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The possibility of English as a solution to resolve socio-political issues: The case in Okinawa

Panel: Conflict Resolution 3

The present study investigated influence of a particular socio-political situation over the perception of English language in Okinawa, where 75% of all U.S. military bases in the nation are located. Presumably the demographic structure with a large number of military personnel, mainly Americans, in the community may have affected locals' attitudes towards native speakers of English and their language. Following this assumption, 113 base-employees and 143 locals not working on bases were requested to respond to a questionnaire with 46 items. The results revealed that base-employees were more positive about pedagogical use of base and relatively stronger view on English as a tool to address their socio-political issues than other individuals. However, they limited its instrumental function to the local-level: English could help them solve base-related crimes happening in their community. In conclusion, locals have not fully recognized English as an instrument to bring worldwide attention to their current situation.