



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MELBOURNE**

**Seminar Series**  
School of Languages & Linguistics

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## **Japanese English as a variety: features and intelligibility of an emerging variety of English**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigates Japanese English, English spoken by Japanese, from a World Englishes perspective. Using a number of recorded conversations between Japanese English speakers with an English teaching background, it attempts to identify the distinctive features of spoken Japanese English, and examine the intelligibility and comprehensibility of Japanese English.

In particular, the data reveal that there are a number of grammatical features that are shared by many other varieties of English in the Outer-circle. In addition, Japanese English speakers employ a distinctive discourse style in their narrative speech with respect to the use of backchannels. It is argued that frequency, types, and functions of backchannels in Japanese English are different to other varieties of English.

An intelligibility test was developed from the same speech data, and it was administered to a number of students at a Japanese university and students at an Australian university to investigate the intelligibility and comprehensibility of Japanese English in comparison to that of Australian English. The test results reveal that familiarity with the variety plays an important role, and attitudinal questionnaire results show that Japanese English is gaining acceptance in cross-cultural communication. That is, non-Japanese English speakers have positive attitudes towards Japanese English as an adequate variety of English. However, the attitudinal questionnaire also reveals that Japanese still have negative attitudes toward their own variety.

Time:	<b>3:15pm</b>
Date:	<b>Friday 23 October 2009</b>
Location:	<b>Room 509, Arts Centre, University of Melbourne</b>