Language Skill Development in Japanese Kokugo Education: Analysis of the Television Program Wakaru Kokugo Yomikaki No Tsubo

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Language Skill Development in Japanese Kokugo Education: Analysis of the Television Program *Wakaru Kokugo Yomikaki No Tsubo* 

by 

Ruri Yoshii 

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of 

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in
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Thesis Committee: 
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Abstract

Any type of education implemented by a modern nation-state is, at least in part, a tool for socializing its people. In this regard, Japanese language and literature education, *kokugo*, has played an important role in Japan by emphasizing nationalism and the integrity of a Japanese identity. According to Ishihara (2007) and Lee (1996 [English translation 2010]), kokugo, since its inception in 1900, has promoted moral awareness and assimilation of Japanese ideals across the country. However, responding to unsatisfactory test results in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2003 and 2006, Japan’s Ministry of Education Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) adjusted kokugo education policies. A decision was made to place more emphasis on language skills rather than on the traditional kokugo approach that had been in place from the beginning of the Meiji era (1868-1912). Based on an analysis of *Wakaru Kokugo Yomikaki no Tsubo* (WKYT) (*Understanding Kokugo: The Secrets of Reading and Writing*), an educational television program for elementary school kokugo classes by *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* (NHK), this thesis discusses how language skill development has recently been introduced into the kokugo curriculum and Japanese kokugo education policies. This thesis also uses the historical-structural approach of critical language policy research developed by Tollefson (1991, 2013) and Street (1993) to analyze how this modified kokugo education has the potential to affect the social development of students.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The word kokugo has two different meanings in Japanese: one is “the national language of Japan” and the other is “the title of a subject in school education” (Nishio, Iwabuchi, & Mizutani, 2009, p. 497). This word was born in the early Meiji period and is now used as daily vocabulary in Japanese. Ramsey (2004) states that the word kokugo is used to designate “something more like ‘our language, our mother tongue’” (p.82), referring to the first meaning of kokugo. It is important to note that kokugo as a subject in school education is related to teaching something that is ours or the language for the Japanese people. As an example, kokugo is taught in schools to Japanese native speakers, while nihongo (literally “Japanese”) refers to classes taught to “foreign” people (Nishio, Iwabuchi, & Mizutani, 2009, p.497).¹ As a subject, kokugo is not a simple program that teaches basic Japanese language skills, but also a device to create and enforce the values associated with the Japanese language as a beautiful and culturally meaningful entity. Japan’s Ministry of Education Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) defines the purpose of kokugo education in its 2008 revised curriculum guidelines, Gakushū Shidō Yōryō (Course of Study)² as follows:

国語を適切に表現し正確に理解する能力を育成し，伝え合う力を高めるとともに，思考力や想像力及び言語感覚を養い，国語に対する関心を深め国語を尊重する態度を育てる。(MEXT, 2008, p.12)

Our goals are to develop in pupils the ability to properly express and accurately comprehend the Japanese language, to increase their ability to communicate, to

¹ During W.W.II, exceptions were made when kokugo was taught in Taiwan and Korea.
² It is specifically stated in Course of Study that Japanese public education should maintain consistent curricula throughout the country. Course of Study comprises guidelines, which are based on the Basic Act on Education enacted after World War II. Course of Study is revised almost every ten years and its official curriculum guidelines exist for every subject in elementary, middle and high school education. Every teacher in school is expected to consult Course of Study to make lesson plans.
develop their ability to think, imagine and foster in them a sense of language, to deepen their interest in the Japanese language, and to develop an attitude of respect for the Japanese language.³

As we can see, kokugo aims to foster comprehension and communication skills in Japanese, as well as create and promote respect for Japanese language and culture.

As a matter of fact, the publishers of government-sanctioned textbooks advertise their products by saying that their kokugo textbooks promote traditional Japanese culture and values. For instance, kokugo textbooks issued by Mitsumura Tosho, the most successful publisher of kokugo textbooks for elementary schools (Ishihara, 2009), promotes these objectives. They write that first, students will develop feelings of love for the Japanese language and their kyōdo/furusato (homeland).⁴ In addition, students will learn ethics and morality along with reading and writing comprehension skills. The textbook in question presents the following topics as moral: “a respect for life,” “work ethic,” “love of nature,” “international cooperation,” “the aspiration for peace” and so on (Kabashima et al., 2010, p.2). Mitsumura Tosho’s textbooks also encourage national pride by teaching the interpretation of classical literature, texts that express the beauty of the four seasons in Japan, and by assigning writing activities about the students’ kyōdo (Kabashima et al., 2010, p.2). Thus, in kokugo, students are expected to learn not only language skills, but also develop a love for Japanese language, culture and country.

Ishihara, who edited official kokugo textbooks for more than twenty years, states that kokugo education is dōtoku kyōiku (moral education) (2005, p.57). Here, dōtoku kyōiku means that students are provided with examples of the ideal personality traits and

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³ All MEXT translations are from the MEXT website with minor edits for clarification by this author.
⁴ Kyōdo or furusato both mean homeland, including the geographical and also cultural environment where someone has grown up.
behaviors expected in Japanese society. This includes obedience and compliance toward the social environment to which the children belong (2005, p.84). Therefore, being good at kokugo means achieving the government-promoted ideal personality. The reading comprehension skills taught in kokugo education focus primarily on moral readings of texts; teachers in classrooms do not expect students to read the text in innovative ways or to express unique individual opinions. As evidence of this, Ishihara gives the following example: given an assignment to review a school trip, students who write compositions that give evidence for an argument that the trip was unsuccessful would get lower scores because the critical evaluation of a school event is not considered moral. As a result, “clever kids” learn that you cannot write what you really think in school (Ishihara, 2005, p.56). Accordingly, in traditional kokugo education, students are not expected to express their opinions or interpret a text in a variety of ways.5

More recent changes in kokugo education show a different attitude—one that recognizes something besides the role of national assimilation. As a result of low scores on reading literacy assessments in the Program for International Students Assessment (PISA) by OECD6 in 2003 and 2006, policymakers have decided that kokugo education

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5 It is misleading to say that kokugo education ignores any type of output language skill education. In fact, discussion activities and debate activities are included in Course of Study and the contents of official textbooks (i.e., Kabashima et.al, 2010). Also, in the period of education for yutori kyōiku (low-pressure education) between 2002 and 2012, communication activities such as presentations were important assignments for students (Tsuneyoshi, 2004, p.370). However, Ishihara points out that the presentation of this content was superficial or unsuccessful because the discussions were always guided to have “morally correct motivation,” and students were not encouraged to have opinions other than those which conformed to government promoted morals (2005, p.65).

6 OECD is the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development, founded in 1962 with headquarters in Paris. The membership is composed of 34 states with advanced industrial economies. OECD provides a forum for multilateral intergovernmental consultations on a wide range of economic and social issues (Sholte, 2001).
policy must change.\footnote{The rank of Japan on the literacy assessment among the participating countries and economies in each test was: eighth in 2000, fourteenth in 2003, fifteenth in 2006 and eighth in 2009. As for mathematical literacy and scientific literacy, the rank of Japan has never dropped under tenth (MEXT, 2012).} Japanese education that was once highly evaluated (Duke, 1986; Shimahara, 1985, 1986; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Vogel, 1979) fell far short in PISA. This decline took Japanese educators by surprise and drove MEXT to change its kokugo policies. We can see evidence of this in the Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai (NHK) educational television program, Wakaru Kokugo Yomikaki no Tsubo (hereafter WKYT, Understanding Kokugo: The Secret of Reading and Writing), which started in 2004. The mission statement of the program is as follows:

**Learn how to communicate logically and accurately:**

Nowadays many people say that children struggle with Japanese. Many adults point out that “young people are not good at speaking and writing logically,” or “students cannot properly comprehend text-based information.” PISA addressed a drop in the reading comprehension ability in Japanese children and MEXT started to deal with this issue by presenting “The Program for Reading Comprehension Skill Improvement.” This television program is linked to such MEXT kokugo education policies, and helps students learn logical and accurate communication skills through language skill education.

As we can see, WKYT’s mission is to follow MEXT policies, which focus on logical and accurate communication skills in response to PISA’s reading literacy assessments.

As we will see, MEXT policies are changing because of the relatively low result of PISA in reading literacy in 2003. PISA is an international intellectual assessment
Program instituted in 2000 by OECD. The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate education systems around the globe. Worldwide, fifteen-year-old students in participating countries and economies are tested in three categories: reading, mathematics and scientific literacy. More than seventy countries and economies have joined this assessment thus far. The literacy skills assessed by PISA are considered to be essential to “individual growth,” “economic participation,” and “citizenship” (OECD, 2010, p.21). Japan received a relatively low reading literacy score among the OECD countries in 2003 and 2006, compared to the country’s high scores in mathematics and science. MEXT analyzed the results and decided that Japanese students are challenged in their ability to think, judge, and express their opinions, especially in writing. In addition, MEXT found a weakness in Japanese test takers’ ability to make use of their knowledge and skills (MEXT, 2011, p.1).

To examine the result of PISA assessments, it is important to understand the definition of literacy used by OECD: “Reading literacy is understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society” (OECD, 2010, p.23). More concretely, OECD spells out this definition of reading literacy from four perspectives:

1) Reading literacy should be an interactive skill so that readers can connect their opinions and experiences relevant to a text.
2) Besides being able to read, students should also be able to evaluate and make use of reading for various aims.
3) In addition to simple texts, students should be able to handle various types of writing with visuals such as diagrams, pictures, maps and so on.
4) In terms of competitive skills in contemporary society, literacy should be a skill that enables students to participate in social activities and helps them achieve their life-long learning and ambitions even after finishing their school education. (OECD, 2010, p.23)
Ishihara (2005) argues that the definition of reading literacy in PISA is basically equivalent to critical thinking. He interprets this as the ability to express one’s opinion, which might be different from others, and to be critical about others’ arguments. Thus, there is a contradiction between what PISA evaluates in literacy assessment and what kokugo stresses in terms of moral and cultural traditions.

Indeed, there was no reason for educators in Japan to be surprised by the low scores on the literacy assessment by OECD in 2003, because the goals of kokugo simply do not cover the criteria that PISA examined. While PISA literacy tests assess the ability to express an opinion based on texts, in kokugo, moral reading of the text is emphasized (Ishihara, 2005). In the kokugo curriculum, students are not encouraged to have individual opinions about the texts, but are expected be able to read Japanese traditional stories and learn ethical lessons from the texts. In kokugo, in fact, students rarely learn how to make an original argument effectively (Ishihara, 2005; Sanmori 2005); therefore, it was only to be expected that Japanese students would not score well on the PISA literacy tests. To improve scores on the PISA literacy tests and to meet the criteria of this assessment, language skill education, which includes critical thinking and the expression of individual opinion, has recently been introduced into kokugo education.

However, this shift in kokugo education to include language skill education cannot be accomplished simply by a change in curriculum. It entails a change in the essence of the subject itself. It means that the goal of social assimilation must become secondary to (or at least acknowledge) the goal of teaching logical and accurate language skills and critical thinking skills. As Durkheim (1969) says, “Educational transformations are always the result and the symptom of the social transformation in terms of which they
are to be explained” (p.92). Likewise, the way the Japanese government socializes people has changed from shaping people to support a strong nation-state to shaping people who can survive in the international competition of the globalized market. I explore this shift of kokugo using Tollefson (1991, 2006, 2013) and Street’s (1991) historical-structural approach, which “emphasizes the influence of social and historical language policy and language use” (Tollefson, 2006, p. 48). This approach developed as a critique of the traditional approach (e.g. Fishman, J.A., Ferguson, C.A, & Das Gupta, J., 1968), which evaluates policies without regard to their role in systems of oppression and exploitation.\(^8\)

Focusing primarily on kokugo and its historical development in Japan, in this thesis I discuss how national language policies in Japan socialize its people creating the social ideal, which changes with the times. First, I will review kokugo educational policy from its birth to the present to analyze the meaning of this contemporary shift in kokugo in terms of social change in Japanese society. Next, I will show how WKYT reflects and enforces goals of the content of kokugo education. Through an analysis of WKYT, I will explore the potential effectiveness of language skill education in kokugo, and then, I will show how language skill education constitutes a new type of socialization through kokugo education.

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\(^8\) The historical-structural approach has been criticized for giving too much attention to structures like nation-states and top-down planning and policymaking. Some say it should be more concerned with “the local decisions of individual language users, teachers, parents, administrators, and communities.” (Abu-Lughod, 1975; Johnson, 2007). Based on this criticism, the public-sphere approach was created, an approach which places greater emphasis on the agency of all actors, not necessarily just nation-states. This study is based primarily on the public sectors policies.
Chapter 2: History of Kokugo

2.1. An Overview of Kokugo History

From the time of the Meiji government to the present, kokugo education policies have been an important instrument in uniting the public across the country under the banner of one united “Japan.” Tollefson (2013) argues that to understand any contemporary language policy, it is necessary to start from the rise of nationalism and the nation state, and its concept of identity that is a consequence of these. Next, it is necessary to examine the decline of the power of the nation-state in the vast prosperity of global capitalism. In this section, I will explore the birth and development conversions of kokugo education policies in Japan following Tollefson (1991, 2006, 2013) and Street’s (1993) historical-structural approach to language policy issues.

The history of kokugo education can be divided into five stages to show the different goals which policy makers aimed to instill into the Japanese public: the origin of kokugo education (1868-1919), colonial kokugo education policies of the Japanese Empire (1919-1945), the democratization of kokugo (1945-1965), kokugo education in the economic growth period (1965-1998), and recent changes in kokugo education (1998-2014). In what follows, I will discuss the different roles of kokugo education in the process of socialization in each of these periods.

2.2. The Birth of Kokugo Education (1868-1919)

2.2.1. An Overview

The first stage I discuss is the “birth of kokugo,” which ranges from 1868 to 1919. This period starts with the Meiji Restoration, the beginning of modernization for Japan,
which lasted until Japan adopted full-scale assimilationist policies toward other Asian countries. During this time, kokugo education was born, and soon developed into an important concept for modern Japan. The idea of one national language, kokugo, was academically developed and introduced by Ueda Kazutoshi (1867-1937) as an ideal that would help the Meiji government to form a nation-state. The concept of kokugo as a national language was important to the integration of the various dialects across the country into one common tongue, and also to the integration of the Japanese people themselves into one national identity with one national language. To promulgate this idea of kokugo, mandatory kokugo education was also instituted as a subject in elementary school through the revision of Shōgakkōrei (Elementary School Order) in 1900. Every child in Japan was now encouraged to think of him/herself as a citizen of a nation with shared values, ideals, history, traditions and one language. During this period, along with the other policies instituted during the Meiji Restoration, kokugo education policies were instrumental in building the nation-state.

It is important to understand that the concept of kokugo as a national language in Japan was “invented” during this period. Prior to the Meiji period, the Japanese people did not consider themselves to be members of one unified nation-state but as part of many different regional communities. The concept of kokugo in which the Japanese have one united national language that every Japanese person speaks is a social construct that many contemporary Japanese people believe in without question. Lee (1996 [English translation 2010]) draws on Anderson’s (1991) concept of “imagined communities” to

9 Each regional community was called han and was ruled by daimyō (feudal lord). Ivy (1995) described the language situation at this pre-Meiji period: “Hundreds of dialects existed throughout the country; spoken Japanese was fragmented and various and bore the marks of local.”
underscore kokugo education policies that present Japanese identity historically to the public. I will examine this birth of kokugo through the role of Ueda Kazutoshi and the establishment of kokugo as a mandatory subject in education for Japanese children.

2.2.2. Ueda Kazutoshi

In discussing the birth of kokugo as a concept of one national language of Japan, it is necessary to recognize the contributions and work of Ueda Kazutoshi, who introduced the connection between a nation and a national language, as well as the concept of a standardized language, hyōjyungo, to Japanese society. Ueda studied linguistics at Tokyo Imperial University under British linguist B. H. Chamberlain (1850-1935). Ueda examined modern western linguistic theories and then applied them to the analysis of Japanese as a spoken rather than written (literary) phenomenon. After his graduation from Tokyo Imperial University, Ueda went to Germany and France to conduct linguistic research for four years. He extensively investigated German language policies that supported German prosperity at the time,10 which enabled him to bring back to Japan the concept of a strong connection between language and nationalism (Lee, 1996 [2010]). Becoming a professor at Tokyo Imperial University in 1894, Ueda and his students built kokugo education policies for the goal of nationalizing its citizens.

One of the crucial ideas Ueda introduced to Japanese linguistics was that the Japanese language is connected to Japan as a nation-state. In “Kokugo to Kokka to” (“Kokugo and Nation-state,” 1894), Ueda characterizes kokugo as “the spiritual blood” of a nation-state as what follows.

10 Ueda studied the All-German Language Association and its language purification movement at Leipzig University starting in 1892 (Lee, 1996 [2010]; Clark, 2009).
A language for the people who speak it is the symbol of the spirit of the brethren. Just like the blood shared by their bodies. Therefore, the language of the Japanese nation is the spiritual blood of the Japanese people.

In Lee’s (1996 [2010], p.90) and Yasuda’s (2006, p.52) analysis, using the analogy of “spiritual blood” to explain kokugo in this essay, Ueda succeeded in convincing the Japanese public that kokugo was something naturally given, something that had existed from time immemorial. This viewpoint of national language continues to be supported by kokugo education up to the present.

Ueda’s second major contribution to Japanese language policy was his discussion of hyōjungo (standard language). The term hyōjungo was first introduced by Okada Yoshizaburō in 1890 as a translation of the English language term “standard language.”

Ueda adopted this word and developed it as a concept in his lecture “Hyōjungo ni tsuite” (“About Standard Language”) in 1895 (Sanada, 1991, p.91). Ueda’s definition of hyōjungo was “the language used in a country as a model language [that is,] unlike so-called dialects, understood by most people throughout the country” (Ueda, 1895, p.502).

It is difficult to imagine for contemporary Japanese people, but in the first years of the Meiji era, Japan did not have one language that acted to unify its people. It is now widely thought that Japan is a linguistically homogeneous country\textsuperscript{11}, but the current situation is the outcome of educational language policies that have continued since the early Meiji period (Coulmas, 2002, p.206). Ueda proposed that the language spoken in Tokyo should

\textsuperscript{11} This idea spread as a result of public kokugo education. This idea might be challenged by minority language speakers in Japan (e.g. Korean, Ainu language, and Japanese sign language, etc.) in kokugo education.
be this *hyōjungo* and that it should be learned by all Japanese children through public education.\(^{12}\)

To establish one definitive *hyōjungo* and promulgate it among all the educational organizations across the country, Ueda proposed setting up a national committee for language policy in the government. The *Kokugo Chōsa Iinkai* (National Language Investigative Committee) was instituted, following his suggestion in 1902 as the first official committee for language policy in Japan. As an actual leader of this committee, his philosophy of kokugo informed the ultimate framework for kokugo education: to establish one national language to underlie a modern nation-state, and to make that language traditionally, culturally, and historically critical to the self-image of all people in Japan. These motivations of the *Kokugo Chōsa Iinkai* became the center of language policy in the Meiji period.

To achieve these two goals (connecting the nation to its language and the dissemination of *hyōjungo*), Ueda sought the establishment of *kokugogaku* (national language study).\(^{13}\) In fact, many of the members of the *Kokugo Chōsa Iinkai* were from the *kokugogaku* department of Tokyo Imperial University. A key philosophy of *kokugogaku* during this period was to take a comparative linguistic approach and also to cement the notion of national language being necessary to the modern nation-state.

*Kokugogaku*, then, encompassed the study of ways that allow people to speak and write

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\(^{12}\) Ueda was also a strong advocate of the *genbun-itchi* (unification of spoken and written language) movement, which sought to unify written and spoken language conventions. The movement was led by authors such as Tsubouchi Shōyō (1895-1935), Futabatei Shimei (1864-1909) and Yamada Bimyō (1868-1910) in the beginning of the Meiji period. They experimented with writing fiction in a revised orthography that reflected the conventions of spoken language. Ueda also agreed that standardized Japanese should include orthography that unified written and spoken language. Established soon after his lecture "*Hyōjungo ni tsuite*," people in Japanese territories were educated in *hyōjungo* through compulsory kokugo education.

\(^{13}\) The kokugo research department was established in 1893 at Tokyo Imperial University.
“appropriate” Japanese. Therefore, it was important to create and maintain the values of kokugo in kokugogaku. As Lee (1996, [2010]) points out, kokugo education has always been valued for creating and maintaining a national language in modern Japan (p.106). In other words, kokugo education has always been a practical as well as an experimental tool for kokugogaku as first put forward by Ueda.

2.2.3. Kokugo as a Subject

Kokugo as a subject in public school appeared for the first time in 1886, introduced in middle schools and teacher training academies. Later in 1900, The Shōgakkōrei (the elementary school order) mandated kokugo education in elementary schools. Kokugo combined three previously taught subjects: reading, composition, and calligraphy. Kokugo also functioned to subordinate dialects14 and other orthographies that had been taught in schools before the Meiji period.

Following this implementation of Shōgakkōrei, the first government-sanctioned kokugo textbook appeared in 1904. This textbook was heavily influenced by Ueda’s vision of kokugo, which is the promotion of hyōjungo. Lee (1996, [2010]) summarizes the importance of introducing kokugo as a subject as follows:

[I] t was not a mere change in the subject’s name, but a representation of the desire from various facets of the society to establish the ideal of kokugo. The dissemination of the kokugo ideal through elementary schools meant institutionalization of kokugo as a normative value to be planted in the people’s consciousness. (p.107)

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14 As an example of this, hogenfuda (dialect tag) or batsufuda (penalty tag) system was used especially in Okinawa to disseminate hyōjungo. The students were forced to wear the wooden hongenfuda (tag) as a penalty of using their “dialect” in the elementary school and could not remove it until they found out other students to speak “dialect.” According to Tanaka (1981), this system has started in 1907 and lasted until 1945.
As a new subject in elementary school with one government-sanctioned textbook, the recognition of kokugo began to standardize the Japanese language and make people aware of the concept of one national language. Kokugo education policies supported by kokugogaku scholars such as Ueda and his students were thus connected to kōminka kyōiku (imperial education) in the era of Imperial Japan.

2.3. Kokugo Policies of the Japanese Empire (1919-1945)

2.3.1. An Overview

As we have seen, kokugo education started as a strong tool to unite people in a modern nation-state in the Meiji era. Kokugo education policy, however, played an expanded role as the Japanese government increased its territory. Starting with the Sino-Japanese War (1894), Japan became an imperialist nation after the model of the Western powers. After the Sino-Japanese War, Japan acquired Taiwan (Formosa) from China in 1895 and colonized Korea beginning in 1910. After 1940 in the midst of World War II, Japan also acquired East Asian countries and islands in the South Pacific such as Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, East Timor, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Micronesia, Palau, Marshall Islands and Mariana Islands. For the Japanese Empire, kokugo education and a national language policy were adapted to deal with the multi-cultural situation of this era. After the invasion, Japanese administration always established kokugo education in the colonial territories.

Japanese language education was called kokugo education especially in Korea and Taiwan, which became Japanese colonies before the start of WWII (Okada, 2008, p.46). According to Lee (2009, p.191) kokugo education was used with the word gaichi (colonial territories), Korea, Taiwan, the islands of South Sea, foreign students and the second generation of Japanese in the foreign territories. On the other hand, nihongo education was used with in areas such as Guangdong, the East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere,
During this period, the legitimacy kokugo had as a mother language, or historical language would not work in its newly colonized territories. Some linguists argued for a new way to look at kokugo in colonized territories. In the next section, I will look at Hoshina Kōichi (1872-1955), Tokieda Motoki (1900-1967) and Saitō Hidekatsu (1908-1940) who each took expressly positive or critical attitudes toward the kokugo policies in colonized territories.

2.3.2. Hoshina Kōichi

Lee describes Hoshina Kōichi as a forgotten but important successor of Ueda Kazutoshi. Hoshina shared Ueda’s view that kokugo should represent the Japanese national character and be the basis of nationality. Hoshina became a professor at Tokyo Imperial University beginning in 1901 after studying under Ueda, and the next year he was appointed as an alternate member of the Kokugo Chōsa Inkai. Hoshina also took part in a project to create kokugo textbooks in 1904. After that, he was appointed by the Ministry of Education to study in France and Germany.

Immediately after the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910, Hoshina’s mission while studying in Europe was to investigate language problems and policies in German and French colonies for the Japanese government-general of Korea. Based on the knowledge he gained in German-occupied Poland, Hoshina became a rare scholar for his time—one who realized the importance of clear language policy and legislation in colonized Korea (Hoshina, 1936). What he learned from the policies of Germany in Poland was the resemblance between the relationship shared by Poland and Germany on Manchuria, Mongolia, Uyghur, and China in her analysis of the essays during 1941-42. The line between kokugo and nihongo was whether Japanese government had a territorial possession or not.

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the one hand, and that of between Korea and Japan on the other. Hoshina argued that within its colonies, Japan should take an assimilationist attitude based on long-term kokugo education policies in Korea and other colonized territories (Hoshina, 1936).

Armed with his knowledge of German policies, Hoshina believed that developing and also promulgating Japanese language and culture in other East Asian countries was significant and necessary. For instance in *Kokugo Seisaku* (*Kokugo Policies*, 1936), he pointed out the need for assimilationist policies to deal with the anti-Japanese public sentiment in China that was increasingly common at that time.

たとえば東洋の各民族にわが国の文化や言語を移植普及させることは、大和民族勢力を発展せしめるのに、もっとも緊要な方法である。北平や漢口に日本語の大学を設立し、わが国の文化や言語を普及せしめれば、知らず知らずの間にかれらを同化せしめて、今日のような排日思想を絶滅せしめ、はじめて日支の親善融和を期することが出来よう。（p.130）

For example, it is vital to the development of the influence of the Japanese race to implant and disseminate our culture and language in each East Asian nations. Establishing a Japanese University in Beijing or Hankou and promulgating our culture and language will enable Chinese people to assimilate to our culture without realizing it. It will exterminate anti-Japanese ideology and the reconciliation between Japan and China will be achieved.

Hoshina saw kokugo education as the most effective way to deal with any anti-Japanese ideology and resistance to the Japanese Imperial government in other Asian countries.

We can see his basic ideas reflected in *kōminka kyōiku* in 1943.

Hoshina did not question the supposed superiority of Japanese to Korean or Taiwanese or any other native languages of Japanese colonial territories, as he believed in the political and cultural predominance of Japan in his time. The following excerpt from *Daitoua Kyoueiken to Kokugoseisaku* (*The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity and Sphere and Kokugo Policy*, 1942) explains Hoshina’s ideas.
It is a general principle in the history of language that when uncivilized people have contact with civilized people, the former adopt a great part of the latter’s language. Now that the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere has been formed, our nation, as the leader, has an important mission to guide its sound history…. The Japanese language will spread over those people just as water flows from high to low.

As we have seen, Hoshina was never critical of Japanese imperialist policies. However he was critical about not having an actual officially sanctioned language in the colonial territories. As Lee (1996 [2010], p.174) observes, the Japanese government did not legislate the actual language policies in the colonial territories, as they saw it as self-evident to use Japanese in those territories. During that time Hoshina suggested the need to establish kokugo policies and legislation such as the following.

我が国においては、これまで国語政策を樹立し、以ておおいに国運の伸展を促すことは実に刻下的一大急務である。(Hoshina, 1936, p.1)

It is an urgent task to institute a solid kokugo policy in order to promote and expand the nation’s power.

In terms of the colonial language policy, Hoshina should be remembered as an ardent advocate for cultural and linguistic legislation to support kokugo education in the colonies.

2.3.3. Tokieda Motoki

Kokugo scholar Tokieda Motoki was also a student of Ueda. He is known as the author of *Kokugogaku-Shi (History of Kokugogaku, 1940)* and *Kokugogaku Genron (The
Principles of Kokugogaku, 1941). His analysis of Japanese grammar is called Tokieda-bunpō (Tokieda grammar) and is influential even in present kokugo study. He graduated from the Department of Kokugo and Kokubungaku (Japanese literature) at Tokyo Imperial University in 1925 and was appointed as a lecturer at Keijō (Seoul) Imperial University (1927-1932). He became a professor of Tokyo Imperial University in 1943 and his influence as a kokugo scholar continued after the war. Tokieda developed gengo katei setsu (theory of language as process) while he was in Seoul, responding to the need for kokugo education in the Japanese colony. This theory is famous for its argument against Saussure’s Cours de linguistique générale (“Course in General Linguistics,” 1915). According to Tokieda’s theory, language cannot exist without syutai (a philosophical subject). This means that he rejected the notion of analyzing language as an entity that exists separate from actual communication. Instead, Tokieda suggested that language should be seen as the outcome of one’s kachi-ishiki (sense of values).

我々の研究対象とする具体的言語に具備する心理的生理的過程は、その過程的形式にこそ日本語的性格が具現されているが故に、その限りに於いてこれを日本語の語として認識することが出来るのである。(Tokieda, 1941, p. 146)

Our research object is a particular language that entails psychological and physical processes. We can recognize this language as Japanese since the form of these processes embodies characteristics of Japanese language.

Applying this theory to kokugogaku, Tokieda argued that kokugo should be studied as the process of communicators’ mutual understanding in Japanese society. He dismissed the objectification of language. Unlike Ueda and Hoshina, Tokieda found the traditional pre-Meiji kokugaku method to be effective because it did not analyze language separate from culture nor communication.
During the time Tokieda was appointed as lecturer and associate professor at Keijō Imperial University, kōminka kyōiku and naisen ittai (the unification of Korea into Japan) were slogans of the Japanese imperial administration. The Japanese government was on the way to establishing military conscription in Korea, and both the oppression of Korean language and the enforcement of Japanese in Korean society were accelerated. As Karatani (2002) argues Tokieda was a scholar who found contradictions in Ueda’s view of kokugo, which understood kokugo as the spiritual blood of a nation-state (Tokieda, 1947). He developed his own theory to justify kokugo education in Korea as in Yasuda’s (1998) analysis. Yasuda (1998) draws on Chosen ni Okeru Kokugo (“Kokugo in the Korean Peninsula”, 1943) and says that Tokieda gave logical support to the oppressive language policies of the Japanese state in Korea.

半島人は須く朝鮮語を捨てて国語に帰一すべきであると思う。国語を母語とし、国語常用者としての言語生活を目標として進むべきであると思う。今日に於ける朝鮮語の現状は、古くは漢語漢字の圧倒的な勢力と、近代に於ける国語との接触のために、甚しき混乱と不統一に陥り、半島人の言語生活は必ずしも幸福であるとはいえない。この現状を脱却する唯一の道は国語によって半島の言語生活を統一するより外に道はない。韓国併合という歴史的・一大事実は、正にこれを言語生活にまで及ぼすことによって完成させられるのである。国語的統一ということは統一国家の一の象徴といわなければならないが、国語への統一ということは、半島人にとってはもっとも内面的な又精神的な一の福利である。(Tokieda, 1943, p.12)

I think Koreans should surrender Korean language and integrate into kokugo (Japanese). Koreans need to think of kokugo as their mother language and set as their goal to live their lives as daily kokugo users. Thinking about the present state of the Korean language, it is traditionally influenced overwhelmingly by Chinese language and in the modern period by contact with kokugo. It is in deep confusion and inconsistency. Therefore, the present Korean language cannot be said to be stable. The only way to eliminate the status quo here is nothing but the unification of language life through kokugo in Korea. Annexation of Korea as a major historical fact will be completed by influencing even language life. It should be said that unification through kokugo is a symbol of a unified nation-
state. Furthermore, for Koreans their integration into kokugo will be of the most internal and spiritual benefit.

As Tokieda clearly stated, the value of language is a matter of convenience and each individual needs to choose the most convenient language for themselves. This meant, in Korea under the Japanese colonial administration, that it would be to the “benefit” of Koreans to choose Japanese as their “mother language.” Yasuda (1998) criticized this view since it assumed that the entity, in this case Korean people under the Japanese colonial administration, had no right or chance to choose their language.

Even after the war, Tokieda did not dismiss his theory but applied it to the relationship between hyōjungo and regional dialects. He argued for the importance of hyōjungo education employing the same logic he used when analyzing Korean and kokugo. Yasuda concludes that Tokieda’s theory of language was a process for justifying linguistic imperialism academically (1998, p.137). Tokieda had realized that Ueda’s concept of kokugo, as the “spiritual blood” of Japan could not apply to kokugo in the colonies. In the end, he solved the contradiction between the intrinsic concept of kokugo for one nation-state and Japan’s oppressive language policies by saying that it benefits Korean people to choose Japanese, ignoring the importance of their own native language. This illustrates the closed world of kokugogaku and its inability to respond to a multicultural situation such as education in Japan’s colonies.

2.3.4. Saitō Hidekatsu

Saitō is known as the author of Tökyō hōgen shū (1935 [1975]) and the magazine Moji to gengo (Scripts and Language, 1936-1938). His linguistic interest was primarily dialect research and rōmaji (the Roman alphabet) education. Saitō criticized Japanese
colonial language policies in the magazine *Rōmaji Sekai* [The World of the Roman alphabet] in 1934. He studied East Asian literature at Komazawa University from 1926 until 1930. After graduation, he went back to his hometown in Yamagata prefecture and became a teacher at an elementary school. In 1933, he was discharged from the school because of his arrest on the suspicion of joining a communist group. After his discharge, he concentrated on his linguistic research and presented his arguments in academic magazines such as *Rōmaji Sekai*, or *Hōgen*. At the same time, Saitō also published a magazine highlighting movements within linguistics, *Moji to Gengo* by himself. Even though only about fifty copies were published, we are still able to access this magazine through its later mass republication in the 1970s.

Saitō’s argument is that Romanization of ethnic language should be used for the enlightenment of the proletariat, and Esperanto should be used as an international language in communication between foreign countries. This is his so-called proletariat-Esperanto theory. In addition to being an advocate of this theory, Saitō extended his criticism to Japanese language policies in the colonies.

植民地（朝鮮・台湾・満州）の言語的開放も必要であり、日本語をおしつけるのではなく、植民地の民族言語を自由に発展させるためにそれをローマ字化する運動をすすめ、植民地と日本のコミュニケーションにはエスペラントを使うべきだ。 (as cited in Shimizu, 1992)

Linguistic liberation in the colonies (Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria) is needed, too. Not for enforcing Japanese, but for developing each colony’s ethnic language without inhibition, the Romanization movement should be promoted. In addition, we should use Esperanto in communication between the colonies and Japan.
Saitō evaluated the language policies in the colonies as linguistic imperialism\(^{17}\) and called for linguistic liberation. To present this argument publicly during this period was to put one’s life in danger under the enforcement of the *Chian iji hō* (Peace Preservation Law) in Japan. Saitō passed away in 1940 due to illnesses he contracted through his several arrests and incarcerations. Saitō should be noted as a rare linguist and activist who criticized the Japanese government’s way of dealing with language in its newly annexed territories.\(^{18}\)

### 2.3.5. Kokugo’s Limitation

The concepts of kokugo and public kokugo education quickly came to be much relied-upon tools critical to the process of forming a modern nation in the early Meiji period, and they were applied to Japanese colonial territories following the territorial expansion of the Japanese imperial government. Looking back at kokugo education and the policies of the Japanese Empire, we can see kokugo’s limitations—those that ignore different languages and end up imposing Japanese forcefully on subjects. *Kokugogaku*, established by Ueda and developed by Hoshina and Tokieda, was not successful in responding to the multi-lingual societies that Japan attempted to integrate through imperial rule.\(^{19}\) Lee (1996 [2010]) concludes that the absence of legislation on official language or languages used in schools in the Japanese colonies exemplifies the fact that

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\(^{17}\) In Phillipson’s work (2006), the concept of linguistic imperialism is defined as that which “resonates with the historical fact of empires as sociopolitical structure that have risen and fallen over three millennia, and with the analytical exploration of the role of language of empire (p. 346)” He draws on examples such as English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German and Japanese.

\(^{18}\) Yanaihara Tadao (1893-1961), a colonization policy scholar, was also famous for standing against the assimilation policy and the imposition of Japanese language in Korea. He came to resign his post as professor in Tokyo University for his criticism toward colonial policies. Yasuda (1998) contrasts Yanaihara’s view of assimilation policies in Korea with his acceptance of Tokieda’s ideas and concludes that Yanaihara only criticized the assimilation policy and language policy in Korea because it was not an effective colonization policy.

\(^{19}\) Yasuda points out that *Nihongogaku* was created after the difficulty that *kokugogaku* faced (2006, p.179)
Japanese rule was a matter of language force rather than language policy (p.174). It was a difficult time for the development of kokugo language policy and *kokugogaku*, but Saitō Hidekatsu’s critique of linguistic imperialism is noteworthy. This period ended in 1945 when imperial Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration. Kokugo education returned to being a tool to unite Japanese people—this time as a “democratized” nation-state.

2.4. The Democratization of Kokugo (1945-1965)

After August 15, 1945, all social policies in Japan were reviewed in the light of democratization under the direction of U.S. General Headquarters (GHQ). The militaristic content of the textbooks were blacked out, and for kokugo education as well the slogan changed from imperialization to democratization. Before the 1960s, according to Satō (2006), kokugo’s purpose was focused on completing and maintaining the move to democracy and on cultivating language skills to support it.

In this early post-war period, kokugo in the academy was infused with the sentiment of guilt, generalizing the kokugo policies Japan had during the war. Kamei Takashi (1912-1995) expressed his thoughts on *kokugogaku* in “*Kokugo Mondai to Kokugogaku*” (“The Issue of Kokugo and *Kokugogaku*”) in 1947 as follows.

けだし、思へば思ふほど、あまりにも、ばかばかしいえせ学問の横行した時代、それはまだ、なまなましくわれわれの記憶に残っているのだから。
いな、われわれは、その実証的な業績についてみるかぎり、後世に対しての現代が誇りうべき、最も偉大な学者である山田孝雄博士の場合を、象徴として、思い起せば、それで十分である。それは、真に、みづからを自覚

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20 Japan was under the control of the U.S. from 1945 to 1951 until it recovered its sovereignty through the San Francisco Peace Treaty.
21 Students blacked out the militaristic contents of kokugo and other textbooks in school using *sumi* (black ink) under the direction of GHQ. These blacked out textbooks were called *suminuri kyōkasho* (blacked-out textbooks).
Indeed, we still have a fresh recollection of the generation when overly absurd and fake academism prevailed. In fact, it is enough to remember the case of the great scholar for future generations, Dr. Yamada Yoshio, as a symbol if you look at the actual proof of his achievements. He was, so to say, a single-life-time aristocrat who had the dubious honor of presiding over the downfall of kokugaku. He was a patriarch of the academic spirit and its sad destiny and the academic spirit was half killed and tinged with death because he did not make himself sufficiently aware. Needless to say, the problem here is not the object of his study as a scholar but the ethics he had as a scholar, in other words his attitude toward his study.

Here, Kamei criticized kokugo and kokugaku scholar Yamada Yoshio’s (1875-1958) work as an example of the attitude of pandering to the imperial government that was so typical of Imperial Japanese scholars. Yamada was famous as a conservative kokugo scholar and argued for the critical importance of its inalterable tradition—in works such as Kokugogaku Shiyou (The Essence of Kokugogaku, 1935) and Kokugo no Honshitsu (The Nature of Kokugo, 1943).22 Post-war, kokugo was directed at reflection on the wartime experience and tended to encompass the more simplified language education of a democratized nation-state.

In the early post-war period, the democratization of kokugo meant the simplification and rationalization of contemporary kokugo orthography so that people could more easily communicate (Yasuda, 2006). In Kokugo Mondai no Tame Ni (“For

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22 Lee (1996 [2010]) points out that Yamada’s “praise for the tradition and purity of kokugo (p.215)” could still be effective today in the context of kokugo as a subject to learn Japanese cultural tradition.
Kokugo Issues,” 1962), Tokieda discussed seven major new kokugo policies that were to be instituted after the war.23

1. Modern kanji used for contemporary kokugo orthography (11.16.1946 cabinet announcement vol.32)
2. Ways to use kana to write contemporary colloquial sentences (Contemporary Japanese Syllabic Writing) (11.16.1946 cabinet announcement vol.33)
3. Kanji needed to be taught in compulsory education (2.16.1948 cabinet announcement vol.1)
4. Daily-use kanji onkun readings for contemporary kokugo orthography (2.16.1948 cabinet announcement vol.2)
5. Table of kanji fonts in common use (4.28.1950 cabinet announcement vol.1)
   Appendix table of kanji for names (5.25.1952 cabinet announcement vol.1)
6. How to use okurigana (7.11.1958 cabinet announcement vol.1)

These policies were concerned chiefly with the orthography of contemporary and colloquial kokugo and included the selections of kanji for daily use or names. Kokugo was simplified and the numbers of kanji students should learn were limited under the direction of the government. These cabinet announcements did not control the individual’s writing itself but did control the materials used for kokugo education and the

23 These discussions on orthography and the way to use kanji in Japanese are called Kokugo kokuji mondai (Kokugo and writing system issues).
actual terminology used in textbooks across every subject taught in school. As a result, other publications came to follow the rules of simplified kokugo.

According to Lee (1996 [2010]) and Yasuda (2006), this democratization of kokugo is not a new stream in kokugo policy but the continuation of kokugo reformist movements such as those led by Hoshina. Lee mentions the post war change in kokugo policies:

[…] the seeds for the postwar kokugo reform had been sown in the Ministry of Education before the war. Therefore, postwar kokugo reform was not forced by the occupation army, nor was it necessarily the result of the democratic power that had been suppressed until after the war. It was rather a realization of the plans that the reformists among the bureaucrats had already drawn before the war. (Lee, p.120)

In this analysis, the reformist movement in kokugo had already been moving in the direction of simplicity and convenience for daily communication even before the war, and the only change being that instead of its proposed in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere; it was to be for use in a democratized nation.

In fact, the guilt and criticism such as that expressed by Kamei did not become a mainstream in official kokugo’s academic understanding and policies. For example, the Kokugo Shingi Kai (National Language Council) in the Ministry of Education, which led and controlled kokugo policies, originated in the Kokugo Chōsa Iinkai established in 1902 under the direction of Ueda. This council lasted until 1961 and remained influential in determining kokugo education content. In addition to this body, kokugo scholars like Hoshina and Tokieda remained active in kokugo circles and policy-making processes, and influenced post-war kokugo policies (Yasuda, 2006, p.198). Hoshina, for instance, became the secretary-general of the Kokugo Shingi-kai in 1941 and remained on the
council after the war. Hoshina separated kokugo issues into two kinds: the political kokugo problem and the cultural kokugo problem. The political kokugo problem was one that occurred in the multi-ethnic nation-state where each ethnicity could contend their own language rights. The cultural kokugo problem was, in contrast, more a matter of consolidating Japanese language inside Japan (such as the kokugo kokuji mondai) (Lee, 1996 [2010]). Hoshina changed his stance toward kokugo policies very little as we can see from the following.

As a result of the separation from Korea, Taiwan and Manchuria, the political kokugo problem collapsed under its own weight. Instead, the cultural kokugo problem became the highest priority. People should be well aware of this, reflect on their conduct and make efforts to help the development of a sound democratic nation.

As a result of the separation of the colonies, according to Hoshina, the cultural kokugo problems simply needed to be re-focused. Hoshina also wrote about the importance of the control of kokugo in 1948 in his essay, Kokugo no Tōsei wo Kyōka Seyo (“Strengthen the control of kokugo”). In this essay, Hoshina insisted on the importance of kokugo education to encourage people to love and respect for kokugo in the members of a newly democratized Japanese society. We can see that defeat in the war did nothing to hinder Hoshina’s arguments in support of kokugo education and language policies as tools to build a strong nation-state.

Tokieda also became a professor at Tokyo Imperial University in 1943 after his career in Korea and kept this postwar. He did not give complete approval to language
policies that democratized (simplified) kokugo. He argued that these policies that promote the simplification and rationalization of kokugo would result in discontinuities with Japanese tradition, and would be counter to the purpose of kokugo education, which is to maintain a “correct” kokugo (1962, p.50). Tokieda questioned the simplification and rationalization in kokugo education even later in 1962.

Kokugo education should fundamentally seek kokugo’s orthodox tradition. For that reason, we watch and assure ourselves that kokugo will not become uncontrolled by establishing rules and distinguishing right from wrong. The reason to engage in these activities is to demonstrate the function of kokugo. If we leave kokugo uncontrolled, kokugo cannot contribute to social life or the succession of the culture.

In this discussion of Tokieda (1962), we can see that kokugo’s function was defined as contributing to social life and promoting traditional culture, just as Ueda contended earlier in the Meiji period. Tokieda argued that the movement toward excessive simplification that gained traction after the war would be counter to this original function of kokugo. Therefore, even after experiencing the simplification and rationalization of the orthography, after the war, kokugo’s function was still something deemed to be under governmental control and constituted the basis of a “democratized” nation-state.

During this period after the end of WWII, kokugo education ostensibly underwent drastic change. The terminology of militarism was eliminated from kokugo classes and textbooks, the processes of simplification and rationalization was taken seriously in order
that it might become the intellectual base for more people in the democratized country. This created the foundation for almost universal access to schooling and easier access to higher education in the coming period of high economic growth. At the same time, there are several discussions (e.g. Tsurumi, 1946; Yasuda, 2006) that suggest the word “democratization” was used as a mere replacement of the former militaristic words such as hakkōichi (the whole world under one roof) without serious reflection on the past or the motivation required to build a democratic state. It is important to note that this resentment against the surrendering of Japanese imperial government policy (such as done by Kamei, above) did not form the mainstream conception in kokugogaku circles. In addition, Hoshina and Tokieda argued for the core concepts of kokugo anew; love for the nation-state, love for kokugo, love for Japanese traditions such as those first developed at the time of kokugo’s birth. These concepts have remained since the war, while the multicultural experience of kokugo education in the colonies seems to be forgotten.25


Kokugo policies in postwar Japanese society are always a matter of dispute between those who do not want to change and strengthen the tradition of kokugo—supporting traditional concepts —and those who want to simplify and rationalize it in order to provide more accessible language to the populace. In the early postwar period, “democratization” was the slogan for kokugo and but this slogan gradually transformed. The change started in the 1960s when Japan experienced a high level of economic growth,

24 Hakkōichi was the phrase used as the slogan to justify and promote the Japanese Empire in patriotic education as well as Ichoku ittshin (unite the hearts of the every person in Japan), mettshi hōkō (sacrifice oneself for the nation).
taking advantage of the boost in production of goods provided by the Korean War. In the 1960s, school education drastically shifted into one concerned with individual careers in a society with high economic growth. Additionally, entrance examinations for the university became more salient.

The following chart is a summary of revisions made to the *Course of Study*, which is the curriculum guideline for every subject, created by the Japanese Ministry of Education.\(^\text{26}\)

**Table1: The Revisions to Course of Study for elementary school curriculum**\(^\text{27}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of the Revision/enforcement</th>
<th>Class Hours per a Year</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947/1947</td>
<td>5565-5915</td>
<td>Test version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Removal of the subject of <em>shūshin</em>(^\text{28})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951/1951</td>
<td>5780</td>
<td>Test version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958/1961</td>
<td>5821</td>
<td>Establishment of the subject <em>dōtoku</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968/1971</td>
<td>5821</td>
<td>Enhancement of cramming-style education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977/1980</td>
<td>5785</td>
<td>Adjustment of study load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988/1992</td>
<td>5785</td>
<td>Transition to a five-day school week system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/2002</td>
<td>5367</td>
<td><em>Yutori kyōiku</em> (low-pressure education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/2011</td>
<td>5645</td>
<td>Implementation of foreign language to the elementary school curriculum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the revisions to *Course of Study* in 1961, class hours per year increased from 5780 to 5821 in elementary schools. This shows the implementation of so-called *tsukemomi*

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\(^{26}\) Japanese Ministry of Education became MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) united with *Kagaku Gijyutsu Chō* (Science and Technology Agency) in the 2001 reorganization of government ministries and agencies.

\(^{27}\) (Toda, 2009).

\(^{28}\) *Shūshin* refers to the moral education conducted during 1890-1945.
kyōiku, cramming education, which oversaw a demanding curriculum and a focus on memorizing factual material. As for kokugo education, knowledge of kanji, classical letters and historical facts in the history of Japanese literature was emphasized. The motivation to educate people in simplified and rational Japanese was dimmed after mass education was achieved in this period. Shimahara (1985) discusses how Americans viewed the productivity of the Japanese labor force and the connection between this and education as follows:

Japanese education has fascinated Americans for the past 10 years. American corporations have sought to identify the sources of Japanese industrial strength; American journalists seeking the wellspring of the competitiveness and unsurpassed productivity of Japanese industry; have nominated schooling as its source. (Shimahara, p.418)

The high economic growth of Japan in this period is often connected to the Japanese educational system. Vogel (1979) also suggests that this education was successful because it provided an abundant supply of labor to the Japanese workplace (p.177). 29

Even though Japan became famous worldwide for its exemplary education system, the problem with “cramming education” became prominent in the 1980s and 1990s. This system of education placed heavy emphasis on entrance examinations and on the memorization of a large body of facts. In Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo’s policy speech in 1977 as well, the defects of the cramming system of education were pointed out explicitly:

特に戦後の学校教育は、入試中心、就職中心の功利主義的な行き過ぎた傾向が目立っておるのであります。教育にとって一番大切な、自由な個性、

29 There are other discussions that evaluate Japanese cramming education positively such as Duke, 1986; Shimahara, 1995, 1996; and Stevenson & Stingler, 1992.
Especially for post-war school education, there was an excessive tendency toward Utilitarianism that emphasized entrance examinations and getting a good job. The most important things for education—such as cultivating the liberal individuality, high intelligence, a wide range of sensibilities, and a sympathetic attitude—tended to be forgotten.

He went on to say that an educational reform was needed to educate students to be more creative. According to Bjork and Tsuneyoshi (2005), during this period, while achieving almost universal access to higher education, Japan had education-related problems such as kyōiku mama (mothers overly concerned with education of their children), juken jigoku (examination hell) and the increasing numbers of ochikobore (underachievers) (p.620).

Moreover, in 1987, members of the Ministry of Education’s kyōikukatei shingikai (educational curriculum committee) presented a new concept of academic ability, one which cultivates the student’s own motivation to learn and the skills to respond to social change, and suggested the new concept of gakuryoku (academic ability). This approach did not attach as much importance to knowledge and understanding as to the value of individual motivation, attitude, and the way of thinking and personal expression. Until its revision in 1998, there were several such movements to effect changes to “cramming education” by the kyōikukatei shingikai. It is noteworthy that this shift away from “cramming education” occurred simultaneously with changes in the world economy and the expansion of globalization.30 In fact, the period of high economic growth ended and the bubble economy burst between 1991 and 1993 as economic stagnation set in. The

30 There is a wide-ranging discussion of when the globalization of the world economy started (e.g. Chase-Dunn, 1989; Gamble, 1994; Friedman, 2005; Robertson, 1992 and Walts, 1999), but in this thesis globalization refers to expanded and rapidly increased international economic activities especially after the 1960s (Harvey, 1989; Sholte, 2001).
government was aware that the Japanese economy was not responding well to the development of the Internet and personal computing, or to the expansion of service and IT industries, the rise of the venture businesses, and the globalization of economic activity in general (Fujita, 1997). Educational reform was a belated response to these new economic situations.

2.6. Yutori Kyōiku and Recent Changes

2.6.1. Yutori Kyōiku

With the revision to Course of Study in 1998 (enforced in 2002), yutori kyōiku (low-pressure education) was instituted, responding to the failures of the cramming method—such as putting “excessive pressure on students and undermining their interest in learning” (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi 2005, p.620).31 This reform, carried out in 1998, was structured around reduced class hours and a change in the educational content from cramming factual material to promoting output skills and critical thinking skills. The ideas underlying yutori kyōiku were summarized in the following MEXT statement.

完全学校週 5 日制の下で、各学校が「ゆとり」の中で「特色ある教育」を展開し、子どもたちに学習指導要領に示す基礎的・基本的な内容を確実に身に付けさせることもとより、自ら学び自ら考える力などの「生きる力」をはぐくむ。

1. 豊かな人間性や社会性、国際社会に生きる日本人としての自覚の育成
2. 多くの知識を教え込む教育を転換し、子どもたちが自ら学び自ら考える力の育成

31 Kariya (2002), on the other hand, discussed these failures not based on the data but on the social image of cramming (p.136).
3. ゆとりのある教育を展開し、基礎・基本の確実な定着と個性を生かす教育の充実
4. 各学校が創意工夫を生かした特色ある教育、特色ある学校づくり

(MEXT, 2014b)

Under the complete five-day school week system, we will cultivate students’ “zest for living” — including the ability to study and think independently as well as the basic content that we show in Course of Study through the development of unique education by each school in yutori. Our goals are:

1. To cultivate students’ awareness as Japanese people living in an international society, [to promote] well-rounded character and social skills.
2. The transformation from an education that teaches as much knowledge as possible to the one that cultivates children’s motivation to study and think independently.
3. To develop an education that has less pressure and establishes a firm basis in academic ability and to provide an education that maximizes students’ unique abilities.
4. To develop each school as one that has unique education supported by originality and ingenuity.

These educational ideas were not completely new, since they reflected to a certain degree, the revision made to Course of Study in 1980 as a response to the disadvantages of cramming education. Based on these ideas, however, beginning in 1998 school hours decreased from 5785 to 5367 per a year for elementary school. Beyond this, sōgōtekina gakushū (integrated studies) and a five-day per week school system were also instituted.

One of the main characteristics of the 1998 revision was the implementation of sōgōtekina gakushū periods. Sōgōtekina gakushū sprang from the idea that academic ability is not be a matter of the quantity of knowledge acquired, but the integrated skills needed to carry out research, think, evaluate and present one’s own opinion. In Sōgōtekina gakushū, students are supposed to gain ability in problem solving, logical and critical thinking, and communication skills. In these ways, it is closely related to language skill education. For example, students are expected to engage in activities related to
international understanding, information technology, environmental problems, health and welfare, and other interdisciplinary topics (Tsuneyoshi, 2004). It is noteworthy that even with the reduction of study materials in kokugo; language skill education was newly included in sōgōtekina gakushū—as a means of cultivating research and presentation skills in the yutori kyōiku curriculum.

In kokugo education, the number of required kanji for students in elementary school decreased (MEXT, 2014a) during yutori kyōiku. This was done to follow through with underlying thrust of yutori kyōiku: to cultivate better language skills, rather than simply cramming students with information. Even with these new goals to cultivate problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, and communication skills yutori kyōiku was often seen to undermine students’ education in terms of basic knowledge provided to students (e.g. the explanations in MEXT 2014a). Additionally, according to Sakamoto (2011), students educated in this period also have a weak communication skills and writing skills in comparison to their receptive language skills such as reading or memorizing. Yutori kyōiku faced difficulty from the beginning because its goals were hugely different from those of cramming style education, which had been in use up to this point.

Yutori kyōiku faced a huge backlash from the “achievement crisis debate” (Tsuneyoshi, 2004, p.366), because of its thirty percent reduction in learning content in school. Many anxious parents felt more pressure to send their children to private schools or tutoring schools. Satō (2006) also points out that yutori kyōiku tended towards elitism rather than securing the minimum and basic education for every child, saying that yutori kyōiku gave up the role of “the social equalizer” (p.190). In addition, Japan ranked low
in the PISA international assessment in 2003, which made policymakers take notice and institute changes once again. As a result, the most recent revisions to Course of Study in 2008 (enforced in 2011) were a repeal of yutori kyōiku, which is now generally seen as a failure. The two most influential arguments against yutori kyōiku were that it undermined basic knowledge, which had been supported through Japanese economic growth, and that it led to relatively lower scores in international achievement tests.

2.6.2. PISA in 2003 and Recent Changes

As was briefly explained in the introduction, PISA is an international assessment conducted by the OECD. Japan’s rank in the subject of reading literacy dropped from eighth to fourteenth in 2003, and then to fifteenth in 2006. This lower score in the PISA assessment gave policymakers ample reason to repeal yutori kyōiku and the educational policies that had only just been implemented in 2002. There were two kinds of significant responses to the PISA scores. The first was from people who did not support an education that cultivated children’s individuality or critical communication skills, concerned that these ideas would eventually undermine Japanese culture and tradition especially in kokugo education (e.g. Bunkashingikai, 2004). The other response was from people who realized the need for more language skill education in the kokugo curriculum (e.g. MEXT, 2006). In MEXT policies after 2002, these two types of reactions co-exist.

The lower PISA test scores fueled the discussion of the achievement crisis in Japanese society. Nakayama (2004) said that if there was anything lacking in education so far, it was competitive spirit and the spirit to promote each other. This reaction was the opinion of Nakayama Nariaki, the minister of MEXT at that time. Nakayama criticized yutori kyōiku and supported the old cramming system of education. Even though the low
PISA scores in reading literacy did not prove that yutori kyōiku was at fault, the conservatives used this opportunity to move back to cramming-style education and, moreover, to education that supported patriotism or nationalism, and Japanese culture and tradition in kokugo education.

Members of the Bunka shingikai within MEXT can also be classified as conservative. In “Korekara no Jidai ni Motome Rareru Kokugoryoku ni Tsuite” (“About the Skill of Kokugo Needed in the Coming Generation”, 2004), kokugo’s role was described by Bunka shingikai as one which will carry on Japanese tradition in globalized society.

In a society where internationalization rapidly advances, it is necessary for each individual to love kokugo, understand Japanese culture and establish their awareness and consciousness as Japanese. On top of that, it is still more important to understand and respect each nation’s particular culture. For this kind of awareness and understanding, kokugo has a significant role.

They go on to reinforce the notion that love of kokugo is crucial and that in kokugo is the foundation for every other subject. 

Kyōiku kihon hō (The Basic Act of Education)’s revision in 2006 was yet another example of conservative influence that affected to kokugo. Kyōiku kihon hō is the most basic law enforcing mandatory education in Japan and, in 2006, was revised for the first
time in sixty years to add the words *aikokushin* (love of nation). After this revision, love of the nation became officially sanctioned as part of kokugo education, as is mentioned in *Course of Study* and in kokugo textbooks. It is true that some people think love of kokugo is all the more important especially in the globalized generation. In fact these ideas originated with Ueda Kazutoshi at the birth of kokugo. If kokugo united the people as one nation state, any new education aiming to cultivate critical thinking skill would be a threat to the existing structure of kokugo. Thus the reaction among conservatives is completely natural if they believe that globalization “undermined nationalism, the nation-state, and other traditional forms of social organization and social identity” (Tollefson, 2013, p.19).

It is perhaps misleading that Nakayama and others like him names *yutori kyōiku* as the reason behind the low score in PISA. Again, the definition of literacy within the OECD is: “Reading literacy is understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one’s goals, to develop one’s knowledge and potential, and to participate in society” (OECD 2010, p.23). This is not unlike *sōgōtekina gakushū*, which is the foundation of *yutori kyōiku*.

Ishihara (2009, p.13) suggests that *yutori kyōiku* did not succeed simply because of the lack of the institutional preparation and too many impositions on teachers. He admits that the shift from cramming-style education to the cultivation of critical thinking and presentation skills was not completely misguided. As evidence, he points out that

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32 The word, *aikokushin*, literally patriotism, is often avoided in kokugo textbooks because it reminds people of education during wartime. For example, instead of *aikokushin*, love of *kyōdo* is used in Mitsumura Tosho’s textbooks (Kabashima etc, 2010).
kokugo’s curriculum came to include the contents of sōgōtekina gakushū, which started with yutori kyōiku.

The other reaction to the lower score in PISA — people realizing the need for more language skill education in the kokugo curriculum — is represented in WKYT. As an example, gengoryoku ikusei kyouryokusha kaigi (Conference of language skill education supporters) began regular committee meetings within MEXT starting in 2006. This committee was created to discuss how to improve language skills in children and how to include language skill education in the each subject of Course of Study (MEXT, 2006a, 2006b).

One of the members of this committee, Sanmori Yurika argues for the urgent need for language skill education in Japan. This is based on her experience with German education. According to Sanmori (2005), the word gengo gijyutsu (language skill) can be differentiated from existing terms kokugo or nihongo kyōiku. As important characteristics of language skill education she offers the following.

1. 部分技術から総合力へ
2. 議論を中心とした授業
3. 論証に基づく創造的意見
4. 複数の考え方、複数の答の存在
5. 記述式の宿題と試験
6. 大量の読書 (Sanmori, 2005)

1. Gaining integrated skill by accumulating partial skills
2. Discussion-focused classes
3. Creative opinions based on evidence
4. Multiple ways of thinking, multiple answers
5. Essay question homework and examinations
6. Extensive reading
Sanmori argues that these are the international standards for language education in developed countries, and that language skill education should be the basis of all other subjects including kokugo. She also argues for the need to reform kokugo education. This second point is important because it entails a new type of socialization through kokugo education. Kokugo has traditionally had the role of shaping people in regional communities into a cohesive Japanese people as well as providing a labor force to the national economy. Language skill education adds a new role to kokugo: educate people to survive in a globalized society.

Often repeated in the official documents from MEXT (2008, 2011a, 2011b) is the assertion that the purpose of education has changed from supplying a good quality labor force to the market and achieving economic growth into competing in globalized markets. This change is emphasized in the revised Course of Study from 1998 as well as the most current revision from 2009. “Globalized society” and “society based on knowledge” became important key words in MEXT’s kokugo education policies. For instance, we can see these phrases in, Shogakkō Gakushū Shidō Yōryō Kaisetsu (Instruction for Course of Study for Elementary School, 2008), and Gengo Katsudō no Jyūjitsu ni Kansuru Shidō Jirei An (The Sample Instruction on the Development of Language Activities, 2011).33 In addition, the revised Course of Study from 2009 states

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33 It is said that the twenty-first century is the so-called “society based on knowledge” where the importance of new knowledge, information, and technology are exponentially advanced, and serve as the base for any kind of activity such as politics, economy and culture. A “society based on knowledge” and a globalized society accelerate the competition for knowledge itself and also human recourses. At the same time, a
that education should not be a matter of cramming or *yutori*, but should be something that cultivates the ability to think, evaluate and present knowledge.

新しい学習指導要領は、子どもたちの現状をふまえ、「生きる力」を育むという理念のもと、知識や技能の習得とともに思考力・判断力・表現力などの育成を重視しています。これからの教育は、「ゆとり」でも、「詰め込み」でもありません。次代を担う子どもたちが、これからの社会において必要となる「生きる力」を身に付けてほしい。

(MEXT, 2011a)

The New *Course of Study* is based on the current situation of children, subsumed under the notion of cultivating “zest for living.” We place a greater weight on cultivating the ability to think, evaluate, and present facts, as well as acquiring knowledge and skills. Education is now neither *yutori* nor cramming. It exists to cultivate “zest for living” in children who will be responsible for the next generation.

In the recent revision, *yutori kyōiku* was repealed, but the core concept of educating children with “the ability to think, evaluate and present one’s opinion” did not change. As mentioned earlier in this section, “zest for living” for *kokugo* means very different things depends on one’s standpoints. For conservatives, it could mean more emphasis on Japanese traditional values and culture, but for the reformist members in

knowledge-based society accelerates the need to work together with people from different cultures or civilizations and the requirements for international cooperation. (MEXT, 2008)

知識基盤社会の到来、グローバル化の進展など急速に社会が変化する中、幅広い知識と柔軟な思考に基づく判断や、他者と切磋琢磨しつつ異なる文化や歴史に立脚する人々との共存など、変化に対応する能力が求められています。

In the coming knowledge-based society, where internationalization rapidly advances, the abilities to respond and change are needed. This includes the ability to evaluate information based on a wide range of knowledge and the ability to live and work together with people who have different cultural and historical background. (MEXT, 2011b)
gengoryoku ikusei kyouryokusha kaigi, it means focusing on more language skill education. In what follows, I will analyze WKYT as an example of language skill education as it has recently be applied in kokugo education.
Chapter 3: Wakaru Kokugo Yomikaki no Tsubo, an NHK Educational Program

3.1. About the Program

Wakaru Kokugo Yomikaki no Tsubo (Understanding Kokugo: The Secrets of Reading and Writing, WKYT) is an NHK educational television program aimed at elementary school students, to supplement their kokugo curriculum. NHK educational television programs have long been another important conduit for Japanese education in addition to the government-sanctioned textbooks meant for public education. The content of these programs conforms to both Course of Study and MEXT policies (Vogel, 1979). It is specifically stated in Course of Study that Japanese public education should maintain consistent curricula throughout the country. NHK has one specific television channel entirely dedicated to public education, called NHK-educational TV.\(^{34}\) Vogel (1979) evaluates NHK programs as the successful result of national planning for education; these programs are intended to contribute to the consistency of national public education, especially at the elementary school level.

WKYT was (until 2012) broadcast on weekday mornings, geared specifically toward an elementary school student audience. Each episode is thirty minutes in length and the program is often broadcast in the morning so that children can watch it in the classroom. There are two different variations of this program, depending on the elementary grade level; one is for third and fourth graders, while the other is for fifth and sixth graders. Episodes for third and fourth grade students started in April 2004 and were rebroadcast five times through 2009. The program for fifth and sixth graders started in

\(^{34}\) NHK started use the name NHK E-tere (instead of NHK-education) for this channel from 2012. WKYT is a program of gakkō hōso (NHK for School) in NHK-education. NHK made these gakkō hōso programs following the official curriculum (Course of Study) by MEXT. This is prescribed in Hōsōho (Broadcast Act) which determines the role of NHK (NHK 2014).
2006. By 2012, it was being rebroadcast for the fifth time. There are 20 episodes in total made for third and fourth grade students, and 20 in total for the fifth and sixth grades. Although they are no longer being rebroadcast, the fifth and sixth grade episodes are still available for viewing on the NHK website (http://www.nhk.or.jp/kokugo/tsubo/).

According to the website for this program, its purpose is to teach basic writing and reading skills with grammatical knowledge and strategies useful in actual writing and reading situations. The main objectives of the program are explained as follows: “This is a program that will teach methods of reading and writing logically and accurately; through games and drills, students can acquire the basics of kokugo naturally” (NHK, 2013). The website for the program also clearly states that it aims to develop new kokugo skills for “korekara no jidai (the coming generation),” obliquely acknowledging that the developers are responding to the results of PISA. In developing “skills for the coming generation,” educators hope to acquire higher scores on PISA tests in the category of reading literacy and to prove Japanese children’s competency to the world (NHK, 2013).

The main characters in WKYT are Tokuda Akira, a regular NHK announcer, Mitsuura Yasuko, a comedian, Puppet Muppet, who are a stuffed animal comic duo named Kaeru-kun (Mr. Frog) and Ushi-kun (Mr. Cow). In addition to these four, there are the animated characters, Tsubo-kun and Warutsubo-kun. Tsubo-kun’s role is to explain and emphasize the secret of the day for each episode, and Warutsubo-kun is always behaving selfishly or thoughtlessly, which is meant to trigger the viewers and other characters to think about why and how he is in the wrong. In the first part of each episode, characters play a quiz show and think about some question regarding reading and writing, usually presented in comical ways. After the quiz show, the scene cuts away to a real
elementary school classroom. Non-actor children in the classroom try to answer similar or applied questions raised in the quiz show portion. Questions are usually posed by Mitsuura or Puppet-Muppet and Warutsubo-kun and Tsubo-kun. Finally, Tokuda and the other characters wrap up with the language skill portion, the daily secret, together with all the characters in the studio.

Looking at the table of contents of WKYT, it is clear that it is aimed at instilling language skills from the first episode to the last. In WKYT for third and fourth grade, as we can see in the table 2, there is heavy emphasis on formal grammar content, such as how to use punctuation (episode 2), particles (episode 4 and 11), and conjunctive forms (episode 15). There are also, episodes that introduce resources for reading and writing such as kokugo dictionaries (episode 4), kanji dictionaries (episode 16) and the public library (episode 7). These themes form a basis for reading and writing meaningful Japanese text, and the show strives to present these in an interesting and engaging way. In WKYT for fifth and sixth grades, the content is more skill-oriented. The targets are divided into five broad skill areas: description, sentence structuring, summarizing, paraphrasing, and critical skills (See table 3). These advanced language skills are based on the basic grammar knowledge that was covered in WKYT for third and fourth grade. In this sense, the structure of WKYT follows one of Sanmori’s definitions of language skill education: integrate skills that are acquired by building up on partial skills.

Table 2: Table of contents, WKYT for third and fourth grades

| 1. 「ですますでございます」（常体と敬体） |
| 2. 「てんでんばらばら」（読点） |

| 3. 「しゃしんとるからぼうしとる」 [多義語] |
| 4. 「ことばのせかいのこうりゃく本」 [国語辞典] |
| 5. 「ツボは? ツボも?」 [「は」と「も」] |
| 6. 「ちゃんと言ってよ」 [が・を・に・へ] |
| 7. 「図書館であそんじゃおう」 [図書館] |
| 8. 「青いのはどっち?」 [修飾と被修飾] |
| 9. 「どきどきすることば」 [擬態語] |
| 10. 「のようなもの」 [比喩] |
| 11. 「ことばを作るブロック」 [熟語の意味] |
| 12. 「反対はどれ?」 [対義語] |
| 13. 「小さなはたらきもの」 [助詞] |
| 14. 「それが問題だ」 [指示語] |
| 15. 「どうやってつなぐ?」 [接続語] |
| 16. 「へんってへん?」 [漢字字典、部首] |
| 17. 「うれしいときはなんていう?」 [感情表現] |
| 18. 「わたしの目 あなたの目」 [人称・視点] |
| 19. 「分けて、まとめる」 [改行・段落] |
| 20. 「いいたいことは何ですか?」 [要約] |

English translation

| 1. Desu, masu, de gozaimasu (regular forms and honorifics) |
| 2. It takes all kinds (punctuation) |
| 3. Removing my hat for taking a photo (Polysemy) |
| 4. A walkthrough guide for the world of language (kokugo dictionary) |
| 5. Tsubo-wa? Or Tsubo-mo? (the particles wa and mo) |
| 6. Say it clearly (the particles, ga, wo, ni, and e) |
| 7. Let’s have fun at the library (the public library) |
| 8. Which is the blue one? (modifiers and modified words) |
| 9. Exciting language (onomatopoeia) |
| 10. Something like that (analogy) |
| 11. Writer’s block (idioms) |
| 12. Which is the opposite? (antonyms) |
| 13. Small but useful (particles) |
| 14. That’s the problem (terms of reference) |
| 15. Connecting methods (conjunctives) |
| 16. Is hen weird? (kanji radical meanings, kanji dictionary) |
| 17. What do you say when you’re happy (how to express emotions) |
18. My eyes and your eyes (the personal, and the viewpoint-specific)
19. What do you want to say? (summarizing)

**Table 3: Table of contents, WKYT for fifth and sixth grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>描写力を身につける</th>
<th>構文力を身につける</th>
<th>論理力をみがく</th>
<th>要約力をやしなう</th>
<th>言い換えで考える</th>
<th>批判力を高める</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
## English Translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build your descriptive skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Language skills for description (descriptive essays)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Skillful use of direction words (giving directions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Let’s take a look at it (how to interpret drawings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Drawing a picture in your head (visualizing contents from texts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build your sentence structure skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Who are you talking about? (subjects are important!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Make it short or make it long? (dividing and joining phrases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Straight talk (matching subjects and predicates in sentences)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polish your logic skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. This is why (verbalizing your evidence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Using the Communication Triangle (three elements of an argument)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Using numbers for clarity (how to organize and classify information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Is it a fact or is it opinion? (how to differentiate facts from opinions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Don’t stretch out the conclusion (stating the conclusion early on)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improve your summarizing skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Mapping out a story (learning story patterns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Who, what, when, where, why, how (the 5 Ws and 1 H)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Reporting a story (telling a story in your own way)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase your paraphrasing skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Paraphrasing game one (desu/masu vs. da/dearu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Paraphrasing game two (pay attention to your narrator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Paraphrasing game three (wago (Japanese-based vocabulary) vs. kango (Chinese-based vocabulary))</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build your critical skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Spot false advertising! (critical reading)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Look for holes in the argument! (making counter arguments)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In what follows, I will examine the content of two episodes of WKYT for fifth and sixth grades—the 11th episode (how to differentiate facts from opinions), and the 19th episode (critical reading). This content is focused on advanced language skill education and is representative of the characteristics of the series.
3.2. Episode 11: Is it a Fact or is it Opinion? < How to Differentiate Facts from Opinions>

In this episode, Students learn how to differentiate facts from opinions while reading texts. The cast of characters try to classify each sentence as either a fact or an opinion. At first, they try to classify the sentences that the announcer, Tokuda, wrote about Ms. Mitsuura. After that, the scene cuts from the studio to a real classroom and children in the classroom try to classify the sentences Kaeru-kun wrote.

1. 光浦さんはメガネをかけている。
2. 光浦さんは美人だ。
3. 光浦さんは運動が苦手だ。
4. 光浦さんは頭がいい。
5. 光浦さんは気が強い。

1. Ms. Mitsuura wears glasses.
2. Ms. Mitsuura is beautiful.
3. Ms. Mitsuura is not good at exercise.
4. Ms. Mitsuura is smart.
5. Ms. Mitsuura is strong-willed.

In their analysis of the first texts, the announcer Tokuda is the one presenting the questions and Ms. Mitsuura, and Puppet Muppet (Kaeru-kun and Ushi-kun) are the panelists tasked with providing the answers. Especially for statements one and two, the panelists feel that each question is easy to categorize: statement one is of course a fact and statement two is an opinion. However when it comes to statements three to five, the panel is split. For statements three and four, Ms. Mitsuura thinks it is a fact because it deals with herself and she agrees with the sentiment. On the other hand, Puppet Muppet consider it to be the writer’s opinion only because they do not agree with the message. For statement five, Ms. Mitsuura thinks it to be an opinion because she does not see herself as strong-willed, but Puppet Muppet feel the opposite to be true. Therefore,
Puppet Muppet judge this example to be a fact. The answers are read and explained: three, four and five are examples of opinions. By the end of this quiz show, students should know the definitions of fact and opinion. A fact is “something that really happened” or “something anyone can confirm independently.” On the other hand, an opinion is “something a person thought.” Also, the announcer reminds the students that it seems easy to differentiate them, but many cases require at least a bit of thought. After that, the scene cuts from the studio to a real classroom and children in the classroom try to classify sentences that Kaeru-kun wrote.

1. うしくんはけちだ。
2. 誕生日に本をくれた。
3. きたない本だった。
4. 「何回も読んでよ。」と言った。
5. 読みあきた本をくれるとは、本当にけちだ。

1. Ushi-kun is stingy.
2. He gave me a book for my birthday.
3. The book was dirty.
4. He said, “I read it many times.”
5. He is stingy because he only gives away books that he is tired of reading.

The students and Puppet Muppet try to classify the text Kaeru-wrote. Students have no difficulties classifying statements one, two, four and five: statement one and five are opinion, and statements two and four are facts. Student answers are split on number three. One student thinks it is a fact because the book is in fact battered. The next student, however, argues it is an opinion because each person feels differently about the nature and degree of what constitutes dirtiness and cleanness. After the discussion, they reached agreement in the categorization of this statement as an opinion.

Before this analysis, Puppet Muppet had asked the students, who were in the role of the facilitator, whether they thought Ushi-kun was stingy or not after reading this text,
and many students’ answers were that Ushi-kun is indeed stingy. However, after analyzing each statement, the number of students who label Ushi-kun as not stingy actually increases. Also there are students who think it cannot be decided whether Ushi-kun is stingy or not based on the evidence. These two different evaluations: A) to see Ushi-kun as stingy, B) not to be able to judge whether Ushi-kun is stingy or not from this evidence, are left as they are. In other words, the facilitator introduces two different evaluations based on each student’s use of logic, demonstrating that evaluation of the texts can vary. In fact, it is more important to evaluate the text using methods of fact and opinion, rather than finding the right answer in WKYT. In other words, text evaluation does matter, but the evaluation itself might depend each student’s personal interpretation. Through such treatment, students learn how to analyze text-using definitions of fact and opinion. In addition to that, students are given support to learn that text evaluation might differ based on judgment of whether something is fact or opinion.

3.3. Episode 19: Spot False Advertisements <Critical Reading>

In this episode, it is intended that students learn how to determine the reliability of a text based on the presence or absence of concrete evidence. NHK presents three example texts: a chart that shows the number of crimes in a town with a caption (Figure 1), a conversational text between a child and a mother talking about exam results, and a television advertisement for the “Power Dumbbell” (Figure 2).
Figure 1: “Number of Crimes” from WKYT Episode 19

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Crimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The number of crimes in this town has doubled in the past year. Public safety is becoming increasingly worse.

In their analysis of the above figure and text, Puppet-Muppet and Ms. Mitsuura look for false statements, checking the chart that is presented. Focusing on the figures for 2004 and 2005, panelists analyze the second sentence of the text. The panelists need to realize that the larger statistical value for 2005 is not high when viewed longitudinally. Consequently, it is deceptive to say that the situation is getting increasingly bad. From this analysis, students learn that the claims of the text are based on limited evidence.

Mother: How did your tests go?
Child: I got a ninety-five percent in kokugo.
Mother: Good job!
Child: And I got a sixty percent in Math, fifty-five percent in Social Studies and a fifty percent in Science.
Mother: What did you just say?

In the above text, panelists analyze a conversation between a child and his/her mother.
The first three lines of this text tell readers that this child performed well on his/her tests, prompting Puppet Muppet to offer that this was a great test score. Taking into account the entire conversation, however, it is clear that this child’s test performance was not consistently good. This encourages students to consider the whole text and again to analyze the evidence.

**Figure 2: “Satisfaction Questionnaire” from WKYT Episode 19**

![Satisfaction Questionnaire](image)

Individual surveyed: 10

Nowadays athletes are very popular with the ladies! So, if you want to be popular, Power Dumbbell is perfect for you! You can have the ideal body! Eighty percent of users are satisfied with the results!

Figure 2 is an advertisement for the “Power Dumbbell,” presented alongside a pie chart.
The scene switches to the real classroom once again, where the students try to spot the false logic in this advertisement. Analyzing this text, students are supposed to recognize
the false logic and insufficient evidence. First, students are tasked with the recognition that even though athletes may be popular among women, using this product does not make you either an athlete or popular among women. Second, students are encouraged to notice the paltry sample size. From this text students are instructed in the discernment of what sufficient evidence for supporting an argument actually is. Also, they learn to be critical of the logic upon which an argument relies.

Another goal is for students to learn that the writer of the text is the one who controls what and how much evidence he/she will use through analyzing texts. At the end of the episode, Tokuda summarizes and informs the audience of the following,

文章を読むときには、すぐに信じ込まずに、納得できる十分な証拠があるか、それから話の筋がきちんと通っているか、まずは疑いの目で見て、その情報が信用にあたいするものかどうか、確かめる。そういう習慣をつけるようにしましょうね。

In reading texts, it is important to withhold belief at first until you can make sure the evidence is there and if the information is believable or not. Check if there is false logic or limited evidence. This is a good habit to pick up.

He is warning students not to take a text at face value but to stop and critically consider the evidence and logic contained within. Students learn that the reliability and implementation of evidence can profoundly change the reader’s interpretation of a text.

3.4. Analysis on the Language Skills Reviewed in WKYT

It is clear that the skills targeted through WKYT are based on the OECD’s definition of reading literacy (OECD, 2010, p.23). Again, there are four important points in the criteria for reading literacy in the OECD definition. First, literacy should be “an interactive skill so that readers can connect their opinions and experiences there are
relevant to a text.” This is evident in WKYT, where the expression of a number of opinions supported by logical reasoning is encouraged. For example in episode 11, the facilitator (in this case, Puppet Muppet) did not coerce participants to any single right way to evaluate the text but instead recognized two different textual evaluation methods proposed by different students based on their reasoning. Thus the reader of the text reflects on his or her own opinion in evaluating the text in question.

According to the OECD’s second criterion “students should also be able to evaluate and make use of reading for various aims.” In WKYT, especially for fifth and sixth grades, the skills students are expected to learn go beyond simple proficiency in reading and writing Japanese. For example, in episode 11, students are asked to read the texts to determine whether they are fact or opinion. Also, in episode 19, students study how to assume a mindset critical of the text being read. In their third criterion, OECD states that students should be able to handle various types of writing with visuals such as diagrams, pictures, maps and so on. Especially in episode 19, students are asked to analyze the text presented with a chart. Finally the fourth criterion aims to instill literacy that can allow for student participation in social activities and that helps with life-long learning. Such critical reading skills can be applied after graduation, when reading news, creating reports in the workplace, or when considering advertisements. Overall, the target skills through WKYT meet the criteria of reading literacy proposed by the OECD.

Next, I will discuss whether the content of WKYT meets the Course of Study stated goals of kokugo. WKYT’s goals can be divided into the following three parts.
A) To develop in pupils the ability to properly express and accurately comprehend the Japanese language,
B) To increase their ability to communicate, to develop their ability to think, imagine and foster in them a sense of language,
C) To deepen their interest in the Japanese language, and to develop an attitude of respect for the Japanese language.

As for A), WKYT for third and fourth graders does contain content that aims to instill “the ability to properly express and accurately comprehend the Japanese language.” As we can see from the table of contents (Table 2), students are presented with the basic function of particles, conjunctions, modifiers, antonyms, onomatopoeia, as well as basic summarization skills. For B), WKYT for fifth and sixth grades does aims “to increase their ability to communicate, to develop their ability to think, imagine,” most especially through cultivating a critical attitude in student when analyzing texts. In episode 11 and 19, for instance, students learn the reasoning or criteria that can be the basis of their opinion. In order to “foster in them a sense of language,” WKYT encourages students to utilize more accurate language through their critical reading skill education. I suggest however, “a sense of language” could mean the instinctive understanding of kokugo content that students need (for example, being able to relate to one specific character in the reading text). In this case, WKYT does not clearly meet the criteria needed to foster a sense of language because WKYT focus less attention on reading that meets the

37 Sanmori (2006) points out that one of the characteristics of kokugo is to seek student’s sensual reading skill not based on the logical thinking.
government morals criterion and more on critical reading. Finally, I argue that WKYT contributes to (C): engaging student interest in the Japanese language by presenting it in interesting (to young people) ways (for example, in the style of a quiz show), and by utilizing comedy skits by professional comedians. However, it may be argued that WKYT does not overtly aim to develop an attitude of respect for the Japanese language.

In kokugo textbooks, emphasis is typically put on students learning about the beauty of the Japanese language, respect for life, a strong work ethic, as well as the skills that make it possible to evaluate texts (e.g. Kabashima et al, 2010, p.2). The strong focus on language skills and lesser focus on content make WKYT a new type of kokugo education. In fact, in episode 11 and episode 19 of WKYT for fifth and sixth grades, the content of the text is hardly discussed. Students are not supposed to focus on the content of what is written or presented, but rather on the way it is written or presented. The focus is on how the language is used and how to evaluate the text based on established criteria or on logical reasoning.

3.5. Potential Effectiveness of Language Skill Education in Kokugo

Emphasis on language education, especially critical reading skills, is a matter of focus within current kokugo curriculum, but beyond that, it is also a significant element in Japanese socialization that imparts to Japanese people a primary skill in the mastering of critical thinking. Fishman (2006) refers to the essential role of education in language shift, saying that the education is “a very useful and highly irreversible language-shift mechanism” (p.320) because it is mandatory and it focuses on the younger generation, who will be the main actors in the future. If this essential role of education is applied to
this educational content shift in kokugo, the introduction of language skill education could mean the emergence of an upcoming generation educated to engage as individual participants in society who can be critical of given texts, not just people who are uncritically accepting of a single set of values, love for the nation and the Japanese language. In other words, language skill education introduced by WKYT has the potential to affect socialization of the Japanese people, to foster citizens who can evaluate and think using their own reasoning.

3.6. Conclusion

This thesis discussed the effectiveness of language skill education in kokugo introduced through *Wakaru Kokugo Yomikaki no Tsubo*, an NHK educational television program. In the school subject kokugo, students generally are taught Japanese language and literature, as well as a positive attitude towards them. The language skill education recently introduced through WKYT can be viewed as historically important because it contradicts one of kokugo’s essential purposes, namely to disseminate an affirmative attitude toward Japanese language and traditional culture.

Recent Japanese kokugo education policy finds itself torn between maintaining the historical and traditional roles of kokugo (support for a strong nation-state) and the pressure to educate Japanese people as creative and competitive individuals who can survive in contemporary global markets. As my study shows, in recent years, these two threads in kokugo education policy co-exist in MEXT and WKYT.

In WKYT, the texts students are asked to analyze are less important than their interpretation. This kind of language skill education focuses less on the content of a text,
and more on evaluation of the text in question. This new language skill education can be found throughout WKYT. This is important because it offers students the opportunity to be critical about the content of the kokugo text itself. Also, greater emphasis on language skill education has the potential to affect the socialization of Japanese young people. Kokugo traditionally has succeeded in getting people to believe that there is an ideal, which is a basis for the nation-state. Lee says that kokugo education is so influential as to become “a normative value in Japanese society” (p.107). Wetzel (2008) also points out that the ideology of kokugo is “an essential marker of cultural identification” (p.116) in Japan. Therefore, changes in kokugo education are related to Japanese identity and have the power to affect the socialization of Japanese young people.

I propose that WKYT is an effective and seminal attempt to adopt a more liberal attitude toward what is acceptable and accepted in kokugo’s status quo. Even though we cannot say that the language skill education is a main stream of kokugo curriculum consulting the current contents of Kokugo textbooks, WKYT epitomizes the direction that MEXT would like kokugo education to go. Kokugo has been and is going to be the ideological device that readily and regularly reinforces conservative values (Lee, 1996[2010]). However, this new approach to language skill education has the potential to give students instruments for analyzing and evaluating those conservative values inherent to kokugo’s history. Such language skill education can provide students the opportunity to notice the ideological elements present in kokugo. WKYT, as one part of kokugo that is followed and controlled by MEXT policies, is meant to shape Japanese people into empowered individuals who are able to acquire more enduring language skills in the increasingly globalized society.
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Appendix A: Script of Episode 11 in WKYT for fifth and sixth grades

事実？意見？＜事実と意見を区別する＞

●イントロダクション
徳田アナ：クイズ、読み書きのツボー！
徳田アナ：さあ、「クイズ・読み書きのツボ」の時間がやってまいりました。
今日もクイズに挑戦して、読み書きのツボを身につけましょう。
徳田アナ：それでは、解答者のみなさんのご紹介です。
徳田アナ：まずは読み書きの素人代表、光浦靖子さん！
光浦：がんばります！
徳田アナ：お隣、読み書きを学んでどうするの？パペットマペットさん！
パペマペ：がんばります！
徳田アナ：今日は、書かれていることが事実か意見か、見分けるクイズに挑戦してもらいます。
光浦：事実か意見か？それは分かりますよ。私がこの目で厳しく判定してあげましょう。
カエル：はい。僕も自信があります。僕は視力には自信があるんです。
うし：視力は関係ないんじゃないかな・・・。
徳田アナ：それでは問題です。

●事実？意見？クイズに挑戦
徳田アナ：私が書いた文です。事実か意見か答えてください。「光浦さんはメガネをかけている。」
光浦：はい、事実です！
カエル：はい、事実です！
徳田アナ：正解は、事実。みなさん正解です。
徳田アナ：では次。「光浦さんは美人だ。」
カエル：はい、それはあくまで徳田さんの意見です！
光浦：はい、意見ですね。よく言われますが、徳田さんも私が美人だという意見なわけですよ。
徳田アナ：正解は、意見。これもみなさん正解です。
光浦：簡単、簡単。今日のクイズは簡単すぎますよ。
カエル：僕も今回は全然正解の予感があるね。
徳田アナ：では次の問題です。「光浦さんは運動が苦手だ。」
光浦：はい、事実です！私は、運動が苦手なんですよ。私が言ってるんだから事実でしょう。
カエル：はい、これは徳田さんの意見です！だって光浦さんは、うしくんよりずっと逃げ足が早いですよ。
徳田アナ: 分かれましたね。では次。「光浦さんは頭がいい」
光浦: はい、事実です！私はいつもこのクイズで正解しているからです。
カエル: はい、あくまで徳田さんの意見です！このクイズでいつも正解したんですか？いつも間違えていますよ。
徳田アナ: これも意見が分かれましたね。では次。
光浦: 「光浦さんは気が強い。」はい、意見です！徳田さんがそう思っているだけですよ。実は私は気弱なんですよ。見るからに気弱そうじゃないですか！
カエル: はい、事実です！今の発言を聞いても分かるように、気が強いとしか言いようありません。
徳田アナ: うーん、どちらの言い分も正しいように思えるんですが・・・。正解はこちらです。これ、全部意見なんですね。
光浦: ん？

●事実と意見の見分け方
ツボくん: 事実と意見、どう見分けるかを、整理してみよう。まず事実は、「本当にあったこと」や「だれでも確かめられること」。そして意見は、「その人が考えたこと」。「光浦さんは運動が苦手だ」「光浦さんは頭がいい」「光浦さんは気が強い」これは全部、文を書いた人が考えたこと。こう考える人もいれば、こう考えない人もいる。本当かどうか確かめることができないので、意見だ。
光浦: なるほど。本当かどうか確かめることができるのが事実なんだね。
カエル: 意見は、その人が考えたことだから、そう考える人もいれば、そう考えない人もいるのが意見か一。
徳田アナ: そなさんです。分かっているようでも、見分けるのは難しいんですよ。
光浦: 事実と意見、もう分かりました。今度は間違えませんよ。
うし 僕も、もう大丈夫です！
徳田アナ: はい。では次の問題はどうでしょうか。

●事実と意見の混ざった文章に挑戦
ツボくん: 問題だよ。カエルくんが書いた文章です。「うしくんはけちだ。誕生日に本をくれた。きたない本だった。『何回も読んだよ。』と言った。読みあきた本をくれるとは。本当にけちだ。」さあ、きみはどう思う？
ツボくん: 杉並区立高井戸第四小学校のみんなに聞いてみよう。
パペマペ: どうですか。みんな。これを読んでみて。
パペマペ: うしくんのことがけちだと思う人。手をあげて。おい、あげすぎじゃないか。
女の子: 誕生日にあげるものは、新しいものをあげるけど、あきたいらない本をくれるのはひどいと思うから、けちだと思う。
パペマペ: そうだよね。
パペマペ： じゃあこの文章、これを一個一個事実か意見か、分けていきたいと思います。こちら一。
ツボくん： この文章は5つの文からできている。それぞれの文が、事実か意見か区別してみよう。
パペマペ： 「うしくんはけちだ。」この文。事実でしょうか意見でしょうか。
子ども： 意見。
パペマペ： 意見だと思う。
男の子： うしくんがけちだという時点でカエルくんが勝手に思っていることだから、意見だと思います。
パペマペ： 意見だと思う人手をあげて。全部じゃないか。
子ども： いい。
パペマペ： はい次。「誕生日に本をくれた」事実でしょうか意見でしょうか？
子ども： 事実。
パペマペ： おっ、これは事実。
男の子： 誕生日には汚い本だったけど、ちゃんとうしくんはカエルくんに本をあげたから。
パペマペ： じゃあ事実と思う人手をあげて。これまた満場一致ですね。
パペマペ： 事実っていうことでいいかな。
子ども： いい。
パペマペ： はい次。「きたない本だった」これは事実だと思う人手をあげて。おー結構いるね。じゃあ意見だと思う人手をあげて。こっちも結構いるね。なるほど。
ツボくん： 「きたない本だった。」この文は事実？意見？うーん・・・。
パペマペ： じゃまずは、事実だと思う人で理由が言える人。
男の子： 実際にうしくんがくれたものは、ボロボロの本だったから、カエルくんが思ったことじゃないから事実。
パペマペ： あーなるほど。
パペマペ： 意見だと思う人。
女の子： 何回も読んでからって汚いとはかぎらないから。
パペマペ： なるほど。汚いとは限らない。
女の子： 汚い本かどうかは見た目によって違うから、いつも汚い本を読んでいる人は、あの本を見てきれいだな、と思うかもしれないし、いつもきれいな本を読んでいる人は、あの本を見て汚いなと思うかもしれないから。
パペマペ： なるほど。人によって違うんじゃないか。
パペマペ： もう一回手をあげてもらっていい。事実だと思う人。最初より減ったかも。意見だと思う人。おっ、意見派が増えましたよ。最初と違ってさ。
パペマペ： これは意見ということでいいかな。
子ども： ダメ。いいよ。
子ども： 絶対ダメ
パペマペ：絶対ダメだって言う子、意見言ってくれる。じゃあ、これが意見じゃないってことは、事実ってことだよね。
男の子：えーあるかな？
パペマペ：絶対ダメだって言ったでしょ。
パペマペ：事実か意見か。どっちだ。
男の子：じゃあ意見でいいよ。何そのしようがねえなーみたいな。
パペマペ：理由言って、あれが意見でもいいやと思った理由。
男の子：まあ、人によって汚いとかきれいとかと思うのは、何だろう。汚いと思う人もいるし、きれいだと言う人もいるから、まあ人それぞれ。
パペマペ：なるほどね。同じものを見たってきれいって言うか、汚いって言うかは人それぞれだもんね。うん、そうだよね。
パペマペ：とりあえず、意見ということにしようか。
子ども：うん。
パペマペ：次行ってみようか。「何回も読んだよ」と言った。これはどうでしょう。事実でしょうか意見でしょうか。事実と思う人手をあげて。これから満場一致ですね。
女の子：本当にうしくんが言ったことだから、言ったからかぎかっこが付いているわけで、それは言ったことだから事実。
パペマペ：事実ということではっちゃいました。
パペマペ：では最後。「読みあげた本をくれるとは本当にけちだ」これは事実でしょうか意見でしょうか。
子ども：意見、意見。
パペマペ：おっ意見が多いか。
女の子：読みあげた本っていうのもカエルくんが勝手に決めつけて、本当にけちだだっていうのにも勝手にすべて決めつてるから、それは意見だと思う。
パペマペ：なるほど。カエルくんが勝手に言ってるんだもんね。
じゃあ意見、はっちゃいます。じゃない。これは意見。
ツボくん：「うしくんはけちだ。」「きたない本だった。」「読みあげた本をくれるとは、本当にけちだ。」この3つの文が意見。「誕生日に本をくれた。」「『何回も読んだよ』と言った。」この2つの文が事実だ。
パペマペ：これを踏まえて、もう一回聞いてみたいんだけど。まずけちだと思う人。ゼロになった。急にゼロになったよ。じゃあ、うしくんはけちじゃないと思う人は？あれっ、増えちゃったよ。
男の子：何回も読んだっていうのは、おもしろかったということで、おもしろい本をカエルくんにあげたということは、けちじゃないと思う。
パペマペ：なるほどね。そうだよね。ちなみに、どちらでもない、っていう人はいる？どちらとも言えない。理由が言える人いるかな。
男の子：きたない本っていうのも意見だから、本当にきたないかどうかわからないし、うしくんはけちだっていうのも意見で、本当にけちかどうかわからないから、言い切れない。
パペマペ：どちらとも言い切れない。なるほど。ありがとう。
光浦：なるほど。私もすっかりカエルくんにだまされるところでした。

●今回のツボ
光浦：文章を読むときは事実か意見か、しっかりと区別して読まないとね。
うし：それが事実で、それが意見かちゃんと分かっていないと、判断ができないなくなるんだよね。
徳田アナ：そこで、今日のツボです。ツボ〜♪『事実？意見？しっかり目を光らせて』
徳田アナ：文章には事実と意見が混ざっているんですよね。それをどれが事実で、どれが意見か意識して読むと、客観的な判断ができるようになりますよ。
うし：ところで、ということは、僕はけちじゃないっていうことでいいんだよね。
カエル：今のうしくんの発言は事実でしょうか、意見でしょうか？
うし：ちょっとー、ごまかさないでよカエルくん！
徳田アナ：ということで、今日はこのへんで。さようなら～。

Is it Fact or is it Opinion? <How to differentiate facts from opinions>

Introduction
Tokuda: It’s quiz time, Yomikaki no Tsubo!
Tokuda: Well, it’s time for the quiz show Yomikaki no Tsubo. Okay everyone, please go ahead and try the quiz again and learn the secrets of proper reading and writing.
Tokuda: So, I will introduce the panel. First, on my right, the representative of beginners to reading and writing, Mitsuura Yasuko!
Mitsuura: I will do my best!
Tokuda: And next, what on earth will they do to learn reading and writing, Puppet-Muppet!
Ushi & Kaeru: We will do our best!
Tokuda: Well, today we will have you try this quiz to determine whether the sentence is a fact or someone’s opinion.
Mitsuura: A fact or opinion? That’s easy to tell. I will judge it strictly with these eyes.
Kaeru: I feel confident, too. I have a great vision.
Ushi: That seems to have nothing to do with this quiz.
Tokuda: Let’s take a look at the question.

A fact or one’s opinion?
Tokuda: These are the sentences I wrote. Please distinguish them as fact or opinion. “Ms. Mitsuura wears glasses.”
Mitsuura: Yes, that is a fact!
Kaeru: Yes! It’s a fact!
Tokuda: The answer is, yes, a fact. Everyone got the answer correct.
Tokuda: Then, next question, “Ms. Mitsuura is beautiful.”
Kaeru: Yes, that is merely Mr. Tokuda’s opinion.
Mitsuura: Here, it is an opinion. Many people tell me that, Mr. Tokuda has such-and-such an opinion that, and Mr. Tokuda obviously shares that opinion.
Tokuda: The answer is opinion. Everyone got this question correct, too.
Mitsuura: Easy, easy. Today’s questions are too easy.
Koeru: I agree. I think I will get all the questions right today.
Tokuda: Well, here’s next question. “Ms. Mitsuura is not good at exercise.”
Mitsuura: Yes. That is a fact! I am not good at exercise. It should be a fact because the original person is saying that.
Koeru: Here, it is Tokuda’s opinion because Ms. Mitsuura runs faster than Ushi-kun when she wants to escape from something.
Tokuda: The answers split, didn’t they? Let’s go to the next question. “Ms. Mitsuura is smart.”
Mitsuura: Yes, it is a fact because I always get the right answers in this quiz show.
Koeru: That is just Tokuda’s opinion. And when did you get the right answer? You always get the wrong one.
Tokuda: It seems that the answer split half and half this time, too. Next question. “Ms. Mitsuura is strong-willed.”
Mitsuura: Me! It is an opinion. That is only what Mr. Tokuda thinks. I’m actually pretty shy. I look shy, right?
Koeru: Yes, it is a fact. You can tell just by listening to her now. There is no other word for that except strong-willed.
Tokuda: Well, it seems like both opinions are right. Let’s have the correct answer… They were all opinion.
Mitsuura: What?

**How to tell a fact from an opinion**

Tsubo-kun: Let’s review how to tell a fact from an opinion. First of all, a fact is “something that really happened” or “something anyone can confirm.” On the other hand, an opinion is “something a person thinks.” “Ms. Mitsuura is not good at exercise,” “Ms. Mitsuura is smart,” and “Ms. Mitsuura is strong-willed.” These are all something the person who wrote these sentences thought. There are people who agree with this and people who do not agree with this. We cannot confirm its truth. That is an opinion.

Mitsuura: I see. A fact is something that you can make sure of.
Koeru: And an opinion is something a person thought. There are people who think so and who do not.
Tokuda: You are right. It seems easy, but it can be difficult tell them apart.
Mitsuura: A fact and an opinion, I’ve got it now. I won’t make a mistake next time.
Koeru: Me, either. I will be okay.
Tokuda: All right then, how about this next question?

**Try analyzing the texts with both a fact and an opinion**

Tsubo-kun: Here is a question for you. These are the texts Koeru-kun wrote. “Ushi-kun is stingy. He gave me a book for my birthday. The book was dirty. He said, “I read it many times.” He is stingy because he only give away books that he is tired of reading.”

Tsubo-kun: Let’s ask the children from Suginami-ward Takaido Elementary.
[Characters enter classroom]

Kaeru/Ushi: Try reading this text. What do you think everyone?

Kaeru/Ushi: Anyone who thinks that Ushi-kun is stingy, raise your hand. Whoa, too many, too many!

Girl: I think he is stingy because people should give new things for birthday presents. It is terrible to give something he got tired of and doesn’t need anymore.

Kaeru/Ushi: You are right.

Kaeru/Ushi: Okay then, let’s take a look at each sentence in these texts and try to tell the facts from the opinions. Here we are.

Tsubo-kun: This is made up of five sentences. For each, let’s classify it as either fact or opinion.

Kaeru/Ushi: “Ushi-kun is stingy,” this sentence. Is it a fact or an opinion?

Children: An opinion.

Kaeru/Ushi: You think it is an opinion.

Boy: I think it is an opinion because this is something Kaeru-kun just thought of himself, so it is an opinion.

Kaeru/Ushi: Raise your hand if you think it is an opinion. Oh, everyone.

Kaeru/Ushi: This must be an opinion.

Kaeru/Ushi: Next, “He gave me a book for my birthday.” A fact or an opinion?

Children: A fact.

Kaeru/Ushi: Oh, it is a fact.

Boy: Even though it was a dirty book, Ushi-kun really did give a book to Kaeru-kun.

Kaeru/Ushi: So if you think it is a fact, raise your hand. This one is unanimous, too.

Kaeru/Ushi: So is it okay to label this as a fact?

Children: Okay.

Kaeru/Ushi: Next, “It was a dirty book.” Please raise your hand if you think this is a fact. Oh, there are a lot. Now raise your hand if you think it is an opinion. There are some here too, I see.

Tsubo-kun: “It was a dirty book.” Is this sentence a fact or an opinion? Well…

Kaeru/Ushi: First of all, is there anyone who can explain the reason why you think it is a fact?

Boy: In reality, the book Ushi-kun gave was beat up. It is not something Kaeru-kun thought. That is why this is a fact.

Kaeru/Ushi: Well I see.

Kaeru/Ushi: How about the people who think it is an opinion?

Girl: Because it is not necessarily dirty just because someone read it a lot.

Kaeru/Ushi: Oh, I see. It is not necessarily dirty.

Girl: Dirty or not depends on how it looks. People who always read dirty books might find this clean, but people who always read clean books might find this dirty.

Kaeru/Ushi: Okay, you think it depends on the person.

Kaeru/Ushi: So will you raise your hands again? Anyone who thinks it is a fact? Maybe the number decreased compared to the first vote. How about the people who think it is an opinion? Oh, it increased! This is different from the first vote.

Kaeru/Ushi: Is it okay if we label it as an opinion?

Children: No! /Yes!
Children: Absolutely not!
Kaeru/Ushi: If you say absolutely not, please share your thoughts. If it is not an opinion, then it should be a fact.
Boy: Is it really?
Kaeru/Ushi: You said it is absolutely not.
Kaeru/Ushi: A fact or an opinion, which is it?
Boy: Hmm, opinion, I guess.
Kaeru/Ushi: What’s that? You are like “if you insist.” Give me the reason why you think it is an opinion.
Boy: Well talking about dirty or clean, it is depends on the person. You know, there’re people who think something is dirty and also people who think it’s clean. It depends on the person.
Kaeru/Ushi: I see. Even though people are looking at the same thing, it depends on the person, on whether they feel that it is dirty. You are right.
Kaeru/Ushi: For the time being, is it okay to leave it as an opinion?
Children: Yes.
Kaeru/Ushi: Let’s move on to the next question. He said, “I read it many times.” How about this? A fact or an opinion?
Girl: Because it really is what Ushi-kun said, we can see the comma in the sentence. This is something he said. Therefore, it is a fact.
Kaeru/Ushi: I already counted it as a fact.
Kaeru/Ushi: Then this is the last one. “He is stingy because he gave me a book that he got tired of reading.” A fact or an opinion?
Children: An opinion, an opinion.
Kaeru/Ushi: Oh there are many people who think this is an opinion.
Girl: Kaeru-kun thinks without good reason that the book is one that Ushi-kun got tired of reading and that Ushi-kun is stingy. Therefore, it is an opinion.
Kaeru/Ushi: Okay. It is something Kaeru-kun said without good reason. Then I will label it as an opinion. Tada! This is an opinion.
Tsubo-kun. “Ushi-kun is stingy.” “The book was dirty.” and “He is stingy because he gave me a book that he got tired of reading.” These three sentences are opinions. “He gave me a book for my birthday.” “He said, “I read it many times.”” These two sentences are facts.
Kaeru/Ushi: Based on this analysis, I would like to ask again. First, who thinks Ushi-kun is stingy? Nobody, suddenly it’s nobody? Then, who thinks that Ushi-kun is not stingy? Oh, that is more than before!
Boy: Reading a lot means that the book was interesting. I think it is not stingy to give an interesting book to Kaeru-kun.
Kaeru/Ushi: I see. You are right. By the way, is there anyone who thinks he is neither stingy nor not stingy?
Boy: Because “the book was dirty” is an opinion, we cannot tell if it is really dirty. Because Ushi-kun is stingy is an opinion, we cannot tell if he is really stingy. We cannot say for sure.
Kaeru/Ushi: We can’t see for sure, I see. Thank you.
Mitsuura: I get it. I was almost deceived by Kaeru-kun.
Today’s secret
Mitsuura: We need to read texts while differentiating facts and opinions clearly.
Ushi: If we cannot tell what opinion is and what is fact, we cannot evaluate the text.
Tokuda: Well then, here is today’s secret. “Keep an eye out! Fact or Opinion?”
Tokuda: In texts, facts and opinions co-exist. If you aware which is fact and which is opinion, you will be able to evaluate them objectively.
Ushi: By the way, we agreed that I was not stingy, right?
Kaeru: This remark of Ushi-kun just now, is it a fact or his opinion?
Ushi: Now you are messing with it.
Tokuda: Okay, then it is time to finish. Good-bye.
広告のウソを見抜け！＜批判的に読む＞

●イントロダクション
德田アナ: クイズ、読み書きのツボー！
全員: いえーい！
德田アナ: さあ、「クイズ・読み書きのツボ」の時間がやってまいりました。今日もクイズに挑戦して、読み書きのツボを身に付けてくださいね。
德田アナ: では、解答者のみなさんをご紹介しましょう。まず、わたくしのお隣は、読み書きの素人代表、光浦靖子さん！
光浦: 全問正解目指します！
徳田アナ: そして、お隣、読み書きを学んでどうするのか？パペットマペットさん！
パペ: がんばりまーす！
光浦: がんばれよー！
パペ: ああ、がんぱりますよー
徳田アナ: さて、今日みなさんに挑戦していただくのは、「ウソさがし」ゲームです。これからみなさんですね、あるものを見ていただくんですが、その中には必ず「ウソ」がかかれているんですよ。それをよく見てよく読んで、どこにウソがかかされているかを、当てていただきたいのです。
光浦: へー、ウソを見ぬくなんて、簡単！つっこみでは、私にかなう人はいないでしょう！
カエル: いやいや、ぼくたちだって！カエルがウソをついて、うしがだまされる。いつものコンビネーションの成果を、発揮するときですね！
うし: ぼくはずっと、だまされてきたのか…。
徳田アナ: それでは、最初の問題は、こちらです！
徳田アナ: 「この一年間で、この街の犯罪件数は二倍になり、治安が急激に悪化している」
光浦: もー、ウソを見ぬくなんて、簡単！つっこみでは、私にかなう人はいないでしょう！
カエル: いやいや、ぼくたちだって！カエルがウソをついて、うしがだまされる。いつものコンビネーションの成果を、発揮するときですね！
うし: ぼくはずっと、だまされてきたのか…。
徳田アナ: それでは、最初の問題は、こちらです！
徳田アナ: 「この一年間で、この街の犯罪件数は二倍になり、治安が急激に悪化している」
徳田アナ: さあ、この文章とグラフから、かくされたウソを、さがしてください。
カエル: これみてよー！犯罪件数が倍だってさー、こわいねー。
うし: ホントだねー。このグラフの伸び方がすごいよー。
カエル: それもたった一年で、っていうんだから大変だよねー。
光浦: ちょっとあんたたちどこ見てんのよ？そこだけ見ててもダメでしょう！
うし: え？なんでー？
光浦: だいたい増えたっていっても4件が8件になっただけですよ！
光浦: 全体を見てごらんなさい！
カエル: いたい、いたい！あれ？前の年は6件、その前の年は10件？？？？
●「限られた事実」にご用心
ツボくん: それではあらためて、考えてみよう。過去6年間の犯罪件数は、この通りになっている。
ツボくん: 「この一年間で、この街の犯罪件数は二倍になり、治安が急激に悪化している」。この文章のどこに、ウソがかかっているか、わかるかな？
光浦: ただ、ここ。「治安が急激に悪化してる」。これが、ウソ！
うし: なるほど。
ツボくん: 2004年と2005年のデータだけを比較すると、たしかに文章の通りに犯罪件数は急増しているように見える。
ツボくん: でも、グラフの全体を見てみると8件という件数は、飛びぬけて多くないし、治安が悪化しているとは言えない。
このように、一部分だけを見ると正しいようにも、全体を見てみると、そうとはいいきれない場合がある。「限られた事実」には注意が必要なんだ。
うし:「限られた事実」かー。だまされるところだっー!
カエル: ぼくたちが小さいのを利用してペテンにかけようとは、何て悪賢いやつらだ…。
光浦: あんたたちはなに言ってるの!あんたたちは本当に視野が狭いね。もっと大きな目で物を見なさいよ！
うし: 大きな目で?
光浦: 大きな目で！
ツボくん: それでは、「限られた事実」とは、どういうものなのか、もうひとつの例をみてみよう。
うし: 母「テストはどうだったの？」子「国語が95点だったよ」母「まあ、すごい！'
カエル: いやーほんとほんと。この子は読み書きのツボを見てるんだろうねー。
うし: お母さんが「すごい！」って喜ぶところが目に浮かぶようだねー。
光浦: ちょっとあんたたち。さっき教えた事がまるでわかってない！
カエル: え？なに？
光浦: この後をちゃんと読んで！
うし: あれ？まだ続きがあったの？
光浦: うん。
うし: 母「テストはどうだったの？」子「国語が95点だったよ」
母「まあ、すごい！」子「それから、算数は60点、社会は55点、理科は50点だったよ」母「なんですか！」
ツボくん: この会話文も、最初の部分だけ読むと、成績優秀に見える。でも、会話全体を見てみると…。
ツボくん: いくら国語の成績がよなくても、他の教科が50点や60点では、必ずしもテストの成績がよかったとは、言えないよね。
うし: うーん、なるほど一。「限られた事実」かー。まだまだまされるところだっただよ。
カエル: やっぱりぼくらが小さいことを利用した悪だくみだな。
光浦: だから悪だくみじゃないの！もっと視野を広くって言ってるでしょ。
うし: うん？広く？
徳田アナ: そうですね。情報をどう切り出すかによってものごとの印象というのは大きく変わってきてしまいます。だから、文章を読む時は、すぐに信じてしまうのではなくて、立ち止まって考える。そういう習慣を、つけるようにしましょう。
徳田アナ: それでは、他の問題にも挑戦してみましょう！
光浦・パペ: はーい！
悪ツボくん: 最近オレ様はテレビショッピングにはまっているんだ。今日、また買いたいものを見つけたんだ。それは、こんなCMだ！
CM
今、女性にスポーツ選手が大人気！
そこで、モテたいあなたに、パワーダンベル！
理想の肉体を手に入れる！
8割の人が効果を実感しています！
悪ツボくん: よーし、このダンベルを買えば、女の子にもててなること、間違いなし。買うぞー、買っちゃうぞー！
ツボくん: あーあ、悪ツボくん、すっかりその気になっているよ。この広告を見るとたしかにいい商品に見えるけれど、本当にそうなのかなあ。みんなは、どう思う？
●広告のウソをさがせ！
パペ: ウィーッス、どうもー！
ツボくん: 考えてもらうのは、台東区立平成小学校のみんなだよ。
パペマペ: ほらきた、きたよこれ。この広告ね、よく見るとあやしいところがあるんだよね。
男の子: えっと、もしねだんどが高かったら買う人も買わないと思うので、ねだんを書いておいたほうがいいと思う。
パペ: うーん、なるほど。そっか。よく見るとどこにもねだんだが書いていないもんね。
男の子: 一日何回やるとかが書かれていないので、無理してやりすぎちゃうと、体がぶっこわれちゃう。
パペ: おおー！こわれるどころか、ぶっこわれちゃうんだ。
パペ: これは大変だね。
男の子: 何回かとかは、書いてあったほうがいいと思う。
パペ: そうか。
女の子: この人が、もしこれを前の写真と今の写真があれば、この人は鍛けたいていて前からこうだったかもしれないから、そういうところがあやしいと思いました。
パペ: なるほど、そうだよね。
パペ: このダンベル使い始め前の写真と今の写真があればわかるけど、こちらは鍛けたていって前からこうだったかもしれないから、そういうところがあやしいと思いました。
男の子: マッチョマンなのにね、肉がのってる。
パペ: なるほど。もう、まさにこの人の話だ。
パペ: こう、マッチョな感じでやっているけど、腹ここのってるじゃん、腹ちょっとぷよっとしているじゃんみたいな。
ツボくん: みんな色々な意見を言ってくれたけど、実はもっと大事なポイントが、この広告にはかくされている。もう一度、CMを見てみよう！

CM
今、女性にスポーツ選手が大人気！
そこで、モテたいあなたに、パワーダンベル！
理想の肉体を手に入れる！
8割の人が効果を実感しています！

ツボくん: この文章におかしなところがあるんだけどうわかるかな？
パペ: じゃあ、指さしながら言ってもらっていい？こっからって。
女の子: 今、女性にスポーツ選手が大人気、そこでもてたいあなたにとってところで、パワーダンベルは理想の肉体を作るもので、スポーツ選手になることではないから、女性にもっててわけではないと思う。
パペ: なるほど。女性にスポーツ選手が大人気だけど、このパワーダンベルを使うことで別にスポーツ選手になれるわけじゃないし、だからそれでもてるわけではない。

ツボくん: この女の子が指摘してくれたのは「話のすりかえ」というポイント。いくら女性にスポーツ選手が人気だからといって筋肉をつけても、スポーツ選手になれるわけではない。だから、女性にもっててわけではないの。
ツボくん: あと、もうひとつ、あやしいところがあるんだけどう、わかるかな？
パペ: はい。
女の子: ふつうは何十人もやるのに、10人しかやってないところ。
パペ: おお。なるほど。
パペ: ここと。なるほどね。この8割の人がっていっているけれど、対象が少ないんじゃないかって。おお！
女の子: このグラフで、アンケートが10人だと、100人とかだったらいっぱい使われているんだなあってわかるんだけど、10人だと全然使われてない感じがする。
ツボくん: 次にあげてくれたポイントは「限られた事実」。8割の人が満足したといっても、アンケートの対象はだったの10人。しかも、それがどんな人たち
なのかについてもかかれていない。これでは、本当に効果があるかどうか、わからないね。

●今回のツボ
カエル: 注意深く見てみると、文章にはいろいろなトリックがかくされているものなんだね。
うし: やっぱり書かれていることをうのみにしちゃいけないね。
徳田アナ: そうなんですね。そこで、今日のツボです。
徳田アナ: 「本当にそうかな？」を確かめよう！
文章を読むときには、すぐに信じ込まずに、納得できる十分な証拠があるか、それから話の筋がきちんと通っているか、まずは疑いの目で見て、その情報が信用にあいするものかどうか、確かめる。そういう習慣をつけるようにしましょうね。
光浦: なるほど。
うし: ところでちょっとみなさん、ぼく、いいもの拾っちゃったんですよ。これ見てくださいよ、ほら。
うし: 「ケーキ10人前無料券」。これで、みんなで思いっきりケーキ食べましょうよ！
カエル: おー、やった、すごい!
光浦: ちょっと待って！ここに小ちゃく書いてあるよ。
光浦: 「一口でも残した場合は、お代をいただきます」!
光浦: ほら、だから言ってるじゃない、ちゃんと読めて！
カエル: うしくん、ちゃんと読めていったでしょ！
うし: いや、ちゃんと読めて言ってるでしょ。
光浦: 10人前も食べられないでしょ。
うし: だから食べられるようで、10人前！
徳田アナ: はい、それでは今日はこの辺で。どうもありがとうございました。
さようならー!

Spot False Advertising! <Critical Reading>

Introduction
Tokuda: It's quiz time, Yomikaki no Tsubo!
All: Yaay!
Tokuda: Well, now it is time for “The quiz show Yomikaki no Tsubo.” Everyone please try the quiz again and learn the secrets of proper reading and writing,
Tokuda: So, let me introduce the panel. First, to my right, the representative of the beginners to reading and writing, Mitsuura Yasuko!
Mitsuura: I will get all the answers right.
Tokuda: And next, what on earth will they do to learn reading and writing, Puppet Muppet!
Ushi& Kaeru: We will do our best!
Mitsuura: Do it!
Ushi & Kaeru: Of course we will.
Tokuda: Well, today you will participate in the game “Hunt for Lies”. So you are going to watch something, and there is always a lie in it. You need to watch and read carefully, because you are supposed to guess where the lie is.
Mitsuura: Aha, it is easy for me to see through a lie. No one can beat me in tsukkomi.
Kaeru: You know we are always doing that too. It is the time for us to show our routine trick, Kaeru telling a lie and Ushi getting taken in.
Ushi: I did not realize I have always getting taken in.
Tokuda: Well, here is the first question.
Tokuda: “The number of crimes in this town has doubled in the past year. Public safety is becoming increasingly worse.”
Tokuda: Please find a lie from this sentence and the chart.
Kaeru: Look at this! The number of crimes has doubled! So scary.
Ushi: It’s true. The increase in this chart is amazing.
Kaeru: It happened in only one year. That’s crazy.
Mitsuura: Wait, where are looking at you guys? You cannot look at only that part.
Ushi: Hmm? Why not?
Mitsuura: First of all, the increase is only from four to eight.
Mitsuura: Look at the whole chart!
Kaeru: Ouch, ouch! Oh! In a year before there was six and in a two years before, was there ten?????

Watch Out for “Limited Evidence”
Tsubo-kun: Okay, let’s think about this question again. This shows the number of crimes over the last six years.
Tsubo-kun: “The number of crimes in this town has doubled in the past year. Public safety is becoming increasingly worse.” Can you guess where the lie is in this sentence?
Mitsuura: It is here. “Public safety is becoming increasingly worse.” That is the lie.
Ushi: Right.
Tsubo-kun: If you think about the data from 2004 to 2005, it seems like the number is increasing, just as this sentence says.
Tsubo-kun: However, if you look at the whole chart, all the numbers, eight does not mean such a great increase. We cannot say that public safety is becoming increasingly worse. Like this, there are some cases when it seems right if you look at only one part, but it cannot be true if you look at the whole. We have to be careful about “limited evidence.”
Ushi: Hmm, “limited evidence.” I was about to be deceived.
Kaeru: They are so wickedly clever to just blow us off, taking advantage of our tiny bodies.
Mitsuura: What are you talking about? You guys have a really narrow outlook on things. You should widen your viewpoints with big eyes!
Ushi: With big eyes?
Mitsuura: Yes, with big eyes.
Tsubo-kun: Then, let’s look at the other example to learn more about “limited evidence.”
Mother: Good job!
Kaeru: Well all right, I bet this kid watches *Yomikaki no Tsubo*.
Ushi: I can imagine how proud his/her mother would be.
Mitsuura: Wait you guys! You did not understand what I just taught you at all!
Kaeru: What?
Mitsuura: You need to read the parts *after* that!
Ushi: Oh! There is more?
Mitsuura: Yes.
Mother: Good job! Child: And I got a sixty percent in Math, fifty-five points in Social Studies and a fifty percent in Science. Mother: What did you just say?
Tsubo-kun: In this conversation, if you read only the first several parts, the child seems to be a high-achieving student. But, if you look at the whole conversation,
Tsubo-kun: Even though he/she got the good score in kokugo, we cannot say that his test scores were good since he/she got fifty percent or sixty percent in the other subjects.
Ushi: Well, I got it, “limited evidence.” I was about to get taken in again.
Kaeru: These are evil plans taking advantage of our small bodies.
Mitsuura: No, it is not evil plans! I said that you should broaden your scope.
Ushi: What? Broaden?
Tokuda: She’s right. Our impressions of things change drastically depending on how it is broached. Therefore, whenever you read any texts, it is better to have the habit to stop and think instead of just believing it automatically.
Tokuda: Okay, let’s try the other question!
Mitsuura, Ushi & Kaeru: Yeah!

Warutsubo-kun: These days I am into television shopping. I found something I want to buy today, too! Here is the commercial of the product.
CM: Nowadays athletes are very popular with ladies! So, if you want to be popular, Power Dumbbell is perfect for you! You can have the ideal body! Eighty percent of users are satisfied with the results!
Warutsubo-kun: Good! If I buy this dumbbell, I know I would become so popular among girls. I will buy it! I’m going to buy it!
Tsubo-kun: Well, poor Warutsubo-kun, he is definitely feeling this. Looking at this advertisement, it seems to be a good product. But is that really true? What do you think about it?

**Spot false advertisement!**
Ushi/Kaeru: Hello!
Tsubo-kun: Here are children from Taito-ward Heisei Elementary to think about this question.
Ushi/Kaeru: Here comes! In this advertisement, there is a suspicious part.
Boy: Well, I think it needs to show the price, because if it is expensive, people would not buy it.
Ushi/Kaeru: All right. Well, they did not show the price, looking at it carefully.
Boy: And there is no instruction how to use it, like how many times you should do in a day. If you do it too much, your body will be completely broken.
Ushi/Kaeru: Oh! It will not just get broken, but completely get broken.
Ushi/Kaeru: This is a big problem.
Boy: I think they should show how many times we should use.
Ushi/Kaeru: I see.

Girl: Well, I think it is suspicious because there is only one picture of this person, and he might be the man who has been like this with daily exercise. If there were two pictures before and after use of this dumbbell, I would understand.
Ushi/Kaeru: Hmm, You’re right.
Ushi/Kaeru: If only there are two pictures from before and after using this dumbbell, we could understand that the change happened because of the dumbbell, but there is only one picture. Hmm.
Boy: He is macho, but he is a little flabby.
Ushi/Kaeru: Right. It is about just this man.
Ushi/Kaeru: He is playing macho, but is a little flabby in the stomach area.

Tsubo-kun: Thank you for the varieties of your opinions. But there is more important point in this advertisement. Let’s take a look at this television commercial again.
CM: Nowadays athletes are very popular among women! So, if you want to be popular, Power Dumbbell is perfect for you! You can have the ideal body! Eighty percent of users are satisfied with the results.
Tsubo-kun: There is a strange part in these sentences. Can you guess where it is?
Girl: I think it is here, “Nowadays athletes are very popular among women! So, if you want to be popular, Power Dumbbell is perfect for you!” Power Dumbbell is for getting the ideal body, not for becoming an athlete. So, the users will not necessarily be popular among women.
Ushi/Kaeru: Aha. Athletes are very popular among women. But using this dumbbell does not make people into athletes. So you will not be popular with women just by using this.
Well, you are right.
Tsubo-kun: This girl is pointing out the “false logic.” You exercise a lot and strengthen your muscle, but it does not mean you can be an athlete. So even if people say athletes are popular with ladies, it does not mean this dumbbell use will be popular among women. In fact, these sentences are not logically consistent.

Tsubo-kun: There is one more strange point in it, can you guess?
Ushi/Kaeru: Yes.
Girl: There are only ten people who used this dumbbell for this survey, regularly it should be dozens.
Ushi/Kaeru: Aha.
Ushi/Kaeru: Here, I see. This sentence says eighty percent, but the whole sample of those surveyed is too small. Good point.
Girl: In this chart, I feel like this product is seldom used because the survey sample is only ten people. I would feel that this product is used a lot if there were the object is like one hundred people.
Tsubo-kun: The second point the girl brought up was “limited evidence.” The sentence says that eighty percent of the users are satisfied with the result, but the target size of this survey was only ten people. Moreover, there is no explanation about what kind of people took part in this survey. Therefore, we cannot tell if this dumbbell is really effective or not.

**Today’s secret**
Kaeru: If you read it carefully, you can learn that there are many kinds of tricks in the sentences.
Ushi: All in all, we cannot accept anything just on faith.
Tokuda: You’re right. Therefore, here is today’s secret.
Tokuda: Let’s make sure when you feel like “Wait, is that real?”
Tokuda: When reading texts, it is important to doubt first and make sure the information is believable or not. We can check if there is false logic or limited evidence. It is good make this a regular habit.
Mitsuura: Aha.
Ushi: By the way, I found this lucky ticket by chance. Look at this, here.
Ushi: “Slices of cakes for ten people, free.” Let’s eat as many cakes as possible together!
Kaeru: Oh! That’s great!
Mitsuura: Wait, can’t you see the fine print here? “You should pay if you cannot eat all of it.” See? I told you that you need to read it carefully.
Kaeru: See? Ushi-kun, I told you that you need to read it carefully.
Ushi: No, I said to you that you need to read it carefully.
Tokuda: Maybe it’s better to finish today. Thank you everyone, good-bye!