

Business English as an International Trade Language :

The Significance and Problems of International English

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Introduction

Any hybrid or auxiliary language used for communication between different peoples is called "lingua franca." It is a language used as a means of communication among persons who do not speak each other's native language. Originally, it was a hybrid language for the Mediterranean coast trade of Italian, Spanish, French, Greek, Arabic, and Turkish elements, spoken in certain Mediterranean ports, whose use was said to start in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹

In our world today two languages are well known as a lingua franca :

1 *Seibido's Dictionary of Linguistics*, s. v. "Lingua franca."

Swahili, a Bantu language of eastern and central Africa, widely used among those living in the countries and regions along the east coast of Africa, and Indonesian, the official language of Indonesia, where 180 million inhabitants speak 200-400 different languages beside this national and official language.²

One other lingua franca, used on a much wider scale quantitatively and geographically, is English. No explanation is necessary to show that English is widely used in the fields of politics, economics, trade, etc. in the world today. Many statistics and serious studies have been published to support this wide use of the English language. No one could deny that English has emerged as the world's premier international language or even a world language.

I would like to define "Business English"³ as an international trade language so widely used that no other language has ever approached its status before. I will discuss the following aspects of Business English in this paper :

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- 2 Indonesian was originally a part of Malay, specially used as a trade language among travel merchants from different tribes in the Malay Peninsula and neighbouring islands. Most of the population (about 180 million in 1991) have and still use their own regional languages, which are said to number 200 to 400, as mother tongues. It is worthwhile to mention that the language of an ethnic group in Java controlling the politics and economics in the country has its native speakers of about 60 million followed by Sunda with 20 million; yet the people adopted their trade language as their National, Official and Educational Language of their country. Details are shown in Sophia University Asian Culture Institute, *Nyuumon Tonan Ajia Kenkyu* [Introduction to Southeast Asian Study] (Tokyo : Mekong Co. 1992) p. 106.
 - 3 The standard definition of Business English is "1 : English as used in business; *specif.*: the study and practice of composition with emphasis on correctness, propriety, spelling, punctuation, and the forms of Business Correspondence," as defined in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, s. v. "Business English."

- 1) The definition of Business English: its history and current usage as an international trade language.
- 2) The accuracy of a language: criticism of the preeminence of native speakers.
- 3) The relations between standard English, national English, and new Englishes.
- 4) The position of Business English as an international trade language and its future prospect.
- 5) Comments on undergraduate level education and International Business Communication.

Business English As An International Trade Language

The origin of Commercial English⁴ dates back to the latter part of the sixteenth century when England started to make rapid progress in her international trade. Those pirates who were granted a privateering commission by Elizabeth I helped to expand the country's international trade through their privateering acts and overseas trade.

The customers for all the expensive plunder and goods which the

4 The word "Commercial English" is an old-fashioned term and seldom used today. "It has become common knowledge that by the term Commercial English we mainly refer to the English language used for overseas trade in U. K. ... In this point it has more or less different nuance from Business English so termed in the U. S. A. The Business English Americans prefer to use is the terminology for correspondence used for the sales and advertisement appealing to mass consumers in the domestic market. It is much closer to current English than Commercial English as an international trade language." Ryusho Yoshida, *Shohgyoh Eigo No Jissai* (Status of Commercial English) (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Printing Co., 1963) p. 7.

pirates raked up overseas and brought into the country were the wealthy classes, such as nobles, priests and millionaires. They were living in a quite different world from that of the pirates and the traders, whose social status was very low. The languages they used were also different, since the language caste systems existed more evidently in those days than today. The traders, bare of education and low in social standing, had to arm themselves with the language of their customers in order to sell their goods.⁵ The "customers" who represented the intellectuals at that time still used Latin for writing their letters and documents and upper class English for their daily lives.

It is not hard to imagine that a trader would copy a specific letter sample or samples, which he must have asked someone from the upper class to draft for him, whenever he needed to write a business letter to a customer. Because of such a requirement for immediate needs, "elegant and lofty Commercial English, though something like rental costume in the beginning, started to coagulate as the traders' terminology".⁶

The commercial efforts of these earlier traders remind us of present day international businesspersons who travel around foreign lands of different cultures and languages to sell their products, striving to

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

6 We can imagine how prostrate the traders were when writing their letters to the upper class customers from the following complimentary closes: "(1) I remain, most sincerely, sir, your obedient humble servant, (2) I am, always, and most truly, sir, your obedient humble servant, (3) Acknowledging myself deeply unto your Lord for many sundrie favours, I do remain in all humble reverence." *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

overcome linguistic and cultural barriers. Since cross-cultural communication study handles communication gaps between generations, classes, and businesses, it is not too much to say that the communication between the early English traders and the elites was truly cross-cultural communication.

Shifting our point of view to the trade relations between the early traders and their supply points, we can see their trade with local merchants on the west coast of Africa, and along the southern coast of China, which is said to be the birth place of pidgin English.⁷ The communication among these people was also a perfect model of cross-cultural business communication in English as an international trade language. The Commercial English used between the pirates and traders and the upper class elites must have influenced the communication style and pattern of the former with African and Chinese merchants. Also, because of its simplicity and convenience, the pidgin English must have affected to some extent the Commercial English used in trade in their suzerain country.

When we look at the use of Commercial English today, we will soon notice that the essence has not changed a bit from the origin of Commercial English in terms of the following points: 1) the language is

7) "The term pidgin is applied to a number of varieties of speech that have grown out of English or other languages and that have been used in various parts of the world since the 17th century." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s. v. "Pidgin."

"The word Pidgin is a clue to the nature and limitations of this language. 'Pidgin' is believed to be a corruption, probably native to the China coast, of the English word 'business.' It was originally the language of the business or trade developed between Chinese and Englishmen; other Pidgin dialects have also developed mainly because of trade." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s. v. "Pidgin English."

a tool of communicating a person's will to sell the goods; 2) the person uses or is often forced to use the language of his or her counterpart to facilitate his or her communication; and 3) the buyer more often than not gains the upper hand in the selection of the language; 4) both the buyer and the seller try to use a common language as much as possible to find the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of time and cost.

The English language, a national language of the United Kingdom and the United States, has been used in international trade for a much longer time and on a wider scale than any other language in the world. What has made English such a predominant language is nothing but the development of the U. K.'s worldwide trade started in the latter part of the sixteenth century and the immense economic power of the United States in the twentieth century. It is not incorrect to say that we can call this situation "the domination of economic activity by English." Like it or not, as a result of this "*Structure of English Language Domination*,"⁸ the English language is ahead of other languages in the arena of international trade across nations, cultures and languages.

Even though I agree on the dominant presence of English, I still feel a kind of resistance against the use of the American term, "Business English." I have two reasons why I say so. First, the English word 'business' has such a loose and wide scope of meaning that even a dialogue between a professor and his or her secretary can be a

8 Yukio Tsuda, *Eigo Shihai No Kohzoh* [Structure of English Language Domination] (Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten Co., Ltd., 1989).

subject of the study. Second, because domestic business is the nucleus of the nation's economic activity, contacts between business firms and consumers seem to be a major interest of Business English study in America.

However, we can define the Japanese *Shohgyoh-eigo* (literal translation of Business English) as "the English language used for international business contexts or for international business communication." In this way, the business situation or scene in which we have to use Business English as a tool of communication can be found only in international business or trade. If the object of our study is focused on the international business situation, the English language could be limited to English for international business communication. Needless to say, English for negotiation, contract drafting, inter-office memos, reports, etc. across nations and cultures falls into the bracket of *Shohgyoh-eigo* without any qualification.

As stated above, the fields, the objects, or even the methods of our study can be broken down into various parts depending on one's interest or speciality. However, we must draw a clear distinction between language and communication. The pie which we can slice into parts is not English itself but international business communication as a study subject. An interpretation that *Shohgyoh-eigo* equals international business communication itself has been recently voiced here and there. But, these two are different entities and should not be mixed up. One is a kind of languages for specific purposes while the other includes various trade languages within its scope. In his article "On Japanese Style Business English," Professor Ozaki stated, "The

Business English of our country takes up English as a foreign language and focuses on the study of English in the situation of international business communication. It deserves to be highly praised in the world of Business English study.⁹ This “English in the situation of international business communication” as he stated is very important.

What is Correct Language in Business English ?

Soseki Natsume, one of the eminent writers in modern Japanese literature, had the hero of his work *Botchan* say in this nationally famous novel, “I’d never seen a self-effacing person like a pawned doll as Uranari Sensei. It was almost as though he wasn’t there.” The original Japanese reads as follows: KONO URANARI SENSEI NO YONI AREDOMO NAKIGAGOTOKU, HITOJICHI NI TORARETA NINGYO NO YONI OTONASHIKU SHITEIRU NO WA MITA KOTO GA NAI.¹⁰

I have been long time wondering if this simile “HITTOJICHI NI TORARETA NINGYO NO YONI” or “like a pawned doll” is “correct” Japanese as a conventional simile to modify OTONASHII or self-effacing. It is still hard for me to believe that this is an ordinary expression which Japanese generally use. I imagine that either Soseki’s witty character or his hard study of English literature (he is known as a man of great erudition in the subject) prompted him to use this expression. He may have known or not known that it was

9 Shigeru Ozaki, “On Japanese Style Business English,” *The Japan Business English Association Annual Studies* 43 (October 1983) : 49-57.

10 Soseki Natsume, *Botchan* (Tokyo : Shinchosha Co., Ltd., 1950), chap. 7.

a directly imported English simile. We usually say “like a cat you have borrowed” as a simile in this context. Allan Turney, a well known translator of Japanese literature, has put this expression into “He had the air of a pawned doll.”¹¹

The points of this anecdote are : 1) Japanese people in general seem not to have noticed this irregular expression or have accepted it as quite a correct one for nearly 90 years since the *Botchan* was first published in 1906 ; and 2) why this unusual expression has not been adopted and used by the public although it was “coined” by such a great novelist as Soseki who greatly influenced modern Japanese usage.

The reason why I have brought up this question is that I think I should discuss the issue of correctness in Business English. Some Japanese like to collect letters and faxes from the United States and/or the United Kingdom for their own study of usage. One of these collectors once said, “Gee! Even a native speaker writes English like me?” I had a funny feeling when I heard this remark. Although they treat English written by “Americans” or “British” as something like the most precious treasure, you cannot say that all these letters and faxes are written by native speakers of the language simply because they are physically from the U. S. or the U. K. In the U. S. many different ethnic groups are engaged in business. This fact makes the U. S. a melting pot. The U. K., too, is jammed with Jewish, Indian, Arabic business-persons competing with

11 *Ibid.*, trans. Allan Turney (Tokyo : Kodansha International Ltd., 1972) chap. 7.

the locals and also those from the Continent. Moreover, there are those who have not received formal education in their national languages even though they are born New Yorkers or Londoners. One cannot say of the letters and faxes coming from these two countries that they are written by natives and, therefore, all in correct English. It is quite conceivable that irregular English expressions, just like Soseki's unusual Japanese, are used. When collecting model letters, therefore, one should pay considerable attentions to these facts with keen critical eyes.

What, then, is correct English? When a non-native speaker has his or her English proofread by multiple native speakers, it often happens that each one of the proofreaders points out different parts and places to be corrected from others. In each case, the proofreader might say, "We usually wouldn't say in that way", or "I would say in this way, if I were you," and correct them in his or her own style. The corrections seem to come from the linguistic sense of each proofreader. If the English sentence structures in question are totally out of the language's rules, such sentences are not deserving of discussion. However, if the pointed out parts and places of the non-native's English are based on the native's linguistic sense, they are questions of individuality and likes or dislikes. And if so, judgment of correct usage could not be based on the standard of being correct or incorrect as a language.

The English expressions themselves differ from place to place and where a native speaker comes from. In Texas the locals say, "It's a quarter till four," while Bostonians say, "It's a quarter of four."

While the expression "I'll take you home" is a proper expression of the standard American, "I'll carry you home" is the expression Texans use for the same thing.¹² The standard English of the U. S., General American, means the Midwest American, and the British RP (Received Pronunciation) means English spoken by those from the South or, in another term, the Public School Pronunciation. If, therefore, there is a geographical category for standard English, naturally there must be areas which do not come under the category of the standard English. And if we say English used in those areas is not correct because it is nonstandard English, the objects of such a groundless judgment, those living in the subject areas, will get angry. If we say the speech in Tokyo is correct because Japanese spoken there is close to the standard Japanese and the Osaka dialect is incorrect simply because the Tokyoites do not say so, the Osaka people will surely make an objection.

"The concept of Japanese or English as a national or an official state language is itself a very rough and abstract idea," said Katsuhiko Tanaka, "and, if we think of it carefully, we will learn that 'Japanese' itself does not exist. What firmly holds substance is each dependent speech belonging to each individual, as the term, 'the language people speak' suggests.... If we go back to 100 years ago, the prescription of the Japanese language might have been felt laxer than today. People in those days might not have felt unusual if Japanese was expressed not as a singular noun but a plural such as 'Japaneses.'¹³"

12 Thomas M. Paikeday, *The Native Speaker is Dead!*, trans. Yasuhiro Matsumoto and Irene Matsumoto (Tokyo: Maruzen Co., Ltd., 1990), p. 58.

13 Katsuhiko Tanaka, *Gengo Kara Mita Minzoku to Kokka* (Race and Nation)

From this viewpoint, too, even if an unusual expression, such as one by Soseki, would be used, the fact itself could not be a standard to judge the correctness of a language as a tool for communication.

Just as there are many dialects of "Japanese", there are varieties of English in the world. We can say that English or a model of the English language we learn at school is only a part of various dialects of English. The correctness of English or a language in general does not have a fixed standard, but exists as the difference in kind and degree from an average or reference point. Tanaka also states, "We should keep in mind that being bad or good speech should not be judged by the speech itself, but rather in reference to the environment in which the speech is placed and used."¹⁴

Standard English, Business English and International English

In the outset of this paper we observed the general definition of Business English as English for business and transactions. When discussing the subject, however, I would like to hypothesize that even if the term "business" is added one day and all of a sudden a modifier "international," the English language which would be used in that situation will not become automatically "International Business English" or "English for international business communication." The English language I have referred to is English as a national language of the

from the Viewpoint of Language} (Tokyo : Iwanami Shoten Co., Ltd., 1991)
p. 33.

14 *Ibid.*

U. S. and U. K. or the standard English.

Before developing my hypothesis further, I would like first to introduce the definition of standard English. Peter Trudgill, a young sociolinguist from the U. K., defines it in his *International English* as, "The standard English is a variety of English which 'educated' native speakers use for their writing and speaking. And naturally it is also a variety of English which is taught to those students who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) as a part of a formal school education program. The term 'standard English' usually refers to grammar and vocabulary, i. e., dialects and not to pronunciation that is a variety of accent."¹⁵

English now being used widely in the arena of politics, economics and cultures worldwide shows a tendency of deviating from this standard English. It is the result of the world journey of English scattering the seeds of English far and wide, and "the Third World flowering of the language has now produced some exotic hybrids, among them Caribbean English, Indian English, various forms of African English, and Singaporean English, sometimes known as 'Singlish'.¹⁶"

Here are some examples of Singaporean English or Singlish :

- I like hot hot curry—very *shink* (terrific, beyond description) ;
- big *bluff*, man, he! (he's just a show-off) ;
- you can *drop* here (you can get out here) ;
- my name, you write it with three *alphabets* (letters) not four ;

15 Peter Trudgill and Jean Hannah, *International English*, trans. Yoshio Terazawa and Iwao Umeda (Tokyo: Kenkyusha Printing Co., 1986), p. 1.

16 Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil, *The Story of English*, new rev. ed. (London: Faber and Faber Limited and BBC Books, 1992) p. 338.

- stop *shaking legs* and do some work (*Shake legs*, a direct translation from Malay, means to be idle).¹⁷

As these examples clearly show, Singaporeans have developed their own kind of English with their nationalism. This is well put into a statement by T. T. B. Koh, formerly Singapore's representative to the United Nations: "When one is abroad, in a bus or a train or aeroplane and when one overhears someone speaking, one can immediately say this is someone from Malaysia or Singapore. And I should hope that when I'm speaking abroad my countrymen will have no problem recognizing that I am a Singaporean."¹⁸

I have no clear answer to the correctness of a Japanese person's speaking and/or writing of American or British English for his or her business with Singaporeans. However, we should at least keep in mind that there are such people as Mr. Koh who has his own opinion as described above.

Japanese businesspersons use English as a tool for communication with not only American and British counterparts but also the non-native speakers of English in various situations. I have hypothesized that we can classify the situations into the following five communication patterns. National English here refers to the standard English used by either Americans or British. International English refers to English used by non-native speakers:

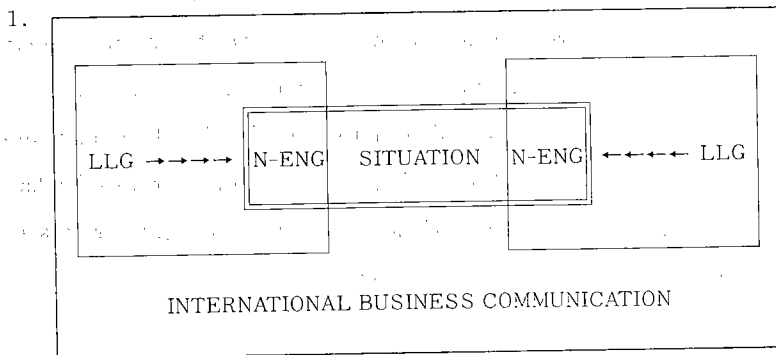
1. Communication with non-native speakers in National English

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 369-370.

2. Communication with native speakers in National English
3. Communication with non-native speakers in International English
4. Communication with native speakers in International English
5. Communication with non-native and native speakers in International English

It may be a rare case that a Japanese businessperson shifts gears from National English to International English or vice versa in an actual business situation. However, if he or she has a skill with ample experience of speaking with people from various places in the world, this businessperson may find it rather easy to do so and does it even unconsciously. Some businesspersons have reported to me that their English is influenced and changed, either deteriorated or improved, by whom they talk with and where they have lived as expatriates. I will illustrate and explain the above five patterns as follows :

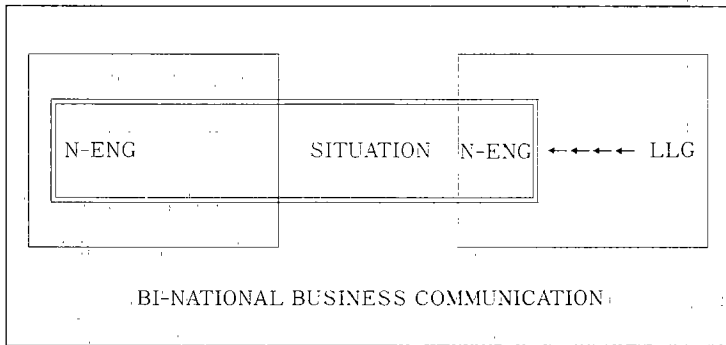


LLG=Local Language N-ENG=National English

N-ENG in this pattern is supposed to be the standard English.

Its quality or the level of usage, when actually used by non-native speakers, is not questioned. This pattern can be the object of international business communication study because it represents international or cross-cultural communication.

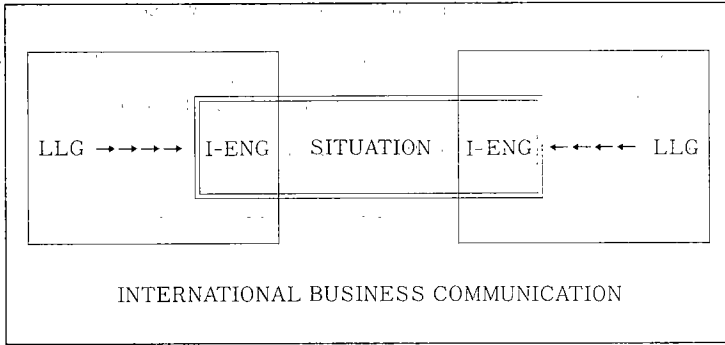
2.



This pattern represents a single or uni-communication pattern in terms of a language selected and can be called a pattern of “bi-national”¹⁹ or bi-cultural relations. The native speakers are always in a superior position and the non-natives are apt to feel inferior as far as correct usage problem is concerned. This difference in attitude toward each one’s counterpart may influence even their business negotiations. This type of uni-communication pattern should not be called “international,” but “bi-national.”

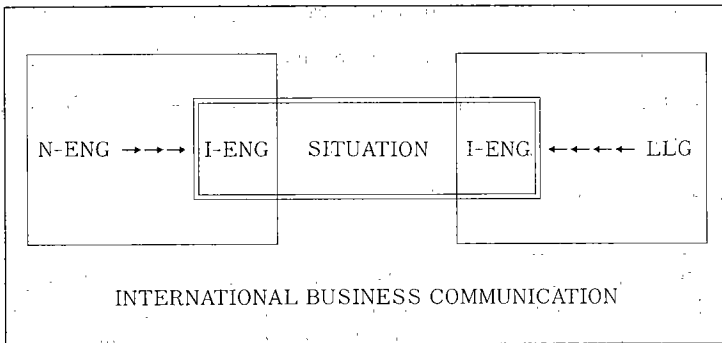
19 The term “bi-national” is a coinage of Kent Gilbert, a well-known American TV personality in Japan, who said, “...Among those I know there are many who have come from Utah to Japan and really understand Japan or love Japan, but are not at all that interested in Mexico, their neighboring country. These people are not international but should be called ‘bi-national.’” quoted in Tokyo University Press, *Understanding toward Different Cultures* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1988), p. 194.

3.



Here Japanese businesspersons use International English (abbreviated to I-ENG), which is a variation of National English. In this category international business is being done with those from countries where English is a foreign language or where it is a second or an official language, while the locals use various languages within the country. Varieties of English or “new Englishes”²⁰ can be used in this pattern.

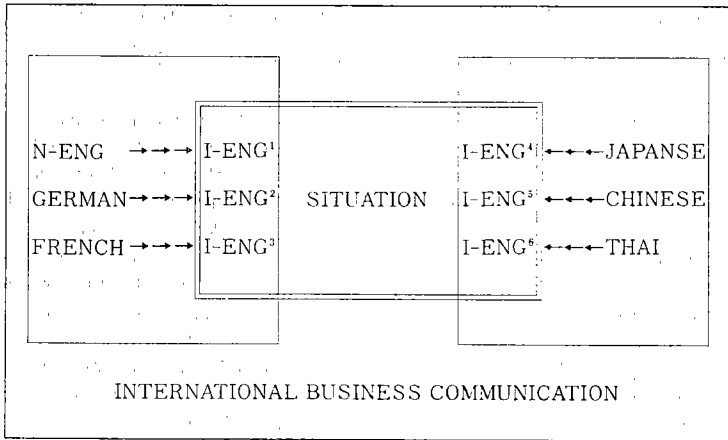
4.



20 Detailed evidence of the emergence of varieties of English or new Englishes is described in McCram, Cran and MacNeil, *The Story of English*.

In this scenario we must ask an N-ENG speaker for his or her cooperation in the use of I-ENG through understanding and practice of the language somewhat different from his or her own English.²¹ It avoids the use of idioms, slang and expressions even natives sometimes find difficult to understand. However, in the real world this type of International English does not exist yet as an established language with complete rules for shared comprehension.

5.



21 Rosenthal offers a good advice to Americans in this regard. He wrote, "Although the foreign businessman is more skilled in foreign languages, he does not always know American colloquial expressions and idioms and is unlikely to understand them unless he actually spends some time in the United States. Also, he does not have a broad vocabulary in English unless he spends some time here. Hence, in writing to those whose mother tongue is other than English, simple direct expressions should be used which are easily translatable into the language of the receiver. American colloquialisms or slang expressions should not be used. Phrases and sentence structure should be simple and short. Multisyllable words should be avoided." Morris S. Rosenthal, *Techniques of International Trade* (Tokyo: Kogakusha Co., Ltd., 1950), p. 450.

This pattern shows that I-ENG is influenced by one's mother tongue, or to be more exact an ethnic language, which may or may not be a national language, in the actual use of I-ENG. As a result, it is hardly possible to put the definite article "the" on International English and it becomes I-ENG^{1~n}. Indonesian and Chinese, for instance, have no tense for their verbs and express the past, present and future by putting particles before or after a verb just as in the case of Creole.²² Because of this feature of these two languages, both the Indonesian and the Chinese people have a tendency not to care much about the tense when they write and speak English.²³

I once watched a TV program about an English agronomist doing his research in Papua New Guinea. He was speaking to local people not in his National English but in Tok Pisin, a kind of pidgin English spoken in the area. Here are some typical Tok Pisin expressions: "haus kuku (= house cook) for a kitchen, haus sick (=house sick) for a hospital, glas bilong lukuk (=glass belong look-look) for a mirror, and man bilong long-way ples (=man belong long way place) for a foreigner." Motofumi Kobayashi, *Fukugou Minzoku Shakai To Gengo Mondia* [Complex Racial Societies and Language Problems] (Tokyo: Taishukan Shoten Co., Ltd., 1989), p. 56.

22 Creole/*n* a [C, U] language formed by a blending of two other languages, and used as the main language in the community in which it is spoken. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, s. v. "Creole."

Trudgill gives the examples of particles put before verbs to indicate the tense of Creole sentences such as /wa de go hapm nou/'What's going to happen now? (Jamaica Creole), /mi de kom/'I coming.' (Sranan), /a de go wok/'I'm going to work.' (Krio) etc. P. Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics*, trans. Shigeru Tsuchida (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Co., Ltd., 1975) p. 209.

23 While we can observe from NNE (non-standard Negro English) or BEV (black English vernacular) that many American black people have started ignoring the tense, "some Chinese people have recently started putting such particles as 将 (for the future tense) and 了 (for the past tense) before or after the verbs they use. This may be an influence of English because those who follow this new linguistic fashion are usually businesspersons having some contacts with foreign businesspersons." Interview with Tadashi Ohshima, manager, Akihabara branch, Daiichi Kangyo Bank, Tokyo, 14 June, 1993. Ohshima is a graduate of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies majoring in Chinese and has been in Canton for many years.

Future Prospect of International Business English

As we have so far observed, it may not be easy for each country or businesspersons in the world to follow the move of introducing International English into their international business communication, even if an ideal International English should be formed. We need time and a development process before reaching our final goal.

One variety of English, even if it were modified so that it can meet the requirements for an ideal tool for international business communication, cannot be equal to International English²⁻ⁿ. If we forced the use of that English, it would cause controversy because of the existence of regional variants of English, as in the case of Singlish discussed above.

Having one variety of English dominate the dialects of English and making it the base of International English will create a high and low relationship between them similar to the one between a national language and the dialects in the nation or the original language and its pidgin and Creole. In either case one is often considered superior to the other. An ideal model of Business English as the most favored international trade language must not make these discriminations, and should be developed irrespective of rank between itself and each of the Englishes in the world, even if there are differences. Their relationship must be an even or horizontal one.

²⁴ Professor K. Tanaka discusses the problem of language relationships and language imperialism with great clarity in many of his works; see, e. g., his *Kotoba To Kokka* (Language and Nation) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Co., Ltd., 1981).

What I would like to propose is that we will positively build up a regional block base International English, a common language in a given region in the world, in collaboration with each ethnic group in the region after we collect common features of communication patterns which we can share with each other. We can think of, for example, Southeast Asian Block English, German and North European Block English, Romance Block English, which includes French, Italian, and Spanish, etc. The people in Asia, as the Orientals, have many common English usages to share with us Japanese.

In 1989 just three weeks before she was placed under house arrest, Aung San Suu Kyi spoke with a *Time* magazine correspondent. During the interview she spoke about her father General Aung San and said, "... he was really a great man. I feel embarrassed saying this about my father, but the more you study his life, the more impressed you are."²⁵ Oriental modesty, a common communication pattern, is well expressed in this English sentence. If the interviewee were an American, he or she would never use the word "embarrassed" and might say something like "I am proud of my father. He was really a great person, who did wonderful things!"

It will not be an impossible project, though it may be very hard work, if universities and business enterprises in the Asian nations cooperate with each other and establish a new Business English as a common inter-regional trade language within the Southeast Asian block. Only after first going through this and other development processes, will a universal Business English eventually appear

25 *Time*, August 14, 1989.

in international trade circles through the sincere and selfless cooperation and hard efforts of each ethnic group and nation in the world. This English will maintain a fair and even relationship not only to National English but also to any ethnic language in the world. And then, our new Business English will be given the definite article and welcomed by all businesspersons at every corner of the world as "The Universal Business English."

There is another reason why I persist in the need for the above development process before realizing the Universal Business English. The emergence of the new Englishes has been compared to the spread and subsequent break-up of Latin throughout the Roman world. It is precisely described in *The Story of English*, "In the late 1970's, the then Chief Editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Dr Robert Burchfield, made a series of predictions based on this comparison that made headlines all over the world. His controversial thesis was that just as, with the decline of the Roman Empire, Latin broke up into mutually unintelligible European languages like French, Spanish, and Italian, so over a period of several centuries, global English will similarly disintegrate into separate languages."²⁶ We must not repeat such a break-up of our Business English as Latin experienced centuries ago.

The possible future of our Business English is to follow the world's trend toward multilingualism. Greenburg stated in his *A New Invitation to Linguistics* that "...recent experience has shown, on the one hand, the remarkable survival power of local languages as vehi-

26 McCrum, Cran and MacNeil, *The Story of English*, pp. 338-339.

cle of ethnic and national identity and, on the other, the spread of international languages like English to satisfy the practical needs of communication. . . . People will continue to use more than one language especially where one is a means of expressing group solidarity and the other satisfies practical requirements of wider communication. In the past, multilingualism has been the rule rather than the exception. This situation is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.”²⁷

What Truly is Required for International Business Communication Education

I believe that being familiar with a foreign language and learning the skill of communication with the people who use the language are two entirely different things. A language is naturally an important factor of communication but not an absolute factor. According to some research, what is communicated explicitly by words in a conversation is only 30% of all that is communicated, and other statistics note that in interpersonal communication the role language plays is 7%, the features of voice or diction 38%, and facial expression takes 55%.²⁸ The unspoken or unwritten assumptions and expectations, the postures and facial expressions, the setting and occasion for the communication: all these influence what is said and written and the way

27 Joseph H. Greenberg, *A New Invitation to Linguistics* (Tokyo: Seibido Co., Ltd., 1980) p. 130.

28 *Kinesics and Context* and “Communication Without Words,” cited by Satoshi Ishii et al., *Cross-cultural Communication* (Yuhikaku Co., Ltd., 1987) p. 91.

expressed words and sentences or utterances are interpreted.

A linguist and communication specialist, J. V. Neustupny, born in Czechoslovakia and now teaching Japanese in English speaking countries, has said in his *Communication with Foreigners*, which he wrote in Japanese, "You cannot complete communication only with matters of grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Rather, if you do not know how to organize the networks of communication and how and what to communicate there, genuine communication does not occur, even if you compose a grammatically perfect sentence and pronounce it with perfect diction."²⁹

This statement by Neustupny was directed to general language education. However, all of what he stated can be well practised in a course in international business communication. In this field we have for a long time continued educating undergraduates in how to read and write business letters as our major study and education subject. Information loaded onto a single page of business letters is really enormous: the process or sequence of events which have influenced the writer to write that letter, his or her personal relations with the readers, inner-self, bosses, suppliers, etc. and even his or her relations with his or her own and the readers' companies, countries and cultures: all are put into a piece of thin letterhead. To explain all these complicated personal relations of the writer and his relations with the outer world with developing an ideal model of interpersonal communication is the goal of international business communication.

However, international business communication also involves the

²⁹ J. V. Neustupny, *Communication with Foreigners* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten Co., Ltd., 1982) p. 158.

education of constructing communication networks and teaching how and what to communicate in national and other kinds of English.

Education not about a foreign culture but of the foreign culture itself which distinguishes between two entirely different entities, understanding and action, will be realized by a course of International Business Communication which includes the kind of language study proposed in this paper.