

Introduction of Second Culture Acquisition

Saori Baba

2008FB215

Abstract

It is very difficult to integrate culture teaching with English teaching in class. Next year, the Ministry of Education in Japan will carry out a new course of study in junior high school and in two years of high school. The new official guideline emphasized the importance of learning about culture. Many researchers also have recognized the close relationship between language and culture. Second culture acquisition has been started since post-war. The necessity of culture learning has been pointed out as part of the course of study and the integration of teaching culture and communication abilities: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Today, however, this integration is not practiced in classroom. Culture and language teaching are usually separated in education. Therefore, this research has focused on learning culture as well as language in the English classroom. Moreover, second culture acquisition should be based on communication because culture is a way of life. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) would play a role in integrative teaching. The integrated teaching could improve communication skills in the real world while learning various cultures. It also enables students to recognize different points of views which deepen mutual understanding. Now, the role of culture should be reconsidered and culture learning is extremely beneficial to learning second language, and vice versa.

Significance of Interaction in the Second Language Learning

Natsumi Ohashi

2008FB132

Abstract

'Interaction' is a significant component of second language learning. This does not only mean language practice, but also the means by which learning takes place. In this thesis, the nature of interaction in the context of second language learning is discussed, followed by some perspectives of the role of interaction. They can be helpful in studying what happens in a real classroom situation, where there are mainly two types of interaction; interaction between 1) NS (native speaker) and NNS (non-native speaker) and 2) NNSs. As for my research, I conducted classroom observation and studied the features of each type of interaction and what students learn through each of them. I use Foreign Language Interaction Analysis model in order to classify each interaction which takes place in the classroom. There have been significant differences between what students gain through the interaction with NS and with NNS. I have found that interaction between NNSs had rather a social nature while NS-NNS interaction had pedagogic tendency. It seemed that, in interactions between NNSs, students exchanged their way of thinking and sense of value as well as information about the language itself. Interaction plays important roles not only as it assists acquisition of second language but also as social exchanges of ideas which eventually lead to acquisition. Although the purpose of this thesis is not to argue which type of interaction is more effective for acquisition, I refer to how each of them contributes to second language acquisition, arguing the differences.

Pragmatics and Pedagogy of *The*
--A Research of Possible Use of the Definite Article
and Its Background—

Takato Suzuki

2008FB159

Abstract

Understanding and using the English definite article is one of the biggest obstacles that Japanese EFL learners encounter mainly because of many rules and contexts where the definite article must or cannot be used in English. In junior and senior high school, learners judge whether to use the definite article or not through memorization. In addition, some learners and teachers do not care about mistakes of articles, because they do not interfere with the overall understanding of what they communicate. However, knowing about the article *the* is crucial in enhancing better communication in most situations, because *the* is one of the ten most frequently used words in English (Hewson (1972: 131)). Furthermore, a speaker possibly sends different messages to others by using *the* or not using it. Therefore, this thesis intends to show the difference of meaning and context where *the* is or is not used, based on corpus research and interviews with professors of Nanzan University's Department of British and American Studies who teach oral communication class and writing class. The thesis also discusses how usage of *the* connects to the following two concepts: knownness and inclusiveness, by clarifying the background of the obligate use of *the* stated in English grammar books for junior and senior high school students. The paper then states what EFL learners and teachers should be concerned with learning, using, and teaching the definite article. Finally the paper concludes with a mutual connection between context and example sentences in understanding the concept of *the*.

How to Develop the Class to Help Students Improve their Expression Abilities in English Class

Shogo Goto

2008FB024

Abstract

The lack of students' expression abilities is one of the biggest problems in Japan. This can be one of the biggest causes of various problems children and teachers face within the field of education; bullying and violent behavior. Not to cause these problems, teachers have to help students to acquire their expression abilities in the class, especially in English class if we are English teachers. However, in most public schools, Grammar translated method is used recently. In this method, vocabulary and grammar are emphasized and speaking is neglected. So there is not enough opportunity for students to express themselves. However, it is difficult to change this method in public schools because of the school curriculum. Therefore, teachers cannot devise a way to develop the class to help students acquire their expression abilities. In this thesis, I introduce some techniques other teachers have already tried and gained. In fact, it is difficult for students to express themselves in English from the beginning, beyond that by speaking. A good method which makes it easier for students to express is to express themselves first by writing and then by speaking. For both speaking and writing, it can be said that vocabulary is very much needed. Therefore, some researchers introduce how to increase vocabulary. What's more, this does not apply only to English classes; the same thing can be said for Japanese classes. Based on some techniques some researchers introduced, I make teaching plans to help students to acquire their expression abilities in English class.

Effective Learning and Teaching Strategies of Japanese Language Education in Japan

Yumi Makino

2008FB092

Abstract

Because of internationalization, the number of foreign people learning Japanese has significantly increased, which has resulted in the implementation of intensive Japanese language programs for foreign students in many universities across Japan. Japanese is considered to be one of the hardest languages to learn, which implies that teaching is equally, if not even more difficult. To teach Japanese effectively, teachers should manage the classroom by using certain strategies that focus on the interaction between teachers and students, and students and students. Students should then make up for deficiencies in classroom activities, by continuing their studies by themselves. The focus both in and outside the classroom should be on the four essential abilities: speaking, listening, reading and writing, and students and teachers alike should find the best way to approach these abilities. The goal of this report is to learn how exceptional Japanese teachers manage the classroom effectively, and how learners study Japanese by themselves. I will accomplish this through a review of previous studies, in addition to interviews of both teachers and students at Nanzan University's Center for Japanese Studies.

Authenticity in Listening and Speaking to Develop Students' Communication Abilities

Yoshie Akao

2008FB001

Abstract

This study examines effective ways of teaching English to develop students' communication abilities through a close examination of some research and an English Oral Communication Class taught in a Japanese high school for first year students. It addresses in particular how to teach listening and speaking skills to Japanese high school students so that the students can develop those skills, which are needed for the students to communicate in real life. As for the listening skills, this study emphasizes the importance of using the authentic audio materials and addresses efficient ways of using such materials in class. At first, this study shows what kind of characteristics the audio materials should have so that the materials are authentic and useful for the students to develop their communication abilities. After that, it shows the content of the model class activities with such authentic materials. As for speaking skills, it emphasizes the importance of designing the speaking activities as realistic as possible so that the students can develop the necessary speaking skills to communicate with others. Also, it addresses the attitudes the students should have in dealing with the speaking activities, where students act as Japanese native speakers and the posture to use both verbal and non-verbal signals to tell their intention. Based on previous researches, this study examines an English Oral Communication Class I taught at high school by pointing out the problems and by suggesting alternative teaching plans for that class.

The Minds and Ideas Related to English Study among Adult Japanese Learners

Miho Mamba

2008FB093

Abstract

Due to the rapid progress of internationalization, many adult Japanese have to study English for their career, which can be a great burden. In general, 'being adults' and 'being Japanese' are thought to be restricting factors in studying English. The goal of this report is to understand the minds and ideas of adult Japanese learners of English. Previous research suggests that these two elements could be issues; however adult Japanese learners could be successful if they have adequate motivation. Also, they suppose anxiety is the real obstacle of adult Japanese learners. In order to verify the validity of previous research, I conduct a questionnaire of actual 47 adult Japanese learners. This research has revealed learners with high motivation are apt to be successful, while learners with low motivation are not successful in learning English. This fact conforms to the previous study. One more thing comes into line with past research is that learners who have anxiety toward using English do not succeed in their English learning. In addition, I have found out many Japanese think they want to improve practical English skills like 'speaking' and 'listening'. However, they also feel they have few chances to use English, which they think are big obstacles to their English learning.

L2 Motivation and Learner Autonomy

Yumi Handa

2008FB026

Abstract

Success in L2 acquisition is attributed to a great extent to learners' motivation. Naturally, various studies have been conducted in various fields to overcome the complexity of L2 motivation so as to apply motivational strategies to L2 classroom situations.

Not until the 1990's did a tangible onset of research arrive regarding L2 motivation. The results of studies, fortunately, disclosed that teachers have influential roles to play in generating and maintaining learners' motivation. Those roles include, most importantly, the show of passion and commitment from the teachers.

In my paper, I focused mainly on learner autonomy as a cause to and sustaining force of L2 learner motivation. I felt urged to bring up learner autonomy since I believe that this is too important factor to dismiss and yet it has somehow been dismissed in many L2 classrooms.

As my own ideas to apply to L2 classroom situations, I weighed on giving an equally important responsibility to each and every learner in forming class. This would encourage learners to take on their own learning, leading to ultimate independence from the teacher.

I also specified that learners should be encouraged to produce the target language free from fear of making errors. Additionally, I suggested that the teacher convince the learners of the validness of manners in which they are studying the target language and increase their expectancy of success.

The Impact of Culture in Teaching English

as an International Language:

An Analysis of an ESL Course Book in Terms of Culture Teaching

Fukuoka Mina

2008FB021

Abstract

Today, young people as well as adults are involved in studying English in classrooms around the world and English is utilized as a tool of communicating with people all over the world. Since language is one of the ways to express the speaker's culture, language and culture are closely related to one another in terms of educational environment. Most Western nations are categorized as individualist societies that are comprised of explicit, stipulatory social systems whereas most Asian nations are referred to as Collectivist societies which are comprised of highly contextual, subjective, subtle nonverbal communication. Hence, the teacher is supposed to consider the students' cultural communication pattern in teaching English. Moreover, there are three kinds of materials to be used in teaching English as an international language(EIL): the source culture materials, the target culture materials, and the international target culture materials. Whether the teacher, the students, and the textbook are from the same culture or not, appropriate teaching materials are different. However, in common, most important goals to achieve in teaching EIL include the establishment of a sphere of interculturality and teaching culture as difference.

Second Language Acquisition and the Age of Immigration: Young Learners Abroad

Emi Ushida

2008FB189

Abstract

Recent studies suggest that children benefit in acquiring second language from when they have a biological ability, Critical Period Hypothesis. The research of second language acquisition indicates the relationship between the age of immigration, length of residence and the language level, proposing that the earlier the immigration, the more native-like language proficiency they are going to achieve. These studies show the reasons to why learners, with experiences abroad in their youth, are superior when discussing about second language acquisition. Besides children's biological advantages, there are psychological contrarities between children and adults. Mature learners may be anxious using foreign language, which may restrict learners from successful second language acquisition. In addition, the environment of the classroom greatly influences the level of the target language. Students in school have more opportunities of learning and exposure to the target language, which is advantageous to the learners. On the other hand, there have been investigations that reveal adults learn faster and are able to acquire syntax better than young learners. By comparing the significant distinctions between children and adult learners, it will define the best environment and the age of second language acquisition.

Integrating Four Skills in Junior High School in Japan

Ikawa Hiroe

2008FB042

Abstract

The best methods for foreign language education have been discussed by specialists for a long time in Japan. It has been changed in the long history of Japanese guidelines. At one time, aural and oral skills were considered to be important, and at another time, four skills had equal importance separately. Today, according to the government guidelines in 2008, integrating four skills, listening, speaking, writing and reading, was set as the most effective way to teach English. Following the new guidelines, teachers should reconsider their classes. There are many methods to teach English by integrating four skills. Especially, I would like to adopt Task-Based Language Teaching in my classroom because I think it is suitable for students in the beginning or low-intermediate levels. There are a lot of tasks such as interviewing, writing letters and discussing on the internet, in the textbook for junior high school students. In addition, the most important thing for teachers is to examine their classes, and they should keep developing good points and improving bad points. They must keep making efforts to find more effective ways to teach English. To summarize, teachers will reflect on their teaching plans and their classes every time, ask other teachers for advice, and keep growing to organize better classes.

The Use of L1 in L2 Learning

Higashida Mari

2008FB034

Abstract

The focus of English curriculum in Japan has been inconsistent in its long history. The present study examines that the use of L1 is ineffective in L2 acquisition, and English curriculum of Japan is shifting to focus much on English-only classes. The question that arises is whether L1 should be used for successful L2 learning or not. In order to consider the effects of the new official guidelines for school teaching on the proficiency of students learning English, opinions and experiences of students, teachers and researchers are to be paid attention. Finding the most effective balance between L1 and L2 on teaching the target language is the aim of this report.

Extensive Reading for Japanese Senior High School Students

Hiroyo Oda

2008FB126

Abstract

This paper focuses on extensive reading for Japanese high school students. There is a large amount of research about extensive reading all over the world. However, in Japan, extensive reading programs are not so common yet. There are high schools which use graded readers for assignments, but usually the readers tend to be too difficult for students to do extensive reading. First, we look at the overviews of extensive reading. After that, we see the benefits of extensive reading and the reasons why it is not so common. I will also focus on two extensive reading programs for high school students and examine the results of it. One of the programs is for first-year high school students and some of them chose to attend an extensive reading program in their second-year. Therefore, the result shows that the students developed different strategies during their earlier and later stages of extensive reading. The result shows that continuous extensive reading will be effective for them. The other program is for third- year high school students and the results shows that extensive reading is one of the good ways to improve their attitude toward reading in English even if most of the students have to study for entrance examination universities. Finally, I look back at my experience of extensive reading at high school and have made three plans for extensive reading programs for high school students.

Bilingual Education in Japan

Kaori Hokii

2008FB035

Abstract

In the rapid progress of internationalization, people have come to realize the need for practical English skills. The early introduction of English education has attracted a lot of attention in Japan and so has bilingual education. As many studies have suggested, those who start being exposed to a second language while they are very young are the most likely to succeed in attaining great proficiency in the language whereas it is really difficult for adults learners to achieve native-like mastery. The point is that since bilingual education usually starts in the early stage of childhood, it is not the children who make a decision whether or not to receive it, but parents' thoughts are greatly reflected. I made an assumption that since those who spent a certain period of time abroad experienced difficulties from language barrier and realized the importance of English, they take a positive stance towards bilingual education for their future children. To examine the relationship between experiences overseas and interest in bilingual education, I conducted a survey of Nanzan university students on attitudes toward bilingual education in the form of a questionnaire. As a result, they view bilingual education positively in general, but while those who have overseas experience tended to emphasize the advantages of starting learning English from an early age, relatively many of those who never lived or studied abroad expressed concern about the negative effect on the development of the Japanese language.

Alleviation of Foreign Language Anxiety

In Language Classroom

Kyoko Kawakita

2008FB075

Abstract

Most Japanese junior high and high school students have studied English as their foreign language for several years, but some of them do not like English at all. After they graduated, they are eager to avoid studying English. However, since English has become a global language to communicate with people all over the world, speaking English is a necessity for us, and is getting to be common practice and nothing special. Despite such a situation, some people still try to avoid English. Therefore, it is meaningful and important to examine why they do not want to study English and to think of ideas to make them feel comfortable when they study English. While there are some reasons why students feel they do not function well in English class, foreign language anxiety has been researched as a significant obstacle to acquiring foreign language. Foreign language anxiety is “fear or apprehension occurring when a learner is expected to perform in a second language” (Gardner & MacIntyre 1993 p.43). Although most people experience foreign language anxiety, teachers can alleviate students’ anxiety by using effective strategies and techniques to feel make students comfortable, especially in listening and speaking activities.

The Motivational Strategies in the Classroom and the Relationship to Cooperative Learning

Mikio Hattori

2008FB030

Abstract

In this graduation thesis, I analyzed the relationship between motivation and cooperative learning. In chapter 1, as introduction, I put emphasis on the importance of motivation in learning. In chapter 2, first, I introduce a lot of viewpoints of motivation which researchers have suggested. Then, referring to these viewpoints, I offer its definition from three different perspectives: a behavioral definition, cognitive definitions and a constructivist definition. In chapter 3, I separate these theories into two large categories: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Then, after commenting on each characteristic, I suggest intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic motivation. In chapter 4, I focus on cooperative learning as the activity which raises students' motivation intrinsically. I start this chapter by defining cooperative learning. Then, I analyze the relationship between motivation and cooperative learning from the perspective which I have mentioned in the previous chapters. And based on the analysis, I prove that cooperative learning contributes to raising students' intrinsic motivation. In chapter 5, I shift the focus from theories into ones on practice. Then, in order to see how the theories which I have suggested are practiced in the real classroom context, I introduce my own experience of teaching practice as a case study. In chapter 6, I summarize the whole of this graduation thesis and find some reflection in my research and present the part which I should improve for future research.