"Japanese English": A Descriptive Grammar of the Structure of the Verb Phrase

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Abstract: As an attempt to conflate the existing pedagogical concept of "Standard English" and the emerging theoretical notion of "standard non-native varieties of English", this study looks at the stability of the claimed "characteristic" forms of "Japanese English" and shows the statistical likelihood of their occurrence in particular syntactic and semantic environments. The realization of grammatical categories associated with the verb, such as tense, aspect and modality, was examined in a corpus of "educated written English" in Japan. In most of the texts examined for this study the divergent forms and the standard forms alternate with each other without any apparent contextual determinants. This would appear to underscore inconsistency in handling the complexity and idiosyncrasy of Standard English practice with respect to verb usage rather than manifest an "institutionalized" divergent verb usage. However, the data seems to also suggest that either there exists something called "English usage in Japan" or that there exists something called "Japanese English".

Keywords: Standard English, Japanese English, descriptive grammar, prescriptive grammar, institutionalized variety, verb phrase, tense, aspect, modality.

1. Introduction

Arguments rejecting the pedagogic notion of "Standard English" or "correctness", and suggesting that all forms of English are equal, have resulted in the proliferation of terms such as "Indian English", "Singapore English", "Filipino English", "Nigerian English" etc., which are claimed to be on precisely the same equal footing with "American English", "British English", "Australian English" (Greenberg, 1971; Kirk-Greene, 1971; Grieve, 1964; Kachru, 1986; Coleman, 1987, p. 13).

The term "Japanese English" has also gained currency amongst many linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, cognitive scientists and ordinary people both inside and outside of Japan (Takeshita, 1993; Larsen, 1993; Iwasaki, 1994; Honna, 1995; Morrow, 1995; Hayashi et al., 1995; Bolton, 2003; Stanlaw, 2004; D'Angelo, 2005).

However, the most comprehensive study on the subject of "Japanese English" was conducted by Stanlaw (2004). In his seminal study done from "an anthropological linguistic perspective", Stanlaw describes "Japanese English" as "a created-in-Japan variety for use by Japanese in Japan regardless of how they may appear to native English speakers" (p. 299). In other words, the Japanese do not aspire to approximate the native norm. He claims that in the larger context of "world Englishes", "Japanese English" is so entrenched that English has become "… a Japanese language" (p. 300). This is an extreme position which few scholars share with Stanlaw. And, this is not my position.

The tendency among researchers on the subject of English in Japan has largely been to provide glossaries of coinages and other lexical modifications, and the listing of isolated examples of divergence, and present them as "the features" of "Japanese English" (cf. Stanlaw, 2004). Caught helplessly in this controversy especially in a country such as Japan, where English language is chiefly acquired through formal education, is the classroom teacher, who needs to know what form of English to teach, and which reference books to use.

The focus exclusively on isolated examples of divergence, in the final analysis, does not provide the classroom teacher in Japan with a full knowledge of what needs to be highlighted in the classroom; nor the theoretical or descriptive linguist with what needs to be observed and analyzed.

This study does not select isolated examples of forms to corroborate or falsify any theoretical position or construct, which has been the general trend of research in the field. Instead, it seeks to provide a descriptive grammar of aspects of educated written English in Japan, on which those concerned with teaching English in Japan particularly at junior high, high school and university can draw; it seeks to demonstrate that across the range of forms which are regularly identified as "errors" in the English written by educated Japanese, there are some environments which regularly reflect "Standard English practice" and others where "divergent forms" are manifested with some degrees of frequency. The discrimination between the different types of environment gives some idea of the possible reasons for this variation and how to set about correcting it in the classroom.

This study focuses on the structure of the verb phrase in "Japanese English". It is a continuation of an earlier study on the structure of the noun phrase published in the 2010 edition of the *Akita International University Global Review*.

The realization of grammatical categories associated with the verb, such as tense, aspect and modality, is always at the centre of discussions that seek to distinguish between "native" and "non-native", "correct" and "incorrect" forms of English. Defining the kind of English described in his Practical English Usage, Swan (1980, ix) for instance states: "The explanations are mainly of standard modern British English, and the examples are as realistic as I can make them …. If we say that a form is 'incorrect', we … may be referring to a form like ***I have seen her yesterday**, which only occurs in the English of foreigners; or we may be talking about a form like *ain't,* which is used by many British and American people, but which is considered 'wrong' or substandard. In this book, I am mainly concerned with the first sort of incorrectness (the differences between British or American English and 'foreign' English)". Notice that an expression such as **I have seen her yesterday** is said not only to be "incorrect" but also as constituting the sort of usage that distinguishes between "native" and "foreign" English. According to Tingley (1981) such a form, "would be clearly unacceptable to at least the great majority of educated native speakers". To Trudgill and Hannah (1985, p. 110) it marks "a difference from English English in the usage of tense and aspect in Indian English". Tregidgo (1973, p. 189) also cites the same structure as "a very widespread mistake" which could probably be due to "mother tongue interference". Other categories associated with the verb are cited in the same manner.

My main interest in this paper will be to discriminate in the English written by educated Japanese between environments where the verb phrase regularly occurs standardly, and areas

where divergence is manifested with some degree of frequency.

2. Scope, Data and Methodology

As an attempt to conflate the existing pedagogical concept of "Standard English" and the emerging theoretical notion of "standard non-native varieties of English" (Milroy & Milroy, 1987; Quirk, 1989), this study looks at the stability of the claimed "characteristic" forms of "Japanese English" and shows the statistical likelihood of their occurrence in particular syntactic and semantic environments.

This approach is both pedagogically and theoretically interesting inasmuch as it identifies the divergent forms. The classroom teacher, for example, may know what to "correct" and the textbook writers (cf. Tregidgo, 1962) what to highlight. The theoretical linguist who argues for the existence of non-native standard varieties of English (cf. Todd & Hancock, 1986; Williams, 1987) has also got ready evidence on which to draw; evidence that can also validate the concept of "fossilization" (cf. Selinker, 1972), which seeks to account for the adult non-native speaker's grammatical variability.

My starting point was to compile a corpus of the "educated written English" in Japan. The corpus consists of material that appears in the four Japanese national English-language newspapers, *Asahi Evening News, Japan Times, Mainichi Daily News,* and *The Daily Yomiuri* which comprises the editorials, articles, advertisements, letters to the editor, etc.; government publications, such as those of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); articles published in English by Japanese University professors and the writings of university students in Japan. Statistical information is given in the text itself. Because we are interested in the language produced by a people or group of speakers rather than the individual variability within the group, the data-base is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal.

The newspapers have been selected for this study for several reasons. Published daily (Monday to Sunday), they are the most widely circulated national English-language newspapers in Japan. Even though English newspapers in Japan have a very limited number of subscribers, they are read by those whose proficiency in English ranges from the lowest to the highest (native-like). The newspapers constitute what might be called the Japanese quality press.

It should be noted that even though most of the four English language newspapers used for this study most likely have native speaker grammar checkers who work there full time, there was a very limited "contamination" on the data collected. Diligent efforts were made to specifically select various articles written by the same Japanese writers which have shown consistent divergent tendencies. It is therefore possible to assume that those articles were either not checked or that the grammar checkers were unconscious of the consistency with which the divergent forms occur in those articles.

It could be argued that newspaper journalism has its own specialized conventions (O'Donnell & Todd, 1980, p. 85) and may not reflect general usage as such. One believes, first, that it is representative of written English in Japan. According to Gorlach (1989, p. 283) newspapers "are usually close to a written local norm". Secondly, we believe that the material appearing in newspapers, because of its pervasive nature, will be one of the most powerful

models and authoritative sources of English usage for the Japanese. According to Todd and Hancock (1986, p. 7), today: "one may claim that the media, especially in the quality press ..., function like an academy in that they arbitrate on what is acceptable and they influence the entire population, encouraging a modification towards network norms".

The corpus also includes data collected from the articles published in English by Japanese university professors, and data collected from MEXT publications. These and the English of Japanese newspapers are what we are associating with "educated English" (call it the "acrolectal") in this study. These are the highest levels at which we are readily able to find a corpus from the daily communicative experience of the people, large enough to be well representative of the major forms, and quite convenient for detailed examination. Other bases, such as students' writing collected at various levels, will show tendencies that are generally associated with early and middle learners (the "basilect" and the "mesolect" speakers). It is necessary to emphasize tendencies in relation to a data-base because there seems to be no objective way of dividing the cline of bilingualism. In sociolinguistic terms (Bickerton, 1977; Stauble, 1978; Bolinger & Sears, 1981; Magura, 1985), the levels of proficiency are grouped into those broad stages of the acquisition process, each of which is associated with a variety of the language.

The data for this study was collected manually, and was therefore very laborious. Each detected divergent form is then manually fed into the Word document which serves as the computerized "tool" and corpus for the study.

As we are interested in the description of data rather than the explanation of a theory or process, the approach is more inductive than deductive. The realization of the grammatical categories that are typically associated with the constituents of the verb phrase (VP), are examined in the English of the newspapers, in the writings of university professors, the government publications and the writings of university students. The environments where persistent patterns and tendencies emerge are described and tabulated with a view to determining the extent to which the patterns may be said to represent stabilized usage based on a specifically Japanese syntax and semantics as opposed to (American) Standard English practice.

In the discrimination between different types of syntactic environment, our pedagogical aims will take precedence, and we shall be suggesting one grammatical approach or another. The main purpose, however, is not to prescribe any particular approach but to furnish the teacher-trainer, textbook writer and curriculum designer with an eclectic mixture of methodological frameworks which will be useful in approaching a particular problem.

The relations between the standard forms and the divergent forms, and their percentages of co-occurrence will provide helpful insights into various theoretical issues. For example, the corpus shows no grammatical categories that regularly occur divergently only and never standardly. If we accept the general view that there is a distinctive Japanese English usage that can be clearly distinguished from standard practice then we must allow for a great deal of overlap between "Japanese English usage" and standard practice in the language produced by educated Japanese.

The term "standard practice" is used in this study in the pedagogical sense to refer to the defined standards of English that are recognized by the institutions of state, taught and

examined in schools for educational and professional purposes, and observed in international communication (Quirk, 1990; Trudgill & Hannah, 1985, p. 1; Todd & Hancock, 1986, p. 440). Perhaps, with reference to its native-speaker origin, and therefore its native-speaker stability, Standard English is often described in the literature as British and/or American English (Trudgill & Hannah, 1985, Chap. 1). In terms of origin, Standard English started as the social dialect of London, and acquired prestige as a result of several factors including London being the capital (Baugh & Cable, 1978, p. 191) to become the class dialect of educated users throughout the English-speaking world.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Verb Patterns That Regularly Occur Standardly in the English Written by Educated Japanese

We shall now examine the general verb patterns that regularly occur standardly in the English written by educated Japanese. Specific cases of divergence will be examined in the next section.

3.1.1. Subject + V + Complement

1. The Emperor's first son is *a farmer.*
2. The rest of his children *are teachers*.
3. All the farmers *seemed unhappy.*
4. His wife *looked surprised.*
5. They *became good friends ....*

Numerous variations of this pattern occur with introductory *there/it:*

6. *There* was a large crowd.
7. *It* was impossible to pursue the gang ….
8. *It* was a pity the match was called off.

3.1.2. Subject + Verb intransitive + (adverbial adjunct)

1. A period of political unrest followed.
2. The Prefectural Governor wept when he visited the victims of the earthquake.
3. Everyone cried.
4. The governor was eating when the messengers arrived … and they waited.

Variations occur with introductory *there/it:*

5. There followed a long period of student demonstrations.
6. It does not concern the government whether the people starve ….

That-clauses occur after *seem, appear, happen, chance:*

7. It seemed that X would never hand over power to a democratically elected government.
8. It happened that he was not in the country when the military toppled the government.

3.1.3. Intransitive verb + adverbial adjunct of distance, duration, weight, cost, etc.

1. The meeting lasted three hours.
2. The project cost the government … ¥3m.
3. The police walked for two miles ….

As in example 3, *for* occurs before adverbials of distance and duration, and, as in example 2, an indirect object occurs after verbs such as *cost, last* and *take* (meaning "require").

3.1.4. Intransitive verb + adjective (phrase) or noun (phrase)

1. X died a millionaire.
2. She married young.
3. Their dreams have come true.

There were very few instances of univalent verbs in the corpus.

3.1.5. Present participle or participial phrase functioning as predicative adjunct

1. The people … came running to meet the Prefectural Governor and his entourage ….
2. Will the governor go fishing …?
3. She lay smiling at him.

In these cases, the participles function as adjectives and the verb forms are completely regular.

3.1.6. Intransitive verb + to-infinitive of purpose, outcome, or result.

(Transitive verbs also occur in this pattern, cf. 3.1.10).

1. The tourists stopped to rest.
2. How did you come to know her?
3. The farmers have called to see the governor.

The infinitive (phrase) or catenative verb construction is sometimes equivalent to a co-ordinate clause:

4. She awoke to find the house on fire.
5. He looked around to see the window slowly opening.

3.1.7. Auxiliary verb or anomalous finite + bare infinitive.

(The forms *had better, had/would rather*, and *would sooner* fit into this pattern).

1. The government had better re-open the universities.
2. The students need not re-apply ….
3. The governor would rather be out fishing ….
4. The mountain … was so feared that no-one dare pass by it ….

3.1.8. Transitive verb + direct object NP

1. The trap caught the bear**.**

2. The animals destroyed the crops.
3. A hunter shot a bear ….
4. Everyone likes her.
5. The children enjoyed the film.

This pattern also occurs in the passive transformation:

6. The woman … was arrested ….
7. Salaries have been increased in line with inflation.
8. The man … was killed by his wife ….

3.1.9. Transitive verb + direct object NP

This pattern does not occur in the passive transformation. The verb *have* (meaning "possess/take/eat/drink"), reflexive verbs, and verbs with cognate objects occur in this pattern.

1. The match was just five minutes old when X … sprained his ankle and was carried off the field.
2. She has blue eyes.
3. He dreamed a very odd dream.
4. He hurt himself.

3.1.10. Transitive verb + to-infinitive or infinitive phrase.

(Intransitive verbs also occur in this pattern, cf. 3.1.6).

1. The manager pretended not to know what was going on.
2. The Governor expects to start a youth club.
3. The Ministry of Agriculture hopes to supply high yielding seedlings.
4. Does he want to resign?

3.1.11. Transitive verb + conjunctive

(Interrogative pronoun or adverb except *why* and *whether*) + to-infinitive

1. The Prime Minister did not know what to tell the parliament.
2. The committee … could not decide what to do next.
3. Do you see how to do it?
4. They must learn when to use force and when to use persuasion.

3.1.12. Transitive verb + that-clause

(The action is directed towards the verb's object without the NP before *that*-clause.)

1. The government intended that the X Companies should be broken up
2. The people of X suppose that the Governor will be at the meeting.
3. The farmers thought it would rain ….

3.1.13. Transitive verb + NP + *that*-clause

(In these cases, the NP is mandatory before *that*-clause.)

1. The accused convinced the court that they were innocent.
2. The government warned the farmers that the price of rice would not be increased.
3. They satisfied themselves that the plan would work.

3.1.14. Transitive verb + Indirect object + Direct object

1. The government gave the people of X the land
2. The farmers told the Governor their problems.
3. He denied them nothing.
4. She cooked her husband some rice and fish.
5. The driver showed the policeman his driving license.

This pattern also occurs with the two object NPs reversed in order and a preposition, typically *to* or *for*, inserted:

6. The farmer gave the gun to the policeman.
7. They found accommodation for all the visitors.

In transformational terms, the pattern of examples 6 and 7 will be said to be derived from the patterns of examples 1-5.

3.1.15. Transitive verb + Object + Complement

1. Most people considered him innocent.
2. They have always found her a good friend.
3. We all felt the plan to be unwise.
4. They made X President of the company.
5. We usually call him Zen.

(There were many more examples of these cases without any ellipsis, which standard practice would consider superfluous to what is required).

3.1.16. Transitive verb + Object + to-infinitive (phrase)

1. They left the boys to do all the dirty work.
2. He opened the gate to let the sheep out.
3. She brought the children to see their grandfather.

It may be noted, as illustrated in this subsection (3.1), that all the major or basic verb patterns occur standardly in the English written by educated Japanese.

3.2. Divergence in the Realization of Grammatical Categories Associated with the Verb

We shall now discuss the specific cases of divergence in relation to verbs that are manifested in the English written by educated Japanese.

3.2.1. 3rd Person usage of *shall*

We may describe this as divergent substitution of *shall* for *will*. It chiefly involves the 3rd person usage of *shall* where standard practice would prefer *will* (cf. 3.1.2.ii). *Shall* was counted 680 times in the corpus. In 27 (4%) cases, we may prefer *will* in the classroom:

1. The meeting shall discuss some of the problems ….
2. X … shall be here within a fortnight ….
3. The play shall raise questions about the government's popularity ….
4. The President of the PTA shall take part in the fun run ….

3.2.2. Expression of tentativeness

Perhaps, because they can be used more or less interchangeably in some environments in standard practice (cf. 3.1.7), there is a divergent tendency in the English of Japanese newspapers to use the past tense forms *would* and *could* where standard practice would respectively prefer *will* and *can*. The issue seems to be a conflict between the expression of modality and futurity in the case of *would,* and between the expression of modality (tentativeness, politeness, etc.) and ability in the case of *could*. Out of 720 examples of *would*, we may prefer *will* in 43 (6%) cases:

1. Identity cards *would* be demanded at the gate ….
2. The city mayor *would* preside over the opening session ….
3. Certificates … *would* be awarded to the participants ….

A similar divergent tendency occurred in 4% of cases (32 out of 805 examples) involving *could:*

4. If workers are finding it difficult to make ends meet, one *could* imagine the plight of the unemployed.
5. A good mayor is one who *could* be seen as a father of the people.

3.2.3. Perfective usage of imperfective verbs

There are some verbs (generally stative verbs) that either do not standardly occur in the progressive or occur but with a change of meaning. This issue is discussed in the literature under various terms, such as "nonprogressive verbs", "perfective/imperfective verbs", "dynamic/stative verbs", etc. In the case of verbs such as *see* and *hear,* for example, the contrast is maintained by two corresponding forms (compare: *see/look* (*at*); *hear/listen* (*to*)). The major example of divergent "progressive" or "imperfective" use of verbs in the English written by educated Japanese occurred in 2% of cases (8 out of 408) involving the verb *have,* e.g.:

1. All the houses that X is having in the country have been confiscated.
2. He is having two wives ….

3.2.4. Verb + NP + Adverbial adjunct

Usually, in standard practice, the simple past tense is associated with time position adverbials that indicate a specific point or period in the past (e.g., *yesterday, a week ago, last*

year, etc.), and the present perfective is associated with adverbials that designate a period leading up to the present moment (e.g., *today, this month, this year,* etc.). It is also a standard tendency to use the same adverbial with both the simple past and the present perfective, e.g.:

She saw him *two weeks ago*.

She has seen him *two weeks ago.*

Many writers, however, are not in favor of the use of time position adverbials with the present perfective (as in example b). Quirk et al. (1985, p. 195) describe such examples as "performance errors". As we saw at the beginning of this section, not only is that form regarded as being grammatically divergent, it is also identified as being typically "non-native". But at the same time, we are being told (cf. Trudgill, 1984, p. 42) that: "The rules governing the use of the present perfect in Standard English seem to be altering somewhat, and there appears in particular to be an increase in the usage of forms such as: *I've seen him last year; He's done it two days ago".* It is interesting that Standard English is changing in the direction of "non-native usage".

3.2.5. The to-infinitive and the -ing form

Divergence relating to the distinction between the *to*-infinitive and the *-ing* form is manifested in expressions such as:

1. The few trucks which *risk to go to* these areas charge the farmers heavily ….
2. It … cannot be ignored because it has a close bearing on *the process to establish* social harmony.
3. Tourists … always wish *taking* souvenirs of gold … away …
4. Everyone *stopped to talk* and the whole place suddenly became as quiet as a cemetery.

600 sentences were found in the corpus where the *to*-infinitive and the *-ing* form would be mutually exclusive in standard practice. In 18 (3%) cases, the infinitive was used instead of the *-ing* form (as in examples 1, 2, 4), and the *-ing* form was used instead of the infinitive in 6 (1%) instances (as in example 3). There are other cases which do not seem so obviously divergent:

5. She made it a point to arrive early.

Perhaps, standard practice would prefer:

She made a point of arriving early.

For our purposes, however, example 5 is better than examples 1, 2 and 4, where the teacher will normally insist on the *-ing* form. It would appear, therefore, that the degree of divergence involving the choice between the infinitive and the *-ing* form depends, to some extent, on the verb involved. The verb of a nominal *-ing* participle clause is traditionally called a "gerund", and the clause itself is sometimes described as "gerundive" or "gerundival" (cf. Quirk et al., 1985, p. 98.1n). In many cases, standard idiomatic practice chooses between the gerund and the *to*-infinitive. For example, the gerund usually occurs after verbs such as *dread, prevent, avoid, resist, enjoy, postpone, give up, recall,* and the to-infinitive after *hope, wish, need, dare, shudder, persuade.*

There appears, however, to be a good deal of overlapping between the nominal *to*-infinitive clause and the nominal *-ing* clause, and some verbs can occur in both constructions without any serious semantic difference. Compare:

He had really not intended divorcing her.

He had really not intended to divorce her.

It is sometimes suggested, however, that the to-infinitive form indicates that some goal was achieved whereas the *-ing* form indicates simply that an attempt was made, which may or may not have been successful - i.e., a process was initiated (cf. Quirk et al., 1985, p. 98 loc. cit.). Thus we could say:

i. I taught her swimming for many years and she never succeeded in doing it.

ii. I taught her to swim for many years and she never succeeded in doing it.

Expression (ii) would appear grammatical, but an odd proposition especially in relation to expression (i). Similarly, if we compare:

a. I prefer walking to work in order to get there early.

b. I prefer to walk to work in order to get there early.

We may find (a) not quite as normal as (b).

3.2.6. The past form and the *-ed* participle form

Divergence in the realization of the past and the *-ed* participle morpheme is manifested mainly in two types of verbs:

3.2.6.1. Verbs which occur both as a base form and as a past form

When a verb occurs in standard practice both as a base form and as a past form but with different meanings, there is a tendency in the English of Japanese newspapers to use both verbs with the meaning of the base form. The most common example involves the form *lay*. 12 in (3%) 360 examples manifested this tendency:

1. He *laid* in the sun all day.
2. The car *has laid* in the gutter for three days …
3. The soldiers *laid down* side by side ….

3.2.6.2. Verbs which occur in both the regular and irregular paradigms

Some verbs occur in standard practice in both the regular and irregular paradigms but with different meanings. There is a tendency in the English of Japanese newspapers to use the "regular paradigm meaning" of the verb for its "irregular paradigm meaning". The most common example here involves the verb *hang.* In 256 examples, the tendency was manifested in 11 (4%) cases:

1. The priestess's long hair *hanged* over her face.
2. The walls were *hanged* with pictures ….
3. The governors and the politicians have *hanged* together for years ….

4. Conclusion

It will be clear from the examples we have seen that the realization of grammatical

categories associated with the verb in the English written by educated Japanese generally reflects the close interrelationship between futurity, modality and tense in standard practice. The divergent forms largely seem to be related to the interchangeability and overlap which standard practice sometimes exhibits in the realization of the categories.

In conclusion, what the data has shown is that whereas the rate of divergence is high (in some cases up to 6%), there are a lot of other high instances of standard American English practice. In most of the texts examined for this study the divergent forms and the standard forms alternate with each other without any apparent contextual determinants. This would appear to underscore inconsistency in handling the complexity and idiosyncrasy of standard practice with respect to verb usage rather than manifest an "institutionalized" divergent verb usage. However, the data seems to also suggest that either there exists something called 'English usage in Japan' or that there exists something called 'Japanese English'. There is in fact a large area of overlap between the two interpretations, and the second could even be seen as included entirely within the first.

Because of a desire to elevate divergent grammatical forms into the dignity of national and regional non-native varieties of English, often described as "New Englishes", some writers have focused exclusively on some relatively rare exceptional divergent uses or forms in the English produced by non-native speakers as manifesting characteristic features of "New Englishes". Detailed, descriptive documentation has been lacking. But the most common isolated examples which have often been listed include expressions relating to definite/indefinite distinction (realised by articles); number realisation involving noncount nouns; modality, tense and aspect (realised by the verb); concord; and verb + particle (preposition, adverb or prepositional adverb) collocations. In this study, we have examined the incidence of the category of the verb phrase in a corpus of educated written English in Japan.

Two issues are of particular interest to us: the stability of the realization of the categories and the statistical likelihood of the occurrence of the divergent forms in particular syntactic and semantic environments; and the distinctiveness or uniqueness of the divergent forms to educated written English in Japan.

Our analysis shows that the divergent ("characteristic") features are not consistently or reliably realized, and that their Standard American English equivalents are used on more than 95% of occasions of use. Any given deviant form occurs in less than 10% of instances of use and sometimes alternates with the standard form without any apparent contextual determinant (cf. Olagboyega, 2010). The divergent forms relating to verb phrases, as presented in this study, occur on the average of 4% of instances of use. So that if we are prepared to label the use of *shall* for *will* in a given environment as "a characteristic of Japanese English", then we must inevitably be prepared to justify the overwhelming 96% of instances of use where the so-called "characteristic" does not or will not occur. What in effect we shall be saying is that the form that occurs in 4% of instances of use constitutes the "rule" or regular practice in "Japanese English" and the alternative form that occurs in 96% of instances constitutes "an exception to the rule". Such a position would be ludicrously inconsistent with descriptive linguistics.

The pedagogic notion of "Standard English" does not imply a refusal to accept the existence of (non-native) varieties of English as scholars like Bamgbose (1982) would argue. His suggestion that other varieties of English be recognized would not have been questioned

if, as Spencer (1973 p.vi) puts it in *Foreword* to Sey (1973 p. vi): "… these relatively slight deviations from and extensions of Standard British English are widespread, stable and, above all, locally acceptable. So far, … impression and opinion has dominated discussion". This is what has been at issue for the past four decades or so.

Some writers have resorted to an attack-to-defend strategy whereby "New Englishes" are being defended not so much by describing such varieties as by attacking the pedagogic notion of "Standard English" or of "correctness". Opposed to the linguistic ethos which suggests that there is a Standard English which must be the accepted educational norm or practice, which some scholars, like Kachru (1991), describe as *deficit linguistics*, is that which suggests that all forms of English are equal, which scholars like Quirk (1989/90) describe as *liberation linguistics*. Writers like Quirk (1990) still reject the idea of "institutionalized non-native" varieties of English on the basis of "stability", and reiterate (p. 22): "No one would quarrel with any of this provided there was agreement within each such country that it was true, or even that there was a determined policy to make it true. So far as I can see, neither of these conditions obtains, and most of those with authority in education … in these countries tend to protest that the so-called national variety of English is an attempt to justify inability to acquire what they persist in seeing as 'real' English". Cf. Kachru's reply (1991, pp. 3-13), which goes beyond the specific points made by Quirk to discuss what Kachru identifies as the ideological backdrop to Quirk's concern or position - *deficit linguistics*.

National consensus apart, there is the grammatical need to address the issue of stability. One way of putting the question will be: "in what sense are these forms 'stable' deviant forms if, as this study has shown, they only occur in less than 10% of instances of use?" Another way of looking at it could be: "if two forms alternate with each other in the ratio of 90% to 10%, and there is no apparent contextual determinant, which of them, in terms of frequency, deserves more recognition as the stable form?"

Whether or not we recognize a Japanese Standard variety of English appears to be a socio-political rather than linguistic question. Surely, there is a political or social dimension to the issue, and we are very unlikely to find complete agreement on it. This is one reason why it is all the more important for teacher-trainers, textbook writers and curriculum designers to know what forms they are recognizing and emphasizing as the educational target, which will guide teachers and examiners. Obviously, there can be no purposeful and effective teaching/learning without any required standard. Neither will it be pedagogically useful to have educational standards which do not reflect social and professional reality. Our analysis shows that whatever we may understand as the "characteristic" features of "Japanese English", as manifested in the Japanese English language quality press, the educated Japanese will be achieving at least 95% of their "standard" realization if we continue to teach Standard American English in schools and colleges in Japan. If it is a question of "standards", then it may be worth noting that even in the native-speaker setting, such as Britain, the emphasis is always on "standards", and the "marking of grammar" is always the central issue.

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