

# Purpose of the Symposium and Introduction of the Speakers

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Although we have a long history of English education since the opening of the country for more than a century, it seems that the system itself is not really working effectively, especially in this period of globalization rapidly in progress with the development of IT technology. Being aware of this fact of inefficiency of English teaching, the Japanese Ministry of Education shifted the emphases more than a decade ago, now focusing on communicative competence by means of English, but the system still is not working effectively.

Although I don't know whether it is reasonable or justifiable to compare or not, when you look at the scores of TOFEL and TOEIC, we are always behind China and Korea. As a matter of fact, Japan has been placed among the countries with the lowest scores of TOEFL. We have to do something to overcome this stagnancy of the situation caused by the present system and we thought that looking into the systems of other Asian countries might help us get started in finding the problems and solving them.

Therefore we have been conducting this kind of symposium since last year, the purpose of which is to learn the current situations of English teaching in Asian countries and, in so doing, to shed light upon the problems we face in the teaching of English in Japan. Henceforth, the main theme was worded as "Locating the Teaching of English in Japan in Asian Contexts." For the symposium of the last year, the first attempt of this kind, we invited lecturers from two EFL countries, i.e., China and Korea, since their situations are more or less the same as Japan's and Japan has always been compared with these two countries with respect to the proficiencies attained by the learners.

This year, in addition to one EFL country, i.e., Vietnam, we selected two ESL countries, i.e., the Philippines and Malaysia, as target countries in order to broaden our perspective since TEE, Teaching English in English, is to be taken up in senior high schools in two years' time. We firmly believe that we can learn a great deal from what they have attained so far in those ESL countries in Asia, too. Hence, the subtitle of this year's symposium: "What We Can Learn from Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines."

Three distinguished guest speakers are invited from these countries to show how their systems work. From Vietnam, we invited Dr. Hoang Van Van, Professor of Linguistics in the School of Graduate Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi. He received his B. A. in TEFL from the

Hanoi Languages Teachers' Training College, M. A. in Applied Linguistics and Ph. D. in Linguistics from Macquarie University, Australia. He is famous for his research in the application of systemic functional theory to the description of Vietnamese and to the process of translation. He has published over 10 books and more than sixty journal articles and book chapters. He was involved in editing English textbooks used in high schools in Vietnam.

Dr. Saadiyah Darus, who represents Malaysia, received her B. Sc. from University of Southampton, M. Ed. from University of Nottingham and Ph. D. from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and is now Associate Professor at the Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities, School of Language Studies and Linguistics, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her expertise is Computer-Enhanced Language Writing specializing in English as a Second Language and she published many books and papers related to that field such as *A Framework for a Computer-Based Essay Marking System: Specifically Developed for ESL Writing* published by LAP (Lambert Academic Publishing AG & Co.) in Koln, Germany.

Representing the Philippines, Dr. Johanthan Malilcsi was invited. He is a professor of Linguistics at UP Diliman, where he teaches courses in phonology, grammar, semantics, and sociolinguistics. He received his B. A. in English, M. A. in linguistics and Ph. D. in Philippine Studies, all from UP Diliman. His most recent publication is *A Multilingual Conceptual Glossary of Elementary Math and Science (in English, Filipino, Magindanaon, Maranao and Tausug)*, 2006, under a grant from US-AID through ASCEND Mindanao and Save The Children Foundation. Today he is going to talk about Filipino English called "Pinoy English."

Our last speaker today is Professor Kenji Yamaoka of Ritsumeikan University. He received his B. A. from Kobe City University of Foreign Studies in 1978. Since then, he has had a long experience as a high school English teacher in Shiga Prefecture. Maibara High School, one of the first Super English Language High Schools, was where he taught before coming to Ritsumeikan and there he made a great contribution and achievement, resulting in his winning of the *Yomiuri* Education Award. He was serving as a member of the Central Council for Education, which is responsible for drafting the new English course of study to be put into effect in two years' time. He has been one of the coauthors of many dictionaries and the English textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education.

Professor Kojiro Asao, one of our colleagues at Ritusmeikan, will act as a coordinator of the symposium. He is one of the most famous scholars in the field of English teaching in Japan, graduated from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies with B.A. in the field of English language study, went to the U.S. and graduated from Denver University with M.A. in speech communication. After that, he also received an M.A. from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. His teaching experience began at Tokyo University of foreign Studies, his own school, went to Tokai University and came to Ritsumeikan about 7 years ago. He now belongs to the Faculty of Literature and the Graduate School of Language Education and Information Science, specializing in Applied Linguistics, especially, English education and English language studies. His achievement is too

much to be quoted in a short time, but everybody in the field of English teaching in Japan probably read many of his articles written in the professional magazine called *the English Teachers' Magazine* published by Taishukan.

For this publication of the proceedings of symposium, all the speakers agreed to prepare their full papers and the following papers were written after the symposium. This is one of the reasons why the part of plenary discussion was omitted this time.