

TEACHING JAPANESE INTERACTION AS A PROCESS OF LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates an attempt of Teaching Japanese as Foreign Language (TJFL) at a private university in Japan as a model built on the grounds of the language management framework (Neustupný 1985a, 1985b; Jernudd and Neustupný 1987). According to this framework, language problems do not necessarily surface but remain significant in the process of management which typically commences with deviation from norm, and then goes through stages such as noting and evaluation of deviations, planning and implementation of possible adjustments. It is suggested in the paper that due to (1) the diversity of norms other than the Japanese native norms available for the learner; and (2) the existence of factors other than language in the narrow sense to be considered even if Japanese native norms are selected, a real interaction experience among learners through the target language in contact situations is difficult to be achieved naturally or automatically. These noted deviations provoke the design of a Japanese curriculum which aims to teach foreign students how to interact with the Japanese through the Japanese language. In this paper, problems necessary to be treated in the planning stage (e. g. how to define the scope of TJFL for interaction), adjustment stage (e. g. how to teach Japanese interaction through the means of activities), implementation stage (e. g. how to administer a Japanese course for such purpose in practice) are discussed. It is expected that through a systematic procedure of teaching and learning of Japanese interaction, learners will not only acquire the norms for interacting with the Japanese (i. e. through interpretation activities and exercise activities) but also become competent in using the norms for interaction (i. e. through performance activities) and this will eventually assist the learners to establish and design their own norms for interacting with the Japanese in real life.

1. INTRODUCTION

In society, social norms are presumed and social behaviors according to such norms are acknowledged. Similarly, language norms are not only purely linguistically enforced rules but also expected to be implemented by individual users and violations are dispreferred. In contact situations, as indicated by Neustupný before, all participants necessarily use norms as a yardstick from which all deviations are measured, and to which evaluation of behavior is firmly bound (Neustupný 1985b). In recent studies within the framework of language management, it has been widely discussed and reported that communication problems arise in contact situations more readily than in native situations not only because participants involved in such situations presumably possess a rather different set of “native norms”, but also because the interaction itself is potentially built on the basis of various other norms such as so-called “contact norms”, “dual norms”, “universal norms”, “global norms” (Marriott 1990; Muraoka 2002; Fairbrother 2003; Fan 2003; Neustupný 2005). More specifically, while most norms used for communication in native situations are shared by the participants and thus usually remain covert, it is obvious that norms which can be used in contact situations are to be negotiated, and as a result other than unshared norms, at least a part of the underlying shared norms and native norms become overt and/or intensified and this directly leads to a series of much more complex processes for the management of problems surfaced. The diversity of norms available in contact situations can be observed in the following self-introductions made by Japanese language learners.

- Case 1: J: *hajimemashite, Tajima desu. dōzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu.*
F: *hajimemashite, Jonson desu. dōzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu.*
- Case 2: J: *hi, konnichi wa, Yūko desu.* Please call me Yūko.
F: *konnichi wa, Pitā Jonson.* (offering handshaking)
- Case 3: F: *hajimemashite, onamae wa?*
- Case 4: F1: *watashi wa Chūgoku kara kita Chin Ken to mōshimasu.*
F2: *hajimemashite, watashi wa Nyūjirando kara kita Arison desu.*
(laugh)

It is apparent that Japanese norms were used in Case 1 in which formulaic greetings for self-introduction (*hajimemashite* and *dōzo yoroshiku onegai shimasu*) and surnames (*Tajima* and *Jonson*) were exchanged. Norms of the foreigner, most likely an American in Case 2 and a Chinese in Case 3, seem to have been applied since language behavior such as a more casual greeting *konnichi wa*, use of first names (*Yūko*), initiating questions (*onamae wa?*) contributes to positive politeness (Brown and Levinson

1978) and is considered to be favorable among Americans and Chinese in first time meetings.¹ In Case 4, in spite of a comparably formal introduction with the use of honorific expression (*mōshimasu*), the formulaic greeting *yoroshiku onegaishimasu* was not exchanged. According to Fan (1999), omission of a part of Japanese norms as contact norms (i. e. norms only applicable in the contact situation concerned) is a common feature in third-party language contact situations where no native speaker is involved. It is important to point out here that, regardless of the large amount of potential problems due to the diversity of norms in contact situations, interaction in such situations is not necessarily to be problematic in nature. As a matter of fact, foreign participants in cases such as above often enjoy meeting and being able to interact with other people through the Japanese language they know.

There is no doubt that foreigners are loaded with problems when communicating with Japanese, and various types of Japan literacy (Neustupný 1995a, 2000) are crucial in order to achieve and maintain successful interaction in contact situations. From the point of view of language planning and second language education, it is thus of great importance to identify problems potentially confronted by Japanese language learners and to provide possible solutions with resources accessible within the institutional environment. In the present paper, I shall demonstrate an attempt of Teaching Japanese as Foreign Language (TJFL) at a Japanese private university as a model built on the grounds of the language management framework (Neustupný 1985a, 1985b; Jernudd and Neustupný 1987; Jernudd 1993). The focus of discussion will be placed on the role of activities as an adjustment procedure for TJFL within the process for building up a Japanese curriculum as management of language problems. It is hoped that this study can provide insight into problems of interaction in contact situations and possible treatments of such problems in institutional education.

2. TJFL AND THE LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT THEORY

The language management theory was first introduced in the early 1980s as a tool for the study of language problems particularly in contact situations. According to Neustupný (1995b), the treatment of language problems within the language management framework is different from that in the traditional language planning paradigm at least in the following ways, namely, (1) scope of language problems, (2) possibility for

¹ Discussions can be found in Gu (1990), Azuma (1997) and others.

solving language problems, (3) levels of language problems, (4) agents of language problems, (5) process of language problems, and (6) universality of language problems. The main points are summarized in Table 1 below.

Tab. 1: A theoretical comparison of the paradigms of language planning and language management (Neustupný 1995b: 71)

	Language planning	Language management
Scope of language problems	Mainly focus on problems related to the development and application of various language varieties	Cover language problems including those related to language education
Possibility for solving language problems	Believe that problems can be solved with appropriate policies	Emphasize that problems which cannot be solved (temporarily or permanently) should also be attended
Levels of language problems	Mainly focus on problems related to language use in a narrow sense	Emphasize that in order to solve language problems, other than language use in the narrow sense, related socio-linguistic problems and socio-cultural problems should also be attended
Agents of language problems	Mainly taken at the national level	Multiple levels, from the national level to the conversation level among individual language users
Process of language problems	Mainly focus on surfaced language problems. The process of language problems starting from the discourse level has not been emphasized	Analyze language problems at various stages, i. e. deviation from norms, noting of deviations, evaluation of deviations, planning of adjustment, implementation of adjustment plans
Universality of language problems	Language problems in different societies are basically treated in the same way	The paradigm of language problems is socio-cultural specific and thus different treatment is necessary

As it is clear in the above table, the language management framework emphasizes that language problems which should be attended are not limited to problems of language use in the narrow sense, which have been one of the main concerns of language teachers and language learners. In addition, some language problems may not surface (e. g. in the form of errors) but remain significant at various stages in the process of treatment. The most basic process of language problems as suggested by Neustupný includes the following five stages. They are: (1) deviation from norms, (2) noting of deviation from norms, (3) evaluation of devia-

tion from norms, (4) planning for the adjustment of deviation from norms, and (5) implementation of plans for the adjustment of deviation from norms.

In the following sections, I shall outline a Japanese curriculum designed and implemented by applying the above-mentioned language management theory. The attempt was first made in the Japanese Language and Culture Program (*Ryūgakusei Bekka*) at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in Chiba, Japan in 2000 when the author became the director of the program. The curriculum developed is still in practice and has continuously been refined.

3. THE NOTING STAGE: THE PROBLEM WITH HOW TO INTERACT WITH THE JAPANESE

While the learning environment is crucially important for second language learning, it would be unrealistic to expect that once a language learner gains an opportunity to live in an environment where the target language is spoken, he or she will “naturally” or “automatically” acquire the language and eventually become proficient to interact with native speakers. One of the main reasons is that, as mentioned in the beginning of this paper, interaction in contact situations is difficult in nature due to the diversity of norms available and the complicated management processes on the basis of such norms. Another reason which seems to be equally significant is that language learners in reality are not necessarily placed in the position of getting involved in interaction with native speakers through the target language. As a result, it is apparent that problems with interaction in contact situations still remain even if the base norm selected for interaction is native norm, as in the case of second language teaching and learning. The fact that interaction is not necessarily acquired “naturally” or “automatically” is obvious among Japanese learners who study overseas in Japan. For instance, Japanese learners in Japan typically confront one or more of the following types of problems which may hinder their contact with local Japanese and, consequently, their acquisition of the Japanese language and literacy for interaction.

- (1) The problem of developing and maintaining a personal Japanese social network

Several factors may contribute to this problem. Firstly, although most of the Japanese learners in Japan are tertiary students over the age of 18, very few of them possess a personal social network with Japanese people before they arrive (Tanaka 2000). In other words, it is necessary

for them to establish a totally new network after their arrival in Japan. Secondly, many Japanese learners study in Japan through short term language programs (e. g. exchange students) and the time for developing personal social network is limited. Thirdly, with the advanced automation systems in the Japanese society, Japanese learners can survive daily life without relying on interpersonal contact. Finally, same as other foreigners in Japan, Japanese learners can easily get into contact with their own family and friends via telephone and emails. International and local news can also be obtained in English or many other languages through the internet. It should be correct to say that all these social factors support Japanese learners to live in the Japanese environment without having direct interaction with the local Japanese people.

(2) The problem of developing and maintaining a Japanese language network

With the widespread of English education in Japan, communication with local Japanese people without relying on the Japanese language has become more accessible. Indeed, many Japanese learners, particularly those who have strong features of a westerner, will not be surprised to be approached by Japanese in English. While English remains a strong foreign language in the Japanese society and is always seen as a means for the achievement of globalization, many Japanese will believe that it is necessary to communicate with foreigners in English, regardless of whether they are from an English or non-English speaking background. The problem of maintaining a Japanese language network still remains even if a Japanese learner is successful in developing a personal network with Japanese. Japanese learners, especially those from western countries, may find it more difficult to make new friends as their Japanese level becomes more advanced. Some other learners are not satisfied with their Japanese counterparts who do not intend to develop topics in depth or use sophisticated Japanese.² As a matter of fact, it is not easy for many Japanese learners studying in Japan to have “real interaction” using Japanese other than with their Japanese instructors and fellow students in the Japanese program they are enrolled in.

(3) The problem of inadequate non-grammatical competence

Needless to say, for successful interaction with local Japanese through the target language, Japanese learners will need to know more than merely the language in its narrow sense. As widely pointed out in

² Murakami (2005) discusses the social network and development of friendship among Japanese learners from America.

recent studies related to teaching Japanese as foreign language, so-called Japan literacy with integrated grammatical and non-grammatical competence, such as the ability to manipulate sociolinguistic and sociocultural rules in the Japanese society, is crucial (Neustupný 1995a; Muraoka 2000). Unfortunately, in the traditional paradigm of TJFL, the non-grammatical part of competence of Japanese has yet received sufficient attention (Fan 2006).

(4) The problem of avoidance

Although the goal of going to Japan is to study the Japanese language, Japanese learners in Japan are open to design and to control his/her language use. As an extreme case, a Japanese learner can choose not to use Japanese at all outside the Japanese classroom for reasons such as avoid exposing his/her identity or inviting unnecessary problems (Yokota 1991). The degree of using Japanese for interaction with Japanese is opted to be managed by the learners depending on their personal needs, interests, personality and other social factors.

The arguments above support the views that interaction is not easy to be acquired automatically or naturally and that language problems cannot be resolved without a systematic procedure of teaching and learning. This problem was noted and taken as the starting point of the entire language management process for the development of a new Japanese curriculum at KUIS. In other words, the goal of the Japanese curriculum was set as how to interact with the Japanese through the Japanese language.

4. THE PLANNING STAGE: DEFINING THE SCOPE OF TJFL FOR INTERACTION

As far as the policy makers of a language program are concerned, the problem regarding to how to interact with the Japanese is not only noted but also evaluated as inadequate and thus relevant treatment (i. e. management) has to be made. In order to establish a Japanese curriculum which can assist learners to acquire necessary ability when facing such problems, it is important at the planning stage to define the scope of the curriculum for teaching Japanese which “works” when learners interact with Japanese native speakers. In this section, I shall briefly introduce the design of (1) participants of the interaction, (2) authenticity of the interaction, and (3) perspectives of the interaction.

4.1. PARTICIPANTS OF THE INTERACTION: WHO ARE THE JAPANESE?

When designing a program for teaching Japanese interaction, it is necessary to make clear to both the teachers and the learners involved: "interacting with whom?" As for the Japanese program at KUIS, the counterparts of the Japanese learners are set to be "ordinary Japanese people who use the Japanese language in their daily life." This may sound insignificant but it is important to raise consciousness to the fact that there are "special Japanese," who are very familiar with foreigners and foreign languages, and/or who do not rely on using Japanese in their daily life. From the point of view of a Japanese learner, Japanese teachers and volunteers are more likely to be in the group of "special Japanese" in the way that they are sensitive to the Japanese language and they can talk about their own language. Existing literature on foreigner talk, for example, has suggested that unlike the special Japanese, ordinary Japanese deal with foreigners in a somewhat different manner. For instance, they are usually not used to the deviated pronunciation and usage of Japanese and thus tend to ask more often for clarification. In addition, they have a more distant feeling towards foreigners and as a result they tend to use more honorifics. Also as an inexperienced communicator with foreigners, they in general possess less repair strategies and issue more unintended topics and code-switching.

It should be mentioned here that the identity of "special Japanese" may change if they release their roles and approach the foreigners as an ordinary Japanese person. In the case of Japanese teachers, they may be viewed by their students as "ordinary Japanese" in small talks at the beginning of a class, consultation during the orientation period, and chats at parties and traveling together during excursions.

Regardless of being special or ordinary, the interaction between Japanese and foreigners constitutes a "contact situation." As widely studied in recent years, the interaction and language management in contact situations are fundamentally different from that in native situations in which no foreign factors are significant. Language policy makers should not neglect the fact that features of contact situations remain even if some of the foreign factors appear to be less apparent or cannot be observed on the surface (e.g. overseas students from Asian countries with a high proficiency in Japanese) and this should receive sufficient attention when designing the curriculum for Japanese learners.

4.2. AUTHENTICITY OF THE INTERACTION: HOW REAL SHOULD IT BE?

When planning for teaching Japanese interaction, it is also necessary to put a special note on “real interaction” since some cases can be considered as “pseudo” or “artificial” interaction designed for the purpose of teaching and learning. Interaction as the goal of language teaching and learning, from my point of view, should include also the type of interaction which is subjectively perceived by the learner involved as “real” or “actual” and not merely interaction which can be observed by outsiders. In this sense, classroom activities such as role plays or pair work are useful to enhance interaction using Japanese but may not necessarily be perceived as a real interaction by the learners. It should be correct to say that only the learner involved can tell whether an interaction has been a real experience or not although his/her counterparts in the situation can usually perceive the case.

Before we turn to look at the perspectives of the interaction, let me also add here that a real interaction for a language learner is not necessarily to be achieved with a natural setting and thus can, in theory, be obtained within the institutional environment. In more detail, a natural setting may encourage but does not guarantee a real interaction (e. g. playing *mamaoto*-housekeeping in a well-equipped modern kitchen does not result in a real cooking experience), and a rather artificial setting does not necessarily discourage real interaction (e. g. a rock-paper-scissors *janken*-game actually determines the order of players in a toy kitchen).

4.3. PERSPECTIVES OF THE INTERACTION: SOME BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Needless to say, teaching Japanese interaction will not be successful without clearly defining what interaction means. According to previous literature in the area of sociolinguistics (e. g. Hymes 1972), interaction is characterized by the following factors.

(1) Interaction has a purpose

The purpose for interaction is usually determined by the language user himself/herself such as transmitting a message, making a request, expressing feelings, maintaining human relationships, making fun and others (Jakobson 1960). Sometimes a language user may interact with a goal which is imposed by the society and/or directed by other people. Voting, giving a self-introduction, answering a telephone call, refusing an invitation are cases of this kind.

(2) Interaction involves participants other than the speaker

It is true that a language user can interact with himself/herself such as writing diaries and making confessions. However, it is more common

in daily life to interact with other people. The counterparts may be a single person (e. g. personal tutoring) or in a group (e. g. attending a lecture); distant (e. g. making telephone or writing emails to a friend) or close (e. g. conversation during dinner); once only (e. g. asking a stranger for direction) or continuous (e. g. joining extracurricular activities).

(3) Interaction involves the use of language

Although some of the purposes of interaction can be achieved through non-verbal channels (e. g. playing sports, games), language remains a powerful and efficient tool for human communication. In most societies in the world, interaction is achieved through either the spoken or the written channel of a language. As for language programs, interaction should be regarded as “speech events” in various “speech situations” (Hymes 1972).

(4) Interaction involves language and/or substantial behavior

While many types of interaction in daily life can be achieved through only language (e. g. making a speech, a telephone call, giving a lecture, writing a letter, reading newspaper), it is not uncommon to find some types of interaction which are accompanied by substantial behavior in cases such as conversations at a dinner party (e. g. talk while eating and drinking), or instructions at a sports event (e. g. giving instructions while playing). When designing a language program, the type of interaction should be considered.

(5) Language behavior for interaction is constrained by the situation

Appropriate language behavior for achieving a goal through the interaction with other participants in a situation essentially means more than accurate pronunciation and selection of vocabulary and construction of sentences. A successful interaction through language requires not only the competence of applying appropriate linguistic rules but also related sociocultural and sociolinguistic rules which make the language work.

5. THE ADJUSTMENT STAGE: ACTIVITIES AS A MEANS FOR TEACHING JAPANESE INTERACTION

In the discussion above, it is suggested that both teaching and learning of a second language can be regarded as a language management process which commences with language problems and aims for the removal of problems. In the case of designing a Japanese curriculum for foreign students with the goal of teaching and learning Japanese interaction, problems related to interacting with the Japanese are noted, and

in correspondence to the noting of such problems (= deviation from norms), a series of language teaching and learning procedures involving evaluation, planning and adjustment for their removal will become possible. The enforcement of various types of so-called “activities” inside and outside classrooms can be taken as an adjustment procedure for teaching Japanese interaction. Since the term “activity” has been used in various ways especially in the area of second language acquisition, it may be relevant to add a brief description of what “activity” is taken here.

5.1. WHAT IS AN “ACTIVITY”?

The concept of activity is important in the areas of linguistics and applied linguistics. Vygotsky’s activity theory (Vygotsky 1980, 1986), Levinson’s activity types (Levinson 1979) are among some of the influential frameworks. The term “activity” has been sometimes used interchangeable with “task”. However, as pointed out by Coughlan and Duff (1994), unlike “task” which can be defined as “a kind of behavioral blueprint provided to subjects in order to elicit linguistic data,” “activity” comprises (Coughlan and Duff 1994: 175) “the behavior that is actually produced when an individual or a group performs the task.” They further state that “it is the process, as well as the outcome, of a task, examined in its sociocultural context.”³ Along with the sociocultural views in previous studies such as Hymes (1972), Goffman (1974), Levinson (1979), Appel and Lantolf (1994), Neustupný (1995a) and Muraoka (2003), the term “activity” is taken here as the frame of sociocultural behavior of a language user in a speech situation which involves language use with locally determined goals, expectations and interpretations in accordance to his/her own socio-history.

From the psycholinguistic point of view, it has been claimed in existing Second Language Acquisition literature that language performance of a learner resulted from specific pedagogical tasks can be predicted with some degree of certainty (Ellis 2000). Moreover, some tasks are potentially closer to the presumed performances of language learners, which in turn would facilitate language acquisition (Pica, Kanagy and Falodun 1993). Therefore, it can be assumed that the experience of systematic activities performed in language classrooms assists learners’ framing of sociocultural activities. Under the framework of language management, strategi-

³ Recent discussions on the connotations of activities, tasks and exercises can be found in Ellis (2003).

cally constructed activities serve as an important adjustment procedure in the process of the management of potential language problems.

As far as the design of activities is concerned, the following two points seem to be of most importance and should be taken into consideration.

(1) The distinction of designer's and learner's activity

As Appel and Lantolf (1994) have pointed out before, performance in a task depends crucially on the interaction between individual and task, rather than on the inherent features of the task itself. In reality, it is obvious that "although teachers have the overt power to set the agenda, learners also have considerable power to accept, reject and change the intended design of activities" (Murphy 1993; Spence-Brown 2003). For this reason, attention should be given to the fact that pedagogically designed activities will elicit language performance which constitutes the framing of activities to be interpreted and approached by the learners, not necessarily by the designers, in completion of the adjustment procedure.

(2) The distinction of real and realistic performance

Since the goal of the entire language management process is the acquisition of real interaction (see Section 4.2), real activities perceived by the learners should be included, if not pre-dominant, among the pedagogically designed activities. Neustupný (1995a) advocates that activities should be real, rather than realistic, interaction and that it is important to distinguish superficially interactive exercises and authentically interactive performances. According to Neustupný, pedagogically designed activities can be categorized into three types, namely, "interpretation activities", "exercise activities" and "performance activities". In Section 5.2 below, I shall give a brief introduction of the three types of activities mentioned above.

5.2. THREE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

5.2.1. *Interpretation activities (IA, or kaishaku akutibitī)*

Interpretation activities are designed to facilitate a learner's understanding of language use necessary for sociocultural activities through direct or indirect provision of knowledge. In the traditional grammar-translation paradigm, interpretation activities have been dominant and mostly teacher-based. For instance, instructions, explanations given by the teacher in the form of a lecture, an introductory session (*dōnyū*) or a follow-up session (*fukushū*) are the most common forms taken for IAs. It is correct to say that IAs still remain important in recent approaches for second language teaching and their development is prominent. In many language

programs nowadays, learners are placed to take a more active role in order to gain new knowledge. Conducting interviews, project works (learner-based IAs), peer-reading and group discussions (interaction-based IAs) are some of the popular activities.

5.2.2. Exercise activities (EA, or renshū akutibitī)

While interpretation activities characterize the grammar-translation paradigm, exercise activities are indispensable in the audio-lingual paradigm in which learner-centered second language education is in the spotlight. Exercise activities are typically designed to facilitate a learner's skills of language use necessary for sociocultural activities on the basis of the knowledge gained through various IAs. Unlike IAs which activate the process of evaluation when learners are searching for new meanings, EAs encourage the process of correction which allows learners to acquire new skills from mistakes. From the learners' point of view, some EAs are no more than routines (e. g. repetitions, dictations, copy writing) while some EAs are very close to natural interaction (e. g. role plays, rehearsals, simulations). It is important to note that activities which on the surface appear to be very natural may still remain an exercise and not a real interaction experience for the learners. Since most of the social and linguistic factors for the interaction (e. g. the goal, participants, language used, non-grammatical and substantial behavior) are pre-arranged by the teacher and learners are not required to re-frame them according to their own judgment, learners in this type of EAs can usually "interact" without much pressure psychologically and it is not uncommon to find unexpected changes of interaction goals, abrupt abortion of interaction halfway, unmatched evaluation towards interaction (e. g. laugh over errors, repetitions of correct expressions). Similar to IAs, EAs can be teacher-based (e. g. flash cards), learner-based (e. g. rehearsal of speech) and interaction-based (e. g. pair-work).

5.2.3. Performance activities (PA, or jissaishiyō akutibitī)

Unlike interpretation activities and exercise activities which are fundamentally pedagogical-goal-oriented in nature, performance activities are designed to facilitate a learner's ability to make the knowledge earned in IAs and the skills acquired in EAs work so as to achieve an interaction with a real-world goal. It is not exaggerated to say that in the traditional paradigm of second language education, activities other than pedagogical-goal-oriented types are not emphasized, if not totally neglected. It has been mainly the learners' responsibility to use the knowledge and skills learnt from the language program in daily life social activities although

they are often “advised” and “encouraged” by their teachers to do so outside the classroom. In order to foster authenticity, PAs are usually conducted with the help of participants other than the usual teacher (e. g. visitor sessions) or a change of the setting (e. g. home visits). It is necessary to add, however, that PAs are also possible with the normal teacher in the normal classroom as long as the learners perceive the activity a real interaction experience and not an exercise (e. g. small talk, classroom instructions, after-class consultation). In addition, since PAs are usually designed to place the learners in a position in which they need to manipulate social and linguistic factors according to their own judgment of framing a real interaction, learners often find more pressure psychologically even if they are well-prepared in IAs and EAs. In the case of unsuccessful interaction, linguistic repairs (e. g. restatements, requests for clarification) and emotional reactions (e. g. upset, embarrassment) can be observed.

In the following section, I shall introduce an attempt of implementing the above-mentioned theoretical approach for teaching Japanese interaction in the Japanese Language and Culture Program at KUIS.

6. THE IMPLEMENTATION STAGE: AN INTRODUCTION OF THE COURSE “JAPANESE IN CONTEXT” (*JISSEN NIHONGO*)

6.1. CURRICULUM DESIGN

Departing from the theory of language management, the curriculum of the Japanese Language and Culture Program at KUIS was designed as follows.

(1) Goal-setting

The goal of Japanese language and teaching in the program was set as “TJFL for interaction” (*intāakushon no tame no nihongo kyōiku*). More specifically, the program aims to provide Japanese learners training for being able to actually interact with the Japanese people in Japanese. In order to achieve this goal, various types of contact situations possibly confronted by the learners during their stay in Japan are systematically analyzed and integrated into the program, and teaching and learning activities are encouraged for the acquisition of competence for actual interaction in such situations with the Japanese.

(2) Scope of Japanese language teaching

In view of the fact that linguistic ability in the narrow sense, such as the production of complicated sentences in accurate pronunciation, can support nothing more than parroting, the scope of Japanese lan-

guage teaching in the program is set to cover also the sociolinguistic and sociocultural aspects of the language for natural interaction as an adult language user.

(3) Types of courses

To support different needs among individual learners for their interaction with Japanese, three types of Japanese courses are designed and offered. Using the terms suggested by Neustupný (1995a), they can be regarded as (a) “Japan Literacy III” education: focuses on linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence; (b) “Japan Literacy II” education: focuses mainly on sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence with a minimum of linguistic competence; (c) “Japan Literacy I” education: focuses mainly on sociocultural competence.

Japanese in Context, or *Jissen Nihongo* as it is known to the students, is a course designed for “Japan Literacy III” education. It is a half year course which typically runs for 14 weeks in one semester. Students meet four times a week with one and a half hours in each class period (or one *koma* in the Japanese university system). In 2006, five levels (zero beginners to intermediate) were offered and a total of 56 overseas students in the Japanese program were enrolled in this course (see Table 2 below). Each level is taught by one native Japanese instructor. In addition, although the majority of students in this course are native speakers of English, the media for instruction in class is in principle Japanese.

Tab. 2: Background of students enrolled in “Japanese in Context” [*Jissen Nihongo*] course

	America	Brazil	Canada	England	Indonesia	Total
Level 1	12	0	1	1	0	14
Level 1.5	13	1	0	0	1	15
Level 2	8	0	0	1	0	9
Level 3	11	0	0	2	0	13
Level 4	5	0	0	0	0	5
Total	49	1	1	4	1	56

6.2. COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the orientation session held at the beginning of each semester, students who intend to take *Jissen Nihongo* are provided with the following course description:

“This course is designed to introduce Japanese at different levels necessary for students to communicate with native speakers in the

Japanese context. More specifically, classes in each course are structured to develop students' competence in the following three aspects: (1) Linguistic Competence for vocabulary, pronunciation and levels of speech; (2) Sociolinguistic Competence for using the language according to Japanese communication norms: e. g. knowledge of the Japanese politeness system, typical contact topics, strategies for handling expressions and comprehension problems; and (3) Sociocultural Competence for presenting themselves as a member in the Japanese society: e. g., knowledge of facts about Japan such as cycles in daily life, patterns of entertainment, hierarchy in family and work domain, social organization of contemporary Japanese society. Students will be introduced four or five topics based on the students' needs. Each topic will be taught in two or three weeks, which includes an introduction of related sociolinguistic and linguistic items; explanation and drills of necessary linguistic items; kanji and grammar quizzes; preparation of a performance activity interacting with Japanese people; administration of the performance activity; and summary of contents and follow-up assignments. Throughout the entire period of *Jissen Nihongo*, attendance and participation in all activities is particularly emphasized. Students are encouraged to use the university facilities such as the Self Access Learning Centre (SALC), the Media Education Centre, library, and canteens as resources."

Students will also receive a more detailed syllabus guide of their respective level in the first class from the instructor.

6.3. SYLLABUS DESIGN

As mentioned in the course description above, in each level of *Jissen Nihongo*, four to five topics, preferably topics of interest and importance to the students, are selected and a performance activity for each topic is designed in order to assist students to utilize relevant linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge they learnt in class so as to strengthen their competence for the interaction with Japanese. According to students' learning progress (i. e. zero beginners to intermediate), the scope of basic grammatical and non-grammatical items to be taught and the assessment policy in each level are indicated by the Japanese program. Teaching plans such as selection of topics, types of PA, teaching materials and teaching methods, however, can be determined by the instructors as long as it is relevant and efficient. For this reason, no particular textbook or reference book is fixed for each level. In the current *Jissen* Level 1 class, for instance, the following five topics are taught based on existing and self-developed teaching materials (Kikuchi 2006).

Tab. 3: Topics and PAs of *Jissen* Level 1

	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
Name of topic	<i>gaishoku</i> [Eating out]	<i>wakaranai mono ya kotoba</i> [Things and words you don't know]	<i>ryokō</i> [Traveling]	<i>kyōshitsu de no katsudō</i> [Activities inside classroom]	<i>nihon no mukashibanashi</i> [Japanese old stories]
Number of <i>koma</i> for this topic	7	9	9	8	7
Theme of the PA	Open a restaurant with special menus	Compile a dictionary of signs	Make a speech about your trip	Teach Japanese to do origami	Perform a play on <i>jūnishi</i> [the twelve horary signs]
Type of PA	Visitor session	Visitor session	Visitor session	Visitor session	Visitor session

As illustrated in Fan (2005), a typical flow of classroom activities for each topic is as follows:

Tab. 4: A flow chart of classroom activities for *Jissen Nihongo*

	Class time devoted to each topic: 12 hours (or 8 class periods) in 2–3 weeks
Interpretation Activities (IA) ↓	① Explanation of sociocultural elements related to the topic ↓
	② Explanation of grammar, vocabulary and other linguistic elements related to the topic, practice through various tasks ↓
Exercise Activities (EA) ↓	③ Interaction assignments over the weekend (e. g. interviewing host family members, survey, making journals) ↓
	④ Reviews of linguistic elements. Practice of listening comprehension ↓
Performance Activities (PA) ↓	⑤ Quiz ↓
	⑥ Preparation for Performance activity ↓
	⑦ Performance activity with class visitors ↓
	⑧ Follow up of Performance activity (e. g. self-evaluation, reports) ↓
Follow up	⑨ Reviews of vocabulary, kanji writing, and grammar ↓
	⑩ Reading comprehension tasks

6.4. PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES: AN EXAMPLE

Needless to say, the design and implementation of performance activities (PA) vary according to the learners' Japanese ability, goals of the topic (e.g. what kind of grammatical and non-grammatical items are to be taught), background and readiness of the visitors involved, among others. As an example, let me here introduce a performance activity which was designed and carried out as a part of *Jissen* Level 1 in 2005.⁴

This PA was carried out in the latter half of the course for the topic "Activities inside classroom" (see Table 3 above). The teaching plan prepared by the instructor included the followings.

- (a) Overall objectives for this topic: to understand classroom instructions. To be able to give instructions and explanations for making something.
- (b) Discourse functions: how to give instructions, how to give explanations, how to make an offer, how to give permission, how to say no.
- (c) Grammatical items: *-nai, -naide kudasai, -te, -de, -temo ii desu ka, -tewa ikemasen* for verbs, adjectives, and nouns).
- (d) Topic of the PA: "*nihonjin ni origami no tsukurikata o oshieru*" (Teaching Japanese to do origami).
- (e) Tasks for the overseas students: to teach the Japanese visitors how to do origami.
- (f) Tasks for the Japanese visitors: listen to the overseas students' instructions, ask questions, confirm and ask for confirmation.

The following is an excerpt of classroom interaction recorded in the seventh class of *Jissen* Level 1. Four students in Group 4 (A, B, C, D, all Americans) were trying to teach the class visitors (V1, V2, V3, all Japanese undergraduate students) how to make a balloon using the origami paper.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE VISITOR SESSION:	
Overseas students:	A, B, C, D (all Americans, beginners)
Japanese visitors:	V1, V2, V3 (all undergraduate students)
Japanese instructor:	K
1 K :	はい、じゃあ次の人どうぞ。(Okay, the next person please)
. . .	
	[B posted up the cardboard on which he has written down the instructions for doing origami]
2 A :	みなさん、おはようございます [笑い]。(hello everyone, good morning [laugh])
3 Vs :	おはようございます。(Good morning)
4 A :	私たち、私たちのグループは・風船、風船を作ります。みなさんは風船をツカッタことがありますか。[笑い] これからいっしょにつく・作りましょう。(we, our group will make balloons. Have you made balloons before?)

⁴ This performance activity was originally introduced in Fan (2005: 92–94).

PARTICIPANTS IN THE VISITOR SESSION:	
Overseas students:	A, B, C, D (all Americans, beginners)
Japanese visitors:	V1, V2, V3 (all undergraduate students)
Japanese instructor:	K
5 Vs :	[nodding]
6 A :	[笑い]じゃ、作りましょう。紙を一枚折ってください。(<i>[laugh], okay let's make it! Please fold one paper.</i>)
7 Vs :	[the visitors followed the instructions and started to fold.]
8 B :	次に・下に折ってください・・・[大きい模造紙で半分折る]・・・次は、左に折ってください・・・[模造紙を左に折る]・・・開いて・・・三角に折ってください・・・[模造紙を三角に折る]・・・できましたか。・・・裏返して・・・三角に折ってください・・・[模造紙を三角に折る。CがBを手伝う]・・・できましたか。 <i>(next, fold downward. [He folded the cardboard paper in half.] next, fold towards the left. [He demonstrated by folding toward the left.] open it... then fold into a triangle. [He folded his paper into a triangle.] Have you got it? ... turn to the other side, then make a triangle... [He folded his paper into a triangle. C helped D] ... Have you got it?)</i>
9 C :	次に両端を上へ・え・え・折ってください・・・[模造紙の両端を折る。DがCを手伝う]・・・上のはじを真ん中・真ん中に・折ってください。 <i>(Then the two ends up... e, e, fold it up... [She folded the two ends up. D helped C.]</i>
10 A :	[At this moment, A was trying to check whether V 1 was doing alright. He laughed.]
11 C :	上の両端を下に折ってください。 <i>(Fold the two upper ends downward.)</i>
12 A :	[At this moment, A tried to check whether V 1 was doing alright or not and helped.] こう、こう。[紙をV 1に折ってあげる] <i>(Like this, like this. [A folded the paper for V1.]</i>
13 V 1 :	あ、あ、はい。[V 1があまりうまく行かないようで恥ずかしそうに笑う。V 2に聞く。] <i>(Haa, okay. [V1 did not get it well and she was a bit embarrassed and laughed. She asked V2.]</i>
14 A :	[V 2に向かって]わかりますか。 <i>([turning to V2 and said] do you know how to do it?)</i> [V1 and V2 checked again. A tried to help.] ここ、中に。 <i>(Here, put it inside.)</i>
15 V 2 :	ああ。 <i>(oh I see.)</i>
16 V 1 :	これは? <i>(how about this?)</i>
17 A :	そうそう。 <i>(yeah yeah)</i> ・・・
18 C :	[笑う]両端を・・・中に折ってください。 <i>([laugh] the two ends... put them inside.)</i> ・・・ [D helped C] ・・・ [B was trying to help V1 by folding the paper for her. At the same time A was also trying to help V2 and V3.]
19 A :	(・・・)
20 V 1 :	[V 2に向かって]やったことある? <i>([Turning to V2 and said] have you made this before?)</i> ・・・
21 All :	[笑う] <i>([laugh])</i>

PARTICIPANTS IN THE VISITOR SESSION:	
Overseas students:	A, B, C, D (all Americans, beginners)
Japanese visitors:	V1, V2, V3 (all undergraduate students)
Japanese instructor:	K
22D :	裏返して両端を上折ってください。・・・もう一度両端を真ん中に折ってもう一度ください。(Turn to the other side and fold the two ends upward... Again, fold the two ends to the center again.) [While D was explaining, C pointed with her fingers to the Japanese instructions written on the blackboard.]
23D :	両端を上折ってください・両端を真ん中に折ってください・・・両端を下に折ってください・・・両端を中に入れてください。(Fold the two ends upward, then fold them to the center... again fold them downward.) [D passed her work to A with a "hai" and A tried to set the balloon.]
24A :	今ふくらませてください。(Now you can blow it up.)
25Vs :	[ふくらませる] あ、できない [笑う]。(blowing] oh, I can't make it [laugh].)
26A, B :	[ビジターを手伝う]([A and B tried to help the visitors.] ・・・ [V 3 was the first to finish and she played with the balloon she made.]
27A, B :	できあがりでした ! [笑う](I made it! [laugh])
28Vs :	[clapping hands.]

Although only simple words and structures were used in the above conversation, it is not difficult to discover many important features of "actual interaction" between the overseas students and the Japanese visitors, which cannot usually be observed in traditional Japanese classrooms.

- (1) Despite their limited proficiency in Japanese which hinders communication with unknown or unprepared items, the overseas students did not rely on code-switching but made an effort to interact with the visitors using only Japanese.
- (2) The overseas students made an effort to apply their knowledge of Japanese learnt particularly for the PA by integrating knowledge they earned previously in order to achieve their interaction goals (i. e. teaching the visitors how to do origami), e. g. greeting (turn 2), confirming (turn 8, 14), closing up (turn 27).
- (3) Japanese was used not only with the Japanese visitors but also with fellow students, e. g. after Turn 23 student D passed her work to student A with a *hai* (-here).
- (4) Although both the overseas students and the Japanese visitors were aware of the fact that they could communicate more efficiently, they did not try to solve communication problems in English.
- (5) Japanese was used among the Japanese visitors (e. g. in turn 20 V1 turned to V2 and asked if she had made origami balloon before or not) and it is expected that this was overheard by the overseas students.

- (6) More importantly, the overseas students “really” taught the Japanese visitors how to make origami balloons.
- (7) In addition, through listening to the overseas students’ explanations and asking them “real” questions, all of the Japanese visitors finally learnt how to make origami balloons which they had not known before.

As demonstrated in the above example, with well designed and structured pedagogical activities such as interpretation, exercise and performance activities, a real sociocultural interaction experience can be expected even among Japanese learners at the beginner level and in a rather unnatural setting (i. e. visitor session). From the point of view of second language acquisition, I believe that it is a crucial process for learners to make sense and keep alive the Japanese provided in the program (i. e. to actually use Japanese native norms for interaction), and that this process will eventually assist learners to establish and design their own use of Japanese when interacting with Japanese speakers in real life as adult language users (i. e. apply Japanese native norms together with other norms for interaction in contact situations).

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper I have outlined a theoretical approach of teaching and learning Japanese interaction on the basis of the language management theory. It is suggested here that the entire adjustment process commences with the identification of problems as interacting with the Japanese through the Japanese language in contact situations. The goal of a Japanese language program is seen as the removal of these problems and a series of planning and adjustment procedures can be implemented. As far as adjustment procedures are concerned, activities made accessible for learners inside and outside classroom are of most importance. It is believed that systematically constructed activities in TJFL programs will assist learners in framing their language behavior for the participation of sociocultural activities in real life and this in turn will facilitate their acquisition of Japanese in a wider sense. In the latter part of the paper, I have also introduced an attempt applying such an approach for teaching Japanese interaction at a Japanese university.

For future development of Japanese programs which emphasize language use for interaction, it is obvious that other than asking how Japanese interaction should be taught through the development of various types of activities, it is equally important to further our understanding of what is actually happening when foreigners interact with Japanese with

real sociocultural purposes. As exemplified in the beginning of this paper, interpersonal interaction in the contemporary postmodern society is much more complicated than a native speaker can imagine. Norms other than native norms may be used and subsequent problems may arise. How should a Japanese learner orient himself/herself when interacting with Japanese before he/she elects the use of language? Further studies into the mechanism of interaction involving foreigners in contact situations are inevitable for the teaching and learning of Japanese interaction in the future.

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