

Sociocultural and dialogical perspectives on language and communicative activity for second language education

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Sociocultural theory of learning and dialogical theory of language and communication have drawn language educators' attention for the last decade or so. In this paper I will articulate my position, as a second language educator and researcher in sociocultural theory and Bakhtin's dialogism, on language and communication for language education. The paper begins with Bakhtin's contention against "abstract objectivism" along with his semiotic theory of language and proceeds to the merger of Bakhtin's speech genre and the concept of community of practice (CoP) formulated in the theory of legitimate peripheral participation by Lave and Wenger (1991). Communication is then examined in terms of communicative activity that is facilitated through the mobilization of speech genre. Moreover, increasing communicability within one national-language society is explained in terms of interaction between/among CoP, overlap of certain communicative activities among CoP, and multiple membership in different CoP by individuals, etc. Finally, communicative activity is defined as a verbally mediated activity in which people initiate and engage in the creation and progression of historical events while employing verbal signs. I conclude the paper with a discussion on some implications for curriculum planning and actual teaching practice.

Compilation of Japanese learners' dictionaries

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Digitized dictionaries, such as electronic dictionaries and online dictionaries, are being widely used by learners of foreign/second languages. There is a great potential for innovative designs for digitized dictionaries. But as there are still many people who learn languages in environments where digitized dictionaries are not available, we have to keep working on printed dictionaries as well as digitized dictionaries. In this article I will present *A Handbook of Japanese Grammar Patterns for Teachers and Learners* as an example of a non-digitized printed dictionary, and *A List of Basic Vocabulary for Japanese Language Instruction* and *Basic Verb Handbook* as examples of digitized online dictionaries. I will demonstrate how *A Handbook of Japanese Grammar Patterns for Teachers and Learners* attempts to realize a plan of describing functional expressions, and how *A List of Basic Vocabulary for Japanese Language Instruction* and *Basic Verb Handbook* utilize corpora in their compilation.

The effects of narrative types in children's narrative production

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This study investigates the relationship between narrative type and participant age, focusing on the following aspects: length of elicited narratives, text cohesion and the complexity of sentences used in narratives. The participants in this study consisted of 30 monolingual Japanese speakers in three different age groups; 4-5 ($n=10$), 8-9 ($n=10$), and adults ($n=10$). The participants were asked to tell a story by using two types of narrative elicitation tasks; two sets of four picture sequences and one 24 wordless picture book (*Frog, where are you?*). The data suggest that a relationship exists between text length, cohesion, and the development of cohesive devices with age. However, no absolute relationships between text length and the use of more complex sentences were found. A comparison of the two types of narrative elicitation tasks also gave mixed results, with differences only found amongst the youngest group who performed better with the shorter narrative.

Practical linguistics of Japanese: Japanese linguistics' contributions to teaching *dareka/nanika*

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This paper examines Japanese indefinite expressions *dareka/nanika* in detail, to explore effective ways to introduce them in Japanese instruction. To do so, I will first show that *dareka/nanika* (without particles) are like numeral quantifiers, such as *futari* “two (people)” or *go-hon* “five (cylindrical objects).” Second, I will show that *dareka/nanika* without particles are more like English indefinite articles. In many textbooks, *dareka/nanika* are said to appear without particles, but the nature of the omission of particles is not clearly explained. This paper will elucidate the structure that lies behind *dareka/nanika* without particles. Finally, I will connect the linguistic insights on *dareka/nanika* presented in this paper to Japanese instruction and defend this paper's pedagogical contributions. I will argue for more rigorous efforts to: translate findings in linguistics for language instruction; provide clear and explicatory information on the Japanese language to language instructors in a manner that goes beyond mere descriptions; and help organize and/or reorganize pedagogical grammar by taking theoretically-informed linguistic findings into consideration.

**A new approach to business Japanese instruction:
Content-based instruction using business cases**

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This article addresses a new approach to business Japanese utilizing content-based instruction (CBI) with business cases and presents new teaching material. It first discusses notional-functional syllabus - traditionally employed in business Japanese instruction - and its benefits and challenges in American university classroom settings. It then suggests incorporating CBI in business Japanese instruction, integrating language and content learning and encouraging learners to use the language; a teaching material, developed by the author and later published as a textbook, is introduced as an example of such approach. Since this material integrates business case and language learning, the application of using business cases in language classrooms and central features of the material are illustrated. The discussion of this article attempts to provide an alternative approach to the traditional notional-functional-syllabus-based instruction in business Japanese education.

**Co-regulation in pair work: Insights from the
Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) classroom**

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Sociocultural theory as applied to language learning asserts that an L2 is learned through social interaction. This study uses microanalysis of audiovisual data to investigate the interactions that occur during pair work in the JFL classroom, specifically the existence and organization of *co-regulation* — the continuous mutual social coordination of participants in an interaction (Fogel, 1993). In addition to coordinating action, co-regulation allows for creativity to spontaneously emerge in an unfolding interaction. Co-regulation was found in the JFL learner interactions on a continuum of increasing agency from body posture, gaze gestures, waiting, and joint word searches to L1 talk. The focal learners were able to complete the task by maintaining co-regulation throughout the interaction creating a joint-attentional focus (Tomasello, 2014). These findings give a glimpse of the mechanics behind pair interaction in the foreign language classroom providing insight into how learners develop autonomous language use that can adjust to various unforeseen contingencies.

**New Content-Based Textbook
for Intermediate/Advanced Japanese**

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『道：日本を探る』 *Michi: Nihon o Saguru* “*The Path: Exploring Japan*” is a new intermediate/advanced Japanese textbook. It embodies content-based instruction (CBI) and explores the diverse histories and cultures of the various regions of Japan in authentic Japanese language. It affords substantial knowledge of Japanese culture. At the same time, it aims to develop intermediate/advanced Japanese proficiency, according to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines and National Standards’ 5C’s. This paper describes *Michi*’s purpose, distinctive characteristics, curriculum, and chapter structure. *Michi*’s characteristics include rich cultural content, abundant digital images, proficiency-oriented exercises, detailed vocabulary lists, easy-to-use text organization, Internet activities, and varied projects. The paper also discusses revisions and improvements to *Michi* over its course of development, including a gateway chapter to smooth the transition from elementary to intermediate Japanese, and various devices to facilitate CBI.