

Reading “Culture Texts” in Understanding the Target Culture

Takashi Ogawa

Japanese culture programs need to be designed with the learner-centered approach. The learner-centered approach to cultural understanding is based on the idea that culture, whether it has concrete forms or is conceptual, does not possess objective substance. This is reflected in the history of *nihonjinron*, in which “Japanese culture” has been interpreted differently from time to time.

In class, the instructor should take the standpoint that cultural understanding is always an on-going process, and should not attempt to lead learners to the “Japanese culture” shared by the Japanese people in general. Rather, the instructor should encourage learners to pursue the issues they perceive within their individual frame of reference.

A Study of Instructional Objectives in Business Japanese Instruction

—focusing on the importance of cultural aspects—

Nobuko Ikeda

Language has an influence upon the world in which the language is used, while at the same time language is affected by the world existing behind it. The world which exists behind language as its setting is culture. In that sense, language and culture are closely related and mutually interactive. So, it is very important to present cultural aspects to the learners in the instruction of foreign language. In the case of instruction for business people, the importance of instruction in cultural aspects is much greater than that in the instruction for other people. Furthermore, Japan is a typical case of a country with a "high context culture." To take this Japanese cultural characteristic into consideration, the importance of instruction of cultural aspects in Business Japanese Course is immeasurable.

In order to design an effective instructional course, it is indispensable to analyze characteristics or needs of the learner, and then to set the instructional objectives which meet and satisfy such needs. In order to do this, this paper enumerated the cultural, habitual aspects in business that are important in the Business Japanese Instruction by obtaining information through a questionnaire to foreign businessmen. Then, this paper discussed how we should use these cultural, habitual aspects in setting instructional objectives of Business Japanese Course.

The Relationship Between the Characteristics of Kanji Shape and Production

Etsuko TOYODA

Abstract

The study of kanji is recognized as one of the most difficult aspects of learning Japanese for students whose native languages is non-kanji based. The reasons for the difficulties in studying kanji are numerous, with memory retention being shown to be significantly difficult (Toyoda, 1995). Recognizing that the learning process of perception, recognition, retention, and production involves various interrelated factors, this paper focuses on the relationship between the characteristics of kanji shape and production. Kanji exhibiting greater number of strokes, diagonal lines or dots, or asymmetrical shape have been shown to be more difficult to reproduce (Kanou, 1987; Komai, 1993). This paper presents an analysis of the results of kanji composition style quizzes. Results indicate that 1).the number of strokes and the degree of linearity do not necessarily provide accurate predictions of the degree in difficulty of production, 2).kanji with a weak degree of symmetry show a positive correlation to mistakes in production, and 3).kanji produced with mistakes, versus kanji which were not produced, show differences in type and pattern. This paper concludes with an address for further study on the factors of reading, meaning, Dan characteristics of inter-kanji relations in the formation of compound words, to enable a more comprehensive focus to be placed on the development of teaching curricula. In addition, the possibility for revision of current testing parameters form standard correct/incorrect into a system that accurately addresses the reasons for difficulties in kanji reproduction presents itself.

A Study of the Meanings of KOTO-DA

—Focusing on Degree of Modality—

Yukari TSUBONE

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the core meaning which accounts for the semantic diversity of KOTO-DA , and to inspect the degree of modality of each usage of KOTO-DA .

The paper attempts to verify two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that KOTO corresponds to the hidden "theme" in the KOTO-DA sentence. In the X wa Y-DA (\sim KOTO-DA) structure, X is omitted when it is understood by both speaker and hearer. Being left alone, Y-DA (\sim KOTO-DA) results in ambiguity depending on the context. The second hypothesis is that the hidden "themes" of certain usages are easier to restore than those of other usages, therefore, the degree of modality of each usage differs. This research found that all the usages of KOTO-DA ranged from the KOTO as a pseudo-noun plus the copula DA , to the KOTO-DA that has turned into an auxiliary verb as a whole. The range is as follows: paraphrasing \rightarrow hearsay \rightarrow exclamation \rightarrow advice / grounds, reason. Out of this investigation about the range, I suggest that the KOTO of the KOTO-DA denoting grounds or reason should add the nuance that the speaker is uttering the sentence objectively, not subjectively.

疑問符の「の」に関する一考察

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本稿は、日本語の「の」がGB理論の下での日本語統語論先行文献(Saito & Hoji 1983, Saito 1985, Lasnik & Saito 1984, 1992 等)で、あたかもそれが疑問符(question marker)として使われていることに対する反論である。「の」は名詞であり、疑問符として使われる場合は「のですか」の省略形であり、「か」がない「のです」という形が疑問文として成立するためには上昇音調で発音されなければならない。下降音調で発音されると当該の文は疑問文ではなく肯定文として解釈される。また、「の」は補文中に現れる真の疑問符「か」と共存する事実から、「の」は決して補文の疑問符として現れ得ないとである。さらに、本稿は、名詞としての「の」を含む補文からの疑問詞「なぜ」の取り出しがGB理論(ECP)の枠組みでは説明できない場合があることを例証する。

Teaching of Kanji in a Lower Intermediate Level Japanese Language Program : Computer Aided

Instruction (CAI)

Suzuki Yoko

An experiment on CAI for Kanji learning was administered in beginning to lower intermediate level classes of the ICU Japanese Language Program between 1992~1994. The experiment was divided into two stages. The first stage emphasized individualized learning after class, while the later stage emphasized learning in class. In a survey of participants in the individualized learning after class stage, the participants reported problems of lack of time to practice and lack of initiative to practice due to the absence of pressure from instructor(s). These problems were resolved by introduction of CAI for Kanji learning in class. From survey responses of participants in CAI for Kanji learning in class and results of Kanji

tests administered at the beginning or end of class (depending on instructor) the following conclusions can be made about CAI:

1. CAI enables customized teaching for each student based on their ability;
2. Distinctive characteristics of CAI lectures are:
 - (i) its concentration on learning and
 - (ii) opportunity for individual student-instructor conversation;
3. Evaluation of CAI is affirmative and
4. CAI takes into consideration the results of Kanji learning. Future discussion on will focus on the following topics:
 1. learning environment
 2. educational software
 3. managing students who are averse to using computers.