

EFL Pronunciation Norms in Japanese Context: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

This article reviews theoretical and empirical research on the shift from native-speaker norms towards intelligibility in English pronunciation and its implications for Japanese EFL education. Since the 1980s, frameworks such as World Englishes (WE), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), and the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) have challenged the dominance of Inner Circle models like General American (GA) and Received Pronunciation (RP), emphasising mutual intelligibility, accommodation, and linguistic diversity. While these perspectives promote realistic and inclusive goals, their pedagogical application remains contested, particularly in contexts strongly influenced by native-speaker ideologies. As a result, both teachers and learners tend to prioritise GA and RP as ideal models. Research shows that teachers' beliefs strongly shape classroom practice and that many feel uncertain about adopting ELF-oriented approaches. Learners likewise often associate correctness with native-like pronunciation, which can lower self-confidence and willingness to speak. Nevertheless, recent studies indicate growing awareness of pronunciation diversity among educators and students. The literature suggests that incorporating ELF perspectives, promoting accommodation skills, and presenting non-native speakers as legitimate models can support learners' confidence and communicative effectiveness. Overall, this article highlights the need to realign pronunciation pedagogy in Japan with intelligibility-based, context-sensitive goals.

Keywords: pronunciation norms, speaking confidence, World Englishes, ELF, Lingua Franca Core

1. Introduction

Despite ongoing curricular reforms and communicative goals in English education, many Japanese high school students remain hesitant to speak English in class, even as they actively engage in reading, writing, and listening activities. This is supported by a 2018 survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), which indicates that Japanese students' productive skills—especially speaking—lag behind global standards (Tanaka, 2023). While multiple factors may underlie this issue, existing research highlights both systemic and psychological dimensions. King (2013), for example, argues that silence in Japanese EFL classrooms stems from an emphasis on translation and rote learning, which strips students of autonomy and discourages oral production. He notes that silence is often interpreted positively in Japanese society and is embedded in communication norms that do not always prioritise spoken output. Tanabe (2003) adds that a widespread emphasis on precision and aesthetics in Japanese education may also inhibit learners from speaking unless their output meets native-like standards of language form, such as pronunciation and grammar (Ishikawa, 2017). This pursuit of perfection can create a barrier to classroom participation. Horwitz et al. (1986) argue that language anxiety is often exacerbated by the belief that one must attain a high level of competence before attempting communication. Such perfectionist tendencies are particularly salient in pronunciation, where fear of error may outweigh the communicative value of intelligibility.

In this context, pronunciation beliefs emerge as a potentially influential factor. Prior studies suggest that many Japanese learners and educators uphold native-like pronunciation as the ideal. Goto Butler (2007) reports that a majority of elementary-level English teachers in Japan favour instruction by native speakers, viewing them as linguistic authorities. Similarly, Kubota (2004, as cited in Kamiya, 2008, p. 54) notes that approximately 70% of Japanese university students studying English regard native-speaker varieties from Inner Circle countries as the formal standard for learning. Teachers' beliefs often reinforce these students' beliefs. In my previous sociolinguistics project on pronunciation models, the author found that Japanese teachers frequently emphasised native-like accents, whereas British teachers prioritised intelligibility and student confidence. While teacher beliefs are not the focus

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of the current study, such findings suggest that the pedagogical environment may shape learners' pronunciation expectations. Although the idealisation of native-speaker pronunciation models, such as General American (GA) in the United States and Received Pronunciation (RP) in the United Kingdom, has long dominated English education in Japan, alternative perspectives such as World Englishes (WE) and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) have increasingly challenged the relevance of these models. Scholars such as Jenkins (2000), Seidlhofer (2001), Matsuda (2003), and Yano (1994) have argued that English is no longer solely the language of native speakers, and intelligibility among diverse speakers is often more critical than conformity to a specific accent.

However, awareness of these approaches remains limited in Japan. While many teachers acknowledge the existence of World Englishes (Iino et al., 2022), few incorporate them into classroom practice or materials (Yoshikawa, 2005; Matsuda, 2003). Moreover, there has been limited exposure to intelligibility-based frameworks, such as the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) (Jenkins, 2000), which proposes a pronunciation model tailored to mutual intelligibility among non-native speakers. Tanabe (2003) also observes that, despite the potential utility of such approaches, native-speaker norms continue to dominate classroom instruction and learners' perceptions.

2. Views on EFL Pronunciation Norms

2.1 The Shift in Emphasis to Intelligibility in the World

From the 1980s onward, developments in English language education have favoured comprehensibility over native-speaker precision in pronunciation. Kachru's (1982, 1986) model of World Englishes (WE) reframes English as a global resource, spoken across multilingual contexts and shaped by a range of linguistic and cultural influences. This framework accounts for localised variation in grammar, vocabulary, and discourse, shaped by cultural and social norms (Kachru, 1992; Bolton, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2007). The communicative teaching movement, gaining momentum in the late 1980s, steered pronunciation instruction away from repetitive drills and towards more functional, meaning-focused interaction (Setter & Jenkins, 2005; Wei, 2006, as cited in Fujiwara, 2013, p. 38). This pedagogical realignment prompted a conceptual shift: accurate production was no longer the primary aim; rather, the ability to be

understood by interlocutors became the primary aim (Fujiwara, 2013; Yamane, 2015).

WE legitimises plural Englishes across the Inner/Outer/Expanding Circles and challenges the exclusive authority of Inner-Circle norms, acknowledging culturally shaped variation; pedagogically, it promotes linguistic pluralism and critical awareness of norms (Kachru, 1982, 1986, 1992; Bolton, 2005; Kirkpatrick, 2007).

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) refers to communication among speakers with different first language speakers, emphasising intelligibility and accommodation rather than adherence to a single native accent, and encourages tasks involving negotiation of meaning across diverse accents (Seidlhofer, 2011; Jenkins, 2017).

The Lingua Franca Core (LFC) identifies pronunciation features essential for mutual intelligibility while de-emphasising less critical ones; pedagogically, it offers realistic, attainable goals that enhance learner confidence (Jenkins, 2000).

Together, these models provide a conceptual foundation and pedagogical implications of this study, which examines how realistic pronunciation targets may influence Japanese learners' willingness to speak. This orientation towards intelligibility and inclusivity is also reflected in international frameworks, such as the CEFR Companion Volume (2018), which promotes the inclusion of global English varieties beyond native norms, including General American (GA) in the US and Received Pronunciation (RP) in the UK (Morimoto, 2019).

Although the LFC offers a learner-friendly framework for enhancing intelligibility in international contexts, its pedagogical validity remains contested. Critics such as Dauer (2005, as cited in Rogerson-Revell, 2011, p. 13) argue that excluding word stress may hinder learners' development, while others view the LFC as a pragmatic starting point, particularly for low-stakes international communication (Hartle, 2008; Kuo I-Chun, 2006, as cited in Rogerson-Revell, 2011, p. 13). In Japanese high school education, where native norms still predominate, engaging with these debates is essential to evaluate whether and how the LFC principles can be meaningfully integrated into classroom practice.

2.2 Attitudes towards World Englishes in the Japanese Educational Settings

Although discussions of WE in Japan have expanded since the early 2000s, there remains a significant gap between theoretical recognition and practical implementation, particularly in pronunciation instruction. The following overview, therefore, focuses on

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how pronunciation models are conceptualised and applied in Japanese EFL education.

2.2.1 Attitudes towards World Englishes in the Japanese educational curriculum

In the context of a growing global emphasis on intelligibility in pronunciation, Japanese scholars have actively engaged in discussions on the concept of WE since the early 2000s. Efforts have been made to explore how Japanese English can be situated within the framework of WE (Morizumi, 2009).

Nevertheless, the current situation in Japan does not adequately reflect these global developments. A number of studies on textbooks and pedagogical practices indicate a persistent inclination towards Inner Circle varieties—namely, GA and RP (Matsuda, 2003; Kiryu et al, 1999; Swan, 2013; Widdowson, 2013, as cited in Igarashi and Igarashi, 2022, p. 15).

In Japan, MEXT develops national curriculum guidelines, and English education at schools is conducted using MEXT-authorized textbooks and teaching materials based on these guidelines. Earlier national curricula in Japan explicitly prescribed British or American English as models of pronunciation. Since 2003, this has been replaced by the vague term “contemporary standard English,” which many teachers interpret as continuing to refer to native norms. As a result, the intended shift towards diversity has had limited practical impact, potentially restricting learners’ autonomous engagement with English (Yukimori, 2014). However, the 2017 curriculum revision (implemented in 2020) shifted the focus from native-like pronunciation to intelligibility, promoting context-sensitive communication and prosodic flexibility in line with WE and ELF perspectives (Wada, 2018).

In parallel with the government-authorized English curriculum, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, launched by the Japanese government in 1987, implemented as part of national education policy, has been identified as a contributing factor in reinforcing learners’ normative orientation towards native-speaker models of English (Kamiya, 2008; Matsuda, 2003; Ishikawa, 2017; Yukimori, 2015). The majority of the programme's instructors have been American, accounting for approximately half of the total in recent decades (Yukimori, 2014; JET Program Guide, 2025). Consequently, this has hindered the development of learners’ openness to linguistic diversity. In addition, the content of English textbooks used in Japan also reflects this tendency: the accompanying listening materials are

predominantly limited to GA and RP models (Matsuda, 2003; Sugishita, 2012). Yamanaka (2006), as cited in Kamiya (2008, p. 54), points out that these textbooks predominantly feature countries and cultures from the Inner Circle (Yamanaka, 2006, as cited in Kamiya, 2008, p. 54). One high school English textbook reported by Morizumi (2009, p. 88) introduces WE yet ends with, “don’t worry if your English is not always ‘correct’ or ‘perfect’.” Such phrasing implicitly suggests that non-native varieties are inaccurate or deficient, undermining a genuine affirmation of linguistic diversity (Jenkins, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2007).

Furthermore, the washback effect of standardised testing and university entrance examinations plays a significant role in maintaining traditional language norms, thereby hindering the integration of an ELF perspective (Rose & Galloway, 2019, as cited in Igarashi & Igarashi, 2022, p. 15). Levis (2005) states that pronunciation teaching has long been influenced by two contrasting principles: the nativeness principle and the intelligibility principle. Levis assumes that native-like pronunciation is both achievable and desirable, and this belief is reflected in most current teaching materials, which prioritise prestige accents such as GA and RP. In EFL contexts, English is often treated as a temporary instructional form rather than a legitimate variety, positioning learners’ English as a transitional step towards native norms (Levis, 2005). Deterding (2005) similarly notes that reliance on idealised native accents may hinder comprehension of everyday speech, supporting the prioritisation of intelligibility in pedagogy. Hino (2001, p.277, as cited in Yukimori, 2014, p. 110) asserts that “an unbiased attitude towards various English varieties, including one’s own, is a fundamental element for successful communication in international English.”

However, in recent years, there has been a growing movement within Japanese high school education to incorporate perspectives from WE. For example, Iino et al. (2022, p. 112) present a more affirmative message, stating, “Each of them is equally important. ... be confident when you speak English,” thereby encouraging learners to embrace linguistic diversity and build confidence. Furthermore, a study by Wako et al. (2021) revealed that both in-service teachers and pre-service teacher trainees recognise the importance of teaching the diversity of English pronunciation models, indicating an emerging awareness of the need to move away from a GA centric orientation.

As outlined above, although English education in Japan continues to be strongly influenced by native-speaker norms, there is a growing movement towards pedagogical

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practices that emphasise linguistic diversity and incorporate the principles of ELF. The following section will examine how Japanese EFL teachers perceive pronunciation models and how these perceptions influence classroom practice.

2.2.2 Japanese EFL Teachers' Attitudes towards World Englishes and Pronunciation Models

It is widely acknowledged that effective pronunciation instruction requires providing learners with a reference model. The central challenge lies in selecting a model that both aligns with learners' and teachers' preferences and supports intelligible communication (Rogerson-Revell, 2011).

Pajares (1992, as cited in Kojima, 2015, p. 3) argues that when teachers plan lessons or engage in classroom instruction, their beliefs exert a greater influence than their formal knowledge. Furthermore, previous studies have indicated that when there is a discrepancy between teachers' and learners' beliefs, learners tend to experience dissatisfaction with instruction (Horwitz, 1987, as cited in Kojima, 2015, p. 3). How, then, do teachers in the Japanese EFL context perceive and position themselves in relation to pronunciation models?

Yukimori (2015) conducted a questionnaire survey with 288 Japanese high school teachers and found that they place strong emphasis on native-speaker norms in English communication. Open-ended responses also revealed concerns about the increasing focus on practicality in English education. Nishigaki (2015) points out that under the ideology of native-speaker supremacy, so-called "correct" pronunciation models—such as GA and RP—have been privileged, while other varieties have been regarded as "incorrect." In response to this tendency, Honna (2003, as cited in Nishigaki, 2015, p.11) warns that setting native-speaker norms as the goal may lower learners' self-evaluation and diminish their confidence. Similarly, Hino (2015, as cited in Nishigaki, 2015, p.11) argues that native-speaker superiority also affects teachers, making them hesitant to expose learners to their own English. As a result, learners may struggle to develop an active and self-directed approach to speaking English.

Goto Butler's (2007) survey of primary school teachers found that approximately 60% preferred native speakers as English instructors, particularly those who were hesitant about early instruction, proud of Japanese culture, or hostile towards non-standard English. Yoshikawa (2005) reports that although 80% of Japanese high

school English teachers recognised the importance of introducing a range of English varieties in their classes, only 7.8% reported actively incorporating such varieties into their teaching practice.

Yukimori (2015) argues that, in Japan's EFL environment, where no stable variety of international English exists, adopting native-speaker English as a reference standard is often regarded as a natural and justifiable choice for teachers. This partly explains why ELF-and LFC-based approaches remain difficult to implement in practice.

One major obstacle to adopting an ELF-aware perspective is teachers' reluctance to revise their existing beliefs and practices (Blair, 2017; Sifakis et al., 2018, as cited in Igarashi and Igarashi, 2022, p. 16). This resistance often stems from a strong attachment to standard English norms and concerns about the practicality and validity of ELF-based assessment methods (Rose & Galloway, 2019; Rose & Syrbe, 2018, as cited in Igarashi & Igarashi, 2022, p. 15).

As demonstrated above, many Japanese English teachers continue to exhibit a strong normative orientation towards native-speaker English, a tendency that remains deeply embedded in pronunciation instruction. Although the importance of perspectives such as ELF and the LFC is beginning to gain some recognition, these approaches are rarely integrated into classroom practice.

Given that learners' perceptions also influence how pronunciation is received and internalised, the following section turns to Japanese EFL learners' attitudes towards pronunciation models.

2.2.3 Japanese EFL Learners' Attitudes towards Pronunciation Models

Suter (1976, as cited in Rogerson-Revell, 2011, p. 17) emphasised that learners' motivation and their belief that pronunciation is significant play a critical role in second-language communication. Tanaka (2023) found that 90% of non-English majors viewed pronunciation as central to communication, and more than 80% sought native-like pronunciation. Morimoto (2019) examined the beliefs of university students training to become English teachers and found that while some valued English as an international language, most strongly adhered to native-speaker norms. About 70% supported imitating native pronunciation, and Japanese-accented English was often viewed negatively, with terms such as "inaccurate" and "heavily accented." This

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tendency is consistent with the results of a sociolinguistic survey conducted by the present author in November 2024, in which a majority of Japanese teachers reported that English should be learned with “correct” and “native-like” pronunciation. Watanabe (2022) also reports a strong preference for GA among Japanese university students, reflecting the influence of educational materials and global exposure to American English. Despite their awareness of ELF and of the importance of diversity in pronunciation, learners still tend to aspire to native-speaker norms (Watanabe, 2022; Groom, 2012; MacKenzie, 2014; Timmis, 2002; Young and Walsh, 2016).

In a questionnaire and interview study of Japanese university students, Ishikawa (2017) found that no participants expressed a positive view of English influenced by Japanese (Ishikawa, 2017). Conversely, American English—or more broadly, North American English as a Native Language (ENL) variety—was widely perceived as possessing high international intelligibility, and many participants regarded it as the standard and universally accepted model. Although many Japanese students recognise English as an international language, they still associate correctness with Inner Circle models, which leads to negative self-evaluation and reduced willingness to speak (Matsuda, 2003; Ishikawa, 2017).

Such negative attitudes towards non-native varieties of English have been identified as a barrier to effective use of English as a global lingua franca (Yukimori, 2014). Jenkins (2007) notes that even those who value successful communication by non-native speakers (NNSs) often resist deviations from native norms, suggesting that “intelligibility” is not widely accepted as a practical teaching goal.

Japanese learners of English have long been exposed to instructional and audio materials based on pronunciation models such as GA and RP. English teachers have also tended to present these models implicitly as instructional targets in the classroom. As a result, many learners have come to regard GA and RP as the ultimate goals of pronunciation, leading them to perceive their own accents as deficient if they fall short of these norms. This perception has been associated with a reluctance to speak English in public.

In contrast, Ishikawa’s (2017) interview survey of Japanese university students revealed that, despite initial unfamiliarity with ELF and the LFC, many participants came to appreciate their practical value through reflections on real-world communication. This indicates latent openness to ELF- and LFC-informed approaches,

even in contexts dominated by native-speaker norms. Introducing the LFC as a realistic pronunciation goal may help reduce learners' pronunciation anxiety, particularly if presented at the high school level, where it may also mitigate speaking reluctance.

2.2.4 Expectations for EFL Teachers in Japan from an ELF Perspective

While intelligibility is widely accepted as a core goal in pronunciation instruction, learners' goals vary—from comfortable intelligibility to native-like pronunciation—and both should be respected (Rogerson-Revell, 2011; Jenkins, 2000). Jenkins (2007) and other scholars have emphasised the need to incorporate ELF perspectives into teacher education programmes. Future EFL teachers need to develop the ability to respond flexibly to learners' diverse uses of English, with an emphasis on international intelligibility.

Yukimori (2014) argues that Japanese teachers should deepen their understanding of English diversity and effectively utilise their position as NNSs, for example, by presenting themselves as learner models and providing a non-native perspective on English as a lingua franca. Medgyes (2001) highlights several advantages of NNS teachers, including serving as successful learner models, effectively teaching strategies, and empathising with learners' challenges. Yukimori (2014) adds that they also play a key role in presenting a non-native model of English as a lingua franca. Rogerson-Revell (2011) defines intelligibility as ease of understanding without excessive effort, while Kachru (1992) warns that reliance on native norms in ELF contexts may hinder comprehension. Matsuda (2003) and Kachru (1992) argue that, rather than focusing narrowly on American and British varieties—typically associated with pronunciation models such as GA and RP in English education—introducing the concept of WE in the classroom can better prepare learners for international communication and help them develop greater confidence.

Additionally, in ELF contexts, it is advised not to correct pronunciation but to add accents, encouraging exposure to different forms of English and improving receptive flexibility (Walker et. al. 2021; Esling, 1987, as cited in Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019, p. 129). While the main features of ELF and English as an International Language (EIL) guarantee fundamental intelligibility, learners striving for greater proficiency may refine their accents by practicing connected speech or vowel clarity

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(Walker et. al., 2021). A key aspect of this growth is the development of accommodation skills—defined as the speaker’s ability to adjust their pronunciation (productive accommodation) and the listener’s capacity to adapt their phonological expectations (receptive accommodation)—to improve mutual understanding (Walker & Setter, 2021). Nation and Newton (2009) point out that a listener's comprehension of a speaker's pronunciation improves with the listener's motivation, empathy, and effort. These methods for pronunciation and listening instruction support the broader aims of ELF-focused teaching.

Mompeán (2004) and Mompeán & Fouz-González (2008) recommend using a reference model for systematic explanations and a comparison model for listening practice. Walker and Setter (2021) emphasise the importance of helping learners adapt their listening and pronunciation skills to various English-speaking contexts.

Building on these perspectives, it is also important to consider how these global trends relate to the Japanese context. In particular, as the focus on intelligibility and accommodation strategies continues to grow, it is crucial to critically evaluate the current status and potential of Japanese English as a practical pronunciation model in EFL settings. In this paper, the term Japanese English refers to the English spoken by Japanese learners, typically influenced by their first language. It often features unclear consonant sounds, vowel insertion, and a flat or unnatural intonation pattern, which may cause listeners to perceive the accent as unfamiliar or difficult to follow (Jenkins, 2007).

Nevertheless, Weinberger (1987) and Jenkins (2000) argue that such accents can help facilitate effective communication among non-native speakers. To connect theory with classroom practice, it is important to re-emphasise intelligibility and shift focus away from native-like norms as the sole legitimate targets (Yukimori, 2015).

3. Issues and Possible Solutions

3.1 The Role of English Pronunciation as a Medium of Communication.

This study clarifies why the issue of pronunciation norms is a major topic only in English education, unlike in other foreign language education. In English education, a significant tension exists between a “polycentric and diverse reality” and a “monocentric sense of norms.” Specifically, the triple structure of English as an

international language, the long-standing dominance of native-speaker norms, and the strengthened standardisation of the examination system make pronunciation a crucial issue compared to other foreign languages. This, combined with the uniquely Japanese culture of perfectionism and aestheticism, has made pronunciation a symbol of perfection, prioritising native-speaker quality over intelligibility and reinforcing the psychological tendency not to speak unless it is perfect. Furthermore, because English is a familiar language, Japanese learners can easily tell whether their pronunciation is close to that of native speakers, which may lead to tension about how their English will be evaluated when speaking in public.

3.2 Bridging the Gap through ELF and the LFC

To address this, the paper advocates for the systematic integration of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) into the Japanese curriculum. By shifting the goal from “accent reduction” to “mutual intelligibility,” educators can set realistic, attainable linguistic targets for students. The LFC, by focusing on essential phonological features for international communication, offers a pragmatic framework that can boost learner confidence. If students understand that being understood is more important than sounding “American,” the psychological barrier to oral production may be significantly lowered.

3.3 The Evolving Role of the Japanese Teacher

Furthermore, the study highlights the critical role of the Japanese teacher as a non-native speaker (NNS) role model. Rather than viewing their own accents as a liability, Japanese teachers should leverage their position to demonstrate successful bilingualism. This requires a shift in teacher training programmes to include exposure to World Englishes (WE) and accommodation strategies—both productive and receptive. By presenting a variety of English models in the classroom, teachers can foster an environment of linguistic pluralism, preparing students for the diversity of real-world international communication.

3.4 Towards Measuring the Intelligibility of Pronunciation by Native Speakers of Japanese

Finally, it is worth considering developing a measure to evaluate the intelligibility of

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pronunciation that is heavily influenced by the native language, a characteristic typically found among beginner learners of Japanese.

The LFC represents an attempt to identify the essential phonetic elements necessary for communicative success. Similarly, the Council of Europe's CEFR Companion Volume (2018) describes pronunciation assessment in terms of comprehensibility, intelligibility, and phonological control. Based on these approaches, assessment can be designed not around “native-like” pronunciation, but rather centred on whether the listener can understand the meaning without additional effort.

Regarding the pronunciation of beginner Japanese learners, it is important to note that not all native language transfer equally impairs intelligibility. In other words, the “Japanese accent” itself is not the problem; rather, it is the “elements that impair meaning discrimination” that pose an issue. Specifically, in LFC items, /l/-/r/ confusion and the destruction of initial consonant clusters are often cited as causes of word recognition difficulties. On the other hand, monotonous intonation, most vowel insertions, and Japanese-style rhythm—typical features of a Japanese accent—are often sufficiently understandable with contextual clues (Jenkins, 2000). Therefore, treating Japanese English not as “incomplete English” but as a “variant with systematic features” is expected to reduce pronunciation anxiety, increase speech output, and enhance self-efficacy.

Based on the above, constructing a rubric to measure the intelligibility of Japanese English at multiple levels is a future challenge. Ultimately, what is crucial is redefining pronunciation not as “a measure of how close one is to an ideal,” but as “a resource enabling mutual understanding.” This is considered key to overcoming the culture of silence in Japanese English education

4. Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the Japanese EFL landscape reveals a profound disconnect between global linguistic trends and classroom realities. While the international community has moved towards prioritising intelligibility and communicative efficiency, Japanese English education remains largely tethered to native-speaker norms, specifically General American (GA) and Received Pronunciation (RP). This study concludes that rigid adherence to “native-like” perfection is not merely a pedagogical choice but also a

psychological barrier that significantly contributes to the pervasive silence and reluctance to speak observed in Japanese high schools.

Note

This paper is based upon part of my master's thesis submitted to the University of Leicester in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MA in TESOL and Applied Linguistics in September 2025. While the original thesis involved a mixed-methods study—incorporating a questionnaire-based survey on pronunciation norms, attitudes towards native speaker models, and psychological barriers to classroom speaking, analysed using multiple regression analysis, followed by semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis—the present article focuses exclusively on views on EFL pronunciation norms due to space constraints. The author intends to present the empirical findings and subsequent discussions in future publications.

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