

多言語多文化研究

Japan Journal of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism

27 卷 1 号
2021 年 11 月
全国語学教育学会
バイリンガリズム研究会

Plurilingual and Intercultural Education:

A Cross-Disciplinary Practice around Chocolate in an Elementary School in Japan

..... Mayo Oyama, Danièle Moore, Daniel Roy Pearce, & Yuki Kitano (1)

A Case Study on Oral Corrective Feedback During Oral Reading:

Potential for Improving High-Frequency Word Recognition.....

Wendy Tada (27)

Book reviews

Bilingual Development in Childhood (Annick De Houwer)reviewed by Suzy E. Fukuda (51)

Translanguaging for Emergent Bilinguals (Danling Fu, Xenia Hadjioannou, & Xiaodi Zhou)

.....reviewed by Blake Turnbull (55)

Volume 27 Number 1

November 2021

JALT Bilingualism SIG

ISSN: 1348-4095



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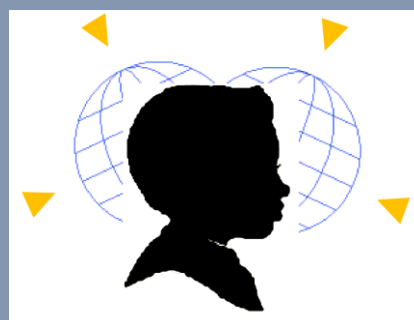
Kathleen Yamane, Christie Provenzano, Taura Hideyuki

JALT Bilingualism Special Interest Group

Statement of Purpose

The modern Japanese situation holds unique challenges and opportunities for the study of bilingualism. Linguistically, Japanese, because of its extensive historical borrowing, shares some surface features with Korean, Chinese, and even modern European languages, but it appears to have no clearly traceable linguistic ties to any other major language. Sociologically, it can be argued that, as one of the most industrialized of the Asian nations, postwar Japan has had an extraordinarily high degree of economic and cultural exchange with Western nations, but that its adopted Western artifacts are only thinly overlaid on zealously protected traditional culture. Psychologically, local bilingual and bicultural speakers of Japanese and another language live in an environment with unique pressures and potentials. In view of these rich areas for research and of Japan's rising political and economic importance, disappointingly few studies of bilingualism have emanated from Japan to date.

One of the purposes of the Bilingualism Special Interest Group is to address the need for high quality research in uniquely exciting venue. As JALT members and their families comprise a significant portion of the bilinguals available for convenient study, this Special Interest Group to identify an extremely valuable pool of researchers and bilingual participants willing and able to help each other conduct significant studies, not only in the linguistic arena, also on the many social and psychological ramifications of bilingualism in this particular society. As educators, JALT members are ultimately dedicated to developing fully



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functioning bilinguals. As bilinguals themselves, as the parents or spouses of bilinguals, however, JALT members at the same time recognize that these individuals, minors in particular, are often in need of social and psychological support. A second purpose of the Bilingualism Special Interest Group, then, is to provide that support, in the form of disseminating research findings among this network of individuals sharing common pressures, and providing timely information on alternatives and responses to common problems affecting bilinguals in Japan, such as multicultural education, peer acceptance, and legal status.

Accordingly, this Special Interest Group proposes to:

1. encourage bilingualism research projects and the wide dissemination of findings by organizing an extensive network of researchers and willing bilingual participants;
2. promote awareness of current developments of interest to these overlapping communities;
3. provide a base for mutual support among the group's members.

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