A country in focus

Selected research on second-language teaching and acquisition published in Japan in the years 2000–2006

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This review presents selected research on language education published in English in Japan from 2000 to 2006. In an attempt to show the academic diversity and intellectual depth of current research agendas in Japan, it looks at the following areas: LANGUAGE POLICY , in which recent government mandates are outlined, including a stronger focus on English education in elementary school; TEAM-TEACHING situations that are commonly found at the high school and junior high school level; TESTING and PLACEMENT , focusing on entrance exams and placement exams which can be a driving force behind many classroom practices and continue to be the focus of considerable criticism; BILINGUALISM, which is receiving more and more attention in Japan as the number of returnees, children of bi-cultural families and other English-speaking Japanese nationals increases; WORLD ENGLISHES, reflecting the reality that many adult Japanese speakers of English interact with speakers from Outer and Expanding Circle countries; INTERLANGUAGE PRAGAMATICS, which is attracting more and more researchers interested in cross-cultural differences and interlanguage development; MOTIVATION, which continues to receive a great deal of attention and has been examined in a more nuanced approach of late; WRITING, in light of its importance in many educational settings; and GENDER and its interconnectedness to EFL learning and use.

1. Introduction

We are pleased to add this compilation of selected research published in Japan to *Language Teaching*'s series of country-specific reviews. While the decisions involved in what to include in this review were ultimately based on subjective criteria, we feel confident that the current state of publishing activity in Japan is well represented by the studies highlighted below. For this review we considered only reports related to language education published in English in Japan from 2000 to 2006. Thus, we have not reviewed materials widely available outside of Japan (e.g. Fotos & Goebel-Noguchi 2001; Yoshitomi, Unimo & Negishi 2006), nor have we included research published in Japanese given that the original articles might be less accessible to many readers. Further, we have not reviewed dissertations that would otherwise meet our criteria, as they will be reviewed at a later date in a separate *Language Teaching* series.

While there is a large amount of research published in English in Japan, most of it originates from a limited number of sources. For this review, we have included articles published by service organizations such as the Japan Association for College English Teachers (JACET) and the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) along with their various special interest groups. We have also looked at the

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work of the Japan Association for Asian Englishes and the Japan Language Testing Association. In addition, we have reviewed articles from the working papers of Temple University Japan and articles found in *kiyou*[1] – in-house bulletins or journals of Japanese universities. Throughout, in selecting articles, it has been our goal to make available a body of quality research that is less commonly read outside of Japan.

Space limitations have dictated that only a handful of topics can be covered. With readers less familiar with language learning in the Japanese context in mind, we have attempted to provide a portrait of both issues and trends central to language education in Japan together with an indication of research directions being taken. Thus, we open our review with a section on language policy, in which we outline recent government mandates, including a stronger focus on English education in elementary school. We then turn to how language policy gets played out in the classroom in team-teaching situations that are commonly found at the high school and junior high school level. As entrance exams can be a driving force behind many classroom practices and continue to be the focus of considerable criticism, we review research on testing and placement that has followed since Brown & Yamashita's studies (1995a, b) on Japanese university entrance exams. We hope that this discussion will be of interest to readers in other settings where entrance exams play an important role in shaping classroom choices. We then turn to the topic of bilingualism. While the received image of Japan may be that of a monolingual culture, increasing numbers of immigrants are coming to Japan, and this trend promises to influence policy needs in the future. At the same time, research on bilingualism in Japan is receiving more and more attention as the number of returnees, children of bi-cultural families and other English-speaking Japanese nationals increases. Next, we review recent research on World Englishes. Here again, more and more articles are appearing in this area, reflecting the reality that many adult Japanese speakers of English interact with speakers from Outer and Expanding Circle countries (Kachru 1985).

Our choice of the final four topics (interlanguage pragmatics, motivation, writing and gender) is admittedly the most eclectic. However, we believe that these areas are representative of those receiving the most attention in domestic conferences and publications. Interlanguage pragmatics continues to attract researchers interested in cross-cultural differences and interlanguage development. As English and Japanese are highly contrastive languages and the sociopragmatic norms in Japanese differ considerably with those in many English speaking contexts, the attention to this area may not be that surprising. Given the social context in which English is taught in Japan, motivation continues to receive a great deal of attention and has been examined in a more nuanced approach of late, as researchers look at motivation to read and re-examine the construct of learner motivation. Similarly, various aspects of writing have been examined, including the effect of different instructional interventions and writing processes. Finally, following a trend throughout the world, research on gender as it relates to language education has been receiving long-overdue attention, and we feel that it is important to share this literature with readers outside of Japan. It is unfortunate that we are unable to cover more topics in this review, but we hope that our list of links to Japanese-based databases and academic societies at the end of this article will prove to be a useful resource for readers who want to read more on these and other topics.

2. Language policy

The past five years have been a very active time in Japan in terms of language policy. Citing globalization and progress in information technology as driving forces behind an increased need for Japanese to develop English abilities, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) introduced 'The National Action Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities"' in March 2003 (MEXT 2003b; see also Tanabe 2004 for a summary). This five-year plan is one of the first to set specific targets for teacher proficiency (TOEFL 550 or TOEIC 730) and target levels for student achievement based on standardized tests. In terms of instruction, the action plan calls for a greater focus on communicative abilities, smaller class sizes, increased contact with native speaking teaching assistants, and more English education in elementary school as part of the 'Period for Integrated Study'. Additional reforms include the introduction of a listening component to the national University Center Examination in 2006, specific numerical targets for students and teachers studying abroad, the promotion of research on English education in elementary schools as well as junior and senior high schools, and the creation of 'Super English Language High Schools' recognized for their innovative approaches.

The Action Plan has prompted both criticism and research related to its implementation. Criticism of the plan has focused on the plan's examination-oriented aspect which relates gains in proficiency to specific tests (e.g. the STEP test). The concern is that

[1] There are divided opinions regarding the quality of *kiyou* since for many years they were non-refereed. However, in recent years a growing number of institutional editorial boards have been set up to referee the articles. Furthermore, as Gorsuch & Snyder (2006) and Canagarajah (2003) have noted, authors publishing in peripheral publications often have to struggle to have their research disseminated in the international research community. As a result, we feel it is appropriate to include select *kiyou* articles in this review as they reflect the type of research that is being done and reported on in Japan.

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the quality of the tests will 'exert a great influence on the formation of . . . learners' L2 competence' and that the tests in question have not been sufficiently evaluated in terms of their validity for measuring the competence the government is attempting to foster (Hato 2005: 36). Another concern raised by both Hato (2005) and Takagaki (2003) regards how realistic the goals of the plan are, considering the actual hours of instruction. Citing second language acquisition (SLA) literature on class hours and achievement, Hato concludes that the objectives are unattainable given the number of hours of instruction allotted. Takagaki comes to a similar conclusion based on his comparison of the MEXT proposal with immersion education in Canada.

One recent innovation receiving attention from researchers is the introduction of English in elementary school. Using a Conversation Analysis framework, Hosoda & Aline (2006) looked at the turn-taking timing of elementary school students and participation patterns of homeroom teachers in team teaching situations. In their analysis of seven and a half hours of video and audio-taped classroom interaction taught by team teachers in seven schools, they found that the learners understood that turn-taking timing is not different between English and Japanese. They also found that classroom interaction not only helps the students who are selected to speak but also other learners as they participate peripherally by whispering answers. In their analysis of participation patterns of Japanese homeroom teachers in team-teaching situations with native speakers of English, Aline & Hosoda (2006) found that in the six classes from the five schools they videotaped and transcribed, the moment-to-moment participation of the homeroom teachers could be categorized into one of four roles: bystander, translator, co-learner, and co-teacher. Individual homeroom teachers varied in their participation patterns throughout class periods, and changes in their participation patterns affected the overall interaction patterns of the class and vice-versa. Aline & Hosoda suggest that by being aware of interactional patterns teachers can improve their teaching by making informed decisions about their classroom actions.

3. Team teaching and the JET program

As illustrated by the work of Aline & Hosoda, issues related to team teaching are integrally connected to language policy and continue to receive attention from a variety of perspectives since the inception of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program, a governmental program started in 1987 to bring English-speaking college graduates to Japan to serve as cultural representatives and assistant English teachers (for a detailed discussion of the JET program see McConnell 2000). While some authors mentioned in this section use the acronym ALT (Assistant Language Teacher), others use AET (Assistant English Teacher); however, both are comparable designations for the position and responsibilities of non-Japanese English teachers. In an article that examines the roles of teachers in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program, Mahoney (2004) documents the conflicting perceptions held by Assistant English Teachers (AETs) and Japanese English teachers (JTEs). Building upon a study by Yamada (1996), Mahoney reports on the open-ended section of a questionnaire examining 1402 AETs' (431) and JTEs' perceptions (971) of their respective roles. Working with participants' written responses, he coded the data in a qualitative analysis. Broad categories were developed and checked by six raters (three English L1 speakers and three Japanese L1 speakers), who showed 96% inter-rater agreement. Whereas Yamada wrote that JTEs reported using AETs more often as language resources than as cultural referents, Mahoney found that JTEs saw AETs' chief role as being a cultural model while AETs saw their main role as being an English conversation and pronunciation model. Mahoney acknowledges that 'Teaching language and teaching culture may and often do occur simultaneously', but points out 'the issue may at times lead to problems in assigning priority to classroom tasks' (Mahoney 2005: 230). In addition to this conflicting perception, Mahoney also found there were different attitudes toward power relationships, with AETs reporting that they either had too much or too little authority. Most JTEs did not see AETs as equal coworkers though some saw their role as being an assistant to the AET.

In another team-teaching study that looks at professional development and the JET program, Crooks suggests that AETs are likely to take a more active part in classes than they did in the past, as L1 English speakers have become more accepted in the Japanese secondary education system. At the same time, he points out that there are still complaints and frustrations about 'their position and the effectiveness of their team teaching partners' (Crooks 2001: 33). Crooks goes on to outline some problems before describing Sendai City's program and professional development opportunities in the program. Crooks argues that, with only two weeks of practice teaching in actual classrooms prospective, JTEs are often not prepared for team teaching, and once they become teachers there are few opportunities for in-service training. At the same time, AETs, for the most part, are not better prepared for teaching English. While AETs must meet nationality, age, and language requirements, they do not need to have a background in education nor do they need any teaching experience. Crooks also discusses institutional conflicts, such as textbooks that do not match new government guidelines encouraging more communicative classrooms. This mismatch of goals and methods extends to the pressure teachers feel

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to both prepare students for entrance examinations and create communicative classrooms. Based on his experience in the Sendai program, Crooks suggests the following as possible solutions: offer JTEs seminars to improve their communicative English ability, develop culturally appropriate teaching techniques, draw on the expertise of Japanese teaching experts, schedule the seminars at more convenient times, offer some seminars just for JTEs, and make seminars mandatory to make it easier for teachers to attend without needing to get special permission.

In another article on team-teaching, Gorsuch (2002) looked at the influence that working with an assistant language teacher (ALT) had on JTEs' self-reports of their English speaking ability, their English learning experience and the level of approval they had for communicative, audio-lingual, and *yakudoku* methodology. YAKUDOKU, literally translated as 'translation' and 'reading', refers to a teacher-centered approach where classes are conducted in Japanese with the focus on checking student-produced English translations of Japanese texts. Using a Japanese language questionnaire, Gorsuch surveyed 884 full-time JTEs working at public academic, public vocational and private academic senior high schools. She found that 61% of the respondents did not teach English I or II with an ALT (English I and II are mandatory four-skills English courses within the national curriculum). Gorsuch supposes that this may be due to the nature of English I and II, which may focus on preparing students for English entrance exams. She also found that ALTs are not distributed equally among schools. Many private academic high school JTEs did not teach with ALTs, whereas public vocational JTEs reported more use of ALTs. Private schools do not participate in the JET programme but instead hire their own L1 English teachers. Most private school JTEs also seem less approving of communicative language teaching techniques, preferring activities that they deem necessary for preparing students to take college entrance exams. Gorsuch suggests that the presence of an ALT has a positive influence on JTEs' estimates of their English ability. Teachers who had some contact with ALTs had significantly higher self-reports of their English ability than teachers who had no contact with ALTs. They also had higher approval rates for communicative language activities. Gorsuch suggests that the presence of ALTs might be a 'dynamic, if unevenly available, form of in-service teacher education' (Gorsuch 2002: 4). In light of the potential influence of ALTs on the beliefs and practices of JTEs, Gorsuch concludes by suggesting that more research into the role of team teaching in professional development is needed.

4. Testing

High stakes language testing is an area of concern throughout the world, and Japan is no exception. In an open letter to the Japanese Prime Minster, Murphey (2000: 4) summarizes a central controversy concerning entrance exams: 'Universities need to develop more assessment literacy, to test their entrance exams, and to eventually report their validity and reliability publicly'. Around the same time, in a plenary speech to the Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC), Amano (2000) reviewed the history of entrance examinations in Asia (China) and Europe (Germany and France) before examining university admission policies in Japan, tracing their development from the Meiji era through periods of reform to the current system. He provides a rationale as to why the current system has been developed and predicts that it will soon be obsolete due in no small part to the falling population that Japan is trying to cope with (See Brown, 1996a, b, Stapleton, 1996; and Yoshida, 1996a, b for some of the points and counterpoints that have been exchanged around the issue of entrance examinations).

To investigate the extent to which entrance exams have changed in response to earlier critiques, Kikuchi (2006) repeated Brown & Yamashita's studies (1995a, b) by analyzing exams from the same 20 prestigious universities (10 private, 10 public) in the original reports. He found that in 10 years little has changed. Reading difficulties are basically the same (too difficult), and though a few new item types (listening, summarizing) have been added, most of the items still test receptive and translation skills. He suggests that one reason translation might be so prevalent is that since many English programs are often part of literature departments, they may be predisposed to using translation as part of their entrance exams. Another reason may be that the prestigious universities examined in both studies may not be sensitive to the need to change their entrance exams. While most universities are seeing the effect of a decreasing number of college age students (and are having to respond accordingly), prestigious institutions continue to have a large number of applicants. Kikuchi concludes that success on these entrance exams may have more to do with test-taking ability than with proficiency. He also reports that there are some moves to add listening items to entrance exams with seven of the 20 schools having added listening components. However, in spite of the government guidelines (MEXT 2003a) that are strongly promoting aural/oral communication skills, the change is occurring very slowly.

One example of a small-scale project to affect change in entrance exams is Akiyama's (2003a, 2003b) study on including a speaking component in senior high school entrance exams. In a survey of 199 junior high school teachers, he found that approximately 75% of the teachers felt that the inclusion of a speaking component in high school entrance exams would have an effect on their teaching practices. While 57% of the respondents said that they currently included a speaking test in their evaluation of students, most schools also used pencil-and-paper

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tests to evaluate students. Akiyama also performed a comparative analysis on different types of speaking tasks and found that interviews and role plays were easier for students than descriptive tasks. Based on test trials with 219 students at 12 junior high schools, Akiyama suggests that the difficulty of matching tasks to student ability poses considerable challenges to potential raters. This is particularly true if the assessment of students' ability needs to be comparable across schools. Thus, while the introduction of an oral component in entrance exams at the high school level could positively affect teaching practices at the junior high level, the implementation of such a reform is not without its difficulties.

Recently, placement tests have been the focus of research in Japan as more and more schools try to assign students to classes based on their proficiency levels. Gorsuch & Culligan (2000) examined the use of Item Response Theory to help with placement decisions at the university level. In their study, they found that when using raw scores from a proficiency test–as is commonly done for placement purposes, 5% of the test takers were potentially misplaced. They suggested that administrators avail themselves of the added information provided by Rasch analysis to attempt to make better placement decisions.

In another study dealing with university placement decisions, Westrick (2005) tested the viability of using a commercially available test. As part of his 'test of the test' he examined whether or not the test would have reliability coefficients at or above 0.90 and if the two versions of the test were highly correlated. The procedure that he followed was to administer both versions of the test to 167 first-year students who had been divided into two groups. Group one took version 1 first while group two reversed the order. Westrick found that 40% of the students who had had trouble with the first administration approached the second administration differently having become familiar with the test. Item analysis of the test revealed that many items were either too easy or too difficult for the students. In addition, the correlation of the two versions was low. Westrick suggests that test anxiety and practice effect appeared to have affected the two administrations of the test, and thus would have made placement decisions using first administration scores inaccurate because students' true abilities might be underestimated. 'Anxiety, confusion, and lack of experience created variance in the scores, but it was error variance because it was not related to the purpose of the test' (Brown 1996c :188, cited by Westrick 2005). Westrick points out that score reliability is more a function of the group rather than the test. Even though the test he used had been validated in 20 countries and with 5000 students, it did not fit his students, the majority of whom came from one country. Based on his experience, Westrick recommends that in-house placement tests connected to the school's curriculum may better meet the needs of Japanese universities than commercially produced tests.

5. Bi/multilingualism and education

The monocultural, monolingual stereotype of Japan has been slowly eroding due to the increase in immigrant populations and the appearance of a significant body of research in the area of bi/multilingualism and education that promises to impact on future language policy decisions. In addition to better-known publications on bi/multilingualism in Japan (e.g. Goebel-Noguchi 2001; Kanno 2003), the large number of publications by local research associations attests to interest in this area among researchers in Japan. The Bilingualism Special Interest Group (Bilingualism SIG) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) is at the forefront of a movement not only to disseminate research findings but also to provide social and psychological support for bi/multilingual individuals who share common problems involving multicultural education, peer acceptance, and legal status. In addition to monographs containing a collection of its newsletter articles, the Bilingualism SIG publishes an annual journal, *Japan Journal of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism*, to provide a venue for research in a field that is expanding due to Japan's political and economic importance in an increasingly diverse global community.

There are numerous and often conflicting definitions of bi/multilingualism (which is inherently intertwined with multiculturalism) depending on the language components (receptive/productive skills) under examination; however, the Bilingualism SIG employs the umbrella term BILINGUAL 'to refer to individuals and groups who use two (or more) languages on a regular basis, and who consequently have some claim to multiple cultures' (JALT Bilingualism SIG 2006). As such, many studies from multiple perspectives have appeared attempting to elucidate not only the psychological issues involved in bilingual speech (e.g. codeswitching/mixing, syntactical constraints) but also the sociocultural implications of an individual's additional language use. Reports published in the last five years are a mosaic of topics ranging from the acculturation processes of bilingual heritage students of Japanese in Hawai'i (Kondo-Brown 2000) to a poststructuralist discourse analysis of multi-ethnic identities of Japanese–Caucasian adolescent schoolgirls in Japan (Kamada 2005). Of particular note among the journal's contributions are case studies of bi/multilinguals' identities conducted within a qualitative research paradigm with its corresponding methodological procedures. In her case study of English-Japanese bilingual children in New York, Fujiu (2004) employs semi-structured interviews as a main data collection procedure along with an interpretive analysis of the visual representations of cultural identities as

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depicted in drawings made by the participants. The study's postmodernist approach provided the researcher with a window into the multi-layered nature of bilingual identities shaped at the intersection of family background, language practices, and social environment. The complexity of child trilingualism in Japan is explored by Jie (2005) through an analysis of qualitative data obtained from the mother's journal and audio recordings of parent-child conversations and interviews. In Ascough's (2001) study, qualitative data obtained from analyses of life-story interviews with three female native Japanese speakers married to native English speakers reveal how notions of relatedness and *akogare*, or 'yearning', play an integral part in their bilingual language learning experiences and identity formations. Focus group discussion data are used in Greer's (2005) study of the dynamic enactment of multi-ethnic Japanese teenagers' identities in Japanese society, which has traditionally inscribed these individuals in static, dichotomous terms such as *haafu* 'half' or *daburu* 'double'. In sum, qualitative research methodologies are gaining a foothold in bi/multicultural research in Japan and elsewhere and represent an alternative investigative approach well recognized in the parent fields of SLA and Applied Linguistics.

Kanno's (2002) work with four *kikokushijo* (Japanese returnees) draws on social identity theory to highlight the multifaceted nature of their bicultural identities. Through narrative inquiry she found that the four returnees' identities were constantly in flux as they attempted to adjust to their immediate surroundings. The author suggests that the study's findings can inform language educators' pedagogical practices by encouraging a learning situation in which bi/multilingual individuals share their experiences with teachers and students, thus fostering a keener understanding of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Beginning with a detailed outline of the limitations of the current foreign language education system in Japan, Reedy (2002) proposes some educational reforms that would enable Japanese children to achieve a substantial level of bilingual proficiency. The author's main criticisms concern the delayed introduction of English studies in elementary school (4th grade), an over-emphasis on rote-memorization and translation methods geared primarily to preparing students for college entrance examinations, and the peripheral role of the foreign native English-speaking teaching assistant in the classroom. In addition to recommending an early partial immersion model in primary school, Reedy also suggests that language studies at the college level not be limited to traditional Western language majors (English, French, German) but instead should include a more diversified curricula in line with the actualities of the recent proliferation of non-western languages spoken by foreign residents in Japan. This group of non-native English speaking individuals could also be hired to teach content-based courses in a foreign language to better equip Japanese students to become more active members in both local and global bi/multilingual communities.

6. World/Asian Englishes

The term 'native speaker' itself has become a controversial point in SLA/Applied Linguistics and is at the heart of recent research in the field of World Englishes (WE) as well as in its growing sub-field, Asian Englishes. The role of English in Japan vis-à-vis its status as a lingua franca in many parts of the world is articulated in a report by Morrow (2004), who explains that the numerous varieties of English (e.g. INSTITUTIONALIZED in India and PERFORMANCE in Korea) necessitate a critical re-evaluation of non-native English usage and the implications for EFL education, particularly in hiring practices of native/non-native English teachers. Using examples from discourse analytical studies of interactions between Japanese speakers of English and native English speakers, Morrow suggests that Japanese English (JE) could rightfully be considered an independent variety of English, but that the preference for instruction in so-called standard English as spoken in Inner Circle countries (e.g. USA, UK) still holds a dominant place in most EFL contexts.

Following a comprehensive review of the history and current state of World Englishes, Miller (2001) reports on the results of a questionnaire administered to 143 university students to assess how they envisioned the role of English in their future lives. The results indicate that communicative skills for interacting with foreigners (at work and abroad) and being able to read Internet materials and listen to English movies without reading subtitles are high priorities for the respondents. The author concludes that these anticipated needs are in line with a recent emphasis in the WE paradigm on 'flexible functional intelligibility' (Miller 2001: 215) that entails a more inclusive and pluralistic stance towards non-ENL (English as a native language) linguistic varieties that have been excluded in the past from EFL education in Japan.

In his article on the multiculturalism of Asian English, Honna notes that the spread of English in Asia has made it 'a working language for intranational and international communication' (Honna 2000: 13) echoing a recent research emphasis on the functional (as opposed to formal) aspects of English. As such, an analysis of, for example, Singaporean English reveals how language contact has produced unique indigenous varieties that are nevertheless mutually intelligible among other speakers of non-native English in Asia and around the globe. To ensure the maintenance of this global mutual intelligibility, Honna adds that the introduction of language awareness training in foreign language programs modeled on UK and European educational settings would be a valuable addition to

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EFL instruction in Asian countries and would also enhance speakers' intercultural literacy. A fortuitous outcome of the development of Asian Englishes as a research area in its own right has been the formation of international research organizations, journals, and conferences as venues to explore issues pertaining to the diffusion of different varieties of English in Asian countries. For example, an international conference sponsored by the International Association for World Englishes (IAWE) was held in Japan in 2006, and papers were presented on multiple topics in the areas of language, literature, and pedagogy.

In her study of university students' perceptions of their English proficiency and the role of Japanese-English, Takeshita (2000) found that the majority of her questionnaire's respondents were not satisfied with their English language ability, particularly in the area of pronunciation. Because the students also indicated that their main purpose in studying English at the college level was to communicate with native speakers of English, the researcher states that this tendency is not conducive for intercultural communication with other non-native English speakers who far out-number native speakers of English. Takeshita urges English teachers in Japan to help students realize that Japanese-English is one of the many varieties of Englishes worldwide and that its speakers should develop more confidence in communicating with both native and non-native speakers in order to develop awareness of their own unique roles in a global community.

In light of current reappraisals of World and Asian Englishes contexts, the attitudes and policies implicit in textbooks has become a serious concern. Yamanaka (2006) addresses this concern through a detailed examination of Japanese junior and senior high school EFL textbooks' treatment of cultural issues. Drawing on Kachru's (1985) well-known 'concentric circles' model, Yamanaka proceeds to problematize recent government guidelines concerning the inclusion of culture topics in secondary school English textbooks. Based on percentages of the instances of culturally relevant material, the author found that there is a marked bias in favor of Inner Circle compared to Outer and Expanding Circle countries. To resolve this discrepancy and to fashion more realistic instructional directives, the author suggests soliciting teacher and student perspectives on what would constitute interculturally appropriate teaching material. In this way, learners in Japan will be able to develop a deeper appreciation of the interconnectedness of language and culture and the role of English in an increasingly diverse EFL global community.

7. Interlanguage pragmatics

In domestic conferences and publications, interlanguage pragmatics has attracted continual attention as researchers investigate cross-cultural differences, learner pragmatic development, sociopragmatic assessments and the authenticity of instructional materials. In two cross-cultural studies on compliments and subsequent responses, Matsuura (2002, 2004) found that Americans and Japanese react quite differently to compliments. While Americans responded mainly by using appreciation tokens in response to appearance related compliments, they varied greatly in their response to ability-related compliments. In contrast, the Japanese respondents tended to use a wider variety of responses for both types of compliments. In the follow-up study, Matsuura (2004) compares the likelihood that American and Japanese university students would give appearance-related compliments to a variety of addressees. While there are gender differences, large cultural discrepancies were not detected in the respondents' perceived likelihood of giving compliments. However, it is noted that the Japanese are less likely to compliment their own family members.

Investigating differences between native and non-native speakers of Japanese, Kawate-Mierzejewska examines request-related interactions recorded over the telephone. In both acceptance (Kawate-Mierzejewska 2004, 2005) and refusal sequences (Kawate-Mierzejewska 2006), notable differences between the two groups are reported. In cases when the interlocutor accepted the request, non-native speakers (NNS) used an acceptance sequence that was similar to that of native speakers (NS) who did not perform the action being requested. Conversely, the acceptance sequence of NNS who did not carry out the request was similar to that of NS who did. In the follow-up 2005 study, she found that there were both similarities and differences between the two groups in terms of prosodic features. Native speakers of Japanese tend to use a negative tone in their final decision regardless of whether they carried out the request or not. While NNS who carried out the request also exhibited a negative tone in their final decision, those who did not carry out the accepted request employed a positive tone with a high pitch. In examining refusals, Kawate-Mierzejewska found that the sequential organizations were independent of different types of reinitiations. Moreover, the NNS exhibited greater variation in their refusal sequential organization than the NS of Japanese. While eight types of organization were found for the NNS, only six types were found for the NS. Moreover, only two of the organizational sequences were shared by both groups, suggesting that even the advanced learners in this study had a lot to learn in terms of Japanese pragmatic norms.

Using a Conversation Analysis framework, Hosoda (2005) examines NNS of Japanese in their use of directives and assessments. Based on a multimodal analysis of two video-recorded conversations between pairs of NS and NNS of Japanese, Hosoda found that the pragmatic competence of the NNS and NS was co-constructed as the participants drew upon

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linguistic, non-linguistic resources and emerging sequential contexts.

Also working with non-native learners of Japanese, Jungheim (2004) studied how JSL (Japanese as a second language) learner gestures accompanying refusals of offers and invitations compared with those of native speakers. Based on video-taped data from a series of role plays with 10 native speakers of Japanese and 33 advanced learners, Jungheim found that with both groups, manual gestures were most common in refusals of offers and that head movements were dominant in refusals of invitations. However, the non-native speakers tended to make their hand movements more pronounced and bowed more when refusing invitations, suggesting that gesture use may be an important part of interlanguage pragmatics.

Studies on Japanese learners of English have also investigated their orientation to face work in language learning conversations (Hauser 2005), evidence of their sociopragmatic assessment (Tada 2005), development in their request realizations (Cole & Anderson 2001; Churchill 2002) and evidence of transfer in their written announcements (Shiomi 2005). Utilizing a Conversation Analysis framework to examine conversations recorded in university classes and conversation clubs, Hauser documents how learners in both settings engage competently in face work with the collaboration of other participants. Based on the collaborative nature of the interaction, Hauser suggests that the notion of interlanguage possessed by individual learners may be problematic and that the distinction between competence and performance deserves review.

In order to develop an instrument to investigate constructs of imposition in sociopragmatic assessments of requests, apologies and refusals, Tada (2005) validated a 24-item questionnaire (eight items for each speech act) based on data collected from 107 female university EFL learners. The results of a principal component analysis indicate that context-internal parameters for apologies and requests show a one component solution, reflecting previous findings. However, refusals appear to be made up of two different constructs, the speaker's difficulty and speaker's sense of obligation.

Comparing speech act data elicited in a cartoon-prompt multiple-choice questionnaire (MCQ) with those gathered in a cartoon-prompt discourse completion task (DCT), Tatsuki (2003) used pictures from a picture frustration test to look at complaints by Japanese students in English. The 103 sophomore participants from two universities tended to respond to stress or frustration using the same direction of aggression, but small differences were noted in the type of aggression in both instruments. Overall, the MCQ instrument was seen as a valid alternative to the more labour intensive DCT, although the author notes that MCQs are not conducive to examining the finer details of hedges, mitigators and downgraders.

Several studies of the pragmatic development of EFL learners have looked at requests. Kite & Sakui (2001) report on request strategies used by young Japanese learners in an English immersion program. Using a DCT, verbal data were elicited from the participants (5th and 6th graders and, for comparison, NSs of English from an international school). The analysis of the two groups' use of direct/indirect request patterns shows that the immersion students invoke a smaller repertoire of indirect forms and supportive moves than the native speakers. While the authors make note of the possible confounding effects of the elicitation instrument, they conclude that immersion students could be seen as moving along an interlanguage pragmatic continuum towards native-like usage of request forms, and that further research needs to be done on how learning environments might enhance pragmatic abilities.

In two studies looking at supportive moves used by university-level learners, Fukuzawa and his colleagues (Fordyce & Fukuzawa 2004; Fukuzawa & Sasaki 2004) used DCTs to look at syntactic and lexical downgrading and the use of other supporting moves. Based on data from 26 third-year university students, Fukuzawa & Sasaki compared the learners' production in English with that of their L1 and found that the majority of supporting moves were grounders and that the learners gave more grounding information in their L1 than in their L2. This led the authors to suggest that positive pragmatic transfer does not always take place in the use of supportive moves. In a similar approach, Fordyce & Fukuzawa collected DCT data on high imposition requests and a measure of grammatical competence (a CELT test) from 85 third-year university students. The learners used a variety of syntactic downgrading with more accuracy than lexical downgrading. The authors also found a relationship between the use of internal downgrading, time spent overseas and grammatical competence. Based on their results, they suggest that the role of lexis in pragmatic development has been under-emphasized in instructional materials.

Churchill's (2002) study of naturally-occurring request realizations by 47 high school learners revealed a decreased frequency in direct realization strategies following a one-month exchange overseas. He suggests that the developmental trend could be explained in part by a learner tendency to combine 'want to' statements (possibly transferred from Japanese) with other conventionally indirect strategies. Based on DCT data from 35 high school learners, Cole & Anderson (2001) also note a reduction in the use of direct strategies and a corresponding increase in conventionally indirect requests after the learners had spent ten months overseas. In another study examining the effects of study abroad on pragmatic development, Fukuzawa & Fordyce (2005) used a DCT to collect pre- and post-program requests and apologies from 20 sophomore English majors

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who spent over four months studying in England. The learners were found to be more verbose in their speech act production following the program and their use of syntactic and lexical mitigation in both speech acts and lexical intensification in apologies showed clear development. Also finding less progress in sociopragmatic development, the authors conclude that the study abroad experience led to more development in pragmatic competence than grammatical competence, perhaps because the participants already had a solid foundation of grammatical knowledge.

In a study examining written public announcements, Shiomi (2005) compared English posters and fliers made by 50 Japanese learners of English with English fliers collected in cities in the United States and Japan. Based on a semantic and syntactic analysis, Shiomi found that the Japanese university students used declarative statements not in the headings but in the sub-headings of their announcements. They also tended to include general greetings and seasonal greetings common to Japanese documents, and they made invitations politely and indirectly by using *please*-imperatives and *let's*-imperatives. Shiomi suggests that many of these features are transferred from Japanese flyers to limit the imposition on readers.

Aside from empirical studies on pragmatic development, there has been a growing interest in assessing the authenticity of various instructional materials. Studies have compared telephone calls (Tatsuki 2005b) and greetings (Kakiuchi 2005) in textbooks with those occurring in films and naturalistic speech and examined compliments (Tatsuki & Nishizawa 2005) and apologies (Kite & Tatsuki 2005) in films for their authenticity. Kakiuchi examined the naturally-occurring greetings of 60 native speakers of American English and those of 51 Asian ESL learners studying at an American university. Noting that the NNS tended to use multiple-turn patterns not found in the native data and that NS tended to use a wider variety of greeting expressions, Kakiuchi compared the NNS data with greetings in 7th grade English textbooks used in Japan. The textbooks fall short of the patterns used by native speakers of English and are posited as a possible factor, along with transfer and fossilization, in contributing to the patterns used by the EFL learners.

Inspired by Wong (2002), Tatsuki (2005b) contrasts telephone conversations found in 23 MEXT approved textbooks with those from a corpus of 20 films and those in conversation analysis research. Marked differences were noted in regards to summons answer sequences in films, the MEXT approved textbooks and Wong's EFL textbooks. Overall the phone dialogs in films contained more complete openings, more closings and sequences commonly identified in naturally occurring data. Moreover, as with Wong's EFL texts, incompleteness was found in the English textbooks for Japanese learners.

In an ongoing project looking at films for their authenticity, Tatsuki (2004) first created a corpus of 50 films commonly used in classes based on an internet survey of language teachers. Drawing from this corpus, Tatsuki & Nishizawa (2005) compare the compliments in films with those found in television interviews and naturally occurring data, focusing their analysis on syntactic categories, compliment topic, compliment response strategies, adjective choice and gender distribution. Both films and the television interview data are reliable models of pragmatic behavior, but sociopragmatic features (such as gender distribution of compliments) and adjective choice in films and interviews differ from those reported in existing research. Working with the same film corpus and using a similar analysis, Kite & Tatsuki (2005) focused on apologies and found similarities between the films and a naturally occurring corpus taken from existing research in terms of apology strategies, offense types and syntactic patterns. However, as with Tatsuki & Nishizawa, there was divergence in the two data sets in terms of sociopragmatic features. As the above review shows, the field of interlanguage pragmatics provides a fertile site for researchers interested in the many facets of cross-cultural differences and interlanguage development.

8. Motivation

The role of motivation in second language learning has received a considerable amount of research interest in Japan. In the wake of Gardner and his second-generation associates' well-known seminal studies investigating the ways that motivation and attitudes impact on second language learning, Japanese researchers have made significant contributions in this area. Irie (2003) conducted an extensive review of Japanese survey research on instrumental and integrative motivation in EFL learning at the tertiary-level. Based on the review, Irie then introduces the concepts of MASTERY ORIENTATION and GOAL ORIENTATION. Claiming that these two orientations have not been extensively employed as yet in motivation measurements in the Japanese EFL context, the author suggests that it might be beneficial to do so. One reason given for this conclusion is that there has not been sufficient confirmation of the analytical robustness of traditional test batteries (e.g. Gardner's well-known AMTB) in describing Japanese EFL learners' motivation and its relation to learning strategies.

Takada (2003) conducted an empirical investigation of the motivation construct (and two corollary variables, anxiety and aptitude) in a cross-sample study of a large population of Japanese junior high students who had been exposed to FLES (Foreign Language Experience in Elementary School) and students who had had no FLES experience. A battery of tests was administered to measure individual

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differences in the variables under consideration, and the statistical results indicate that early exposure to EFL does not necessarily lead to enhanced motivation to learn English in junior high school where both groups of learners display a similar pattern of foreign language anxiety. One unexpected result was that there was no significant difference in two motivation subsets (i.e. interest in a foreign language and its speakers) and instrumental motivation. However, the authors suggest that this finding could be attributed to weaknesses in the testing instruments. The study's implications include a call to reassess foreign language policy decisions regarding the actual benefits of early exposure to EFL in Japan. This call is especially pertinent as regards the recent introduction of English at the elementary school level in Japan.

Yamashiro & McLaughlin (2001) report on their examination of the influence of social-psychological variables on EFL learners in Japan. Following a comprehensive review of previous research on the relationship among attitudes, motivation, anxiety and language proficiency, the authors outline their application of Gardner's model in their replication study of low-proficiency Japanese college EFL students. As part of the final analysis, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to tease out significant factors from the accumulated mass of survey statistics. The results indicate that attitudes correlate with motivation, which in turn shows a strong path, as well as a weaker path mediated through anxiety, to language proficiency. Although it is noted that all the statistical variance in the SEM model was not accounted for, the researchers nevertheless state that the role of anxiety should not be discounted as a significant factor in language learning, and that pedagogical practices in Japan should therefore take into more serious consideration ways of reducing students' stress levels in the language classroom. The report concludes with a call for future studies using longitudinal or ethnographic approaches that would help to give a more complete picture of attitudes, motivation and anxiety in EFL education.

O'Donnell (2003) looks at first-year students' attitudes and motivation for learning English at a tertiary-level institution in Japan. After a concise review of traditional theories and alternative approaches to examining motivation in educational contexts, the author explains the unique circumstances of Japan's notorious college entrance exam system and its washback effects on high school students' motivation to study English. Two additional areas of investigation for the study are a) the role of parental and teacher expectations on learners' motivational level, and b) the beliefs that the learners themselves have concerning language education and the subsequent effects on their English proficiency. For data collection purposes, a six-point Likert scale modeled on different well-known measures of motivation was administered to 135 college freshmen, and Pearson correlation and paired *t* test statistics were used to analyze the survey responses. For the majority of the respondents, who like most high school students in Japan had been exposed to six years of traditional EFL training (strong emphasis on rote memorization and translation exercises), there is a tendency to negatively evaluate their English language classes along with a significant indication of their own lack of confidence in using English. The author concludes by outlining the pedagogical implications of the study, that is, the necessity for tertiary-level EFL teachers to understand their students' previous language training experiences and beliefs and how best to gear classroom practices to help students develop a more positive attitude towards English learning and use.

In a series of articles, Mori (2001, 2002, 2003) explores college-level, English and non-English majors' motivation to read in English. After an extensive consideration of existing models of motivation applied to foreign language learning in general, she focuses on what motivational factors in particular influence Japanese students' reading behavior and their consequent achievement levels. The results of a questionnaire based on traditional motivational measurement instruments were put through factor analysis to determine the interrelationship of the questionnaire items. Mori's most recent findings concerning performance on reading tasks suggest that the satisfaction derived from the reading task itself, along with expectancy for success, are the strongest predictors of reading performance. Pedagogical implications include assigning reading tasks designed to create a sense of accomplishment that in turn will sustain students' motivation to read in English.

While the bulk of research on learner motivation has been done on university students, a recent study by Carreira (2006) looks at changes in elementary school pupil's intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In a cross-sectional questionnaire study comparing 174 third and 171 sixth graders from two public schools and one private school, significant differences were found in three underlying factors (interest in foreign countries, intrinsic motivation, instrumental motivation) between the two groups. Overall, a developmental decline in intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was found from the third to the sixth year of elementary school, suggesting that there is a need to improve teaching methods in the higher grades. Since many researchers are now incorporating qualitative methodologies (e.g. interpretive analyses of participant interviews) into investigations that traditionally adhered solely to quantitative models, future motivation studies in Japan will bear watching.

9. Writing

Recent studies on writing have validated various instruments (Cornwell & McKay 2000), and looked at the effect of different instructional interventions

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(Hirose & Sasaki 2000; Duppenthaler 2002, 2004), writing processes (Yasuda 2005), and peer feedback (LoCastro 2000). Duppenthaler examined the effect of three different kinds of feedback on journal writing and writing motivation. Comparing the effect of meaning-focused feedback, positive comments and error-focused feedback on the journal writing of 99 low-level female high school students, Duppenthaler (2004) investigated if there was any transfer of writing skills to in-class writing tasks. While no statistically significant transfer to other writing tasks was found, the meaning-focused group made a steady increase in the number of error-free clauses in their journals and in their in-class writing. In a companion study, Duppenthaler (2002) questioned whether meaning-focused feedback led to greater learner motivation. Based on questionnaire data, he found no statistical difference between the three forms of feedback, but the students who received positive feedback (e.g. 'good job', 'keep writing') were least eager to get their journals back every week and indicated that they would be the least inclined to continue with journal writing.

Examining the writing development of four intact classes at two universities over a 12-week period, Hirose & Sasaki (2000) compare the effect of teaching metaknowledge of English expository prose with that of teaching metaknowledge instruction plus journal writing. Based on pre- and post-tests of learner metaknowledge and expository writing, they found that metaknowledge instruction alone led to increased gains in learner understanding of writing, but did not lead to developmental change in five categories of writing measured (content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics). With the group that received the metaknowledge instruction and wrote journals, there was an improvement in their mechanics but no change was found in the other measures. Despite this improvement, no statistically significant difference was found between the two groups in terms of their development.

Examining developmental changes in peer feedback on writing over the course of a month, LoCastro (2000) investigated the forms of mitigation and the speech acts used by first-year students in a high level Japanese university (approximate TOEFL scores ranged from 500 to 590). Comparing the reviews of 19 students before and after instruction on peer feedback, LoCastro found an increase in the number of corrections suggested and a decrease in the use of compliments and 'I think' expressions. Thus, even over a relatively short period, instruction on peer reviewing appears to lead to accommodation to L2 pragmatic norms in peer review tasks done by Japanese learners.

Taking a case study approach with three postgraduate Japanese learners in Australia, Yasuda (2005) collected all the drafts of a writing assignment and conducted retrospective interviews based on the changes between drafts to investigate how learners interpret, perceive and engage in L2 writing tasks. Conceptually framed from the perspective of activity theory, Yasuda found that the learning history of each of the three participants determined the way in which they interpreted the task and their thought processes while writing. The overall suggestion is that while the learners may have been assigned the same writing task, they engaged in different activities to complete the task.

Studies on validating instruments have looked at rating scales and writing anxiety. Cornwell & McKay (2000) developed a Japanese version of Daly and Miller's Writing Apprehension Test and collected data from 701 first and second year female junior college students. In contrast to the unified construct reported by the original authors of the instrument, Cornwell & McKay found that for the Japanese L2 writers, four factors were identified in their factor analysis. These included enjoyment of writing, fear of evaluation, negative perceptions about writing ability and the showing of writing to others. The authors speculate that the differences between their study and the original instrument could be attributable to differences between the learners, as Daly and Miller were working with L1 learners at American universities. This conclusion is supported by other studies of L2 learners that have also revealed writing apprehension to be multi-faceted.

10. Gender and language education

As an area of scholarly interest in the fields of SLA and language education, gender was not, until quite recently, accorded equal status in Japan with other academic topics. In positivist studies, gender was usually treated as one of many extraneous variables affecting statistical results and was not considered to be a core component in language teaching and learning processes. Traditional gender research in Japan mainly followed a structural linguistics model, prevalent throughout the SLA world in the 1970s, which focused on, for example, the differences between women and men's conversational styles. Over the past decade, however, influenced by feminist socio-political movements worldwide, reports on gender and language from diverse perspectives have appeared in numerous publications in Japan, some of which have devoted entire issues to what is now considered to be a topic worthy of special consideration by language theorists and practitioners alike.

One important article on gender is Sunderland's (2000) comprehensive assessment of the current state of gender and language education research. Two major problems that the author suggests need to be (re)considered by researchers in this area are: (a) an over-emphasis on differential teacher treatment, male dominance and biased gender representation

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in textbooks, and (b) dichotomizing analyses of male/female differences. The two problems mentioned above tend to be counter-productive in light of postmodernist understandings of the complexities of sexual identifications and the agentive role that individuals assume when confronted with gendered marginalizing discourses in educational and social contexts. Although the important work done by researchers taking a 'difference' or 'dominance' approach cannot be completely dismissed, Sunderland suggests that it is now time to move on to a new conceptual paradigm that can more fully capture the fluid nature of individuals' gendered identities. The author concludes by stating that rather than relying solely on statistical analyses of, for example, differential gender behavior in language classrooms, qualitative methodologies can provide more enlightening insights on the various dimensions of gender and language education.

The *Temple University Japan Working Papers in Applied Linguistics: Gender issues in language education* (Yamashiro 2000) is a collection of reports on gender from a variety of theoretical and pedagogical viewpoints. Contributions from well-known feminist authors such as Stephanie Vandrick, and co-authors Catherine Kitetu & Jane Sunderland deal with gender asymmetries in ESL/EFL classrooms and the resultant educational disadvantages for women. Kitetu & Sunderland describe gendered discourses as not only involving male/female linguistic behavior but also various ways of being and being acted upon according to one's gender background in different social and educational contexts. Taking a historically and culturally situated perspective on women's situations, these authors reveal how a universal application of, for example, a Western, liberal-humanist, equal opportunities discourse may be inappropriate in some countries. A case study from Kenya illustrates how an equal opportunities approach to eliminating gendered asymmetries in schooling without full acknowledgment of local actors' (teachers and students) perspectives may unwittingly exacerbate the situation. In the same volume, tertiary-level educational contexts in Japan for female learners are explored in separate articles by Curtin and Simon-Maeda whose positions as teacher/researcher in their respective institutions provide an 'emic' (insider's) view of gendered marginalization processes and the role that EFL educators can play in challenging sexist norms for women. Curtin offers a concise review of higher education for women in Japan and describes the current environment as one that still lags behind other developed countries' measures to secure equitable learning opportunities for women. Using a nursing university as a case example, the author highlights the ways in which the EFL instructor can contribute to progressive educational reform that can help female learners compete on an equal par with their male counterparts in Japanese universities. Simon-Maeda reports on an ethnographic investigation of her female EFL junior college students and the subtle and not-so-subtle ways this population is marginalized both during and after their lives in a Japanese institution of higher education. The use of focus groups for qualitative data collection purposes helped to highlight the sociocultural contexts within which her students were involved in making sense of gender and education issues that affect their daily lives.

A subsequent Temple University publication (Churchill & McLaughlin 2001), *Qualitative research in applied linguistics: Japanese learners and contexts*, contains four articles that are also concerned with the intersection of gender and language learning. In Maeda's report, excerpts from students' journals in the author's feminist course on gender and language depict how, when provided with the opportunity to critically examine women's status in Japanese society, learners can begin to imagine alternative life trajectories. Rather than treat EFL as unconnected to female students' actual life experiences, Maeda contends that a content-based course that deals with issues of gendered marginalization processes is an important component in any EFL curriculum. Skarin utilizes social identity theory and a poststructuralist epistemological framework to unravel the complexities of gender, ethnicity, and class as recounted in the life-history narratives of two female Japanese graduate students in a TESOL program in the USA. What emerged from analyses of the participants' experiences were the unique ways in which the women worked within and against Western-based academic discourses to reach their full academic potential. The study's conclusions bring attention to the need for educators to acknowledge the power differentials inherent in learning situations and to structure their teaching practices in order to create greater classroom equality. Analyzed from the perspective of Japanese mothers in bilingual families, Ascough's prolonged observation and in-depth interviews provide insight into the participants' beliefs and attitudes concerning language choice at home. Factors that are salient determiners of how the participants' good language learner identities evolved are: utilization of language learning resources (short term language immersion course, English radio programs, etc.) and a keen motivation to make up for lost opportunities for improving their English language ability when they were younger. In sum, the mothers' success or failure in becoming fluent English speakers subsequently shapes the bilingual language environment they create for their children. Kim & Cornwell utilize a Communities of Practice (Wenger 1998) framework to elucidate how female learners in a tertiary-level English program become members of their local academic community, and how their ways of participating

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in this community both reflect and reproduce 'common-sense' expectations for female graduates in Japanese society. Following a presentation of the ideology of women's education in Japan, the authors outline their choice of a qualitative approach to elucidate the schooling practices and educational experiences of the student participants. Final interpretations indicate that enabling female learners to become fully participating members in Japanese society after graduation evolves through their prior engagement in curricular activities that foster a sense of achievement and self-confidence.

Following recent trends in gender and language studies that include discussions of queer theory, sexual identity politics, and the situations of LGBT or LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER individuals in language teaching and learning, a special interest group of the Japan Association for Language Teaching, GALE (Gender Awareness in Language Education) has made available on its website timely articles in these areas. For example, O'Mochain's (2004) case study report on an EFL classroom highlights how well intentioned educators may nevertheless be perpetuating homophobic attitudes towards sexual minorities through heteronormative pedagogies and teaching materials that do not foster more progressive thinking among students. The author concludes that the study's poststructuralist analysis of students' opinions concerning topics such as gay marriage can provide a window into learners' complex ways of interpreting vital issues in their social lives.

Of direct concern to teachers of business English in Japan, Matsuno's (2002) examination of portrayals of men and women in a popular textbook used throughout Japan makes clear that this area of EFL pedagogy harbors sexist norms concerning occupational roles in the business sector. Ways in which sexism is perpetrated in textbook material are through the (a) omission of female characters in textual and visual material, (b) gendered disparities in the assignment of characters' work-related positions, (c) negative or stereotypical depictions of women and (d) preferential use of lexical items, such as the masculine generic in written passages. The author concludes the report with a suggestion to EFL teachers in Japan to re-examine judiciously their choice of textbook material in order to provide learners with more equitable representations of men and women.

11. In conclusion

We are grateful to have this opportunity to share with the readership of *Language Teaching* some of the varied research that is being conducted in Japan. We hope we have met our goal of providing a portrait of some of the issues and trends central to language education in Japan together with an indication of future research directions being taken. In the interest of facilitating access to articles that we have reviewed and articles that we were unable to cover, we have compiled an annotated list of links to databases and academic societies in Japan related to English language education. (All the links to the websites listed here were correct on 1 February 2007.)

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF INFORMATICS
http://ci.nii.ac.jp/cinii/en/pages/outline-e.html
CiNii-(Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator) is a database service that enables searches for information on academic papers published in academic society journals and university research bulletins.

MEXT – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, SPORTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
http://www.mext.go.jp/english/shotou/index.htm
Includes government white papers and articles published in English by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

JALT – JAPAN ASSOCIATION FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING
http://www.jalt-publications.org
JALT Journal is the refereed research journal of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (*Zenkoku Gogaku Kyoiku Gakkai*) and publishes articles and research reports linking theory and practice as they related to second and foreign language teaching and learning in Japanese and Asian contexts. JALT also publishes a monthly publication, *The Language Teacher* and several of the Special Interest Groups within JALT also have their own publications. A partial list of Special Interest Groups and their respective web pages are available at JALT's publications website. Examples include:

- bilingualism – http://www.bsig.org/publications.html
- computer assisted language learning (CALL) – http://www.jaltcall.org/news
- pragmatics – http://www.pragsig.org
- testing – http://www.jalt.org/test/pub.htm

JACET – JAPAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHERS
http://www.jacet.org/bulletin/index.html#Anchor-1
The *JACET Bulletin* is a bi-annual publication of the Japan Association of College Teachers and publishes full-length articles on methods, pedagogical research and topics of significance to all college English teachers. The table of contents and ordering information for this journal can be found at the above address.

THE JAPAN SOCIETY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION
http://www.jasele.org
The Japan Society of English Language Education publishes the *Annual Review of English Language Education* (*ARELE*). The table of contents for the current issue may be viewed at the organization's web site. While the website is in Japanese, the table of contents and most of the articles themselves are in English.

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Temple University Japan
http://www.tuj.ac.jp/newsite/main/tesol/publications
To be found here are the publications *Working Papers in Applied Linguistics* and *Studies in Applied Linguistics*, as well as a list of dissertations completed at TUJ.

Japan Society for Language Sciences
http://jchat.cyber.sccs.chukyo-u.ac.jp/JSLS/SLS
Proceedings from the annual conference of the Japanese Society for Language Sciences are published in *Studies in Language Sciences*. The webpage lists the tables of contents of recent issues of *SLS* and provides information on how to order copies of the publication.

The Engaged Pedagogy Association
http://www.alpha-net.ne.jp/users2/rei0225
The Journal of Engaged Pedagogy is a bilingual publication that carries articles embracing a holistic, critical, feminist and reflective stance toward pedagogy. Information about the Association and the journal is available at the above web page by clicking on 'English'.

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