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TEACHING JAPANESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE WITH A CULTURAL
CONTEXT

by

Naomi Fujii

A portfolio submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Logan, Utah

2022

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ABSTRACT

Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language with a Cultural Context

by

Naomi Fujii: Master of Second Language Teaching

Utah State University, 2021

Major Professor: Dr. Ekaterina Arshavskaya

Department: World Languages and Cultures

This portfolio is a compilation of the author's work during her studies in the Master of Second Language Teaching program at Utah State University. It also includes the author's reflections on her language teaching experience as a graduate instructor. This portfolio is organized into three primary sections. The first section includes the author's teaching perspectives which include professional environment, teaching philosophy statement, and professional development through teaching observations. The second section consists of two research papers, one on refusal strategies in Japanese, the other on the use of CALL for the development of oral proficiency. The third section contains an annotated bibliography that focuses on corrective feedback.

(77 pages)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all my committee members. To Dr. Ekaterina Arshavskaya, I really appreciate that you gladly accepted the role of committee chair. Without your support and encouragement, I could not have completed this portfolio. Since my days as an IELI student, you have been giving advice and when my performance was down, you were always concerned about me and encouraged me. To Dr. Elena Taylor, thank you for your continued support. I still remember the email I received from you after I completed the teaching assistant training course you taught. You gave me generous words “If you need another person on your supervisory committee, let me know.” Thank you very much for extending this offer and adjusting your busy schedule for me many times. To professor Atsuko Neely, thank you for your support of not only my studies, but also the Japanese program, and even my private life. Because of your support, I have been able to hang in there and I am grateful to have been a part of the Japanese language program with you.

Second, I would like to thank the professors in the MSLT program and the Department of World Languages and Cultures who have supported me. To Dr. Joshua Thoms, thank you very much for your advice and support. You always expressed your care about both my learning and teaching in the individual meetings we held every semester. You also helped me when immigration issues occurred and helped me to maintain a safe environment so that I can focus on my studies and teaching. I really appreciate it. To Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan, in the first semester, I thought that completing the portfolio would be an impossible project for me. Thanks to all the advice and feedback you gave me, I was able to complete my portfolio. Thank you very much

for your time. When I was an IELI student, I observed your linguistic class for an observation assignment. Since then, I have been a big fan of your class. Thank you for opening the door to the world of linguistics. To Dr. Abdulkafi Albirini, thank you for your support for my defense, which was later than planned. My first presentation in the MSLT program was in your research class. I still remember that I was encouraged by the advice you gave me as we walked together from Old Main to Distance Education before the class. My presentation that day was the starting point and I have come a long way. To professor Yurika Izumi, as a friend and a mentor, thank you for encouraging and helping me. We have shared so many documents on Google Drive since I started teaching Japanese at USU. I can say the feedback you gave me every day has definitely helped me improve. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to co-teach with you. Thank you very much. To Dr. Ann Roemer, thank you for your support even before I started the MSLT program. Your support for my defense practice has encouraged me a lot. I could not have done my defense successfully without your help. And I would like to thank all the professors and peers who supported me and worked with me.

Third, I would like to express my appreciation to my friends and family. To my friend, Carol Denniston “CD” and Logan Country Club Ladies Association members, thank you for checking my English in my assignments and Japanese course syllabus. Even though I have left the club, I am grateful for your continued friendship. To my family in Japan, thank you for your unconditional love and being so supportive.

Finally, to my partner Julio C Lopez, thank you for putting up with me even though I stayed up late for assignments and occupied the dining table on weekends. You are my biggest supporter.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTFL=American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

CALL=Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CF=Corrective Feedback

CSL=Chinese as a Second Language

ESL=English as a Second Language

FL=Foreign Language

GI=Graduate Instructor

JFL=Japanese as a Foreign Language

L1=First Language / Native Language

L2=Second Language

MSLT=Master of Second Language Teaching

NNS=Non-Native Speaker

NS=Native Speaker

OCF=Oral Corrective Feedback

OJAD=Online Japanese Accent Dictionary

RQ=Research Question

SE=Speak Everywhere

SLA=Second Language Acquisition

TA=Teaching Assistant

TBL=Task-based Learning

TL=Target Language

TPS=Teaching Philosophy Statement

USU=Utah State University

WFC=Written Corrective Feedback

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INTRODUCTION

The time I spent studying in the MSLT program was one of the most rewarding periods of my life. While studying as a graduate student, I had the opportunity to teach Japanese at Utah State University, which gave me an opportunity to practice the theories and incorporate teaching methods and classroom activities I learned in various courses. It was my desire to improve my Japanese classes that motivated me to enroll in the MSLT program.

This portfolio is a collection of writings on my beliefs as a language teacher, my discoveries, and the results of my research. It includes the integration of culture and language that I want to continue to pursue, effective feedback, and research on CALL, the necessity of which I began to understand due to the COVID-19 pandemic that I faced unexpectedly. All of these components are essential for me to achieve my career goals as a language teacher. The completion of this portfolio made me more interested in language teaching. It also helped me to clarify my future goals, as it made me realize that I really like teaching and learning languages and want to continue in this field.

TEACHING PERSPECTIVES

Professional Environment

My first encounter with learning a second language was learning English as part of my middle school required curriculum in Japan. However, my first real experience of learning a second language was when I moved to Taiwan as an expat wife and studied Mandarin Chinese for three years at the Mandarin Training Center of National Taiwan Normal University. My reason for learning Chinese was that it was essential for living in Taiwan. As my Chinese gradually improved, I was able to interact more with the people around me, and I recognized that my life in Taiwan became richer as I came to understand their lifestyle and culture.

At the same time, this learning experience made me realize the beauty and richness of expressions in the Japanese language that are sometimes difficult to translate into other languages. I also realized that language is not only a tool for communication based on grammatical rules and knowledge of words but also includes many other factors such as culture, the climate and geography of the place where the language users live, and the history and customs of the people who use the language.

When I first came to Logan, Utah in 2014, I had an opportunity to teach Japanese to students at Utah State University (USU) as a volunteer tutor. It gave me great pleasure to help them progress and to be part of the cultural exchange and I gradually became motivated to prepare for a career as a Japanese teacher who can teach based on proper pedagogy. These experiences in language learning and teaching led me to pursue the degree of the Master of Second Language Teaching (MSLT) at USU.

In the MSLT program, I had the opportunity to teach Japanese to university students as a teaching assistant (TA) and a graduate instructor (GI) for two years.

Through incorporating the pedagogy and theories that I have learned in the MSLT courses into my classroom, I realized that the role of a language teacher is not only to teach the language and convey cultural elements to the students. I have set my goal as a language teacher to contribute to the personal development of my students through language teaching, and I aspire to achieve this goal by teaching Japanese to college-level students in the United States. The papers included in this portfolio were written for this professional context.

Teaching Philosophy Statement

Introduction

I believe that no matter their age, all people have a right to learn throughout their lifetime. As learning new things enriches one's own life, "It's never too late to learn" is one of my favorite quotes. My teaching philosophy is rooted in my experiences as a second language learner. In studying English since middle school and Chinese after the age of 30, I've realized that learning a language is not only acquiring grammar and lexical knowledge. Learning a language also means learning and understanding the culture, traditions, and people who speak the language.

Being a language teacher for the last 3 years has allowed me to have a teacher's perspective, which has helped me to realize this even more. Language teachers have to take on the role of an ambassador between the two cultural realms: learners' cultures of origin and the cultures of the societies where the target language is spoken. In the area of culture learning, I consider the impact teachers have on students especially great. Students depend on their language teacher not only for learning vocabulary and grammar, but also for acquiring cross-cultural awareness, intercultural communication skills, and cultural knowledge. The things they learn from their teachers may affect students' view of life and their future. As Tohsaku (2014) mentions, language teachers also help develop people who can contribute to the global community. My career goal is to become a Japanese language teacher at the university level; thus, I aim to contribute to the development of global human resources who will lead the next generation through the study of the Japanese language.

When I started teaching Japanese at USU as a teaching assistant (TA), I realized that being a language teacher is truly rewarding and requires a lot of responsibility. In *Technology for Language Teaching*, taught by Dr. Joshua Thoms in the fall semester of 2020, I learned that technology cannot replace teachers in all necessary aspects for language learning, even though technology now affords learners to learn on their own. I recognize that an important role of a language teacher is to give feedback to students on their mistakes in appropriate ways, to help them develop cultural understanding, and to help motivate them to keep learning. From my perspective, from both a language learner and a language teacher, a classroom has to offer a safe environment where students can feel free to make mistakes and ask questions. Teachers are classroom organizers who should provide a comfortable learning environment for students. I plan to organize pair work, role play, and group work to increase interaction with peers and promote active discussion in the classroom. I believe that effective classroom discussions can provide an environment where students can learn from their peers' ideas and help one another correct mistakes.

Teaching Japanese in a Cultural Context

Through opportunities to live outside my home country, I have come to understand the uniqueness of Japanese language and also have encountered situations where many Japanese expressions are difficult to express in other languages. Comprehending a second language is not the same as finding translation equivalents. As many studies point out, a language cannot be fully understood without understanding its culture (Henderson, 2016). Culture is a very broad term with various definitions. In *Second Language Pragmatics*, taught by Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan in the fall semester

of 2020, culture was defined as “the evolving way of life of a group of persons, consisting of a shared set of practices associated with a shared set of products, based upon a shared set of perspectives of the world, and set within specific social contexts” (Moran, 2001, p.24). Even if students master grammar and vocabulary perfectly, they cannot communicate successfully with people who have different cultural background or first language without using appropriate expressions for each various situation. Moreover, even if one hears the same word, the interpretation is based on the person's experience and background, so the listener does not always adopt the interpretation that the speaker expected (Ishihara, 2010). In other words, without the understanding of the culture on which the language is based, the language cannot work as a tool for appropriate communication. As Kano (2012) states, deeper cultural understanding and awareness of the target language are the main strengths of native speaker teachers.

In addition to assessing grammatical correctness, other strengths are to instantly determine the appropriateness and naturalness of expressions and to demonstrate to students the non-verbal behaviors associated with speech, such as gestures and facial expressions. Creating opportunities to interact with Japanese people and providing students a chance to experience Japanese culture is my ideal way of teaching culture, even though it has not been easy. For many of the students I have taught at USU do not have many opportunities to interact with Japanese people. Instead, I have been trying to incorporate realia, such as advertisements, restaurant menus, into my classes to help them imagine Japanese life. I consider that using realia not only helps students to understand the culture, but also increases their interest in Japanese culture and language, and even helps to motivate them to study Japanese. I believe that my experience as a person who

was born and raised in Japan will be a strength to help students acquire Japanese language skills.

At the same time, teachers must remember that there is a danger of developing stereotypical thinking when teaching culture. Japanese language teachers should always mention that there are regional or individual differences and try to avoid teaching stereotypes. I believe that teachers' prejudiced view of students also contributes to stereotypes and I should avoid assuming that students might not be able to understand Japanese culture.

The base of my classroom organization

In the MSLT program at USU, I have learned the history of second language acquisition theory in chronological order. Each theory has benefits and strengths and I learned how to implement those in my classroom organization and activities. Among them, I am particularly inspired by Swain's output hypothesis (1985) and Long's interaction hypothesis (1986). From my second language learner's perspective, I believe that many learners experience the frustrations of having stronger receptive language skills (i.e., being able to understand what they read or hear) than productive skills (i.e., writing and speaking). Without opportunities for output, learners cannot verify that their knowledge is actually usable in real life. Therefore, output activities in the classroom should always be designed to give the students situations that could actually happen in Japanese contexts. In my classroom, I modify activities in the textbook as much as I can since the textbook we use was published more than a decade ago. I change the role play settings and dialogues to match the students in light of their age group and the environment and social background in which they live. I believe it is one of the important

roles of language teachers to provide enough effective input to learners and create opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge to practical scenarios through effective output. As technology continues to develop, there are plenty of materials available today that allow students to learn without the assistance of a teacher. It is not difficult to find materials that help students prepare for class by reviewing grammar and vocabulary in their L1 (Correa, 2015). This can compensate for the weakness of native teachers like myself who do not share a common L1 with our students (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). In the classroom, I believe that a significant amount of time should be spent on the output of communicative approaches that simulate real situations that are likely to occur in the lives of Japanese people and on providing feedback rather than spending a long time on grammar lectures.

As an educator, I believe one of my roles is to contribute to the personal growth of students through classroom activities. While acquiring Japanese language skills one of the goals of the class, another important goal is to provide students with opportunities to reflect on what they can do with the Japanese they have acquired (Tohsaku, 2014). In the Japanese language program from the first year to the third year at USU, we assign the students a research project with Japanese people as the target audience every semester. This assignment is not my idea, but an annual activity that other instructors have been incorporating into their classes and I have adopted it in my class. In my opinion, there are not many opportunities in their daily lives to work with a group to create something helpful for someone else. The sense of accomplishment that comes with the completion of a collaborative project would give them confidence. Based on my own experience, I believe that time spent in college can leave a significant impact on students' life plans or

future outlooks. The interactions with peers who share time in the classroom provide meaningful reflection for each other. I also consider it necessary for students to practice how to behave as a member of a team and how to cooperate with others through collaborative activities in the classroom, which will be useful after they leave school and go out into the world.

Conclusion

The experience of studying in the MSLT program and teaching Japanese at USU has had a great impact on my teaching philosophy. Furthermore, due to the pandemic of COVID-19, when we were unable to conduct face-to-face classes, I explored the use of technology for language teaching, which made me realize the roles that only teachers have and reaffirmed the importance of practical classroom management. Designing effective classroom activities and creating a classroom atmosphere that encourages students' active participation is, in my opinion, an important role of a teacher. Furthermore, as an educator and one of their life supporters, I consider that part of my mission is to provide them with opportunities for new experiences that bring them a new world and help their personal growth. As language learning is never complete, there is no end to my professional growth and development as a language teacher. I recognize that language teachers need to continue exploring the best way to support students. My career goal is to be a Japanese teacher for undergraduate students, supporting and preparing the generation who will be responsible for the future.

Professional Development through Classroom Observations

Introduction

I had the opportunity to observe five different classes during my MSLT program besides Japanese 1010 and Japanese 2010 that I participated in as a TA for throughout the semester. I have observed Spanish 1010, French 1010, Portuguese 1010, Chinese 1010, and Japanese 3020 at USU. The opportunity to observe these other language teachers' classes not only gave me ideas that I can incorporate into my classroom but also allowed me to practice critical thinking about what I could improve if I were the instructor of the class.

My experience as a language teacher began by observing classes to learn effective methods and processes and then copy them in my own classes. In the fall semester of 2019, which was my first semester of the MSLT program, I had an opportunity to teach Japanese 1010 section 2 at USU. Since I did not have any experience teaching language, I observed Japanese 1010 section 1 as a TA every morning and tried to copy the teacher's lecture in the afternoon. I took notes on every single word the teacher spoke in the classroom. The first few weeks of the semester, I could only focus on copying the contents of the lecture without thinking about what the purpose of each activity was and what the teacher was aiming to convey through each lesson. However, the opportunity to observe this course every day for an entire semester was a very valuable experience, and I learned an ample amount about long-term class design to achieve course goals and objectives. I also had an opportunity to observe Japanese 2010 once a week, which gave me a chance to learn about designing activities and materials for both novice and pre-intermediate levels. I as well realized the effective usage of the target language (TL) and

students' first language (L1), based on their levels. In the following paragraphs, I highlight some aspects of what I have learned through the class observations that are particularly relevant to my teaching philosophy.

L1 and TL in Language Classrooms

Through the class observations, I gained important insights on how to increase TL usage in the classroom and the effective role of L1 in the second language (L2) classroom. What surprised me when I observed Spanish 1010 was the high amount of TL usage. Although only a month into the semester, the class was held more than 90 percent in the TL. Even more surprisingly, I could understand most contents of the lecture, despite my very limited knowledge of Spanish. I supposed and the instructor also confirmed that one of the reasons is that English and Spanish contain many similarities. However, I believed that the primary reason was the effective use of visual content, including YouTube videos and images. Before showing the video, the instructor first showed only the pictures of the characters from the video and asked the students to share their guessing about what the video is about. He paused the video several times to check the students' understanding. After watching the video, he had the students exchange their understanding of the whole story and then lectured the target grammar that was spoken a lot in the video. This process helped the students to clarify the points they need to focus on and to understand the content without the help of L1.

In Portuguese 1010, the class was conducted mostly in TL. The content of the day I observed was colors and clothes. The instructor used images and pointed to the students and to her own clothes to reduce the use of L1. However, I had the impression that the instructor relied too much on visuals and not enough grammar explanations were

provided, causing students to work the activities mechanically without understanding the objectives of the activities. I believe that increasing TL usage is one of the effective ways to give students input of TL. For USU students who have less opportunity to hear Japanese as input outside the classroom, increasing TL usage in the classroom is an essential factor of classroom organization. I incorporated into my Japanese classes the use of visuals that I learned from the observations, and it has worked effectively.

At the same time, focusing on TL usage in the classroom also made me aware of the role of L1 in the L2 classroom. In French 1010, the instructor used TL for the cultural contents portion, but grammar explanation was held in English, which was the students' L1. As a result, the students were able to move on a practice activity quickly without spending a long time understanding the grammar constructs. In *Second Language Teaching Practicum*, taught by Dr. Joshua Thoms, I have had a discussion on the topic "How might a student's L1 affect them in learning/acquiring an L2?" Many classmates agreed that there was no doubt that L1 helps students understand L2. One of the classmates who is an ESL teacher also said that she has enough Spanish skills to clear up her students' questions, so she has no hesitation in using students' L1 to help them understand rather than spending more time explaining in TL. I agree with this opinion and have realized from class observations that L1 helps L2 acquisition. In Japanese 2010 in the fall semester of 2020, which I taught, students were assigned reading from the textbook, then were asked to summarize the new grammar contents in English as their preview homework. This helped students to get accurate grammar understanding in a short period, while at the same time allowing them to spend more time on task-based

output activities in the classroom activities. I realized that it is important to use both L1 and TL effectively in classrooms rather than only pursuing an increase of TL usage.

Teaching the Cultural Context

Incorporating cultural elements into the classroom is an important factor for second language acquisition (SLA). On the day I observed Japanese 3020, the topic was the history of trade in Japan. Several new vocabulary items were original Japanese words that were difficult to translate into English. The instructor used visuals to give the students a presentation of the origin of the words and the historical background involved and then had the students guess and look up the meanings of these words. Although students could look up the meanings of words in the dictionary, they could not use the words if they didn't understand the actual context in which the words were used. When I took LING6900 *Culture Teaching and Learning Theory and Practice*, taught by Dr. Ekaterina Arshavskaya, we analyzed textbooks for a class assignment. We examined how much amount of cultural portion is contained in the textbook, and most of my classmates reported less than 30 percent. The textbook I used in my Japanese class also did not contain a lot of cultural sections. Only following a textbook-based curriculum cannot provide students many opportunities to learn the culture. Teachers should add cultural elements related to the topic to help students understand the Japanese language more deeply.

Task-Based Output Practice

Classroom activities based on practical situations help students develop their newly acquired knowledge to a level that can be used in actual life. In Spanish 1010, the students used their newly learned future tense grammar in an activity where they had to

explain their travel plans to their classmates. The students used their own devices to choose one place in Spain or Latin America that they would like to visit. They then explained what they plan to do there in the future tense. Sometimes classmates asked follow-up questions as if they were having a real conversation. I found this to be a great activity. This was not a mechanical grammar exercise, but rather focused on making sentences to convey one's thoughts and focused on the meaning of the sentences. I realized that when instructors design classroom activities, it is important for instructors to give students settings of situations that might actually happen.

The role as an Educator

Creating classroom atmosphere, wherein students are able to be actively involved in class without fear of making mistakes and able to ask questions without hesitation, is one of the roles of teachers, and the influence that teachers give to the classroom is significant. In Chinese 1010 and Japanese 3020, the teachers let the students discuss in pairs before they shared their answers and thoughts with all the classmates. Through sharing own thoughts in a small group, they gained confidence in their answers or opinions. This step encouraged the students to share their opinions more actively without fear of making mistakes. I thought this was an effective way to make the classroom a safe place where students feel free to make mistakes. I believe that students should be the center of the classroom, However, it is still the teacher's role to build a foundation for student-centered classrooms where they can actively participate.

In Japanese 1010, which I observed for the entire semester, I realized that the classroom atmosphere and students' teamwork have improved, and I found their positive personal growth through working on the final project. The purpose of this group project

was to create a video or a pamphlet in order to introduce USU to future Japanese exchange students. Through this project, the students experienced working together with a team as well as produced an advertisement that would help someone else by using the language they learned. This process gave them the opportunity to consider what information is needed from the perspective of their audience. This exercise also helped them to recognize the differences between American and Japanese universities. In this project, the teacher only monitored their progress and gave some advice with respecting the students' autonomy. This approach taught me that a language teacher has the potential to not only teach language but also to help the students develop as a person through classroom activities.

Conclusion

I would like to express my gratitude to all the language teachers who allowed me to observe their classes. Through classroom observations, I was able to see how the SLA theories I learned in the MSLT program are applied in real classrooms and how these theories are related to instructional practice. In addition, I learned how to create a comfortable atmosphere, motivate students, and support them. It was valuable to reflect on my teaching practice and get new ideas through observations. These experiences have also impacted my teaching philosophy. Classroom observations will help me to achieve my ideal classroom and career goal as a Japanese teacher.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

CULTURE PAPER

Strategies of Refusal Speech in Japanese Language - Its Characteristics and Trends Based
on Japanese Culture

Orientation and Reflection

I originally wrote this paper as the final project for *Second Language Pragmatics* taught by Dr. Karin deJonge-Kannan in the fall 2020 semester. As a key part of my TPS, I have always kept in mind the need to incorporate cultural contexts into my classroom. However, looking back at the time when I started the MSLT program, I only focused on the visible cultural aspects such as traditional events, food, and so on. After studying pragmatics in *Second Language Pragmatics* course, I realized the importance of understanding the aspects of culture that are not visible but are deeply related to the lifestyle of speakers of the TL. This course has given me a great insight into why students struggle to read speakers' intentions accurately, even though they follow the textbook curriculum, complete the necessary grammatical items, and are given sufficient opportunities to practice. In addition, the articles regarding pragmatics that I read in the course and the presentations by peers helped me to understand the aspects of pragmatics that are embedded not only in the Japanese language but in all other languages as well. This has also helped me to understand the L1 background of my students.

Through the study of pragmatics, my belief that culture and language are inseparable has become stronger. I also realized that for SLA, it is essential to incorporate elements of pragmatics into classroom activities, and this idea led me to design a two-day lesson plan. My goal as an instructor of Japanese is not only to be a person who teaches the language, but also to be a bridge between Japanese culture and Japanese language learners. I also believe that this is one of the strengths of native-speaker teachers. Therefore, this paper is one of the important components of my portfolio.

Introduction

Second language (L2) learners memorize vocabulary, develop their understanding of grammar, and practice reading and speaking in order to acquire the target language both inside and outside of the classroom. Language teachers provide input and output opportunities to help L2 learners, especially through chances for interaction. However, those are not all the required tasks for the acquisition of a language. As the language is inseparable from its cultural contexts, learning language itself is not enough for the acquisition of L2.

In my own experience as a L2 learner and living in a place where my first language is not spoken, I have encountered innumerable instances where I could not communicate well in the L2. I believe those were caused not only due to my lack of lexicon and grammar understanding, but also due to cultural factors. Translating someone's L2 speech into one's L1 is not necessarily the same as understanding what they want to convey. Communicating with others through the target language should be one of the main motivations for the majority of L2 learners. Facilitating the achievement of this goal is the role of language teachers, whose curriculum tends to focus on teaching vocabulary and grammar based on the textbook making students practice listening and speaking. However, these are not sufficient to achieve SLA and the target language does not perform as a reliable communication tool solely by those methods.

In order to communicate with others smoothly and accurately, it is absolutely essential to understand the cultural context of the language and operate it (Hotta, 2019). In this paper, I will call this ability a pragmatic ability. My target language (TL), Japanese, tends to avoid direct expressions (Melansyah & Haristiani, 2020). This

tendency is especially noticeable in the refusal speech acts. This tendency to avoid direct expressions is a hallmark of the fact that the Japanese language is based on a high-context culture, making it a language that conveys more information than simply the words spoken (Gao, 2019). This paper contrasts a high-context culture that surrounds the environment in which Japanese is spoken with low-context cultures and focuses on the trends found in Japanese refusal speech. In addition, based on the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), I will examine the impact of the concept of Face on refusal strategies.

Background

High-context cultures

High-context and low-context cultures is a concept proposed by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in the 1970's to describe the characteristics of communication styles in a country or region. It refers to the difference in style of communication, whether it focuses more on words in low-context or on non-verbal meanings in high-context cultures (Hall, 1976). According to this theory, Asian cultures are considered high-context cultures, and in contrast, Scandinavia, Germany, and the United States are assumed to be low-context cultures (Gao, 2019). Within Asia, Japan has the strongest tendency for a high-context (Gao, 2019). Socio-cultural discourse is an important factor of interaction and an essential element for understanding each other in high-context cultures, while in low-context cultures, information that speakers want to convey is expressed (Lisda, 2020). In a high-context culture, information that speakers want to convey is contained in the scene or situation rather than the words spoken (Gao, 2019). For example, if someone who is a Japanese native speaker refuses a dinner invitation, they often give the implication that

“That day is a little ...” without giving a clear reason. It is for the listener to read behind the phrase “a little ...” and understand one was turned down, and they rarely ask for a clear reason. A high-context language requires and expects hearers to have the ability of observation.

The concept of “face” in Japanese

Brown and Levinson (1987) defined politeness theory as the method for building and maintaining smooth, decent relationships. They advocated for two types of face in their politeness theory: positive face and negative face. They categorized positive face into two ways. The first is "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62), the second is "the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Negative face was defined as "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 62). In other words, positive face includes a desire to connect with others, and negative face includes a desire to be independent. However, some argue that politeness theory is based on Western culture and does not apply to Asia, where cultural norms are based on always needing to behave as a member of a social group rather than as an individual (Kato, 2000). Harmony with others is the basic unit of social interaction in Asia and is therefore, opposite of the concept of negative face which includes the desire not to be invaded by others (Meng, 2010). In the extreme case, it may be said that there is no concept of negative face in Asia (Kato, 2000). At a minimum, learners should understand that the concept of face in Japanese focuses on behaving appropriately as a member of the social group and

communicating with others appropriately in consideration of the relationship between interlocutors.

Refusal strategies

Comparison with another Asian language

Refusals are considered as face-threatening acts; therefore, certain strategies are employed to maintain a good relationship when uttering a refusal (Meng, 2010). When a request is made, the person who receives the request worries or fears that if they do not accept it, they will disappoint the person who made the request, and they will be disliked. Therefore, it may threaten the interlocutor's positive face which is the desire to be considered well or liked by others. The refusal act may threaten the positive face of the one who invites or asks (Usami, 2011). Refusing an offer or invitation risks threatening a relationship; therefore, it should be carefully made. Asian languages are considered high-context languages (Gao, 2019). Among them, Japanese is a particularly high-context language (Gao, 2019). By examining the characteristics of Japanese refusal strategies, we can see whether Japanese is a more high-context language than other Asian languages.

Chiao (2016) examined refusal strategies by comparing native Chinese speakers and native Japanese speakers. The results showed that both Chinese speakers and Japanese speakers rarely used direct expressions such as "No, I can't." or "I won't." Both tended to use a strategy that made the opponent understand refusal by explaining the reasons they could not do it, rather than using the direct word "No." It was also common to add expressions that show an attitude of effort after making the hearer understand the refusal. For example, as a reply for an invitation to dinner, instead of saying, "I can't come." a better response would be, "I have an important exam coming up." Another

characteristic of Japanese refusals is that Japanese speakers tend to use ambiguous expressions, such as “I think may be...” or “I am going to try...”(Chiao, 2016).

Moreover, Japanese interlocutors apologize to each other, both those who refused and those who were refused.

Comparison with English

Yotsuya (2019) analyzed the differences of refusal strategies in English and in Japanese based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory. The result contradicted the stereotype that low-context languages frequently use direct expressions and high-context languages tend to use indirect expressions. Both rarely used direct refusals and both had a similar tendency to propose alternative ideas to show effort toward accepting the requests. However, there was the difference that Japanese speakers changed their attitude depending on their power balance, which is the social status between interlocutors, and the context in which the conversation is taking place, whereas English speakers made efforts to accept the requests regardless of the power balance.

According to Ebsworth and Kodama (2011), a major difference between American English and Japanese refusal strategies is in what is viewed as the highest priority in relationships. While American English speakers prioritize honesty, Japanese prioritize avoiding threatening face and maintaining good relationships. Therefore, Americans explain clear and specific reasons why they cannot accept requests or offers, and Japanese often use the strategy of postponement. In other words, instead of refusing the request, they create a scenario in which they try to reschedule but cannot make adjustments well and as a result, the request is turned down despite their wishes.

Characteristics of Japanese refusal speech

Overall, it has been shown that verified Japanese speakers tend to avoid explicit refusal expressions, however, this is not unique to Japanese. A distinguishing feature of Japanese refusal act is that both interlocutors apologize, namely the one who refused and the one whose offer or invitation was turned down. In addition, Japanese speakers tend to avoid giving specific reasons for refusing and add words to the refusal speech to show that they intend to make an effort to accept the requests, but this additional expression depends on their power balance.

Practical lesson plans

According to Can-Do statements published by ACTFL(2017), Japanese learners who are novice high to intermediate low level are required to “recognize that significant differences in behaviors exist among cultures, use appropriate learned behaviors and avoid major social blunders” (National Council of State Supervisors for Languages- ACTFL Can-do statement, 2017). That is, second-year undergraduate students need to understand appropriate refusal speech based on pragmatics. In order to provide pragmatics learning opportunities to college level Japanese L2 learners in the U.S, I designed a sample set of lesson plans. I believe these lessons will help students to understand refusal strategies in a high-context culture.

Table 1

Overview of the Lesson Plan

Target Students:

Pre-intermediate Japanese students in third-semester college Japanese class in the U.S. Native language is English. There are about 15 students in the class. The students have already learned the expressions of giving reasons, responding to a request.

Communicative Objectives (Can Do):

Student can successfully decline invitations and requests from the others. Students can speak with superiors in polite language.

Length of the Lesson:

2 days (2 lessons of 50mins each) and oral interview for assessment (15mins).

Materials:

Yokoso!: An Invitation to Contemporary Japanese Third Edition (2006) Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, New York; McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.(pp.466-470)

Yokoso!: Continuing with Contemporary Japanese Third Edition (2006) Yasu-Hiko Tohsaku, New York; McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. (pp.101-102)

Task sheets

As Table 2 shows, I designed this lesson plan as a two-day class, followed by an oral interview for assessment. The first day of the lesson consists of an introduction with input, presentation, and mechanical output. As a warm-up, pair or small group discussions are incorporated, and these discussions are to be held in English. The purpose of this activity is to make the students realize that 1) refusing invitations and requests is not unique speech in Japanese, but exists in their first language (L1) as well, and 2) they have experience in making polite refusals in L1. I expect that students can imagine the situations in which a refusal speech would occur in their actual lives through this discussion. After exchanging ideas in groups about the following topics, students will share the results with the whole class.

Discussion topics

1. Do you often go out with your friends on your day off?
2. Do you often invite your friends or get invited by your friends?
3. What would you do if you were invited to a party that you do not really want to go?
4. What would you do if a friend who lives far away from your place asks you for a ride?

Table 2*Schedule of the Lesson Plan*

Day	Format	Activity (time length)
1	In Pairs or Small Groups	1. Warm-up (8 mins)

		Talk about experience regarding refusal.
	Presentation	2. Input (7 mins) Read aloud an example dialogue
	In Pairs	3. Presentation (3 mins) Show example patterns of refusal
		4. Mechanical output (10 mins) Practice the dialogue with substituting invitation and refusal portions using the provided options
		5. Output (12 mins) Practice the dialogue with substituting invitation and refusal portions for own phrases
2	In Pairs	6. Role-play (Formative assessment) (15 mins) Practice for invitation and turning down
	Presentation	7. Presentation (7 mins) Polite expressions (including honorific form and humble form)
	Presentation	8. Input (7 mins) Practice for verb change (Plain form to honorific or humble form)
	In Pairs	9. Output (15 mins) Practice for declining speech
3	One-on-One	10. Oral interview (Summative assessment) (15 mins)

After the warm-up, the instructor leads a discussion, followed by students

listening to a Japanese dialogue on indirect refusal as an input activity, and then reading the dialogue aloud. This activity focuses on the intonation of indirect expressions because the difference in intonation is a big cue for Japanese speakers to signal a refusal.

Dialogue invitation and turning it down

林：カワムラさん、金曜日の夜、いっしょに夕ごはんを食べませんか。

(Mr. Kawamura, would you like to have dinner with me on Friday night?)

カワムラ：ありがとうございます。金曜日ですか。すみませんが金曜日

はちょっと…

(Thank you for asking. Friday? I'm sorry, but...)

林：そうですか、じゃあまたの機会にしましょう。

(Oh, well, let's do it some other time.)

カワムラ：すみません。ありがとうございます。

(I'm sorry. Thank you very much.)

The purpose of this dialogue practice is to provide an opportunity to learn indirect refusal expressions as an input activity. It also helps students become aware of the difference between English and Japanese refusal strategy. As the third activity on day 1 (see Table 2), the instructor presents common expressions that are often used by Japanese people to decline invitations and requests such as *chotto...* (well,...), *sumimasen ga chotto...* (I'm sorry, but...), *moushiwake arimasenga chotto...* (I'm sorry to have to say this , but...) and explains to students that Japanese native speakers tend to avoid direct expressions. As Ebsworth and Kodama (2011) state in their research that in comparing refusal strategies of Japanese and American English speakers, Japanese people focus on maintaining the relationship and give priority to not threatening the interlocutor's face when refusing a request. Therefore, they use ambiguous expressions or suggest postponement without indicating a specific alternative date and time in contrast to the American English speakers' emphasis on honesty and giving explicit reasons for refusal. This difference is one of the main reasons that American students have trouble understanding Japanese refusal speech in the pragmatic perspective. As the last task of the first day, two different output activities are conducted by using the dialogue in Activity 2 on day 1 (see Table 2). First, as a mechanical output, students should substitute the invitation and refusal parts of the dialogue with the expressions of the given options. Then, they should practice the dialogue by substituting the invitation and refusal parts of the dialogue to phrases that they made by themselves. If time allows, the instructor can ask some pairs to roleplay their dialog in front of the class.

On the second day, this lesson plan focuses on learning polite expressions to use in conversations with people who are superiors or not in close relationships. The students

concentrate on understanding “why”, “in what situations”, and “with whom” they need to use polite expressions. While it is not difficult for students to memorize words and rules of word conjunctions, it is not easy for them to choose and use the appropriate expressions according to the conversational situation. This practice is essential for students to achieve an intermediate level in the intercultural communication area of the ACTFL Can-Do statements. The first activity on the second day is a role play of invitation and refusal following the task sheet in pairs, and students will be assessed on whether they can use the indirect refusal expressions that they learned on the first day. For the assessment purpose, the task sheet does not specify “avoid direct expressions” or “use indirect expressions.”

Task sheet for activity 6 on day 2 (see Table 2) (Formative assessment)

Student A invites Student B to do something fun. Student B should refuse A's invitation nicely. Student B may provide a reason.

As I stated in this paper, refusal speech is a face-threatening act. In order to maintain good relationships, refusal speech must be done carefully. In addition, it can be especially tricky if a power imbalance exists between conversation partners or if the relationship is not close. In activity 7, I will use PowerPoint slides (see Figure 1) to present the three main situations in which polite expressions are frequently applied. This activity helps students imagine situations in which they need to use honorifics and helps them understand why they need to learn honorifics.

どんな時に敬語 (けいご/Honorifics)を使いますか。
When do we (need to)use honorifics?

When you talk with one's elders
or superiors.

年上の人や目上の
人と話す時

Boss, Teacher, Friend's parents, etc

When you talk in a formal
situation.

正式な場所で話す時

Presentation, etc

When you talk with strangers or
someone not close to you

知らない人やあまり親しくな
い人と話す時

Shop staff, When asking a stranger for directions,
Taxi driver, etc

1

Figure 1: Three main situations of honorific expressions

After the presentation, the instructor asks students about why we need to use polite expressions. Then, the instructor shows them reasons such as to show respect, to build good relationships, and other reasons including manners, courtesy, and to facilitate communication. In the Japanese language, some polite expressions are associated with a verb change, or a change to a completely different verb. In activity 8 on day 2 (see Table 2), the instructor shows frequently used polite and humble words in an invitation and refusal conversations including 結構です (I am good/ No thank you), せっかくですが (I'm afraid but.../ I appreciate your offer, but...) 致しましょうか (Would you like me to do...?), していただけますか (Could you please...?/ I am grateful if you could...). In activity 9 as an output activity, students practice appropriate declining speech based on information about who the invitation or requests came from. The objective of this activity

is to help students use appropriate expressions depending on the relationship between themselves and their interlocutor.

After completing these plans, the instructor administers an oral assessment to check each students' achievement. The time spent with each student is 15 minutes, including feedback. Based on the task sheet written in English, students are required to role-play with the instructor and are evaluated to see if they can turn down the invitation/request in an appropriate way. The assessment is done from the four perspectives including comprehension, comprehensibility, fluency, and size of information. The task sheet is written in English, and no instructions are given in Japanese to avoid the students' performance getting affected by their listening comprehension ability.

Task sheet for the oral interview (Summative_assessment)

You are invited to go to a Japanese restaurant with your boss who is someone you don't really like (your instructor). Turn her down politely by giving reasons.

Conclusion

Although it is important to learn the dictionary meanings of the words, the actual meaning of a word may differ depending on the situation in which the word is used and the relationships between the conversation partners, in particular the power balance between them. In addition, depending on the situation and power balance, it is often necessary to change the choice of words. This occurs in any language, and we do this without being aware of it in the L1 contexts. As Houck and Gass (2011) state, refusal and decline acts tend to be regulated due to their face-threatening nature and because of the consideration for faces based on cross-cultural backgrounds. As a result, these

acquisitions are one of the most difficult areas for Japanese L2 learners to learn.

However, at the same time, it is an absolutely necessary element to understand in order to master the target language as a communication tool. Language teachers should consider what we can do to solve this difficulty and need to provide classroom activities that allow students to imagine how the learned vocabulary and grammar are used in actual contexts.

I believe that incorporating lessons that have the appropriate balance between the acquisition of grammatical items and cultural contents help students to understand pragmatics and SLA.

LANGUAGE PAPER

Promoting the Development of Oral Proficiency in Japanese via CALL

Orientation and Reflection

I originally wrote this paper for the final project of *Technology for Language Teaching* taught by Dr. Joshua Thoms in the Fall semester of 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most courses were delivered remotely, and this course was also taught online, which gave me a unique experience of taking a class using CALL and learning about the possibilities of CALL.

While this paper focuses on improving speaking skills through CALL and examines the various programs and tools that can be incorporated into classroom activities, what I realized in contrast to the development of technology is the importance of the teacher's role as a classroom organizer. Technology can never completely replace the role of the teacher.

For SLA, providing input alone is not enough. Students need opportunities for output and the resulting opportunities for feedback. Incorporating CALL into classroom activities to increase speaking practice provides students with more opportunities to produce output and, as a result, provides students with more opportunities to receive feedback.

This paper explores the possibilities of CALL as it is developing, and at the same time highlights the role of the teacher as a contrast. Therefore, this paper has become an important component of my views on language teaching and learning in the 21st century.

Introduction

Since the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic, language teachers have been adopting technologies into their classrooms whether they want to or not. Although this change was not what I expected, it made me realize many potential ideas for future classroom organization and curriculum. While various technology tools can support language teaching, in this paper, I will focus on teaching JFL with the assistance of technology, especially in practice and improving speaking aspect. Because the word *technology* is a very broad term, in this paper, I will use Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and rely on Blake and Guillén's (2020) definition, i.e., "CALL refers to any software program that aids students in learning another language" (p.178).

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has set five goal areas, also known as the 5Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities) in its World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. As this shows, communication is one of the important goal areas that language learners should achieve. One of the requirements of communication is for learners to interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions. In light of these, there is no doubt that speaking is an essential factor and one of the main goals in second language learning.

In the spring semester of 2020, when the teaching format suddenly moved to remote due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of my biggest concerns was how to maintain and improve students' speaking skills without face-to-face speaking activities. As not many Japanese speakers live in Logan, Utah, where USU is located, it is not easy to provide students opportunities to practice Japanese conversation with fluent speakers in

face-to-face settings outside the classroom. Therefore, we had no choice but to rely on in-class activities for most of the students' speaking practice. Practically the only outside-of-class speaking opportunities consisted of tutorial sessions with volunteer tutors. Before the pandemic, exchange students from Japan, serving as conversation practice partners, were great supporters to help with our Japanese program.

The pandemic has dramatically changed our lives and caused severe limitations in classroom activities. Many classroom activities that were designed for face-to-face delivery format was no longer feasible and we were forced to make changes. However, CALL has a lot of potential by providing opportunities for individual study, especially with using the internet and digital devices. In an online environment, students are able to access the information they need and practice with materials and resources (Andriivna et al., 2020). I believe that CALL has enormous potential to provide learners with an effective speaking practice alternative to the traditional face-to-face format. Therefore, I believe that it is very beneficial for instructors to explore the possibility of using CALL to foster SLA. In the following paragraphs, I will explore the methods and resources for SLA by using CALL with focus on developing students' oral proficiency in Japanese.

Background

Speaking Practice for JFL in the U.S.

Before exploring speaking activities using CALL, I would like to mention the percentage of speaking practice in Japanese language education at universities in the United States. According to Fukuda (2013), students who study Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) spend an average of approximately 50% of class time on speaking practice. From my perspective, this percentage seems quite high, when we consider that

generally, in-class speaking practice is held as pair work or group activity. During such activities, as students spend some time listening to their practice partner's speech, the amount of time allocated for actual speaking and for receiving feedback on speech performance is likely less than the percentage that Fukuda indicates. The actual percentage might be less than 25% on an individual basis, and approximately 15% of the curriculum including outside of classroom assignments, which is half of the portion of listening and less than one-third of reading and writing. In addition, assessment and feedback for speaking is time-consuming because it needs to be given on an individual basis, and it is not practical for the teacher to assess the achievement and give feedback to all students on every single activity. With limited class time, it is not easy to allocate a high amount of time for oral practice (O'Brien, 2019). Moreover, because speaking practice almost always requires a conversation partner, it is difficult to assign individual homework as out-of-classroom activities (Fukuda, 2013). The main challenge is that teachers are not able to spend enough time on oral practice in their curriculum, despite recognizing that it is essential to practice actual speaking to improve oral fluency.

Incorporating CALL into the Curriculum

As Blake and Guillén (2020) state, computers cannot interact with learners; therefore, CALL cannot completely replace the teachers as human beings. However, Web 2.0 digital tools have enabled interactions in the virtual world, and physical distances are no longer an obstacle to interactions (Tunks, 2012). Using video-synchronous tools, such as Skype and Zoom, can facilitate lectures remotely while also facilitating conversations with fluent speakers regardless of physical distance. After I read some articles regarding CALL in *Technology for Language Teaching* taught by Dr.

Joshua Thoms in fall 2020, I realized that CALL has already been incorporated into my language teaching and learning without my realizing it. Web 2.0 tools should be familiar to most of my undergraduate level students, who are considered digital natives. Change always involves a considerable amount of energy and effort. Especially when everything seems to proceed well with traditional methods, instructors may be hesitant to take the risk of adopting something new. However, as Friedman and Friedman (2013) insist:

Educators who refuse to adapt and continue to insist that the only way to learn is via “chalk and talk” methods will find themselves hopelessly obsolete. Besides the changes that have taken place in libraries and in journalism, one only has to think of what is currently happening to the film industry where the traditional way of showing films — in movie theaters — is disappearing. (p.17)

As stated above, if instructors continue with traditional methods without even trying new methods, it may not cause much difficulty. However, in the near future, classes that incorporate CALL will become the standard for language education (Blake & Guillén, 2020). It will take a long time to catch up once they are left behind the mainstream method.

CALL can be categorized into two main types: tutorial CALL and social CALL (Blake & Guillén, 2020). Tutorial CALL is mainly used as a drill for input enhancement and the practice of linguistic structures. CALL not only offers dialogue and vocabulary practice for students, but helps with pronunciation, which can be hard for instructors to fit in their curriculums. Social CALL is tools that connect learners with teachers, tutors, and sometimes other learners by using digital devices. It includes email, text message, and

social media, and some video teleconferencing software programs such as Zoom and Skype which can be for group or pair work as video-synchronous tools.

Tutorial CALL

Speaking practice using Speak Everywhere

Firstly, I would like to examine the possibility of tutorial CALL that enables individual oral practice. As O'Brien (2019) noted, many teachers indicate that the main reason they are unable to incorporate speaking practice into their class activities is due to limited class time. They have a number of components that they are required to incorporate into their curriculum, and they need to complete the curriculum in a limited time schedule. As such, it is an efficient approach to incorporate speaking exercises that cannot be adequately conducted in the classroom as out-of-classroom assignments. Purdue University has developed a program that could be of great help in solving this problem, and it has already been adopted by several universities' Japanese and Chinese language programs. It is a system called Speak Everywhere (SE) (<http://speak-everywhere.com>) which is an online system mainly for oral practice and assessments in foreign language learning. It was developed in 2009 at the Center for Technology-Enhanced Language Learning at Purdue University and it has been open to the public for a fee since 2011 (Fukuda, 2013; Li, Fukuda, & Hong, 2012). This program allows teachers to pre-record and create audio materials that follow classroom materials and allows students to access speaking opportunities at their own convenient time outside of the classroom. They can practice dialogue as a drill, or practice conversations by answering pre-recorded questions orally. In addition, the breakthrough of this program is that the teachers can assess the speaking segments by listening to students' recordings.

That is, the teachers are able to carry out oral proficiency assessments via this system. As O'Brien (2019) states, given that some students may feel anxiety when speaking in the classroom as a whole-class activity, individual practice can alleviate this problem and allow them to concentrate more on practicing their speaking skills. At the same time, it also solves the students' problem of finding a speaking practice partner and the instructor's need to assess students' speaking proficiency in an efficient manner.

Pronunciation practice

In regular language classrooms, another challenge with incorporating speaking practice is that there are few opportunities to practice pronunciation. Although many students notice the importance of pronunciation accuracy and want to be able to acquire correct pronunciation, they are not given enough opportunities to practice pronunciation (Algarra, 2016). Tutorial CALL has a function as a drill and is adequate as a tool to give students input. As such, it has been adopted by instructors and individual learners in language learning as a listening drill to practice pronunciation. However, there are some challenges in practicing pronunciation on an individual basis. Because the writing system used for Japanese has syllabaries rather than alphabetic symbols that some languages do, it is difficult to recognize which syllable has the accent when learners see the written word. Nevertheless, there are many homonyms whose meaning changes depending on the intonation. Sometimes learners need to determine the appropriate word from multiple homonyms based on the context. This is especially difficult for novice learners. These challenges are what Japanese learners often face in oral conversations. Students tend to struggle the most with differences in length and pitch accents between similar words. For example, 時計 (to.ke.i /clock), 統計(to.o.ke.i/statistics), 特惠(to.k.ke.i/preferential

treatment) are three words that have the same pitch accent, so that it is necessary to focus on the length of the words, pronunciation accuracy, and extend vowels accurately.

Similarly, the words 着る(ki.ru/to wear), 切る(ki.ru/to cut) have the exact same length but different pitch accents so that if the context does not indicate to the hearer what it means, pronunciation accuracy is the only way to convey the idea exactly (Schaefer & Darcy, 2019).

In order to acquire accurate Japanese pronunciation, learners must rely on input and feedback that comes through their ears, such as listening to audio or getting help from native speakers. However, I see a potential solution to this challenge in a website system called “Online Japanese Accent Dictionary” (OJAD) (<http://www.gavo.t.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ojad/>). While there are many web-based dictionaries including Google dictionary and smartphone apps that learners can access to listen to audio to check pronunciation and accents, those tools do not visualize the Japanese accent pitch. On the other hand, OJAD is a tool that enables self-learning of pronunciation by visualizing the information that should be obtained from the ears. Algarra (2016) states the following about OJAD:

The Website OJAD is a database of Japanese accent aimed at teachers and students, used in programs of language teaching around the world and which is linked to the project “Development of an Online Japanese Accent Dictionary using a Corpus for Japanese Language Education”; a project led by Professor Minematsu and belonging to the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics. (p.23)

As an example, I created an illustration of three homonymous short phrases (“あつたかい/Attakai”), using OJAD. The phrases have the same spelling but three different meanings depending on the accent (see Figure 2). In number one, a flat pattern without accent indicates “It is warm,” while number two, with accents on the first and fourth syllables, indicates surprise and means “Wow! It is expensive!” Number three, with an accent on the second syllable, represents a question and means “Did you find it?” These example patterns show that by using OJAD to visualize the accent, it becomes possible to accurately read and pronounce the meaning of the phrase even without context.

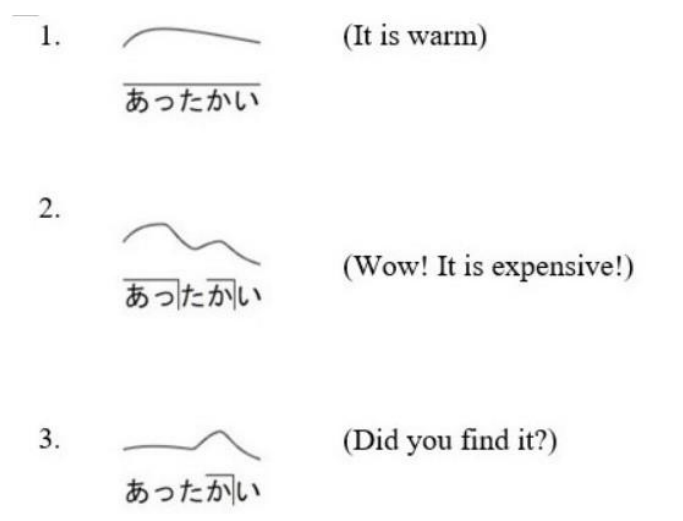


Figure2: Illustration of the accent patterns of short phrase

This platform has a function to input multiple sentences and indicate the accent position in light of the context. It can help users identify homonyms. Rather than relying on uncertain information that learners hear, practicing basic pronunciation according to visualized pronunciation rules helps learners to practice on their own outside the classroom. In addition, using visualized marks, it is possible to avoid the risk of pronunciation differences due to regional and individual differences. Furthermore,

considering that 72 percent of Japanese teachers outside Japan are non-native speakers, OJAD is a reliable source that helps both students and teachers manage natural accents (Hirano et al., 2013).

Social CALL

Video-synchronous

The biggest advantage of social CALL is that it makes it easy to connect learners with others, regardless of their physical distances. Remote lessons using video-synchronous tools such as Skype and Zoom have become part of the standard class delivery format (Spring, Kato, & Mori, 2019). Especially due to the pandemic, many teachers may have realized the convenience of the web-broadcast delivery format. Besides traditional video-synchronous applications, Zoom has become a mainstream tool for online teaching and conference, and it has facilitated online teaching with specific features for meeting such as hand raising function, screen sharing, and breakout rooms. Nurieva and Garaeva (2020) investigate and report on the advantages and challenges of Zoom-based online teaching of ESL from the perspective of both teachers and students. The result of improved student attendance compared to face-to-face format is attributed to the fact that the physical distance barrier was solved, which is an advantage of social CALL, and students were not required to commute. At the same time, however, the research also revealed some of the difficulties that Zoom-based classes faced. Firstly, not all students' access to the Internet is functional and stable. The teacher's voice often cuts out during lectures, and the poor quality of the audio makes students feel stressed and tired. Many students also suffered from problems with the microphone, which made it difficult for them to concentrate on speaking practice. These difficulties also led to a lack

of motivation. The teachers faced difficulties in encouraging students to actively participate in their classes. When the teacher asked a question to a student, all the students except the one being asked mute their microphones. Similarly, in class discussions, all students except the speaker mute their microphones; therefore, there is less discussion than in a face-to-face format class. Nurieva and Garaeva (2020) conclude that, although the breakout room is a useful function that supports conversation practice in pair or small group work, it takes a lot of time for the teacher to visit every breakout room to give all students feedback. It was not very efficient and did not work well in the limited class time.

Even with the aid of CALL, it is not easy to incorporate a sufficient amount of speaking activities into the classroom curriculum. In fact, as many teachers have pointed out, the traditional face-to-face teaching format might be more effective in the aspect of time management. On the other hand, social CALL facilitates students to connect with tutors or other fluent speakers outside the class who can provide conversation practice and feedback. Students can easily connect with fluent speakers and ask for advice or tutorial sessions despite physical distances, and it allows them to get more practice outside of class. This is very attractive to learners who are learning TL outside the area where the language is spoken. However, there is a challenge that needs to be addressed. Even if they have the tools to connect online, they still need to find conversation partners in advance. According to Nishioka (2016), not many learners have partners to practice conversations with on a regular basis and in case they are studying in an environment where the TL is not widely spoken (i.e., a FL context), they may have very few opportunities to get to know fluent speakers. In an online environment, it is likely easier

to find a fluent person to practice with than in one's geographic neighborhood in a FL context. Physical closeness and the availability to meet in person are not criteria in the search for a practice partner.

Social media

Social media is an online service that allows people to communicate without meeting face to face, which makes it also useful for language learning (Febrianty & Ricardo, 2019). It also helps learners find study partners or conversation practice partners. Traditional social media make it easy to connect with people who share the same interests; thus, it is not difficult to find a community of people who are learning the same TL. Language learning opportunities using social media are based on written interactions. The opportunity to see casual expressions and some slang, which is not found in textbooks or classroom activities, is an effective way to learn spoken language. However, in order to practice speaking, learners needed to create other occasions apart from social media apps.

Regarding the solution to this concern, HelloTalk (<https://www.hellotalk.com/about/?lang=en>), a social networking service dedicated to language learning, helps to increase opportunities for speaking practice outside the classroom. Vollmer (2017) describes HelloTalk as the following:

HelloTalk, is a conversation-based mobile assisted language app that claims to make cultural immersion, language learning, and practice easy, engaging, and intuitive as it allows users to synchronously connect and chat with native speakers from all around the world. Conversation partners are able to communicate with

each other via a variety of different mediums, such as written text, speech-to-text, recorded audio messages, video chats, and doodles. (pp.384-385)

Through this application, which currently features over 30 million users, learners register their own L1 and TL to find language exchange partners to teach their L1 to each other. While traditional language learning through social media happens mainly in written form via text and chat, HelloTalk allows them to actually talk to native speakers they meet on the app using the call feature, and even receive oral feedback. This is a unique feature not found in other social media services or language learning apps. However, the major disadvantage of HelloTalk is that it is a conversation practice as a language exchange. In some cases, learners will only be able to speak in L1 without getting chance to practice TL. Another disadvantage is that although one gets the chance to talk to native speakers, in most cases they are not language teachers. This means that one may not always get adequate feedback or grammar explanations. Furthermore, it is a free conversation rather than an effective conversation practice that follows a lesson plan. However, practicing conversation by using HelloTalk can be effective from the perspective of creating opportunities to listen to natural expressions spoken by native speakers and to make up for the insufficient time afforded to speaking practice in classroom activities although the number of fluent Japanese speakers who use this service is not yet significant.

Tutorial via video-synchronous

Considering my own teaching experience with a Japanese class, connecting my students with Japanese tutors who are living in Japan or other states in the U.S through Zoom and arranging weekly tutorial sessions was an unexpected great finding of the pandemic. Because I had never imagined the tutoring sessions in any other way other

than face-to-face format, this trial opportunity was a useful experience. Although there were still challenges because it is difficult to arrange the schedule due to the large time difference between the United States and Japan, I was able to verify how easily the physical distance can be overcome. And surprisingly, I was able to incorporate most of the activities that were designed for the face-to-face format and could get the same outcomes we expected. As Spring et al. (2019) stated, tutorials rely on volunteers outside the classroom to provide a significant impact on the learning effectiveness of individual tutees. In other words, the effect the students can get is influenced by the tutor's experience and skills, hence teachers scrutinize the content of tutorial assignments in order to allow all students to have effective speaking practice. I provided the tutors instructions that clearly identified the grammar and vocabulary I wanted the students to practice, I also gave them role play situations and specified the CF methods. This reduced the risk of gaps in practice due to differences in tutors' skills. At the same time, teachers should keep in mind that technology cannot replace teachers and CALL is just a tool to assist learning and teaching.

Conclusion and Implications

It is obvious that the Internet is inseparable from most of our lives, and digital devices have become familiar tools, especially for college students who have grown up with digital devices since childhood. Incorporating CALL into the classroom not only gives the teacher a choice of delivery methods, but it also allows students to learn effectively even without any assistance from the teacher. It helps to relieve anxiety from students who are nervous about making mistakes in front of many peers in the classroom and hence cannot concentrate on their speech. Therefore, it can also support them to

focus on their speaking activities. In addition, CALL has many possibilities to increase the amount of speaking practice at-home assignments, which are difficult to allot sufficient time in classroom activities and difficult to assign as an individual task. Despite this, technology is not always perfect. It includes occasionally making a negative impact on learners' motivation. The role of the teacher is significant in the effective use of CALL and even with development of CALL, effective learning cannot be achieved without teachers' support. Compared to other major languages, the tools of CALL that support Japanese language learning are still limited. As HelloTalk offers more support in English and Chinese than in Japanese, some tools that support Japanese language teaching and learning are still under development. I look forward to future developments in this regard and would like to keep monitoring them carefully. Video synchronous tools facilitate overcoming physical distances between learners and others, but they will not be able to facilitate overcoming the problem of time differences. Occasionally, teachers may need to arrange the activity into a different approach than face-to-face format. There are still challenges that need to be solved, but there is no doubt that it will be a large help to increase speaking practice time in curricula.

Finally, after examining the aforementioned studies regarding CALL, I reaffirmed the importance of not relying too much on CALL. That is, teachers should always keep in mind that “computers cannot replace human beings” (Blake & Guillén, 2020, p.21). To help learners develop their language proficiency and conversation skills, teachers must be aware that a CALL-based classroom is not an inorganic learning environment as a sort of teaching machine, but a developed form of education that emphasizes human

communication. We must bear in mind that teachers as human beings are the ones who use CALL; we cannot let CALL guide our pedagogical decisions.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Oral Corrective Feedback in the Context of Interaction Perspectives

Introduction

Corrective feedback (CF) is defined as “responses to learner utterances containing an error” (Ellis, 2006, p.28). It has been considered an essential factor of SLA, whether it is written corrective feedback (WCF) or oral corrective feedback (OCF) (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Since Lyster and Ranta (1997) have proposed and categorized CF into six types, namely explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition, many researchers have investigated the effects of and relationship between CF types and learners' uptake, while determining the most effective CF methods. I have learned about the historical views of error correction and had discussions on effective CF in *Second Language Teaching: Theory and Practice* taught by Dr. Joshua Thoms. Errors that second language learners make contain valuable information about areas that learners need to improve, and effective CF is an essential factor that helps learners make progress. Providing appropriate CF is an important role of a teacher that cannot be obtained through self-learning (Blake & Guillén, 2020). For language teachers, it is necessary to know the characteristics of each type of feedback and explore its effects to correct learners' linguistic errors and help students' SLA. Besides that, it can help language instructors to organize task-based classroom activities and make small-groups or pair-work activities in L2 classrooms effective. In this Annotated Bibliography, I focus on OCF and examine its effects in the context of learner-to-learner and teacher-to-learner interactions, based on the interaction hypothesis advocated by Long (1996).

Theoretical framework

The interaction hypothesis proposed by Long (1996) highlights the importance of both input and output and emphasizes that SLA is facilitated by face-to-face interaction using the TL. In addition, Long (1996) argues that the effect of “comprehensible input”

that Krashen (1982) advocates for will be further enhanced when offered in an environment where learners have to “negotiate for meaning” (p.414). Based on this hypothesis, when the learners are talking to someone in the TL and they sense their output is not understood, they will engage in efforts to convey their thoughts using such strategies as paraphrasing, using gestures, or slowing down their rate of speech. Using various communication strategies to understand each other increases the effectiveness of the interaction. In other words, there is no doubt input is important. However, by practicing real second language conversation and gaining the experience of miscommunication (both in being misunderstood and also misunderstanding someone else), it will help the learner identify their needs to develop proficiency in TL. Moreover, when the learner has incorrect grammar or vocabulary, the other person may ask the speaker to repeat their sentence or give the speaker a recast in the form of a correct sentence, thus generating further interaction and new input. CF, new input, and awareness gained from interaction with other speakers of the TL will help learners improve their TL skills (Wei, 2012). In light of the interaction hypothesis, I investigated the topic of feedback from teachers to learners and among peers in the context of interaction in SLA.

Annotated Bibliography

For successful SLA, “inputting” grammar and vocabulary are not enough. The CF that learners are able to receive through interaction and awareness of areas to grow are invaluable (Long, 1996). It is a difficult matter to decide at level and in methods to correct students' mistakes. It is necessary to give the appropriate CF at the appropriate time, which depends on the student's proficiency level and the area of error. **Fujii (2013)** states that not all errors need to be corrected, and in situations where the focus is on

communication, CF may not be necessary as long as the speaker can deliver one's thoughts. In task-based activities, the priority is to convey one's thoughts and complete the task, rather than to eliminate linguistic errors (Ellis, 2009). In such situations, more than necessary CF may cause negative effects of interrupting the smooth interactions. In tutorial conversation sessions that I have assigned for my pre-intermediate level students, I ask the tutors to keep the conversation focused on meaning, without pointing out minor grammatical errors in free conversation portions, as long as the expressions that students address are understandable. Teachers need to have clear criteria for giving CF when they set up class objectives.

Kawaguchi and Ma (2012) investigate the roles of CF and negotiating meaning in mutual peer interaction in English as a second language (ESL) based on the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996). The study investigates CF of four female adult learners of ESL, two of whom have high English proficiency, while the others have low proficiency. Two native speakers also join as CF givers and examine the influence on the negotiation of meaning of the English proficiency gaps between CF giver and receiver. The research data was collected in the form of pre-test and post-test data, consisting of recorded interactions on three tasks. Five kinds of combinations of CF givers and CF receivers were created and asked students to give interactional CF for four tasks that they were given: board games, interactive conversations, image descriptions, and depictions. The authors found that CF and negotiation of meaning occurred even in peer interaction. However, the effect of peer interaction is not the same as the interaction between native speakers (NSs) and NNSs. The interesting point in the results is that CF from NNSs was more effective than CF from NSs when it was regarding grammar. This is likely because

NNSs provided CF based on their own learning experience, which was helpful to CF receivers. The finding supports the idea of effective organization of the conversation practice sessions that the Japanese language program at USU assigns first-year and second-year students. The sessions are conducted on a one-on-one basis with an NS or NNS tutor with high Japanese proficiency. We intentionally assign NNS tutors to first-year students because it is beneficial for lower proficiency learners to receive advice or CF from NNS tutors based on their own experiences as a Japanese language learner. This method is effective according to student surveys. In Kawaguchi and Ma (2012)'s research, compared to the pre-test, the error rate was reduced on the post-test for all combinations of participants. This shows that learners are impacted by CFs and interactions between NNSs. However, since there were only four learners in this research, the data is not considered generalizable.

Recasts are defined as rephrasing an incorrect statement using the correct form while retaining the original meaning. It has been considered the most widely used and effective feedback method with 55% or more of the six main types of corrective feedback. Therefore, to examine the effect of second language learning by corrective feedback, it is essential to verify the effect of recast. As the most frequently used CF, many scholars have researched the effectiveness of recasts. For example, **Hama (2013)** investigated strategic recasts feedback and their effectiveness. In this research, 50 university students studying Japanese were divided randomly into two groups: a control group and an experimental group and each of these groups was divided into two smaller groups. All participants received corrective feedback by using recast on the conjugation of the verb *give*. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the effect

of awareness, which is the main effect of recasts, between the two groups. The conclusion of this study is that recasts promote learners' awareness of errors, which in turn helps their progress, agrees with many previous studies. However, in this research, the effect of recast in task-based learning (TBL), in which learners use their existing knowledge to interact in TL in given situations that could likely occur in actual life, has not been revealed. Even if it is a fact that recasts are the most frequently used CF, teachers should remember that these methods do not work effectively in all cases.

Yang (2016) examined the effects of recasting by focusing on the learners' perspectives. The research examined 159 students who study Chinese as a second language (CSL) in Beijing, China, to see which of the six types of CF they preferred. Yang found that learners preferred metalinguistic feedback to all other error types. Explicit corrections and recasts were supported as effective in phonological, lexical, and grammatical errors. The recasts were more effective from the students' point of view for pronunciation errors rather than grammatical errors, despite the learners' preferences. This result was unexpected for me because my understanding of recast is that it is most effective when it makes the learner aware of the knowledge that they have already learned but have lost or used incorrectly. I tend to use recasts for grammatical errors, especially conjunction errors, in CF. I assume that this is due to the characteristic of Chinese that is difficult for learners to pronounce, however, the study did not discuss this point.

CF is not only given to students by the teacher but also by peers, and peer CF can occasionally be more effective than CF from the teacher. **Xu, Fan, and Xu (2019)** state the importance of pair or small group work in the communicative approach and

focus on peer feedback and its effect and interactions that each giver and recipient of CF gains. The study addresses three research questions (RQ): 1) To what extent do learners provide CF on peers' errors and what are the types of CF provided? 2) What types of learner errors lead to peer CF? 3) How do learners make their moment-to-moment CF decisions in response to their partners' errors at the time of peer interaction? The participants were 40 first-semester EFL university students aged between 18 and 19. All of them started to study EFL from grade three in primary school and no one had study abroad experience. Before the experiment, participants answered a demographic questionnaire indicating their age, gender, and the age of starting to study English. The data was collected through an information-gap task. The participants were shown six pictures that described three stories. They were paired up and worked with a partner making one story together. Their interactions during activities were video recorded and learner's errors, partners' CF, and CF receivers' responses to CF were recorded. Then, after the activity, the researchers interviewed 40 of them if the partner noticed the errors, to investigate why they decided to point the error out and give CF and the reasons that they chose a particular CF method. The finding of the first RQ showed that learners engaged in CF provision in task-based peer interaction. However, the instances of CF were relatively infrequent and there was individual variation in the amount of CF provision. Both implicit and explicit CF were provided, and recasts accounted for 72.2% of total CF. The finding of the second RQ demonstrated that a total of 18 lexical (23%), 57 grammatical (72%), and 4 phonological (5%) errors was followed by CF. As the finding of the third RQ, six categories of factors were identified to influence peers' moment-to-moment CF decisions in interaction, such as provider-related factors,

receiver-related factors, task-related factors, error-related factors, interpersonal factors, and teacher-related factors. For example, in terms of error-related factors, the type of error such as grammatical, pronunciation, or word choice, and whether the error is a significant obstacle to carrying the speaker's ideas both impacts choosing CF methods. In interpersonal factors, the closeness of the relationship with the practice partner can be a factor in CF selection. The results of this study encourage my belief that CF from peers can be effective because they can notice errors from learners' perspectives. However, it is difficult to select the most effective CF based on the types of errors.

As another interesting research regarding the effects of peer feedback, **Sippel and Jackson (2015)** show that it has positive effects on the students who receive CF. The study examined the effects of peer feedback and CF from the teacher on 68 students studying German at an American university by recording their conversation practice in class. The study shows that, in order to give feedback, it is necessary to indicate mistakes, and this has a positive learning effect on the CF giver. This is because the work of providing CF raises students' consciousness of grammatical structures and the accuracy of linguistic forms. In addition, errors made by learners who are at the same level often have similarities, therefore when providing peer CF, they may find their own errors and be able to correct them. Organizing a student-centered class is an effective way to promote student interaction, which offers opportunities for peer CF.

With the critical view that previous research on CF has been inconsistent, **Fang (2019)** examined what kind of feedback teachers use more often and whether the classroom environment influences what kind of feedback is adopted. The study was conducted in an ESL class at a university in the U.S with students between the ages of 18

and 25. All students had been in the U.S. for less than six months. The teacher was a native English speaker. The class was advanced level and included speaking and listening, and there was a lot of interaction with the instructor and fellow students. The researcher recorded the class sessions by observing, taking notes, and recording videos for 7 hours of the class conducted over two weeks. During the observation, the researcher recorded 13 different types of feedback during the session. The results were quite surprising and different from what had been examined in previous studies. Whereas recasts were reported as the most commonly used CF, with nearly 60 percent of CFs in other studies, in Fang's study, elicitation with questions had the highest frequency at 17.5%. That is, in general, instructor used elicitation with questions more than any other feedback type. In other words, the instructor believed that asking students questions and encouraging them to find answers were important roles in this ESL listening and speaking class. Allowing students to address their thoughts or answers helps them with SLA as it encourages meaningful negotiation as Long (1996) advocated. The results of this research encouraged me because I intentionally try to use elicitation when I give CF to my students on their particle errors. The function of particles is a topic covered in the first semester of the first-year Japanese class at the college level, and it does not receive grammatical explanation most of the time. On the other hand, it is the area where learners make errors frequently. I consider elicitation one of the most effective methods to correct errors without de-motivating them. When a teacher gives CF in front of the whole class, they encourage learners to use the correct forms on their own. This study supports the CF method that I practice in my class.

From the perspective of classification of CF into explicit CF and implicit CF, **Lyster, Saito, and Sato (2013)** examined what factors should be taken into consideration to adopt the most appropriate CF method. The authors claim that some researchers indicate that although explicit CF is effective in the short term, it does not stay in memory for a long time, while implicit CF tends to have long-lasting effects. I agree with this opinion from the perspective as a language learner. However, the distinction between explicit and implicit CF is very equivocal, as there is no clear definition. Moreover, CF effectiveness is affected many by variables, such as the cognitive level, linguistic level, and contextual level. In other words, it is affected by various factors such as the age of the learner, the intonation used when providing CF, and the status of the CF provider. Hence, teachers need to select the most effective CF method depending on tasks or interactional contexts, students' background and proficiency levels, and the class objectives. As the study states in the conclusion section, I believe that interaction is a negotiation between humans, and there is no communication that all situations and conditions are exactly the same. Therefore, for example, even if a teacher provides CF using recasts for the same error in two different pairs' interactions, the outcome will be affected by the situation of interactions or even the length of time from the error occurrence to the error correction. Even though teachers create a set of rules or a formula for choosing effective CF, that formula will not fit all, and it is impossible to cover all patterns of errors. There is no one error that is identical with the factors surrounding the error, such as the context, the relationship between speakers, and the proficiency level of the learner. Lyster et al. (2013) emphasize the characteristics of CF, which is required to select the most appropriate method for each error. In addition, they highlight that

understanding the characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses of each CF is an essential process in determining the CF for each error. The teacher's decisions based on one's knowledge and experience are required. Their argument supports my teaching philosophy that CF is an important role of the teacher that cannot be replaced by technology or textbooks.

Conclusion

The interaction hypothesis emphasizes the crucial role of negotiation of meaning in TL conversations. Therefore, it is important that teachers not only lecture based on the textbook or review worksheets, but also give learners tasks based on realistic situations where language use takes place. As a result, learners are allowed to receive effective CF on language use that is situational to their interaction. One of the keys to applying the interaction hypothesis to actual second language learning classrooms is not simply increasing opportunities for interaction. While it is true, according to the interaction hypothesis, that learners should get plenty of input before they are placed in a situation where they interact with others, continuing to practice the target language without sufficient input or feedback is not efficient. When learners receive negative feedback from teachers and peers in the classroom activities or conversations, or if the learners find out what is missing or wrong in their target language, that awareness can be their new knowledge and they can use it as the next input or output. Furthermore, language teachers should keep in mind that the type of CF affects the motivation of learners. Considering the impact of CF in terms of interaction, whether implicit or elicited, it is important to give CF by the appropriate methods and timing. When an instructor highlights what is missing for the learner to convey accurately what one wants to address, learners can

notice the gap between what they want to convey and what they can currently address, and their efforts to fill those gaps lead to progress in their SLA. Language teachers should consider it their essential role to provide appropriate CF that supports learners in their efforts.

Looking forward

I am grateful that I had the opportunity to teach Japanese in all semesters I was enrolled in the MSLT program. It was not easy for me to balance the MSLT coursework and five hours of Japanese classes per week, but it was a very rewarding experience. Before I entered this program, I had set my career goal to become a Japanese teacher in the United States. My experience as a graduate student and a graduate instructor has motivated me to achieve my goals. Upon graduation from the MSLT program, I plan to enter the Japanese teaching profession at a university or community college in the U.S.

One of the fields I would like to improve in the future is to design a course that connects Japanese language with cultural elements and current social issues in Japan. I learned a lot of ideas in the MSLT program to help me build such a course. I look forward to the opportunity to incorporate elements that I learned in the courses into my classroom. There are some organizations that provide information on Japanese language education in the U.S. and Utah, such as the American Association of Teachers of Japanese and the Utah Foreign Language Association. I plan to attend conferences organized by these organizations to obtain additional ideas to improve my classroom activities. I will continue studying linguistics to help me grow as a Japanese teacher.

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