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Teaching written Japanese to deaf children : Developing a teaching method for the correct use of postpositional particles

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This paper reports on how well a second language teaching method for Japanese writing can be applied to deaf children, defined here as children who have difficulties in acquiring spoken Japanese because of a hearing disability.

Previous studies have indicated that deaf children have problems in acquiring postpositional case particles when learning to write Japanese. Iori & Oka (2016) looked at whether it is deep case (semantic role) or surface case (particle) that causes this group difficulties in acquiring postpositional case particles. Participants were asked to identify the correct illustration for corresponding sign language sentences. The results showed that deaf children in Grade 5 and above could recognize deep case in the presented sentences.

The present study found that deaf children made fewer mistakes in fill-in-the-blank tasks after concentrated teaching of and practice with postpositional case particles (*ga, wo, ni*) in typical transitive sentences. However, in free composition, there remained mistakes in intransitive and irregular transitive sentences. The method applied for Japanese as a second language seems effective, but more comparative studies are needed to detect the effects of negative transfer from subjects' native sign language.