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メタデータ	言語: 出版者: 琉球大学法文学部 公開日: 2012-07-03 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Shibata, Miki, 柴田, 美紀 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	https://doi.org/10.24564/0002007184

Identity conflict of Japanese EFL teachers in the socio-political context¹

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1. Introduction

Foreign language learning is often viewed as a social process in which the power relationship between a target language and those involved in language education, including policy makers, teachers, and learners, influences their socio-cultural identity in teaching and learning situations. The perception of a foreign language in the society or nation has an impact on language policy, which influences its implementation in school settings. English is taught as a foreign language at schools in Japan, and this situation limits Japanese learners' English use in daily life. Second language (hereafter, L2) acquisition studies have claimed that interaction plays an important role in the acquisition process: the modification and collaborative efforts which take place in negotiating for mutual understanding facilitates L2 learning processes (Long, 1996). That is, the more L2 learners have the opportunity to use the target language, the more proficient they will become. In order for Japanese learners to acquire English in the EFL (English as a foreign language) context, it would be ideal if they could be provided with opportunities to use the target language.

From the pedagogical perspective, then, Okinawa appears to have the potential to aid the learning and use of English since there are a large number of native English speakers, mainly Americans, in the

community due to the presence of U.S. military bases. Furthermore, people in mainland Japan seem to believe that the locals in Okinawa may have opportunities to use English in the community due to a social structure in which there are a large number of native speakers of English (i.e., Americans). However, no studies have been conducted to see whether people in Okinawa view U.S. military bases as a pedagogical advantage. The present study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between *JTEs'* (Japanese teachers of English) identity and their perception of the military bases from the educational point of view. Note, however, that the study has no intention of attempting to justify the politically-challenged issues regarding the involvement of U.S. military bases in the promotion of foreign language learning. The findings revealed *JTEs'* complex and contradictory social identities (i.e., as an Okinawan, a language teacher, and a public figure). As English instructors they consider the socio-politically unique environment to have the pedagogical potential to help their students improve their English proficiency, but as local and public figures affiliated to their society they are reluctant to be actively involved in approaching them even for pedagogical purposes.

2. Language Policy of the U.S. Government in Okinawa

After World War II, between 1945 and 1972 Okinawa was placed under U.S. administration (Arasaki, 2000). During the occupation, the U.S. government promoted English in order to stabilize its presence and to aid in its successful administration of the islands (Ishihara, 2004). In particular, to maintain the huge military bases, increasing the bilingual population in Okinawa was a major concern for the United States Civil Administration of the Ryukyus.

The policy to promote English was implemented in different ways such as introducing English as a compulsory school subject and setting up the English Language Center to provide activities and courses to improve the ability of local people to effectively use the English language (Ishihara, 2004). Despite the U.S. government's efforts, however, promoting English in the society was not successful. A major reason was that the American occupation heightened Okinawans' Japanese identity as well as creating anti-American and anti-militaristic feelings. Although the U.S. military authorities encouraged locals to use Ryukyuan (a group of local languages in Okinawa) and English in order to accommodate them into their administrative system, Japanese nationalism arose and the promotion of Standard Japanese after 1945 became a means of inculcating a Japanese identity. In particular, the Okinawa Teachers Association was obsessed with the desire to implement a one nation one education system in Okinawa (Heinrich, 2004). Due to their policy of educating Okinawan children as Japanese citizens, they were reluctant to support the teaching of English in Okinawan elementary schools.

3. Rationale for the Current Study

The present study attempts to explore the relationship between JTEs' social identities and their perception of U.S. bases as an educational potential to promote English education in Okinawa. The Japanese in mainland Japan often mention that the locals in Okinawa should be fluent in English because the presence of military bases can provide them with plenty of opportunities to speak English with native speakers of English, in particular Americans. This implies that, at least from an external point of view, U.S. military bases are seen as being pedagogically beneficial for developing English communication skills

outside the classroom. The issues associated with the bases are politically and socially sensitive and the majority presumably perceives them negatively. However, since English is recognized as an international language in Japan as well as in the rest of the world, which has led the government and educators to encourage Japanese people with a good command of English, it is plausible to speculate that some local people, in particular educators involved in English teaching, view the U.S. military bases as having potential pedagogical value. Using the results of questionnaires and interviews with JTEs from the secondary and tertiary levels, the present study is intended to show whether the local people derive any pedagogical advantage from having the U.S. military bases and to discuss the results in terms of JTEs' social identity.

4. Method

4.1. Participants

The detailed data of the participants is summarized in Table 1. There were 210 JTE participants including 67 junior high school and 102 senior high school teachers, and 41 university faculty members.² The majority is from Okinawa: 89.6% of the junior high school JTEs, 98.0% of the senior high school JTEs, and 80.5% of the university faculty. More secondary-level female JTEs participated than males, whereas there were more males than females at the tertiary level: 81.8 % from junior high school and 73.0% from senior high school; 60.0% were males from the university level. The age range shows that 73.1% of junior high school JTEs and 71.5% of senior high school JTEs were in their 20's and 30's, and none in their 60's. On the other hand, 65.8% of university participants were in their 30's and 40's and no participants in their 20's.

Table 1

Summary of Participants' Backgrounds

		Junior high school	Senior high school	University faculty
		JTEs	JTEs	
Birth place	Okinawa	60	100	33
	Other	7	2	8
Total		67	102	41
Gender	Male	12	27	24
	Female	54	73	16
Total*		66	100	40
Age	20's	21	26	0
	30's	28	47	13
	40's	17	17	14
	50's	1	12	7
	60's	0	0	7
	Total		67	102
Average years of experience		9.6	10.9	16.6

*Four participants did not provide information.

4.2. Data Collection and Analysis

A questionnaire and interview were utilized for the present study. The original questionnaire included 14 items to investigate JTEs' beliefs about the influence of the U.S. military bases on English education in the society.³ In order to argue JTEs' identity reflected in their attitudes toward the U.S. military, the current paper focuses on seven items of them. Participants were required to indicate their attitudes using 6-point Likert scales with *strongly agree*, *agree*, *moderately agree*, *moderately*

disagree, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree* for the section. Previous studies on attitudes and beliefs have utilized two degrees for each pole (e.g. *strongly agree*, *agree*, vs. *disagree*, *strongly disagree*); the present study employed three scales for each in order to more closely explore the degree of perception. The Cronbach alpha was .84, thus there was internal consistency in the questionnaire items.

The follow-up interview sessions were conducted on a voluntary basis with a total of 22 English educators: 17 from five senior high schools and five from a national university, all of whom were teaching English at the time of data collection. Two senior high schools out of five are located in the area where the military bases are positioned and the university is relatively close to one of the major bases. All participants except three senior high school JTEs were from Okinawa. No junior high school JTEs volunteered for the interviews.

The initial data collection was conducted while the secondary level JTEs were attending the summer intensive seminars in 2006. They were then asked to give a copy of the questionnaire to their fellow JTEs. Later, the seminar organizers collected and mailed them to me. For the tertiary level, I first contacted faculty members from four universities (i.e., one national university and three private universities) via e-mail to ask for their participation, and then sent the questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope to those who agreed to participate in the study. Factor analysis and comparison of percentages were utilized to analyze responses to questionnaire statements.

Then, the volunteers were asked for follow-up interviews. Individual interview sessions were set up at the most convenient place and time to suit participants' schedules: in the case of senior high school JTEs, I visited their schools to interview them individually and I had an interview session with each university participant in my office. The

sessions, all of which were tape-recorded and transcribed, were in Japanese and lasted 30 minutes to one hour.

5. Results

First of all, the extent of participants' concern about the base issue was examined with Item 1, "I am concerned about the issue of bases in Okinawa as an inhabitant of a prefecture." They demonstrated a high degree of concern: over 90% of participants were concerned about the issue (See Appendix A for mean and standard deviation, and Appendix B for percentage and the actual number of respondents).

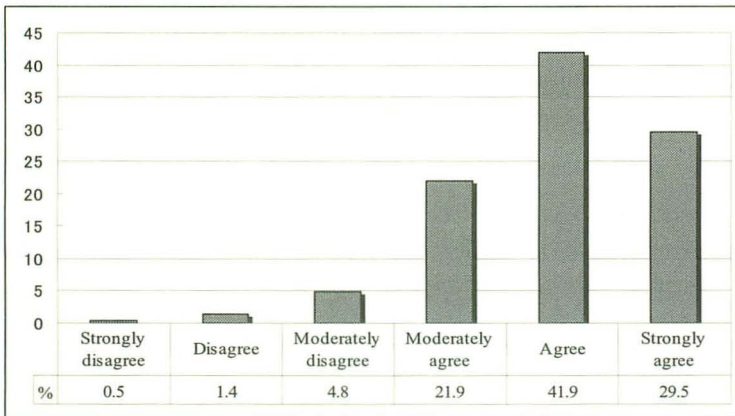


Figure 1. Responses to Item 1: I am concerned about the issue of bases in Okinawa as an inhabitant of a prefecture.

As for Item 2, "The presence of U.S. military bases is advantageous for English education in Okinawa," 53.3% of participants appeared to approve of it, yet their approval rate was restrained: i.e. 40% moderate agreement was the most frequent response (See Figure 2).

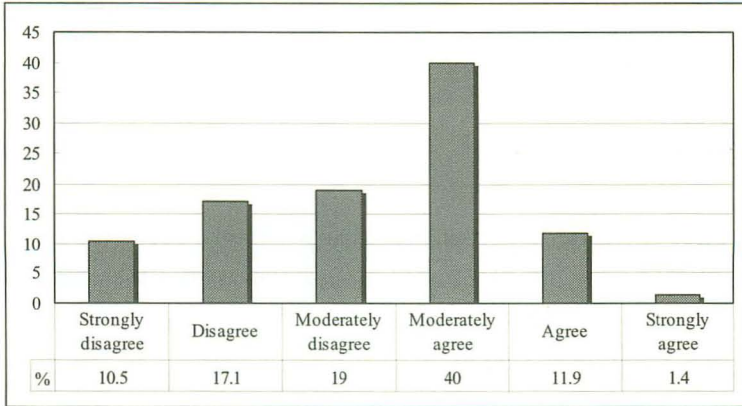


Figure 2. Responses to Item 2: The presence of U.S. military bases is an advantage for English education in Okinawa.

The following comments indicate their positive attitudes to accessing the U.S. military bases for pedagogical benefits in English education.

JTE5 (SHS)⁴: *Personally, I think it is OK. We do not have to go to America. Although the base issue is politically touchy, our students can be exposed to English in their neighborhood, if we can have exchanges with high school students on the bases.*⁵

JTE9 (SHS): *Without mentioning any historical background, I think it is a good idea. For example, remove fences so that we can get into the bases more freely. If we can shop on the bases, it should give us more chances to use English.*

JTE10 (SHS): *Although the base issue is political, it has nothing to do with English education. So it is OK to use them. We should get some benefit from bases in terms of opportunities to use English.*

JTE12 (SHS): *If we can use them, why not? I was motivated through home-stay on the base and I know some students got motivated through exchanges with high school students on the base. It is*

politically a complicated matter, but personally I think we should actively use them.

JTE19 (U): I strongly support the idea of using anything we can for English education. We do not have to be so fastidious about the bases. It depends on our attitude. What is the purpose of using bases? It is problematic if we simply admire their culture and act like Americans without getting to know them well. Utilizing bases for pedagogical purposes does not mean that we have to be in favor of the military bases.

Among those who showed a positive reaction to the idea, the phrase 'at a personal level' is frequently mentioned in their utterances. That is, they are ready to accept the idea as long as it happens at a personal level, implying that it is officially unacceptable.

JTE4 (SHS): Since our high school is prefectural, we should not have any contact with the bases. The base issue is very touchy and some parents may feel uncomfortable about us being involved with the military bases. It may be OK at a personal level.

JTE5 (SHS): Personally I agree with the idea. Our students do not have to go abroad to study English and do home-stay. There are some political issues, though.

JTE20 (U): At a personal level, it is OK to use the bases for English education, but not at the public level. So when I took my students to the base, it was my idea. It had nothing to do with the university.

JTE20 (U) took his students to the base to fulfill one of his course objectives, which is to deepen their understanding of the base issue in Okinawa. Emphasizing that it was his own idea without his university

being involved, he believed that seeing what the inside of a military base looked like should help students to reflect on the politically and socially complex base issue.

On the other hand, a total of 46.6% of the participants did not perceive the military bases as pedagogical resources. They claimed that the existence of U.S. bases was not meant to give students and locals the opportunity to use English.

JTE6 (SHS): It is a reality that the military bases exist in our community. But it does not mean it is OK to approach and use them. We know that the military bases bring different kinds of dangers to our community, so I wonder if it is worth utilizing the bases for pedagogical purposes despite those dangers.

Two participants clearly expressed their anti-military position as shown in the following comments:

JTE3 (SHS): Since I am anti-U.S. military bases, I cannot use them even if they do provide pedagogical benefits for English teaching and learning. I feel uncomfortable with the idea.

JTE22 (U): I can never accept the U.S. military bases, so I will not approach them.

Figure 3 shows the results of Item 3 which asked whether Okinawa prefecture should approach the U.S. military bases to collaborate on English education. There was 63.8% disapproval and 36.2% approval. The most frequent response was strong disagreement (25.7%). This result is predictable: any official involvement in the military bases even for pedagogical purposes would be interpreted as the authorities condoning

the presence of U.S. military bases.

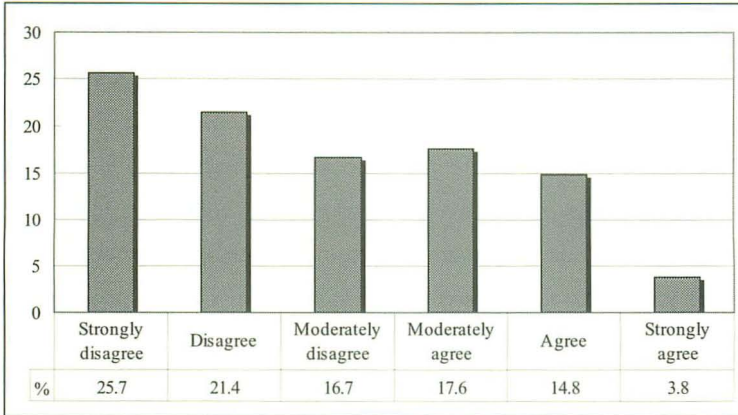


Figure 3. Responses to Item 3: Okinawa prefecture should approach the military bases to collaborate on English education.

Item 4 dealt with the possibility of employing Americans from U.S. military bases as assistant language teachers (hereafter, ALTs).

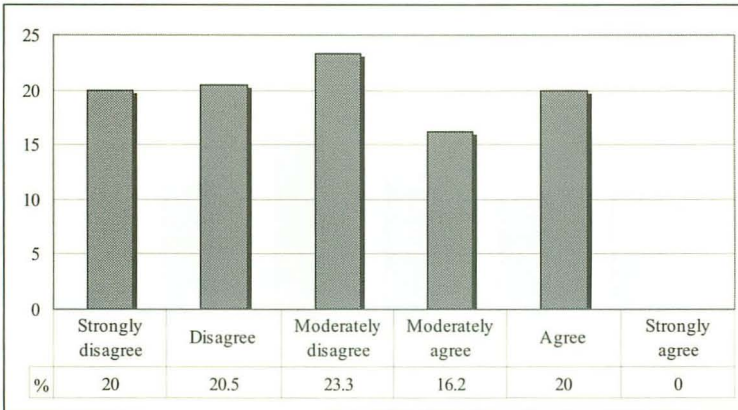


Figure 4. Responses to Item 4: The American from the base could be employed as ALT.

It should be pointed out that due to the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation

and Security between Japan and America whereby military personnel cannot work for any payment, this case is hypothetical. The ALTs' typical duties are team-teaching (i.e., assisting with classes taught by Japanese teachers), assisting in the preparation of teaching materials, and participating in extra-curricular activities with students. Over 60% of participants did not approve of the proposal as presented in Figure 4. The reason mentioned in the interview sessions was that Americans on base were not trained as language teachers. Another comment was that students should not be exposed to servicemen since their presence in the school setting was educationally inappropriate.

Items 5 and 6 asked whether the JTEs would support inviting Americans, and elementary and secondary level students from bases to their schools, in order to give their students the opportunity to interact with them in English. The responses indicate different attitudes depending on who they would invite to local schools and there was a significant difference between their responses ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.43$ for Item 5 and $M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.37$ for Item 6), $t(216) = -11.49$, $p < .05$.

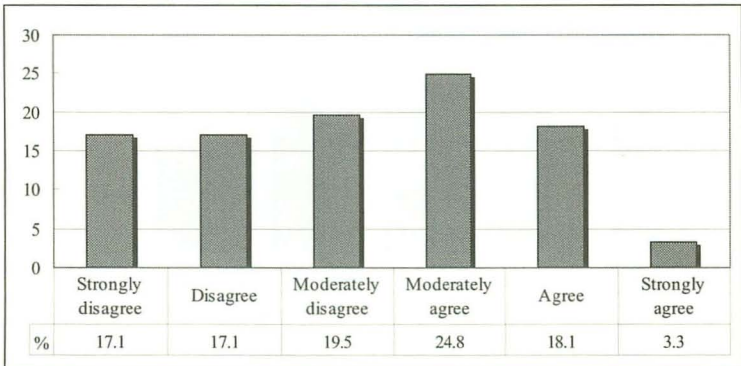


Figure 5. Responses to Item 5: I would like to invite an American from the base to my school.

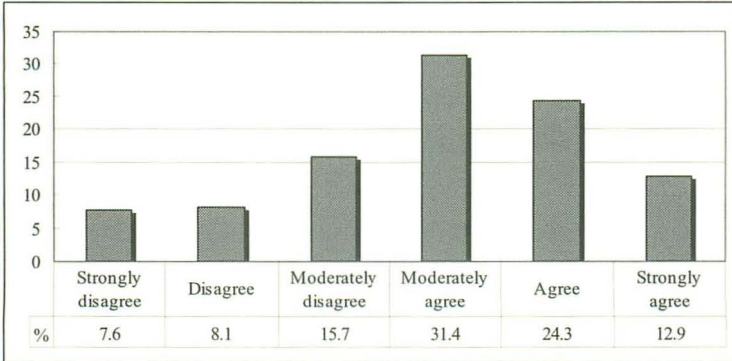


Figure 6. Responses to Item 6: I would like to invite elementary and secondary school students to my school.

Their different attitudes were shown in the distribution pattern of responses as shown in Figures 5 and 6: in the case of the Americans on base, there was more disagreement than agreement (53.7% and 46.2%), yet moderate agreement (24.8%) was the most frequent response, whereas obvious approval is shown in responses to Item 6, that is, 68.6% of the JTEs supported the proposal to invite elementary and secondary level students to their schools.

The JTEs appeared to be reluctant to invite American servicemen and personnel, reflecting their belief that the presence of Americans connected with the military is unacceptable and inappropriate both pedagogically and socially. Clearly, not all native speakers are welcome at schools. In the interviews, it was mentioned that the idea is acceptable as long as the Americans are volunteers, are keen to help students, are not military servicemen and there is no attempt to promote military bases. Disapproval was also voiced: JTEs had no way of finding out about their personal history and background prior to inviting them. Their concerns indicate that they are cautious since there have been many incidents related to the U.S. military bases in Okinawa. On the other hand, they

were prepared to accept students from the bases interacting with their students at school, a situation which might make it easier to avoid dealing directly with the military issue. In addition, their students should enjoy sharing information and interests with their contemporaries.

As for exchange with elementary and secondary school students, one of the senior high schools has a project to exchange students: once a year they take about 30 students from the first and second years to the high school on the base. Participants attend classes and have lunch at the cafeteria with American high school students. Students from the base also visit their school once a year. According to the JTEs from this high school, the exchange project started through a personal connection of the ALT. Furthermore, they stated that whether the exchange programs could take place or not would depend on the school authority. The event still continues at their senior high school since the principal supports the project as an English teacher.

Although JTEs from other high schools showed interest in the exchange program, they were reluctant for various reasons, such as: it is not socially acceptable for public schools to contact the bases even for academic purposes, students studying English for college entrance exams had no interest in interacting with students from schools on the base, and JTEs were too busy to go through complicated official procedures to get the proposal approved.

There was one JTE who articulated her dilemma over her anti-military stance and students' request for an exchange program:

JTE3 (SHS): I am against bases so I cannot use them even for pedagogical purposes. I have no intention of improving my English by utilizing military bases as resources. However, when my students ask me to take them to the base, I am not sure if I should say no to

them just because of my position on the political issue.

She commented that even if her students requested her to plan any exchange events with elementary and secondary schools on bases, she was very reluctant to take action and would use any excuse not to be involved in the matter.

Item 7 asked the participants whether they would like to take students to a U.S. base to provide them with an opportunity to experience "America." The bases provide an "American style" environment: there are movie theaters, food courts, a shopping area, a bank, a post office, restaurants, and other recreational facilities. It is possible for the residents on bases to have an American life-style even in Okinawa. This atmosphere can give the locals a flavor of "America" while they are on the base.

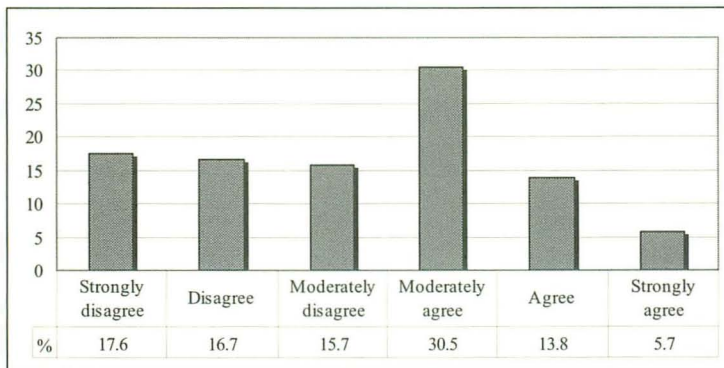


Figure 7. Responses to Item 7: I would like to take my students to the base and let them have some experience of America.

Figure 7 reveals that 30.5% showed considerable agreement, which is the most frequent response, and that the percentages of participants as a whole appear to be equally divided. The JTEs who had experienced

taking students to schools on base mentioned during the interview that students wanted to visit schools not to satisfy their educational motives, but to satisfy their personal curiosity: they simply would like to see what the base looks like and even when they were on the base, they were not necessarily eager to interact with native English speakers there.

6. Discussion

The present study has found that while JTEs from secondary and tertiary levels showed moderate approval of the presence of U.S. military bases as educational resources, they were reluctant to admit the possibility of there being any official basis for pedagogical use of bases. The findings will be interpreted in terms of JTEs' ethnic and professional identities, suggesting that their contradictory attitudes reflect a conflict in their minds as educators, public figures, and locals in Okinawan society.

6.1. Identity Conflict

Norton provided the definition of identity as "how people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future," claiming that it relates to the desire to be recognized, affiliated, and to be secure and safe (1997, p. 410). Lee stated that identity is not only the individual conception of the self, but also the individual's interpretation of the social definition of the self, both within his or her inner group as well as the larger society (2003, p. 138). That is, individual identity is multi-faceted and impermanent since human beings identify themselves by being affiliated to different groups and their identities change depending on which social community they participate in. Hara (1995), for instance, suggested that its polysemous features could

be recognized as self identity, social identity, existential identity, and biological identity. Furthermore, social identity is realized as national identity, language identity, ethnic identity, cultural identity, and professional identity when one positions oneself in a particular group.

Given the above interpretation of identity, the JTE participants in the present study presumably had multiple identities, which would have influenced their tangled views on the base issue. Historically, Okinawa has been through tremendous challenges such as invasion and integration to mainland Japan, the Battle of Okinawa, and the U.S. occupation, which should have shaped Okinawans' complex and multi socio-cultural identity. In terms of ethnic identity, Lim (2008) showed that local people in Okinawa had dual ethnic identities: Japanese and Okinawan. A majority of the participants in his survey identified themselves as Okinawan, yet to some extent as Japanese too, and some identified themselves as being both Okinawan and Japanese to an equal degree. Most of the participants in the present study were from Okinawa so presumably they identify themselves as being Okinawan as well as Japanese, although individuals might have different degrees of the two ethnic identities. When they deal with the U.S. military bases as a socio-political issue, their Okinawan identity emerges. While responding to the questionnaire, their political attitude to the base issue might have reinforced the JTEs' ethnic identity as members of Okinawan society.

Unlike other EFL learning situations where few opportunities to use English outside the classroom are available, a large number of Americans living in the community makes Okinawa a unique EFL context, compared to the rest of Japan. Considering this pedagogically unique situation, JTEs may change their view on the base issue from social burden to pedagogical potential. When they positioned themselves in the school setting, their professional identity as an EFL teacher

suppressed their ethnic identity as an Okinawan. Believing that it is their responsibility to improve their students' English skills, JTEs' perception of U.S. military bases appeared to compromise the issue.

However, they were not entirely in favor of accepting the military bases for educational purposes. As shown in the results section, their positive perception was moderate. Their rather indecisive attitude may reflect conflict with another side of their professional identity, namely as a public figure, a teacher in the society. The dual facets of their professional identity make it inevitable that they would separate the base issue as a political concern from pedagogical issues as verbalized in the following excerpt:

JTE1 (SHS): We intentionally separate English education and the US military base issue.

The results indicate that teaching is not neutral, but politically and socially biased, reflecting teachers' beliefs rooted in their complex identities. The present study suggests that the identity of language teachers is reflected in their pedagogical choices. In constructing their complex social identity, JTEs take into account their social situation and politics in order to comfortably and safely affiliate to their society as Okinawans and public figures, while internally they are ready to accept the U.S. bases as pedagogical resources in view of their professional responsibility for improving their students' English abilities. The conflict between multiple identities interferes with implementation of their ambition to utilize the unique EFL context in Okinawa.

6.2. Physical and Psychological Distance

The study has also revealed that physical and psychological

distance exists between the U.S. bases and the local community: that is, the visible availability of native English speakers does not imply psychological openness to them. During the interview sessions, a majority frequently mentioned that the presence of military bases gives no practical reasons for locals to use English although Americans from the bases are present in the community, as articulated in the following excerpts:

JTE1 (SHS): *There is a fence between them and us. The bases are totally different from where we live.*

JTE2 (SHS): *Although we live close to the bases, it does not mean we have contact with them. We appear to be physically close to bases but we have a psychological distance from them.*

JTE11 (SHS): *Considering the reality of Okinawan society, I do not think we have more need to speak English in Okinawa than in mainland Japan.*

JTE18 (U): *Actually, the bases have neither good nor bad influence on English education in Okinawa. Although people from mainland Japan often say that many foreigners and U.S. military bases should give people in Okinawa chances to be exposed to 'real' English, the locals do not think so.*

The reality is that there is no physical contact since a fence around the base isolates the people on base from Okinawan society and makes them exclusive. The present study contradicts the belief held by people in mainland Japan. Then, the physical distance should have enhanced psychological distance: locals may have little concern about their alien neighbors.

Finally, unlike the former British colonies where localized or

institutionalized varieties of English have been established, English did not penetrate into Okinawan society under the 27-year U.S. administration. As stated earlier, it was not successfully promoted in Okinawa despite the efforts made by the U.S. government during its administration: English did not have a chance to function as a second language or official language in Okinawa. At present there is little extracurricular contact between locals and Americans on base in Okinawa due to the physical and psychological distance. In terms of second language learning, it is claimed that direct and indirect contact between inter-ethnic members determines motivation to learn and use the other community's language (Clément, Gardner, and Smythe, 1977; Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994). Following this psychological framework, the limited amount of verbal interaction between Americans and locals provides little or no unique EFL context and does not bring much, if any, educational benefit to the community.⁶

7. Conclusion

Along with English being recognized as an international language, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) has set an educational goal to encourage Japanese with English ability (MEXT, 2003). Assuming that, theoretically, the more contact learners have with native English speakers, the more their English communication skills will be enhanced, Okinawa would be an ideal English learning context in which a large number of Americans are present in the community and locals have the chance to practice English with them. On the contrary, considering the context-sensitive aspect of foreign language learning, the study has found that there are few chances of U.S. bases being approached for whatever pedagogical benefits

there may be. The JTEs appeared to believe that English education should be independent of a socio-politically sensitive issue. Their perspective is, however, not straightforward, but complex, exhibiting their multiple identities - as a language teacher, a public figure, and an Okinawan. Their different identities are interwoven and may shift and adapt depending on which group they relate themselves to. Their perception of military bases is unstable and swings back and forth between socio-politically sensitive matters and pedagogical concerns. Psychological distance from the bases as well as physical distance provides no pedagogical advantage to locals in terms of EFL learning and teaching.

As for the last remark, I would like to emphasize that the present research is not intended to justify the U.S. military bases as having educational value nor is it intended to promote the pedagogical use of military bases in Okinawa. The present study is, in effect, primary and descriptive research, and its ultimate goal is to explore the perception of military bases held by local people in a teaching context (i.e., Japanese teachers of English), following a framework in which socio-political circumstances affect foreign language learning in the society including language ideologies, motivation, and the educational beliefs of both learners and instructors.

Notes

1. The study was funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology between 2006 and 2008 (Exploratory Research No. 18652061).

2. Originally, the number of participants was 227; however, 17 were excluded as they did not respond satisfactorily to the questionnaire.

3. The original survey included four sections and 38 questionnaire items to conduct a larger scale research.

4. A number and the abbreviation in parentheses indicate the participant ID number and affiliation level. The abbreviation SHS and U stand for senior high school and university respectively.

5. The interview sessions were conducted in Japanese. The original excerpts in Japanese were translated into English by the researcher.

6. The findings of the present study may apply only to the official settings, but not at the private level. There may be individual native English speakers related to the U.S. bases who offer private language lessons to locals.

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Appendix A: Mean and Standard Deviation

Item	Mean	SD
1	4.93	0.94
2	3.33	1.23
3	2.85	1.51
4	2.95	1.39
5	3.20	1.43
6	3.99	1.37
7	3.23	1.48

Appendix B: Percentage and Actual Numbers of Respondents*

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	0.5% (1)	1.4% (3)	4.8% (10)	21.9% (46)	41.9% (88)	29.5% (62)
2	10.5% (22)	17.1% (36)	19.0% (40)	40.0% (84)	11.9% (25)	1.4% (3)
3	25.7% (54)	21.4% (45)	16.7% (35)	17.6% (37)	14.8% (31)	3.8% (8)
4	20.0% (42)	20.5% (43)	23.3% (49)	16.2% (34)	20.0% (42)	0% (0)
5	17.1% (36)	17.1% (36)	19.5% (41)	24.8% (52)	18.1% (38)	3.3% (7)
6	7.6% (16)	8.1% (17)	15.7% (33)	31.4% (66)	24.3% (51)	12.9% (27)
7	17.6% (37)	16.7% (35)	15.7% (33)	30.5% (64)	13.8% (29)	5.7% (12)

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = moderately disagree,
4 = moderately agree, 5 = agree, 6 = strongly agree

* The actual number of respondents is in the parenthesis.

論文要旨

Identity conflict of Japanese EFL teachers in the socio-political context

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日本全土の約0.6%にすぎない沖縄県に在日米軍基地の75%が集中している。本研究では、米軍基地の教育的利用の可能性について沖縄県の英語教員にアンケート調査とインタビューを行った。アンケート調査に参加したのは、県内の中学校、高等学校、大学で英語を担当する日本人教員210名、うち22名にインタビューをした。本研究は文部科学省の科学研究費の助成を受けて行われた研究の一部で、実施したアンケートには13項目あったが、ここではアイデンティティーに関わる7項目の分析結果を考察する。

アンケート結果は、日本人英語教員が持つ複数のアイデンティティーが基地の教育的利用の可能性に対し複雑に関与していることを示唆している。生徒の英語力上達を目指す英語教員としてその可能性を否定しない一方で、「教員」という公的な役割と沖縄社会を構成する県民として英語教育の目的であっても米軍基地に公に働きかけたり自ら交流を働きかけることに消極的であり、基地はやはり政治的・社会的な問題であり教育とは切り離すべきであるという態度が明らかになった。また、英語教員のインタビュー回答から、県内にある米軍基地と沖縄社会は、フェンスという物理的な隔りがあるだけでなく、沖縄県民にはその存在は心理的にも遠く、基地の教育的利用の可能性は公には皆無に近いと考えられる。