

3511

**KANJI INSTRUCTION AT A JAPANESE SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL
IN THE U.S.**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

EAST ASIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES (JAPANESE)

MAY 2008

By

Yukiko R. Yamaguchi

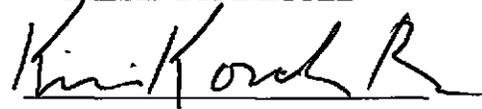
Thesis Committee:

**Kimi Kondo-Brown, Chairperson
Kyoko Hijirida
John Haig**

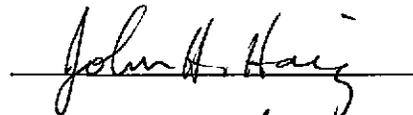
3511

We certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in East Asian Languages and Literatures (Japanese).

THESIS COMMITTEE

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kirk R. ...", written over a horizontal line.

Chairperson

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John H. Haig", written over a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kyoko Hijiura", written over a horizontal line.

© Copyright 2008

by

Yukiko R. Yamaguchi

(iii)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have supported me in countless ways in making this project a reality. Without their patience, guidance, and help, this study could never have been completed. First, I would like to thank my thesis committee chairperson, Professor Kimi Kondo-Brown, for her generosity, constructive feedback, encouragement, and continuous support. Without her help, I could not have earned this degree. Also, I would like to express my appreciation to my other thesis committee members, Dr. John Haig and Dr. Kyoko Hijirida. Their valuable feedback and suggestions added great value to my work.

In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to the principal, teachers, and staff at the target school. They generously permitted me to conduct this study and kindly welcomed me to their school. I am especially thankful to the three participants who allowed me to observe their classes and openly shared their experiences and perceptions. I learned a lot from them about what it means to be a teacher.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and sister for understanding and encouraging me to pursue my interests.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
List of Contents.....	v
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	2
2.1. What are Japanese Supplementary Schools?	2
2.1.1. Overview of Japanese Supplementary Schools.....	2
2.1.2. The Changing Situation in JSS.....	4
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	7
2.2.1. <i>Kanji</i> Instruction	7
2.2.2. Teachers' Beliefs.....	12
Chapter 3: THE STUDY	16
3.1. Research Questions	16
3.2. Field Entry	17
3.3. Research Site.....	19
3.4. Participants.....	21
3.5. Instruments and Procedures	23
3.6. Researcher's Experience	25
3.7. Analysis.....	27
3.8. Trustworthiness	28
Chapter 4: Teachers' Beliefs about <i>Kanji</i> Instruction	31
4.1. Beliefs about <i>Kanji</i> Instruction in general	31
4.1.1. <i>Kanji</i> is the Essential Skill for Reading Japanese Texts	31
4.1.2. Stroke Orders are Important	32
4.1.3. Mastering Fundamental Skills is Important in <i>Kanji</i> Learning	33
4.1.4. Repetition is Important for <i>Kanji</i> Learning.....	34
4.1.5. Rich Vocabulary Helps Students Learn <i>Kanji</i>	36
4.2. Beliefs about <i>Kanji</i> Instruction at the JSS	37
4.2.1. Lack of Japanese Use in Daily Lives is a Great Disadvantage for <i>Kanji</i> Learning	37
4.2.2. Negative Influence of English should be Removed	43
4.2.3. Parents should Support their Children to Learn <i>Kanji</i> at Home.....	45
4.3. Summary and Discussion.....	47
Chapter 5: Teaching Practices of the Participants.....	53
5.1. Kayo's Teaching Practice.....	53
5.2. Miki's Teaching Practice.....	58
5.3. Fuyuko's Teaching Practice	61

5.4. Summary and Discussion.....	68
5.4.1. Participants' <i>Kanji</i> Teaching Strategy	68
5.4.2. The Relationship between the JSS Teachers' Beliefs and their Practices	70
Chapter 6: CONCLUSION	72
6.1. Pedagogical Implications	72
6.2. Implications for Future Studies	78
APPENDIX A: Number of JSS and Full-time Japanese Overseas Schools.....	81
APPENDIX B: Number of JSS and Full-time Japanese Schools by the Area	82
APPENDIX C: Research Proposal Submitted to the Board of Directors of the Research Site.....	83
APPENDIX D: Agreement to Participate in the Research Project.....	87
APPENDIX E: Sample Sentences in <i>Rizumu Ondoku</i> (Rhythm Reading).....	89
APPENDIX F: Example of Material of the New <i>Kanji</i> Subject in 1-6 th Grades	90
APPENDIX G: Sample Material 1	91
APPENDIX H: Sample Material 2	93
REFERENCES	94

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Japanese supplementary schools used to consist mostly of students who temporarily live abroad and return to Japan within a few years. However, with globalization, more and more students who permanently live in foreign countries have enrolled in such schools to study Japanese as a heritage language. Due to the diversification of these students' backgrounds, Japanese supplementary schools all around the world face difficulties implementing traditional methods of teaching. One area that has proved particularly challenging involves the instruction of *kanji*.

The present study investigates Japanese supplementary school teachers' beliefs and pedagogical practices in *kanji* instruction. Through this examination, this study aims to identify the challenges Japanese supplementary school teachers are currently experiencing in relation to *kanji* instruction and suggest methods to address these challenges.

The overall structure of this study is as follows: Chapter 2 examines the previous literature on Japanese supplementary schools, *kanji* instruction, and teachers' beliefs. In Chapter 3, the research questions are stated, and the methods, instruments, and procedure of the research are described in detail. The participants' beliefs about *kanji* instruction are identified in Chapter 4 and their instructional strategies are investigated in Chapter 5. Finally, pedagogical and research implications are discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. What are Japanese Supplementary Schools?

2.1.1. Overview of Japanese Supplementary Schools

Japanese supplementary schools (JSS hereafter) are overseas educational institutions (*Zaigai kyooiku shisetsu*) offering instruction following the curriculum followed in schools in Japan. In addition to JSS, *Zaigai kyooiku shisetsu* include Japanese full-time schools (*nihonjin gakkoo*) and private overseas educational institutions (*shiritsu-zaigai kyooiku shisetsu*). In contrast to these latter types of schools, most JSS offer classes once a week on Saturdays for students who go to local schools on weekdays. Because of the limited instructional time, not all subjects taught in Japan are covered in JSS—unlike the other *zaigai kyooiku shisetsu*. Many JSS teach only Japanese (*kokugo*), but some JSS teach social studies, science, and mathematics as well (Monbukagakushoo, 2006a).

The first JSS was founded in Washington D.C. in 1958. Since then, more and more JSS have been established all over the world as the number of Japanese companies that station employees abroad has increased. According to Furuie (2001, p.8) and Monbukagakushoo (2006b), there were only 20 JSS globally in 1971, but the number increased to 77 in 1980 and to 146 in 1990. As of April 2004, there were 186 JSS, 82 of which are located in North America (See Appendix A and B). While half of these Japanese schools are full-time—offering a full curriculum—in Asian countries, there are

only three *nihonjingakkoo*, or full-time Japanese schools in the U.S. Statistics suggest the part-time schedule seems to attract more students: 57.5% of Japanese children attend JSS in the U.S. whereas only 4.4% of Japanese children do so in Asian countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2005). Furuie (2001) explains that this high level of participation in part-time schools in the U.S. can be attributed to Japanese parents preferring to send their children to local American schools because they are satisfied with the level of American education.

Douglas, Kataoka, and Kishimoto (2003) classify JSS based on the time of establishment. The first type of JSS, most of which were established by the Japan Business Association, are located in big cities and have longer histories compared to other types of JSS. This type of JSS usually has many students and therefore the Japanese government sends several teachers. The JSS of the second type were established in the 1970's in response to the increase in the number of Japanese children living abroad. According to Furuie (2001), these schools were initiated by parents who worried that their children would forget Japanese during their stay abroad. They opened Japanese classes by themselves for their children. Gradually, the number of such families increased, and the local consulates or Japanese associations began to help them organize the system. The JSS of the third type were founded in local cities in the U.S. because of the yen's appreciation caused by the Plaza Accord in 1985. American counties established JSS in cooperation with American and Japanese companies in order to encourage Japanese industry. Most JSS of this type are small in size.

The common primary educational purpose of all three JSS is to help overseas workers' children retain their Japanese language proficiency so that they can promptly readapt to schools in Japan after their stay abroad. But more than providing language instruction, JSS are regarded as places to educate children to be able to behave correctly as Japanese citizens (Furuie, 2005; Sato, 2004, 2005).

2.1.2. The Changing Situation in JSS

The original goal of JSSs was to support children who planned to return to Japan within a few years so that they could easily adjust to Japanese schools upon return. However, this original goal seems to have more or less changed because an increasing number of the JSS children are not actually returning to Japan (Furuie, 2001, 2005; Douglas, 2005; Douglas et al., 2003; Fujimori, Kashiwazaki, Nakamura, & Itō, 2006; Kataoka, Furuyama, & Koshiyama, 2000; Okumura, 2006). In other words, an increasing number of JSS students are heritage language learners who have grown up in a home where Japanese is spoken and first acquired their Japanese language and cultural competencies in the home (The UCLA Steering Committee, 2000; Kondo-Brown, 2006).

Furuie (2005) conducted a questionnaire survey of 61 full-time Japanese schools and 105 JSS all over the world. According to this survey, 36% of the JSS students have at least one non-Japanese parent, and 41% of students do not plan to receive education in Japan. Given this diversified student population, it is not surprising that the majority of JSS around the world (Asia & Oceania, Middle East & Africa, Europe, and North

America)—except Latin America—report that the issue of how best to deal with the learning needs of students from such heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds was one of their major concerns. For example, 62% of JSS in North America—the highest rate among all regions—specifically noted this issue as a problem. Kataoka et al. (2000) and Fujimori et al. (2006) similarly emphasize that teachers at JSS find it difficult to teach students with heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds.

This situation instigated examination of the Japanese language performance of students who do not plan to return to Japan in several studies (Kataoka, Koshiyama, & Shibata, 2007; Fujioka-Ito, 2003; Nagaoka, 1998; Nagasawa, 1995). Nagasawa's (1995) study compares the Japanese grammar knowledge of three groups: Japanese as first language (L1) children, bilingual students at a JSS, and Japanese as second language (L2) university students. The results showed that bilingual students generally performed better than the L2 students did. However, they notably scored lower than L1 children in most grammatical items.

Furthermore, other studies that have investigated the academic performance of JSS students state that it was difficult for long-term and permanent resident students to study following the curriculum designed for children who will return to Japan. For example, Nagaoka (1998) conducted in-depth interviews with four JSS students and their teachers and articulated difficulties JSS students experience studying Japanese. She also examined the essays of these four students. According to Nagaoka, the JSS students experienced problems with Japanese language acquisition because of (a) language

transfer of English into Japanese, (b) lack of background knowledge and Japanese vocabulary, (c) low *kanji* proficiency, and (d) insufficient time for Japanese study. Fujioka-Ito (2003) claimed that temporary sojourners have an advantage at JSS. She divided JSS 9th and 10th graders into three groups based on their plan to return to Japan and compared the mean scores of each group's comprehension tests, *kanji* tests, and idiom tests. Comprehension tests included questions regarding *kanji*, word meanings, grammar, and reading comprehension—the temporary sojourner group outperformed the permanent resident group in all tests.

Given this diversification of students' backgrounds, a number of researchers have called for a reform of teaching practices at JSS. Fujioka-Ito (2003) argues that teachers have to give more comprehensible and intellectually stimulating classes. To this end, she suggests that JSS offer a different track for long-term and permanent resident learners than that of temporary sojourners. However, the fact is that there is no clear teaching guideline for long-term and permanent resident students. Douglas (2005) addresses this need and presents a curriculum design that would be suitable for young learners of Japanese as a heritage language (HL). She explains the need for developing new curricula for JSS:

[H]oshuukoo still teach Japanese as a mother tongue and adopt the same curriculum used for Japanese monolingual native speakers in Japan. Therefore the original educational goal of these schools does not meet the needs of many JHL [Japanese as a Heritage Language] learners, who grow up in a bilingual environment. (p.61)

Based on theories for curriculum development for young HL learners, she proposed a curriculum development process consisting of five steps. The first step is to analyze learners' interest, content knowledge, and language proficiency through the construction of a learner profile. In the second step, topics and themes based on the profile analysis are generated. Instructional objectives are set in the third step. The fourth step involves developing instructional materials and activities. The last step is to assess learners through alternative approaches such as performance-based assessment and portfolio assessment. Unlike the curriculum traditionally used in JSS, her curriculum development model makes it easier to meet the needs of HL learners with heterogeneous language proficiency.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. *Kanji* Instruction

Kanji instruction has been a crucial issue in Japanese as a foreign language (JFL)/ Japanese as a second language (JSL) settings, and many researchers have investigated *kanji* acquisition of the second language learners (e.g. Koda, 1999; Mori, 1998; Chikamatsu, 1996). The studies indicate the difficulty Western students experience learning *kanji*. For example, Tollini (1994) suggests the difficulty attaining *kanji* proficiency for Western learners lies in its ideographic nature. Therefore, learners who use the Roman alphabet in their L1 should learn a different decoding process. Furthermore, Western learners struggle with *kanji* strokes—since the strokes seem to be

complex and randomly arranged, learners find learning *kanji* extremely difficult. Tollini reports that learners often cannot write a *kanji* even if they can recognize it and suggests proper teaching instruction can help students overcome this problem.

Other scholars have pointed out the difficulty of *kanji* instruction in HL settings as well. Sugiura (2003) reports that students at JSS tend to proceed to the upper grades without acquiring enough *kanji* ability. Consequently, they struggle with writing and reading both newly learned *kanji* and *kanji* they previously learned. Okumura (2006) reports that many JSS students in Germany express their disdain for learning *kanji* during interviews. In addition, Nakajima (2003) reveals several problems particular to *kanji* instruction for HL learners. First, since heritage language education is provided only a few hours a week, it is extremely difficult for instructors to allocate enough time for *kanji* instruction. Second, the difference in the learning styles of Japanese students and western students plays a significant role in successful *kanji* acquisition. While students in Japan are more accustomed to doing drill exercises to memorize *kanji*, students in western countries are not used to this learning style. Therefore, it is necessary to teach *kanji* differently based on students' learning styles. For example, she suggests teaching techniques such as explaining the meanings of *kanji*, letting students experience *kanji* through authentic materials, and helping them notice the relationships among various *kanji* characters. Third, she emphasizes the necessity of writing instruction incorporating learned *kanji* as well because there are some negative interference into *kanji* writing due to the considerable differences between the way of writing *kanji* and that of the Roman alphabet.

Several empirical studies reveal that HL students' ability in reading and writing *kanji* is lower than that of Japanese L1 speakers or JFL learners whose L1 includes *kanji*. Matsunaga's (2003) study compares the oral skills and reading performances among three learner groups at the university level: heritage group, non-heritage group with *kanji* in L1, non-heritage group without *kanji* in L1. His study shows that the HL group scored low when they read passages with many *kanji* while they performed equally with the group of learners whose L1 includes *kanji* when they read passages that contain only a few *kanji*. Given this result, Matsunaga claims that it is necessary to provide enough *kanji* instruction with effective instructional methodologies for the HL learners to extend their restricted *kanji* knowledge. Nakajima (1988) studied Japanese language proficiency of school-age HL learners at a Japanese as a heritage language school in Toronto, Canada. As one of the components of her study, she compared the *kanji* usage rate of JHL school students with that of university JFL students. She found that although the JHL school students wrote much longer essays, their *kanji* usage rate was extremely lower than that of the JFL learners. Furthermore, Kataoka et al.'s (2007) large-scale survey of 1600 Japanese supplementary school students indicates that students higher than 5th grade have trouble maintaining their expected grade level in terms of their *kanji* proficiency. By the time these students are in 6th grade, only about half of the students had *kanji* proficiency equal to their grade level. The percentage of students who performed at the level of their expected grade drastically drops to 25% after 6th grade.

In response to the problem *kanji* learners' experience, researchers advocate various methods of *kanji* instruction. For example, Flaherty & Noguchi (1998) propose

two *kanji* teaching methods, the Whole-*kanji* method and Component Analysis method. The Whole-*kanji* method involves memorizing *kanji* as a whole by reading controlled passages and writing each *kanji* separately. This method is commonly used in elementary schools in Japan. The Component Analysis method involves splitting *kanji* into single components. It is suggested that by giving meanings to each component and memorizing the stories that combine the components help learners remember the forms and meanings of *kanji*. Flaherty and Noguchi examine the effectiveness of both methods and demonstrate the advantage of Component Analysis method over Whole-*kanji* method in writing *kanji* accurately and inferring their meanings.

Okita (1996) suggests three *kanji* learning strategies: rote learning strategy, contextual learning strategy, and mnemonic learning strategy. In rote learning strategy, teachers let students engage in drill exercises repeatedly during which students write *kanji* paying careful attention to stroke order. In context strategy, teachers use authentic texts and let students guess the meanings of *kanji* from the contexts provided. In this learning strategy, students sometimes read paragraphs aloud over and over. In mnemonic learning strategy, students link new *kanji* with pictures and/or with simple *kana* or *kanji*.

Shimizu & Green (2002) found three *kanji* teaching strategies remarkably similar to Okita's: rote learning strategy, context strategy, and memory strategy. The first two strategies parallel Okita's strategies with the same/similar titles. In memory strategy, teachers try to connect new learning to students' knowledge of previously learned *kanji* by breaking down *kanji* into parts. The two researchers investigate the relationships

between these three instructional strategies and six attitudes towards teaching *kanji* of 251 JSL teachers. They discover that although teachers' attitudes are complex, teachers who believe *kanji* to be important and useful as well as value the cultural tradition of *kanji*, generally prefer to use context and memory strategies. Additionally, Shimizu and Green find that Japanese language educators in the U.S. are likely to use rote learning strategy most frequently. They explain the popularity of rote learning strategy in two ways. First, educators are influenced to use this strategy by recent studies that have reaffirmed the effectiveness of rote learning on long-term memory. Second, native Japanese teachers are likely to employ this strategy because their own *kanji* learning experiences included rote learning strategy.

Based on Shimizu and Green's (2002) study and previous studies that examine teacher's beliefs about language learning, Mori and Shimizu (2007) investigate the attitudes toward *kanji* of 311 U.S. college students and how they perceive *kanji* learning. The two researchers identified six attitudes toward *kanji*: *kanji* is fun, *kanji* is difficult, *kanji* has cultural value, *kanji* has future, *kanji* is useful, and *kanji* learning requires special abilities. They also identified six *kanji* learning strategies: morphological analysis, rote memorization, context-based strategies, association strategy, metacognitive strategy, and helplessness. Among these strategies, students recognize rote memorization as the most effective while they regard the metacognitive strategy, which requires awareness of learning strategies, least effective. In addition, the two researchers examine the relationships between the attitudes and beliefs toward *kanji*. They found that the more students recognize the cultural value of *kanji* and feel *kanji* learning fun, the more they

utilize various learning strategies. Furthermore, students who rely only on rote memorization tend to find *kanji* learning difficult and feel helpless. Building on these findings, the researchers suggest using a variety of *kanji* learning strategies and activities to enhance students' positive attitudes toward *kanji* by emphasizing its cultural value. Another suggestion Mori and Shimizu offer is that instructors provide students with achievable but challenging tasks that facilitate that realization that they *kanji* is learned through effort rather than because of a student's special abilities.

Several researchers indicate that instructional strategies affect learning strategies that students use (e.g. Gamage, 2003; Kern, 1995). Shimizu & Green (2002) claim it is important to know which instructional strategies teachers choose because "the particular language instruction used by a teacher may significantly impact the choices that students make in their efforts to develop learning strategies" (p. 228). According to Gamage (2003), many studies on *kanji* learning strategies have been conducted by incorporating learner perspectives attained through questionnaires. Moreover, these studies are mostly conducted in university settings (Gamage, 2003). Therefore, further research is needed that deals with *kanji* learning/teaching strategies preferred in Japanese as a heritage language setting.

2.2.2. Teachers' Beliefs

Although there is no scholarly consensus of what the concept of beliefs constitute (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Woods, 1996; Pajares, 1992), Pajares

(1992) claims, after examining literature on beliefs, that beliefs are based on evaluation and judgment. He states that all teachers have their own beliefs about effective teaching and learning, and thus their beliefs strongly influence their practices. He also claims, “beliefs are far more influential than knowledge in determining how individuals organize and define tasks and problems and are stronger predictors of behavior” (p. 311). Indeed, previous studies also point to the strong relationship between teachers’ beliefs and their practices. Johnson (1992) examines the extent to which ESL teachers’ instructions are consistent with their beliefs. She distributed a survey to 30 ESL teachers in order to determine their beliefs about literacy instruction. She then conducted a lesson plan analysis task and Ideal Instructional Protocol to ascertain participants’ favorite instructional approaches. The results of this study show that the majority of the teachers’ favorite literacy instructional practices align with their beliefs about learning.

Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, and Lloyd (1991) also articulate a connection between teachers’ beliefs and their classroom practices. The four researchers worked with 39 elementary school teachers of third to sixth graders. Based on interviews with the participants about their beliefs, the researchers predicted the following six categories for reading instruction practices: Use of basal readers, consideration of students’ background knowledge, oral reading, interruption of students’ oral reading, teaching of vocabulary, and flexibility. Classroom observation indicated that the teachers’ practices correlated significantly with these six categories. Therefore the researchers conclude that there is a “relatively strong relationship between teachers’ stated beliefs about the reading process and their classroom practices” (p. 578).

Moreover, teachers' beliefs about effective learning ultimately influence students' beliefs and learning strategies. Kern (1995) compares French language learners' and teachers' beliefs about language learning before and after a semester. He conducted a questionnaire survey called The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed by Horwitz (1988). Although the relationship between teachers' beliefs and students' beliefs could not be generalized, Kern states that "the individual correlation data indicate that some students greatly improved the degree of fit between their BALLI responses and their instructors" (p. 81). Banya & Cheng (1997) also utilize BALLI to compare the beliefs of 23 English teachers and 224 EFL college students in Taiwan. In addition, they compare their results with Kern's (1995), who examined the beliefs of American students and teachers. Banya and Cheng find that teachers' beliefs affect not only their teaching strategies, but also their students' beliefs and learning strategies. For example, the Chinese teachers in their study generally value good pronunciation and accurate grammar. Hence, they tend to correct students' errors immediately and emphasize students learning vocabulary and grammar. Like their teachers, the Chinese students placed importance on excellent pronunciation and grammar proficiency, which seemed to influence their eager learning of grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, the American teachers in Kern's study did not require grammar accuracy and good pronunciation of their students. Instead, they put emphasis on the learning process and encouraged their students to be involved in the learning activities. American students shared similar beliefs with their teachers and did not think immediate error correction as

necessary as the Chinese students did. Also, they did not value excellent pronunciation as much as their Chinese counterparts.

Some studies suggest that teachers' instructional practices do not necessarily reflect their beliefs because of restrictions. Australian teachers of Japanese in Sato & Kleinsasser's (1999) study, for instance, taught classes in a way that was not consistent with their beliefs about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Although the teachers reported they believed that CLT involves little grammar instruction and uses many activities, they actually spent time in teacher-centered grammar explanation and rarely used communicative activities that promote interaction among students. Teachers reported that their employing of traditional teaching practices was tied to the lack of appropriate materials, time, and students' motivation. Graden's study (1996), which examines the practices and beliefs of six French and Spanish teachers in the U.S., uncovered a similar situation. The participant teachers in her study often gave up incorporating their beliefs into their teaching practices because they did not have enough time nor access to the materials necessary to implement such practices. Furthermore, the teachers claimed students' inadequate preparation forced them to compromise their beliefs. In addition to these reasons, Graden points out the teachers' insufficient knowledge about effective alternative approaches and suggests teachers be more aware of theoretical discussions that address similar teaching situations.

Chapter 3

THE STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to (a) examine what beliefs JSS teachers have about *kanji* instruction and describe how these beliefs correlate to their actual teaching practices, (b) articulate the difficulties and problems teachers and students experience with *kanji* instruction at JSS, and finally to (c) suggest methods to address these problems and difficulties.

As the previous literature shows, teachers' beliefs are a crucial factor influencing teaching practices and ultimately their students' beliefs about learning. However, there is no study that has investigated teachers' beliefs about *kanji* instruction at JSS, which is noted by both teachers and students as being problematic. The present study thus investigates JSS teachers' actual practices through observations to examine the connection between their beliefs and practices, focusing particularly on *kanji* instruction.

3.1. Research Questions

The present study will address the following research questions.

- a. What beliefs about teaching *kanji* do JSS teachers have?
- b. What teaching strategies do JSS teachers actually use?
- c. What changes to teaching beliefs and practices can be implemented to improve *kanji* instruction at JSS?

3.2. Field Entry

To investigate the research questions above, I chose to conduct research at a Japanese supplementary school in the Pacific Rim. This school was appropriate as the research site for the present study because (a) the majority of the students do not have a clear plan to return to Japan to receive education, and (b) its curriculum puts emphasis on *kanji*. As the previous literature shows, many JSS around the world have an increasing number of students who do not plan to return to Japan, which results in difficulties when traditional teaching practices are implemented in the classroom. The target JSS in the present study relies heavily on such traditional teaching practices and confronts the same problems noted in the literature. These problems are primarily linked to Japanese traditional teaching practices not being conducive to students of heterogeneous backgrounds having different learning styles. This school particularly acknowledges a serious deficiency in students' *kanji* proficiency, and hence, recently introduced a new curriculum focusing on *kanji* instruction.

In March 2006, I visited the school office of the target JSS with my professor, who knows the principal personally. At the initial meeting with the principal, I briefly explained this project and asked him if I could use his school as the site for my research. He requested that I submit a brief research proposal explaining the purpose, procedure, likely products, and overall schedule so that he could present it to the board of directors. Given his request, I submitted a brief research proposal (see Appendix C) and a letter from my advisor, Dr. Kondo-Brown to demonstrate that the University of Hawai'i at

Mānoa supports this project. In May 2005, I received an approval to conduct the research at the JSS from the board of directors with several conditions. The conditions included submitting the final product of the research (which is this thesis) to the principal and to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. At the beginning of August 2006, I held another meeting with the principal and the school secretary to confirm commencement of the research project and address any necessary paper work.

I entered the field at the end of August 2006, when a new semester began. I was present at the school throughout the day; from the morning staff meeting to the end-of-day staff meeting. In the first one month, I focused on building rapport with the teachers, students, and parents at the JSS because the early stage of field entry considerably affects the relationship between the people in the field and the researcher (Richards, 2003). Specifically, I observed and, upon request, supported classes of different teachers. In other words, I was an observer-participant at this stage. In addition to building rapport with the people in the field, during this time I gained a better understanding of the context of the research site.

The teachers knew that I was there to conduct research because the principal introduced me as a researcher on the first day at the morning staff meeting. However, the students did not know exactly who I was. It seemed that they assumed I was either an assistant-teacher or a student teacher who aspired to be a JSS teacher in the future. When asked by the students who I am, I answered that I was there to learn how to teach, just as

their JSS teachers had explained to them. It seemed that the students were satisfied with this answer and did not press the issue as to why I was there further.

At the beginning of field entry, the principal assigned me three teachers as participants in the research. Since the principal claimed to choose the participants solely by himself, I requested that he find participants who (a) teach the new *kanji* subject and (b) are willing to participate in the research. The principal told me that he chose the three participants because they are “good” teachers, and seemed to be able to afford time for interviews. I approached the participants and asked them to sign the consent form I had created (see Appendix D). I started collecting data in October 2006. The details of the data collection procedure are described later in this chapter. The data collection period ended in March 2007, when the 2006-2007 school year finished.

3.3. Research Site

The research site is a JSS located in the U.S. The city where the JSS is located is multicultural/multiethnic and has many Japanese immigrants. It is also a famous international city where there are many Japanese tourists. This JSS was established in the mid-1970s and belongs to the second category of JSS, which were established in response to the increase in the number of Japanese children living abroad, according to the classification of Douglas et al. (2003). In 1979, a teacher was dispatched from Japan to this school and was assigned as the school’s vice principal for the first time. Currently, the principal is the only teacher dispatched from Japan; all the other teachers are locally

hired native speakers of Japanese. There are about 30 teachers and 400 students ranging from kindergarteners to ninth-graders. According to the school newsletter, the number of students who plan to return to Japan has decreased, and more than 60% of the students have no clear plan to go back to Japan.

The JSS offers classes on Saturdays and teaches *kokugo* and mathematics to all grades except kindergarten, and social science to students fifth grade and above. The JSS acknowledges the students' diversified needs as well as the decrease in students' *kokugo* proficiency. Therefore, it introduced a new curriculum in 2005 designed to overcome those issues. What should be noted about this new curriculum is that it places an emphasis on *kanji* instruction. There are two significant changes from the old curriculum. The first change is the introduction of a new subject designed to develop students' *kanji* ability. This subject is taught during one class hour per week and is offered to students from first through sixth grades. Students from seventh through ninth grade are taught this subject during two class hours per week.

The second change is the implementation of promotion examinations, which assess students' *kanji* proficiency. The examination is administered five times each year. Students have to score more than 80% on at least one of the exams in order to advance to the next grade. Students at first and second grades are expected to demonstrate *kanji* proficiency at a first grade level, third and fourth grade students are expected to be at a second grade level, fifth and sixth graders are expected to be at a third grade level, and students at the seventh through ninth grades are expected to demonstrate *kanji*

proficiency at the fourth grade level. Expected grade level proficiency is determined by the proficiency expected at the corresponding grade level at schools in Japan.

3.4. Participants

Three teachers, upon assignment by the school's principal, participated in this study. Therefore, the participants were selected by a convenience sampling, in which researchers "settle for what is convenient because of advantages it offers or difficulty of using other samples" (Richards, 2003, p. 250). Each participant was asked to sign the consent form before the observations and interviews began. The consent form included detailed explanations about the purpose and procedures of the study, practices for protecting confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study. The participants not only read the consent form but were also given explanations about the content of it in Japanese. Below is a description of each of the three teachers.

Kayo teaches mathematics, *kokugo*, and the new *kanji* subject to third graders. Her class consists of 18 students. Since separate tracks for students returning and not returning to Japan are not offered for students up to third grade, she has heterogeneous students in her class: both students who plan to return to Japan in the near future and those who do not. She has been teaching at this JSS since 1993. When she was in Japan, she taught at preschools. During her first several years at this JSS, she was in charge of kindergarten students. Upon the principal's request, she began teaching at the elementary school level. She has taught first, second, and third graders for three to four years each

respectively. Although she enjoys teaching elementary school students, she would like to return to teaching kindergarteners in the future and make use of her experiences as a kindergarten teacher again.

Miki is a sixth grade teacher. She also teaches mathematics, *kokugo*, and the new *kanji* subject. Since separate tracks are offered for students fourth grade and above, she teaches an advanced level of *kokugo* to students, many of whom have clear plan to return to Japan. On the other hand, she also teaches mathematics and the new *kanji* subject to her homeroom class, which consists of 12 students with heterogeneous backgrounds. When she was in Japan, she taught English at a junior high school for about three years after graduating from a Japanese university. She then moved to New Jersey to teach Japanese as a foreign language to elementary school children for two years. Currently, she has a full-time job at a travel industrial company in addition to teaching at the JSS on Saturdays. She has been teaching at this JSS for three years. She taught fourth grade in her first year, and then began teaching sixth grade in her second year. At the time of the research, it was her second year teaching sixth graders.

Fuyuko, who teaches seventh to ninth graders, teaches only the *kanji* new subject. She has been teaching at this JSS since 1999. Before she moved here, she lived in New Jersey and taught at a JSS there. She feels that teaching in New Jersey was easier than here because most students stayed in the U.S. only temporarily and planned to return to Japan soon. She applied for the teaching job at this JSS right after she moved to this city. However, there was no position available at that time, so she had to wait for two years for

a vacancy. During her first few years at the school, she taught composition and *kanji* to students from fifth to ninth grade. After that, she moved to teaching third grade upon the request of a new principal. She started teaching *kanji* to students from seventh to ninth grade this year because the principal asked her to do so. She assumes the main reason that the principal wanted her to specialize in teaching the *kanji* subject was because she runs a calligraphy school outside of the JSS and is regarded as an expert of *kanji*. She started learning calligraphy when she was in elementary school. After graduating from a Japanese junior college, she started working for a calligraphy association as an examination referee. In between judging and correcting the work of 800,000 students, she also trained calligraphy teachers that belonged to this association. After moving to the U.S., she has been running a calligraphy school during weekdays.

3.5. Instruments and Procedures

The present study incorporates the qualitative tradition of grounded theory developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This approach allows “the generation of theory through the inductive examination of information” (Rennie and Phillips, 1988, p.141). That is, theories emerge through research processes rather than the research being used to validate or dispute preexisting theories. Hence, data are gathered systematically from natural settings using different methods, such as observations and interviews (Priest, Roberts, and Woods, 2002). In the present study, the data was collected through class observations and interviews with the

JSS teachers. In addition, documents and materials obtained during observation and staff meetings were also used as data for analysis.

Observation

I observed the classes of each teacher for three days, which resulted in about 12 school hours. I assisted the teacher if requested, and thus, I was a participant-observer in those cases. For example, I answered students' questions individually, distributed handouts, and supervised the students when teachers had to leave the classroom for a short period of time. I took field notes about what was happening in the classes during the observation. I recorded participants, events, acts, and gestures in the classroom, observing as much of the classroom dynamics as I could (Glesne, 2006). When I could not take notes in class because of some restrictions, such as when the need to help the teachers or students' made note-taking impossible, I tried to remember what I saw as much as possible and wrote my observations down in my field notebook immediately following the class.

Interview

In between the observations, informal interviews were conducted during which I asked what the participants thought about the class they had just taught. I also asked more general questions about teaching *kanji* at this school. The teachers' answers were recorded in the field notebook. In addition, I conducted semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews with each teacher to ask about their thoughts more in-depth. The interview questions were developed based on the literature review, class observations, and the

previous interviews. The interviews were carried out in Japanese, which is the native language of all three teachers, as well as myself. The length of the interviews with each participant varied from two to four hours. All semi-structured interviews were transcribed for analysis.

Other resources

Documents and teaching materials that were obtained during class observations and other teaching related situations—such as staff meetings and conversations with the principal—were also used to more fully capture the context and to provide data for analysis. The documents and teaching materials included: weekly newsletters for parents, weekly notes from the principal to the teachers, teachers' handbooks, a report about the implementation of the new curriculum, a summary of a questionnaire distributed to parents, a sample promotion *kanji* examination administered to seventh graders, and a few sample handouts for the new *kanji* subject.

3.6. Researcher's Experience

Since the researcher's experiences and perspectives influence the overall research procedures, analysis, and consequently the results of any research project (Foltz and Griffin, 1996), it is important for researchers to reflect on themselves critically (Lincoln and Guba, 2003). Hence, I would like to briefly discuss my background and how I tried to minimize its effect on the present study.

Currently, and also during the data collection period, I have been a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i. I have been interested in the issues at Japanese supplementary schools during most of my academic career, and wrote a graduation thesis about people who attended JSS as an undergraduate student. My concern with JSS derives from my personal experience as a child. I lived in Germany as a child and attended a local German school. Since it was clear that our family would return to Japan in a few years, my parents sent me to a JSS to have me study Japanese. Therefore, I attended a JSS for about four years until I went back to Japan prior to the sixth grade. These experiences as an undergraduate student and a JSS student enabled me to become familiar with the contexts of JSS. On the other hand, however, it is also true that these experiences made me biased when I planned, conducted, and wrote the present study.

To reduce the influence of my experiences and perspectives on the present study, I used several strategies to compensate for my underlying prejudices. First, I triangulated the data collection procedures. The data were obtained through observation, informal and semi-structured interviews, and analysis of various documents. Second, I tried to collect rich data. For example, I tape-recorded and transcribed all interviews. In this way, I could revisit the full text of the conversations, which I would not have been able to do if the interviews were recorded only in notes. Third, I kept an audit trail; i.e. I kept all documents I submitted to the principal and took notes about meetings and on-going research so that I could trace my thinking and the evolution of this study. Fourth, I tried to bracket my personal experiences and suspend judgments. Although it is impossible to completely suspend judgment as a human subject, I put significant effort into separating

my previous experiences as a JSS student and the present study. Then, I focused on making interpretations based only on the data obtained. The trustworthiness of the present study will be further discussed in the final section of this chapter.

3.7. Analysis

In grounded theory, themes should be identified from data to grasp the meaning of the experiences of participants (Bowen, 2006). Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced the constant comparative method as an analysis process in the grounded theory approach.

The constant comparative method involves three coding stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It is absolutely acceptable to move back and forth from one coding form to another. Open coding is a process of identifying concepts, which will be the basis for subsequent analyses. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe the procedure of open coding as:

During open coding the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data. (p. 62)

Concepts that are similar or related to each other are grouped together and become a category. Once categories are generated, researchers try to connect categories and sub-categories in the axial coding stage. As the analysis proceeds, it becomes clear in which contexts certain phenomena occur. Furthermore, it is also crucial to search for variations

and contradictions at this stage (Priest et al., 2002). Another coding form is selective coding. At this stage, researchers integrate all sub-categories into one or two core categories and establish conceptual frameworks. Strauss and Corbin (1990) explain that the integrations at the selective coding stage “is not much different than axial coding. It is just done at a higher more abstract level of analysis” (p. 117).

As its name suggests, the essential feature of the constant comparative method is that researchers continuously engage in analyzing while they are gathering data. They determine what kind of data they gather next based on the ongoing analysis. Thus, data collection and analysis have significant and constant interaction (Boeije, 2002). In the present study, I went through the following process to compare data.

1. Comparison among the interviews of one participant
2. Comparison between interviews of the three participants
3. Comparison between the observations of one participant
4. Comparison between the observations of three participants
5. Comparison between interviews and observations of one participant

Data collected from the interviews and observations were compared and analyzed to develop patterns, themes, and sub-themes.

3.8. Trustworthiness

Claiming that terms such as validity, objectivity, and reliability are inappropriate to apply to qualitative studies, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the concepts *dependability*, *credibility*, *confirmability*, and *transferability* as criteria for qualitative

data. By emphasizing these four factors, it is possible to maintain the trustworthiness of qualitative studies.

The idea of *dependability* requires the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing conditions at the research site. In qualitative research, it is assumed that the reality is context dependent because it is constructed by people and is multiple whereas there is only one absolute reality in quantitative research. Therefore, it is important to describe the changes and their possible influences on the results. In the present study, I enhanced the dependability through a methodological triangulation. As described previously, the data were gathered through multiple procedures: informal and formal interviews, observations, and document analysis. This overlapping method enabled the present study to acquire a more exact understanding about the context from different perspectives.

Credibility involves describing the results as believable as possible from the participants' view. Its analogy in quantitative research is internal validity. To enhance the credibility, I put *prolonged engagement* and *persistent observation*, and triangulation into practice. Namely, I spent adequate time at the research site and tried to focus on the aspects that are most relevant to my research. In addition to observing the classes, I attended all morning staff meetings as well as the staff meetings at the end of the day. I also participated in some events which the JSS hosts to provide support, such as a sport festival and Japanese Kanji Aptitude Test (*Nihon Kanji Nōryoku Kentei Shiken*). I took field notes not only during the class observations but also during staff meetings and other

occasions so I could identify any characteristics relevant to the present study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim “if prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth” (p. 304). I used the technique of triangulation as well to obtain enough data to look at the phenomena from various perspectives.

Confirmability refers to the possibility for other researchers to confirm the interpretation or results of the study. It is “to be assessed in terms of the documentation of research design, data, analysis, reflection, and so on, so that the researcher’s decisions are open to others.” (Richards, 2003, p.286). I have kept records during the data collection in the form of memos, field notes, and various documents for further inspection. In addition, I described the research procedures in detail in the above sections to make them clear to the readers.

Transferability is parallel to external validity in quantitative research. It is the degree of generalizability of the study. A qualitative study has to demonstrate how applicable its findings are to other contexts or settings. To enhance the transferability, thick description that “involves an epic perspective, which demands description that includes the actors’ interpretations and other social and/or cultural information” is most effective (Davis, 1995, p. 434). In the present study, thick description is realized by describing the research processes, institution, and the participants in detail.

Chapter 4

Teachers' Beliefs about *Kanji* Instruction

Beliefs of the JSS teachers were classified into two major themes: (a) beliefs about *kanji* instruction in general and (b) beliefs about *kanji* instruction at the JSS. Each major theme included several sub-themes. In this chapter, I will describe the teacher's beliefs that emerged from the data by alternating analysis with excerpts from the data (transcripts, observations, and interviews) that support this analysis.

4.1. Beliefs about *Kanji* Instruction in General

The first theme examined is the beliefs about *kanji* instruction in general. Certain beliefs of the teachers were not specific to *kanji* instruction at JSS, but common to *kanji* instruction in general regardless of context.

4.1.1. *Kanji* is the Essential Skill for Reading Japanese Texts

All three teachers I interviewed concluded that they should teach *kanji* to their students because it is the basic skill necessary for reading Japanese.

I think *kanji* is important because all books and sentences written in Japanese have *kanji* in them. If you cannot read *kanji*, you cannot understand what they say at all. (Interview with Kayo)

I noticed that the *kanji* proficiency of students in my class [= seventh grade] is only that of second or third graders. Those students can't understand the class because they can't even read the textbook. For them, the classes might as well be in Greek. We must somehow improve this situation. (Interview with Fuyuko)

These interviews made it apparent that these teachers feel that without enough *kanji* knowledge students cannot understand Japanese texts. In addition, students have to be able to read *kanji* so that they can read textbooks and follow the lessons. Fuyuko also pointed out that knowing *kanji* helps students infer meanings of sentences because of its ideographic nature.

Every *kanji* has meaning, right? So, knowing the *kanji* help you to guess what the texts talk about. Even if you don't know how a *kanji* is pronounced, you can still imagine what it means. (Interview with Fuyuko)

In sum, the teachers recognized *kanji* as a crucial skill in reading Japanese. Therefore, they expect their students to learn *kanji* in order to understand Japanese texts.

4.1.2. Stroke Orders are Important

All of the three teachers agreed that students should learn correct stroke order.

I think the stroke orders are very important. If you write *kanji* in the wrong order, the *kanji* would be out of shape. Also, correct stroke order help you write appropriate stroke endings automatically. (Interview with Miki)

Students need to learn correct stroke order. Otherwise, the *kanji* loses its shape and it sometimes looks even like a different character. (Interview with Kayo)

If you don't learn correct stroke order, it is very difficult to learn *kanji* because you have to remember them as random graphics or symbols. Stroke order is something that people refined over thousands of years to make writing *kanji* easy and neat. You need to write a letter that is legible. In order to write a legible letter, you have to learn stroke order accurately. (Interview with Fuyuko)

These teachers believe learning stroke order is important because it helps students write *kanji* neatly with appropriate stroke endings, which results in a correct character. If students write *kanji* in random stroke order, they cannot write properly and risk compromising comprehension at the reading stage.

4.1.3. Mastering Fundamental Skills is Important in Learning *Kanji*

JSS teachers seemed to believe that students cannot learn *kanji* effectively without acquiring the basic writing— *hiragana*, *katakana*, and basic *kanji* . They noted that it was difficult to learn new *kanji* for students who failed acquiring *hiragana*, *katakana*, and basic *kanji* in earlier grades.

Some parts of *kanji* are made from *katakana* and *hiragana*. For example, “*ka* [科]” of “*kagaku* [science]” includes *katakana* in its radical, *tomasu* [斗], right? Kids who cannot write *shi* [シ] and *tsu* [ツ] in *katakana* end up writing *tomasu* like a *tsu* [ツ]. In other words, they write the first stroke of *tomasu* from up to down, not from left to right. Also, another radical, *sanzui*, also requires the ability to write a *shi* in *katakana*. There are many students who have to review *katakana* before they learn new *kanji*. Kindergarteners should also practice drawing lines: Short lines, long lines, and curved lines. Then, they should learn *katakana* because it's easier than *hiragana*. *Katakana* has only straight lines. Doing so allows students to move more easily from the basics to the advanced, I think. (Interview with Fuyuko)

Some of the students in my class [= third grade] have been reviewing the *kanji* they learned from the second grade. You can't learn the third grade level *kanji* without mastering the second grade ones. [...] I think everything starts with the ability of drawing a straight line. We need to train students from the first grade or even from kindergarten to draw various kinds of lines so that they can prepare for learning *kanji* later. (Interview with Kayo)

These teachers agreed that students should master the foundations for writing in the early grades which allows them to learn new *kanji* in a step by step fashion rather than trying to memorize each *kanji* without a reference.

4.1.4. Repetition is Important for *Kanji* Learning

The JSS teachers agreed that students have to be exposed to *kanji* repeatedly.

Students need to practice *kanji* over and over, especially the kids here in the U.S. They are surrounded only by English alphabet, right? There is too much English around them. (Interview with Kayo)

Writing *kanji* many times means that you get many chances to recall it. You need repetition. The more you are exposed to *kanji*, the better you can learn them, definitely. Four times is better than three times, three times is better than two. (Interview with Miki)

Many ideas were implemented in the three JSS teachers' classes so the students had to read and write *kanji* repeatedly. For example, Miki stated that she decided to give tests twice for the same *kanji*:

You definitely forget *kanji* if you have only one test. So, I will give two tests to my students next year. You learn new *kanji* in class, and then you

practice them as homework and take a writing test in the following week. In the third week, you take another test on same *kanji* with a focus on reading. As a result, you have to study the same *kanji* over three weeks. (Interview with Miki)

In fact, Miki had implemented this system in her class by the time of the second interview and reported a positive result from giving two tests.

It seems that students remember *kanji* a bit better now. Yes, it's working well. (Interview with Miki)

Kayo, who teaches third graders, also developed a strategy for students writing *kanji* more frequently. Kayo designed classroom materials so students could practice writing *kanji* repeatedly by filling out forms.

You kind of create your own *kanji* book with this material. There aren't enough squares in your notebooks, right? However, you can write more *kanji* using this material. You write the readings, radicals, and phrases in the blanks. In addition, you practice writing in the empty squares as homework. Also, you take a test in the following week. That means, you write *kanji* during class, at home as homework, and as a preparation for the test. You can write *kanji* over and over using this, so you should be able to memorize them well after filling out all the blanks in this form. (Interview with Kayo)

Fuyuko, who specializes in teaching the new *kanji* subject, often tells her students explicitly that they must write *kanji* many times to learn *kanji* effectively.

Takuya is staring at his worksheet for a long time. Fuyuko finds it and says, "Takuya, you can't memorize *kanji* by just looking at them. Move your hand and write them plenty of times." Takuya answers, "I'm tired. I don't want to." Fuyuko continued, "Otherwise, you can never learn *kanji*. You have to actually write them. I can write *kanji* because I wrote them

thousands of times when I was in school. Everyone in Japan also learns *kanji* in that way.” (Observation of Fuyuko’s *kanji* class. Eighth grade)

The observations and interviews above indicate that the three teachers contrive to put their beliefs into practice by making their students write/read *kanji* repeatedly.

4.1.5. Rich Vocabulary Helps Students Learn *Kanji*

The three teachers believe that students can learn *kanji* easier if they have a wide Japanese vocabulary because this allows students to remember *kanji* in connection with the meanings of words.

Japanese vocabulary definitely has a relationship with *kanji* learning. If you know the word *shokuyoku* [食欲, appetite] and see the *kanji* for this word, you would think “Oh, it’s written as a desire [欲] for eating [食].” However, if you didn’t know the word and think “Huh? *Shokuyoku*?,” the *kanji* would be more difficult because you have to start with learning the word before learning its *kanji*. That’s a lot of work. (Interview with Miki)

Fuyuko is sitting in front of Chiaki’s desk and corrects the sheet Chiaki did. Fuyuko says, “Do you understand *mikaku* [味覚, gustatory sense]? *Mi* [味] means taste. It’s easier if you memorize *kanji* with the meaning of the word.” (Observation of Fuyuko’s *kanji* class)

According to the excerpts above, the teachers assume that students learn *kanji* better when they can relate the *kanji* to the meaning of words. Therefore, the students need to have a rich Japanese vocabulary. Indeed, students have greater success guessing correct *kanji* when they know the meanings of the word the *kanji* represents.

Students are taking a test. A student, Sachi, raises her hand. Miki goes to her. Sachi asks, “What’s *mokkan* [木管, woodwind]?” Miki answers, “*Mokkan* is an instrument made of woods.” Hearing this answer, Sachi writes the kanji for tree [木]. Miki says, “Yes, yes! *Mokkan* is an instrument made of woods and *kinkan* [金管, brass] is an instrument made of metal.” (Observation of Miki’s *kanji* subject class, sixth grade)

Kayo walks around the classroom while students are taking a *kanji* test. When she walked by a student, the student asked her, “What does *shoobu* [勝負, game] mean?” Kayo says, “It means to win or to lose.” Then, the student says smiling, “Ah!” and writes the answer. (Observation of Kayo’s *kanji* class, third grade)

It appears that students can recall *kanji* better when they succeed in connecting the *kanji* with the meanings of the words the *kanji* represents.

4.2. Beliefs about *Kanji* Instruction at the JSS

Another theme that emerged from the data was the beliefs about *kanji* instruction specific to the context of the JSS. In other words, the teachers held some beliefs that are embedded in the JSS context.

4.2.1. Lack of Japanese Use in Daily Lives is a Great Disadvantage for *Kanji* Learning

All three teachers believe that their students were significantly disadvantaged in *kanji* learning because they are mostly surrounded by English in their lives. Since the JSS students attend local American schools during weekdays, English is dominant in their

environment. Kayo, Miki, and Fuyuko discussed three major difficulties in JSS students' *kanji* learning caused by their lack of exposure to Japanese.

The first difficulty was the students' poor Japanese vocabulary. Although the teachers believed that the knowledge of Japanese words is crucial for *kanji* learning, as mentioned above, many students do not know enough Japanese vocabulary. The three teachers reported that in particular students do not know the words specific to Japanese culture.

Our students are living in the U.S., so there are many things that they haven't even seen or heard before. For example, my students didn't know *natsu-mikan* [夏ミカン, Chinese citron]. It's no wonder because this fruit is not common here. (Interview with Miki)

The teachers also reported that even if the students knew English words, they did not know how to say them in Japanese.

A question in the test we had in April asked something about guinea pigs. What was surprising was that my students didn't know the word *morumotto* [guinea pig]. They only knew the English word, guinea pig. One of the students also didn't know what *chui* [attention/warning] meant. For those students, I have to explain every single detail. (Interview with Kayo)

There are many words in the textbook that my students don't know. Of course, kids in Japan don't know some words as well, but there are many more words unfamiliar to our students here. When we were reading the textbook, a student asked me, "What is *kaniku* [果肉, pulp/flesh]? Is it an abbreviation of *kanikuriimu-korokke* [croquette stuffed with crab-crème]?" A person who grew up in Japan would never come up with *kanikuriimu-korokke* when he reads *kaniku*, will he? It was so surprising. (Interview with Miki)

Limitation in the Japanese word knowledge of JSS students' was actually observed during classes. Most questions asked by the students to the teachers were related to the meanings of Japanese words.

Makoto is working on the *kanji* writing worksheet. Fuyuko asks whether there are words he doesn't understand. Makoto answers, "Yes, there are a lot. *Sekitori* [関取, sumo wrestler], *teiden* [停電, blackout], and *seisho* [清書, make a fair copy]." Then, Fuyuko began to teach what each word meant. (Observation of Fuyuko's *kanji* class, ninth grade)

Students are working on tests. Sachi raises her hand and asks Miki, "What kind of vehicle is a *kamotsusha* [貨物車, truck]?" ... After a while, she asks again, "What's *eiyou* [栄養, nutrition]?" ... Another student, Kenta, comes to Miki's desk and asks, "What does *shushi* [種子, seed] mean?" (Observation of the promotion exam in Miki's class, sixth grade)

Due to their limited Japanese vocabulary knowledge, some students have problems using *kanji* appropriately. In Japanese, there are many words that are pronounced the same or similar but have different meanings. Not knowing all the possible meanings can result in writing the *kanji* for one word when the intended meaning is different. In short, they tend to write *kanji* incorrectly because they do not connect the written character with the right word.

Students who don't know the word often write *kanji* which is pronounced the same. They don't think about the meanings of the word or *kanji*. For example, a student made a mistake like this the other day. The word in the question asked how to write *iin* [医院, clinic]. Then, the student wrote the *kanji* for members [員、in] instead of buildings [院、in]. You would never make this kind of mistake if you knew what the word means, would you? (Interview with Fuyuko)

Another problem resulting from a limited Japanese vocabulary is that the students can not understand the words in the materials.

[Talking about the worksheet that Fuyuko is using in her class.] Today, a student was working on a sentence like this: *Koogeehin no tenkeetekina tsukurikata o shison ni tsutaeru* [Passing down to descendants how to typically do handiwork. 工芸品の典型的な作り方を子孫に伝える]. However, the student didn't know *koogeehin* [工芸品, handiwork], *tenkeeteki* [典型的, typical], and *shison* [子孫, descendant]. What can he do without knowing so many words? (Interview with Fuyuko)

Students often memorize *kanji* without understanding the word it represents. It's less effective. However, I know that it is a lot of work for the JSS students to check the meaning of all *kanji* and words they learn because they are busy with their assignments for the American schools. Moreover, they are living in the U.S., so they have extremely little contact with Japanese. (Interview with Miki)

It seems that the JSS students' lack of Japanese vocabulary proficiency leads to several difficulties in their *kanji* learning.

Another difficulty caused by insufficient contact with the Japanese language is students have little chance to use *kanji* repeatedly in their daily lives. As mentioned above, teachers believe that repetition is essential for *kanji* learning. However, residing in the U.S., students do not have many opportunities to read or write *kanji* in their lives, which prevents them from practicing *kanji* through actual use.

They have great disadvantage [in learning *kanji*] compared to the students in Japan. The opportunities to use *kanji* are very limited. They come to the JSS only once a week while they go to American schools five days a week. The students here do not have enough opportunities to use *kanji* over and over in their lives. (Interview with Miki)

While students in Japan are exposed to *kanji* in their daily lives and thus are unconsciously practicing it constantly, it is extremely difficult for JSS students to do the same in their English dominant environment.

The third difficulty is the students' relative lack of motivation toward learning *kanji*. Students do not necessarily have to know *kanji* because they go to local American schools—learning *kanji* is neither perceived as essential nor privileged in their wider community. As many students at this JSS do not have a specific plan to return to Japan in the near future, the importance of acquiring this skill is somewhat diminished..

It depends on students' motivation how well they can learn *kanji*. Their motivation is related to how much Japanese they need in their lives. Moreover, students who aren't going back to Japan don't need Japanese in their future. In such a case, you don't see the reason to study Japanese hard. Talking with grandparents and writing letters in Japanese—they think that's enough for them. (Interview with Kayo)

Miki lamented that students who do not attend school because they want to and are not motivated to learn Japanese can't learn effectively even if they attended the JSS.

Students who are not good at *kanji* are those who don't want to come to our school. They don't want to study Japanese and don't want to come to the JSS. The only reason why they come here is because their mothers make them. It is a waste of time and money for those students to attend the JSS. (Interview with Miki)

Kayo claimed that the motivation is a crucial factor to learning *kanji* successfully.

The kids are smart and have enough ability to learn *kanji*, so we should make them feel they want to learn more. Once they wish to learn, they can

really do a great job. So we as teachers should try to awaken their curiosity.
(Interview with Kayo)

Kayo is very invested in addressing this apparent apathy toward learning *kanji*, and suggests developing teaching materials that encourage students to be motivated to learn *kanji*. To this end, she had been looking for chances to share ideas with other JSS teachers. However, there are not as many opportunities to exchange ideas with other teachers as she wishes.

I want to develop more teaching materials. If I could do that, the students would enjoy the class more and become more interested in *kanji*. Otherwise, the classes remain boring. [...] I like Fuyuko's classes, so I want to learn from her more. *Rizumu ondoku* [rhythm reading] is originally her idea. I'm using it because she used it in her class when I observed, and I really liked the idea. It would be wonderful if I had chances to observe her classes. Even among the teachers of the third grade, we seldom observe each others' classes because we have to teach our own class while other teachers are teaching their classes. We sometimes exchange our ideas, but everyone is busy, so we don't have enough time to develop teaching materials together. (Interview with Kayo)

Another teacher, Miki, tried to elicit students' curiosity as well.

I sometimes talk about the origin of *kanji* to my students. For example, why this radical is used and those kinds of stories. This is the most interesting part of *kanji*, isn't it? I explain those things to my students. Then my students think "Oh, I see!" and become more interested. (Interview with Miki)

However, Miki was not confident enough of her knowledge about *kanji*. She said that she needed to study more so that she could amuse her students with more interesting stories.

I don't have so much knowledge, though. I know only basic things such as *tehen* [primitive for hand] derives from the letter for hand. I can only teach easy things. [...] I have to increase my knowledge and become a "*kanji* doctor." To do so, I have to search on the Internet and read books and

dictionaries. I have to study by myself to develop my knowledge. (Interview with Miki)

When asked whether she has opportunities to gain knowledge of *kanji* or *kokugo* at the JSS, she answered “As far as I study by myself, I do.” Kayo and Miki’s answers indicate that there is little support from the school for individual teachers’ professional development.

4.2.2. Negative Influence of English should be Removed

Fuyuko and Kayo reported that there were negative influences of having learned English first on JSS students’ *kanji* writing. Fuyuko pointed out students who learned the English alphabet before Japanese suffer from the differences in stroke order between English and Japanese. In English, most characters are written from vertical strokes. On the other hand, most Japanese characters begin with horizontal strokes.

Kids in the U.S. usually attend preschool from two years old or so. Then, they learn the English alphabet there and acquire English stroke order. It makes it difficult for students to write Japanese characters later because most English alphabet letters begin from vertical lines while Japanese characters mostly begin with horizontal lines. For example, capital “B” “D,” and “E” begin with the vertical strokes, right? So, the students acquire the habit of writing characters beginning with a vertical line. Even if they understand the difference conceptually, it takes time to translate that to practice. (Interview with Fuyuko)

Another influence on writing was the differences between the importance of stroke endings in English letters and Japanese characters. According to Kayo, students at the JSS tend not to pay enough attention to the details of stroke endings.

Students [who are strong in English] do not have enough writing pressure. They write softly because English letters are written very smoothly, aren't they? You don't care how the strokes end when you write English letters. Therefore, students here write *kanji* too smoothly without paying much attention to the details. (Interview with Kayo)

Consequently, students end up writing *kanji* sloppily without learning accurate stroke endings.

Acknowledging the negative influences of English on students' *kanji* learning, Fuyuko and Kayo are trying to counter of them. Fuyuko indicated that she had been trying to change students' English writing habits by carefully paying attention to their way of writing. Kayo has been making her students use dark pencils so they see their stroke endings clearly.

In spite of the teachers' efforts, they reported that many teachers at the JSS are unaware of the English influences on students. When Fuyuko determined that students are affected by their writing of English alphabet letters a few years ago, she discussed this matter with her colleagues. However, new teachers who joined the JSS recently have not been familiarized with this issue.

Teachers who have been working here for a long time know about the English influences on students' Japanese writing. I think those teachers are teaching *kanji* with this issue in mind. However, there are now many teachers who don't know the differences between writing English letters and Japanese characters. They are probably wondering why their students always begin by writing a vertical line. (Interview with Fuyuko)

In fact, Miki, a relatively new teacher among the three participants, did not mention the English influence during the interviews or observations at all. It seems that only the "old-timers" at this JSS believe that they have to address the negative influences of English on students' Japanese because only those teachers are conscious of this matter.

4.2.3. Parents should Support their Children to Learn *Kanji* at Home

All teachers believed that parental assistance outside of school for JSS students was important because class time is limited to one hour. The JSS only offers classes on Saturdays, so teachers do not have enough time to spend on teaching *kanji*.

I hardly have time to cover new *kanji* during class. I only teach stroke order. Basically, students have to learn *kanji* by themselves at home. (Interview with Miki)

We have to cover 7 *kanji* in 45 minutes. Later, it will be 10 *kanji* per class hour, so we will have only four minutes or so for each *kanji*. Besides radicals, stroke order, and readings, I have to teach the meanings of *kanji* and idioms. I don't have enough time to do more in-depth lessons. [...] We don't have time to work on the workbook at school, so I ask my students to do it at home. Their mothers sometimes need to teach stroke order and things like that by looking into the workbook. (Interview with Kayo)

Given the time restrictions at the JSS, the teachers note the need of home study. They believe that students' effective learning is dependent on support from their mothers and fathers. However, the teachers do not feel that the most parents are providing enough help at home.

I want the parents to cooperate more and to know more how their children are doing. I want them to study with the kids. If you want your children to learn Japanese, you shouldn't rely only on teachers. You have to get involved. Otherwise, it doesn't work because our school is only once a week. (Interview with Fuyuko)

I feel that parents can help their kids more. We cannot teach everything at school due to the time limitations, so students must study at home. Especially, you have to practice *kanji* repeatedly at home. However, I feel that some parents are not supporting their children enough. Students who are not supported fully cannot perform well at school. In my opinion, parental assistance is indispensable, especially at this kind of school. The students are learning an additional language, right? They study something extra, so the parents must support them. (Interview with Kayo)

The teachers gave two possible reasons for insufficient involvement of parents. The first reason is that the parents are too busy to take care of their children.

Telling your kid to study Japanese is not enough. You have to be with your kid and study together. Many parents do not have enough time to do that, though. (Interview with Miki)

Another reason suggested by the teachers was that the parents do not fully recognize how important their support is. The students need assistance even as they become older.

The mothers do help their children and study together when they are young. However, when the students get in the fourth grade or so, the mothers think somehow that the students do not need help any more. They think, “You can study by yourself now,” but it’s not true. Actually, students need more help as they get older because the content becomes more and more difficult. However, many parents have the wrong idea; they assume their children no longer need any support. (Interview with Fuyuko)

The teachers state that just sending the students to the JSS is not sufficient. Since home study is essential, parents have to support their children and help them in order for them to learn Japanese, including *kanji*, successfully.

4.3. Summary and Discussion

This section first briefly reviews the JSS teachers’ beliefs about teaching *kanji* and then revisits the difficulties and problems of *kanji* instruction at the JSS as noted by the teachers.

As a result of constant comparative method analysis, JSS teachers’ beliefs about *kanji* instruction were grouped into two major themes: (a) beliefs about *kanji* instruction in general and (b) beliefs about *kanji* instruction at JSS.

Beliefs about kanji instruction in general

The participants had some beliefs about *kanji* instruction that are not necessarily specific to the JSS context. These beliefs included: *Kanji* is an essential skill for reading Japanese texts, stroke order is important, mastering the basic skills of writing hiragana,

katakana, and simple kanji is important, repetition is important, and a rich vocabulary helps students learn *kanji*.

The teachers at the JSS found *kanji* important because it is the basic skill in reading Japanese. They expected their students to learn *kanji* in order to understand Japanese texts. In order to learn *kanji* effectively, the teachers attached importance to correct stroke order. They pointed out that accurate stroke order helps students write *kanji* correctly with proper stroke endings and neatness. This belief of the JSS teachers is consistent with Aoki (2000), who discusses that correct stroke order develops the ability to recognize the shape of *kanji*.

The three JSS teachers also believed that students cannot learn *kanji* without solid acquisition of basic skills. Since the parts of *kanji* consist of *hiragana*, *katakana*, and some basic *kanji*, students have to master these before moving on to advanced *kanji*. In addition, the teachers suggested that the skill of drawing simple lines was significant for *kanji* learning. Students can acquire *kanji* by learning the basic writing skills step by step as they progress through the lower grades.

It is also believed by the teachers that students should practice *kanji* repeatedly. The teachers note that the more students write and read *kanji*, the better they can acquire them. Based on this belief, the three teachers incorporated many activities into their lessons that encourage their students to practice the same *kanji* over and over. In other words, they adopt rote-learning strategies in their teaching practices. This practice is consistent with Shimizu & Green's (2002) study, which discovered that rote-learning

strategy is the most popular strategy among Japanese language educators in the U.S. Furthermore, Shimizu and Green's assumption, that teachers use rote-learning strategy because they rely on their own *kanji* learning experience, was supported by Fuyuko's statement;" You have to actually write them. I can write *kanji* because I wrote them thousands of times when I was in school." Although the effectiveness of rote-learning strategy on long-term memory is debated in the scholarship (Wang, Thomas, & Ouelette, 1992; Gruneberg, 1998; Miyazawa, 2000), the JSS teachers positively value this approach.

Another belief shared among the JSS teachers is the strong relationship between Japanese vocabulary and *kanji* learning. They think that students should attain a wide Japanese vocabulary because they can learn *kanji* better than if they have the knowledge of many words. My observations indicate that it was actually easier for the students to recall *kanji* when they knew the words the *kanji* represents. Just as Kobayashi (2000) and Tanaka (2000) argue the connection between *kanji* and vocabulary, the JSS teachers likewise expect their students to gain rich Japanese vocabulary in order to more effectively learn *kanji*.

Beliefs about kanji instruction at JSS

The participants also had beliefs that are strongly and specifically related to the JSS context. Those beliefs included: lack of Japanese use in daily lives presents a great disadvantage for *kanji* learning, the negative influences of English on Japanese writing

should be removed, and parents should support their children at home in the learning of *kanji*.

As discussed earlier, JSS teachers found knowledge of Japanese words important to learn *kanji*. Yet, the JSS students' Japanese vocabulary seems is generally more limited than the teachers expected. Teachers suggested that this could be due to students' limited exposure to Japanese language and culture in their daily lives. The JSS students sometimes do not know certain things and concepts that are specific to Japanese culture. They also often do not know how to say something in Japanese even if they know the English equivalent words. Considering that Nagaoka (1998) identified the same problem in her study on four JSS students in the U.S, it can be assumed that negative effects resulting from insufficient knowledge about Japanese culture and vocabulary is a common issue at JSS around the world. The present study found that the JSS students actually confront several problems due to their poor Japanese vocabulary. For example, if they do not understand the words used in the materials, they end up writing inappropriate homophones—it seemed difficult for the students to write the correct *kanji* for unfamiliar words.

According to the three teachers, the English dominant environment creates two other difficulties for JSS students' learning *kanji* as well: low motivation toward studying *kanji* and restricted amount of *kanji* use in their daily lives. The teachers worry about this situation and try to make their classes appealing so that their students become more interested in *kanji*. Mori and Shimizu (2007) also recommend making *kanji* learning fun

so the students become more strategic *kanji* learners. Despite the JSS teachers' eagerness, however, it seems that there are few chances to share ideas with their colleagues or to gain knowledge about the subject in more depth.

The negative influence of English on *kanji* writing is also reported by the teachers. Since Roman alphabet letters and *kanji* are written in different stroke order, students tend to write *kanji* incorrectly, which results in the *kanji* having an incorrect shape. Also, students do not seem to be aware of the significance of strokes endings in *kanji*. This result supports Nakajima (2003), who pointed out that heritage language learners have problems in writing stroke endings correctly. Given these problems, the teachers believe that they should help their students change their English writing habits. However, many teachers who recently began teaching at the JSS appear to be unfamiliar with this problem. In other words, the information is not shared among the whole faculty.

Many previous studies discuss the essential role of parents and language environment at home in heritage language maintenance (e.g. Shibata, 2000; Kondo-Brown, 1997; Fishman, 1991). The participants in the present study also argue that parental support is crucial for JSS students' Japanese language study. Nevertheless, according to the teachers in this study, some students do not receive enough support at home because the parents do not necessarily realize the need for support or do not have enough time for it.

Summary of the difficulties in kanji instruction at the JSS

The JSS teachers' beliefs articulated above suggest the following difficulties and problems with *kanji* instruction at the JSS:

1. Japanese vocabulary of the JSS students is limited. Therefore, they learn *kanji* without understanding the words in the materials.
2. The JSS students have little chance to practice *kanji* in their daily lives because they are in an English dominant environment.
3. The JSS students do not have enough motivation toward learning *kanji* because they do not see much necessity of studying Japanese in their lives.
4. The school does not provide enough support to help teachers share their ideas and/or deepen their knowledge about the subject matter.
5. The JSS students are strongly influenced by the writing style of Roman alphabet letters. Therefore, teachers have to counter the negative influences of English when they write *kanji*.
6. Some parents do not offer enough assistance for their children to learn Japanese. They seem not to realize how important their support is.

Chapter 5

Teaching Practices of the Participants

The typical teaching practices of the three participants, Kayo, Miki, and Fuyuko, are described in this chapter, with a primary focus on their instruction of the new *kanji* subject. Something like: Like the previous chapter, first I provide a description of the teaching practice followed by data in the form of an excerpt from my field notes, interviews, or other documents to support the description.

5.1. Kayo's Teaching Practice

All teachers at the elementary school level use a same material for the new *kanji* subject. This material consists of controlled sentences that are classified by grade level. Students can practice both reading and writing *kanji* using this material (See Appendix F). Kayo uses this material just as the other teachers do. She thinks this material is good because students can practice the same *kanji* repeatedly.

There are ten sheets in that material. Each sheet has ten sentences, so there are 100 sentences in total. 200 *kanji* are included in the first 50 sentences. The same 200 *kanji* are included again in the next 50 sentences. So, students are exposed to the same letter at least twice. I think it is more helpful for the students in learning *kanji* than seeing each character only once. (Interview with Kayo)

She always begins the first five to ten minutes of her *kanji* class by having her students read the sentences in the material aloud together.

Kayo stands in front of the class and says, “Now, take out your files and stand up. Today, we go from number 71 through 80. Are you guys ready? Here we go.” The students stand up and start reading the sentences aloud together following Kayo’s command. Students are clapping their hands while reading. Kayo also reads the sentences aloud and claps her hands. The students do not hesitate to read in a very big voice. Some students are even swinging their bodies rhythmically. It seems that they are enjoying this activity. Students who cannot read *kanji* are writing the pronunciations next to the *kanji* while they read aloud. After reading the sentences as a whole class, she divides the class into two; right side and left side. Then, she lets the two groups take turns reading the sentences. (Observation of Kayo’s *kanji* class, third grade)

This activity is called “*rizumu ondoku*” (rhythm reading). Students read the sentences aloud clapping their hands in a uniform rhythm. Kayo feels that students enjoy this exercise and it increases their interest in learning *kanji*.

Students become lively when we do *rizumu ondoku*. They can actively participate in the class when we do this. They don’t have to be quiet. They can clap their hands, stand up, and move a bit. I think my students enjoy this time. [...] Students probably don’t remember all the *kanji* we covered in *rizumu ondoku* during classes. They forget right away. However, I think they become more curious about *kanji* through this material. They begin to want to remember *kanji*. (Interview with Kayo)

Kayo uses this activity because students become more motivated to learn *kanji*. She believes it is because experience is fun—they are allowed to move their bodies and speak aloud rather than remaining seated all the time.

After reading all sentences aloud, the students take their seats and Kayo distributes handouts. The handout lists the sentences they just read, with blanks where the *kanji* go. The students have to fill in the blanks with the appropriate *kanji*. Kayo walks around the classroom and observes her students working on the sentences. Sometimes, she gives hints when she finds a student having trouble with a certain *kanji*. Her hints often contain stories that combine the components of a *kanji*; for example she might provided the following hints during class:

“Breath [*iki*, 息] comes out of your own [自] heart [心].”

“When you go on a trip [*ryokoo*, 旅], you have three people [人] and decide a direction [方向] you should go. Do you see three people [人] on the right side of the *kanji*, trip [旅]?”

“An amusement park [*yuuenchi*, 遊園地] is where you play [遊]. A child [子] decides his direction [方向] when you play.”

“*Hakobu* [運] means to carry [underlined word was actually said in English]. OK? You carry something on a car [車], so you need to put something on the car. You also walk on a street when you carry something.”

“You find blood [血] on a plate [皿].”

(Observations of Kayo’s *kanji* class, third grade)

She also often links the radicals of *kanji* with the meaning of the word it is used in.

“What does a lake [湖] have? Water, right? So you use *sanzui* [氵] for its *kanji*.”

“The radical of iron [*tetsu*, 鉄] is *kanehen* [金] because iron is made of metal.”

“What is a pole [*hashira*, 柱] made from? It’s not made from water. It’s made from wood.”

(Observations of Kayo’s *kanji* class, third grade)

These hints incorporate the memory strategy, which “breaks down the *kanji* into simple components, attaches meaning to those components, and presents a story to tie the components together” (Shimizu & Green, 2002, p. 238). Kayo did not merely give hints using the memory strategy but also sometimes explicitly told her students how effective this strategy is for their *kanji* learning.

Kayo gives a hint for the letter deep [深]. “Hey guys, what does the word deep [*fukai*, 深い] relate to?” The students answer, “Water!” “That’s right. So, which radical do you use? If you think this way, *kanji* are not always difficult, are they? If you don’t know how to write a *kanji*, you should think what the *kanji* relates to.” (Observation of Kayo’s *kanji* class, third grade)

The observations above indicate that Kayo uses the memory strategy to help her students learn *kanji* and encourages them to this strategy also. She also values the rote learning strategy as well. She positively evaluates the material that requires students to write *kanji* over and over in context-dependent sentences. On the other hand, context strategy, which utilizes authentic materials, was not observed in her classes.

One of the unique characteristics of Kayo’s teaching practice was that she made her students look up unknown words in a dictionary to find their meanings in her *kokugo* (Japanese) class. Her students are required to bring their Japanese-Japanese dictionary to

school every week. When the students encounter unknown words, Kayo tells them to take the dictionary out and consult it.

When they are reading the story in the textbook, a student asks Kayo, “What’s *dokyō* [度胸, courage, guts, gumption]?” Kayo immediately responds, “Oh, that’s a good question. Guys, look it up in your dictionaries! Who can find the word first?” The students quickly take their dictionaries out and start looking for the word. While they are turning the pages, Kayo talks to the whole class, “You have to refer to the dictionary when you encounter a word you don’t understand. Then, you learn a new word and you can also learn how to use a dictionary. Dictionaries are very useful.” (Observation of Kayo’s *kanji* class, third grade)

In the interview, she explained the reason for using the dictionary:

It is fun to know new words, isn’t it? For example, if you look up a dictionary for the word *noru*, you find many homophones. They have the same sound but different meanings and different *kanji*. Even if you cannot read *kanji*, you realize that there are different *kanji* for different meanings. I think that is a valuable experience. It is also interesting to know the meanings of your own name. Students are really curious to know about themselves. I had a student whose name is Shin. One day, he looked up the *kanji* of his name. Then he found out that his *kanji* meant decency [*tsutsumashii*, 慎ましい], and said “No, this is not my name. I have no decency.” I think this kind of experience is important for them. The students here will encounter many words they don’t know in the future. Then, it will be important to find out their meanings on their own—not by just always asking their parents. So, I want my students bring their dictionary and practice how to use it. (Interview with Kayo)

Through using dictionaries, she tries to increase her students’ Japanese vocabulary by helping them to acquire a skill that facilitates the learning of new words. She also

believes that using a dictionary can be fun and students will thus enjoy learning Japanese words and *kanji*.

In addition to the use of dictionaries, Kayo's students do *soragaki* when she teaches the stroke order of new *kanji*. In *soragaki*, the students write a letter in the air, stroke by stroke, with their arms. At the same time, they count the strokes aloud. It is one of the strategies that is commonly used to teach stroke order (Miyakoshi, 2000).

5.2. Miki's Teaching Practice

Miki, who teaches sixth grade, uses the same material in her *kanji* class that Kayo does. The students work on the worksheets that are appropriate for their level of *kanji* proficiency. Therefore, some of Miki's students are still practicing *kanji* at the second grade level while others are already learning *kanji* at the fifth or sixth grade level. They can move on to the worksheets at the next level if they make less than two mistakes on the sheet they are currently working on. Otherwise, they have to do the same worksheet until they learn the *kanji* correctly.

When students ask Miki for hints, she usually gives them the Japanese reading (*kunyomi*) of *kanji* to help them recall which *kanji* they should write.

A student comes to Miki and asks for a hint for the *kanji*, *shushi* [種子, seed]. Miki answers, "It is *tane* [種, seed]." The student seems to have recalled the *kanji* and says "Aha!" (Observation, Miki's *kanji* class, sixth grade)

Sometimes, it appears that these hints do not work when the students do not know the word or *kanji* itself.

A student asks, “What is the *kanji* of *gata* [型, form] for *oogatasha* [大型車, large vehicle]?” Miki answers, “It is *kata*, form.” The student further asks, “How do you write it?” Miki just shrugged her shoulders and moves away from him.

A student comes to her and asks, “How do you write *ei* [栄] for *eiyou* [栄養, nutrition]?” Miki answers, “*Sakaeru* [flourish].” However, the student seems not to know the word and asks again, “What’s *sakaeru*?” Miki explains the meaning of *sakaeru*, but the student seems to be confused and says, “I don’t understand.” (Observation of Miki’s *kanji* class, sixth grade)

Miki puts rote learning strategy into practice through the material that consists of context-independent controlled sentences I removed this controlled in an earlier section – but now I think you need it – I’m not sure what it means though – can you explain what a controlled sentence is when you first use the term? Yet, I rarely observed her utilizing the memory strategy or the context strategy in her teaching practices. Instead, she provides the students with a different pronunciation of a *kanji* when asked for hints. However, this type of information does not provide a rich context from which the students can infer the correct *kanji*. It does not incorporate any story that links the components of the *kanji* either. In other words, the hints Miki gives is aligned with the Whole-*kanji* method, in which students have to memorize the *kanji* as a whole in a context-independent environment (Flaherty & Noguchi, 1998). Indeed, she did not mention the meaning of the *kanji* students were learning or what components the character is made up of. Although it could not be observed that she utilizes various teaching strategies, she claims that she sometime tells her students about the origin of a

kanji—such as the reason for using certain radicals—when she introduces new *kanji* to her *kokugo* (Japanese) class. Since the observation period of Miki’s class was in the last few months of the school year during which time new *kanji* were not introduced, it could be possible that I would have witnessed her using other strategies had I observed her classes earlier in the semester.

In spite of the fact that Miki did not adopt any *kanji* teaching strategy other than the rote learning strategy, she used the context strategy when teaching other subjects.

Miki reads aloud the question in the math textbook; “Is the number of rotation of the bicycle wheels in proportion to the distance it moves [自転車の車輪の回転数と進んだ距離は比例していますか]? Do you know what *kaiten* [回転, rotation] is? First, what’s *sharin* [車輪, wheel]?” A student answers, “A tire!” Hearing this answer, Miki continues, “Yes. Then, what do tires do?” A different student answers, “It rotates.” Miki says, “Yes, *kaiten* means to rotate, OK? You see the *kanji* for rotate in the word.”
(Observation of Miki’s mathematics class, sixth grade)

In mathematics and *kokugo*, she sometimes lets her students guess *kanji* words from given contexts. As a result, the students generally succeed in inferring the correct *kanji* words. Nevertheless, implementation of this strategy was limited to the subjects in which she actively utilized the context strategy, and it was not observed during her *kanji* classes.

5.3. Fuyuko's Teaching Practice

Unlike the other two participants, Fuyuko specializes in teaching the new *kanji* subject to seventh to ninth graders. She uses material that she developed herself, which manifests her belief about the significance of repetition in *kanji* learning. She created worksheets wherein students practice reading and writing *kanji* they have learned so far. Students are supposed to work individually on these worksheets and complete all of them by the end of the school year. They take tests whenever they feel they are ready to proceed to the next worksheet. However, they cannot pass the test unless they make fewer than two mistakes. Therefore, students have to practice *kanji* and take tests repeatedly until they overcome their mistakes. Her material is similar to those Miki and Kayo use in their *kanji* classes in terms of the structure. Namely, it consists of worksheets that are divided according to grade levels and contains controlled sentences that are separated from contexts. The difference is that sentences in Fuyuko's material are chosen from the *kokugo* (Japanese) textbook while those in Miki and Kayo's material were created randomly so they include all *kanji* of given grade levels. Yet, it is not possible to guess the original story behind a *kanji* from the sentences in Fuyuko's material despite the fact that information is provided in the *kokugo* textbook. Fuyuko's teaching material incorporates "*rizumu ondoku*" (rhythm reading). However, unlike Kayo's *rizumu ondoku*, each sentence in the material includes various readings of one *kanji* (see Appendix E). To pass the rhythm reading worksheet, students have to read aloud all sentences correctly within the given time. If they fail in reading within the time-limit, they have to practice reading again until they are able to read the sentences aloud faster.

Fuyuko's classes are conducted in a self-study style. After the greeting, students take the material out from their bags and work on it individually throughout the class. The *kanji* class was given in two continuous time periods for each grade. Therefore, students practiced *kanji* for approximately two hours, which includes a brief break. When students need help, (s)he goes to Fuyuko for assistance. While her students are studying with the worksheets, Fuyuko usually walks around the classroom and observes them practicing *kanji*. She provides explanations and advises individual students rather than instructing the whole class.

Fuyuko seemed to use the rote learning strategy most of the time. For example, she developed a material that clearly reflects her belief about this approach: students learn *kanji* by practicing them over and over in controlled sentences that have no contexts. She also taught her students to study *kanji* through repetition.

Ryo completed a worksheet and submits it to Fuyuko. She checks the mistakes and returns the worksheet to Ryo. It seems that there is more than one mistake. Ryo gives just a glance to the worksheet and says to Fuyuko, "Can I throw it away?" Fuyuko answers, "After you rewrite them and memorize all the *kanji* you wrote wrong." Just at this moment, the bell rings and the class ends.

[The next week] As soon as the class starts, Fuyuko goes to Ryo and asks, "Did you rewrite the *kanji* you had wrong last week?" Ryo says, "Oh, I forgot to do it." Fuyuko seems to be somewhat angry. She says, "Oh, no! That's why you cannot remember *kanji*. You never practice them again, do you?" Then, she brings a manuscript paper from her cabinet and gives it to Ryo. She starts explaining what Ryo has to do now. "Look. You wrote *meshi* [飯, rice/meal] wrong, so write the whole word, *nigirimeshi* [rice ball], in *hiragana* on this paper. Then, write the *kanji* over and over next to the

hiragana. Then, you can practice the *kanji* you have not memorized repeatedly so you'll never forget it."

(Observation of Fuyuko's *kanji* class, seventh grade, December 9 and 13)

Fuyuko's *Rizumu ondoku* (rhythm reading) exercises also manifest her belief about rote learning strategy. She thinks it is effective for *kanji* learning because students can memorize vocabularies and readings of *kanji* by reciting the sentences repeatedly.

Fuyuko's view on this activity is different from that of Kayo's because Fuyuko positively evaluates its repeatability rather than its entertainment value. She feels that students in upper grades do not necessarily enjoy doing *rizumu ondoku* like students in lower grades do.

Students in lower grades would like doing it, but my students sometimes hate *rizumu ondoku*. They say it's too ridiculous to do. They feel embarrassed to "sing". (Interview with Fuyuko)

Nevertheless, she believes it is still effective to have her students do this activity because of its rote learning nature.

You can say "*kangaeru chikara* [ability to think]" when you are in second or third grade, but if you become fifth grade, sixth grade, or a junior high school student, you need to be able to use the word "*shikooryoku* [ability to think]" as well. If you do the *rhythm ondoku* over and over, the words will stick to your mind. Even if you don't understand the meaning, you can at least memorize the *kanji* and its pronunciation by chanting the sentences like a spell repeatedly. Even if students don't like it, it is important to make students memorize the words. And this material definitely helps them learn. (Interview with Fuyuko)

In addition to the rote learning strategy, other teaching strategies were also observed in Fuyuko's classes.

A student is writing the *kanji* for 'to gather [集, *atsumaru*]. When Fuyuko walked by this student, he looked at her and asked, "Why do you call this radical [隹] *furutori*? It doesn't make any sense." Fuyuko smiles and answers, "OK, I'll tell you why." She brings a small white board from her cabinet and writes the *kanji* 'to gather [*atsumaru*, 集]'. Then, she explains, "Here is a tree in the bottom, right? Birds sit on this tree." She draws many birds on the radical, *furutori*. "So, there are a lot of birds on the tree. That's why it is called *furutori*. Full of *tori* [birds]!" (Observation of Fuyuko's *kanji* class, eighth grade)

Fuyuko is checking a student's worksheet. She finds a mistake and says, "You wrote the *kanji* 'koo [交]' for *kootsuu* [交通, traffic] wrong. Do you know how you can memorize this *kanji*? Listen. The top part is the radical, *nabebuta* [the same sound as 'pot lid'], right? The bottom part is the *kanji* for father [父]. So, a father is walking the street wearing a lid on his head. If you have this image in your mind, you can remember the *kanji*. You should learn *kanji* in this way. OK? Then, you will never forget it." (Observation of Fuyuko's *kanji* class, seventh grade)

In these cases, Fuyuko broke down the *kanji* into components and created stories to remember the *kanji*. That is, she used the memory strategy in addition to the rote learning strategy. However, this type of feedback to teach *kanji* was only observed a few times; rote learning strategy was the dominant method in her class. According to her, she gave up using various teaching strategies because she had to prepare her students for promotion examinations.

I used to explain the details of *kanji* before. For example, I showed two *kanji*, one is correct and the other is wrong, and had my students think why. I also told them interesting stories about *kanji*, such as the origin of a character. However, I stopped doing this recently because my students really need to prepare for the promotion test now. Some of the students haven't passed the exam yet. So, they need as much time as possible to write and learn *kanji*. I actually like the teaching style I used to employ before, but passing the exam is more important for the students as long as there is a system like this. Otherwise, they cannot proceed to the next grade or possibly not graduate. I hope this will change next year. I think the way I taught before was more fun for the students. (Interview with Fuyuko)

Although she prefers using various activities that include multiple teaching strategies in her *kanji* class, she feels these strategies are not effective in preparing her students for the promotion examination. Therefore, she focuses now on having her students practice *kanji* by writing and reading the controlled sentences repeatedly, which is a manifestation of the rote learning strategy. Furthermore, she recognizes that working only on worksheets is not as exciting as the activities she used to do. Indeed, her students seemed not to enjoy the class very much.

Masaru crumples a piece of paper into a ball and throws it into the trash can, but it falls on the floor. He picks it up and throws it again, aiming at the trash can. Since the ball fell beside the trash can, he starts throwing the paper ball again and again until it successfully falls in the can. Fuyuko notices Masaru's behavior and scolds him in a loud voice, "Oh, no! Don't play with the paper ball!" Masaru answers, "I'm just throwing away the paper. I'm saving the earth." and goes back to his seat. (Observation of Fuyuko's *kanji* class, eighth grade)

Daiki stands by Shota and has been chatting for a few minutes. Fuyuko comes to them and asks Daiki in a cross voice, “Hey, what are you doing? What did you study today? Which *kanji* did you write wrong?” However, Daiki does not stop talking. Then, Fuyuko forces him to sit. (Observation of Fuyuko’s *kanji* class, seventh grade)

Masanori is swinging his stopwatch and doing nothing. Fuyuko comes to him and says, “Practice *kanji*.” However, Masanori does not stop swinging the stopwatch and asks back to her, “I’m tired. What time will the class end?” (Observation of Fuyuko’s *kanji* class, ninth grade)

Many students often did not do anything or did something other than the required activity during the class. Even if a student started working on a worksheet, (s)he often could not concentrate on studying and was frequently distracted in class. Whenever Fuyuko finds one of her students distracted, she had to make him/her return to the worksheets.

Fuyuko also paid careful attention to stroke order as she noted the importance of writing *kanji* in correct stroke order. She thus carefully observed her students when they practiced writing *kanji*.

Fuyuko goes to Chiaki’s desk. Chiaki is doing the practice sheet of second grade *kanji*. While Chiaki is writing *kanji* on the sheet, Fuyuko stands behind her and watches. Suddenly, Fuyuko says, “No, that’s the wrong stroke order.” Chiaki stops writing. Fuyuko starts demonstrating the correct stroke order to Chiaki. She writes the *kanji* on Chiaki’s sheet with her four colored-pen. She uses a different color for each stroke. Chiaki is watching the character Fuyuko is writing. After that, Fuyuko explains to Chiaki, “*Shinnyoo* [the name of a radical] always comes last. *Ennyoo* [another radical] also does. You write this part first, then *Shinnyoo*, OK?” Chiaki nods. (Observation of Fuyuko’s *kanji* class, seventh grade)

She often walked around the classroom and watched how the students were writing. When she found someone writing in a wrong order, she explicitly explained why it was wrong and taught him/her the correct order. This attention to stroke order reflects her belief about the importance of correct stroke order.

What was particular to Fuyuko's practice was that she sometimes invited the parents to her class. Fuyuko lets the parents sit next to their children and correct the worksheets of their son/daughter instead of checking it herself. In the following excerpt, she accounts for the reason why she invites the parents to her class:

I ask the parents to come to class so they see how their kids are doing. I want them to provide more support and to know more about the actual situation. I want them to study together with their kids. They need to be more involved with their kid's Japanese learning and not just send them to school. Otherwise, it is impossible for the students to learn Japanese successfully. It is not until the parents come to class and observe their kids that they realize how much their children are behind. Some of them don't know that their children cannot write even *katakana* properly. So, I want them to realize that they have to help the students and not just turn them over to us. (Interview with Fuyuko)

Fuyuko tries to make the parents aware of the necessity of supporting their children even after they become junior high school students. To this end, she offers the parents the opportunity to actually observe their children in class.

5.4. Summary and Discussion

This section briefly summarizes the three JSS teachers' practices, and answers the research question, "What teaching strategies do JSS teachers actually use?" Next, the consistency between the participants' beliefs about *kanji* instruction and their actual practices will be examined.

5.4.1. Participants' *Kanji* Teaching Strategy

I adopt Shimizu & Green's (2002) three instructional strategies, rote learning strategy, memory strategy, and context strategy to discuss the participants' teaching strategies because these strategies more or less contain the characteristics of the strategies suggested by other researchers, such as Flaherty & Noguchi (1998) and Okita (1996).

Consistent with their beliefs, the rote learning strategy dominates the teaching practices of all three participants. Whether or not the teachers had the authority to decide which material they use in class, they all adopt materials that include context-independent controlled sentences and engage their students in writing the same *kanji* over and over until they learn it. Some teachers even clearly encourage their students to use the strategy of writing the same *kanji* many times to memorize it.

In contrast to the rote learning strategy, the participants use the memory strategy in varying degrees. Kayo utilizes this strategy most frequently by giving her students hints that refer to the relationships between the *kanji* and their radicals, and also tells

stories that combine the *kanji* components. Fuyuko also sometimes uses the memory strategy in her class. However, according to her, she does not use it as much as she did previously because she thinks it is more important to have her students write *kanji* repeatedly so they can effectively prepare for the promotion examination. Miki, a sixth grade teacher, hardly uses the memory strategy at all although she claims that she uses it when she introduces new *kanji* to her students. The degree of use of the memory strategy varies among the three teachers; however, none of them used it as the primary teaching strategy. One possible reason for this may be that teaching *kanji* using the memory strategy takes a lot of time. As the participants articulated in the interviews, they do not have enough time to explain every *kanji* in detail during class. Moreover, the memory strategy often requires great preparation and a deep cultural, historical, and philosophical understanding about *kanji* (Shimizu & Green, 2002).

Lastly, the context strategy was not used by any of the participants during the *kanji* class. This may be because the sentences in the teaching materials did not provide rich contexts from which students can infer *kanji*. Miki sometimes had her students guess the *kanji* words from the texts during mathematic and *kokugo*. It appeared to be possible in these situations because those texts contained enough context for students to use as a clue when guessing *kanji*.

In sum, the JSS teachers in this study dominantly rely on rote learning strategy when they teach *kanji*. The use of memory strategy varied among the teachers, but it played no more than a supplementary role in everyone's classes. The least adopted

teaching strategy by the participants was the context strategy. This strategy was only used Miki's *kokugo* and mathematic classes, and not regularly.

5.4.2. The Relationship between the JSS Teachers' Beliefs and their Practices

The interviews with the three JSS teachers revealed that they believe a rich Japanese vocabulary helps the students learn *kanji* effectively. Their teaching practices clearly reflect this belief and include several strategies designed to increase students' knowledge about Japanese words. For example, Kayo has her students bring a dictionary and look up words during class whenever they come across unfamiliar words. Fuyuko adopts rhythm reading so the students pick up new vocabulary. Miki also frequently makes sure her students know the meanings of *kanji* words. Since limited Japanese vocabulary of the JSS students was reported as being problematic in the interviews, these teachers made significant attempts to try to raise their students' knowledge of Japanese words.

The participating teachers all believe that the JSS students are not motivated enough to learn *kanji* because there is not much necessity to use it in their English-dominant environment. Miki addressed this concern by implementing exercises designed to increase her students' intrinsic motivation. For instance, she uses rhythm reading, which she thinks does induce students' interests for learning *kanji*. She also encourages her students to use looking up unfamiliar words in dictionaries as a fun experience to learn new words. On the other hand, the two other teachers, Fuyuko and Miki, did not

appear to actively try to raise students' motivation. Although Fuyuko adopts rhythm reading as well, she does not focus on its amusement factor as much as Kayo does.

Kayo, Miki, and Fuyuko all believe that it is important for the parents to support their children if they are to learn *kanji* successfully. However, they complained that there is not enough involvement by some parents. To address this situation, Fuyuko sometimes invites the parents to her class so they can observe their children and realize how important their support is. Other teachers also shared how the students are doing at school with the parents when they came to the classroom to pick up their children. However, these were usually brief conversations and did not seem to involve a deep discussion about the students' education.

All three teachers strongly believed that learning correct stroke order is important in order to write proper *kanji*. The participants' practices reflected this belief and all tried to teach stroke order using various teaching techniques, such as *soragaki* and mention another strategy here, in their classes. They clearly put their beliefs about teaching stroke order into their practices.

Fuyuko and Kayo mentioned in their interview that it is important to counter the English influences on *kanji* writing. However, it could not be observed that they explicitly taught their students the difference between writing the Roman alphabet and *kanji*. Also, the teaching material they used did not seem to clearly address this topic.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings discussed above, three suggestions can be made to change the address the problem the teachers noted with *kanji* instruction.

(1) Develop teaching materials that employ various teaching strategies.

The present study shows that the teachers heavily depend on rote learning strategy, in which students write and read *kanji* over and over. As is consistent with their belief about this approach, most materials they used were drill exercises that consisted of controlled sentences. Moreover, these sentences were not proved in context, which made it extremely difficult for the JSS students, who live in an English dominant environment, to guess the meanings of the *kanji* words. Hence, they often end up writing homophones. In order to help JSS students learn *kanji* more successfully, various teaching strategies, such as context strategy and memory strategy, should be included in the teaching materials. Mori & Shimizu (2007) discuss the possibility of the transfer of teachers' instructional strategy on to students' learning strategy. In order to help students become strategic *kanji* learners, it is necessary for teachers to use various teaching strategies in their classes.

Teaching materials that introduce a variety of instructional strategies are helpful to *kanji* learning in multiple ways. For example, Mori and Nagy (1999) found that having information about both word elements and contexts promotes *kanji* learning. Hence, training JSS students to utilize the context strategy through a material that includes abundant context would help students become more tactical *kanji* learners. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, Flaherty & Noguchi (1998) demonstrate that memory strategy, which break *kanji* into parts, improves the retention of *kanji*. Teachers can encourage their students to incorporate the memory strategy into their *kanji* learning by actually showing them how to apply the *kanji*. In addition, Mori & Shimizu (2007) found that students tend to perceive *kanji* difficult and feel helpless if they rely heavily on the rote learning strategy. On the other hand, students who use other strategies perceive that *kanji* is fun and experienced less confusion. Their study suggests that using strategies other than the rote learning strategy may increase students' interest in and intrinsic motivation toward *kanji*. It seemed that the JSS students in the higher grades did not have much enthusiasm for *kanji* learning. Therefore, it would be important to incorporate different teaching strategies into the teaching materials and actual instruction so the students can enjoy learning *kanji* through several approaches. Adopting diverse strategies in addition to rote-learning strategy benefits students in their *kanji* study more effectively.

Moreover, the content of the materials should not be completely separated from the students' lives. The materials must "draw students' interest and give dreams to them" (Nakajima, 1998, p.164). As Aoki (2000) suggests, it is necessary to relate *kanji* to the students' lives so they can appreciate the pleasure of *kanji*. As for material development,

it is also crucial to train JSS students for writing Japanese characters because they are used to write Roman alphabet letters that are written “diagonally right down, roundish, and connected to each other” (Bekka, 1955, p. 54). This form of writing is in direct contrast to how a Japanese character should be written. Teaching materials that enable students to understand the differences in writing form between Japanese characters and English letters are especially needed for heritage language learners (Nakajima, 2003).

To be specific, authentic texts would be good materials through which students can learn *kanji* and Japanese vocabulary from abundant contexts. In this study, students were not provided with enough contexts and had to memorize *kanji* and vocabularies independent of context. To help students learn *kanji* with concrete examples of the usage, the sample material (see Appendix G) adopts a comic book. Since comic books contain a lot of pictures, it is easy to grasp storylines even if students do not know some vocabularies. They can infer and learn the meanings of *kanji* as well as Japanese words in relation to the story. Indeed, Leung (2002) discusses the effectiveness of illustrations in word learning based on her finding that pictures in children’s literature helped ESL learners guess unknown words and learn new vocabulary. Also, comic books usually include many *furigana*, so students can begin to read new *kanji* easily. Moreover, comics are powerful tools that attract students’ interest because they are embedded in their lives as a source of enjoyment. Indeed, many teachers/researchers have noted the popularity of comics among children and have been publishing more and more Japanese language learning materials that employ comics (eg. Sasaki,2001; Bernabe, 2004; Lammers, 2004).

Using comic books as a material and letting students read them extensively is also good. It is reported that extensive reading, in which students engage in reading a quantity of materials within their linguistic competence, has various positive influences on language learning. For example, Cho and Krashen (1994) found that two adult Korean learners of English improved their speaking and listening proficiency through extensive reading. Leung (2002) claims that extensive reading enhances reading comprehension and a positive attitude toward reading. In addition, extensive reading helps students acquire vocabulary (e.g. Leung, 2002; Cho & Krashen, 1994; Day, Omura, & Hiramatsu, 1991). According to the previous studies, students casually pick up new words and phrases by reading many texts at the appropriate levels. Since the JSS teachers in the present study reported that their students general had a limited Japanese vocabulary, reading comic books extensively would help them pick up new Japanese words and makes it easier for them to learn *kanji* and relate the characters to the meaning of the words.

Having students create a *kanji* teaching material by themselves would also help them become aware of various *kanji* learning strategies. In other words, creating a teaching material with several strategies enables students learn how to learn *kanji*. In the sample material, students are required to (see Appendix H) show stroke order, sentences with *kanji* words, and a tip to learn the specific *kanji*. As a tip, students can, for example, include a story that combines the components of a *kanji*, a picture that explains the origin of a *kanji*, a story that combines the meaning of a *kanji* with its radical, etc. As Hattori

(2000) claims, it is important for students to “learn how to learn” in order to become an effective learner.

(2) Provide more opportunities for teacher developing.

The present study showed that there are not enough opportunities for professional development for the teachers. Currently, the teachers have to deepen their knowledge and develop teaching materials by themselves rather than sharing ideas with their colleagues or with the support of the school. Fujimori’s (2006) study in which he conducted a questionnaire survey with 166 JSSs around the world discovered that JSS teachers generally wish to deepen their knowledge of *kanji* teaching methods through teacher training. In Fujimori’s study, this issue was the second most popular item following the desire to learn methods for teaching students of different Japanese proficiency. The teachers at the JSS of this present study would also benefit if there were more opportunities to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge. To that end, the JSS is should build a solid teacher supporting system.

(3) Share more information with parents.

Another suggestion is to give more information to the parents. The present study indicates that some parents do not recognize how important their support is for their children’s Japanese language learning. Considering that parental support has a significant

influence on the students' heritage language development (e.g. Shibata, 2000; Kondo-Brown, 1997; Fishman, 1991), it is essential to involve parents in the education of the JSS students. Li's case-study (2006) found that students who learned heritage language only at home or at the community school alone failed to maintain their literacy in their heritage language. Given this result, she suggests that parents actively participate in the decision-making of the community school and remain involved in actual teaching and learning. In order to elicit more cooperation from the parents, one of the participants, Fuyuko, sometimes invited the parents to her class to observe their children. She said that this practice helps the parents find out how their children are doing at JSS and make them aware that they need to provide support at home. Other JSS teachers could also open their classes to the parents and provide opportunities for them to be actively involved in the students' Japanese study.

Considering that Lao (2004) claims the importance of informing parents of concrete ways of supporting heritage language learning, the JSS could also offer workshops for the parents. For example, they could invite specialists on bilingual education or someone who succeeded in raising her/his child as a bilingual to share information with the parents. In this way, parents would be able to get an idea of how they can help their children develop Japanese literacy at home. A close partnership between the JSS and parents would improve the students' Japanese learning environments.

6.2. Implications for Future Study

Based on the findings of the present study, the following topics should be further investigated in future studies: (1) a large-scale survey research on JSS teachers' beliefs about *kanji* instruction at different schools, (2) an investigation on JSS teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices in *kanji* instruction at JSS that do not offer separate tracks for students who plan to return to Japan soon and those who do not, (3) an empirical study on the relationship between the knowledge of Japanese words and *kanji* learning, (4) examinations of the perspective on *kanji* learning of JSS students and their parents, and (5) a close investigation on the relationship between *kanji* teaching strategies and its effect on the students' use of learning strategies.

The generality of the findings in the present study can be explored through a large-scale quantitative study at JSS in different schools including those in other countries. Additional exploration of JSS teachers' beliefs about *kanji* instruction would disclose the common problems in *kanji* education at JSS around the world.

The JSS in the present study offered separate tracks for students above fourth grade according to their Japanese proficiency. Therefore, problems, which are caused from the differences in students' Japanese proficiency, were not observed in this study. Also, the participants appeared not to have clear beliefs about the gaps in Japanese proficiency within a class. However, it is reported that many JSS around the world have difficulty in providing separate tracks due to teachers and parents' fear of acknowledging their children's low Japanese proficiency (Fujimori, 2006). Considering this situation, it

would be necessary to conduct similar research at JSS that have students with large differences in Japanese proficiency in same classes.

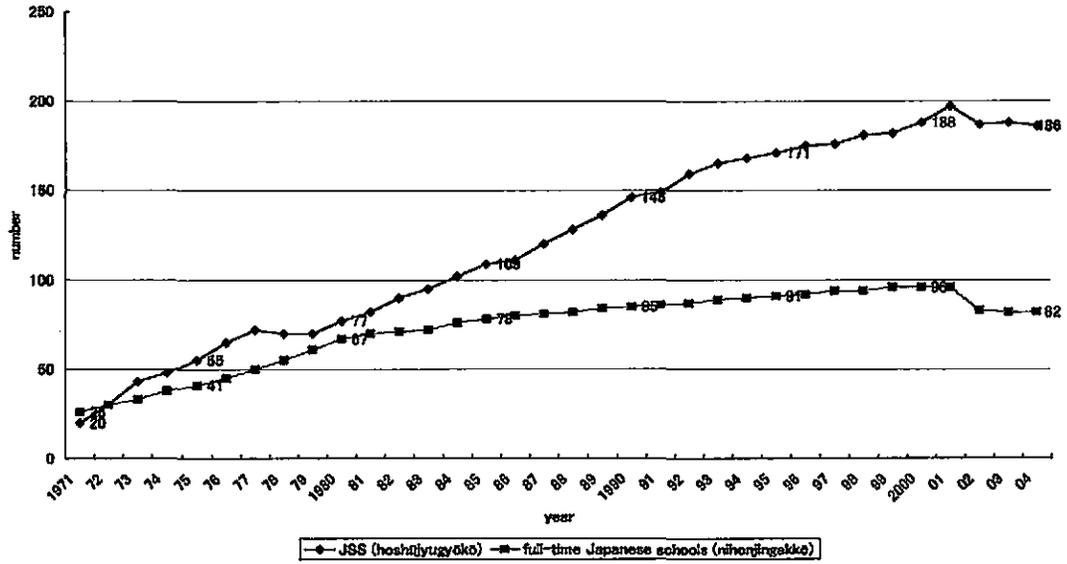
This present study revealed JSS teachers' strong beliefs about the impact of Japanese vocabulary on *kanji* learning. However, there are few empirical studies that deal with the influence of Japanese vocabulary on *kanji* retention, though there are several studies that investigate the relationships between *kanji* processing and *kanji* learning (e.g. Koda, 1999; Mori, 1998; Chikamatsu, 1996). It would be necessary to confirm the JSS teachers' beliefs in further research.

This study also investigated *kanji* instruction at a JSS through teachers' perspectives. However, it lacks the perspective of the learners, i.e. the JSS students. Studies on JSS students' beliefs about *kanji* learning would provide a more in-depth understanding of the *kanji* learning situation—its problems and effectiveness. In addition, the findings of this present research indicate that some parents do not provide enough support for their children to study *kanji*. Considering that parental cooperation is crucial in heritage language learning, thorough research on their opinions, views, and actions is required.

Lastly, it is not known how the teachers' *kanji* teaching strategies influence students' ways of *kanji* learning. Previous studies, such as Banya & Cheng (1997), indicate that teachers' language teaching strategy affects their students' learning strategy. An empirical study on the influence of instructional strategy on learning strategy is required in the field of *kanji* education as well.

Due to students' various backgrounds, JSS are at a critical juncture. This study discovered that the JSS teachers confront several problems that are unique to JSS. Due to the current unique situation at these schools, which differs from when only students with relatively homogeneous backgrounds attended JSS, more effort should be devoted to investigating current problems at JSS and on developing teaching materials/curriculums that best fit the JSS today.

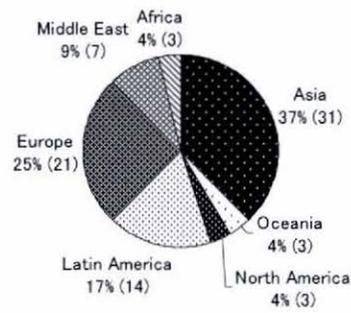
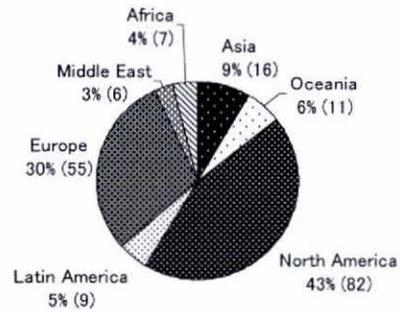
Appendix A



Number of JSS and Full-time Japanese Overseas Schools

Adopted from Furuie (2001, p.8) and Monbukagakushoo (2006c)

Appendix B



Number of JSS and Full-time Japanese Schools According by Areas

Adopted from Monbukagakushoo (2006b)

Appendix C

Research Proposal Submitted to the Board of Directors of the Research Site

研究計画書

1. 研究目的

帰国予定のある生徒・ない生徒が混在する中で補習授業校の先生がどのようなことを考え、どのような実践をしているのかを調べる。

2. 本研究の動機および概要

補習授業校に永住および長期滞在の子どもたちが増加していることが明らかになってきている中で、生徒の国語力や動機に関する研究が次第に増えている。しかし、その多くがテストの成績や生徒へのアンケートに終始しており、実際に補習授業校での教育実践がどのように行われているのかという現場主義の研究は未だみられない。さらに、授業運営の主体である教師の貢献についても充分には明らかにされていない。現在の補習校研究において、教師の姿を捉えようとするものはまだ見られない。そこで、本研究では補習授業校で頑張っておられる先生方は何を考え、どのような実践をされているのかを描きたいと考えている。

私自身、補習校ではいろいろな先生方に教わったが、それぞれの先生方で授業のやり方や雰囲気は全く異なっていたことを覚えている。どの授業も楽しく、補習校のおかげで今の私の日本語力の基礎がついたと感じている。そこで、先生方は一体どのようにして自分の実践を決めていらっしゃるのかを知りたいと考えるようになった。先生の授業を見せていただくと共に試行錯誤や工夫についてうかがい、ご自身の教育実践や補習授業校での教育についてどのように捉えていらっしゃるのかを描きたい。

また、貴校の要望があれば、喜んで学校活動およびその他の活動のお手伝いをさせていただきたいと考えている。例えば、行事のお手伝いや授業補助（高等学校教諭一種免許状・国語、日本語教育能力検定を保持）、研究活動のお手伝いなどが考えられる。その他、お役に立てることがあれば出来る限り協力させていただくつもりである。お手伝いさせていただくことを通して、学ばせていただけることも多いと確信している。

3. 研究方法

Narrative Inquiry という方法を用いる予定である。Narrative Inquiry とは、観察とインタビューによって得られた情報を使用する研究方法である。この方法は、インタビューによって協力者にこれまでの経験を振り返っていただき、ご自身のこれからの実践に役立てていただける可能性を含むものである。

3. 1. 協力者

担当学年は小学生以上であれば特にこだわらない。国語を教えていらっしゃる方が非常に望ましい。また、授業見学やインタビューをお願いするので、積極的に協力していただける方であれば嬉しい。

3. 2. 観察

協力していただける先生の授業を見学する。なるべく先生が教えていらっしゃる全ての授業を見せていただきたい。もちろん、先生が拒否された授業についてはその限りではない。

授業中は授業の様子（主に先生）をメモする。メモを取る行為が先生・生徒に気にならないように注意する。このメモは私以外の人には一切見せないようにし、先生と生徒たちのプライバシーを守る。

授業中は協力していただける先生の指示に応じて授業のサポートなど適宜お手伝いをしたり、邪魔にならぬよう見学したりする。なお、可能であれば職員会議も見せていただきたい。職員会議で話し合われたことが先生の授業などに影響を与えるのではないかと考えるからである。貴校および先生方からの拒否があれば席を外す。観察で見聞きしたことは一切口外しない。

3. 3. インタビュー

授業についての先生の考えや、私が疑問に思ったことなどをお聞きする。回数は未定だが、現時点では全研究期間を通して延べ5・6回になるのではないかと考えている。回数や時期についてはなるべく先生のご都合に合わせる。

インタビューは録音させていただく。この録音データは後日文字化する。録音データ・文字化データともに私以外の人が見たり聞いたりすることは一切ない。インタビュ

一でうかがったことも決して口外しない。先生からの希望があれば、インタビュー中に話したことを後日撤回してもらってかまわない。インタビューに答えたくないときは、その旨伝えていただければインタビューをいつでも終了することができる。

なお、生徒および保護者にインタビューしたりアンケートをとったりはしない。あくまで先生に焦点を置く。

3. 4. 情報の取り扱い

上記で得られた情報を含め貴校で見聞きしたことは一切口外しない。私以外の人には「論文」という形でしか目に触れない。なお、貴校や先生方のプライバシーを守るために仮名を使用するなど、情報の取り扱いに最大限の注意を払う。

4. 研究予定

2006年

8月：ハワイ大学から発行された Human Subjects（個人情報などに関する契約書）の書類をお渡しする。

Health Clearance Form（健康診断書）をお渡しする。

その他、必要な事務手続きを行う。

8月 or 9月：事務手続きが完了し次第、授業見学およびインタビューを開始する。

2007年

3月：研究終了

出来上がり次第、論文を大学に提出。なお、提出前に書いたもののチェックなどを希望される場合は、そのようにする。

5. 論文提出先

ハワイ大学マノア校 東アジア言語・文学部 (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures)に修士論文として提出する。私の指導教官3名が論文を読むことになる。指導教官は現時点で以下の二名が確定している。

- ・ 主査 : Professor Kimi Kondo-Brown (kondo@hawaii.edu)
- ・ 副査 : Professor Kyoko Hijirida (hijirida@hawaii.edu)

連絡先 :

山口悠希子 (Yukiko Rina Yamaguchi)

1660 Pensacola Street, Honolulu, HI 96822

Phone 808-384-3477

E-mail yukikoy@hawaii.edu

Appendix D

Agreement to Participate in the Research Project

Yukiko Yamaguchi

Investigator

(808) 384-3477

Study description

This research project is being conducted as a component of a thesis for a master's degree. The purpose of this project is to investigate: (a) what administrative and pedagogical concerns a Japanese supplementary school teacher has, (b) what professional knowledge a Japanese supplementary school teacher has, (c) how the teacher's professional knowledge is generated, and (d) how Japanese supplementary school administrators, the Japanese government, parents, and the community can assist the teachers in doing their jobs. You are being asked to participate, because you are teaching at a Japanese supplementary school.

In this project, I will observe your teaching practices. I will take notes during your classes in which I will describe your teaching practices. In addition, you will be interviewed for approximately five times (for about 60 minutes each) during the data-collection period and asked about your teaching experiences and thoughts on your teaching practices. Those interviews will be audio-recorded. The data-collection period will be from August 26, 2006 to March 3, 2007. There is no known risk to you in participating in this research project. The information obtained through the research will remain confidential and will be used only for the purpose of the research. All research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project. Your name will not be identified in any report of the results.

The right to withdraw from participation

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty. Participating in this research may be of no direct benefit to you. It is believed, however,

the results from this project will help teachers, administrators, and parents understand better Japanese supplementary school teachers' experiences, needs, professional development, and teaching practices at Japanese supplementary schools,

Contact information

If you have any questions regarding to this research project, please contact the researcher, Yukiko Yamaguchi, at 384-3477 or yukikoy@hawaii.edu.

If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions or have comments about your treatment in this study, please contact my supervisor, Professor Kimi Kondo-Brown at kondo@hawaii.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH committee on Human Studies at 956-5007.

Participant:

I have read and understand the above information. I agree to participate in this research project and permit the researcher to use the data for her study.

Name (please print)	Signature	Date
---------------------	-----------	------

You should keep a copy of the consent form for your future reference.

Appendix E

Sample Sentences in *Rizumu Ondoku* (Rhythm Reading)

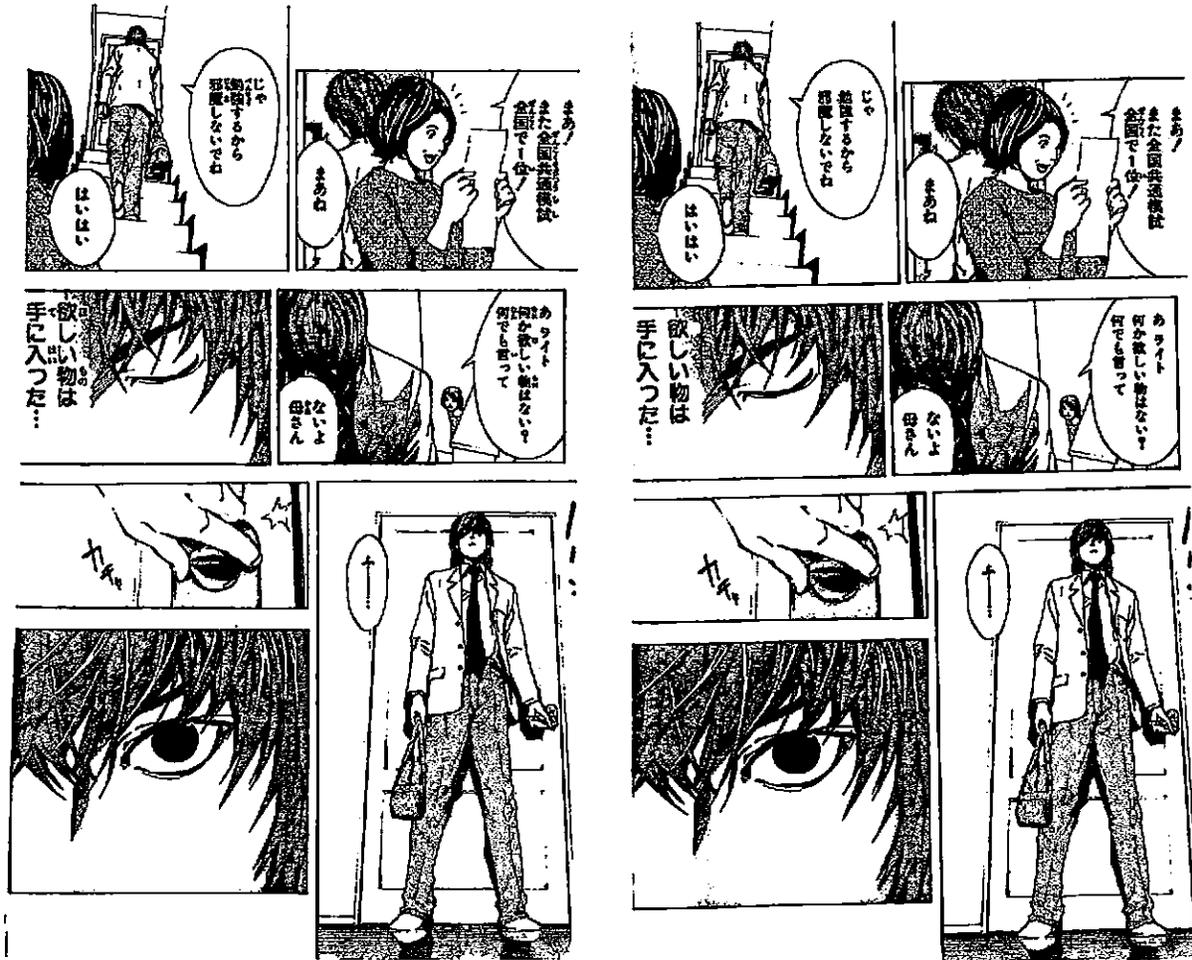
- (1) ここのここの九つ 九月九日九時九分
- (2) かんがかんが考える 考える力 思考力
- (3) 長い短い長短長短 長所と短所 一長一短
- (4) うつくうつく美しい 美しい人 美人美人

Appendix F

<p>① 雨なのでサッカーは休みだ。 ② 森へ虫をとりにいこう。 ③ 小さい赤ちゃんの手。 ④ 青い空と白いくも。 ⑤ 大きなじてん車にのっってみる。 ⑥ 右がわの山を見てごらん。 ⑦ ていねいな字で手がみをかいた。 ⑧ 木の上でねてみたいな。 ⑨ ぞうの耳は大きいね。 ⑩ 夕日が空を赤にそめた。</p>	<p>① <small>あめ</small> □ <small>やす</small> なのでサッカーは□みだ。 ② <small>もり</small> □ <small>むし</small> へ□をとりにいこう。 ③ <small>ちい</small> □ <small>あか</small> さい □ <small>て</small> ちゃんの□。 ④ <small>あお</small> □ <small>そら</small> <small>しろ</small> い □ と □ <small>いく</small> も。 ⑤ <small>おお</small> □ <small>しや</small> きなじてん □ <small>しや</small> にのっってみる。 ⑥ <small>みぎ</small> □ <small>やま</small> がわの □ <small>み</small> を □ <small>み</small> てごらん。 ⑦ <small>て</small> ていねいな □ <small>て</small> で □ <small>て</small> がみをかいた。</p>
--	--

Examples of Material in the New Kanji Subject in Grades 1-6

Appendix G



A page from a comic book.

The same page without *furigana*

Sample Material 1

Appendix H

息	音読み ソク 訓読み いき	筆順：
例文 大きく息を吸う。 息子が元気に育つ。 母の消息が分からない。		
おぼえかた： 「自」分の「心」から大きく「息」をはく。		

Sample Material 2

Sample activity:

1. Divide students into groups of 3-5.
2. Assign each student several *kanji*.
3. Students fill out the material about the *kanji* they were assigned to as homework.
4. In the next class, students share their tips with the group.

REFERENCES

- Aoki, N. (2000). Kanjikyooiku tenkan no kiiwaado: Oboeru kara omoeru e [Keywords for the turning point of *kanji* education: From “remember” to “feel”]. *Nihongogaku*, 19(8), 64-71.
- Banya, K., & Cheng, M. H. (1997) *Beliefs about foreign language learning: A study of beliefs of teachers and students cross cultural settings*. Paper presented at the 31st annual TESOL convention, Orlando, FL (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 411691).
- Bernabe, M. (2004). *Japanese in mangaland 1*. Japan Publications Trading: Tokyo.
- Basturkmen, H., Loewen, S., & Ellis, R. (2004). Teachers’ stated beliefs about incidental focus on form and their classroom practices. *Applied Linguistics*, 25(2), 243-272.
- Bekka, K. (1955). Gaikokujin no kanjigakushū ni okeru mondaiten [Problems of kanji learning of foreign people]. *Nihongo kyooiku*, 36, 40-54.
- Boeije, H. (2002). A purposeful approach to the constant comparative method in the analysis of qualitative interviews. *Quality & Quantity*, 36, 391-409.
- Bowen, G. A. (2006). Grounded Theory and Sensitizing Concepts. *International Journal of Methods*, 5(3), 1-9.
- Chikamatsu, N. (1996). The effects of L1 orthography on L2 word recognition. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 18, 403-432.

- Cho, K. & Krashen, S. (1994). Acquisition of vocabulary from the "Sweet Valley Kids" series: Adult ESL acquisition. *Journal of Reading*, 37(8), 662-667.
- Davis, K.A. (1995). Qualitative theory and methods in applied linguistics research, *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 427-453.
- Day, R., Omura C., & Hiramatsu M. (1991). Incidental EFL vocabulary learning and reading. *Reading in Foreign Language*, 7(2). Retrieved February 22, 2008 from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl>.
- Douglas, M. (2005). Pedagogical theories and approaches to teach young learners of Japanese as a heritage language. *Heritage Language Journal*, 3(1), 60-82.
- Douglas, M., Kataoka, Y., & Kishimoto, T. (2003). Keeshoogokoo to nihongohoshuujugyookoo ni okeru gakushuusha no gengohaikei choosa [Study on Language Background of the Young Learners of Japanese as a Heritage Language at Heritage Language Schools and Hoshuukoo]. *CRIE Review of International Education*, 1, 1-13.
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing language shift: Theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Flaherty, M. & Noguchi, M. S. (1998). Effectiveness of different approaches to kanji education with second language learners. *JALT Journal*, 20(2), 60-78.
- Foltz, T. G., & Griffin, W. (1996). She changes everything she touches: Ethnographic journeys of self-discovery. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing*

ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing (pp. 301-329). Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira.

Fujimori, H. (2006). Gaikoku, zaigaikyooikushisetsu ni okeru nihongokyooiku no genjoo to juyoo choosakenkyuu [A research survey on the current situations and needs at foreign educational institutions]. *Kagakukenyuuhi hojyokin kenkyuu seikahookokusho*.

Fujimori, H., Kashiwazaki, M., Nakamura, A., & Itō, S. (2006). Nihonjingakkoo, hoshuujugyookoo ni okeru nihongoshidoo no genjoo to kadai [The situation and problems of Japanese instruction in Japanese schools abroad and Japanese supplementary schools]. *Nihongo kyooiku*, 128, 80-89.

Furuie, A. (2001). Hoshuukoo no genten to tenboo to [Starting points and perspectives on supplementary schools]. *Gekkan Kaigaishijo Kyooiku*, 343, September, 4-23.

Furuie, A. (2005). Tayooka suru niizu: Nihonjingakkoo, hoshuujugyookoo no atarashii kadai [The diversifying needs: New tasks of Japanese schools abroad and Japanese supplementary schools]. *Gekkan Kaigaishijo Kyooiku*, 385, March, 4-24.

Gamage, G. H. (2003). Issues in strategy classifications in language learning: A framework for kanji learning strategy research. *ASAA e-journal of Asian Linguistics & Language Teaching*, 5. Retrieved March 11, 2007 from http://languages.arts.unsw.edu.au/asaa_ejournal/.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.

- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: an introduction*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gruneberg, M. (1998). A commentary on criticism of the keyword method of learning foreign languages. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 12*, 529-532.
- Hattori, K. (2000). Kokugo-ka ni okeru kanji no yomikaki shidoo no kenkuu: Shingakushuuyoryoo no kanji no yomikaki to korekara no kanji kyooiku no kanoosee [A study on instruction of *kanji* reading and writing in *kokugo*]. *Nihongogaku, 19*(8), 50-63.
- Johnson, K. E. (1992). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices during literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 24*(1), 83-108.
- Kataoka, H., Furuyama, H., & Koshiyama, Y. (2000). *Minami karigorunia nihongo gakuen kyooshi ankeeto kekka bunseki hookokusho [Report on the Southern California Japanese language school teacher survey results]*. Retrieved January 18, 2007 from <http://www.jflalc.org/download/publication/BREEZE22.pdf>.
- Kataoka, H., Koshiyama, Y. & Shibata, S. (2007). Japanese and English language ability of students at supplementary Japanese schools in the U.S.. In K. Kondo-Brown & J.D. Brown (Eds.), *Teaching Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Heritage Language Students: Curriculum Needs, Materials, and Assessment (ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series)*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Kern, R. G. (1995). Student's and teacher's beliefs about language learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 28, 71-92.
- Kobayashi, K. (2000). Atarashii jidai no kanji kyooiku [Kanji education in the new age]. *Nihongogaku*, 19(8), 6-15.
- Koda, K. (1999). Development of L2 intraword orthographic sensitivity and decoding skills. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83, 51-64.
- Kondo-Brown, K. (1997). Social-psychological factors affecting language maintenance: Interviews with Shin Nisei university students. *Linguistics & Education*, 9, 369-408.
- Kondo-Brown, K. (2006). Introduction. In K. Kondo-Brown (Ed.), *Heritage language development: Focus on East Asian Immigrants* (pp. 1-12). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Lammers, W. (2004). Japanese the *manga* way: An illustrated guide to grammar and structure. Stone Bridge Press: Berkeley, CA.
- Lao, C. (2004). Parents' attitude toward Chinese: English bilingual education and Chinese-language use. *Bilingual Research Journal* 28(1), 99-121.
- Leung, C. Y. (2002). Extensive reading and language learning: A diary study of a beginning learner of Japanese. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 14(1). Retrieved February 22, 2008 from <http://nflrc.hawaii.edu/rfl>.

- Li, G. (2006). The role of parents in heritage language maintenance and development. In K. Kondo-Brown (Ed.), *Heritage language development: Focus on East Asian Immigrants* (pp. 15-31). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (2003). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues* (pp. 253-291). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Matsunaga, S. (2003). Instructional needs of college-level learners of Japanese as a heritage language: Performance-based analyses. *Heritage Language Journal*, 1(1).
Retrieved January 21, 2007 from <http://www.heritagelanguages.org/>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (2005). *Zairyuu Hoojin Shijoo Choosa [Survey on Overseas Japanese]*, 2004. Retrieved April 1, 2006 from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/data1.html.
- Miyakoshi, M. (2000). Tettee shita kata no shuutoku o [Acquiring shapes completely]. *Nihongogaku*, 19(8), 16-24.
- Miyazawa, M. (2000). Kanji o shuutokusuru tame no genten [Starting point for acquiring kanji]. *Nihongogaku*, 19(8), 25-31.
- Monbukagakushoo (2006a). *Zaigai kyooiku shisetsu no gaiyoo [An overview of educational institutions abroad]*. Retrieved March 26, 2006, from http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/f_sijo22.html.

- Monbukagakushoo (2006b). *Kaigai zairyuu hoojinshijosuu, zaigai kyooiku shisetsu suu* [The number of the children living abroad and overseas educational institutions]. Retrieved May 6, 2006 from http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/002/002b/17/pdf/119.pdf.
- Mori, Y. (1998). Effects of first language and phonological accessibility on *kanji* recognition. *The Modern Language Journal*, 82, 69-82.
- Mori, Y. & Nagy, W. (1999). Integration of information from context and word elements interpreting novel *kanji* compounds. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 34(1), 80-101.
- Mori, Y. & Shimizu, H. (2007). Japanese language students' attitudes toward *kanji* and their perceptions on *kanji* learning strategies. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40(3), 472-490.
- Nagaoka, Y. (1998). *A descriptive study of Japanese biliterate students in the United States: Bilingualism, language-minority education, and teacher's role*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- Nagasawa, F. (1995). L1, L2, bairingaruru no nihongo bunpoo nooryoku [Comparative grammatical competence among L1, L2, and bilingual speakers of Japanese]. *Nihongo kyooiku*, 86, 173-189.
- Nakajima, K. (1988). Nikkeishijo no nihongo kyooiku [Japanese language education for children of Japanese heritage speakers]. *Nihongokyooiku*, 66, 137-150.

- Nakajima, K. (1998). *Bairingararu kyooiku no hoohoo: Jyuuni-sai made ni oya to kyooshi ga dekirukoto [Methods for bilingual education: What parents and teachers can do for the children under 12 years old]*. Tokyo: Aruku.
- Nakajima, K. (2003). The role of *kokugo* textbooks in *kanji* instruction for heritage Japanese learners. *Obirin Synergy*, 1, 1-21.
- Obata, K. (2004). *Desu nooto I [Death Note I]*. Shuueesha: Tokyo.
- Priest, H., Roberts, P., & Woods, L. (2002). An overview of three different approaches to the interpretation of qualitative data. *Nurse Researcher*, 10(1), 30-42.
- Rennie, D. L. & Philips, J. R. (1988). Grounded theory: A promising approach to conceptualization in psychology? *Canadian Psychology*, 29(2), 139-149.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richardson, V., Anders, P., Tidwell, D., & Lloyd, C. (1991). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in reading comprehension instruction. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28(3), 559-586.
- Sasaki, H. (2002). *Yonkoma-manga de oboeru nihongo [Practical Japanese through comics]*. Asuku: Tokyo.
- Sato, G. (2004). Kaigai nihonjingakkoo, hoshuukoo no kyooiku ni miru "nihonjinsei" ni tsuite ["Japaneseness" in Japanese schools and supplementary schools overseas]. *Toozainanboku*, 3, 28-38.

- Sato, G. (2005). Kaigaishijo kyooiku ni miru "nihonjinsei" no mondai to sono koosatsu: Toransu-nashonaru na kaigaishijo kyooiku no kanousē [The problems and discussions of the Japaneseness in the field of education children abroad: possibilities toward a transnational education for children abroad]. In G. Sato & T. Yoshitani (Eds.), *Hito o wakeru mono tsunagu mono: Ibunkakan kyooiku kara no choosen* (pp. 7-34). Kyoto, Japan: Nakanishiya shuppan.
- Sato, K., & Kleinsasser, R.C. (1999). Communicative language teaching (CLT): Practical understandings. *Modern Language Journal*, 83(4), 494-517.
- Shibata, S. (2000). Opening a Japanese Saturday school in a small town in the United States: Community collaboration to teach Japanese as a heritage language. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 24(4), 465-475.
- Sugiura, H. (2003). *Rosanzerusu hoshuujugyookoo no jlssen kiroku* [A record of practice at Los Angels Supplementary School].
- Tanaka, K. (2000). Shinkyooikukatei ni okeru kanji to kotoba no gakushuu: Kootoogakkoo o chuushin ni [Learning vocabulary in a new curriculum: With a focus on high schools]. *Nihongogaku*, 19(8), 32-39.
- The UCLA Steering Committee (2000). *Heritage Language Research Priorities Conference Report*. Retrieved January 21, 2007 from <http://www.cal.org/heritage/priorities.html>

- Tollini, A. (1994). The importance of form in the teaching of *kanji*. *Sekai no Nihongo Kyooiku*, 4, 107-116.
- Okita, Y. (1996). *Kanji learning strategies and verbal and visual learning style preferences*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Hawai'i.
- Okumura, M. (2006). *Doitsu no nihongo-hoshuukoo ni okeru nihongo-kyooiku ni kansuru kenkyuu* [A study about Japanese language education at Japanese supplementary schools in Germany]. Unpublished master's thesis, Tokyo Gakugei University, Tokyo, Japan.
- Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Wang, A., Thomas, M., & Ouellette, J. (1992). Keyword mnemonics and retention of second language vocabulary words. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(4), 520-528.
- Woods, D. (1996). *Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.