

The Internet use and e-mail communication in English by EFL teachers in Japan

Koji IGAWA & Brian NUSPLIGER

The Internet has spread all over the globe and communication via e-mail has overtaken other types of communication since the 1990s. At the same time the English language has asserted its position as the lingua franca of the world. This study reports a small-scale survey to investigate the use of the Internet and e-mail communication in English by EFL teachers in Japan, including native and non-native speakers of English. The results show a striking contrast between native and non-native speakers in their use of the Internet and e-mail in English. Native-speaking teachers use these technological innovations far more frequently and for far more diverse purposes than their Japanese colleagues. The study concludes with implications for future studies and suggestions for professional development programs for non-native speaking language teachers.

keywords : English Language Teaching, the Internet, e-mail communication, NNS teacher development

I. Introduction

This is a preliminary study to investigate the Internet use and e-mail communication by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers in Japan. The Internet and its function, e-mail, have been around for popular use since 1995 when Microsoft released its Windows 95 with Internet Explorer, which radically altered the way people communicate. Now this information and communication technology (ICT) is an inseparable component of modern life.

It has been pointed out by many authors that these technological features are convenient tools to facilitate the development of second language (L2) communication skills, particularly reading and writing. It is also argued that this information and communication innovation, by offering “authentic” contexts for language use, proves good opportunities for professional development of non-native speaking (NNS) language teachers who oftentimes are in the position to professionally communicate in the target language with their native-speaking (NS) colleagues.

By conducting a small-scale survey, the current study examined how much Internet use and e-mail communication in English are part of the life of Japanese (NNS: non-native English speaking) and non-Japanese (NS: native English speaking) teachers of English in Japan. The results show that while NS

teachers use the Internet and e-mail in English extensively, NNS colleagues utilize the new technology on a very limited scale. It is disappointing to find that many Japanese teachers do not seem to receive or send English e-mail messages frequently; English e-mailing is not an essential part of their life.

Following the introduction, the study proceeds to a literature review of the relevant areas of research. The next section introduces the survey conducted and its results and the concluding section includes suggestions and implications for Internet and e-mail use for NNS teacher development.

II. Literature Review

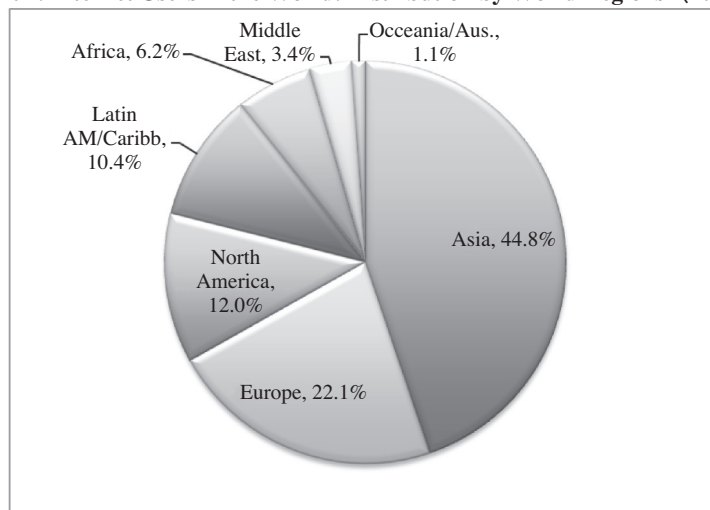
The first section of the literature review encompasses how the Internet has spread extending its coverage all over the world and it also describes the position of “English as a global language” facilitated with the diffusion of the Internet. A special focus is on the situations in Asia, particularly in Japan.

The second half deals with literature on how on-line communication, including the Internet and e-mail, is utilized in language classrooms. Progresses in Asian, specifically Japanese contexts, are included as well as the use of on-line communication in the professional development of language teachers.

A. The worldwide spread of the Internet

The Internet has been spreading to all corners of the world at a speed beyond our imagination. In terms of users by world regions, Asia has the largest ratio of 44.8% of all the world's 2,267 million Internet users, followed by Europe (22.1%) and North America (12.0%). (Chart 1)

Chart 1. Internet Users in the World: Distribution by World Regions (2011) ¹⁾



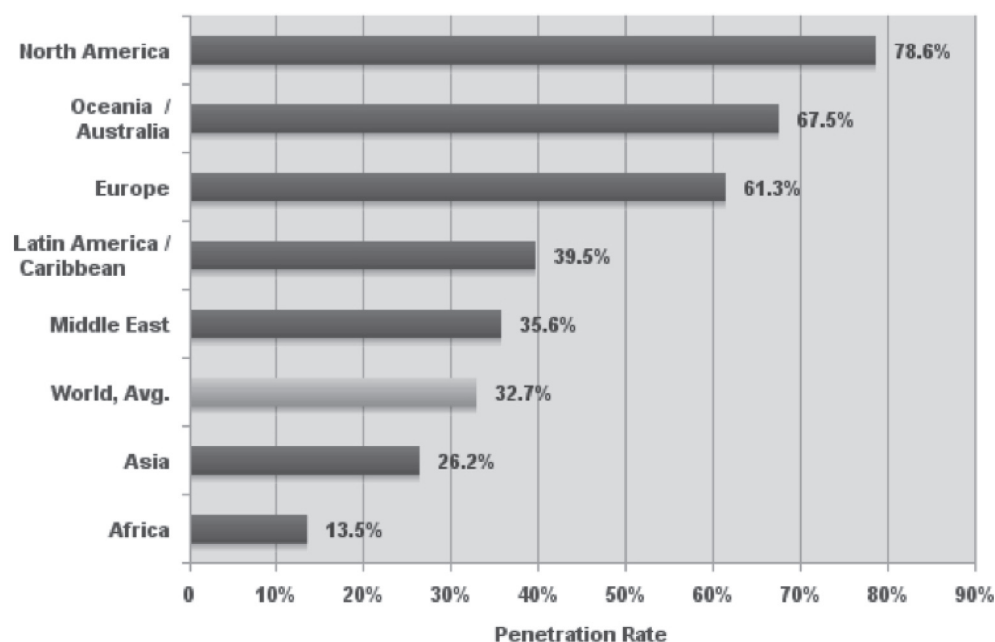
1) Source: Internet World Stats – www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

Basis: 2,267,233,742 Internet users on December 31, 2011 (Miniwatts Marketing Group)

However, when we look at the penetration rate, the extent to which the Internet is used by all the people in a certain geographic region, Asia lags far behind North America (78.6%), Oceania/Australia (67.5%), and Europe (61.3%); Asia's Internet penetration rate, 26.2%, is even below the world's average of 32.7%.

This is a natural reflection of the huge populations of China and India and the reality that the majority of their population is not yet able to afford the privilege of being online. (Chart 2)

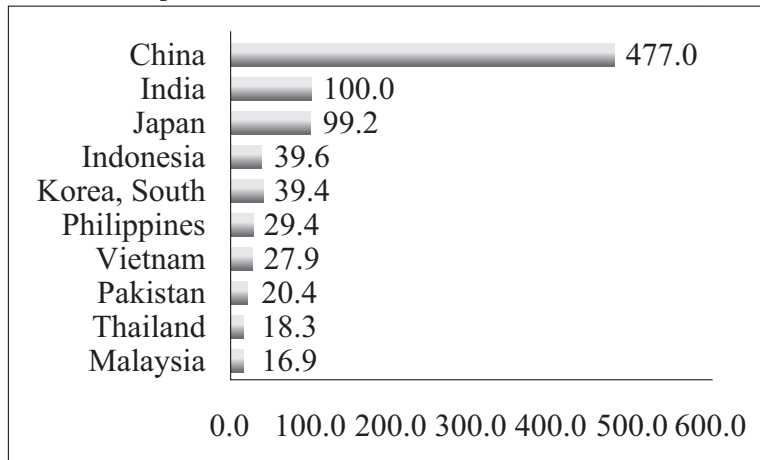
Chart 2. World Internet Penetration Rates by Geographic Regions (2011) ²⁾



The current use of the Internet in Asia can be observed in the following chart which shows the top ten countries that use the Internet by the number of users. As of March 31, 2011, China ranks as No.1 with 447 million Internet users, about one third of the total population, followed by India (100 million) and Japan (99.2 million). Considering that the entire population of India is 1.1 billion, the number of users represents only 10% of the country, while with a population of 127 million almost everybody in Japan is an Internet user. Indonesia (39.6 million) and South Korea (39.4 million) have the next highest numbers of total internet users, although the penetration rates show a disparity similar to that between India and Japan. (Chart 3)

2) Source: Internet World Stats – www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

Penetration Rates are based on a world population of 6,930,055,154 and Basis: 2,267,233,742 estimated Internet users on December 31, 2011 (Miniwatts Marketing Group)

Chart 3. Asia Top Internet Countries (millions of users) (March 31, 2011) ³⁾

Pointing out that “the technology of modern communication” and “the technology of air transportation” are the two key factors contributing to the increasing need of a global language, Crystal (2003) states in his seminal book *English as a global language* (2nd ed.):

The availability of both these facilities in the twentieth century, more than anything else, provided the circumstances needed for a global language to grow. People have, in short, become more mobile, both physically and electronically. (p. 13)

The English language is “a language which has repeatedly found itself in the right place at the right time” (Crystal, 2003, p. 78) and it assumes the current position as the accepted global language.

It is also observed that “English as a global language” and “globalization” are strongly interconnected. Graddol (2006) mentions:

... English has at last become of age as a global language. It is a phenomenon which lies at the heart of globalization: English is now redefining national and individual identities worldwide; shifting political fault lines; creating new global patterns of wealth and social exclusion; and suggesting new notions of human rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (p. 12)

This unprecedented, privileged position of the English language in the world and in Asia (Murata &

3) Source: Internet World Stats – www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm

2,095,006,005 Internet users in the world estimated for 2011Q1 (Miniwatts Marketing Group)

Jenkins 2009) arouses concerns among scholars such as Kramsch (2001), who argues:

Moreover, the spread of English and the concomitant globalization of a certain kind of consumer culture are raising fears that they might displace local languages and cultures, or reinforce the gap between the international culture of the upwardly mobile, internet-connected elite and the geographically rooted, traditional local cultures. (p. 204)

This type of concern certainly has to be duly recognized and language educators need to realize the impact of “globalization” via English as a global language as well as the spread of on-line communication.

Crystal (2011) lists the top ten languages used on the Internet by users and the supremacy of English as a global language does not seem so secure; Chinese is coming up very strongly in terms of users although their Internet penetration rate is still low. (Table 1)

Table1. Top ten Internet languages, measured by users, in 2010 (from Crystal 2011)

Languages	Percentage of all Internet users	Internet users (in millions)	Percentage Internet penetration	Percentage Internet language growth (2000-09)
English	27.5	496	39.4	252
Chinese	22.6	408	29.7	1,162
Spanish	7.8	140	34.0	669
Japanese	5.3	96	75.5	104
Portuguese	4.3	78	31.4	924
German	4.0	72	75.0	161
Arabic	3.3	60	17.5	2,298
French	3.2	57	16.9	375
Russian	2.5	45	32.3	1,360
Korean	2.1	37	52.7	97
Others	17.4	314	13.3	516
World Total	100.0	1,802	26.6	399

However, observing how the Internet is utilized by speakers of languages other than English, it is important to note with Crystal that the Internet is not threatening other languages with extinction: “On the Net, all languages are as equal as their users wish to make them, and English emerges as an alternative rather than a threat” (p. 78).

It is oftentimes pointed out that the Internet and e-mail communication in English is not so much utilized

in Japan. Comparing Japan and South Korea regarding public attitudes toward the Internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC), Fouser (2001) pointed out three factors causing Japan's relatively underutilized on-line situation:

- The comparative slowness of word processing in Japanese,
- the cost of on-line time, and
- the affordability of competing communication technologies.

Fouser explained that differences in government policy and socio-economic contexts contributed to the situation. What Fouser pointed out about 10 years ago could also be applied to the current situation of Japan (Hashimoto 2007) and its comparison with South Korea. Fouser mentions:

Korean policy makers have not promoted the Internet and CMC as aggressively as Singapore, but Korea's dependence on exports makes it imperative that it reach out to overseas markets. Interest in learning English and other foreign languages is higher in Korea than in Japan. As a percentage of the population, more Koreans live and study overseas than do Japanese. The socio-economic atmosphere in Korea contributed to a positive impression of CMC as a way to cut across time and geography to reach customers, relatives, and friends around the world.

This situation of Japan's "unwillingness" to accept on-line communication and English language might have due influence on second language education in Japan.

B. On-line communication used in Language Education

In general education research, Wurster (2009) asked grade school teachers in the United States "What is your favorite Ed Tech tool?" and their responses are summarized as follows:

Table 2. Which group below would you choose as the most effective for teaching and learning over the past 30 years? (From Wurster 2009)

#	Group	Vote	%
1	Internet Tools/Resources (e-mail, search engines, Creative Commons, wireless access, video on demand)	332	37
2	General Productivity Tools (word processors, spreadsheets, slide presentation programs, databases)	209	23
3	Interactive Whiteboards and Projectors	151	17
4	Web 2.0 Tools (wikis, blogs, social networks, etc.)	137	15
5	Portable Digital Devices (mp3 players, PDAs, laptops, cell phones, etc.)	70	8
	TOTAL	899	100

Wurster (2009) sums up his research as:

Internet tools and resources, such as e-mail and search engines, were the clear winners in our poll, garnering more than a third of the total votes. A classroom without these basic tools is difficult to imagine for some and inconceivable for others. (p. 27)

And Wurster quotes one of the participants of the study saying: "I feel that the open access that we have to the Internet is one of the catalysts in the classroom, in teaching, and just living and working in today's society" (p. 27).

It is popularly believed, from a pedagogical point of view, that texting and e-mail writing hinder the development of writing skills in English. Crystal (2011), however, maintains:

All the popular beliefs about texting are wrong. To summarize the result of a growing literature: only a small part of text-messaging uses distinctive abbreviation (textisms); these abbreviations are not modern phenomenon; they are not restricted to the young generations; young people do not pour them into their homework and exams; and texting helps rather than hinders literacy standards. (p. 4)

Gooden (2009) also states; "One could argue that texting and e-mails have led to an increase in writing at all ages, at all levels and at all times" (p. 228). This could be applied not only to first language writers and but also to L2 writers.

Summarizing current research on the Internet and e-mail communication in language education, Warschauer (2001) defines "on-line communication" as "reading, writing and communication via networked computers" (p. 207) and classifies this style of communication into three categories as it is used in the language classroom:

- synchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC), whereby people communicate in real time via chat or discussion software, with all participants at their computers at the same time;
- asynchronous CMC, whereby people communicate in a delayed fashion by computer, e.g. by email; and
- the reading and writing of on-line documents via the Internet.

Ibrahim (2010), reviewing the articles on ELT (English Language Teaching), summarizes the benefits gained by using information and communication technology (ICT) such as the Internet and e-mail as follows:

Table 3. Benefits of ICTs on ELT (Summarized from Ibrahim, 2010, pp. 212-213)

#	Benefit	Group
1	Availability of the Materials	ICTs are very stimulating because of the availability of the learning materials whether it is computer-based, in the web or on CDs; therefore, the student can learn at his own pace with a very patient tutor (the machine).
2	Student Attitudes	ICTs have positive effects on student attitudes toward the language teaching and learning.
3	Autonomy	Students have the opportunity to choose the element/s of language which they want to focus on meeting their learning strategies or learning styles.
4	Authenticity	ICTs provide authentic learning environment, because the learner can interact with others across the continent are very motivating to the language learners.
5	Multifaceted Tools	(ICTs) could successfully contribute to two ends: creating a blend of classroom materials and delivering those materials in multiple ways.
6	Help Teachers	ICTs help the teacher to prepare, produce, store and retrieve their materials easily and swiftly. The availability of different rich texts, different topics, quizzes, exercises help in saving the teacher's time.
7	Student-centered	ICTs help the student be exposed to language clockwise and definitely they help them to write and edit their work in order to produce a well published work.
8	ICTs in Self-Assessment	The examinations generally test the reading and writing skills of the students, totally neglecting the listening and speaking skills, which are indispensable skills for the learners in their future career.

Warschauer (2001) also explains how on-line communication can be of help to language classrooms as:

On-line communication thus fits especially well with a structured, project-based approach that allows learners to engage in increasingly complex tasks throughout a course, in collaboration with partners in the same class or in other locations, and with appropriate scaffolding from the teacher or from other sources (including on-line resources). (p. 211)

What follows is a summary of second language (L2) research on how on-line communication, computer-mediated communication (CMC) in particular, is utilized (Warschauer, 2001, pp. 209-212).

- CMC is syntactically more complex and lexically more dense than face-to-face conversation
- CMC can help serve as a useful bridge between speaking and writing by facilitating L2 interaction that is linguistically complex yet informal and communicative.

- L2 students are more likely to participate in computer-mediated than in face-to-face conversation. CMC can be a useful tool for encouraging greater participation of quiet or shy students.

Warschauer also argues that on-line communication is “for the field of TESOL much more than a useful pedagogical tool”:

Rather, on-line communication is a major new medium of English-language communication and literacy in its own right, and one that is likely to affect the development of TESOL in important ways that we cannot yet predict. (p. 212)

From a TESOL point of view, this might well respond to the concerns raised by Kramsch (2001) mentioned earlier.

Schell (2010) gives advice to native English speaking business people as to how to write for the global audience on the Internet: “How to write globally”.

- When writing for a global audience, it is essential to adopt an attitude that welcomes readers who are unfamiliar with American or British English idioms and who may be incompletely fluent in the global language.
- Writers should minimize the use of idioms, buzzwords, and unexplained acronyms (e.g., ROTFL = Rolling On The Floor, Laughing), all of which tend to convey an attitude of exclusivity that limits the audience.
- Another important aspect of Global English is the use of simpler syntax, which can greatly increase the number of eager worldwide readers while having only a slight impact on the writer's style.
- In some cultures, it is considered polite to be less direct. Regardless of culture, an indirect approach is generally preferred in contexts where the writer is giving bad news or is concerned that the reader might disagree with the content. However, you should avoid ambiguity, even when you need to be indirect. Remember that it takes less effort to approach a delicate subject clearly than to undo confusion.

It is worth noting that this is necessitated by the sheer amount of e-mail communication in English native-speaking business people have to write to non-native-speaking counterparts today.

Emphasizing the potential of e-mail use to experience a process of meaning negotiation and construction, Hsieh (2009) reports a cross-cultural study of the ways in which Chinese and English speakers write English e-mails, employing (im)politeness strategies to develop intercultural understanding. Hsieh maintains that the results of the study have relevance to EFL teacher development in Taiwan and other

language teaching contexts. The research findings include:

- ... the computer-mediated paralanguages, such as emoticons and written out laughter, are also important in realising (im)politeness intent and developing intercultural understanding in emails.
- ... email provides opportunities for language learners to experience the pragmatic aspects of language use in interactions and develop intercultural understanding through the process of email correspondences with people from different backgrounds.

Similarly, Ma (1996) reports a cross-cultural study of CMC (computer-mediated communication including e-mail use) by American and Taiwanese students:

- Those who engage in intercultural CMC regularly are better informed about the culture of their communication partners than are those who do not about the same culture.
- Those who engage in intercultural CMC are less likely to adapt to each other's cultural rules than those who engage in FTF communication.
- Both East Asians and North Americans tend to be more direct in CMC than in FTF conversations.
- Both East Asians and North Americans tend to show greater self-disclosure in CMCs than in FTF conversations.
- Both East Asians and North Americans perceive intercultural CMC as a more egalitarian and information-oriented experience than FTF intercultural communication.
- Modern technology has shortened the distance between people in different societies and made it increasingly likely that intercultural communication will play a significant part in our lives.

Some scholars have investigated L2 e-mail communication involving Japanese learners of English. For example, Kakegawa and Miyazaki (2008) report a study of e-mail exchange between Japanese students learning English and American students learning Japanese. They describe how the e-mail exchange motivates the learning of language and culture.

As to the Japanese EFL teachers' reported use of ICT in the classroom, O'Neill (2009) asked 47 EFL teachers teaching at Japanese high schools and reported their use of ICT skills in the classroom. Quite disappointingly, what is reported is the lack of use of ICT skills:

... 92% of teachers rarely or never involved students in communication via email and 81% rarely or never engaged students in activities involving internet

There are studies reporting the use of on-line communication for language teachers' professional development. For example, Kablin and Rajab (2010) report on the use of the Internet in a teacher

development program for NNS English language teachers in Gaza, Palestine. They describe how many Palestinian teachers utilize the Internet not only for teaching English in the classroom but also for developing their own professional expertise, reading and writing skills.

III. The Study

The current study used a small-scale survey to investigate EFL teachers' use of the Internet and e-mail communication in English. The two-page survey contained a total of 10 questions, 5 of the questions were related to the participants' background and 5 were concerned with their use of the Internet and e-mail in English. Most questions were presented with multiple-choice or short fill-in-the blank responses, but spaces were also provided for other answers and comments. The majority of the participants completed the survey within 5 to 10 minutes. The study was conducted during the summer and fall of 2011, from August to the end of November, by circulating the questionnaire among members of the Japanese EFL teachers' group ACROSS (Association of English Teachers for Cross-cultural Communication) and their colleagues. The participation of ACROSS members ensured that responses were received from a wide area of Japan including the island of Kyushu, Hiroshima, Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Nagoya, and the Tokyo region. Responses were collected both in digital form, by email, and in hard copy, either in person or by post.

A. Participants

A total of 84 participants completed the questionnaire and all were EFL teachers working in Japan during the survey period. A breakdown by nationality and native language(s) of the respondent shows that just over half, or 44 participants, were Japanese (JET: Japanese English Teacher). For the purposes of this study the remaining 40 respondents were regarded as NS teachers within the EFL context of Japan (NET: Native English-speaking Teacher), although it should be noted that 5 were actually bilingual. An argument of what constitutes a native-speaker and of how many languages an individual can regard as their native tongue goes beyond the scope of the present study. The 5 bilingual respondents self-identified as being native-speakers of English and another language and were all employed as NS EFL teachers in Japan and were therefore classified as such in this study. More than half of the NS teachers, 25 out of 40, were from the United States. (Table 4)

A striking difference appears among the NS and NNS groups when gender is taken into consideration. The NS group was fairly well balanced by gender, with 19 male and 21 female respondents. The NNS group was much more biased towards women, with three times as many female participants as males. (Table 5)

Table 4. Participants by Nationality & First Language (s)

Nationality/ Language		Japanese	Non-Japanese						Total	
			English	English & Spanish	Afrikaans	Sepedi	Sub- Total	%	Total	%
JET	Japan	44							44	52.4
NET	USA		25	3			28	70.0	28	33.3
	Canada		3				3	7.5	3	3.6
	UK		1				1	2.5	1	1.2
	Ireland		1				1	2.5	1	1.2
	Australia		4				4	10.0	4	4.8
	S. Africa				1	1	2	5.0	2	2.4
	Jamaica		1				1	2.5	1	1.2
	Sub-Total		35	3	1	1	40	100.0	40	47.6
	%		87.5	7.5	2.5	2.5	100.0			
Total		44	35	3	1	1	40		84	
	%	52.4	41.7	3.6	1.2	1.2	47.6			100.0

Table 5. Participants by Gender & Nationality

Nationality/ Gender		Male	Female	Total
JET	Japan	11	33	44
	%	25.0	75.0	100.0
NET	USA	12	16	28
	Canada		3	3
	UK	1		1
	Ireland	1		1
	Australia	3	1	4
	S. African	2		2
	Jamaica		1	1
	Sub-Total	19	21	40
	%	47.5	52.5	100.0
Total		30	54	84
	%	35.7	64.3	100.0

The biggest difference among the NS and NNS groups occurred in terms of age, with the NNS teachers being noticeably older than their NS counterparts. Seventy percent of the NS group were in their 20s and an additional twenty percent were in their 30s. While ninety percent of the NS were less than 40 years

of age, only about one-third of the NNS participants were in the same age range. The oldest NS teacher included in the survey was in their 50s, while thirteen NNS teachers were in their 50s and another three were in their 60s. (Table 6)

Table 6. Participants by Age and Nationality

Age/Nationality		20s	30s	40s	50s	60s	TOTAL
JET	Japan	7	9	12	13	3	44
	%	15.9	20.5	27.3	29.5	6.8	100.0
NET	USA	20	5	2	1		28
	Canada	2	1				3
	UK	1					1
	Ireland	1					1
	Australia	1	2	1			4
	S. Africa	2					2
	Jamaica	1					1
	SUB-TOTAL	28	8	3	1	0	40
	%	70.0	20.0	7.5	2.5	0.0	100.0
Total		35	17	15	14	3	84
	%	41.7	20.2	17.9	16.7	3.6	100.0

B. Data

The survey asked five questions related to use of the Internet and e-mail communication in English:

Q1 How often do you access the Internet?

Q2 How many hours per week do you spend online?

Q3 Are you addicted to the Internet?

Q4 How often do you receive/send e-mail messages in English? (Check one for both receive and send)

Q5 From/To whom do you receive/send e-mail messages in English?" (Check one for both receive and send)

The survey found a big difference in how often the two groups of teachers access the Internet. Almost all the NS teachers, 35 out of 40 respondents, access it several times a day and all NSs access it at least once every day. The majority of the Japanese NNS teachers access the Internet everyday but only around one-third said they do so several times a day. Four of the NNS teachers connect to the Internet several times a week and three only connect to it once a week. (Table 7)

Table 7. Answers to QUESTION (1) “How often do you access the Internet?”

JET/ NET	a	b	c	d	e	Total
	Once a month or less	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day	Several times a day	
JET	0	3	4	22	15	44
%	0.0	6.8	9.1	50.0	34.1	100.0
NET	0	0	0	5	35	40
%	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	87.5	100.0
TOTAL	0	3	4	27	50	84
%	0.0	3.6	4.8	32.1	59.5	100.0

Not only did they access the Internet more frequently, the NS teachers also spent more than three times as long online as their NNS counterparts, 21.3 hours per week for the NS group versus 6.6 hours per week for the NNS group. Despite the large difference in the time spent online, the Japanese teachers were only slightly less like to answer that they were addicted to the Internet or couldn't decide whether or not they were addicted to the Internet. (Table 8)

Table 8. Answers to QUESTION (2) “How many hours per week do you spend online?” & to QUESTION (3) “Are you addicted to the Internet?”

JET/ NET	Q2	Q3			
	hours/week	a	b	c	TOTAL
		Yes	No	Can't decide	
JET	6.6	8	28	8	44
%		18.2	63.6	18.2	100.0
NET	21.3	11	17	12	40
%		27.5	42.5	30.0	100.0
TOTAL	13.2	19	45	20	84
%		22.6	53.6	23.8	100.0

The differences in how often each group sent and received e-mail in English were the most surprising finding in this study. More than half of the NS group received emails in English several times a day while more than half of the NNS group received them once a month or less. When the responses for sending email in English are examined the difference is even more pronounced, with 72.7% of the

Japanese teachers sending e-mails in English once a month or less. (Table 9)

Table 9. Answers to QUESTION (4) “How often do you receive/send e-mail messages in English?” (Check one each)

		a	b	c	d	e		TOTAL
		Once a month or less	Once a week	Several times a week	Every day	Several times a day	No response	
Receive	JET	26	5	6	6	1	0	44
	%	59.1	11.4	13.6	13.6	2.3	0.0	100.0
	NET	0	1	8	9	21	1	40
	%	0.0	2.5	20.0	22.5	52.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	26	6	14	15	22	1	84
	%	31.0	7.1	16.7	17.9	26.2	1.2	100.0
Send	JET	32	4	2	4	1	1	44
	%	72.7	9.1	4.5	9.1	2.3	2.3	100.0
	NET	1	3	9	6	20	1	40
	%	2.5	7.5	22.5	15.0	50.0	2.5	100.0
	Total	33	7	11	10	21	2	84
	%	39.3	8.3	13.1	11.9	25.0	2.4	100.0

The last question on the survey asked respondents to indicate with whom they exchanged e-mails in English and they were able to indicate multiple groups of interlocutors. The results were perhaps what one would expect, with NS teachers showing a much stronger tendency towards sending and receiving e-mails in English with family members, 67.5%, than NNS teachers, 4.5%. The NS group was also more likely than the NNS group to communicate with personal friends via e-mail in English and around 80% of respondents said they did so. Still, over half of the NNS teachers indicated they sent e-mails in English to personal friends. (Table 10)

Table 10. Answers to QUESTION (5) “From/To whom do you receive/send e-mail messages in English?” (Check one each)

		a	b	c	d	e
		Family Members	Personal Friends	Work-related communication	Students	Others
Receive	JET	2	21	20	2	6
	%	4.5	47.7	45.5	4.5	13.6
	NET	27	31	26	8	11
	%	67.5	77.5	65.0	20.0	27.5
	Total	29	52	46	10	17
	%	34.5	61.9	54.8	11.9	20.2
Send	JET	2	25	20	2	2
	%	4.5	56.8	45.5	4.5	4.5
	NET	27	32	25	9	8
	%	67.5	80.0	62.5	22.5	20.0
	Total	29	57	45	11	10
	%	34.5	67.9	53.6	13.1	11.9

C. Discussion

The composition of the participant groups may have had some bearing on the findings of the study. Seventy percent of the NS teachers were from North America, which has the highest Internet penetration rate in the world. (See Chart 2.) This would suggest that the NS group was more familiar and accustomed to using the Internet, as well as having more family and friends who were also using the Internet. Age could also be an important factor. Computers and the Internet can be regarded as relatively new technology, not in widespread use until the 1990s. A young teacher in their 20s would have grown up around this technology, while older teachers would have been well into their careers before it appeared in daily life. The NNS group (JET) was quite a bit older and the difference in age cannot be discounted. The difference in the gender composition of the two groups, however, is quite open to debate. Having three times as many women in the NNS group could have some bearing on the findings but the issue of gender is outside the area of inquiry of this study.

All of the participants in the survey have access to the Internet. The NS teachers all access it at least once a day, as 84.1% of the NNS teachers. Even the NNS teachers who rarely use it still connect to the

Internet at least once a week. Given the difference in the frequency of access, it isn't too surprising that the total amount of time the two groups spent online also differs. Still, the NS group spent more than three times as long online each week than the NNS teachers and a difference this large is meaningful. Surprisingly the NNS group was only slightly less likely to answer that they were addicted to the Internet.

The most surprising finding of the study was the difference in how often the two groups of teachers received and sent email in English. The majority of the NS group received emails in English several times a day, while the majority of the NNS group did so once a month or less. In terms of sending email the difference was even more profound, with 72.7% of the Japanese teachers sending email in English once a month or less. This difference cannot be explained by the frequency of accessing the Internet, since all the Japanese teachers did so at least once a week and the vast majority of them accessed it every day. The NNS teachers are using the Internet, but they are using it for sending and receiving messages in English only very rarely.

Although the frequency of English e-mail use is vastly different among the two groups, the interlocutors seem to follow what would be expected in an EFL environment. The NNS teachers rarely send e-mail to their family members in English while the NS teachers often do it and this is simply because we tend to interact with our family in our first language. Much, if not most, of the NNS teachers' contact with personal friends and work communication probably occurs in Japanese rather than English. It is surprising then that almost half of the Japanese teachers indicated they do communicate with personal friends and coworkers through English e-mails.

This small-scale survey of a self-selected population cannot provide any definitive answers about Internet and English e-mail use among all EFL teachers, but it does give a strong indication that NS and NNS groups use ICT very differently. The Japanese teachers in this study do access the Internet but they very rarely send or receive e-mail in English.

D. Suggestions for future studies

This study found a striking difference in the frequency of English e-mail use between the NNS (JET) and NS (NET) groups, but the origin was uncertain. The two groups also differed greatly by age and gender so future studies should try to control for these two variables. The use of e-mail in Japanese by both groups was not investigated, which could add an interesting dimension to future studies. Some respondents indicated they felt the survey instrument was too restricted to the use of personal computers and did not take into account the growing importance of mobile devices such as smart phones and iPads. The present study also failed to take into consideration the tightly restricted access to the Internet at Japanese public junior and senior high schools, which could very well limit the use of ICT in the work

environment or at the very least shift it towards access via personal mobile devices.

E. Concluding Thoughts

There seemed to be little consensus about what constitutes normal and “addicted” Internet use. Perhaps it is best to avoid such vague, loaded terms when making a survey instrument, but the responses do raise interesting questions that are unfortunately beyond the scope of this study.

It is clear that, for whatever reason, the NNS teachers in this study sent and received email in English extremely infrequently although they do have access to the Internet. It is unfortunate that such an inexpensive and easy tool for professional development is being so under-utilized. It is our hope that this and future studies will help NNS EFL teachers to recognize the potential that exists for their own professional development and use it to their best advantage.

Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank the English teachers who were kind enough to participate in this study, which was conducted in Japan during the period of August through November 2010. All of the participating teachers were either members of “ACROSS⁴⁾” (Association of English Teachers for Cross-cultural Communication) or colleagues of ACROSS members. Although these teachers remain anonymous, without their cooperation, this study would not have been possible. Special thanks go to the officers of ACROSS who made special arrangements for this study: Mr. Toshiyuki Fujisawa, President, and Ms. Hiromi Inagawa, Vice President. We are also very grateful to the following officials of the non-profit organization, “e-dream-s⁵⁾,” who functioned as research cooperators for this study: Ms. Fusayo Nakagawa, and Ms. Miki Tsukamoto.

REFERENCES

- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (2011). *Internet linguistics: A student guide*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Fouser, R.J. (2001). “Culture,” computer literacy, and the media in creating public attitudes toward CM in Japan and Korea. In C. Ess, & F. Sudweeks (eds.). *Culture, technology, communication: Towards and intercultural global village* (pp. 261-280). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Gooden, P. (2009). *The story of English: How the English language conquered the world*. London: Quercus.
- Graddol, D. (2006). *English next: Why global English may mean the end of English as a Foreign Language*. British Council. Retrieved August 30, 2011, from <http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-research-english-next.pdf>
- Hashimoto, K. (2007). Japan’s language policy and the “Lost Decade”. In J. W. Tollefson, & A. B. M. Tsui. (eds.). *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts* (pp. 25-36). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

4) <http://www.aglance.org/across/>

5) <http://e-dream-s.org/index-j.html>

Associates.

- Hsieh, S. C. (2009). *(Im)politeness in email communication: how English speakers and Chinese speakers negotiate meanings and develop intercultural (mis)understandings*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/337/1/hsieh09PhD.pdf>
- Ibrahim, A.M.I. (2010). Information & communication technologies in ELT. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1 (3), 211-214.
- Kakegawa, T., & Miyazaki, S. (2008). US-Japan e-mail exchange: Impact on Japanese language learners' understanding of Japanese culture and motivation. *DIGITALSTREAM PROCEEDINGS*. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from sumb.edu/wlc/ojs/index.php/ds/article/viewArticle/13
- Kramsch, C. (2001). Intercultural communication. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (eds.). *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 201-206). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ma, R. (1996). Computer-mediated conversation as a new dimension of intercultural communication between East Asia and North American college students. In S.C. Herring (ed.). *Computer-mediated communication: Linguistic, social and cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 173-185). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Murata, K., & Jenkins, J. (2009). Introduction: Global Englishes from global perspectives. In K. Murata, & J. Jenkins (eds.). *Global Englishes in Asian contexts: Current and future debates* (pp. 1-13). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- O'Neill, S. (2009). EFL proficiency level and differences in Japanese secondary school students' views on the need for pedagogical change. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning*, 5, 49-71.
- Schell, M. A. (2010). How to write English as a global language. *Internet Coaching Library*. Retrieved January 10, 2012, from <http://www.internetworldstats.com/articles/art112.htm>
- Warschauer, M. (2001). On-line communication. In R. Carter & D. Nunan (eds.). *The Cambridge guide to teaching English to speakers of other languages* (pp. 207-212). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wurster, P. (2009, June/July). What is your favorite Ed Tech tool?: Educators hail the benefits of many technologies during 30 years of effective teaching and learning. *Learning & Leading with Technology*.

Author Note

Author Information:

Koji Igawa, Department of Education, Shitennoji University (Osaka, Japan).

Brian Nuspliger, School of Human Welfare Studies, Kwansei Gakuin University (Hyogo, Japan).

Contact information:

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Koji Igawa, Department of Education, Shitennoji University (3-2-1 Gakuenmae, Habikino, Osaka, 583-8501, JAPAN). E-mail: igawa-k@shitennoji.ac.jp

日本で教える英語教員による インターネットと英語によるe-mailの使用

井川 好二・ブライアン・ヌスプリガー

1990年代よりインターネットが世界中に普及し、e-mailによるコミュニケーションが、他の手段を圧倒する状態となった。同時に、英語は、世界の共通語（Lingua Franca）としての地位を確立した。本稿は、日本で教える英語教員のインターネットおよび英語によるe-mailの使用に関する小規模なアンケート調査の報告である。調査対象には、英語を母国語とする教員および日本人英語教員が含まれる。結果、英語を母国語とする教員と日本人英語教員のインターネットと英語によるe-mailの使用に関して、大きな違いがあることが判明した。日本人教員に比して英語ネイティブ教員は、これらの情報・通信手段を、遥かに頻繁に、しかもより多様な目的のために使用している。今後の研究のための指針と、ネイティブでない語学教員のための教員研修案を含む。

キーワード：英語教育、インターネット、e-mail、NNS語学教員研修