ENL, EFL, or ELF standards for Japanese learners of English?

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In this talk, I will take up some of the issues raised in my keynote talk and consider them in more detail in relation to the teaching of English in Japan specifically.

I will begin by considering why the standard English varieties spoken among native English speakers in North America and Britain are not the most useful or appropriate kinds of English to promote Japanese learners’ ‘global’ English communicative competence. I will go on to explain why English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) offers a more promising alternative to native English, and will discuss the implications of ELF in relation to the English forms taught to / acquired by Japanese learners of English, along with the question of whether there is (or ever will be) a variety of English that could be called ‘Japanese English’.

Processes such as accommodation and code switching play a crucial role in ELF interactions, and also introduce the intriguing possibility of the existence of ELF communities of practice. I will demonstrate how on the one hand such ELF processes contribute to the promotion of both successful communication and a sense of community, and yet how, on the other hand, they result in forms that differ from native English forms and are therefore usually dismissed as errors or signs of incomplete learning.

Finally, I will explore some of the comments made about Japanese speakers’ English in my recent ELF attitudes study, and consider how these sorts of attitudes might be impacting on Japanese English speakers’ and learners’ identities in English, but not always in ways that might be predicted!