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From the Editor-in-Chief

Today everyone will agree that English has become the language of the globe. English seems to be the most commonly used language in academic and business scenes and some even argue that 80% of information in the world is in that language. What is the situation then, in Asia?

In Asia and the Pacific, there are thousands of languages in use and language issues have been always among ABD's essential topics, but this is the first time that we have focussed on English language itself. Replies to questionnaires completed by ABD correspondents, as summarized on the back page, confirmed that English is being taught in all countries that replied, whether as a language of general use, or a secondary language, or one of the foreign languages. But in every country, the need to learn and use English seems to be growing.

Since we live in a world of so many languages, and the need to communicate globally is increasing, it is inevitable to have a common language. Most probably it will be English. So we should actively utilize it, and not be dominated

by it, as our communication tool. As it is not the mother tongue of most people in Asia, it has the potential of becoming an equal and neutral tool for everyone in the region.

In this issue of ABD, brief reports on English use and education in two Asian countries, a discussion, and a summary of the present state in the region are carried. This is just an introduction. I hope they will stimulate our readers to think about a "common language" and arouse further discussions on its relation with the mother tongues and the influence it will have on indigenous cultures.

As of October 2002, I have succeeded my predecessor, Mr. Kusaba Muneharu as Director-General of ACCU and also as Editor-in-Chief of ABD. I should like to further improve ABD responding to the changing needs of the times. In this regard, I welcome your comments and suggestions.



SATO Kunio

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