

Hiragana Hurdle: Are We Perpetuating the Problem?

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It is estimated that over 27,000 students are learning Japanese in primary schools in the state of Queensland, which represents the highest enrolment of Japanese learners in Australia both at primary and secondary schools. This figure is growing rapidly, as LOTE (Languages Other Than English) programs are promoted strongly at government level. Among all LOTEs, Japanese has the greatest number of students.

It is our belief that all LOTE programs should facilitate the development of communicative competence in a balanced way, that is, using all four skills. To achieve this balance, it is particularly important to promote reading and writing skills in today's LOTE classrooms, where the emphasis has tended to be on oral/aural skills. This point is particularly relevant to the learning of the Japanese language, in which orthographical change can be a major problem for many learners.

This paper reports on a study conducted on 585 primary- and secondary-school Japanese-language learners to examine: 1) their kana proficiency (mainly recognition); 2) their attitude toward learning written forms of the language; and 3) how these two factors are affected by different teaching approaches. This study is the first stage of a project which investigates teaching approaches to reading/writing in Japanese as a LOTE.

This project was conceived to investigate two problems: 1) after the initial learning of kana (mostly at primary schools), students' reading proficiency does not develop as smoothly as desired; and 2) the effect of different teaching approaches, particularly the use of romaji, has been an issue of debate. However, there is no concrete classroom evidence that clarifies which approach is more effective and whether the use of romaji (or any alphabet-based code) actually hinders students' mastery of kana.

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Kana learning is often regarded as an easy task; however, for Japanese learners of non-character-based language background, it can be a major 'hurdle' which may affect their future learning.

As well as the discussion of the outcomes of the study, further research questions will be raised specifically on the teaching of reading and Japanese teaching at the primary-school level.

INTRODUCTION

Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in primary schools has increasingly become the focus of national attention. Currently in Queensland, LOTE is offered in all state primary schools (Years 6 and 7). Among the seven priority languages,¹ the Japanese language has the greatest number of learners, which is estimated as 27,776 (LACU, 1995). The number of enrollments in State of Queensland represents 45% (primary) and 39% (secondary) of national total (Dijite, 1994).

To date, the emphasis has been on a communicative activity-based approach with a greater proportion of teaching time allocated to oral/aural activities. It is perceived that this emphasis has occurred to the detriment of acquiring adequate proficiency in reading character-based (Asian) languages. Perception of time requirements for teaching, attitudes toward the validity of script teaching, and other factors may be contributing to teaching and learning difficulties.

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether these factors or any other factors affect students' lack of proficiency and interest in the reading and writing of Japanese. As we are interested in the initial learning of reading/writing in Japanese, the term 'script' refers to mainly kana, particularly hiragana, in this study.

Background

Three Areas Providing Impetus for This Research

1. *The Role of Reading Proficiency in LOTE learning*

We would argue that literacy (i.e., reading and writing) aspects of LOTE, particularly reading, should be much more strongly supported and encouraged. Currently, learners have only limited access to written materials. Learners with lower L2 literacy levels have even less access. This can be frustrating and disappointing for them.

Written language is not only another means of communication but also a valid way to focus on form. Wales (1993) observed that the development of literacy helped ESL speakers with fossilised language to focus on their problems and improve. It

¹ Currently Japanese, Chinese (Mandarin), Korean, Indonesian, French, German, and Italian are the seven priority languages specified by the State Government of Queensland (1995). Japanese is also one of the Key languages (National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco, 1987)).

was also reported that the development of literacy raises learners' metalinguistic awareness.

2. *Early Introduction*

Early introduction to the written form of the language has been supported by some researchers. It is claimed by Clyne et al. (1995: p.12) that:

Children will sometimes devise their own spelling system in L2 based on L1. Or, as they become more literate and analytical, they may have their own means of access to books in L2. If not, the unavailability of the written language may demotivate them (Van Els et al., 1977) and deny them a source of assisting their memory (Rivers, 1964; Van Ek, 1970; Hawking, 1981).

This is particularly relevant to the learning of the Japanese language, where learners are required to learn a new orthographical system that is not related to their first language.²

3. *Other Factors*

Student performance cannot be separated from other factors, such as motivation, attitude, teaching approaches, school and home environment, resources, curriculum, and so on. An international study on reading literacy examined thirty-four variables in three areas: home background variables, school input, and school/teacher policies (Elly et al., 1994).

As we are particularly interested in the role and impact of teaching approaches currently used in classrooms, we administered a background survey on teaching approaches to kana with fifty primary/secondary school Japanese-language teachers (Appendix 1). The teaching approaches used in current Japanese classrooms are described in the next section.

Teaching Approaches

The teaching approaches identified in the survey were divided into three broad categories.

1. *Approach A: Romaji then Kana*

Students are not exposed to kana initially for a certain period of time, ranging from three months up to one year. Reasons for this approach are:

- Kana can be threatening and discouraging for some students, and can result in students discontinuing the subject
- As oral/aural communication tends to be the main focus of LOTE classrooms, it is more productive not to teach kana initially

² Although some students are from NESBs (Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds), and therefore their home language may not be English, it is assumed here that the language of instruction is English and that students have acquired an alphabet-based literacy.

- Romaji enables classroom teachers³ and parents to provide some assistance even if they have no knowledge of Japanese.

2. *Approach B: Kana and Romaji*

Teachers who use this approach tend to emphasise that romaji is a support device, not a “real” Japanese script. Some present both scripts (e.g., にほん Nihon), and some use romaji as furigana (e.g., にほん). Teachers in this group appear to believe that:

- Students should be exposed to authentic writing from the beginning.
- The earlier kana is introduced, the easier the transition will be.
- Students may be discouraged if no support (i.e., romaji) is provided.

3. *Approach C: Kana Only (No Romaji)*

This group of teachers are attempting to eliminate romaji from their lessons. Only a small number of teachers are using this approach, while others commented they would use this approach in the future. Part of the rationale for attempting this course of action is their belief that younger students learn kana easily and that they do not become discouraged if sufficient activities are used to maintain their interest.

Currently, Approaches A and B are used equally, with Approach C still being used less frequently. Judging from the comments given by the teachers, however, there seems to be a shift toward B and C.

The differences in the effects of each approach are beyond the scope of this study at this stage. However, it should be noted that factors influencing the approach used seem closely related to a teacher’s own proficiency, confidence level, and beliefs; the variety of resources available; the time allocated to LOTE; and the classroom environment (including student attitude). These factors are also strongly influenced by the level of support given to the LOTE program in general.

Aims of the Study

This study addresses the following two issues:

1. There is a growing belief among Japanese-language teachers that the use of romaji (or any alphabet-based code) has detrimental effects on the learning of kana. Romaji can provide an “easy way out,” and learners may not develop the desired proficiency in kana.
However, the use of romaji seems unavoidable in our context where the alphabet is the basis of literacy at least in school and public situations.
2. Some teachers have observed that many students develop a negative attitude toward kana learning even if they are enthusiastic initially. However, many learners seem enthusiastic about learning script initially. A similar finding was

³ In the primary sector, currently three half-hour lessons are allocated to LOTE; they are normally taught by specialist teachers. Some classroom teachers may encourage students to practise the LOTE throughout the week.

reported in a study on primary-school student beliefs (Viney, 1993), indicating that beginning learners of Japanese are as confident about learning the written language as they are of learning oral/aural skills.

Our questions can be summarized as:

- 1) Whether or not the use of romaji in teaching influences student acquisition of kana, and if so, how.
- 2) Whether or not it is evident that students develop negative attitudes toward learning kana later in their learning rather than initially and if so, why.

Study

Administration of Survey

A survey was administered to over 585 students who are studying Japanese at twenty different schools at upper primary and lower secondary levels. Among the 27 groups surveyed, Years 6/7 and Year 8 were the two main groups (Table 1). These year levels were selected since in general the learning of kana is completed by Year 9.

At the time of the survey, the majority of Year 6/7 and Year 8 students had studied Japanese for 1.5 and 2.5 years, respectively. Most of the students were from the Brisbane metropolitan area, with some in regional areas.

Table 1 Students, Year Levels and Years of Learning

	No. of Groups	No. of Students	No. of Years
Year 5	1	6	2.5
Year 6	2	49	1.5–2.5
6/7			
Year 7	10	206	1.5
Year 8	13	311	0.5–2.5
Year 9/10	1	13	3.5–4.5
	27	585	

For each class, teachers provided background information on the amount and timing of the introduction of romaji, hiragana, katakana, and kanji, together with the approaches they use. These are summarized in Table 2. Students were asked to identify their current year level, the year they started learning Japanese, and their home language.

Table 2 Survey Summary

Group (number)	Year Level	Years of Learning	Teaching Approaches*	Proficiency	Part A (1)		Part B (2)		Teacher
					Yes	No	Yes	No	
A (20)	8	2.5	A (H starting this year)	10.7	15	4	17	0	G
B (6/4)	5	2.5	C (H being introduced)	13.3	6	0	6	0	G
	6/7	2.5		8.5	3	1	2	2	
C (21)	7	1.5	A (R : Y6— H : 8 wks)	13.7	17	0	10	2	M
D (13)	9/10	3.5/4.5	A (R , Kata : Y6— H this year)	15.5	12	3	12	1	H
E (15)	8	2.5	A (R , Kata : Y6— H this year)	7.5	9	2	9	1	H
F (10)	7	1.5	A (R : Y6— H : mid-Y6)	12.5	8	1	10	0	S
G (22)	8	2.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	6.9	12	3	12	9	D
H (22)	7	1.5	A (R : Y6— H : mid-Y6)	10.1	20	2	18	0	S
I (22)	7	1.5	C (H : being introduced)	8.7	14	3	16	1	P
J (20)	6/7	1.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	7.8	11	5	12	4	R
K (25)	6	1.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	7.2	19	2	22	1	R
L (13)	7	1.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	12.6	16	3	11	10	R
			*Use R as furigana						
M (25)	8	1.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	10.7	18	2	12	2	R
N (25)	7	2.5	A (R : Y6— H : Y7)	6.4	11	4	15	4	C
O (28)	8	0.5	A (R 5wks— H 14wks)	11.8	16	5	14	8	I
P (20)	8	0.5	A (R 5wks— H 14wks)	13.1	8	4	11	3	B
Q (20)	8	2.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	10.2	32	16	37	13	E
R (20)	8	2.5	A (R , Kata : Y6— H : Y7/8)	14.9	20	1	17	2	W
S (26)	7	1.5	A (R : Y6— H : Y7)	14.5	20	2	25	1	E
			*Trying to limit R						
T (7)	8	2.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	7.4	1	4	3	2	A
U (13)	8	2.2/3.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	6.9	7	3	4	8	S
V (6)	8	2.5	B (R , H : gradual introduction)	10.2	5	1	5	1	J
W (7)	8	1.5	(Mixed group)	6.1	5	0	5	1	J
X (46)	8	0.5		5.1	37	3	31	17	J
Y (26)	7	2.5	A (R : Y6— H : Y7)	8.0	5	0	12	2	C
Z (18)	7	1.5	A (R : Y6— H : Y7)	11.4	17	0	12	0	K
a (23)	7	1.5	B (H with R underneath: Y6— H : Y7)	11.4	19	1	23	0	L
Total				Mean	383	75	383	95	
					(Yes)		(Yes)		
585				10.0	83.6%		80.1%		

A: Romaji then Kana; B: Romaji and Kana; C: No Romaji

H: Hiragana; R: Romaji; Kata: Katakana; K: Kanji; Y: Year level

The Survey

The survey consisted of two parts: Part A, on kana proficiency, and Part B, on awareness about reading and writing in the language (Appendix 2).

Part A consisted of five parts:

- 1) Identifying and labelling different types of scripts. Students circle and name three different types of scripts from authentic written material;

- 2-a) Word match (hiragana): Students match five words written in romaji and kana.
- 2-b) Word match (katakana): (as above)
- 3-a) Word find (hiragana): Students identify and circle four words and three kana from a word-find chart consisting of 25 kana.
- 3-b) Word find (katakana): (as above)
- 4-a) Reading comprehension: Students identify an animal described in Japanese. The text is written in hiragana and katakana with furigana.
- 4-b) Reading comprehension: Students identify a family member being described. The texts are written in hiragana and kanji (numbers only). For questions 3) and 4), students provided answers in English or romaji;
- 5) Writing: Students provide personal information (name, age, year level, physical features such as eye colour, pets) using Japanese scripts.

Part B consisted of six open-ended questions in English to which students responded in English. The questions were designed to examine students' perception of the value of learning kana and its effects on spoken skills (Questions 1 and 2), learning strategies used (Questions 3 and 4), and types of activities/lessons that students regard as effective (Questions 5 and 6).

For the purpose of this study, only part of the information was used. In Part A, 2-b): katakana word match and 3-b): katakana word find were excluded as many students had not been introduced to katakana (timing of katakana introduction varies); 5): writing was also excluded so that we could focus on students' reading proficiency. It should be noted that "proficiency" in this study refers mostly to recognition of kana. It was also decided that only the first two questions in Part B would be used, because they referred specifically to attitudes regarding the learning of kana. The remainder of part B related to teaching and learning strategies.

Findings and Discussion

The survey was carried out through the goodwill of colleagues, who were selected from the respondents to the teacher survey. There was no strict control over its administration. Most classes used one lesson (30 minutes) and some used two to complete the survey. Accordingly, the degree of supervision varied. However, from the feedback received, we considered that the data provided was reasonably reliable.

As for the teaching approaches used, Approaches A (romaji then kana) and B (romaji and kana) were predominant (13 groups each). Approach C (no romaji) was used in two groups.

Proficiency

Findings

1. The number of years of learning did not correlate with the students' proficiency level. Comparing the two main groups, Years 6/7 (with 1.5 years of learning) performed slightly better than Year 8 (with 2.5 years of learning)

Table 3 Summary of Year 6, 6/7 with 1.5 Years of Learning

Group (number)	Year Level	Years of Learning	Teaching Approaches	Proficiency	Part A (1)		Part B (2)	
					Yes	No	Yes	No
C (21)	7	1.5	A (R: Y6—H: 8 wks)	13.7	17	0	10	2
F (10)	7	1.5	A (R: Y6—H: mid-Y6)	12.5	8	1	10	0
H (22)	7	1.5	A (R: Y6—H: mid-Y6)	10.1	20	2	18	0
I (22)	7	1.5	C (H: being introduced)	8.7	14	3	16	1
J (20)	6/7	1.5	B (R, H: gradual introduction)	7.8	11	5	12	4
K (25)	6	1.5	B (R, H: gradual introduction)	7.2	19	2	22	1
L (13)	7	1.5	B (R, H: gradual introduction)	12.6	16	3	11	10
S (26)	7	1.5	A (R: Y6—H: Y7)	14.5	20	2	25	1
Z (18)	7	1.5	A (R: Y6—H: Y7)	11.4	17	0	12	0
a (23)	7	1.5	B (H with R underneath: Y6—H: Y7)	11.4	19	1	23	0
Total				Mean	203	36	207	38
					(Yes)		(Yes)	
273				11.2	84.9%		84.5%	

Table 4 Summary of Year 8 with 2.5 Years of Learning

Group (number)	Year Level	Years of Learning	Teaching Approaches	Proficiency	Part A (1)		Part B (2)	
					Yes	No	Yes	No
A (20)	8	2.5	A (H starting this year)	10.7	15	4	17	0
E (15)	8	2.5	A (R, Kata: Y6—H this year)	7.5	9	2	9	1
G (22)	8	2.5	B (R, H: gradual introduction)	6.9	12	3	12	9
Q (82)	8	2.5	B (R, H: gradual introduction)	10.2	32	16	37	13
R (20)	8	2.5	A (R, Kata: Y6—H: Y7/8)	14.9	20	1	17	2
T (7)	8	2.5	B (R, H: gradual introduction)	7.4	1	4	3	2
V (6)	8	2.5	B (R, H: gradual introduction)	10.2	5	1	5	1
Total				Mean	402	77	400	97
					(Yes)		(Yes)	
169				10.2	76.1%		78.1%	

(Table 3 and 4).

- As only two groups were categorised as Approach C group (no romaji), it is difficult to identify any significant difference in proficiency between classes who were or were not exposed to romaji.
- Learners who were at earlier stages of learning kana performed well. This tendency was observed with Year 8 classes who were starting to learn kana (e.g., Table 2: Group O and P).

Discussion

In this study, it is impossible to identify any clear effects of the use of romaji in response to research question 1. It may be that it is too early for any differences to show. Other factors related to the use of romaji could possibly be greater than the use of romaji itself. However, some teachers with Approaches A and B state that they treat romaji only as a supporting device and consciously limit the time spent on using romaji seem more successful than others (e.g., Table 2: Group L, S a).

Attitude*Findings*

Responses given by students have been grouped into categories. Examples of comments are given for each category.

Question 1: Do you think learning hiragana/katakana is important? Why?

Positive responses

- In-country: you will need it when you visit Japan (e.g., reading street signs and menus)
- Written communication: you can communicate with friends by letters, notes, etc.
- Future study and career: you will need it when you go to high school/university; you will get a job related to Japan (e.g., tourism)
- Current study: you will need it for exams
- Oral communication: if you can read it, you can say it
- Kanji is too difficult: you need kana before you learn kanji
- Part of Japanese: kana is part of the Japanese language

Negative responses

- Not going to Japan: I will not need Japanese language because I will not visit Japan
- Too difficult/confusing: Kana is too difficult/confusing

Question 2: Do you think learning hiragana/katakana will help you speak Japanese better? Why?

Positive responses

- Pronunciation: kana will help you with pronunciation
- Memorizing words: with kana, you can remember words better
- Help speaking: You can say what you can read
- Help reading

Negative responses

- Writing/speaking are not related

Table 5 Part B(1): Do You Think Learning hiragana/katakana Is Important? Why? (Multiple responses)

Year level (Total resp)	Yes							No			
	In country	Written communication	Future study & career	Current study	Oral communication	Kanji is too difficult	Part of Japanese	Other	Not going to Japan	Too difficult, confusing	Other
Year 5 (5)	2 (40.0)	1 (20.0)					1 (20.0)	1 (20.0)			
Year 6/7 (42)	11 (26.2)	3 (7.1)	3 (7.1)	9 (2.1)	1 (2.4)	1 (2.4)	2 (4.8)	4 (9.5)	4 (9.5)	1 (2.4)	3 (7.1)
Year 7 (181)	42 (23.2)	34 (18.8)	34 (18.8)	13 (7.2)	9 (4.9)	1 (0.5)	11 (6.0)	22 (12.2)	5 (2.8)	2 (1.1)	8 (4.4)
Year 8 (250)	43 (17.2)	40 (16.0)	61 (24.4)	4 (1.6)	2 (0.8)	1 (0.4)	19 (7.6)	25 (10.0)	21 (8.4)	11 (4.4)	23* (9.2)
Year 9/10 (15)	2 (13.3)	3 (20.0)			1 (6.6)		4 (26.7)	1 (6.6)	3 (20.0)		
Total response (493)	100 (20.3)	81 (16.4)	99 (20.1)	26 (5.3)	13 (2.6)	3 (0.6)	37 (7.5)	53 (10.8)	33 (6.7)	14 (2.8)	34 (6.9)

*Year 8: 16 students commented that it is not necessary.

Table 6 Part B (2): Do You Think Learning Kana Will Help You Speak Japanese Better? Why? (Multiple responses)

Year level (Total resp)	Yes					No		
	Pronunciation	Memorizing words	Helps speaking	Help reading kanji	Other/No reason	Writing & speaking not related	Romaji is more useful/easier	Other/No reason
Year 5 (6)	1 (16.7)		5 (83.3)					
Year 6 (43)	6 (13.9)	2 (4.7)	16 (37.2)		11 (25.6)	2 (4.7)		6 (13.9)
Year 7 (202)	43 (21.3)	14 (6.9)	56 (27.7)		62 (30.7)	13 (6.4)		14 (6.9)
Year 8 (234)	55 (23.5)	5 (2.1)	56 (23.9)	1 (0.4)	57 (24.4)	22 (9.4)	4 (1.7)	34* (14.5)
Year 9/10 (13)	4 (30.8)		3 (23.0)	1 (7.7)	4 (30.8)	1 (7.7)		
Total response (498)	109 (21.9)	21 (4.2)	136 (27.3)	2 (0.4)	134 (26.9)	38 (7.6)	4 (0.8)	54 (10.8)

*Year 8: 18 students commented that it is confusing.
6 students commented that it is unnecessary.

- Romaji is more useful/easier (so kana is not necessary)

Discussion

Table 5 and 6 show:

- The majority of students across year levels gave positive responses to both questions.
- Older students listed more career-related positive responses. Similar tendencies were observed with students from coastal regions, which are popular holiday destinations for Japanese tourists.
- It is noted that more Year 8 students felt that learning kana was unnecessary, which conflicted with the view held by the same group that Japanese may help with their future careers and study.

It is certainly a new tendency that many young students gave career-related reasons for learning Japanese. Students seem to be encouraged to learn Japanese by teachers, parents, older siblings, or the community. This is a positive outcome of the recent strong governmental initiatives and more active interactions with the Japanese community through exchanges activities, school trips, and tourism. However, the belief that Japanese-language proficiency readily leads to a successful career is misleading, and career options and study requirements must be clearly spelt out even for young students.

Although the majority of students agreed that learning kana is important, their reasons indicate some uncertainty, as if they are not totally convinced of its value. Strong resentment was cited by some students, who were required to “re-learn” the scripts “properly” after spending some time “learning” but not “using” them. This was particularly evident with Year 8 students, who are placed in the same class as absolute beginner learners, even though they have studied Japanese in primary school.

Although it is difficult to maintain student interest and motivation after initial learning, it seems that current classrooms are not providing sufficient opportunities for students to utilise the acquired knowledge and skills in a meaningful way. More opportunities need to be given to develop reading skills using the kana. This seems to explain why we observed many students developing negative attitudes toward kana later in their learning (research question 2).

Conclusion and Classroom Implication

There seems to be a missing link between the mastery of kana and the development of reading proficiency. In other words, the mastery of kana is not leading to a more meaningful use of the scripts. This could possibly be improved by:

- linking oral and written communication activities in such a way that each reinforces the other;
- revising the ratio of oral and written work to give written work greater balance. Furthermore, the profile of form needs to be raised again using activities such as dictation and drills;

- developing reading resources to suit the interests and abilities of learners with lower proficiency;⁴
- providing more individual attention and support to students who have lower L1 literacy level.

Further Research Questions

The following points need further investigation for the continued development of LOTE in schools, particularly at primary school level, as the majority of existing research has so far been based on secondary-school and adult learners.

First, some resources that seem to appeal to primary school learners have been developed. Some teaching programs relevant to beginner learners' interests have also been developed. However, it is still not clear what sort of knowledge and skills these learners can bring from their first language experience to utilize for their second-language learning. Further input in this area is also critical at the teacher training/in-service level. This is related to the point raised earlier in section 2 concerning teaching approaches and teacher beliefs.

Second, the benefits of early age second-language learning for the development of metalinguistic awareness should be addressed. It has been observed that students for whom the LOTE is L3 are more enthusiastic, more proficient learners of Japanese. It was also reported in Yelland et al. (1993) that exposure to even a limited second-language program advanced the age of reading readiness in English. Other benefits related to cognitive development have also been reported (Cummins and Gulustan, 1974).

Lastly, although emphasis on spoken communication (particularly in early years of learning) is also important, delayed introduction to written language and limited use of it could lead to unbalanced development of overall proficiency levels. Since not only the exposure to the written language but also the meaningful use of this aspect of language seems vital, the role of literacy in second-language learning in general needs further investigation.

⁴ Some resources have already been developed by the researchers in response to this study. Follow-up research and its findings are expected in the near future.

Appendix 1: Teacher Survey

Survey on learning/teaching of Japanese scripts

1 LEARNING

* When did you first learn to read/ write Japanese (hiragana, katakana, kanji)?

Do you remember what you learned?

How did you learn?

What was the setting? (please specify)

In classroom in Japan _____

Outside classroom in Japan _____

In classroom outside Japan _____

Outside classroom outside Japan _____

What was your motivation for learning it?

How long did it take?

*If you had your time over, would you change the learning environment, learning style, materials you used etc? If so, why?

2 TEACHING

* How do you teach your students to read/write Japanese? (What strategies do you use?) Why?

* Thinking about it now, can you see a connection between how you learned and how you teach Japanese reading/writing?

* Have you always taught Japanese scripts the way you are teaching it now? Why/why not?

Appendix 2: Student Survey

Year started learning Japanese: _____ Current Year Level: _____

School: _____ Language/s spoken at home: _____

PART A

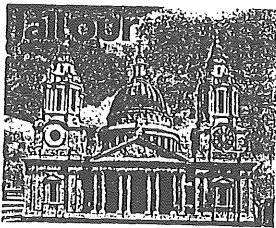
1. Circle one example of each different type of Japanese writing you can find. Do you know what each one is called? (Please label them if you can.)

Do you know what each one is called?

JAL

Japan Airlines

日本へのゲート



JALTOUR : イギリス・アイルランド・ヨーロッパ
往復チケットとレンタカー(14日間)
2,099ドルより

JALTOUR : 日本へのパッケージツアーの
パンフレット近日発行

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[営業時間] 9 : 00 ~ 17 : 00 (月曜日~金曜日)

日本航空

2. a) Match the romaji words with the correct hiragana.

okāsan	・	・いぬ
konnichiwa	・	・えんぴつ
inu	・	・おかあさん
enpitsu	・	・とら
tora	・	・こんにちわ

* What clues did you use? _____

b) Match the romaji words with the correct katakana.

koara	・	・ペン
orenji	・	・コアラ
pen	・	・パン
pan	・	・コーラ
kōra	・	・オレンジ

* What clues did you use? _____

3. Word search

a) Find and circle following words: **red, Japan, stand, good-bye**

た	か	し	あ	く
つ	あ	か	い	だ
て	き	お	う	さ
に	ほ	ん	え	い
さ	よ	う	な	ら

* Colour the following characters

"i" --- yellow

"ku" --- red

"ho" --- blue

b) Find and circle following words: **tomato, door, notebook, pink**

キ	チ	タ	イ	ド
ピ	コ	サ	ウ	ア
ン	ト	マ	ト	エ
ク	ケ	ア	ン	ズ
ノ	ー	ト	ナ	オ

* Colour the following characters

"to"--- yellow

"ki" --- red

"a" --- blue

4 a) Write in English who you think is being described (eg cat).

わたしは ^{あふりか} アフリカにすんでいます。

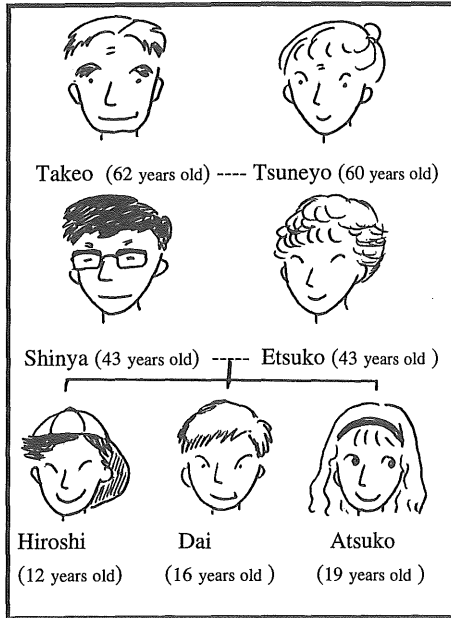
みみが おおきいです。

はなが ながいです。

Who am I? _____

4 b) This is the family tree of Kondo's. Read the Japanese sentences, work out which family member he or she is and write his or her name.

Family tree of Kondo's



a) わたしは 六十二さいです。

Who am I? _____

b) わたしは ひろしの おねえさんです。

Who am I? _____

5. Write three or four sentences about yourself. Write in Japanese using as much script (hiragana/katakana) as you can. You could include, for example, your name, age, what colour your eyes are, pets etc.

PART B

1. Do you think learning hiragana/katakana is important? Why?

2. Do you think learning hiragana/katakana will help you speak Japanese better? Why?

3. What things do you do to remember hiragana/katakana?

4. What clues do you use to help you read words and sentences in hiragana/katakana?

5. What types of lessons/activities help you with your hiragana/katakana?

6. Is there anything you don't do now that you think might improve your hiragana/katakana?

Thank you very much
どうもありがとうございました

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