An EIL Awareness Questionnaire:
Development and Validity in a Japanese Context

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Abstract

This study describes the construction of an EIL feasibility questionnaire that can be used in a Japanese context applying the theoretical frameworks of Jenkins (2005) and Golombek and Jordan (2005). Following the psychometric procedure for questionnaire development established by Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghodtari (2006), a questionnaire was created, its validity confirmed, and exploratory/confirmatory factor analyses conducted. Eleven items were removed from the first 55-item version of the questionnaire. A 44-item version was administered to 203 Japanese university students and the results underwent exploratory factor analysis. The results yielded a nine-item questionnaire with a three-factor model. The first factor comprised four items and was named Native Speaker Myths. The second factor included three items and was named Identity. The third factor, EIL Awareness, consisted of two items. This tentative three-factor questionnaire model was sent to another group of 144 Japanese university students. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the questionnaire's three-factor model was significantly valid and reliable.

Keywords: EIL, feasibility, questionnaire

Currently, non-native speakers (NNSs) of English outnumber native speakers (NS), and the manner in which English is perceived globally is greatly changing. Widdowson claims that language educators and researchers are embracing the following notion (as cited in Llurda, 2004):

English is no longer exclusively owned by the native-speaking communities but its owner ship is also shared by newly arrived members of the English-speaking community (i.e. non-native speakers), who therefore have a right to be heard in matters affecting the language.

Although several terms such as "World Englishes" and "English as a Lingua Franca" (ELF) are used to describe this groundbreaking idea, the concept of English as an International Language (EIL) refers to situations wherein NNSs interact in English with both NSs and other NNSs (Llurda, 2004). While EIL is a rather new framework and its implications remain to be seen, past debate concerning principles of nativeness and intelligibility in pronunciation pedagogy suggest it is necessary to ensure that the opinions of NNSs are considered.

The nativeness principle maintains that achieving native-like pronunciation is both possible and desirable for NNSs. Although the principle was quite dominant prior to the 1960s, its popularity diminished due to the logical conclusion that attaining native-like pronunciation is overly burdensome for students and teachers alike (Levis, 2005). However, Matsuda (2005) argues that the materials used in Japanese EFL classrooms (e.g., textbooks and audio recordings) are still native dominant. Derwing and Munro (2005) point out that the lack of proper teacher training on pronunciation leads instructors to use native speakers as prototypical models for speech, as educators consider this a safe practice.

Based on past studies that determined NNSs rarely achieve native-like pronunciation (Ioup, Boustagi, El Tigi, & Moselle, 1994; Moyer, 2004), some researchers began to focus on the intelligibility principle, which maintains that "learners simply need to be understandable" (Levis, 2005, p. 370). According to this view, EIL learners should obtain the skills necessary to facilitate spoken communication between themselves and both native and NNSs. Several researchers (Smith, 1992; Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1995; Jordan, 2011) have asserted that *intelligibility* refers to the identification of an expression. Moreover, Jordan (2011) considers intelligibility "a vital building block for further understanding" (p. 83). Jenkins (2000) argues that it is not necessary for EIL learners to adopt the norms of native speakers, but rather receive training so that their speech is intelligible by other NNSs. This entails establishing a phonological syllabus based on observations of NNS-NNS classroom interactions and the Lingua Franca Core, a new phonological framework.

Jenkins (2005) not only provided new insight concerning phonological syllabi, but she also attempted to promote awareness of EIL and its feasibility by interviewing eight non-native speaking English teachers from Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Poland, and Spain. In the interviews, teachers were asked questions concerning accents based on three criteria: attitudes toward their own accents, perceived effects of educational and social experiences on accent attitudes, and the teaching of ELF accents to students.

Table 1

Interview Data-Analysis Framework adapted from Jenkins (2005)

Accent attitudes

• Attitude to own English accent

• Desire for native-like accent

• Perceived attitudes of others to participant's accent/L1 accent group

• Participant's attitudes toward other NNS English accents (own L1 group/other L1 groups)

• Beliefs about accent hierarchies and status

Perceived effects of experiences (educational and social) on accent attitudes

• On self

• On their learners

Teaching EIL accents

• Desire to teach their local regional L2 accent as the norm

• Perception of colleagues' desire to teach local regional L2 accent as the norm

• Perception of effect of learning about EIL accents on teachers' attitudes towards and desire to teach these accents

The details of the criteria are shown in Table 1. Based on her findings, Jenkins concluded that teachers would not likely adopt ELF pronunciation unless they ultimately perceived it to be an identity that provided students "with accents [that would] enhance rather than damage their future social and economic prospects internationally" (p. 542).

In terms of identity, Golombek and Jordan (2005) studied whether EIL users can be aware of and construct new accent identities through education as legitimate speakers of English. They provided course readings that challenged the native speaker myth, conducted interviews, and collected reaction papers written by two Taiwanese preservice English teachers. The researchers found that although the teachers were "deeply influenced by the native speaker myth and educational practices that equate Whiteness with native speakers" they were nonetheless able to recognize the legitimacy of non-native accents (p. 513).

Self-reporting techniques were implemented as instruments in both Jenkins' and Golombek and Jordan's studies. This study intends to develop a reliable and valid questionnaire that suits the Japanese context to assess the extent that English learners are aware of EIL based on Jenkins' and Golombek and Jordan's theoretical framework. The creation of a reliable questionnaire requires conforming to very detailed and specific procedures. Consequently, this study generally adopts the procedures for constructing a questionnaire investigating the metacognitive awareness of listening based on Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghodtari's (2006) work, which applied psychometric techniques to adapt the questionnaire to language education.

Method

Questionnaire Development

Following Vandergrift et al.'s (2006) criteria for questionnaire development, the author started by reviewing relevant literature to locate a suitable theoretical framework for item construction. The review yielded some relevant and valid frameworks, although it did not provide actual questionnaires that could be considered applicable in the Japanese EFL context. Therefore, the author generated a questionnaire comprising 55 items based on Jenkins' (2005) framework and Golombek and Jordan's (2005) research. Next, experts scrutinized the questionnaire's readability and the validity of its contents and identified redundancies. This assessment resulted in the elimination of 11 questions, leaving a total of 44 items.

Questionnaire Validity

In accordance with Brown (2001) and Vandergrift et al. (2006), the questionnaire underwent an exploratory and confirmatory phase to verify its validity.

Exploratory Phase

The draft version of the questionnaire was field-tested using the following procedures.

Participants. The study's participants included 203 university students (males n = 91, females n = 112) enrolled in the author's English language courses. All participants were native speakers of Japanese, and none had lived in a country where English is the first or second language. They had been participating in compulsory weekly English courses of 90- minute duration for approximately two months since April 2014 to improve their basic English skills.

Materials. The questionnaire developed for this study comprised 44 questions and utilized a 6-point Likert scale. Students were asked to choose a number between 1 and 6, where 1 indicated disagreement and 6 total agreement.

Procedure. The questionnaire was printed on A4 sized paper with a cover sheet attached, and distributed to students at the course's conclusion in June. The author began by reading the instructions on the cover sheet aloud; afterward, students were afforded an opportunity to participate in the project or opt out. Students were given amble time to read and answer the questions. Each of the author's five classes consisted of approximately 30 students, and the aforementioned process was repeated for each class.

Confirmatory Phase

Following exploratory analysis, the revised questionnaire utilizing a three-factor model was again subjected to field-testing for confirmatory analysis.

Participants. The study's participants included 144 university students (males n = 64, females n = 80) enrolled in the author's English language courses. All participants were native speakers of Japanese, and none had lived in a country in which English is the first or second language. They were

participating in compulsory English courses for 90 minutes weekly for approximately one month since September 2014 to improve their basic English skills.

Materials. The questionnaire developed for this study comprised nine questions and utilized a 6-point Likert scale. Students were asked to choose a number between 1 and 6, where 1 indicated disagreement and 6 total agreement.

Procedure. The questionnaire was printed on A4 sized paper with a cover sheet attached, and distributed to students at the course's conclusion in September. The author began by reading the instructions on the cover sheet aloud; afterward, students were afforded an opportunity to participate in the project or opt out. Students were given amble time to read and answer the questions. Each of the author's three classes consisted of approximately 30 students, and the aforementioned process was repeated for each class.

Results

Exploratory Analysis

To determine the optimal number of factors and identify items that should be removed from the questionnaires, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on the data using SPSS. Principal component analysis was also conducted on the 44 items and provided a 12-factor solution, although these 12 factors were unrealistic and meaningless; consequently, a scree test of the eigenvalues was plotted against the factors and examined (Cattell, 1966). The scree plot results suggested that seven factors should remain. Several factor analyses using principal-axis factor analysis with promax rotation and Kaiser normalization were conducted to further determine the optimal number of factors. Unsatisfactory items were examined and then removed following each trial. Items with low loadings (less than .30), high loadings in multiple factors (more than .30), and those that detracted from the factors' reliability were removed following each analysis.

The abovementioned analyses led to the retention of nine items in three factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index of sampling adequacy was .73, indicating that the patterns of partial correlations among the variables were relatively compact. Each factor was checked for internal reliability and their Crombach's alphas indicated sufficient reliability (native speaker myth, α=.82; identity, α=.80; EIL awareness, α=.72). Table 2 shows the three-factor-model factor loadings following EFA.

Table 2

Loadings for the Three-Factor Model Following EFA

Items	α	Native Speaker Myth	Identity	EIL Awareness	Commonalities	M	SD
NSM1		**.82**	.13	-.11	.48	4.96	1.34
NSM2	.80	**.77**	-.06	.04	.50	4.92	1.20
NSM3		**.66**	-.03	.08	.39	4.34	1.22
NSM4		**.59**	-.06	.05	.34	4.18	1.27
Identity1		.16	**.86**	-.04	.52	2.9	1.29
Identity2	.84	-.10	**.76**	.00	.53	2.57	1.19
Identity3		-.12	**.73**	.09	.55	2.87	1.26
EIL1	.72	-.01	-.06	**.86**	.37	3.31	1.34
EIL2		.07	.11	**.64**	.38	2.92	1.39
Contribution (%)		33.95	24.75	12.57			
Cumulative Contribution (%)		33.95	58.69	71.26			
		1.00					
Factor Correlation		-.28	1.00				
		.08	.35	1.00			

Confirmatory Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted based on data collected from the second sample (*N*=144) using AMOS 22.0.0. To confirm the model's goodness-of-fit, covariance structural analysis was employed. Based on the EFA results a three-factor model including the native speaker myth, identity, and EIL awareness was hypothesized. Maximum likelihood estimation was used in accordance with Vandergrift et al. (2006). The comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI; Tucker & Lewis, 1973), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Browne & Cudeck, 1993) are three widely accepted goodness-of-fit indexes, and were used to compute the results.

As for criteria, this study follows the assertion that models with a CFI and TLI greater than 0.90 are acceptable, and that the RMSEA should be less than .80 (Heubeck & Neil as cited in Vandergrift, et al., 2006). The computation results of four goodness-of-fit indexes are shown in Table 3. Regarding CFI and TLI, the indexes show acceptable fits (CFI= .97; TLI =.96). The RMSEA index also indicates a good fit (RMSEA=.07). Path analysis results are shown in Figure 1.

Table 3

Goodness-of-Fit for the EIL Model

Model	*df*	X^2	p	CFI[a]	TLI[b]	RMSEA[c]
EIL	24	38.81	.03	.97	.96	.07

Note. a = comparative fit index; b = Tucker-Lewis index; c = root mean square error of approximation.
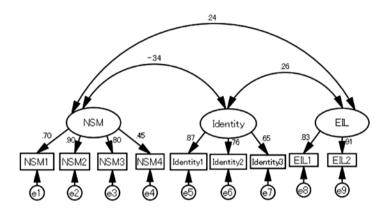

Figure 1. The EIL feasibility questionnaire measurement model.

Discussion

This study aimed to construct an EIL feasibility questionnaire (EILFQ) applicable in a Japanese context following Vandergrift et al.'s (2006) psychometric procedure based on Jenkins' (2005) and Golombek and Jordan's (2005) theoretical framework. It adopted two-factor analysis (EFA and CFA). The questionnaire's draft version underwent EFA and was reduced to three factors with nine items. This version was then combined with another set of data (*N*=144) and CFA was performed. The subsequent results confirmed the three-factor model's strength.

The first factor (native speaker myths) includes a group of items comprising four reverse items related to how learners perceive native norms of pronunciation. The second (identity) consists of items concerning how learners identify their own accents. The third (EIL awareness) contains items regarding students' awareness of spoken regional accents in English, and the extent that they believe learning those accents is necessary to facilitate spoken communication, especially among NNSs.

The three-factor EILFQ model can be applied independently in different ways. First, instructors can utilize the EILFQ as a tool for diagnostics or to promote conscious awareness. The EILFQ can be administered to a class collectively to identify learners' perceptions of their own accents and their ideal model. Second, researchers can use the EILFQ to compare different learner groups according to their grade or proficiency levels. Finally, researchers can also administer the EILFQ as pre- and posttests to measure instructional impact or EIL awareness in international programs.

Conclusions

This study examined the process of constructing a Japanese version of the EILFQ. In the future, EILFQs targeting other nationalities should be constructed so that comparisons can be made regarding other aspects of EIL learning (e.g., learning strategies, L1 backgrounds, etc.) between different nationalities. Such a comparison can lead to improved language policies and curricula.

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Appendix

EIL Feasibility Questionnaire

EIL 1	授業では、様々な国の人によって録音された英語教材を使うべきだ。
EIL 2	リスニングテストでは、様々な国の人によって録音された英語教材を使うべきだ。
Identity1	日本人らしい英語の発音ができる人を尊敬すべきだ。
Identity2	日本の学校では、日本人らしい英語の発音を教えるべきだ。
Identity3	リスニングテストでは、英語力のある日本人によって録音された英語教材を使うべきだ。
NSM1	「君の英語の発音はネイティブ・スピーカーみたいだね」とネイティブ・スピーカーからほめられたらうれしい。
NSM2	ネイティブ・スピーカーの英語の発音を身につけたい。
NSM3	日本人はできるだけネイティブ・スピーカーの英語の発音に近づくように努力すべきだ。
NSM4	授業では、ネイティブ・スピーカーによって録音された英語教材を使うべきだ。