as “broken”, “deficient” and “polluting’ the standards of native speakers” (as quoted in Jenkins, 2009a, p. 150). These claims are not so different from the objections which were raised a decade or so earlier against outer circle Englishes such as Indian English.

There is also some confusion as to whether ELF is indeed a variety at all, with some researchers “preferring instead to refer to it as a strategy for communicative interaction” (Seargeant, 2010, p. 104). Indeed, it seems that much of the success of ELF hangs on this distinction. Pennycook elaborates on this point, noting that whether or not ELF is to be understood as centrifugal or centripetal “depends very much on what one is trying to do with ELF” (2008, p. 30.2). ELF codified and taught as a variety in the traditional sense of the term is of course open to criticisms of simply replacing one idealized standard for another, but he rightfully contends that ELF taken as “an attempt to account for the amorphous ongoing, moment-by-moment negotiation of English” avoids these accusations (Pennycook, 2008, p. 30.3).

An additional concern that has been frequently voiced about EIL is that it typically focuses exclusively on the functional aspects of the language. Conceptions of English as a neutral medium of international communication ignore the cultural history that has contributed to the language’s ascendance, and similarly to Phillipson’s linguistic imperialism arguments, gloss over the ways in which it is “embedded in processes of globalization” (Pennycook, 2007, p.101). By praising English “as a useful tool for all people” in a manner similar to colonial celebration, a purely functional view of EIL goes too far, and fails to acknowledge “that there is no

choice that is independent of the multiple and conflicting contexts in which we live (Lee & Norton, 2009, p. 278). In addition, untethering English from its original cultural context and internationalizing it often aids in the inadvertent process of assigning the role of “static markers of identity” to national or local languages (Pennycook, 2001, p. 57) while simultaneously limiting the function of English in identity construction and performance for its L2 speakers. Several scholars argue that this view is represented in recent national policies towards English in education in Japan (for example, Torikai, 2005, p. 251). Fortunately, as with the notion of EIL as a variety discussed above, a view of EIL divorced completely from culture is less prominent than it once was in academic discourse, and is on the wane in public discourse as well.

Currently, EIL is most frequently considered a paradigm, a sort of macro-category describing a wide range of “thinking, research, and practice” on English in the world (Sharifian, 2009, p. 2). In their recent monograph on EIL pedagogy, McKay and Borhorst-Heng write:

We will use EIL as an umbrella term to characterize the use of English between any two L2 speakers of English, whether sharing the same culture or not, as well as L1 and L2 speakers of English. Our definition then includes speakers of World Englishes communicating within their own country, as well as ELF interactions. It also includes L2 speakers of English using English with L1 speakers (2008, p. xvii).

This is the position that Matsuda takes in her research on attitudes and ownership of English in Japan. She argues that pedagogical approaches to EIL in Japan must also

raise learners' awareness to the diversity of varieties of World Englishes (2003a, 2003b), yet she is persistent in noting that "there is no single variety that can be defined, described and codified as EIL" (2006, p. 160). Based on this conception of EIL, she proposes students in Japan should be exposed to a wider range of varieties than those from the inner circle which are predominantly taught, and for increased student contact with diverse English speakers from around the globe (Matsuda, 2003b, p. 494). While this position is an admirable one, and indeed intercultural interaction ought to be promoted in an increasingly globalizing world, she fails to consider that perhaps this idealized global vision is not, in fact, the reality of her participants. This is the primary weakness of research framed in the paradigm of EIL – it takes extensive international and intercultural communication (often excluding inner circle speakers) as a priori, and constructs its arguments and makes pedagogical recommendations based on this assumption. By focusing on this international or global scope of English usage, there is also the danger of losing sight of the local. It is somewhat telling that her study of the ownership of English in one private high school in Tokyo becomes more generally "the ownership of English in Japanese secondary schools" in the title (2003b, p. 483). Conceived in this manner, EIL as a paradigm provides an inadequate framework for examining the position of English in a local context with minimal presupposition. In addition, the inclusion of World Englishes under the EIL umbrella also means the inclusion of many of the limitations of that framework identified in the previous section.

While some scholars are eager to promote awareness of EIL in Japan (Hino, 2009; Matsuda, 2003a), a number of others have written critically on the position of

English conceived as a language for international communication in the Japanese education policy literature, arguing that rather than promoting internationalism and awareness, these policies reinforce Japanese uniqueness and *kokusaika* arguments covertly (Hashimoto, 2000; Kawai, 2007; Toriaki, 2005). Similarly, Kubota & McKay claim that discourses of EIL foster a narrow approach to multilingualism, promoting a limited double monolingualism in English and Japanese (2009). Establishing this false partnership not only perpetuates the idea of English as the global contact language for speakers from diverse L1 backgrounds but also sustains social and economic inequality for speakers of other languages who do not fit the imagined narrow categories of English speaker or Japanese speaker (Kubota & McKay, 2009).

A further concern with EIL is the issue of ownership. Much of the literature on EIL in Japan (for example, Matsuda, 2003b; Hino, 2009) promotes awareness of a pluralistic view of English belonging to all of its users, with an emphasis on encouraging Japanese learners to recognize themselves as contributors and caretakers of this global language. Yet this view looks only to a possible future, ignoring the history of the ascent of English, and eliding the very real inequalities that continue to be bound up in hierarchies of varieties and levels of proficiency (Pennycook, 2007). Honna and Takeshita claim that for most Japanese, English continues to remain a foreign language which has no use in the context of Japan (2005). While this observation obviously does not reflect actual linguistic practice in the country in terms of symbolic use, it does demonstrate deep-rooted language beliefs, and actual practice in terms of instrumental use. The hopefulness of many of the premises EIL

that is based on undermines the fact that for the majority of Japanese, English for communicative purposes plays a peripheral role at best. I should make it clear that I am arguing here not against EIL per se, but against its potentially exaggerated role in the Japanese linguistic context, and thus its suitability as a conceptual framework for an investigation of English use in the Japanese or Okinawan context.

3.5 Postcolonial Performativity

The final framework I examine here is Pennycook's own approach of postcolonial performativity. This framework seeks to avoid both essentializing notions of English as a number of varieties classified based on national borders, and imperialist notions of monodirectional power flows which ignore the agency of individuals by looking at language "not as a system, but as a practice" (Pennycook, 2008, p. 30.5). By looking at language in this manner, this framework allows researchers to consider language primarily as it is performed in specific local contexts, with all the "diversity, variety and richness of popular and local discourses, codes and practices which resist and play-back systematicity and order" (Featherstone as quoted in Pennycook, 2000, p. 117). Rather than interpreting all instances of English (in its myriad forms) in peripheral contexts as the results of imperial power flows, postcolonial performativity argues that language use in local contexts habitually resists these power flows, and through this resistance appropriates and reconstitutes the language for local purposes. This model effectively sidesteps standard language debates as discussed above and generously distributes language ownership as part of the process of performing identity to all of its users in ways that the World Englishes and EIL approaches cannot (Pennycook, 2003).

This framework is the most effective of those discussed so far at capturing the nuanced role that English plays in globalization, and recognizing that globalization is more than just a homogenizing process of power and influence flowing from the centre out to the periphery. It acknowledges the existence of more than one centre of influence, describing these global flows as “multiple overlapping circles in which joint forms and modes of conduct can flow and be meaningful” (Blommaert, 2010, pp. 19-20). However, in efforts to legitimize this plurality of circles, Pennycook is somewhat silent as to the fact that some circles inevitably hold more sway over others in practice. He writes with an awareness of inequalities, but with an unwarranted optimism for appropriation and empowerment: “it is important to understand these transcultural flows as occurring both within inequitable relations of language, culture, power and money, and at the same time as always potentially reworkable” (Pennycook, 2003, p. 525). Sadly however, this potentiality is rarely or never achieved in practice. Critiquing Pennycook’s analyses of hip-hop, Blommaert notes that “the origins of hip-hop are influences of a different order than those coming from local environments [...] the former are more enduring and static than the latter” (2010, p. 20). This is where postcolonial performativity is lacking. In its eagerness to celebrate appropriation, difference and local agency, it sees potential equitability everywhere by glossing over the inequitable nature of the historical establishment of these various circles, which unfortunately in practice renders many transcultural flows to be ‘unreworkable’. In order to gain a clearer understanding of these transcultural flows, relationships between centres need to be considered from a perspective which incorporates history into its analyses (Blommaert, 2010, p. 20),

particularly when looking at language use in contexts with turbulent histories such as Okinawa.

3.6 Recent Studies on the Position of English in Japan: Beyond the Frameworks

In the following section I take a closer look at a several recent reports on research on the position of English in Japan which attempt to navigate a way forward beyond the frameworks I have discussed so far. These studies were carried out within different epistemological and/or theoretical traditions which are used more generally for examining the position and value of languages around the world. It is useful to evaluate these studies at this conceptual (and to a lesser degree methodological) level to determine the suitability of their approaches for the study at hand, and in addition, to consider how their findings contribute to the existing body of literature on English in Japan. While looking at these findings, it is important to remember the unique position of Okinawa and Okinawan identity within larger discussions of Japan and Japanese identity. Although Okinawans can often be seen as sharing in the national discourses of identity, there is also a range of local discourses based on local culture and history which causes there to be “so many overlapping and contradictory identities in operation at any one time” in Okinawa (Allen, 2009, p. 199). Thus, any account of English in Japan based solely on a monolithic or singular notion of Japanese identity can only capture a portion of the Okinawan experience.

3.7 Language Attitudes: Ryan (2009)

Ryan (2009) reports on a qualitative investigation which grew out of a quantitative “large-scale nationwide attitudinal study (n=2397) into the motivation of

learners of English in Japan” (p. 405). Participants for the quantitative portion of the study were either tertiary or secondary students, while participants for the qualitative portion were either tertiary students or post-graduates. The quantitative survey data suggested to the author that participants were giving a “socialized default response” to questions about “liking English (Ryan, 2009, p. 413). This suspicion was confirmed during the interviews that followed:

When I asked the interviewees to explain what they meant when they said they liked English, most responses were either vague or evasive. The fact that interviewees were so often unable or unwilling to elaborate on what they meant by ‘liking English’ suggested that they were merely following a scripted discourse which holds that ‘liking English’, like other uncontroversial sentiments such as being in favour of world peace, is a ‘good thing’ (Ryan, 2009, p. 413).

In efforts to drill down beyond this scripted response, Ryan closely examined the interview data of those participants who did expand on their responses to this question, and sorted these responses into the following four strands.

The first strand looked at the “‘charm’ of English”, where learners are attracted to the sound and the tactile feel of English (Ryan, 2009, p. 414). Ryan identifies this attraction to the “intrinsic enjoyment” of the language and the learning process as a particular individual connection which he claims to be underexplored in his primary area of specialization, L2 motivation (2009, p. 414). The next strand is that of “personal liberation”, where learners view English as “an opportunity to escape from what may be at times inhibiting or stifling modes of communication” in

the L1 language or culture (Ryan, 2009, p. 415). He found that these types of responses were prevalent among his female participants. The third strand connected English language learning to “personal development” (Ryan, 2009, p. 415). He notes that in the cases of these responses, the objective of language learning is seen as some form of internal growth or accomplishment, “rather than any particular desire to engage with the outside world” (Ryan, 2009, p. 416). The fourth strand considered the “social status” attached to the ability to speak English (Ryan, 2009, p. 416). This strand revealed conflicting data where the prestige that English proficiency earns varies from context to context, causing the author to posit that, in Japan, “the value of English as social capital is uncertain” (Ryan, 2009, p. 417).

This study provides valuable insight into our understanding of what ‘liking English’ means to young language learners in Japan, and it also manages to somewhat successfully avoid a number of theoretical and methodological issues that often limit the effectiveness of language attitude research. For the purposes of the current study as an exploration of approaches to English in a specific local context I briefly elaborate here on a few of these issues and discuss this type of research both in general terms and in terms of other attitude research that has been carried out in Japan.

Attitude studies have a long history in language-related research, and remain quite common today in sociolinguistics, language policy, and language learning journals (Matsuda, 2000; Vaish, 2008). One frequently voiced concern with attitude studies is that they often assume that “an individual’s mind [has] principles of its own, owing nothing to history or society” (Hyrkstedt & Kalaja, 1998, p. 347).

Participants surveyed are often considered exclusively as autonomous decision makers, a view which ignores the role of contextual factors in determining the choices and values that language users have available to them. This notion of autonomy is reflected in research which connects attitudes to motivation in language learning. Dyers and Abongdia note that these studies often “attempt to show a causal link between positive or negative language attitudes and how people successfully learn a language” (2010, p. 120). At issue here is the fact that attitudes are not exclusively formed in the classroom, but are based on experience (or lack of experience) with a language and its users in a broader social context. Ryan negotiates this concern to some degree by situating his study against a background of features in the Japanese context – including *kokusaika* and English education policy – and although he specifically focuses on “individual learners’ sense of emotional identification with the language” he is careful to consider how features of the social context outside of the classroom affect the ‘strands’ listed above (2009, p.405). There is, however, a danger of superficiality in simply mapping individual attitudes onto macro sociopolitical themes.

In contrast, studies such as Matsuda’s (2003) mixed-method inquiry into attitudes and ownership in secondary schools fail to consider what Seargeant (2009) refers to in his critique of it as “other sources of information which might influence the students’ views in conflicting ways” by focusing exclusively the classroom as the context of research (p. 94). A number of other studies (Sakuragi, 2007; Sullivan & Schatz, 2009) use a quantitative attitude framework to explore the relationship between language learning and variables such as cross-cultural attitudes and national

identification in Japan. There is a similar danger here in that, while large-scale questionnaires allow for generalizable results, they do so at the expense of ignoring contextual factors and at the same time running the risk of reducing the complexity of the object of study to a narrow and reified notion. Potter and Wetherell elaborate on this point, arguing that traditional attitude studies consider attitudes “to be separate from the ‘object of thought’ [for example, language or variety]” but this “separation becomes virtually impossible to sustain” when examining participants’ responses in qualitative data (1987, p. 50-51). Instead, they argue, participants ought to be seen as constructing a version of the object in their responses which is far from static. By insisting on a supposedly neutral predefined notion of the object under evaluation, researchers using quantitative methods limit both the responses of their participants, as well as the implications of their findings. Hyrkstedt and Kalaja go as far as to claim that in these types of studies there is a “tendency to suppress variability in the data” (1998, p. 348) although this criticism is rather extreme, considering they provide little evidence for this claim.

It is apparent that for a study of attitudes towards English, it is important to give voice to the participants – typically in the form of qualitative interviews – and Ryan is the most successful at this of the attitude studies mentioned above. However, his study fails at capturing the full range of the spectrum between the macro sociopolitical “with its tendency to view individuals as mere representatives of larger ethnolinguistic groups” and “the complexity of individual learners’ sense of emotional identification with the language” (Ryan, 2009, p. 405). The contextual features that he sees as influencing his individual learners’ attitudes are all based on

the notion of a monolithic and monocultural Japan. As a result his research continues to support the national myth of Japan as homogenous and does not capture the complexity of voices in its social, geographical and economic peripheries.

3.8 Language Ideologies: Seargeant (2009)

While language attitudes research is typically based in social psychology, the concept of language ideologies grew out of research in linguistic anthropology (Woolard, 1998; Blommaert, 2006; Kroskrity, 2006). In his monograph *The Idea of English in Japan: Ideology and the Evolution of a Global Language* (2009), Seargeant employs a language ideologies framework in order to carry out a series of “conceptual case studies anchored around salient concepts or motifs within the discourse” in the country (p. 64). Of particular relevance to the current study are two small-scale empirical studies in this book which focus on (1) attitudes towards English, and (2) English usage, both using data collected from small samples of Japanese participants. After briefly summarizing these studies I consider the framework of language ideologies and its usefulness for the empirical study in this thesis.

Seargeant’s first study forms part of a larger discussion of aspiration, education and how English is marketed and taken up by potential learners in Japan (2009). Data were collected from email interviews with five Japanese university graduates now working in a variety of fields with the intention of uncovering “trends of belief within the cohort which constitute an ideology of language [or] patterns of rationalization, the justification of behaviour, and the association of ideas” (Seargeant, 2009, pp. 125-126). He identifies four themes in this data: English as an

important skill for work; English learning as a source self-knowledge, or the development of “an increased awareness of one’s own cultural identity”; English use as personal liberation; and language learning as a part of one’s identity (Sergeant, 2009, p. 128). There is a considerable overlap of these themes with Ryan (2009), and unfortunately, as with Ryan’s study, although Sergeant carefully situates these themes in a Japanese context at the national level, he does not go deeper into specific locales in the country.

For the second study in this book, he asked an unspecified number of people to keep a journal of their English usage for four randomly selected days (the number is likely quite low, as he refers to this study as a pilot study, and only reports on data collected from two participants). What he is looking for here is a “detailed informant-centred account of the full range of English-related behaviour as encountered in the course of everyday activity” (Sergeant, 2009, p. 135). He considers this study to be something of a failure, as the journals did not provide the data he had originally intended them to. Rather than displaying an expected richness of “sightings of English-language slogans on T-shirts or other fashion items [and] shop signs or on advertisement hoardings” the participants reported only minimal encounters with English (Sergeant, 2009, p. 137). These findings prompted him to conduct follow-up interviews asking about their judgments in the journals. From these interviews it was determined that, for these participants, ‘English’ consists primarily of conversation, and as a concept does not include writing in the Roman alphabet. While both of these studies are quite meaningful in terms of highlighting some of the dominant themes in discussions of the position of English in Japan today, a general discussion of the

language ideologies framework followed by an examination of how these studies fit into it will reveal their strengths and weaknesses.

Ideology is a highly contested term which is unfortunately often only vaguely or partially defined when it is invoked in the literature. In recent discussions, conceptions of ideology are typically divided into two camps - each with its own genealogy (Blommaert, 2006; Eagleton, 1991; Woolard, 1998). The first of these can be considered as preoccupation “with ideas of true and false cognition” and it descends in lineage from Marx’s notion of false consciousness (Eagleton, 1991, p. 3). Roughly speaking, this conception is based on the idea that groups of people share beliefs about the world which do not match with how the world actually or truly is. Within this position there is a broad range of criteria for what qualifies as ideological beliefs (for example, whether or not they obfuscate the power of a dominant class, whether or not more than one ideology can be ‘held’ by a group of people at a given point in time etc.) (Eagleton, 1991). This view is commonly professedly to be the less popular of the two due to issues related to its awkward epistemological basis on the notion of the existence of a real or material world that exists separate from ideological perspectives on it (Eagleton, 1991; Pennycook, 1994). Because of this problematic contrast between illusion and reality, this position is also frequently considered as having a pejorative meaning, but this is not necessarily always the case (Eagleton, 1991, p. 221).

In contrast to this conception there is a second lineage, based in the tradition of sociology, which claims neutrality (Blommaert, 2006, p. 510). This view focuses on the role that ideas play within a community. An oft-cited definition of linguistic

ideology as conceived under this umbrella comes from Silverstein (Blommaert, 2006; Seargeant, 2008, 2009; Woolard, 1998), who is considered as one of the first researchers of this topic: “linguistic ideologies are any sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language use” (Silverstein, as quoted in Seargeant, 2009, p. 25). This conception of ideology “is often called the total concept, for it suggests the acceptance of ideational-cultural complexes by every member of a community”: in other words, the shared assumptions about the world by a particular group of people (Blommaert, 2006, p. 510). There is, however, danger of a certain amount of conceptual slippage here. As Eagleton notes, “to call ideas ‘rationalizing’ is already to imply that there is something discreditable about them” (1991, p. 51). Pennycook also notes a similar slippage in the work of a number of critical discourse analysts, many of whom claim to hold this ‘neutral’ view of ideology (1994, p. 124-126; 2001, pp. 82-85).

While the first of these two conceptions of ideology is rarely explicitly invoked in research on language use, the so-called neutral view is, and often becomes pejorative in practice. McVeigh refers to ‘neutral’ ideologies of Japanese identity as “illogical” and “disfiguring” (2004, pp. 214-216). In Seargeant’s discussion of the second study described above, when he writes that “the perceptions of what counted as English proved to be built on a number of ideological assumptions” his meaning is somewhat unclear (2009, p. 140). Why the seemingly redundant reference to ‘ideological assumptions’? If we take a neutral view on assumptions, then all perceptions of English would by necessity be built on a number of assumptions. Earlier in the book he shows an awareness of this issue, noting that “the neutral view

of ideology only remains truly neutral for as long as it stays theoretical” and indeed it seems as though in the study cited above, he is privileging his perceptions of English as an academic (which include all manner of linguistic detritus in the media, advertising etc.) over the lay perceptions of his participants (Sergeant, 2009, p. 28). It seems obvious that ideology researchers ought to be careful to be explicit in differentiating relativist value judgments from epistemological claims: unfortunately this is rarely done.

An additional concern with language ideological research has to do with the social scope of these ideologies. While ideologies are typically (and correctly to my mind) identified as multiple (Kroskrity, 2006), there is less clarity in the various definitions as to what exactly constitutes a community which shares an ideology. This ambiguity diminishes the value of ideology as an approach to the position of English for all levels of scale (here I am specifically thinking of the local), and is perhaps best suited only for examinations of ideas and beliefs at the macro sociopolitical scale level.

Articles by Kubota (1998) and Sergeant (2008) demonstrate the benefits of ideological analysis at this level, with Kubota focusing on discussions of English within mainstream Japanese media and literature, and Sergeant reviewing mainstream applied linguistic research in English, and language policies. Kubota’s study focuses on the discourses of *nihonjinron* and *kokusaika* as “broader ideological contexts that would provide an understanding of English in Japan” (1998, p. 296). While she does not provide definitions for the terms ‘discourse’ and ‘ideology’, she appears to rank them hierarchically with ideology as the higher level when she refers

to the discussion of discourses as providing an understanding of ideologies (Kubota, 1998). Seargeant (2008) performs a similar analysis, reviewing the English language literature on English in Japan. However, unlike Kubota, Seargeant continually uses the term “assumption” when referring to ideologies, which reveals that he is somewhat covertly in the business of placing values on them (2008). It appears again here as though researchers operating under the ‘neutral’ umbrella are neutral in name only – in practice they often seem very much concerned with demonstrating ideas as somehow ‘wrong’ by labeling them as assumptions and providing contrasting ideas from within the academic discourse.

To reiterate my point from above, because within the ‘total concept’ framework ideologies are considered as “socially situated systems of thought that are collectively shared by every member of the community” there is a limit then to which kinds of thoughts may constitute ideologies, and which do not (Seargeant, 2009, p. 27). Ideologies are contingent on what constitutes a community. So it seems that the attitudes framework that I discussed in the previous section, and ideologies frameworks reviewed here provide us with a means at getting at thoughts about language at two poles – the macro sociopolitical and the individual – but do not provide us with the means of getting the full spectrum of what lies in between the two.

Pennycook has argued repeatedly (1994; 2001) that a useful strategy for avoiding both the tendency towards the pejorative in ideology-based studies, as well as scalar limitations, is the adoption of a Foucauldian approach to discourse. He champions Foucault’s rejection of ideology and advocacy of discourse as an object of

study in order to avoid precisely the types of limitations and weaknesses I have mentioned above (Pennycook, 1994, p. 126). In addition, he importantly identifies that for Foucault, while “ideology may help us to understand how individuals are less than autonomous free-willed subjects, it tends to imply a unitary rather than a multiple subject” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 128). Although these comments are made by Pennycook as part of a larger critique of critical discourse analysis, they resonate with the analysis and interpretation of the role of English in a globalizing world.

Discussions of ideology such as in Kubota (1998) and Seargeant (2008) are effective at teasing out large-scale national themes such as *nihonjiron* and *kokusaika*, but are less useful for capturing the ebb and flow of local discourses. In contrast, in the Foucauldian sense, discourse can be seen as “a range of systems of power/knowledge within which we take up subject positions” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 128). These subject positions are multiple and rather than revealing the singular scale level of national discourses as ideologies, discourses conceived in this manner allow for examining ideas of English as it is constituted across a range of scale levels rather than just in the macro sociopolitical. It is this notion of discourse that Kubota & McKay (2009) employ in the study I turn to next, and it is also the conceptual definition that I use in the empirical research reported on in this thesis.

3.9 Focusing on the Local: Kubota & McKay (2009)

The final article I review here is perhaps the study closest in spirit and scope to the empirical work of this thesis. In this article, Kubota and McKay (2009) report on some of the findings from a one-year critical ethnography in a rural Japanese prefecture (pseudonymous) with the objective of investigating “how local people

view and engage in linguistic diversity in their community and how their views and engagements are implicated in their subjectivities and experiences in relation to learning English” (Kubota & McKay, 2009, pp. 594-595). The portion of this study I discuss here drew from data collected from interviews with three women who teach and learn English, and two men who are learners of Portuguese (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 595).

A number of features of this study stand in opposition to the studies and the frameworks reviewed above. Firstly, rather than beginning their research with a macro-perspective objective, the authors instead chose the method of critical ethnography. This choice enabled them to approach “people’s language use and attitudes towards language” not with the intention of testing a particular hypothesis or theory, but with the more open intention of exploring these topics and allowing patterns to emerge (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 597). This approach ensures the avoidance of macro-discourse assumptions forming the framework for their research, and provides the opportunity to problematize these assumptions from a fresh perspective. Secondly, by using a critical ethnography that takes a bottom-up approach they limit their context of research to a mid-sized city of 160,000 in a rural prefecture (Kubota & McKay, 2009). In contrast to studies of English in Japan that take as their context of research a nation of 130 million, this focus on the local scale level not only allows them to dig deeper into a diversity of complex variables, but it also prevents them from having to rely on national discourses or ideologies as a starting point. This is not to say they are prevented from making discoveries about these larger discourses – instead, they reveal how local experiences and subjectivities

are “implicated” in these larger discourses, rather than the opposite and more frequent approach, where local experiences are drummed up as examples or evidence for them (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 597). Their use of a Foucauldian notion of discourse as described above rather than a language ideologies framework further enables this thick and rich local examination.

A number of connected themes emerge from their data. Kubota and McKay note an “attachment to English which could work against the promotion of multilingualism” in the three women interviewed (2009, p. 611). This attachment represents an investment that is bound up in a number of discourses that emerge from conceptions of EIL as it is characterized in the national education policy. The idea of English as these women see it is not only nationalized and racialized as the language of white inner circle speakers, but it is also classed in this context, where being a speaker of English is symbolic of middle class status, in contrast to “working-class non-English-speaking migrants workers from places outside of inner circle countries” (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 613). This conceptualization of English as an international language also plays a role in promoting “double monolingualism”, a belief I have mentioned previously, which sets up Japanese and English as the only necessary languages for communication in the world, devaluing all other languages and their speakers (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 613). Finally, they also detect in this attachment to English evidence of “symbolic colonialism involving the superiority of English, American culture and whiteness” (Kubota & McKay, 2009, p. 612).

While this study does not focus on how English and its discourses affect Japanese but on how they affect other immigrant minority or heritage languages, its

findings are nevertheless germane to a study of the position of English in Okinawa. Looking at the sociolinguistic profile of Okinawa, it is evident that it is not English but Japanese that threatens and has to a great extent eliminated minority indigenous languages. However, discourses of English do play a powerful role in relations between Okinawans and members of the U.S. military and their families stationed on the island, Okinawans and mainland Japanese, and Okinawans and the rest of the world. The empirical study in this thesis continues in the same vein as the work of Kubota and McKay (2009), by looking at how local opinions and use intersect or diverge from dominant perceptions of English and its position around the globe.

3.10 Three Concepts: A New Framework

In order to examine the full range of discourses of English as situated in particular spaces from the ground up to the macro sociopolitical including all points in between, three interconnected concepts for looking at language in globalization proposed by Blommaert (2010) prove invaluable as either a supplementary or an alternative to those discussed in the literature review above. Although these concepts were conceived for the analysis of linguistic phenomena, I see them as adaptable to metalinguistic phenomena as well. In the remainder of this chapter I first explain these concepts of sociolinguistic scales, orders of indexicality and polycentricity (Blommaert, 2010; Blommaert, Collins & Slembrouck, 2005), followed by a brief explanation of their relevance to this thesis and a demonstration of how I am going to put them to work.

3.10.1 Sociolinguistic Scales

Of these three concepts, scale is perhaps the central one, which the other two articulate and build on in greater detail. Scale as a theoretical concept is a metaphor borrowed from human and social geography; it also plays a key role in Wallerstein's World-Systems Analysis (Blommaert, 2010; Collins, Slembrouck, & Baynham, 2009). Simply put, scale refers to the hierarchical and stratified ranking of things in the world. In the same way that (for the purposes of analysis) determining the correct scale level of phenomena is a "theoretical and conceptual problem central to geography", in applied linguistic and sociolinguistic research, linguistic phenomena also need to be considered in the contextual space of a particular scale level (Collins, Slembrouck, & Baynham, 2009, p. 5).

By looking at hierarchies and layers, scale emphasizes "vertical metaphors of space rather than [the] horizontal ones" which Blommaert sees as having dominated sociolinguistics to date (for example, "distribution", "spread"), providing a complementary way of looking at linguistic data which enriches our understanding of them (2010, p. 33). This is of particular importance in globalization, as now more than ever the local and the global are intertwined with one another in complex ways. Scale provides us with the means of situating phenomena (for example, a dialect – or, in the case of this thesis, a language) not only in horizontal distribution, but in vertical stratification as well.

Blommaert warns, however, that we must not lose sight of scale as a metaphor rather than an actual description of space, as this involves the separation of space and time (2010). He advocates instead that scale be viewed as encompassing

time as well (what Wallerstein refers to as a “single dimension” of TimeSpace) (2010, p. 34). In thinking about and using scales, we must consider phenomena as situated “simultaneously in space and in time, often in multiply imagined spaces and timeframes” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 34). Thus, in addition to seeing geographic and social space as a frame that generates meanings, scale also incorporates the complexity of a full history of semiotic and linguistic practice.

A final point to consider about scale before I provide an example is that scale and its construction is not apolitical. Scales are created and sustained by the means of social power relations, and as such, can often be seen as sites of unequal distribution of power, authority and resources (Blommaert, 2010). Rather than simply passive contexts or backdrops against which linguistic phenomena or social action is carried out, scalar space (and time) ought to be considered as both constitutive and agentive. In other words, “scales are not neutral items, they attribute meaning, value, structure and characteristics to the processes that they are part of” (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005, p. 202).

As an example, Blommaert discusses a chocolate shop in a department store in central Tokyo named “Nina’s Derriere”(2010, p. 29). In this context of Japan, the choice of a French name might be considered as signifying elegance and European sophistication. As most of the usual customers of this shop are not likely to have enough knowledge of French to determine this name as unfortunate, at this local scale level the ‘Frenchness’ of this shop’s name can be seen as “semiotic rather than linguistic” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 29). This ‘Frenchness’ is bound up in an idea of France and the French as conceived and constituted at the local scale level. But when

Blommaert – a Belgian with a higher level of French proficiency than the local audience – sees the sign, it can instead be read as “a linguistic sign [and...] an instance of (linguistic) French” rather than simply semiotic ‘Frenchness’ (2010, pp. 29-30). In this case, he exports his linguistic resources from a higher scale to a lower scale context, and what was an essentially problem-free use of semiotic resources now becomes a problematic use of linguistic resources. The concept of scale allows us to distinguish these two separate but simultaneous acts of signification as constituted by the norms of differing scale levels.

3.10.2 Orders of Indexicality

The example above demonstrates that different scales bundle together different norms, expectations and resources (Blommaert, 2010). The concept of orders of indexicality, inspired in name by Foucault’s ‘orders of discourse’, refers to how these norms are organized (Blommaert, 2010). Indexicality can be understood here as a process whereby particular semiotic or linguistic phenomena index, or reference back to something. This indexing is ordered, in the sense that it is systematic and carries with it a certain degree of stability and/or predictability (Blommaert, 2010). These ordering systems are where value is generated. As Blommaert describes:

Ordered indexicalities operate within large stratified complexes in which some forms of semiosis are perceived as valuable, others less valuable, and some are not taken into account at all, while all are subject to rules of access and regulations as to circulation (Blommaert, 2010, p. 38).

What this means inside a scaled system of signification is that orders of indexicality of a higher scale level will tend to have more power and authority than orders of a lower level. If we look again at the example of “Nina’s Derriere”, the sign indexes back to different orders depending on the scale level that provides the footing for its interpretation. On the scale level of its intended and local audience – Japanese customers with little French language proficiency – the sign indexes back to ‘Frenchness’. Its actual linguistic content has no meaning for this audience – it is not really taken into account at all. However, in the case of someone like Blommaert who has a certain degree of French proficiency, the linguistic context indexes to, first, the unfortunate fact that the sign names a woman’s bottom, and second, this failure to function at this (higher) scale level indexes French-being-used-incorrectly, highlighting a lack of linguistic resources on the part of both the sign makers and their intended audience. This “out-scaling” or “scale-jumping” is often seen as indicative of inequality (Blommaert, 2010). In this case the communicative success of the writing on the sign as semiosis is undermined when it is viewed as linguistic from the higher scale level.

3.10.3 Polycentricity

The third concept of polycentricity helps us to organize these orders of indexicality. If we look at my discussion of “Nina’s Derriere” above, the norms and expectations that makes that sign acceptable for a department store in Tokyo are a part of local orders of indexicality which trace ‘Frenchness’ to elegance and European sophistication semiotically (Blommaert, 2010, p. 6). These orders can be said to emanate or flow from a local (in this case, Japanese) centre, where significations of

this sort are frequent occurrences, granting them a certain degree of appropriacy and normalcy. In contrast, the orders of indexicality that reads the sign linguistically with semantic meaning in French rather than simply as semiosis of ‘Frenchness’, flow from a different centre. Globally the French language is commonly viewed as having its centre in France and it is from this sort of centre that Blommaert-as-a-visitor-to-Tokyo’s interpretation of the sign emanates. As this centre operates on a higher scale level, in this case, it trumps the local centre in terms of authority. Polycentricity highlights the fact that evaluative authority emanates from multiple centres, and different linguistic and semiotic acts or artifacts orient towards different centres of authorities, which provide their norms.

What these three concepts present is a means of looking at language in globalization which recognizes its performative and simultaneously pluralist nature, while also mapping how power flows through the “hierarchical systems of value for semiotic resources” used (Blommaert, 2010, p. 41).

3.11 Metalanguage

In compiling these concepts Blommaert has created a useful toolkit for examining language mixing and code-switching in much more dynamic terms than has typically been done in sociolinguistics. By doing so, he characterizes language less as a static and reified object and more as a collection of mobile and specific language resources (Blommaert, 2010, p. 12). In this thesis, I adapt this toolkit originally conceived for the analysis of linguistic phenomena to the analysis of metalinguistic phenomena in order to uncover “the indexical value that particular linguistic resources have in certain spaces and situations” as perceived by the users of

these linguistic resources, and how these values inform their subjectivities as language learners and users (Blommaert, 2010, p. 12).

Much of the recent research on the position of English in Japan that I have reviewed can be described as the analysis of talk about language, or metalanguage. Ways in which people both understand and describe language and patterns of language use provide useful data for exploring how they value and orient to these languages (Jaworski, Coupland and Galasinski, 2004). As the example of “Nina’s Derriere” demonstrates, language use as a resource is highly dependent on the norms of the spaces or contexts that it occurs in, as well as the participants who take it up. While much of this creative or original use of language and the values that it indexes passes either unnoticed or unremarked upon, in contrast, metalanguage consists of fairly explicit discussion of this language in use, and of those values. As such, “Metalanguage can [...] influence people’s actions and priorities in a wide range of ways, some clearly visible and others much less so” (Jaworski et al., 2004, p. 3). The analysis that I present below is rooted in questions of, as Blommaert phrases, “What counts as language in particular contexts” (2010, p. 12); however, taking this a further step, I also explore *what language counts as in particular contexts*. The following example from my data demonstrates that, contrary to viewing ‘English’ as a static and neutral set of linguistic features, this participant demonstrates a conception of English as a fluid and polymorphous political entity that is highly dependent on a particular scaled context, and all of the orders of indexicality that are relevant to this scale.

In an interview discussion about the U.S. Military presence in Okinawa, Yuki Shimabukuro (the names of participants in this thesis are pseudonyms) had this to say:

In Okinawa (*pause*), because there are so many bases and Americans think Okinawa is their property, so at the restaurants and places, if Okinawa people doesn't speak English at the restaurant the Americans think it's kind of wrong, (*pause*) they think you should speak English, but in other parts of Japan if the people who works in restaurant and they don't speak English, then Americans doesn't think you should speak English. I don't think that's right. Because first, I against the bases, so (*pause*)... and they can't, I think they can't force Okinawa people to speak their language.

This comment reveals not only the stance of this participant towards Americans in Okinawa and what she perceives as the stance of Americans towards Okinawans, but also a discourse of English that is quite particular to the context of language use that she is discussing. The idea of ownership dominates this brief example. She notes that in her experience, Americans presume that because Okinawa is their property, they should be provided service in local restaurants in English, which is their language. She stresses this ownership of the language by the Americans while simultaneously rejecting its ownership by Okinawans, stating: “they can't force Okinawa people to speak *their* language”, that is to say, English is an American language and Okinawans have their own language(s).

When we look at this brief sample using the concepts that Blommaert provides, a rich picture of the position of English in a particular local space emerges.

This sample focuses on the context of public interaction in the service sector locally in Okinawa, contrasted with nationally, in Japan. Within this scale, Yuki presents two sets of orders of indexicality in what she perceives of Americans' behavior. First, what they see as required English use in a restaurant on the island reflects their attitude towards the island as a colonial possession. This is contrasted with the same hypothetical Americans not requiring English when in restaurants in the rest of Japan, which again indexes back to two beliefs: English not being a lingua franca of Japan's main islands; and the American's position on Japan's main islands as tourists rather than colonizers. Finally, both of these orders of indexicality reflect a specific centre or source of English being invoked in this discussion. The English referred to here is not a neutral set of resources; rather, it is a particular national variety of a particular group of people. Yuki indicates this when she refers to it as "their language" and not hers or Okinawans'. While this sentiment reflects English as perceived on a particular scale level, it is not generalizable to other spaces on other scale levels. For example, the idea of English ownership in an English language classroom at a school with teachers and students from various inner and outer circle countries is likely to be quite different from that presented here; likewise, it would also be different in a discussion of perceptions of English as a global lingua franca. This short sample reveals a particular discourse of English that is bound up in a particular space and time.

In the following chapters I report on an ethnographically-informed study of the position of English in Okinawa applying Blommaert's three concepts as an interpretive toolkit in the manner I have demonstrated here. The findings of this study in turn demonstrate the value of this theoretical framework for the discussion of the

role and position of English in globalization in current applied linguistic,
sociolinguistic and ELT literature.

Chapter Four – Methodology

4.1 Approach

While language policy as a field has traditionally focused on how top-down processes influence or fail to influence linguistic behaviour (Canagarajah, 2006), in recent years a number of researchers have opted for a more “expanded view of language policy as overt and covert, top-down and bottom-up, *de jure* and *de facto*” (McCarty, 2011, p. 2). This expanded view sees ethnographic methods as valuable for revealing the positions that language users take towards the top-down policies designed to regulate them, as well as the less official bottom-up policies they perform in their day to day lives (Canagarajah, 2006: Vaish, 2008). As such, researchers inclined towards this approach seek “to understand the connections between micro, meso, and macro processes by critically inspecting the social meanings at their interface” (McCarty, 2011, p. 10). In addition to taking an emic, or local perspective, researchers taking a critical approach to ethnography also “align themselves with the post-Enlightenment philosophical tradition in orienting knowledge as non-foundational, socially constructed, and implicated in power differences” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 156).

For the purposes of documenting the dominant discourses of English as experienced and articulated by local people, ethnographically-informed methods provide greater access to local knowledge, as compared to, for example, more traditionally empirical psycho-social approaches as discussed under the heading of language attitudes above. A key objective of this thesis was to test the suitability of a theoretical framework for the discussion of English as scaled in local spaces. This

objective also fits with the idea of ethnographic research as a comparative endeavor: if this framework proves useful, then it can be extended from this particular locale and applied to English in contexts around the world (Watson-Gegeo, 1988).

Ethnographic research typically involves long-term observation in the field, interviews, and document collection (McCarty, 2011), which allows for the triangulation of data as a means of cross checking findings (Canagarajah, 2006). Recent technological advances have made it possible for much of this interview and document collection work to now be conducted from a distance, using telecommunications and internet technologies. For this research, data were collected via VOIP (*Skype*) and email. My own experiences living and working in the ELT industries in Okinawa serve as a background and partial substitute for observations in the field. However, I am quick to stress that this is not, strictly speaking, ethnographic research. Rather than providing a detailed and comprehensive picture of English use in Okinawa, this thesis has the more modest objective of demonstrating Blommaert's conceptual framework as a viable alternative to existing approaches to describing and examining English in the world. As such, the empirical component of this thesis is more correctly described as an exploratory case study, and serves as a preamble for a more expansive and thorough ethnographic research project.

Most definitions of case study research refer to it as the examination of phenomena within a bounded system (Duff, 2008; Merriam, 2009). Merriam describes case study research as: *particularistic* in that it is focused on a particular phenomenon; *descriptive*, in that its goal is rich and thick description; and *heuristic*, in that it "illuminate[s] the reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study"

(2009, pp. 43-44). In this thesis, I focus on the English language in the lives of five young Okinawans, deriving my description from two different forms of data for cross checking purposes. While providing the first steps towards an understanding of the phenomenon of English in Okinawa more generally, as mentioned above, the main focus of this study is to build and test theory for subsequent research (Duff, 2008).

4.2 Background

The inspiration for pursuing this research came from my experiences living and working as an ELT in Okinawa. I initially went to Okinawa as a novice language teacher with very little knowledge of both ELT and the local culture and linguistic ecology. Before embarking, I assumed that Okinawans would be more comfortable with and speak much more English than the rest of the country as a result of sixty years of American military presence. I also assumed language teaching to be a relatively unproblematic process that required little awareness of local culture, experience and knowledge. After a period of acculturation and adaptation, I realized that my assumptions on both counts did not fit with actual practice. Three years later, on returning to Canada for professional development first in the form of a TESL certificate, followed by an MA in applied linguistics, I was introduced to the field of language policy and planning, and in particular, the research area of English as a global language. While this academic literature described a wealth of useful vocabulary and a wide range of concepts for the study of the position and function of English around the world, as with my experiences, I also felt that much of this discussion and theory fell short of capturing the complexity of what I had actually observed while living in Okinawa.

While my time as an expatriate in Okinawa cannot completely replace careful and focused ethnographic fieldwork, it does, coupled with my experience as a graduate student, provide a meaningful frame for this predominantly theory-building research project.

4.3 Sampling, Recruiting, and Participants

On receiving ethics clearance from Carleton University in November 2010 I began the process of recruiting participants (a copy of the ethics clearance can be found in Appendix A). I used a form of purposeful non-probability sampling known as snowball sampling (Merriam, 2009). Initially I planned to recruit participants from the very specific cohort of Okinawans under the age of twenty-five who were recent university graduates. I had two reasons for these criteria. First, I considered these young people as likely to have made the transition from tertiary education to the workplace recently and as a result to be in the process of situating English in their lives outside of the language learning classroom. Straddling both of these worlds with their classroom experiences still in recent memory, this cohort is well positioned to comment on how well they consider the highly regulated Japanese English language education system has prepared them for the workplace. Second, these young people are of a generation which is likely to have maximal exposure to and rationale for learning and using English in years to come. As such, they are likely to have invested considerably in the language learning process.

Recruitment was carried out first via a form email (see Appendix B) explaining the project which was sent out to a number of my ELT colleagues in Okinawa. I initially asked the following criteria of my participants: 1) Okinawan

Table 2. Biographical Profiles of Participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Hometown</i>	<i>Public English Education</i>	<i>Current Occupation</i>	<i>Tests Taken</i>	<i>Time Spent Abroad</i>
Hiromi	25	Naha	Tertiary	Japanese Language Teacher	EIKEN	-
Mika	25	Nago	Tertiary	English Language Teacher	EIKEN, TOEIC, TOEFL	English study in Colorado, one year
Saya	23	Nishihara	Tertiary	Receptionist at private English conversation school	EIKEN, TOEIC	English study in San Francisco, two months
Setsuko	30	Hiroshima	Secondary	Unemployed	EIKEN, TOEIC	English study in Ottawa, one month; Vacations in Guam and Hawaii
Yuki	25	Nago	Tertiary	City Hall Clerk	EIKEN, TOEIC	English study in Los Angeles, one month; English study in Toronto, ten months

native or long-term resident 2) between 20 and 25 years old, 3) university graduate, 4) comfortable interviewing in English. I deliberately worded this last point so as not to require an external benchmark of proficiency. When this resulted in very few responses, I created a recruiting website using an online widget-based creator (*Weebly*), which I then circulated via a social networking site (*Facebook*), a local English language newspaper (*Japan Update*), and posters at private English conversation schools in Naha and Ginowan. Despite these efforts I was still forced to relax my age and education criteria to enable me to find participants.

Five participants agreed to participate in this project (for brief biographical profiles see Table 2). There are a number of commonalities among the participants: All five are women ranging in age from 23-30 and currently living in Okinawa; of the five, four are university graduates; although four are of Okinawan ancestry, one was born in Japan and moved to Okinawa with her parents as a young child. Each of them has taken a standardized English language proficiency test with most of them having taken two or more tests; and all but one have participated in English study abroad programmes.

4.4 Data Collection

Data were collected from both interviews and solicited English usage journals. In this section I describe these collection methods in detail.

4.4.1 Interviews

Merriam (2009) identifies three different types of interviews: highly structured or standardized; semi-structured; and unstructured and informal. The choice of a particular type of interview can often be seen as reflecting philosophical or disciplinary orientation (Merriam, 2009). For example, highly structured interviews can be seen as “the oral form of a written survey” and are typically designed for the purposes of quantitative measurement (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). A looser structure is more common for qualitative or ethnographic research, depending on the research objectives. I chose to conduct a hybrid of the semi-structured and unstructured types. In terms of structure, I was looking for a certain set of biographical information from all of my participants including: age, current occupation, and standardized English tests taken. However, as this was exploratory

research, I did not begin interviews with a predetermined set of questions as I wanted to give as much voice and authority to my participants as possible. Kvale and Brinkmann refer to differing styles of interviews as either “knowledge collection” or “knowledge construction” (2009, p. 53). My interview design was focused on knowledge construction on two levels. First, I wanted my participants to “construct” a detailed description in their own terms of their experiences with English rather than have them reflect on a description of my construction. Second, I was also interested in not only these experiences but in *how* they reported these experiences to me. In this way I could gain insight into how some of the dominant discourses of English in Okinawa are constructed and disseminated at the micro level.

Interviews were conducted via Skype during the winter of 2011. Each participant was interviewed once for forty to sixty minutes, and the audio VOIP feed was recording using audio recording software (*Wiretap Pro*). All interviews were conducted in English. Although participants were given the option of answering questions in Japanese, none chose to do so. As per university ethics guidelines, informed consent was received at the start of each interview. Audio recordings were then transcribed using a holistic format based on turns in conversation (Duff, 2008). Notes were also taken by the researcher during the interviews.

4.4.2 Journals

A recently developed method of qualitative data collection involves the researcher asking participants to keep a journal or diary for a specified period of time (Dornyei, 2007; Merriam, 2009). These solicited journals allow the researcher access to insider accounts in a “systematic and controlled way” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 156).

As an additional form of data as well as a cross-check for the interviews, I asked each participant to keep a journal recording each time they used English on two random days, including the purpose, context, duration, and any evaluative comments. While this aspect of my research was inspired in part by Seargeant (2009) and shares similarities with his design, his rationale was to “provide empirical data about the intensity of the visual and oral display of English in contemporary Japanese society” (p. 135), whereas my focus was language in use more generally rather than specifically on display. At the end of each interview participants were given oral instructions for this journal. Written instructions followed via email a few days later (see Appendix C for a copy of this email). While I suggested a number of general categories (based on Seargeant, 2009) for organizing their entries, I left the rest of the structure and formatting to the participants, as I wanted them to “construct” a picture of their daily English usage in their own terms. All five of my participants completed these journals.

4.5 Data Analysis

As mentioned above, interview recordings were transcribed holistically for content based on the unit of a turn in conversation; I also took the turn as the unit of discourse segmentation for my data analysis of these transcriptions. I took each entry as a unit of data analysis for the journals.

The first stage of analysis involved the construction of categories based on various scale levels as identified in a preliminary examination of the data. It is important to note here that the choice of these scale levels was arbitrary, and based on the desired degree of delicacy in examination, further scales could have been added to

this list. After the construction of these categories, I examined each unit looking for evidence of discourses of English – that is to say, content or structural features which indicated any sort of opinion, attitude, belief, stance, or behaviour - which reflect a way of conceiving or ideational notion of English. These categories then became my codes or themes, which I visually mapped onto the various scale levels. While completing this second stage of analysis, it became evident that a number of these discourses could be seen as being rooted in one scale level but also as affecting another, typically lower, scale level. Following Blommaert (2010) I posit that these connections between scale levels can be seen as the routes by which discourses travel. Although discourses can then be traced to their points of origin (i.e. indexed) in the various scale levels it is also important to view these discourses and their scale level categories as mutually constitutive. In this way the process of the dissemination of discourses can be mapped onto contextual (i.e. historical) features in Okinawa (for example), but their construction and perpetuation cannot be seen as an exclusive result of these features. Finally, I compared these scaled discourses as themes to the dominant discourses identified in the four studies reviewed in Chapter 3.

As exploratory research with the objective of testing a theoretical framework, this research does not provide a thorough compilation or complete description (Merriam, 2009) of all of the dominant discourses of English in Okinawa. As such, it cannot claim to present a complete picture of the function of English in the lives of these participants or in Okinawans generally. Rather, its purpose is to test the feasibility of this framework for more extensive research.

Chapter Five – Biographical Narratives

One way of gaining a deeper understanding of the position and function of English in the lives of participants in a particular context is to document and analyze their personal narratives and life histories with the language (Murray, 2008). This chapter features summaries of each of these participants' accounts of her personal history and relationship with English, as well as their attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of English use in Okinawa more generally.

5.1 Saya Oshiro

Saya Oshiro, 23, was born in Nishihara, a town on the southeast coast of Okinawa. She graduated from Okinawa International University two years ago, majoring in Linguistics and Japanese Language and Culture. Her English studies began as an elementary school student and when asked about her experiences as a learner she had the following to say:

I just hated English because it was a different language of course. I have no idea how to pronounce and the grammar is totally different. Japanese English class sucks: so boring, so I don't like it.

Her attitude changed when she began university as she then thought that she would need English for her career plans of becoming a Japanese language teacher. While at university she participated in a study abroad programme for two months in San Francisco. At the same time as studying English at university she studied in a private conversation school.

Saya presently works as a receptionist/salesperson at a national chain of private English language schools in Naha. Her duties, which include selling and

booking lessons to Japanese students, are carried out almost exclusively in Japanese, but the job does provide occasional contact with native English speakers who work as instructors at the school: “Sometimes they talk to me to teach me English. So nice”.

She is currently studying English on her own using preparatory materials for the EIKEN test (a domestic standardized proficiency test affiliated with MEXT), but told me she has little desire to take the actual test. Saya still hopes to become a Japanese teacher, and when I asked why she thought she needed English for this job she had this to say about her prospective students:

Maybe [they will be from, for example,] Malaysia, or Thailand. So people who learn Japanese, they are beginner, I can't use Japanese maybe in their beginner. I have to use English or another language, so I think English is better.

In my experience as an ELT in Japan I often heard this argument, which reflects the mainstream practice in the Japanese public education system of teaching language via another language. Interestingly, it also reflects an assumption that Japanese learners from other Asian countries are likely able to speak English.

When I asked Saya about the need for English in Japan generally, we had this exchange:

SO – Recently Japanese companies need English [speakers]. Did you hear of Rakuten, or another big company Uniqlo?

JL – Yes.

SO – They will use English in the company, so maybe if I couldn't be Japanese teacher I need for a job like that.

JL – If you had a job working for Uniqlo why would you need English?

SO – I have no idea. Because they will change it, language. I don't know why they don't want to use Japanese. Maybe they will hire foreigners, that's why they have to use English in this company.

Saya believes there is an increasing need for English in the workplace in Japan, but is unsure of why and how it is being implemented. When I asked whether she perceived a need for English in Okinawa specifically, she was unsure, but after thinking for a moment conceded that Okinawans who work in service jobs where they are likely to have American clientele perhaps need English.

Overall, Saya considers her use of English to be predominantly connected to language learning practices, aside from occasional conversations with American colleagues at work.

5.2 Hiromi Arakaki

Hiromi is 25 years old, and was born in Naha, the capital city of Okinawa prefecture. She currently lives in Ginowan City, which is also the home of the controversial base MCAS Futenma. At the moment, she is pursuing a degree in Education and Psychology at the Open University of Japan part time by distance learning, while also working as a Japanese teacher at a private language school. At this school she teaches foreigners from diverse backgrounds, including Americans, Brazilians, and Filipinos. She had the opportunity to teach a number of courses in Japanese at Okinawa International University a few years ago, and she plans to become accredited so she can get a permanent job at the university when she completes her degree.

Hiromi's English studies began when she was in the second or third grade of elementary school, but after a few years she stopped: "I got bored", she explained. Her attitude changed when she got to high school, where she reports having enjoyed studying the language as it was easier for her than the other subjects. At this time she completed the second highest level of EIKEN tests.

When I asked her where or when she uses English, she reported:

Maybe once a week or twice a week. In my class. My students. Some students are Americans, so sometimes they don't know Japanese, and I explain and I use some English.

This use of English for teaching Japanese echoes Saya's comments above. Hiromi also noted that she used English for a number of other less frequent functions, including: watching movies and reading newspapers online for study purposes. In addition, she occasionally meets and chats with American, British and New Zealander friends living in Okinawa.

Hiromi has never travelled abroad, but hopes one day to visit Hawaii and Australia to study English. She articulates her need for English in terms of her career as a Japanese teacher. She sees English not only as a tool for communicating with students who can't speak Japanese, but also as a means of establishing empathy with her learners about the difficulties and long-term commitment of second language learning. When asked about the general need for English in Okinawa, she replied that it is "not important and not necessary", except perhaps for those who hope to work on bases.

5.3 Setsuko Sato

Setsuko was born in Hiroshima, and is thirty years old. She moved with her parents to Nanjo City in southeast Okinawa at four years of age. She is currently unemployed, but until recently worked at the local branch office of IBM as a financial analyst.

As with all Japanese children, Setsuko studied English in junior high and high school, but at the time was not interested in learning the language at all. She claims this is likely due to the fact that she lived in a part of the island where very few foreigners travel, and there are no U.S. military bases. After she graduated from high school she did not go to university, but instead returned to the Hiroshima area and went to a kimono making school. After she completed this course, she returned to Okinawa, and began to study English in earnest. When I asked her why, she replied:

I have a Japanese friend, and she lives in Okinawa City. She really likes English so it is a good chance to study English with a partner. At the same point, I got American friend. She can speak Japanese, but I want to understand what she say in English. The third reason is I like to dance, so I started taking salsa dance lessons. Dance instructor is foreigner [Puerto Rican] so I wanted to understand what he says in his class.

She also began to study at a local conversation school in Naha close to where she lived. It was at this school that Setsuko met Hiromi, and although neither of them attends this school anymore, they meet occasionally to chat and practice their English over coffee.

After studying on her own and at conversation school for about five years, Setsuko took the TOEIC test, which led to her working at IBM. While at this job she occasionally used English to communicate with co-workers in the Tokyo office whom she identified as American and Indian nationals. She is currently looking for a new job which will allow her to use her English as she enjoys what she considers to be the directness of English – “English is forward” – as opposed to Japanese. She is very interested in intercultural contact and has travelled extensively, to places such as Guam, Hawaii, Italy and France. She also spent a month studying English in Ottawa.

Another occasional activity which allows her to use her English is volunteer work for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) taking foreign specialists and volunteers on sightseeing tours around Okinawa and explaining Okinawan culture, all in English. When asked about the origins of these participants, she replied: “usually American”.

Although Setsuko sees little difference between Okinawa and the other prefectures in terms of a local need for English, she did mention that for some concerned citizens in Okinawa, knowing English gives them access to information about developments in relocation plans for the bases in both languages. Ultimately, however, she considers the need for English in Okinawa as an individual choice:

If people want to work for Americans of course they need to speak English, but I think it depends on people, and depends on what people choose.

Of the five participants interviewed here, Setsuko is the only one who expressed a current interest in learning or using a language other than English. She is learning Spanish in preparation for her dream of travelling to various Latin American

countries to study dance. In this way, in contrast with the other women profiled here, Setsuko actively engages with multilingualism rather than the narrower binary of English/Japanese bilingualism referred to by Kubota and McKay as “double monolingualism” (2009).

5.4 Yuki Shimabukuro

Yuki was born in Nago, a tourist town in northern Okinawa, and is twenty-five years of age. She grew up there and after graduating from high school attended Waseda University in Tokyo – one of the most prestigious private universities in the country. She was admitted through a scholarship programme for students with outstanding achievement in high school, and as a result was exempt from taking the battery of university entrance examinations typically required of Japanese high school students.

Yuki began studying English in junior high school, at the same time attending evening classes at the local branch of a national conversation school chain. She majored in Economics in university, and was required to take business English classes in her first two years. This is how she described these studies:

I didn't think I need to study English to get a job, but I just like studying English. You know, speaking in English. I just wanted to go abroad. Actually I didn't like to study economics English. I just liked conversations. It's too difficult and boring.

When I asked her to elaborate on liking English, she explained:

When I was in junior high I told you I went to English school. The teacher was very nice, and she takes us to American bases, and she had a friend – an

American friend – and we visited this friend’s house and played with their children. It was very fun for me and I think that was the first reason I liked English. Later, in high school, I was in an English speaking contest, and I got a prize, and then my friend got first prize, and she got a ticket to go to Los Angeles for one month and she took me. We went together... I forgot the English school’s name, but it was near Los Angeles – in Riverside – and it was really fun. At the end this trip I could say what I want to the local people in easy English.

Yuki’s brief account here demonstrates that being able to speak her mind in English, and being able to converse in English with native speakers are quite important for her as functions of the language.

After graduating from university, Yuki lived in Toronto for ten months. She studied full time at a private language school for four of these months and then took the TOIEC test; for the remaining six months she worked in a crepe shop. On returning to Japan she trained to become an English teacher, but had difficulty finding a job and lost interest in teaching as a career. She currently lives in Naha and works at city hall. The department she works in does not provide any opportunity for speaking or using English – in fact, at the time of our interview, she claimed she had not spoken English in over six months – but she hopes to transfer to another department:

If I can change department – like international communications, or peace, or something like that, to communicate with foreigners or another city in abroad – then I will use English. I want to change to that department.

When asked why, she replied: “I’m not sure, but it’s fun”. She currently studies English on her own, using CDs and a cell phone application.

Yuki does not think that English plays a large role in Okinawan daily life, with the possible exception of those who work in service industries near the bases:

The people who work at some restaurant or bar near the base need to speak English because customers are American, right? But usually, students and workers at other places – they don’t speak English. A lot of my friends don’t speak English.

However, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, she is concerned that Americans in Okinawa expect service in English, a courtesy she doesn’t think they are necessarily entitled to. In a more general sense, Yuki believes it is important for Japanese people to be able to speak and understand English:

These days, it’s very international, and many people come to Japan and people go abroad, and we need to communicate with people from other country... I think English is a good tool to get to know each other.

5.5 Mika Higa

Mika is twenty-five years of age, and like Yuki was born in Nago City. It was Yuki who put me in touch with Mika – they are high school friends. I was very interested in documenting experiences of English in Nago, as the northern half of the island is much more rural than the southern half. I was curious as to whether this would facilitate more contact with the American forces stationed in the area. This proved not to be the case. When I asked Mika about it, she replied that there is very little for Americans to do in Nago, so they rarely venture off base locally. She

suggested that when they do make excursions for shopping and entertainment, they are more likely to travel south to Chatan, to American-friendly areas such as Hamby Town.

Mika completed post-secondary education at the local University of the Ryukyus two years ago, majoring in English Language Studies and Education, training to be a teacher of English as a Foreign Language in the Japanese public school system. For her final year at university, she scored high enough on the TOEFL test to qualify for a funded exchange semester abroad. She spent nine months in Colorado studying in an intensive programme for international students.

Mika first began her English studies at the age of twelve, when she was in the sixth grade. She continued to study the language throughout her secondary years, supplemented with occasional private lessons with her aunt, who lived in Hawaii for a number of years. These lessons consisted mostly of reading exercises, but sometimes included oral recitation. While she was in high school and university Mika took the EIKEN, TOEFL, and TOEIC tests; although she took the TOEIC test for no particular reason – “kind of like for fun” – she was required to complete the second highest level of EIKEN tests in order to become an English teacher. She currently studies on her own preparing for the highest level of EIKEN tests.

For the past year, Mika has been teaching English at a high school in Uruma City, but will transfer to a school in Naha for the new school year. Unlike the other participants I interviewed, Mika differentiated between language study, classroom use and other forms of English use. When I asked her how often she used English she said:

MH – We have an ALT [an American from Vermont] in our school, so she comes to our school twice a week, so in actual terms of speaking I use English twice a week.

JL – What about study?

MH – I don't have enough time to study English right now, but I'm trying to make time to study for the first grade EIKEN test. Mostly these days I prepare for classes, to teach students.

JL – That doesn't count?

MH – Preparing lessons is English study? (*laughs*) I don't think so. It's mostly in Japanese.

Based on her recent experiences as an English language teacher, Mika blames the lack of English proficiency in Okinawa on the national curriculum and the approach to language learning that it fosters:

We need more time to study English and in different ways. We now have three times a week English classes for high school students. That's not enough. They have to study so much grammar, but we need more time to communicate with other people.

These comments suggest that, similarly to Yuki and Setsuko, Mika values English conversation above other forms, and she considers conversation as more authentic English than classroom English.

Also similarly to Yuki, Mika sees one function of English in Okinawa as a tool for monitoring American activity. But when I asked her if she thought the presence of the bases increased the need or desire for English, we had this exchange:

MH – Some people are interested in speaking English because they think it's cool to communicate with the American people on bases, and some people are, you know, very interested in foreign people and speaking English.

JL – And what do you think?

MH – I think it's ok. As a teacher, it's a good chance to motivate them to learn English.

JL – And do you think this is going to increase? Do you think more and more Okinawans are going to learn and use English more often?

MH – It's hard... I don't think so, because I'm now teaching high school students and they are very interested in not English but Korean (*laughs*).

JL – Interesting. Why?

MH – There are a lot of Korean pop stars in Japan.

This quotation neatly illustrates beliefs that Mika has both about English and English learning for Okinawans. Even though as an English teacher she welcomes opportunity for students to access input and practice with the language, she demonstrates an awareness of their desires as learners, and is careful about overstating claims of the importance of English in Okinawa, Japan, and indeed the world. At the conclusion of our interview, she noted:

Now there are a bunch of people who speak English in the world, but in the future, I think Chinese and Spanish speaking people will increase.

Chapter Six – Themes and Discussion

6.1 Themes and Scales

A number of themes emerged from the interview and journal data which provide insight into the position and value of English as it is both perceived and experienced by these five women. By presenting and examining them with reference to different scales-levels, it becomes possible to situate them within their particular contexts and trace their orientations and/or affinities to various centres as sources of normativity and authority.

6.2 English as Personal Freedom

Several of the participants expressed belief in the idea of English as facilitating a kind of personal freedom or liberation. Both Setsuko and Hiromi describe English as more “open”, “direct”, and “free” than Japanese. Setsuko explains:

When I have to speak English my personality changes. If I speak English I have to say my opinions directly.

Hiromi echoed this sentiment, providing a contrast with Japanese:

In English I am more open, and cheerful. When I talk Japanese, I’m very polite and quietly.

When I asked Setsuko how she felt about this perceived quality of the language she responded strongly:

I want to speak English all day every day. I want to forget Japanese. For a while I want to forget Japanese.

To be sure, there is a certain amount of hyperbole to this last claim, but taken together, all of these comments present both an idea of and stance towards English which can be interpreted as orienting to two different scale levels. First, these types of utterances reflect a highly personal engagement with the language. It is perhaps possible to see a type of ‘self-othering’ at work here, which has its roots in the most local centre of authority: the individual. However, it is rare that beliefs of this nature exist or are developed in complete absence of external forces; typically they are influenced to a certain degree by the cultural contexts in which they are formed.

A second level of interpretation highlights this liberation as the liberation from a particular cultural and linguistic context, which in this case, these women find limits their self-expression. These women can be seen as using English as a means to momentarily step outside of their identities as Japanese and be free from the norms of this national identity. This theme is identified by other researchers, notably Ryan (2009), who argues that this desire for personal liberation from nationally prescribed modes of being is perhaps stronger among women. In this way, Japanese speakers of English around the country who hold this belief use English to break free of the types of constraints that are often articulated in primordial nationalist or *nihonjinron* discourse (Gottlieb, 2008).

6.3 English as a Tool for Monitoring American Activity Locally

All of the participants were quick to link the English language to American military activity on the island, and Setsuko and Mika both referred specifically to using English as a tool for getting information about developments in base relocation plans and processes. They also spoke of English as a means of accessing a more

complete picture of the problems or conflicts between the population of the bases and the local population. As Setsuko suggested:

There are many American bases. There are many problems with American base so we need to understand about the situation. We can get Japanese information, but its difficult to get all the information in Japanese, so we... because if language is different, so meaning is different, so I think its better to understand the language of Americans to learn about the situation.

Similarly, Mika noted:

There are a lot of American people, so if you can speak English you can find out about these people. It gives you a lot of information about what they doing with bases.

Both of these comments illustrate the division between American soldiers and Japanese living on the island. Based on my personal experience, many Okinawans live within sight of base lands that they have never set foot on and have little knowledge of the activities that take place behind the fences. A number of my former students repeatedly mentioned long-standing questions about the storage of nuclear materiel on the island during discussions in class, and wondered how close this materiel may have been to their homes.

These women see the bases as undesirable, and both expressed hope that they could be relocated in their lifetimes. In these comments they connect local American military activity to the English language; furthermore, when Setsuko refers to “the language of Americans” she is expressing a stance towards that particular variety of English while at the same time distancing herself from it. The function of English that

surfaces in these comments is not a desire for international or intercultural communication on a shared footing. What is being described here is a one-way flow of information from Americans, in *their* language, to Okinawans. It is, however, important to stress here that this is not the sole use of English – indeed none of the functions identified as themes here are – rather, it is one among many, and comments of this nature in the interviews must be considered as fluid, reflecting language as a resource situated in particular spaces and times.

6.4 English as an Imposition

While the discussion above refers to concerns specifically about American military activity, there were a number of other more general comments and observations made by the participants about the use of English locally off-base by a wider range of actors, including soldiers' families, civilian contractors and other affiliated expatriates. As Hiromi noted:

I think some older Okinawan people don't like to hear English in shops such as Main Place [An indoor shopping mall in Naha]. They maybe don't like to remember the bases is there.

A similar sentiment was expressed in the comment from Yuki cited in Chapter 3 as an example demonstrating Blommaert's toolkit. She claimed that many Americans in Okinawa presumed they would be served in English in restaurants, whereas they did not have this expectation in other parts of Japan. Yuki felt that this was an inappropriate expectation, saying, "They can't force Okinawa people to speak their language".

Both of these comments indicate not only negative stance towards the use of English in public, but as with the theme above, the connection of this language to a particular group of its native speakers. What we see here is a particular local perspective on the English language as it indexes to a specific group of speakers and their actions. The reason why English is viewed as an imposition by Yuki and the older Okinawans that Hiromi mentioned is because, for them, it is more than just a language: it also represents a collection of long-standing local grievances they have about the history of American presence in Okinawa.

6.5 English as Benign / No Threat to Local Languages

During the interviews, I asked each of the participants to describe her relationship with Uchinaguchi, the dominant variety of Ryukyuan languages on Okinawa. While none of them said they were able to speak this language, a few of them acknowledged occasional exposure and passive knowledge. Mika:

I can't speak, but I can understand...probably seventy percent.... my grandparents speak Uchinaguchi to my parents, but not to us.

Setsuko commented: "When I work with old Okinawan people they talk Uchinaguchi", and Hiromi reported, "In my family my grandparents speak Uchinaguchi but outside they talk Japanese".

When I asked whether she thought English was a contributing factor in the decline of the use of Uchinaguchi, Yuki explained:

Japanese is bad for Uchinaguchi, not English. It's not effect on Uchinaguchi in Okinawa, but my grandparents know a lot of bad words or phrases in

English, like ‘son of a bitch’ so they learned these kinds of phrases from the Americans. But I don’t think these phrase affect Uchinaguchi.

This account goes against the common assumption that English invariably contributes to attrition and shift from indigenous or minority languages (Blommaert, 2010). At the local scale-level in Okinawa English today remains a relatively insignificant language, coming in a likely distant third after Japanese and Uchinaguchi in terms of numbers of current speakers. Yuki’s story about her grandparents is also telling, with their knowledge of English reduced to a handful of bad words and phrases learned from soldiers. Ironically, later in the interview when I asked about the role of Japanese in the decline of Uchinaguchi, her response was sadly quite similar:

For my generation Japanese is our language, so we don’t think anything about Japanese language. Uchinaguchi is kind of slang for us.

6.6 English as Conversation (with Native Speakers)

This topic appeared repeatedly in both interview and journal data, and is closely linked to the topic of English as an object of study which I discuss below. Four of the five participants had a tendency to equate English with conversation, ignoring for the most part a wide range of other symbolic or instrumental functions of the language. It seemed that the question “When do you use English?” was often interpreted as “When do you speak English?” When I noticed this trend was happening in the earlier interviews, I became more attentive to my language in later interviews and noted these subtle shifts in verb choices on the part of the participants. For example, when I asked Yuki how often she *uses* English, she responded, “Last

time I spoke English was like half years ago”. I had to prompt her with a number of examples before I discovered that she also watches many hours of American television programs weekly, often without Japanese subtitles. (Because of the size of the island and the location of the bases, many Okinawans are able to receive *American Forces Network (AFN)* television broadcasts in their homes).

This tendency to equate English with conversation was also evident in the journals, where conversations constituted by far the majority of instances of English use recorded. It is also noteworthy that, with the exception of Setsuko’s Puerto Rican dance instructor, all interlocutors were native speakers: indeed many of these conversations were with current or former ELTs, as unsurprisingly four out of five of the women interviewed either presently or at one time or another studied English at one of the large national chain private language schools.

Sergeant (2009) noted a similar type of trend towards a narrow conception of English in his diary study, when his participants failed to include the English text featured on signs and packaging and in advertisements that is ubiquitous in Japan. By way of explanation he suggests Irvine and Gal’s term ‘erasure’ to describe an ideological process which “renders certain aspects of sociolinguistic usage invisible in order to constrain the interpretation of linguistic behaviour to a particular stereotype” (Sergeant, 2009, p. 139).

This stereotype of English as conversation is pervasive across the country and is often attributed to commercial ELT industries (Gottlieb, 2008; Kachru, 2005). One place that this can be seen is in the nomenclature. Private conversation schools are often simply referred to as *eikaiwa* (conversation), for short. Many of these

companies employ large-budget ad campaigns which feature international celebrities as potential conversation partners, perpetuating the notion of English use as conversation with a native speaker (Kachru, 2005; Seargeant, 2009). (In 2006, this researcher worked for a now defunct national chain which made this claim central to their advertising literature.) In addition, while recent MEXT policies have attempted to bridge the gap between *juken Eigo* (test English) and *eikaiwa* (Butler & Iino, 2005), it is possible that this move to promoting conversation in the classroom inadvertently validates the discourses of learning associated with private sector ELT. It is not surprising then, that these five women orient towards a notion of English that is dominant positioned as a national discourse.

6.7 English as an Object of Study

Closely linked to the idea of English as conversation perpetuated by ELT industries was the repeated reference to English as an object of study. In the same way that participants answered general questions about language with accounts of conversation, I also often received detailed descriptions of language study practices in response to these general questions. For example, Hiromi responded to the question “When and where do you use English?” with:

Sometimes I study from newspapers. Like Okinawa newspapers. Do you know *Japan Update*? I practice from there.

Setsuko recorded the following details about watching a movie in her journal:

[I] watched a DVD at my place for four hours. First I tried to watch it in English then I watched it in Japanese. Friend of mine recommended to watch movie in English with subtitle. It is a fun way to study English.

It is telling that when these two women refer to their consumption of media in English, they frame this consumption in terms of language acquisition.

All of the participants currently engage in some sort of language study practices, and most reported that they wished they had more time to study, or confessed that they had been neglectful of their studies lately. While this sentiment could have been prompted in part by my identity as a native English speaker who they know to be an English teacher (another claim I often heard was how fun studying English is), it also points to the dominance of the role that English as an object of study plays in their lives in comparison with other functions. Further evidence for this is that all the women have taken a number of standardized tests, and Setsuko, Yuki and Mika have all taken one of these tests in recent years – outside of the obligations of the public education system. While Setsuko and Yuki hope to use English in the workplace in a future job, currently they do not, and English study represents the bulk of their time spent with the language.

There are a number of possible interpretations as to how English came to be positioned in this manner in these women's lives. Considering the method of sampling that I used for this study, it is possible that I attracted participants from a particular demographic who would be predisposed to consider English primarily as an object of study. In this way, my recruitment materials could have been seen by them as another opportunity for language practice. But even if this reading accurately describes what happened, it still raises questions about access to the language. If these women have to resort to being interviewed via *Skype* from abroad for English practice, this perhaps says something about the amount of spoken English around

them in their day-to-day lives. (Remember again that Yuki claimed to have not spoken English for six months, and as she noted about her friends, it was not an issue that many of them do not speak English at all.) What this focus on language as study suggests then is that these women have little opportunity to use English outside of the classroom or for independent study activities. This local constraint likely plays a significant role in constructing and defining their relationships with English.

However, while local factors contribute to this particular discourse of English, it is by no means unique to Okinawa. It is also possible to trace this prominence of the idea of English as an object of study to a national culture of English language learning, as reflected in, for example, the fact that Japan has “the largest commercial English language education market in the world” (Gottlieb, 2008, p. 155). Viewed in this way, these women can be seen as participants in a national pastime.

6.8 English as a Language of Employment and Employment Opportunities

English was often connected to the workplace by these participants, but for the most part this connection was made in the discussion of potential rather than actual use. Of the five, currently only Mika, a high school English teacher, uses the language in a formal capacity on a regular basis in the workplace. Hiromi and Saya both communicate in English at work on occasion and casually; Setsuko and Yuki hope to use English at a future job.

Setsuko did have experience with using English in the workplace at a past position. When I asked her about the function of English in her office, she reported it as infrequent: she occasionally had brief conversations with American and Indian co-workers in the Tokyo office by telephone for the purposes of making simple requests,

and a portion of her job training booklet was written in English. Her comments corroborate a common claim that in Japan large companies often expect their employees to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in English, but in practice this proficiency (typically measured in the form of a TOEIC test) is only rarely put to use (Gottlieb, 2008).

When I asked the women about the necessity of English in the workplace in Okinawa generally, Hiromi reported:

Some of my friends works for American base in jobs in restaurants. They sometimes need English to talk to the American boss.

Mika said:

MH – There are not a lot of jobs related to English here, which you need to use English. If you go to mainland Japan, I think there are more jobs.

JL – What jobs?

MH – I've never lived in mainland Japan so I can't say for sure. Maybe interpreter, translator, business people?

Hiromi and Yuki spoke of the value of English in terms of access to work around the world, but when asked to elaborate could not really provide me with any details beyond making vague reassurances that English is an international language spoken by many people.

All of the comments noted above confirm a number of my own observations from the time I lived in Okinawa. While working at a conversation school, I had many students who either worked on base or in jobs connected to the bases in some way. With the exception of those who worked in customer service (one former

student was a cashier at Taco Bell) it seemed that on base knowledge of English was more of a gesture of goodwill than an actual requirement or medium of communication in the workplace. One student (an engineer) described the chain of command at his office as two parallel structures that were linked only at the very top.

The similar nature of the remarks made about English in the workplace in the interviews, and the almost complete absence of recorded use in the journals, demonstrates that for these women (with the exception of Mika), in this locale English in the workplace plays a minor and/or symbolic role and is only rarely used as a necessary medium of communication. Mika's suggestion about the possible need for interpreters and translators in the main islands hints at an awareness that elsewhere, i.e. not out here in the periphery, English is used as a different kind of more integrated resource. Similarly, Hiromi and Yuki's comments about English being an international language indicate a belief in English as a means of access to a world outside of Japan; however, their lack of knowledge or ability to expand on this reveals how they are currently confined to the local scale-level contrary to hopeful claims in the literature about globalization equalizing the global spread of English. While they are aware of the discourses of English as an international language of the workplace, this awareness is not based on local experience; rather, it is based on these discourses having trickled down from higher scale levels. I discuss this theme of English as an international language in more detail below.

6.9 English as the Language of American Popular Culture

English and English language use were repeatedly connected to the consumption of American popular culture by these five women. Their references to

American movies, television shows, and pop music were often quite specific: Movies that were explicitly named included *Shopaholic*, and *Burlesque*; television shows included *Ugly Betty*, *Friends*, and *Prison Break*; and pop music artists included Justin Bieber, Taylor Swift, Ne-Yo, Lady Gaga, and Avril Lavigne. With the exception of the movie *Shopaholic*, which as I noted above, Setsuko adapted to English study purposes, these media were described as having been consumed in much the same manner as a young American in their twenties in Oklahoma or Ohio. Yuki explains: “I often watch TV, English shows like all day Saturday and Sunday”. Similarly, Mika noted in her journal: “Listened to Ne-Yo’s album *Because of You* while driving from Naha to Nago”. When I asked Yuki why she watched American TV shows in English every weekend rather than Japanese TV shows, she responded, “I don’t know. It’s kind of cool. American shows are cool”. This cool factor was also mentioned by other participants in reference to English and pop culture in both interviews and journals. As Mika told me, one of the reasons why she initially embraced learning English and planned to become a high school English teacher was her love of the American vocal group Backstreet Boys.

Interest in a particular English which indexes back to America via pop culture is by no means unique to the local context and scale-level of Okinawa; it has also often been noted in research in mainland Japan (for example, Matsuda, 2000; Murray, 2008; Ryan, 2009). In a discussion of English in Japan, Tsuda argues that there is a strong connection between language learning and “emotional attachment to and obsessive infatuation with Western, especially American culture” (As cited in

Kachru, 2005, p. 77). Indeed, this connection of English to American culture is a common occurrence today around the non-English speaking world.

6.10 English as an International Language

Unsurprisingly, these women also explicitly referred to English as an international language. While Hiromi connected this to work: “Many people speak English so maybe it’s easy to get a job?” Setsuko chose instead to focus on opportunity in terms of language learning: “The reason is English is a common language so we can learn English everywhere, so that’s why”. This last comment was made outside of a discussion about learning – we were actually in the midst of talking about language in the workplace – so it is quite telling that she would mention this; this vocabulary choice reflects the observations recorded in the discussion of English as an object of language learning above.

When I asked Yuki why she considered English to be an international language, she responded:

I think English grammar is easier than other languages. They just have... it’s kind of simple, and I heard English have some essence from many other languages. For example, we have some Japanese words in English and we have some Japanese words from English, and other languages such like that, and it’s easier to understand.

Note the use of “I heard” here: this is not a first-hand report. The speculative nature of Hiromi and Yuki’s comments here suggests that these women’s notions of English as an international language are for the most part not based on actual knowledge and experience of English connecting diverse speakers of English from around the world.

As I have shown above, their experiences with the language are overwhelmingly limited to a) classroom use, b) contact with Americans, (i.e. English as an American language), and c) study abroad programmes (i.e. learning English as a Canadian language). These default responses which describe English as an international language instead must be seen as originating in the discourses disseminated by the education policymakers at the national scale-level, as well as by ELT academics and industries globally.

Discussion

6.11 English, Scales and Okinawa

The themes identified above describe a number of the dominant functions of and perspectives on English in Okinawa as perceived by these five young women. Reviewing these themes, it quickly becomes apparent that there is a range of different notions of English at play in their lives, operating “at very different scale levels, and with very different effects and functions” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 195). Grouping and arranging these themes by scale allows us to see this layered polycentricity at work: what emerges are perspectives on the language which can be seen as oriented toward or aligned with different orders of indexicality that ‘organize’ English as normal, appropriate, and acceptable or not in particular spaces and for particular purposes (Blommaert, 2007, p. 187).

It is important to keep in mind that scales are analytic heuristics and metaphors rather than actual or material things in the world. Thus, named scales are provisional, and the description and division of scales are highly dependent on a researcher’s objectives for a particular analysis. It is possible for any number of scales

to be identified and described based on the features of the phenomenon analyzed, and the desired delicacy of this analysis. I have situated the themes identified here on three scale levels – the local, the national, and the global – which demonstrate different orders of indexicality at work in these women’s lives, revealing the normative authorities they see themselves and others aligning with in terms of their use and valuation of English in Okinawa.

6.11.1 Local

The themes that address issues surrounding English locally all connect the language to Americans and the American presence on the island, but from slightly different standpoints, and with different functions in mind. The themes of English as a tool for monitoring American military activity and as a foreign imposition both involve these participants taking a critical and distancing stance towards the language and its native speakers. While discussing each of these topics, they explicitly identified English as an American language, and strongly asserted that American varieties have no local roots. In contrast, the comments recorded under the theme of English as benign rather than threatening to indigenous languages featured a more neutral stance. Although American varieties were again singled out here, they were described as a source of quirky slang, perhaps because of their perceived harmlessness. What is noteworthy in all three of these themes is an underlying notion of English that indexes back to American varieties governed by American norms. There is also evidence here for the often-stated claim that dispute about language is always about more than language: these local scale-level themes are informed by a long history of local conflicts and intercultural contact.

6.11.2 National

Looking at the national scale-level, a number of themes identified here corroborate with past academic research on attitudes and beliefs about the position of English in Japan (e.g., Matsuda, 2000; Seargeant, 2009), and involve orientation to ideas of English conceived and perpetuated nationally. Both English defined as conversation and as an object of language learning can be regarded as stemming from the lengthy history of Japanese education policy and its implementation in the public sector, as well as the practices and philosophies of private ELT stakeholders (Kachru, 2005; Kubota, 1998; McKenzie, 2008). While English as a gateway to personal freedom can also be seen as a national discourse, I focus in my discussion here on the two themes mentioned above.

First, foregrounding the notion of English as conversation with native speakers sustains the belief in language as a cultural artifact owned by its native speakers. Not only is this idea commonly considered to negatively affect language learning (see for example, Honna & Takeshita, 2005; Matsuda, 2003a); but, as Kubota and McKay (2009) have persuasively argued, it also promotes a narrow and classed vision of English and its speakers that does not necessarily reflect global realities. This thinking is evident in the L1 and national backgrounds of almost all of the interlocutors referenced by these women in the interviews and noted in their journals. The fact that these women valued conversation with inner circle speakers by featuring them prominently in their conceptions of English practice reveals their alignment with these beliefs.

Second, as these women describe it, they have very little opportunity for what they themselves consider to be authentic English use in their day-to-day lives: as a result the majority of their self-described English use falls into the category of language study activities. This constraint on their usage means that their engagement with the language is in large part necessarily informed by their experiences as language learners, and to a slightly lesser extent, by the language study materials available to them domestically. While the notion of English constructed by these policies, materials and the discourses that surround them could be regarded as a type of ‘Japanese English’, this is an idea that is far removed from the empowering variety of the same name described within the World Englishes paradigm (see for example, D’Angelo, 2005). Thus, although globalization has facilitated the spread of English to Japan, this English has been taken up in particular ideational ways which can best be described as situated and constructed by norms disseminated at the national scale level. As they are based on ideas or discourses rather than actual practice or exposure on the ground in contrast to the themes identified on the local scale-level, the notions of English at play here are more abstract.

6.11.3 International

How these women related to English as the language of American popular culture, English as a language of employment and employment opportunities and English as an international language suggests a more global or internationally scaled set of norms which holds considerable sway in their thinking on these topics.

American popular culture and the language that it is encoded in was exclusively discussed and noted in the interviews and journals in a positive and

unproblematic light, and American varieties used in this pop culture were often referenced as something to aspire to. This is a phenomenon that can be found around the world, as young people everywhere look up to American film and pop music icons as role models. What this entails is that American English is also taken up as the objective of language learning, and as a cultural artifact in terms of material consumption. Answering follow-up questions via email, Saya jokingly wrote that she wished she had been born of mixed parentage and was a bilingual and bi-national American-Japanese. She complained that instead she was limited to copying the accents of the American actresses she admired. Again, this reflects a particularly strong aspiration towards and alignment with a very particular variety of English. For Saya and most of the other women, American varieties of English are held in high esteem.

A number of researchers have focused on the creative and transformative potential in taking up the practices of American popular culture (for examples in Japan, see Moody, 2006; Pennycook, 2003). In my data, however, there was little evidence of this crossing and borrowing. Indeed, in my experience living in Okinawa, I found it common that young people adopted material styles and fashions (for example clothes, and haircuts) that were heavily indebted to American culture, but it was much less common for them to take up language. I question the pervasiveness and productiveness of crossing and borrowing (at least in the Okinawan context). Although it is undeniable that artists (typically rappers are cited in these types of arguments) linguistically create and perform complex new identities and ‘Englishes’ in their work, how much this trickles down into the everyday usage of most young

people is unclear and is something that warrants further research. Similarly, although there has been much discussion of English words used aesthetically on T-shirts and in advertising in Japan and other Asian countries (for example, Seargeant, 2009), how the wearers of these T-shirts reflect on them remains unclear.

When discussing the themes of English as an international language and a language of employment, local exposure and opportunity were most frequently expressed in the hypothetical or abstract by these young women. While discourses of the usefulness and global penetration of English are present and have considerable influence in the Okinawan milieu as orders of indexicality, in practice these women have little or no opportunity in their day-to-day lives to use English regularly as a means of communication, despite American military presence. Although they have absorbed the idea of EIL as the language of globalization, they do not seem to be aware of the conflicts of ownership that have arguably triggered its description and discussion in academia and in various linguistic spaces around the world. This is perhaps due again to the peripheral nature of the role that English plays in their lives, as none of them has ever seen the need to advocate for having their particular use or style of English placed on equal footing with that of other users around the world.

To sum up, at the local level, these women expressed negative and neutral stance towards an English which they explicitly connected to America. At the national level, these women discussed English largely in terms common to the national discourses of language learning. Finally, at the international level, they took up the dominant global discourses of English as world language, referring repeatedly to the language as a tool for access to hypothetical international contact and

opportunity. One noteworthy point was their approval of English as the language of American popular culture, which involved positive stance towards English as an American language in contrast with the negative stance taken at the local level.

6.12 What Does a Scaled Analysis Reveal?

As the purpose of this empirical study was to test the viability of scales as an analytic tool, I should reiterate that this analysis presents a less than complete picture of English in Okinawa and of English in these five young women's lives. However, a number of interesting observations can be made about functions and positions on English that this analytic framework reveals.

Beyond grouping the themes into scales, it is also possible to (roughly) categorize them according to whether they represent a function or use of English (for example, getting information about the bases) or a discourse, position, or way of talking about English (for example, as a local imposition). This is an imperfect division, as a number of these themes straddle both categories, but it is relevant for the discussion below.

One of first things I discovered in the data was the variation between the negative stance that the participants exhibited vis-à-vis English spoken by Americans when the discussion focused on American presence locally in Okinawa versus the lack of any negative stance when they discussed their love of American popular music and films and recorded their viewing and listening habits in their journals. The factors behind these stances seemed unremarkable, but on the surface it seemed difficult to reconcile, for example, Yuki's affront at Americans' presumption of English use locally and her weekly Saturday marathon viewings of American

programs such as *Ugly Betty* and *Friends*. Yet by situating these attitudes in their various scales it is not only possible to see Yuki taking up multiple subject positions towards American varieties of English, it is also possible to find possible explanations for them in the scaled orders that inform them. In the first case, she is speaking as a concerned Okinawan while in the second she speaks as young person of the world.

When I looked at how the stances taken for each of the themes were situated across the range of scale levels, a pattern emerged. The only place that the women expressed negative stance towards English – and here again it was specifically towards English as the language of Americans – was on the local scale-level, and can be seen as directly related to the history of language contact on the island of Okinawa. On the topic of English and the bases, these women were explicit in distancing themselves and the people of Okinawa from the language, even while simultaneously advocating for its use locally as a tool for keeping up with information about the bases.

What was present in the other levels that was not evident about the functions of English in their responses on the local scale-level was a certain amount of ambiguity and vagueness, particularly in the highest or international scale-level. An example of this is Saya's remark that for reasons unknown to her, English proficiency is necessary for working in a large company in Japan as contrasted with Yuki's clearly expressed resentment of American assumptions about local use of English. Unsurprisingly, opinions on the local scale level are rooted in concrete phenomena and events, while opinions on the national and international levels, such as those about English as a language necessary for employment around the world, are based

more on second-hand accounts and can often be discourses that originate elsewhere. Knowledge in this scaled system seems to exist on a continuum from concrete to abstract which directly matches a parallel continuum from the local to the global.

How this knowledge is harnessed or put to use reveals the power that a subject has, and can be seen when we look at these themes grouped as functions or discourses (or both) across the scale levels. Most of the local themes involved local discourses against the U.S military presence (just how local they are is accentuated by comparing them with Tokyo's stance on the bases over the years). Because these discourses are local, these five women, as locals, are experts. In contrast, the international themes of English as a language of the global workplace and EIL more generally involve discourses that these women have the less experience and knowledge of. Yet the two themes I have situated on the national scale level involve the complex interplay of discourses and functions. These discourses and functions are involved in a reciprocal relationship of continually reinforcing one another. Thus, not only did these women have notions of English primarily as conversation with native speakers and an object of language study, they also manifested and perpetuated these notions in their lives.

In Blommaert's discussion he notes that power is a key feature of scaling, where lower levels are typically empowering and higher levels disempowering (2010). A common feature of language use identified by scale analysis is the phenomenon of scale jumping, which involves one conversational partner "lifting a particular issue into a scale-level which is inaccessible to the other, as when a lawyer shifts into legalese or a doctor onto medical jargon" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 36). While

this example of scale jumping refers to linguistic phenomena, it can be adapted to metalinguistic phenomena when we consider ways in which these five women articulate opinions about language and language use which emanate from higher-level centres. Although these participants were able to inform me with confidence and authority about English locally, and could easily tell me about their language study habits, when it came to discourses such as EIL, they could not tell me with the same degree of specificity, because these discourses are not based on local knowledge. It could be argued here that they are not successfully able to make this scale jump.

Another advantage that comes with a scaled analysis is the possibility of tracing how various discourses come to be established in a particular space. By making use of a comprehensive sociolinguistic profile of the space in question with an eye to all of the relevant scale levels, it is possible to posit from where discourses about language flow. By basing analysis on the premise that there will be polycentricity or complexity in terms of numerous and sometimes competing spheres of influence, it is possible not only to describe themes but also to take preliminary steps at providing explanations for them. An example of this can be found in the theme of English as an object of study. While I initially did not know what to make of the fact that the participants kept responding to questions about general language use with comments about language learning, it was eventually possible to look for explanations for this phenomenon by considering the local and national constraints described in the sociolinguistic profile.

Predictably, much of what was uncovered in this data at the national scale-level corroborates the findings of previous studies on English in Japan. But this

corroboration is also supplemented by new knowledge about English in Okinawa with a focus on both the local and the global. Rather than choosing from a simple binary which asks whether English is beneficial or detrimental to this community, this approach compiles a complex range of its uses and the attitudes these women have towards them. Blommaert has suggested that rather than considering these phenomena as multiple manifestations of the same thing – a language, it is more usefully to consider each of these themes independently as bundles of resources or language resources (2010). In this way these participants can be seen as reporting on what they perceive as appropriate or inappropriate language resources for a variety of particular purposes rather than an abstract concept of which they have finite and incomplete knowledge. We can then also read the limits and sources of influence of these particular resources as they construct them in their discourse.

6.13 Frameworks for Understanding English in the World Revisited

It is now useful to revisit the frameworks reviewed in Chapter 3, and reevaluate them in terms of their relevance for understanding how these five women situate English in their lives and see it positioned in the lives of others in their local community.

It is not surprising that claims of the intrinsic (inherent) and extrinsic (functional) superiority of English over other languages continue to inform aspects of the popular discourse around English globally. A few of these arguments, which are representative of the framework that I have referred to using Pennycook's term colonial celebration, were alluded to by the participants, particularly in comments contrasting intrinsic qualities of English with Japanese as recorded under the theme of

English as personal freedom. These intrinsic qualities, however, were limited to the scale-level of the individual. They were not brought up in conjunction with any other comments the participants made, nor did they make any arguments for beneficial extrinsic qualities of English. Reflecting on the colonial side of the term, they repeatedly denied any sort of role of English in Okinawa as a threat or superior replacement to indigenous languages, arguing instead that colonial celebration-type behaviour has been and continues to be perpetrated in Okinawa by Japanese. This indicates that although there are traces of colonial celebration in the discourses of English at the local scale-level, there is certainly not enough to warrant its use as a theoretical framework. As such, it would only be able to provide explanations for a small minority of the activity and attitudes towards English currently present in Okinawa, and could only provide very limited understanding.

The linguistic imperialism framework, which is based on belief in the deliberate promotion of a particular language for purposes of economic, political and cultural dominance also appears to be a poor choice for capturing the Okinawan experience of English as seen by these women for largely the same reasons as colonial celebration. Indeed, both of these two frameworks are perhaps more appropriately suited for analysis of the current relationship in Okinawa between indigenous languages and Japanese rather than between either of these and English.

In the interviews none of the participants spoke of English as something which they had their own variety of, nor did they refer to a Japanese national variety. They also did not refer to other varieties of English from outside of the inner circle when identifying their past and current interlocutors in English. This silence attests to

the lack of relevance that the discussion of different varieties and their ownership has for these women, reflects their lack of knowledge of the intricacies of these higher scale-level discourses, and thus shows the world Englishes or linguistic hybridity approach to have little applicability in this context. To be fair, I should mention that much of the current research on world Englishes in Japan (for example, Matsuda, 2003a; 2003b) speaks of the need for the inclusion of varieties of world Englishes in how the language is taught around the world. The evidence here does support Matsuda's concern for the lack of awareness of these varieties in Japan; however, the intent of this research was to uncover what people in a local community think about English rather than what outsiders would like them to think or to pass judgment on local positions.

On the other hand, EIL was mentioned quite frequently by these women, and a number of them shared the assumption that visitors to Okinawa from diverse Asian locations such as The Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand would all be likely to have a certain degree of proficiency in English and would expect to use it as a *lingua franca*. But these potential interlocutors play a peripheral role in the participants' actual use of English for communication, with the bulk of their conversation exchanges happening with inner circle native speaker language teachers. A study of how English is positioned in Okinawa which endeavored to exclude native speakers would reveal a less than comprehensive depiction of what is happening on the ground at the local scale-level. As I mentioned about world Englishes in the previous paragraph, this is not to say that features, concepts and strategies of EIL, ELF and other iterations of the variety/paradigm would not be useful additions to pedagogical

practice in Japan or Okinawa, especially considering the double monolingualism that four of these women can be said to practice. These features etc. are however not part of their current understanding of how English is positioned or used locally. In a similar way, although postcolonial performativity may provide a useful perspective on scale jumping via language borrowing and crossing, this appropriation of English was simply not present in these women's reports on how they and others situate the language in Okinawa.

6.14 Looking Forward: Using Scales for Analysis of the Position and Role of English in Local Spaces Around the World

The main objective of this thesis was to test the viability of Blommaert's trilogy of concepts as a toolkit for looking at the position and role of English in local spaces around the world. One key advantage of using these concepts as a theoretical framework for this type of study is that they provide a means of examining local knowledge and experience of English from the ground up while at the same time not ignoring macro or global processes and all intermediary levels of influence and interaction in between. These concepts include: *sociolinguistic scales*, which refer to the hierarchical and stratified ranking of linguistic phenomena in the world; *orders of indexicality*, or the collection of norms, expectations, resources and standard language practices that exist at each different scale level; and *polycentricity*, where these orders can be seen as indexing to a multiplicity of centres of influence, authority and power, where their nature is in large part determined. In my empirical study of five women's perceptions of how English is situated in their lives and the lives of others in Okinawa I have demonstrated how this engagement with the language can be mapped across

multiple scale levels and how the dominant orders of indexicality in operation at each of these levels can be deduced, revealing a diversity of sources of influence at work in a particular local environment. This mapping serves to organize a rich complexity of language functions with a wide range of purposes. The richness of the picture of English in this space that emerges is a far cry from the singularities of previously used explanatory models reviewed above, but I have only scratched the surface here in terms of the productive ways that these concepts – particularly scale – can be put to work providing a richer and more complete understanding of English in the world than we currently have access to. Throughout the process of developing and applying a method of using these concepts for metalanguage analysis, a number of complexities and challenges arose. These proverbial kinks need to be ironed out for future studies of this nature.

1. Conceptual clarification is necessary. As an abstraction or metaphor, what exactly constitutes a scale is difficult to keep track of. At times it appears that the term scale refers to a particular set of observable linguistic phenomena; at other times, such as when scale jumping occurs, scale denotes the space in which language use takes place. This is especially the case in a study of this nature where the object of analysis is not linguistic phenomena, but metalinguistic phenomena - that is to say, talk about language. Because metalanguage exists at a remove from day-to-day language use in context, it may be seen as bringing its own set of scales into play, and further complicating things. Future research could perhaps sidestep this issue by focusing more on authentic linguistic phenomena in local spaces obtained

through extensive ethnographic observations and recording. These data could then be supplemented with metalinguistic data in the form of interviews and questionnaires as a form of triangulation.

2. When looking at the position of a language such as English in the world, there is not necessarily a one-to-one match between a particular discourse and a particular scale level. Arguably, certain centres of authority may influence multiple scale levels simultaneously, depending on how the field of research is divided into scales. This can make it difficult for researchers to determine which of these centres is the dominant one in a particular instance of language use or expression of stance towards one of these instances.
3. There is an issue of scope, as the mapping of a large quantity of data across many scales may quickly become difficult to manage. A small sample with very specific intent may be enough to demonstrate larger processes at work. An important question then becomes one of finding and selecting these phenomena.
4. Another concern with scale is its capability of accounting for a diversity of local experiences. While Okinawa (and Japan) are relatively homogenous locales, it is unclear as to whether vertical scales are well-suited for capturing the complexities of (for example) gender, religious or ethnic difference inside of a single local space. There is a danger that an overreliance on a geographical metaphor would blind future researchers to what falls outside of the metaphor (A similar concern has been expressed about the language ecology paradigm's treatment of language as a biological entity – see for

example, Edwards, 2001). On a related note, the vertical nature of scales may promote the tendency to stress hierarchies and their inherent power relationships at the expense of other relationships.

Despite these concerns, I believe these concepts show promise as a theoretical framework for research by helping bridge local-level language practices with global or macro-level discourses about language use. At the very least, the scaled analysis in this thesis makes it clear that existing models for understanding the position and function of English in the world are outmoded, and not flexible enough to grasp the complexities of how the language is taken up and valued (or not) in diverse local spaces around the world.

Chapter Seven – Conclusion

7.1 Research Questions Revisited

Throughout this thesis I addressed two interconnected sets of questions. One set of empirical questions considered how a group of young Okinawan women use and position English in each of their day-to-day lives and see English used and positioned in the lives of others. These data were set against the backdrop of a range of political, linguistic, economic and social factors described in a sociolinguistic profile of the island. Using a scale-based analysis it was revealed that these women simultaneously juggle a number of different notions of and stances towards English depending on context and function. It was also discovered that these notions and stances were less vague and ambiguous at the local scale-level as compared with the international scale-level, suggesting that although these participants showed an awareness of global discourses of English, these discourses have less direct effects or application in their lives than is typically thought. A number of unique local functions of English were found to be connected to concerns about local U.S. military activity, while unsurprisingly, several other functions and conceptions which have been identified elsewhere in the literature on English in Japan were corroborated.

A second set of more theoretical questions asked how the findings of this study support or challenge five dominant frameworks currently used for discussion and research of the role of English in the world, as well as two approaches for looking at metalanguage data more generally. I have shown that not only does the majority of research on English in Japan to date depend on one or another of these frameworks, but it typically focuses exclusively on top-down processes at the national level or

higher, and fails to engage with the complexities of local experience and knowledge. As a corrective to this, I responded to calls for the incorporation of ethnographic methods into language policy research, and empirical data revealed that these frameworks have less universal purchase than is typically claimed (for example, Canagarajah, 2006; Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; McCarty, 2011).

It is, however, necessary to bridge the gap between these macro processes and the micro practices which take place at the local scale-level, and for this purpose I enlisted Blommaert's conceptual toolkit of sociolinguistic scales, orders of indexicality, and polycentricity as a means of organizing discourses of English in space and time. A central aim of this thesis has been to try out and demonstrate these concepts as an antidote or supplement to the shortcomings of the dominant conceptual frameworks mentioned above. While the use of these concepts for identifying connections between the local and the global shows promise, further methodological work is necessary.

7.2 Limitations

There are a number of limitations to the empirical portion of this study that bear mentioning. First, the small sample size prevents me from making any general claims about the position and function of English in Okinawa. The observations recorded here are limited to this particular group of participants. In order to capture a more comprehensive picture of English in Okinawa using this methodology, it would be necessary to interview a larger number of participants and it would also be advisable to supplement interviews and journals with a wider range of forms and sources of data. My intention with this thesis, however, was primarily to test the

viability of these new concepts as a framework or theoretical toolkit, and not to provide definitive or representative results of the Okinawan language situation.

Second is the factor of gender. All of my participants were women. Several researchers on English in Japan (see for example Kobayashi, 2007; Seargeant, 2009) have identified reasons for and attitudes towards English study which appear to be particular to women. It is likely that a sample which included males would have seen a different range of themes.

Lastly, all of my data were collected in English, despite my offer to the participants to answer my interview questions in Japanese if they preferred. Speaking about English in English likely affected their responses: in addition, being interviewed by a Caucasian native speaker who they know to be an English teacher also likely influenced their replies, perhaps causing them to report what they thought I, as an English speaker and teacher, wanted to hear. Describing the researcher's position in qualitative research Lincoln and Guba refer to "the human as instrument" (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 219). Although I have tried to be aware of my subjectivity at all times during the research process it inevitably informs this study in terms of my contact with the participants.

7.3 Envoi

Earlier in this thesis I wrote that rather than proposing another definition, variety or type of English as a language or reified object of study, I hoped, following Blommaert, to instead shift focus to the study of English in a globalized world understood as resources tied to specific speech acts in specific spaces and times (2010). I close with a few words explaining this point in more detail.

Perhaps the most crippling limitation of the frameworks of colonial celebration, linguistic imperialism, world Englishes and a number of conceptions of EIL is that these frameworks tend to treat language as a static thing, bound to and originating from a singular (typically politically demarcated) space. This belief also often forms the basis for research into language attitudes and ideologies. Yet in practice what counts as this ‘language’ and what does not is highly dependent on particular contexts as situated in space and time. As English spreads around the world a multitude of ‘Englishes’, or resources, are put to work daily for specific purposes in particular spaces. While some of these resources are highly mobile, others are not. Notions of EIL and ELF conceived as strategies recognize this, but by being limited to instrumental or communicative functions, fail to acknowledge a wealth of symbolic and semiotic functions. By examining linguistic resources rather than static languages it is possible to access all this complexity in ways that singular conceptions of language deny. Blommaert’s concepts of sociolinguistic scales, orders of indexicality and polycentricity assist in organizing what would otherwise be difficult to manage in a hierarchical manner, also making it possible see how power and inequality flow through these resources. The implications of this for language policy research on English in the world are that we can no longer afford to focus exclusively on top-down or macro processes, but must also incorporate into our analyses the diversity of language resources and the discourses surrounding them that are produced and put to work in local spaces around the world.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Ethics Clearance Form



Carleton University Research Office

1100 Colonel By Drive
 Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
 Telephone: 613-733-2500
 Fax: 613-733-2500
 www.carleton.ca/research

Ethics Clearance Form

This is to certify that the Carleton University Research Ethics Board has examined the application for ethical clearance. The REB found the research project to meet appropriate ethical standards as outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and, the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research*.

New clearance

Renewal of original clearance

Original date of clearance:

Date of clearance	10 November 2010
Student Researcher Status	Jonathan Luke M.A. student
Faculty supervisor	Professor Ellen Cray
Department	School of Linguistics and Language Studies
Funding status	Not funded
Title of project	Attitudes and Ownership of English as an International Language in Okinawa (working title)

Clearance expires: **31 May 2011**

All researchers are governed by the following conditions:

Annual Status Report: You are required to submit an Annual Status Report to either renew clearance or close the file. Failure to submit the Annual Status Report will result in the immediate suspension of the project. Funded projects will have accounts suspended until the report is submitted and approved.

Changes to the project: Any changes to the project must be submitted to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board for approval. All changes must be approved prior to the continuance of the research.

Adverse events: Should any participant suffer adversely from their participation in the project you are required to report the matter to the Carleton University Research Ethics Board. You must submit a written record of the event and indicate what steps you have taken to resolve the situation.

Suspension or termination of clearance: Failure to conduct the research in accordance with the principles of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and the *Carleton University Policies and Procedures for the Ethical Conduct of Research* may result in the suspension or termination of the research project.

Leslie J. MacDonald Hicks
 Research Ethics Board Coordinator
 For the Chair of the Carleton University Research Ethics Board
 Prof. Antonio Gualtieri

Appendix B. Letter of Recruitment



My name is Jonathan Luke and I am a graduate student at Carleton University, in Ottawa, Canada. I lived in Okinawa for three years working as an English teacher, but recently returned to Canada, where I am from, to go back to school to help me become a better teacher.

Right now, I am doing research on the use of English in Okinawa. The goal of this research is to understand what people use English for in Okinawa, and how they feel about it. An important part of this research is to listen to Okinawan university students talk about their experiences using English, and about the role they think English will play in their future lives.

I am looking for 6-8 Okinawans to participate in my research project who are:

- between 20-25 years old
- are preferably students at university or college
- are at least intermediate level speakers of English
- are currently studying English either at university, college, a private conversation school or independently

By participating in this project you will get an opportunity to practice your English and also to learn more about yourself and your relationship with English.

If you decide to participate in my research, I will make every effort to keep your identity anonymous. You can cancel your participation at any time. Your participation in this research will involve two parts:

- A 30 minute to 1 hour interview with me via Skype
- Keeping a journal of your English use for 2 days

If you are interested or have any questions, please email me at jlake@connect.carleton.ca. I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Luke

Appendix C. Journal Instructions

Dear _____,

This email explains the second part of the research project. You will need to make notes using Microsoft Word or some other word processing program. Choose two days, and over the course of these days, please keep track of each time you use English. Try to record *when, where, why, what you thought about it* and approximately *how long* you used English each time – you do not have to use full sentences, just make rough notes. Try to include as many details as possible. If you used English many times for the same reason or in the same place on one of these days, you only need to write on entry, but make sure to indicate approximately how many times.

Here are three different categories that may help you organize your English use. Feel free to use them or not. It is your choice and they are just suggestions:

Media – Movies, Music, Signs, Advertisements
Conversation & Email – Friends, Acquaintances, In the Workplace, In Public
Language Study Activities – Language Classes, Language Study

Here's a sample day to show you what I mean.

Friday January 7th, 2011

1. *Had coffee with my friend at Doutor this morning. She's from Australia, can't speak Japanese. She speaks English slowly, but uses a lot of slang. We talked about my vacation plans – 45 minutes.*
2. *At work. I had short conversations with four or five of the people I work with that are not Japanese. Mostly exchanged greetings "How are you?" for example – around 20 minutes total.*
3. *On break. Wrote an email to my friend from Columbia in English on Facebook using my phone. Used a dictionary to find two words. Read status updates from my other English-speaking friends of Facebook – 20 minutes.*
4. *Heard a song by Lady Gaga while shopping in Main Place. I hear this song everywhere – 5 minutes*
5. *Saw movie 'Harry Potter' at Main Place last night, in English with Japanese subtitles. I could understand most of what they were saying without reading the subtitles. I like Harry's accent - he sounds like a rich person – 2 hours.*

I hope that completing this journal will not only help me with my project, but will also give you better understanding about your English use. Please email me if you have any questions about this part of the project.

When you have completed this journal, you are finished helping me! Thank you so much for your time, and I hope you learned something about yourself in the process.

Appendix D. Pennycook's Original Frameworks Table

TABLE 3.2
Frameworks for Understanding the Global Role of English

<i>Framework for understanding the global role of English</i>	<i>Implications for English and language teaching</i>	<i>Politics, problems, and pitfalls</i>
Colonial celebratory	English an inherently useful language; teach English as mission to the world	Arrogant appraisal of English and disdain for other languages; colonial politics
Laissez-faire liberalism	English a functional tool for pragmatic purposes; teach English to whoever wants it	Inadequate analysis of the global politics of English and of complementarity
Linguistic imperialism	Homogenization, destruction of other cultures and languages; teach English sparingly	Too powerful a model of structural power; strong on structure, weak on potential effects
Language ecology and language rights	English a threat to complex local ecologies; support other languages through language rights	Possible conservative form of conservation; identity too closely pinned to mother tongues
Linguistic hybridity	Languages and cultures change and adapt; world Englishes; teach multiple varieties	Blindness to threats posed by global forces; model of change as natural; weak theorization of hybridity
Postcolonial performativity	English as part of postcolonial problematic; cultural politics of resistance and appropriation	Complexity of relations between local and global contexts; potential romanticization of appropriation

(Pennycook, 2001, p. 59)