Language education is a highly contested arena within any nation and one that arouses an array of sentiments and identity conflicts. What languages, or what varieties of a language, are to be taught and learned, and how? By whom, for whom, for what purposes and in what contexts? Such questions concern not only policy makers but also teachers, parents, students, as well as businesspeople, politicians, and other social actors. For Japan, a nation state with ideologies of national identity strongly tied to language, these issues have long been of particular concern. This volume presents the cacophony of voices in the field of language education in contemporary Japan, with its focus on English language education. It explores the complex and intricate relationships between the “local” and the “global,” and more specifically the links between the levels of policy, educational institutions, classrooms, and the individual.

“In the much-contested field of foreign language teaching in Japan, this book takes the reader directly to the places that really matter. With the help of expert guides in the fields of anthropology, sociology and linguistics, we are invited to join a vital discussion about the potentially revolutionary implications of the Japanese government’s policy of teaching Japanese citizens to not only passively engage with written English texts but to actually use English as a means of global communication.” — Robert Aspinall, PhD (Oxford), Professor, Faculty of Economics, Department of Social Systems, Shiga University, Japan

“This insightful book about language education involves different disciplines using ethnographic methods. Both ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers of Japanese (or English) collaboratively examine two different types of qualitative approaches in Japan – the positivistic and the processual. This is a must-have book for researchers and educators of language who are interested in not only Japan but also language education generally.” — Shinji Sato, PhD (Columbia), Director of the Japanese Language Program, Department of East Asian Studies, Princeton University, USA

Cover photo: courtesy of Jin Sakai
Foreign Language Education in Japan
CRITICAL NEW LITERACIES: THE PRAXIS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING (PELT)

Volume 3

Series Editors:

Marcelle Cacciattolo, Victoria University, Australia
Tarquam McKenna, Victoria University, Australia
Shirley Steinberg, University of Calgary; Director of Institute of Youth and Community Studies, University of the West of Scotland
Mark Vicars, Victoria University, Australia

As a praxis-based sequence these texts are specifically designed by the team of international scholars to engage in local in-country language pedagogy research. This exciting and innovative series will bring a dynamic contribution to the development of critical new literacies. With a focus on literacy teaching, research methods and critical pedagogy, the founding principle of the series is to investigate the practice of new literacies in English language learning and teaching, as negotiated with relevance to the localized educational context. It is being and working alongside people in the world that is at the core of the PELT viewpoint. The Praxis of English Language Teaching and Learning series will focus on inter-culturality and interdisciplinary qualitative inquiry and the dissemination of “non-colonised” research.
Foreign Language Education in Japan

Exploring Qualitative Approaches

Foreword by Ryuko Kubota

Edited by

Sachiko Horiguchi
Temple University Japan Campus, Tokyo, Japan

Yuki Imoto
Keio University, Tokyo, Japan

and

Gregory S. Poole
Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan

SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword vii
  *Ryuko Kubota*

Preface xi

1. Introduction 1
  *Sachiko Horiguchi, Yuki Imoto and Gregory S. Poole*

  *Kiri Lee and Neriko Musha Doerr*

3. Identity, Place, and Language: Conflict and Negotiation in the Writing of an English Textbook for Japanese Secondary School Students 35
  *Thomas Hardy*

4. Stuck in between: English Language Environment for International Students and Skilled Foreign Workers in Japan 51
  *Akiko Murata*

5. Bringing a European Language Policy into a Japanese Educational Institution: The Contested Field of Institutional Foreign-Language Education Reform 65
  *Yuki Imoto and Sachiko Horiguchi*

6. Effecting the “Local” by Invoking the “Global”: State Educational Policy and English Language Immersion Education in Japan 85
  *Gregory S. Poole and Hinako Takahashi*

7. Cultures of Learning in Japanese EFL Classrooms: Student and Teacher Expectations 103
  *Tiina Matikainen*

8. Two Classes, Two Pronunciations: A Postmodern Understanding of Power in EFL Students’ Classroom Performance 119
  *Akiko Katayama*
# Table of Contents

9. Willingness to Communicate: The Effect of Conference Participation on Students’ L2 Apprehension  
   *Rieko Matsuoka*  
   133

10. An Internship in Communicative English Teaching  
    *Patrick Rosenkjar*  
    147

Afterword  
   *Neriko Musha Doerr*  
   167

Appendix: Discussion Questions  
   *Akiko Katayama*  
   179

About the Authors  
   183

Index  
   187
“Globalization” has become a catchword to describe and transform various facets of our contemporary society. The word conjures up a borderless society in which diverse people, commodities, and information traverse freely, creating numerous opportunities for exchanging and sharing perspectives, customs, and values. Of the many real and virtual global spaces created in business, media, entertainment, and education, one concrete example of a global space is the international sport event. In preparation for the Tokyo Summer Olympics of 2020, the then newly elected Governor of Tokyo, Yoichi Masuzoe, visited the Sochi Winter Games of 2014. During the press conference upon his return, he made the following comments about Sochi:

… One problem was that they only spoke Russian. Usually when we go abroad and shop, people there can at least say, “One, two, three” (in English) … No language other than Russian was spoken. The same can be said about Japan. It’d be no good if only Japanese could be used. As I said before, I think it’s good to have volunteer interpreters, to have English conversation lessons. … Actually the first official language of the Olympics is French and the second is English. … So I think it’ll be good if some people serve as volunteers in French. … (original in Japanese)

Some readers may be puzzled by the logic of this comment. Clearly, if Russian people are unlikely to speak English, then the host of the Tokyo Olympics should provide interpretation service in Russian. However, the oddity of the comment is perhaps unquestioned by most people in Japan due to a prevailing discourse that equates “global” (or anything “foreign”) with “English” (and “French” in this particular case), while entirely disregarding actual linguistic practices and demands. As the above comment suggests, issues of teaching additional languages are fraught with paradoxes. These paradoxes are intertwined with politics and ideologies at the state, institutional, and individual levels, as focused in this book. For another example of paradox, we can take a look at Canada, where I currently live. Compared to the anti-bilingual education policies and sentiments in the United States, Canadian language education policy appears to be progressive, as represented by its successful French immersion programs (i.e., bilingual education in French and English for English-speaking students). However, a closer look at the situation reveals that the Canadian support for bilingual education applies only to the two official
languages—English and French, or “white settlers’ languages.” The fact that there are very few bilingual or immersion programs in languages other than the official languages implies the political marginalization of indigenous peoples and settlers of color (Haque, 2012; Haque & Patrick, 2015). The irony is that the lack of an official language in the United States, which leads to fewer legal or financial constraints in education, perhaps has enabled local school administrators, teachers, and parents to support far more varieties of programs, including immersion, two-way immersion, and bilingual programs, in various languages.

As in the United States, no official language is specified in Japan. However, in actuality, Japanese is assigned the status of an official language. Another dominant language in Japan with a symbolic (but not necessarily pragmatic) status is English, as we have discussed in the Tokyo governor’s comment above, and as was epitomized in the public discussion and debates surrounding a proposal made in 2000 about making English an official language (see Butler & Iino, 2005; Kubota, 2002). Although the 2000 proposal was never adopted, education policy and practice implemented since then have reflected a further prioritization of English language teaching and learning. A paradox here is that the emphasis on English does not necessarily correspond to actual linguistic demands in domestic or international workplaces; multilingualism and locally situated linguistic practice, rather than a universal use of English, is the norm (see Murata in this volume; Kubota & McKay, 2009; Kubota, 2013; see also increased international scholarly attention to multilingualism and plurilingualism—e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Martin-Jones, Blackledge, & Creese, 2012). Nevertheless, the discourse of English as a universally useful lingua franca shapes policies and practices in various institutions in Japan, while marginalizing the teaching of foreign languages other than English.

It is important to note that the emphasis on English language learning, which signifies an outward orientation and the neoliberal ideology of human capital development (Kubota, 2011; Park & Lo, 2012), paradoxically coexists with an inward thrust toward nationalism in Japan. Enhancing global capitalism dominated by multinational corporations, neoliberalism has transformed a welfare state into a corporate-style society of competitiveness supported by a flexible and unstable employment system. Developing communication skills especially in English is deemed part of the essential competence to survive in this unstable and yet globalized workforce. Conversely, this emphasis on the outward vision of internationalization ( kokusaika ) and globalization ( gurōbaruka ) has also promoted patriotic values in social and educational contexts. The nationalistic trend is being strengthened under the Abe conservative government’s uncompromising stance toward conflicts with neighboring countries. Such a trend is further fueled by xenophobia overtly expressed by some citizens who experience social and economical marginalization, which is not unrelated to the economic disparity created by neoliberalism and the nation’s economic stagnation (Yasuda, 2012).
The above discussion raises a host of questions especially with regard to English language education: What is the ultimate goal of learning English? Is it to increase individual economic mobility, to enhance economic competitiveness of the nation, to express and disseminate the nationalistic interest, or rather to promote border-crossing communicative competence with critical understanding of culture, history, and ideology (Kubota, 2012)? Does teaching English foster “global human resources”—a recent buzzword in Japan—or “‘docile’ bodies” (Foucault, 1995, 138)—neoliberal subjects with linguistic skills and subjugated dispositions?

The outward-inward tension creates contradictions in not only teaching English as a foreign language but in other aspects of language education. For instance, teaching a heritage language in a globalized society naturally necessitates negotiation with linguistic practice that reflects hybridity and diaspora, given the fact that language is increasingly used across linguistic, cultural, and ethnic borders. The neoliberal notions of human capital and “global human resources” imply the need to foster plurilingual individuals and build a multilingual society. Such outward trends run into conflict with an inward convergent worldview that attempts to determine what type of heritage language should be taught in what way and what kind of national identity should be fostered (see Blackledge & Creese, 2010 for the U.K. context).

This indicates that language education is shaped by a complex interplay between policy and practice, which hides or reveals coherent or paradoxical discourses. This also indicates that the ways in which power is exercised in language education symbolizes governmentality. Drawing on the notion of governmentality discussed by Foucault, Pennycook (2002) argues that language education policy and practice should be understood as a multiplicity of means and techniques to exercise power, through which policies and governances are enacted as local practices, rather than as an imposition of rules and laws by means of authoritative power only. This perspective encourages us to analyze how not only macro-level discourse, but also diverse micro-level discourses and social practices (e.g., social, cultural, political, economic, scholarly, and educational activities) function to enact governmental power. Thus, exploring how language education policies and practices are carried out at both macro and micro levels—e.g., state, institutional, classroom, and individual dimensions—will enable us to understand how practices, no matter how seemingly incoherent or paradoxical, are organized through discourses that circulate power and to explore where resistance might exist. In this sense, this book offers valuable knowledge and perspectives on language education as the embodiment of politics and practices in diverse locations in Japan and beyond.

NOTE

REFERENCES


Ryuko Kubota
University of British Columbia
This project originated from a panel session titled “Changes and Continuities in Japanese Educational Institutions: Foreign Language Education and the Discourses of Multi-Culturalism” that was organized by Imoto and Horiguchi for the Annual Meeting of the Anthropology of Japan in Japan, held at Temple University Japan in 2009.

The issues raised in the panel resonated with many of the conference participants, who had experience teaching English or were involved in international education in Japan and who saw the necessity of addressing language education policy from the ground level using qualitative approaches. We are grateful for the constructive comments we received from the panel audience, and particularly to Jerry Eades who encouraged us to bring the papers to publication.

It is hard to believe that the project has since then extended into a six-year conversation, orchestrated by Greg Poole. We thank Thomas Hardy for providing us the comfortable space of his home for the numerous lively authors’ meetings over meals and drinks. And we thank all contributors for their good humor and patience in this long process and for their continuing friendship and intellectual support. The real fruits of the project have undoubtedly been in the hours of discussion and thinking that took place among applied linguists and anthropologists as well as between the editors. We hope that the manuscript is not only a reflection of this process but a springboard toward further dialogue.

Since the initial inception of this project, much has moved on in the field of Japanese education, not to mention the deep impact of the triple disasters of March 2011 on Japanese society. We believe that the fundamental issues that this volume raises such as power, local contexts, and the need for dialogues, are still, if not more, relevant today.

Finally, we extend our sincere gratitude to the series editors, Marcelle Cacciattolo, Tarquam McKenna, Mark Vicars, Shirley Steinberg, publisher Peter de Liefde, Kim Schuefftan, Yuka Mizuno, Akiko Katayama, and Kumiko Sawaguchi.

Japanese names within each chapter are written as in the vernacular, surname first followed by given name. 100 JPY ($100) is equivalent to approximately 0.80 USD ($0.80).

Sachiko Horiguchi
Yuki Imoto
Gregory S. Poole
1. INTRODUCTION

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Language education is a perennially contested arena within a nation and one that arouses an array of sentiments and identity conflicts. What languages, or what varieties of a language, are to be taught and learned, and how? By whom, for whom, for what purposes and in what contexts? Such questions concern not only policy makers but also teachers, parents, students, as well as businesspeople, politicians, and other social actors. With the gradual dismantling of “modern” ideologies that had bound one language to one nation-state, such contests are now being uncovered, revealing fluid, pluralistic notions and practices of language by individuals at the local level. The heightened discourse of “globalization” and the dominance of English as the “global” language means that, for many countries, concerns are increasingly directed towards English language education.

This volume seeks to present the cacophony of voices in the field of language education for the case of Japan, with a focus on English language education, which has been a dominating concern throughout the postwar period. We explore the complex and intricate relationship between the “local” and the “global” (see also Poole, 2008), and more specifically the links between the levels of policy, educational institutions, classrooms, and the individual. Broadly put, such an exploration that takes a qualitative approach to the study of language education is pressing, within a climate that favors standardization towards global norms and emphasizes quantified evidence based on statistical data to reinforce those norms. In this introductory chapter, we set out the social and historical context of education, and particularly of foreign-language education, to show how the Japanese case speaks to larger global trends. We wish to thus provide a thematic and theoretical basis for bringing together researchers in applied linguistics, sociology, anthropology, as well as concerned educators and English speakers in Japan, into the discussion that follows in this volume.

THE JAPANESE CASE: INTER/NATIONALISM, “GLOBAL STANDARDS” IN EDUCATION, AND THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

From a historical and socio-political perspective, Japan poses an interesting and illuminating case for studying the processes of language education and policy. Despite
the emergent discourses of multiculturalism, as a society it is mostly perceived and portrayed through the media, education, and other public arenas, as “monolingual.” On the other hand, Japan is often described as a keen and creative “borrower” of foreign systems, including its language, which combines Chinese-originated and Western-originated loan words distinguished in its three-part orthography. The creative and “permeable” nature of the Japanese language, however, when placed against English and set in the international context, becomes an impenetrable, primordial, and mystified culture. A very brief portrayal of how the concepts of “language,” “Japanese,” and “English” have developed in relation to the changing education system—intricately tied to social, political, and economic changes—will help us to explain how these are in turn linked to the notion of “culture,” which we wish to problematize in this chapter.

The formation of a standardized national language, kokugo (Yeonsuk, 1996; Carroll, 1997; Mashiko, 2010), can be largely attributed to the establishment of the modern education system that began as part of the Meiji government’s enterprise of Westernization. As scholars have pointed out, however, it was only after World War II that the ideology of a homogeneous, mass middle-class society came to be operationalized, and this has been upheld by a highly standardized educational system structured by rigorous entrance examinations—the belief that homogeneity and education has enabled Japan to attain a highly literate and efficient workforce, the engine that drives the nation’s economic power (see Oguma, 2004; Marshall, 1994). As Japan joined the ranks of the economic superpowers and gained confidence on the international stage in the 1980s, discourses of “internationalization” were paralleled with expressions of Japanese identity. Nihonjinron (theories on the Japanese) literature proliferated during this period of internationalization, which often made reference to the “uniqueness” of Japanese culture and its inseparability from the Japanese language, both only truly understandable by those of “Japanese blood” (Miller, 1982). The use of “internationalism” to express Japanese national identity was particularly prevalent in the 1980s, when conservative Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro propounded a series of educational reforms to drive Japan’s internationalization. Although the extent of the outcome of reforms are contested, his legacies can be identified in the contemporary context (Hood, 2001), with Liddicoat (2007, 42) stating that “Japanese policy in relation to the teaching and learning of English in Japan and of Japanese abroad appears concerned with increasing the symbolic power of Japanese in a global linguistic marketplace.”

Since the 1990s with the burst of the economic bubble, the myth of a homogeneous, middle-class Japan has been dismantled, to be replaced by discourses of a stratified society. There has been an increased visibility of poverty, and a problematization of the apathy of younger generations in a social system faced with serious financial and demographic issues in accommodating a super-ageing, declining population (see Allison, 2013; Kingston, 2012; Goodman et al., 2011; Oguma, 2012). Serious fiscal problems led to the dramatic implementation of neoliberal ideologies, which had begun to be formulated during the Nakasone era but had previously been held
back by ministry-dominant politics (Schoppa, 1993; Hood, 2003). With increasing dominance of neoliberalism in economic, social, and education reforms in postindustrial nations from the 1970s (Takayama, 2008; Kubota, 2011b), efficiency, decentralization, and flexibilization became key words that found their way to Japan particularly during Prime Minister Koizumi’s reform years from 2004, with much that had previously been controlled by the state being off-loaded to the market.

Under a neoliberal regime, education becomes redefined as a market-driven private commodity. In terms of Japanese education, neoliberal restructuring was steadily taking place as in other postindustrial states, despite being disarticulated and masked under discourses that focused on the buzz word of kosei (individuality) since the 1980s and, more radically, of yutori (“relaxed” education) reforms since the 1990s (Takayama, 2009). The increasingly visible shift of power from state bureaucracy to the business sector also meant a move away from postwar egalitarianism to a multitrack system that would better serve the changing economic structures; six-year integrated “elite” secondary schools were introduced, breaking down the postwar 6-3-3 single-track system, and school choice and ability grouping were also introduced.

At the levels of compulsory education, a sense of “crisis” concerning failing academic standards ensued after the yutori reforms were implemented in 2002 (Tsuneyoshi, 2004). The relaxed curriculum saw a 30% reduction of curricular content but soon after it was introduced into public schools, it incited criticism from various groups, including the neoconservatives, who called for a return to “basics” and to more “traditional,” rigorous styles of education, as well as those on the left (e.g., Kariya, 2012; Fujita, 2010), who saw the reforms as leading to social disparity and a widening academic gap (Goodman, 2003). These critiques coincided with “the PISA shock” in 2003, when Japan’s academic performance in the world rankings saw “a significant drop” (see Takayama, 2008). The “problem of declining academics standards” was heavily reported in the media, and the 2008 revisions with increased academic content in the Curriculum Guidelines put a quick end to the 2002 reforms.

The levels of access to English-language education is also increasingly being perceived as stratified, with English-language skills being one symbolic “global capital” in the context of a more flexible, school-to-work transition where students can no longer depend on the “protection” of a company offering lifetime employment or the “name” of a top university on a resume (Brinton, 2011). Neoliberal discourses emphasize that it is the responsibility of the individual to acquire the information and skills, including communication or language ability, that are considered important for the new knowledge economy—self-development of the “human capital” needed to survive in a competitive labor market (Keeley, 2007). English attainment is thus increasingly stratified, not only generationally but also in terms of class and gender through the commodified English education market—private language conversation and cram schools with an “international” orientation serving those with the economic means, especially women with ambitions for upward mobility through the cultural capital of English skills (Kitamura, 2011). As Kubota (2011b) finds,
together with this neoliberal promise of English giving individuals a competitive edge and the accountability framework that measures this skill, language teaching has increasingly focused on the superficial aspects of language competence that can be “objectively” quantified and tested by language exams, while overlooking the many personal, cultural, and historical dimensions of the subjective experience of language learning and language use, or “translanguaging” (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

While the distribution of discourses of “internationalization” and English education has thus become diverse and stratified, the public discourse has shifted to the current overarching buzzword of “globalization,” which is more about aligning with the “global standard” for survival of individuals in the market than of asserting national identity. However, the power balance between the two is a volatile and ambivalent one (Seargeant, 2011) and, as Kubota (2013) also notes, the sociopolitical climate of Japan during this period of “globalization” has been characterized by growing nationalism.

The following more recent policies concerned with cultivating “global leaders” illustrate the extent of the impact of globalization discourse in the education and employment market. The five-year Global 30 Project (Burgess et al., 2010) was launched in 2010 by MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology), whereby 13 prestigious universities were selected to promote English medium instruction (EMI) to raise the number of international students from roughly 20,000 to 200,000 (Phan, 2013). This was followed by a five-year Super Global High School scheme for 56 selected high schools across Japan in 2013 (Clavel, 2014), and the ten-year Top Global University Project launched in 2014 for 37 leading public and private universities to boost their global ranking (Maruko, 2014). Such funding schemes for the cultivation of global jinzai (global human capital) in higher education and other policies that propose to accommodate foreign students have been implemented alongside, and have been driven by, business sectors calling for radical change, such as the electronic commerce/internet company Rakuten, which raised media attention in proposing to conduct all business in English from 2010. On the surface, these policies seem to demonstrate an expansion of state and business investment in globalizing Japanese citizens; but “globalization” reform in higher education has generally been invested in a small and competitively selected top tier of society, which, ironically, tends to involve the core established institutions most resistant to grassroots change (Imoto, 2013). Moreover, as Kamikubo (2013) points out, the quintessentially neoliberal language of global jinzai pronounced in business as well as educational sectors in Japan, places the responsibility of attaining global human capital on the individual workers and students, which may potentially allow these sectors to escape from institutional commitments towards cultivating global human resources.

In all these policies, globalization is conflated with Englishization (Phan, 2013, see also Murata’s chapter). Returning to the larger picture, we are reminded of the extent to which the English language is a salient symbol in Japanese society (Seargeant, 2011), not only as the tool and fuel for responding to global pressures, but also in
the larger historical story of its modernization ever since the arrival of Commodore Perry’s Black Ships in 1853, and more pertinently after the arrival of the GHQ in 1948 and the subsequent influence of American culture (see Seargeant, 2009; Terasawa, 2014, for an extended discussion). The English language represents the historical ambivalence of Japan towards the cultural Other; English is both desirable and threatening—or, as Aspinall (2003, 2013) implies, desirable if acquired in a controlled manner so that “Japaneseness” is not obscured (see also Seargeant, 2011).

In spite of, or perhaps because of this ambivalence, there seems to be an ingrained consensus in both the native and scholarly discourse, that postwar English-language education in Japan has been a “failure” (Aspinall, 2006; Poole, 2005), which at the policy level is linked to the absence of a coherent language policy (Yamada, 2003), but more generally tends to be explained in terms of Japanese cultural characteristics. This perception of “failure” has driven discussions of foreign-language education reform at the national policy level for the past fifty years, creating a vast industry of foreign-language teaching and a population of dedicated English-language learners.2 Rather than taking for granted that foreign-language education has “failed” and to suggest solutions, however, we suggest the need to unpack how this “failure” is constructed and consumed by interested actors. We are interested in how this perception is explained and legitimized through complex discourses of “culture” and how it interplays with issues of power and economics and identity. We outline the conversations among applied linguists and anthropologists on this issue to provide further context, specifically for the case of foreign-language education in Japan.3

THE CULTURAL DEBATES SURROUNDING FOREIGN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN JAPAN

At the center of cultural debates surrounding foreign-language education in Japan are numerous theories proposed as to why the Japanese have great difficulty in acquiring proficiency in English as a second language. The blame usually falls on either the students/citizens themselves or their learning/educational/social environment. Seargeant, in his detailed account of the various meanings and functions of English in Japan, notes Haye’s (1979) stereotyped characterization (cited in Seargeant, 2009, 53) of how “the inward nature of the Japanese, the periods of ethnocentrism, ultranationalism and xenophobia all augur against the teaching of English.” A more recent citation that Seargeant gives are the remarks made in 2006 by Ibuki Bunmei, the neonationalist Minister of Education at the time, which argued against the need to teach English at the elementary level4 because it would diminish the Japanese sense of values (2009, 15).

On the surface, the perceived lack of success with English-language teaching (ELT) in Japan appears discordant with the fact that Japanese education shows relatively good results in other areas (in spite of internal academic crises). Japan is famous for “borrowing” and “copying” technology, and anthropologists have noted that such “copying” is an important theme in Japanese education—“imitation is
the highest form of praise’ in the Japanese cultural logic” (Rohlen & LeTendre, 1996, 371). In fact, the Japanese language itself consists of fully 13% loanwords, mostly from English (Honna, 1995, 45). Why then, experts ask, has there been such a widespread failure in, effectively, learning to “imitate” or acquire the English language?

The discourse surrounding “foreign-language education failure” is perhaps most completely summarized by the sociolinguist Loveday (1996, 95–99), who describes ELT in the context of language contact in Japan. He explains how Japan is a case of a “non-bilingual distant contact-setting” because of deficiencies that are related to 1) the system of education, 2) the teachers, 3) the institutions and 4) the socio-linguistic environment. Loveday argues that the education system has failed because of the emphasis on grammar and translation teaching methodology (GT, or yakudoku in Japanese, see below), the “wash-back” of entrance exams, and a history of reductionist concentration on receptive skills for decoding foreign texts. Teachers are at fault, he continues, because of their often limited proficiency in English, lack of overseas experience, and opportunities for practical training (professional development [PD] or faculty development [FD], as it is often glossed at universities), and for perpetuating large, mixed-ability classes with a strict syllabus and time limits using standardized texts prescribed by MEXT. He argues that there is an institutional conservatism that inhibits effective English-language learning—the local classroom norm of teacher-centered lecturing, collective conformity, emphasis on rote-learning methods, and absolute correctness, and students motivated only by the extrinsic demands of university entrance exams. Finally, Loveday points out that socio-linguistic attitudes hamper proper second-language learning due to 1) the linguistic distance between Japanese and English, 2) culturally specific styles of expression and interaction with an emphasis in Japan on self-control, modesty, reassurance, and perfectionism (factors, which, when combined, prioritize the written text over verbal communication and make for taciturn students in the language classroom), 3) a nonintegrative attitude of ethnocentrism among Japanese speakers, 4) a lack of both perceived and actual need for foreign languages, and finally, 5) little support for maintenance of language skills after schooling, leading to wide-scale attrition. Loveday (see also Aspinall, 2003, 2006) thus summarizes nicely the arguments underpinning the widespread cultural belief in Japan, held by the person on the street and the education expert alike, that ELT has failed.

This belief is strengthened by the prevalence of ELT in postwar Japan. Like many industrialized nations, Japan has a high rate of postsecondary school attendance, with 2.5 million undergraduates enrolled at over 600 national, public and private four-year universities (Hirowatari, 2000). The majority of all Japanese teenagers, then, apply to take a college entrance exam for admission into a tertiary institution. Most such admissions exams include a compulsory English proficiency subtest, even though English as a foreign language (EFL) is not a state-required subject at primary, secondary, and tertiary schools in Japan (Poole, 2003). Partly because of this, university entrance exams focus on English. Over ten million twelve to eighteen
year-olds, and another million or so university students, have no choice but to study English. As Terasawa (2014) shows, based on his meticulous historical analysis, despite the fact that English officially became a compulsory subject in 2002, it has de facto been a compulsory subject in Japanese secondary schools throughout the postwar period, with a dramatic increase in the enrollment rate of students attending English-language classes in secondary schools in the 1960s. Not only is English a requirement to enter college, but most students also study the subject at some point during their four years of attendance. Nearly all tertiary institutions offer foreign-language courses, and EFL is by far the most studied subject of these. In fact, although students sometimes have a choice of different English classes from which to choose, EFL in some form is a required subject at nearly every secondary and postsecondary institution in Japan.

Notwithstanding this “failure” in Japan, very similar hurdles hamper foreign or second-language learning in other predominately monolingual societies such as Britain or the U.S. (see Holliday, 1994; Thornbury, 1998). Though it has been argued there is a “larger culture of Japanese peculiarities” (McVeigh, 2002, 157–158), we feel it is important to also consider the comparative socio-cultural realities of foreign-language education worldwide—a “smaller culture of the ELT classroom” (Holliday, 1999). Many generalizations that describe the Japanese context of language teaching and learning are in fact attributes of a wider phenomenon of tertiary English programs worldwide, which Holliday (1994) describes as “Tertiary English and Secondary English Programs” (TESEP). In fact, Kubota (1999) has argued, correctly in our opinion, that observers need to take more care in their evaluations of the Japanese context and that there exists an overemphasis of essentialized features of Japanese students in the research literature on ELT. Holliday (1994, 14) points out a similar danger of assuming too much when he argues that “‘learner’ carries the implication that the only purpose for being in the classroom is to learn...[while] ‘student,’ on the other hand, implies roles and identities outside the classroom.” Likewise, anthropologists have also noted that, for many students in Japan, classroom learning is in fact not always the main priority and warn that the Western view of learner may not fit with the Japanese model (McVeigh, 1997; Poole, 2010).

One example of the overgeneralizations that are rather common in the ELT literature is the description of Asian students generally as “often quiet, shy and reticent in ELT classrooms, indicating a reserve that is the hallmark of introverts... These ethnic groups have a traditional cultural focus on group membership, solidarity and face-saving, and they de-emphasize individualism” (Oxford et al., 1992, 445). While any EFL teacher who has spent time in a Japanese language classroom would probably agree that many of their students are quiet, an instructor in a North American college might just as easily label a class of eighteen-year-olds as “reticent” or “face-saving” (e.g., Nathan, 2005; Moffat, 1989).

Though similar to other contexts, the “failure” of ELT at Japanese secondary and postsecondary levels is a cultural perception, an image, and an ideology that has challenged both educators and MEXT officials for much of the past century.
Responses to this challenge have varied, and for the most part real change has been superseded by mere rhetoric for reasons that Holliday’s TESEP phenomenon underscores. What might be important to point out in the context of this volume and the chapters that follow, however, is the existence of a discourse around two traditions of ELT in Japan. Japanese ELT experts, themselves, have formed two factions, one supporting the *yakudoku* or GT method and one in favor of the “communicative approach”—“one saying that cultural enrichment through reading is important in the traditional manner, the other saying that English is needed for international communication” (Wada & McCarty, 1984, 28).

The grammar translation method developed as a standard learning style for mastering classical Greek and Latin in medieval Europe, persisting into the modern classrooms of grammar schools in the West as a ubiquitous form of modern foreign-language teaching (see Prator & Celce-Murcia, 1979). Likewise, the GT method has a long tradition in Asia, with some tracing the origin of this language learning methodology in Japan to the Nara and Heian periods (710–1185), when Japanese Buddhist scholars were greatly influenced by the Chinese written language without regard for oral proficiency (Henrichsen, 1989, 104–107). Later in the Edo period (1603–1868), *rangaku* (the study of Western sciences through Dutch) began to complement this interest in Chinese and also necessitated the *yakudoku* approach to language and learning (Wada & McCarty, 1984, 28). In prewar Japan, English taught through *yakudoku* was part of the liberal arts approach at high schools and preparatory schools in preparation for specialized training at universities. This long GT tradition continues today alongside the more recent communicative approach to ELT.

This latter methodology, employing theories from abroad, provided the impetus for a wave of ELT reform in Japan in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. During this period, language teaching worldwide underwent a change in perspective that has been called the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) revolution. A disenchantment with grammar-translation and a search for a more effective oral approach to language learning was one impetus to the development of a communicative teaching theory and methodology. Shifts in theory of language were also instrumental in the CLT paradigm shift (Higgs, 1985). In Japan, secondary and postsecondary level language teachers who saw CLT as the next step in English teaching methodology published a collection of reports on communicative methodology in the 1987 volume *Gengo shūtoku to eigo kyōiku* (Language Acquisition and English Education) (Tanaka et al., 1987).

There exist, then, ongoing debates between proponents of a nativist *yakudoku* camp, with some claiming a hegemony of English linguistic imperialism (Tsuda, 1990; Suzuki, 1999), and other ELT scholars encouraging a communicative approach based largely on Western applied linguistic theory. Against this backdrop of foreign-language education in Japan, and ELT specifically, we explore the question of how this can be observed and researched as a socio-cultural phenomenon and introduce the methodological approaches we have taken in this volume.
INTRODUCTION

CALLS FOR A QUALITATIVE, COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO THE
STUDY OF FOREIGN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND
FOREIGN-LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY

When defining our approaches in this volume, we are faced with a diverse range of perspectives and assumptions regarding the meaning of research, the meaning of data, and the meanings of culture. In order to create a platform for dialogue and reflection, our intention is to accommodate for these diverse assumptions while loosely connecting them under the banner of a qualitative approach.

A qualitative approach, in general, aims at providing a descriptive, micro-level analysis of ideas and practices in specific local contexts and cases, as opposed to macro-level analyses often based on statistical large-scale surveys modeled around a natural science approach. Qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret them in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 4–5). Such research may involve a mixture of methods, structured or unstructured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and ethnographic fieldwork. Qualitative research is often criticized by those relying on a quantitative approach as lacking in objectivity or generalizability and scientific rigor; qualitative researchers often identify themselves as bringing to light more sensitized, plural, alternative, and thus holistic understandings. Ultimately, it can be said that all research methods, whether quantitative or qualitative, and all paradigms that frame and guide them, are human constructions that reflect partial realities. Furthermore we should be aware that qualitative approaches encompass a number of competing paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For the purposes of this chapter, we categorize them broadly into two: positivistic and processual. The positivistic approach assumes an existing, identifiable reality—or problems—and research would entail revealing those realities through the verification of hypotheses and seeking solutions objectively. The processual approach assumes realities as socially and historically constructed, and as being constantly (re)created through the interaction of human actors. Such research generally aims at deconstructing assumptions behind practices and relies more on an emic, insiders’ perspective while engaging dialogically with etic perspectives.

All the authors in this volume take a qualitative approach, but while some of the authors rely on the positivistic approach, others take the processual approach, using primarily ethnographic methods. Thus, whilst some authors in this volume employ “culture” as an objective, identifiable reality and an explanatory tool for understanding practices and barriers of language education, others have more fluid, constructivist notions of culture, pointing to ways in which cultures are constructed and negotiated in educational practices, with the researcher being situated within that very process.7

Although the methods employed and the assumed paradigms differ among the contributors, we have aimed to sensitize all chapters to issues of power, taking a critical stance in analyzing everyday practices and ideologies. As exemplified in
works of critical applied linguists such as Pennycook (1998) and Kubota (2003), “power” is a concept that cannot be ignored when dealing with language education and policy. Not only do respective chapters in this volume place the role of actors engaged in this identity formation as central, but we also explore a variety of dimensions of power dynamics: the impact of socio-economic power to national language policy (Lee & Doerr), the influence of discursive power or peer pressure in the classroom (Katayama), institutional politics between the “core” and “periphery” (Imoto & Horiguchi), negotiations of power in materials development (Hardy), power of “universal” knowledge (ELT expertise) (Rosenkjar), and the gatekeeper’s power (Murata). The authors in this volume see power as negotiated, often causing conflict between agency and structure. This approach foregrounds individual actors, seeing them as interested agents involved in the negotiation of political processes at various institutional levels, situated in structures of power.

One of the key features of this volume is our aim for a dialogue between the fields of applied linguistics and social or educational anthropology, as well as a dialogue between practitioners and observers. It is therefore not viable to regard applied linguistics as positivistic or “scientific” and anthropology as processual or “practice-oriented,” in terms of ontological paradigms. The fields of applied linguistics and anthropology are increasingly overlapping, with the emergent trends in using qualitative methods in the former (Atkinson, 1999). For anthropologists, the emerging discipline of applied linguistics and the professionalization of foreign-language education to which the discipline is closely connected cannot be dismissed. This is because anthropology is situated within interdisciplinary area studies, and language has always been a key element of anthropological training and education. Anglophone anthropologists of Japan, moreover, often first experience life in Japan as English-language teachers, and some of them continue to retain dual identities as language teachers and anthropologists in Japan. The backgrounds of the authors of this volume, which often cross between the fields of anthropology and applied linguistics, suggest the interrelatedness of these disciplines. Some of the authors have backgrounds in applied linguistics with expertise in ethnographic research, some have backgrounds in anthropology but have been engaged in the practices of foreign-language education, while others have backgrounds in all of them: anthropology, linguistics, and education. Although each chapter takes a distinctive approach and style of research within the parameters broadly defined above, by presenting them in one volume, we begin to better understand and become more aware of the varied assumptions and methodological traditions that each researcher carries. We therefore juxtapose chapters that are more concerned with macro-level policy analysis against those that seek to contribute to classroom-level pedagogical practice; and we juxtapose chapters that place importance on the observer’s subjective role against chapters that present data in the form of positivist social science.

In addition to disciplinary collaboration, another dialogue we attempt to create in this volume is that between “Japanese” and “non-Japanese” researchers on foreign-language education. Language teachers in Japan tend to be grouped into
INTRODUCTION

two camps; “native” speakers of English and those comprised of mainly Japanese
speakers of English. The two groups hold separate academic conferences (the Japan
Association of Language Teaching, JALT, for “native” speakers, and the Japan
Association of College English Teachers, JACET, for Japanese teachers), and in
recruitment practices, the categorization of native or non-native speakers is a
culturally engrained phenomenon. What we attempt in this book is to overcome this
symbolic disjuncture between Japanese and non-Japanese teachers/researchers in
the research field. It is worth noting that the Japanese authors in this volume have
received their postgraduate training and/or developed their careers in non-Japanese
institutions either abroad or in Japan (including Temple University Japan Campus),
while the non-Japanese authors have extensive experience in Japanese academic
contexts, leading to the questioning and dissolution of the very boundaries of what
counts as “Japanese” or “non-Japanese/foreign.”

Although we cannot claim to have sufficiently achieved such dialogues in this
volume, we see our endeavor as a starting point of a spiral process of generating
discussion and reflection. We see our attempt for collaboration as a significant
meeting of actors in the field of language education—seeking alternative, more
sensitized discourses and practices. One characteristic shared by all authors is that
we place ourselves, whether intentionally, or through serendipitous circumstances,
as marginals in our disciplines, institutions, and national or cultural affiliations,
crossing and blurring the boundaries of disciplines or Japanese-ness/foreign-ness.
This sense of marginal identity comes partly from the status of qualitative researchers
within the field of applied linguistics or linguistic/educational anthropologists within
the larger anthropological community. But marginal identity for anthropologists
and ethnographic researchers is a useful “tool” in gaining critical perspectives on
taken-for-granted assumptions and everyday realities at the ground level. A marginal
identity also results in heightened awareness of one’s own positionality, which
was shared in frequent conversations among the editors and authors—although the
degree to which the “reflexive self” is revealed in the text differs according to the
inclinations of each author within the broad spectrum of qualitative approaches.

Finally, as we proceed to present a brief summary and guideline of the chapters
of this volume, we provide some background on where each author is situated and
how she/he identifies her or himself in the vast discourse and industry of language
education in Japan.

The authors of Chapters 2 and 3 address the issue of implementation of national
policies drawing on long-term ethnographic research. The focus of Chapter 2 by
Lee and Doerr is on policies regarding the Japanese language and the practice of
Japanese language schools outside Japan. Hardy (Chapter 3) is concerned with
English-language education policies and the process of construction of an English-
language textbook.

Chapter 2 examines the widening gap between government policies regarding the
education of Japanese children overseas and the students’ needs at a community-
based Japanese weekend school overseas. Linguist Lee and anthropologist Doerr
point to the focus of MEXT policies on Japanese children with Japanese citizenship (Japanese nationals) who plan to come back to Japan and the lack of attention given towards the children whose experiences were more rooted in the local culture. This has created gaps between these policies and the shifting realities of children who attend the community-based Japanese weekend schools with the rising number of children who were born and raised outside Japan and have little Japanese-language background. Through an ethnographic case study of a historical development of a Japanese weekend school in the United States, the authors illustrate the difficulties and conflicts faced by local administrators as well as MEXT-sent principals in its endeavor to meet the requirements of a MEXT-approved school while catering to the realistic needs of the local students.

In Chapter 3, Hardy, an anthropologist with over 20 years of experience teaching English in Japanese private universities, discusses the roles the politics of identities play in the construction of an English-language textbook series for Japanese middle school students based on participant observation of meetings among the textbook writers. He examines in particular the writers’ identities represented and negotiated in the process of deciding on place, character, sex, language, culture, and nation. Hardy points to the lack of the writers’ reflection about setting the geographical location to Japan, yet endorsing a view of cosmopolitan Japan by including the English-speaking Other as characters living in Japan.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 on the other hand, are studies based on participant observation and ethnographic interviews that examine how national and transnational policies are implemented within institutions that do not come under direct control of the nation state. In Chapter 4, Murata, an anthropologist trained in the U.S. and the U.K., examines the Japanese government’s policy initiative to facilitate the use of English language in higher education and in workplaces through two ethnographic case studies. Her first case study analyzes engineering students and their language contexts in graduate seminars at a Japanese college. Murata finds that while Japanese is not required for entry into the graduate program, Japanese language is the norm in the graduate seminars, which create problems for the international students. The second study explores the importance of Japanese-language ability for Indian software engineers to enhance their position in the Japanese labor market. Both cases reveal how the power of the Japanese gatekeepers at school and workplace as well as Japanese-language ability limit the accessibility of non-Japanese students and workers even in sites where the use of English is supposedly facilitated at the policy level.

Chapter 5 by Imoto and Horiguchi, U.K.-trained anthropologists, examine the processes and identity politics behind the rhetorics of language education reform through an ethnographic case study of a Japanese educational institution attempting to adopt a European model of language education policy. The authors discuss how the “CEFR” (Common European Framework of Reference) and its key concepts such as “plurilingualism,” “autonomy,” and “communicative learning” seemed attractive at the level of ideology, yet when implemented in practice, conflicts and
resistance emerged due to the multiple interpretations. This chapter also points to how the organizational structure of power and the personal and institutional interests and identities set within the university work both as incentive and obstacle for the implementation of the reform.

Chapter 6, by Poole, an anthropologist, and Takahashi, an applied linguist and bilingual education specialist, examines foreign-language immersion education in private schools in Japan that reflect global ideologies and lie at the borderlands of both national and local policies. Their chapter is based on ethnographic research at two private primary schools in Japan and explores the contradictions of the ideology espoused at these institutions, one that although purports to be “international” is actually closely tied to statist schooling objectives. Poole and Takahashi’s study questions whether elite international schools in Japan are not merely further entrenching values that emphasize national boundaries, even while appearing to embrace as a mission the ideals of a “global society.”

In the subsequent chapters in this volume, applied linguists take qualitative approaches to make sense of learning that takes place in the area of English-language education. Chapters 7 and 8 by Matikainen and Katayama focus in particular on practices and expectations in Japanese university classrooms.

Matikainen, an applied linguist trained in the U.S., explores in Chapter 7 various views of successful language learners and teachers among Japanese students and non-Japanese teachers of English at a university in Tokyo. She finds that while both students and teachers agreed that motivation and autonomy are important factors in learning, there are differences in their perceptions of what makes a good language teacher. She points to the importance of raising awareness of differences in individual cultures of learning to bridge the gap between teachers’ and students’ expectations.

Katayama, an applied linguist trained in the U.S. and Japan, in Chapter 8 draws on ethnographic research done with junior college English major students, who demonstrate two different manners of pronunciation in two types of English courses in one semester, and examines these differences using Foucault’s concepts of power and discourse. She attempts to solve the puzzle of students who passionately imitate an American accent in one pronunciation class while speaking with a heavy Japanese accent in a different discussion class, through pointing to the temporary and localized nature of students’ subjugation to power.

Chapters 9 and 10 examine the individual-level learning that takes place outside the classroom. Chapter 9 by Matsuoka, an applied linguist trained in the U.S., focuses on the learners of English and illuminates the ways in which the experience of volunteering as interns at an international conference was successful in reducing the levels of communication apprehension and increasing the willingness to communicate among serious learners of English. Utilizing a content analysis approach, Matsuoka captures the five concepts of competitiveness, perfectionism, other-directedness, self-efficacy, and strategy evident in the narratives of nine students and demonstrates how students succeeded in gaining strategies to overcome communication apprehension through an enhanced self-efficacy.
On the other hand, the focus of Chapter 10 by Rosenkjar, an applied linguist, is the “development” of a high school English teacher’s ability. Rosenkjar’s study draws on data from dialogues between the teacher intern and the author, produced in weekly journals reflecting on a year-long internship program at an American university in Japan, and provides thick description of the process of identity formation as a teacher of learning “new” pedagogical methods and as a user of English. It also highlights the changes in pedagogy the teacher initiated as a result of the internship experience.

The afterword by Doerr provides a commentary on each of the chapters. The critical commentary enables a more engaged, dynamic dialogue between readers and authors as well as between the chapters. We therefore suggest that this book be read back and forth, rather than linearly, using Doerr’s incisive critique as one guide and our general outline of the volume’s approach as another. We invite the reader to find connections and contradictions among the chapters, to gain a sense of the contested, dynamically changing, and multilayered nature of foreign-language education in Japan. To help to further facilitate such a reading of this volume, Katayama has also provided us with an appendix of discussion questions. We welcome you to join the process of reflecting upon our practices, contexts, and conclusions.

NOTES

1 Moreover, at the level of Japanese education policy, as described by Roesgaard (2011), the alignment with global norms through the introduction of *yutori* education was paralleled with the reintroduction of traditionalist moral education with the revised Fundamental Law of Education (2006) encouraging strong notions of patriotism and familialism. Roesgaard suggests that this strengthening of moral education can be seen as a “gate-keeping” response to the perceived risks of an increasingly individualized and fragmented society—“an attempt to retain Japanese national identity and values while also integrating with the world” (2011, 104).

2 As Kubota (2011a) notes, it is significant that most discussions of foreign-language education in Japan focus on the teaching and learning of English, despite the fact that the vast majority of foreigners in Japan are non-native speakers of English. Of the two million immigrants in Japan, less than 5 percent are from Anglophone countries. Most have emigrated from China, Korea, Brazil, and the Philippines (Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs & Communication, 2014). This makes Japan an important case study of the use of English as a lingua franca/international language and situating it under the paradigm of “World Englishes” (Kachru, 1992; Seargeant, 2011) that can potentially problematize the “native-speaker ideal” in English-language education. And yet it is also important to note that this ideal is persistent in both public and private modes of English-language education in Japan (Breckenridge & Erling, 2011).


4 English was introduced in elementary school in 2011, after 40 years of emotional debate between the proponents (which include the Keidanren and bilingualism specialists) and opponents (which include conservative intellectuals and traditional scholars of English literature).

5 Holliday’s (1994) description of this worldwide phenomenon, Tertiary English and Secondary English Programs or TESEP (Holliday, 1994) includes the following attributes:

- EFL as a part of a wider curriculum and influenced by institutional imperatives.
- ELT has a role alongside other subjects in socializing students as members of the work community.
- EFL is but one of many subjects taught and must work within the parameters and resources that are delimiting factors for all courses.
INTRODUCTION

• ELT methodology choice is limited by institutional-wide approaches adopted across different subjects, as well as the expectations of the actors themselves (students, language teachers, teachers of other subjects, administrators, and MEXT).

This seems to us to describe very closely the Japanese context.

6 Mizuno (2008) shows that recommendations made by Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Organizations) provided a basis for MEXT’s “Action plan to cultivate ‘Japanese with English abilities’” (2003) that supports CLT and emphasizes practical competence in English.

7 The authors of this volume have been in dialogue, but we have not always bridged the gap between our different disciplinary assumptions. For example, we were caught in a dilemma trying to reach a shared understanding of the concept of “culture.” In the end, we decided not to privilege one assumption over another but to present a variety of interpretations of this contested concept.

REFERENCES


Sachiko Horiguchi
Temple University Japan Campus

Yuki Imoto
Keio University

Gregory S. Poole
Doshisha University
KIRI LEE AND NERIKO MUSHA DOERR

2. HOMELAND EDUCATION IN A NEW HOME

*Japanese Government Policy and Its Local Implementation in a Weekend Japanese Language School in the United States*

**INTRODUCTION**

As of July 2014, there were eighty weekend Japanese language schools in the United States. They are called supplementary instruction schools (*hoshū jugyō kō*), and their main purpose is to serve Japanese children overseas by providing them with instruction in the Japanese language arts. All of the schools of this type are community based, but their supporting organizations vary greatly. Schools located in a region where many Japanese businesses exist are sometimes supported by a local branch of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce; others are run by Japanese or Japanese-American Associations (nihonjin-kai or nikketjin-kai), and even by small groups of Japanese families. Once these schools get approved by the Japanese government and are officially recognized as *hoshū jugyō kō*, they can receive grants and subsidies from the Japanese government. When a school has 100 students or more, it can request the Japanese government to deploy teachers and a principal from Japan. However, there are inherent conflicts in running a *hoshū jugyō kō* with teachers and a principal from Japan, as the following two points are in contradiction with each other: 1) *hoshū jugyō kō* are run by local people in the United States with the aim of serving local students' needs; and 2) Japanese government policy toward Japanese children overseas is basically to provide instruction in the same curriculum designed for schools in Japan, based on its Course of Study developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, and Technology (MEXT). As a result, *hoshū jugyō kō* have an inherent tension between the local administration of the school and the teachers and principal deployed by the Japanese government, who may not be fully knowledgeable to deal with situations particular to a local community where the school is located. In the 2000s, as the student bodies of *hoshū jugyō kō* diversified to include those with fewer ties to Japan, this tension became more apparent.

In studies of heritage language education, however, the issues arising from the gap between the policy of the Japanese government and its local implementation has rarely been discussed. In this chapter, we examine how the tension common to all *hoshū jugyō kō* played out in one weekend Japanese language school in the northeastern United States. We trace the struggles of administrators sent by the Japanese government and locally appointed counterparts to cope with a changing...
student body, which reflected Japan’s changing position in the world and shifts in migration patterns. The chapter is part of a wider, four-year-long ethnographic study on the effects of institutional settings and heritage language education on students’ subjectivities (see Doerr & Lee, 2009, 2010, 2013).

We first situate our chapter in the existing research on heritage language education, outline the changes in Japanese government policies towards the education of Japanese citizens’ children overseas since the 1960s, and introduce a weekend Japanese language school founded in 1980, located in the northeastern United States, which we call Jackson Japanese Language School (JJLS; all names are aliases). Then we present struggles experienced by local school founders/administrators, and the principals deployed by the Japanese government, as the school sought to respond to the changing student body while maintaining the status hoshū jugyō kō with a principal deployed by the Japanese government.

RESEARCH ON HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Since the 1990s, scholars have used the term “heritage language” in the context of research on education in the United States. It is an emerging field (Brinton et al., 2008), and perhaps as a result a consensus has not yet emerged as to what exactly “heritage language” is, or who “heritage learners” are (Carreira, 2004; Hornberger & Wang, 2008, among others). In terms of studies in the Japanese heritage language (JHL henceforth) in the United States, the focus has generally been on children who are bilingual in English and Japanese (Kanno, 2003; Sato & Kataoka, 2008). Such studies often discuss children’s language proficiencies (Chinen & Tucker, 2005; Kataoka et al., 2008), their identity construction (Chinen & Tucker, 2005; Kanno, 2000, 2003), and heritage language curriculum development and pedagogy (Douglas, 2005; Kondo, 2003). These studies do not refer to the operation of hoshū jugyō kō from the points of view of local or MEXT-sent administrators. One of the exceptions is Shibata’s study (2000), which describes the process of opening a Japanese Saturday School and briefly mentions that the school became approved by the Japanese government and was thus eligible to receive financial support. However, the school discussed did not receive MEXT-sent teachers or a principal, and there was no discussion on the relationship between MEXT-sent and local teachers and administrators. Another exception is the study by Doerr and Lee (2009, 2013), which refers to administrators’ efforts in building a JHL program within a hoshū jugyō kō. It is safe to conclude that there are not many studies done on how the Japanese government policies are interpreted and implemented by local administrators in such community-based Japanese weekend schools, especially when they involve a teacher who was sent by the government to oversee language instruction based on MEXT guidelines. What makes the matter comparatively more complex in Japan’s case is that the Japanese government policies must be implemented beyond the Japanese boundary as a nation. However, because not many governments intervene with the education of its citizens and their children abroad, there is not much discussion
about policies such as the Japanese government’s. Thus, discussions of policies usually focus exclusively on the host country’s government policies on minority language maintenance within that country (Hubner & Davis, 1999; Pavlenko, 2002). This chapter, then, attempts to capture the increasingly widening gap between the government policies towards the education for Japanese citizens’ children overseas and students’ needs at community-based Japanese weekend schools. We then examine struggles experienced by administrators—MEXT-sent and appointed locally—in dealing with this gap.

**HOSHŪ JUGYŌ KŌ AND JAPANESE GOVERNMENT POLICIES SINCE THE 1960s**

*Hoshū jugyō kō* are weekend Japanese schools that give instruction in subjects such as language arts, mathematics, and social studies to “Japanese” children who are in the 1st to 9th grades, which corresponds to compulsory education in Japan. They are found mainly in the developed countries in Europe and North America (Sato, 1997). As mentioned, they are community-based schools, but the purpose is to educate Japanese citizens’ children using the curriculum based on the Course of Study designed by MEXT so that these children would have a smooth transition to Japanese education once they return to Japan. These children go to either an international school or a local school during the week and go to a *hoshū jugyō kō* on either Saturday or Sunday. The length of school hours vary among *hoshū jugyō kō*, from 3 hours to 6 hours per week (Japan Overseas Education Services, 2010).

Weekend Japanese schools have existed in Hawaii and California since Japanese immigration started in the early 1900s, but our focus in this article is *hoshū jugyō kō* since the early 1960s. There were no government policies on full-time Japanese schools or weekend Japanese language schools abroad prior to this time. In 1962, the Japanese government started deploying certified-administrators (principals/vice principals) to *nihonjin-gakkō* (full-time schools for Japanese people) abroad, and through these administrators, the education in Japanese schools abroad began to follow the Japanese government’s Course of Study designed for schools in Japan (Sato, 1997).

According to Sato (1997), once the Japanese government began to be involved in education of Japanese citizens’ children overseas early in the 1960s, the Japanese government’s policy toward them has been consistent; that is, to give the children the same education they would have gotten in Japan as much as possible. The Japanese government provides the education for Japanese citizens’ children due to Article 26 of the Japanese Constitution, which guarantees free compulsory education for Japanese children between the ages of six and fifteen. Therefore, their policies are always based on building “a good Japanese national,” and, as a result, they export the same language arts curriculum they use for school children in Japan to these schools abroad and send teachers who are trained to teach in public elementary and middle schools in Japan.
In the beginning of the 1970s, because of Japan's growing economy, more and more companies began to send their employees abroad with their families. Based on the data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010), in 1971, there were 8,662 Japanese children abroad, which increased to over 30,000 a decade later in 1981. As the number of Japanese children increased, the number of full-time and weekend Japanese schools increased very rapidly. The first certified teacher was deployed to New York Hoshū Jugyō Kō in 1974. At the same time in 1974, the Central Education Committee (Chūō Kyōiku Shingikai), one of the official committees of MEXT, proposed governmental support for hoshū jugyō kō as follows (the Central Education Committee, 1992, 297–298; English translation by Lee):

Support for Hoshū jugyō kō: (1) Hoshū jugyō kō is a part-time educational institution which offers Japanese children overseas education such as that of Japanese language arts while they attend local schools. Their operation is not always easy; therefore the support toward these institutions should be drastically increased by subsidizing items such as teachers' salary, rental fees, educational materials, etc. (2) More certified-teachers should be deployed similar to full-time Japanese schools and the training of local teachers should be encouraged.

In the 1980s, the number of hoshū jugyō kō increased rapidly—approximately ten new schools per year—reflecting the increased number of Japanese employees being sent abroad due to Japan's increasingly strong economy and strong currency (yen). Following this trend, in 1987, MEXT formed the Ad Hoc Education Committee (Rinji Kyōiku Shingigai) and came up with a statement entitled “The Reforms in Response to Internationalization” (Kokusaika e no taiō no tame no kaikaku). One of the points of the reform relevant to the education of Japanese children overseas is as follows (the Ad Hoc Education Committee, 1987, English translation by Lee):

Regarding education of Japanese children overseas, while placing importance on building their foundation as Japanese citizens, the effort should be made for them to gain experiences from the local setting. Also, appropriate educational institutions should be accommodated for the increasing number of high-school age children.

However, no concrete measure was taken to implement this so that Japanese children overseas “gain experience from the local setting.” The MEXT curriculum designed for schools in Japan continued to be implemented, and there was no special consideration for students whose experience was rooted more in local culture than Japanese culture, such as those who were born and/or raised in the area.

As the number of children who were enrolled in hoshū jugyō kō increased, the Research Study Group on Education of the Japanese Children Overseas (Kaigai Shijo Kyōiku ni Kansuru Chōsa Kenkyukai), another committee of MEXT, made
the following proposal entitled “The Condition of Supplementary Schools” (Hoshū jugyō kō no arikata) in 1992:

Hoshū jugyō kō are facing a big turning point: while they are expected to expand their roles according to changes of the era and requests of parents, they should reexamine their goals and existence in relation to other educational institutions and the local community and explore their future roles and existence.

Proposal: 1. Clarify the purpose and goals of education. 2. Improve the curriculum and pedagogy. 3. Strengthen guidance for students. 4. Strengthen teachers’ organization. 5. Increase outreach for local communities.

The above proposals show that the Japanese government’s policies toward the children overseas started to change in order to adjust to the globalizing world in the early 1990s. However, their basic stance that this education was for Japanese citizens has never changed.

Around this time, diversity of the student body began to grow for two reasons. First, because of the adverse economic situation due to the bursting of the “bubble economy” in Japan, many Japanese companies started to deploy their employees for a longer term, which would help reduce the cost of relocating families abroad. Rather than calling them back within 3–4 years, they began keeping them abroad for more than 5 years, and sometimes for 10 years (Kataoka, 2008). Second, the number of children of “interracial” and “intercultural” couples increased. According to the statistics from 2005 (the Ministry of Health, Labour, & Welfare, 2006), “international marriage” (kokusai kekkon), meaning marriage between a Japanese citizen and a non-Japanese citizen, increased from less than 10,000 couples in 1980 to more than 40,000 in 2005. In the late 1990s, the term “international children,” (kokusai-ji) meaning children of Japanese and non-Japanese parents, started appearing in the government reports and scholarly literature frequently. This trend was reflected in the number of such children residing in the United States.

Are these “international children” included in the target of the hoshū jugyō kō? One way to tell this is to look at how MEXT decides who “Japanese” students are when they decide whether to deploy teachers and/or principals to the school. As mentioned, as part of support for hoshū jugyō kō, MEXT sends teachers/principals from Japan to schools with more than 100 “Japanese” students. How to count enrolment of “Japanese” children to qualify for this deployment is very arbitrary. MEXT defines “Japanese” children as Japanese citizens who do not hold permanent residency in the United States and who plan to return to Japan.

However, such a criterion does not capture the shifting reality of Japanese families in the United States. For example, some families who stay in the United States longer than they expected end up attaining permanent residency in the United States when their children become high school students and start considering going to college in the United States. Other families whose plan was to stay in the United States permanently end up returning to Japan for personal reasons. As a result,
it is completely up to a MEXT-sent principal’s discretion as to how to count the number of qualified “Japanese” students. It is very crucial for hoshū jugyō kō to receive principals and teachers because they bring in the most recent knowledge and information about education in Japan. Also, local administrators feel that these MEXT-sent teachers and principals enhance direct ties to Japan and Japanese education as well as serve as a stamp of approval from the Japanese government.

The hoshū jugyō kō education was established on the assumption that students’ first language is Japanese and that they return to Japan in several years. However, by the 1990s the language background of the student body was diverse and very different from the expectation when hoshū jugyō kō were originally established. When most of the students who went to these schools conformed to the original purpose of hoshū jugyō kō, the MEXT-based curriculum worked. But it did not work as well when the students’ language background became more diverse. In order to resolve this gap, hoshū jugyō kō responded differently. Some made a hard decision to cater only to children who are in the United States for a short period of time. This means ignoring the needs of students who are born and raised in the United States with little Japanese language background.2 Some provided supplemental instruction within the MEXT-based curriculum. Other hoshū jugyō kō decided to create their own curriculum, independent of the MEXT-based curriculum. Such programs are called keishō go (heritage language) programs and were developed in some United States cities (Chinen, 2004).3 However, unless they live in metropolitan areas, the children who need any kind of Japanese language instruction often turn to a hoshū jugyō kō, whether it specifically addresses their needs or not.

Which approach a school chooses depends on three issues. The first issue is size. If the school is small, it makes no financial sense to even make supplemental classes in addition to the usual classes in hoshū jugyō kō, let alone an independent heritage language program for students who do not plan to return to Japan. The second issue is the characteristics of the operating body. Hoshū jugyō kō in New York and Chicago are overseen by Japanese Chambers of Commerce, whose main interest is the wellbeing of their member companies’ employees who are based in those cities but are planning to return home eventually. Therefore, they support the MEXT-prescribed curriculum. The third issue is the school’s relationship to MEXT-sent principals. Whether MEXT-sent principals are adamant about strictly following the MEXT-based curriculum or willing to compromise to include non-MEXT-based curriculum makes a big difference.

In sum: from the 1960s to present, both domestic and international contexts surrounding hoshū jugyō kō have changed drastically. The Japanese government policies towards the education of children of Japanese citizens abroad have shifted to reflect those changes: from merely transporting the Japanese curriculum based on the MEXT Course of Study to the United States, to enriching their Japanese education by taking advantage of regional culture. However, there was no practical measure taken to incorporate such regional culture and no attempt by the government to cater to students whose lives center around the local culture, as it was left up to the schools
themselves. That is, despite changes in its policies, the Japanese government’s approach to hoshū jugyō kō has not changed; it is “education of its own nationals.”

In the following sections, we will introduce and discuss the case of Jackson Japanese Language School (JJSL).

INTRODUCING JJLS

JJLS is located in a suburb of a major metropolitan area in the northeastern United States. It caters to students who wish to learn Japanese, from preschoolers (three-year-olds) to adults. JJLS is a private nonprofit organization and is overseen by a board of trustees, who are chosen by existing board members. JJLS is funded by a combination of tuition fees, MEXT funds (50% of the rent and roughly 50% of hoshū kō-bu [supplementary school section] teachers’ salary), and donations from local businesses. JJLS received its first principal sent by MEXT in 1989. JJLS’s school year starts in April following the Japanese academic calendar. The school meets 42 Sundays per year from 1:00 p.m. to 4:20 p.m. The school day is divided into four periods with recesses in between. JJLS also offers optional mathematics classes between 11:50 a.m. and 12:35 p.m. every Sunday and an optional current affairs class for middle school students between 4:30 p.m. and 5:15 p.m. every other Sunday.

JJLS's school-age student body can be roughly categorized into three groups according to the length of their intended stay in the United States: (1) The chūzai (“short-term residence”) group: students who live in the United States for three to five years due to a parent’s intracompany transfer. Japanese tends to be the “first language” of students in this group. (2) The chōki-taizai (“long-term residence”) group: students who plan to stay in the United States for more than five years. Their return to Japan depends on a parent transfer within the company. English is usually the common means of communication for chōki-taizai students; they use Japanese only in limited situations, such as at home to their parents or at JJLS. (3) The eijū (“permanent residence”) group: students who have no plans to live in Japan. Often, Japanese is not the “first language” of one or both of the student’s parents. For eijū students, who are usually born and raised in the United States, English tends to be their first language.

Since its inception in 1980, JJLS has opened its door to children with diverse backgrounds. Its Japanese-as-a-foreign-language (JFL) program was there from the beginning along with the hoshū jugyō kō. However, the existence of two programs was not enough to cater to the diverse needs of students of JJLS, especially that of eijū students, as their number increased in the 2000s. As of April 2010, the students who have only one Japanese-speaking parent constituted about 60% of the student body (135 out of 226, excluding families in the JFL program). Despite this diversity in students’ background and experiences with Japanese, all of them used to attend hoshū jugyō kō until 2004. Consequently, for some students, it became difficult to meet its expectations. In order to accommodate such students, JJLS has offered
several optional language classes supplemental to the MEXT-based curriculum since 2002 within the umbrella of hoshū jugyō kō. This arrangement was very well received by the eijū families, but the then MEXT-sent principal insisted that it did not suit the goal and purpose of hoshū jugyō kō.

After much contemplation, in 2004, the school reorganized its structure, creating another education unit, which houses programs that are based on curriculums other than MEXT’s Course of Study-based curriculum. The section, which houses hoshū jugyō kō was named hoshū kō-bu, and a MEXT-sent principal became the head of that program. A position to head the new section was created, which was filled by Lee.

JJLS also started offering a JHL curriculum in the new education unit for mostly eijū students, whose purposes for studying Japanese language did not fit the MEXT-based curriculum and expectation in the hoshū kō-bu.

The following is a brief summary of JJSL’s history regarding the status of their hoshū jugyō kō and changes in curricula:

• 1980. JJSL opened with 47 students. Among them, 8 students enrolled in the JFL program. It became a state-approved nonprofit educational organization and was also approved as a hoshū jugyō kō by the Japanese government.
• 1987. JJSL requested a teacher be deployed by MEXT.
• 1989. JJSL received the 1st principal deployed by MEXT.
• 1992. JJSL received the 2nd principal deployed by MEXT.
• 1995. JJSL received the 3rd principal deployed by MEXT. It started offering a separate curriculum for US-college-bound high school students.
• 1998. JJSL received the 4th principal deployed by MEXT.
• 2000. JJSL received the 5th principal deployed by MEXT.
• 2002. JJSL opened optional language classes for lower grade eijū students.
• 2003. JJSL opened optional classes for middle school eijū students.
• 2004. JJSL received the 6th principal deployed by MEXT curriculum. It created a new education unit for the programs with non-MEXT base headed by a local administrator, and started offering an independent JHL class to eijū students.
• 2006. JJSL received the 7th principal deployed by MEXT.
• 2009. JJSL received the 8th principal deployed by MEXT.
• 2012. JJSL received the 9th principal deployed by MEXT.

THE ROAD THEY TOOK: THE STORY OF JJLS

In this section, we describe struggles of local administrators and MEXT-sent principals regarding balancing MEXT’s requirements and local needs. It is based on interviews with former school administrators and one of the MEXT-sent principals as well as the recollections of Lee, a local administrator between 2004 and 2012. All interviews introduced below were done by Lee in Japanese and translated into English here by Lee.
Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda: Founding Members and Local Administrators

Lee interviewed the former administrators, Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda, who were also one of the founding families of JJLS, on January 12, 2011 at their home. Mr. Ikeda came to California with his family when he was in eighth grade. He went to college and graduate school in the United States and is now a researcher at a local research institute. He was the president of JJLS between 1980 and 2004. Mrs. Ikeda came to the United States to marry Mr. Ikeda in 1975. They were classmates in Japan. She was a secretary of JJLS between 1982 and 2004.

During the preparation period in 1979, the founding members came up with three goals: first, the school should become a state certified non-profit organization in the United States; second, it should become a MEXT-approved hoshū jugyō kō; and third, it should have a realistic view of meeting students’ needs. Mr. Ikeda recalled, “One of the founding members strongly felt that JJLS should become a MEXT-approved hoshū jugyō kō, while another one wanted to build a school for the local community. That was the reason why we have had a JFL program from the beginning.”

The first two goals were attained soon. The school attained a nonprofit organization status in June 1980 and then started to receive grant money towards teachers’ salaries from the Japanese government in 1981 after becoming a MEXT-approved hoshū jugyō kō. In 1989, the first MEXT-sent teacher was deployed to JJLS. However, the third goal was not attained until the mid 2000s, since the second and third goals implied incompatible aspirations, which were magnified as the student body diversified.

The second goal was achieved as the demography changed and more chūzai families arrived. “In the early 1980s, we did not have many Japanese families who were sent by [Japanese] companies in the area. Japanese families here were mostly visiting researchers at local universities, and they returned to Japan in two to three years.” Mrs. Ikeda continued, “During the 1980s, the number of families sent by Japanese companies increased, and we received the first principal from Japan in 1989.”

There were benefits of being approved by MEXT. In answering Lee’s question about the benefit of becoming a MEXT-approved hoshū jugyō kō, Mrs. Ikeda said, “Before we became an approved school, we had to go and get textbooks somewhere else, but once approved, textbooks are given free of charge and sent to our school [by MEXT]. Also it would give peace of mind for parents if the school is MEXT-approved.” She added that it is not possible to receive the governmental grant towards rent of the school building if it is not MEXT approved. When Lee asked if they were thinking of receiving a MEXT-sent teacher from the beginning, Mr. Ikeda said that “It was not a goal, but if they have a program based on the MEXT-based curriculum, we should follow the MEXT policies as much as possible, just like in Japan.” Mrs. Ikeda added to her husband’s answer by saying, “It is very difficult to build a curriculum from scratch. If there is already a curriculum with textbooks, why not use it.”
However, there were difficulties in implementing what MEXT expected in its approved schools. When asked when they felt that the MEXT-based curriculum was not appropriate for all the students at JJLS, Mrs. Ikeda replied, “By the late 1980s, we already noticed that, especially in the high school program, there were students whose Japanese abilities were not adequate to study with the MEXT certified textbooks.”

Responding to this situation, local administrators sought to solve these problems derived from the gap between MEXT’s requirements and the local situation by offering classes at the high school level specifically designed to cater to local students, as described earlier. However, not all welcomed such efforts. Mrs. Ikeda recalled: “Before we started a high school program for U.S. college-bound students in 1995, we made efforts to accommodate high school students who could not follow the MEXT curriculum. When we ran a special composition class for eijū students, there was a lot of opposition from their parents. They felt their children had been put in a special-needs class.” However, Mrs. Ikeda recalls that the students were very happy. She also said that a new principal who was sent by MEXT to JJLS had a hard time explaining the high school program for the U.S. college-bound students in the information session because this new program did not follow the MEXT curriculum.

Nonetheless, it was easier to create a program for eijū and chōki-taizai high school students than for younger students, because high school is not a part of compulsory education in Japan and thus it is out of the scope of hoshū jugyō kō education. As mentioned earlier, in the late 1990s, the number of “interracial” and “intercultural” marriages increased. This corresponded to the time when JJLS also started facing the need to accommodate eijū and chōki-taizai in the lower grades.

When the school formed a committee to explore the possibility of building a program for eijū and chōki-taizai children in the lower grades in 2001, Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda recalled that the MEXT-sent principal then could not comprehend the idea of JHL education. It was very difficult for the school to work with him. He made complaints to MEXT, and the school was ordered not to involve the MEXT-sent principal in any other part of school operation except the compulsory education part. This shows MEXT’s firm position that MEXT-sent teachers are only responsible for the education in elementary and middle schools within the MEXT-prescribed curriculum.

This struggle of balancing MEXT’s position and local needs reflects the fact that, while MEXT came to show its willingness to adjust to local needs in its policy statements, its policy was not actually aimed to be put in practice. For example, even though the Research Study Group on Education of the Japanese Children Overseas in 1992 recommended that hoshū jugyō kō should accommodate parents’ wishes in a changing world and contribute to local communities, the basic education policies towards Japanese children overseas do not go beyond the MEXT-prescribed education for Japanese nationals.

There were other issues that made balancing being a MEXT-approved school with MEXT-sent principals and catering to needs of local students difficult, according to
Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda. First, there was the issue of the system in which the MEXT-sent principals stayed only for a short period of time, and, thus, such principals were not expected to meet the local needs. In answering Lee’s question if they felt these MEXT-sent principals received enough orientation before they left, Mr. Ikeda said, “I feel that often these teachers come to hoshū jugyō kō to use it as a stepping stone in their career after they go back to Japan. Therefore, often there is no continuity from one principal to the next.”

Second, there was an issue of the division of labor. Mrs. Ikeda added, “The school is told by MEXT that it cannot involve a MEXT-sent teacher in business operations of the school. He should only be involved in educational matters in 1st through 9th grades. However, if we treat him following MEXT’s order and do not consult him with school business matters, we end up insulting him.” This issue became solved once the school was divided into two sections. However, the transition was not easy, as Lee recalls next.

Lee: The Principal of the Second Educational Unit

JILS ended up offering independent JHL classes as a result of negotiating the three issues mentioned earlier. For financial reasons, in the first year, the school offered only one pilot multi-aged class for students who do not plan to return to Japan; this pilot class was all that was within their budget at the time. As more students started enrolling in this course, it became financially viable to develop a full-fledged JHL curriculum. The philosophy of the JILS also influenced the new program: JILS’s roots as a community-based school founded by local parents, not by a local Japanese Chamber of Commerce, was conducive to the establishment of the JHL program.

The school’s relationship to the MEXT-sent administrators was rocky initially. In 2002 and 2003, the difficulties in balancing the MEXT-sent principal’s role and catering to eijū students’ needs reached its peak. There was significant tension between the MEXT-sent principal and the local administrators. The friction derived from disagreement as to whether or not the MEXT-approved hoshū jugyō kō was responsible for education that did not use MEXT-based curriculum and for students who were not planning to return to Japan to live.

Then, as described earlier, local administrators decided to reorganize the programs in response to MEXT’s request that a MEXT-sent principal must concentrate on educational matters only in the hoshū jugyō kō part. The JILS was divided into two educational units: one for the program with the MEXT-based curriculum, and the other for an independent curriculum. This arrangement enabled a MEXT-sent principal to only be concerned with the hoshū jugyō kō part of the school. In April 2004, the hoshū jugyō kō part of the school was renamed as hoshū kō-bu or the first educational unit (daiichi-bu) and headed by a MEXT-sent principal, and the rest of the programs in the school were named the second educational unit (daini-bu) and headed by a local administrator, Lee. Lee feels that the JILS response to MEXT’s
request and the efforts of a new team of administrators have been taking effect, and
the school has been more or less functioning as one community.

MEXT-Sent Principals

MEXT-sent principals are the representatives of MEXT who ensure that a hoshū
jugyō kō runs according to the purposes and goals described by MEXT. They are
only responsible for the education of 1st through 9th grades following the MEXT-
based curriculum.7 They are public school teachers who apply to positions in schools
overseas and are selected by an individual local school board in Japan. They act
as a liaison to a Japanese consulate in the region, oversee how the curriculum is
carried out, train locally hired teachers, and give advice to chūzai families about their
children’s educational concerns.

As the representatives of MEXT, working with local administrators who have
a different agenda sometimes makes it difficult for the MEXT-sent principals to
implement MEXT’s agenda, especially when the division of labor is not clear.
That was the case for the 5th MEXT-sent principal, who served JJLS from April
2000 to March 2004. As mentioned by Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda and Lee, pre-2004 JJLS
developed programs to institutionally cater to eijū students outside the MEXT-
based curriculum, which created ambiguity in what the MEXT-sent principal
should do, leading to a tense atmosphere between the MEXT-sent principal and
local administrators. As his expressed duty was to take care of chūzai and chōki-
taizai students whom he understood as the responsibility of MEXT, Lee recalls, the
principal did not welcome the fact that his position as the principal of the entire JJLS
included programs that do not follow the MEXT-based curriculum: he insisted that it
did not suit the goal and purpose of hoshū jugyō kō. It is worth noting here, however,
that many MEXT-sent principals in especially small schools have been engaged in
matters beyond their job description. However, as long as their complaints are not
reported to MEXT officials, it does not seem to become a big issue. That is, it is up
to the MEXT-sent principals to a certain degree whether to make an issue of non-
MEXT based programs in their schools.

The 6th MEXT-sent principal who served the JJLS from April 2004 to March
2006 worked in the new structure of JJLS in which his duty was limited to hoshū
kō-bu, while Lee oversaw the second educational unit of JJLS. Prior to his arrival,
he held a position of principal in an elementary school in the western part of Japan,
and coming to JJLS was the first time he left Japan. There was no open tension
or struggle during his term. However, Lee heard later indirectly that he felt that
the school’s administrative support was not adequate enough and filed a complaint
to MEXT. This shows that there are pressures and difficulties that the MEXT-sent
principal feels despite the overt smoothness of operation at school.

The 7th MEXT-sent principal who served from April 2006 to March 2009 had
never held a position of either principal or assistant principal in a school in Japan,
unlike the other MEXT-sent teachers to JJSL. In his interview with Lee in December
30, 2008 in the school business office, he told her that he originally applied for a position of regular teacher in a *hoshū jugyō kō*, but was assigned as a principal at JJLS. He was supportive of JJLS’s aspiration to cater to diverse students and was involved in all aspects of school operation. However, he told Lee that he was told by MEXT in official meetings and conferences not to pay too much attention to the matters beyond *hoshū kō-bu*.

The 8th MEXT-sent principal, who served from April 2009 to 2012, was a retired principal. MEXT started sending retired teachers to *hoshū jugyō kō* in 2008 as a cost-saving measure. He held positions of principal in middle schools in Japan, and also was a principal of a full-time Japanese school in the United States in the early 2000s. Therefore, he was well-informed and knowledgeable about the situations in both full-time and weekend Japanese language schools in the United States. In one of the meetings for the regional *hoshū jugyō kō* held in summer of 2010, at which Lee was present, he stated that JJLS is a future model of *hoshū jugyō kō* in offering programs based on three different curricula: MEXT-based curriculum, JHL curriculum, and JFL curriculum.

**DISCUSSION**

As described above, the Japanese government did not have a clear policy toward full-time and weekend Japanese schools abroad prior to the 1960s. Through establishing the system of sending teachers to those schools, the government was able to regulate curriculum to follow the MEXT-based one and organize their support to these schools.

For JJLS, being a MEXT-approved school yet rooted in the local community, its desire to offer realistic education to all students was not always easy. The school was founded in 1980, six years after the first teacher was deployed by the Japanese government to *hoshū jugyō kō* in the midst of the rush of building such schools. Therefore, it was easy to turn to MEXT for curriculum, textbooks, and accreditation from the beginning. It differed from other *hoshū jugyō kō* in that it offered the JFL program from the start to the local children and Japanese children from *eijū* families based on their founding philosophy that the school should be open to the needs of the local community. This philosophy played a pivotal role later. As the Japanese economy became strong, more and more Japanese companies sent their employees with their families, hence JJLS’s *chūzai* population increased, too. However, as Mr. Ikeda’s statement shows, the school was well aware of the limitations of using the MEXT-base curriculum for *eijū* students already in late 1980s.

As mentioned above, in 1987, the Ad Hoc Education Committee delivered a statement on the importance of internationalization in education, and this implies that the Japanese government was aware of the difficulty of enforcing the MEXT-prescribed curriculum in *hoshū jugyō kō*. However, the data we introduced show that the government’s policy was always based on “building good Japanese nationals” and there was no concrete attempt to solve such a discrepancy. Faced with
the immediate need to cater to all students with reasonable goals, the third goal for JJLS, JJLS created JHL courses with independent curricula. This created a tension between the MEXT-sent principal and local administrators, as described by local administrators (Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda and Lee). The tension was ameliorated gradually after creating the second education section for non-MEXT-base curricula.

The experience of the MEXT-sent principals show the effects of institutional arrangement—whether or not there is a separate program with non-MEXT-based curricula and whether or not the MEXT-sent principal is officially in charge of such programs—as well as personal difference of the principals in terms of their philosophy of what hoshū jugyō kō should look like, how to deal with the diverse student body, as well as the philosophy of the school as a whole. The 5th MEXT-sent principal’s case shows the most difficult scenario. The 6th MEXT-sent principal needed more administrative support in the time of institutional transition. The case of 7th MEXT-sent principal shows a successful case of the appropriate institutional structure and the principal’s philosophy matching that of JJLS. His experience also shows that, despite MEXT’s new policy to acknowledge student experience from local settings, MEXT does not encourage putting that in practice. That puts the MEXT-sent principals in a difficult position, especially if they wish to work with local administrators and be involved in the activities of the entire JJLS. The case of the 8th MEXT-sent principal shows a good match between the institutional maturity and his own experience and vision.

CONCLUSION

As shown in this chapter, there has been a gap between the Japanese government policies toward the education of Japanese citizen’s children overseas and locally-based, community Japanese language schools. In facing the changing demography of the Japanese children overseas, the way each individual school makes adjustment to accommodate the local needs are intertwined with many factors.

The policies of the government changed to emphasize a need to adjust to local situations, but there were no concrete measures to implement the changes nor to provide support to locally initiated changes. This led to struggles by and between the MEXT-sent principals and local administrators. The MEXT-sent principals thus struggle to mend the gap. Also, the local administrators, who remain there while MEXT-sent principals come and go, need to be innovative in coordinating different needs of MEXT and the local student body and creating an institutionally viable structure.

Research on heritage language education in Japanese has not been focusing on this issue of interface between the government in the “homeland” and the local implementation and struggles of those involved. This chapter attempted to trace changing struggles and solutions that JJLS administrators developed.
NOTES

1 When a Japanese family is sent abroad, if they want to keep their children in the Japanese education in one way or the other, they have two choices: to send them to a full-time Japanese school called nihonjin gakkō (full-time school for Japanese people) or to send them to a weekend Japanese school called hoshū jugyō kō while they attend an international school or a local school. In developing countries, especially in Asia, Japanese families tend to choose the first option (Sato, 1997).

2 For example, Washington hoshū jugyō kō followed this pattern.

3 For example, the establishment of the Washington Japanese Heritage Center in 2004, separate from Washington hoshū jugyō kō. See www.keisho.org (Accessed November 15, 2014).

4 Because of the declining economic condition, the governmental supports have been decreasing recently.

5 In order to differentiate JLS’s set up from other hoshū jugyō kō, we use the term “hoshū kō-bu” which houses the program equivalent to Japan’s compulsory education.

6 These are conventional categories used at hoshū jugyō kō in general in the United States (see Sato & Kataoka, 2008). Although there is another group who study JFL at JLS, they are out of scope of our research.

7 Job descriptions of teachers deployed to schools outside of Japan 3-(1), Department of International Education, MEXT (zaigai kyōkushisetsu haken-kyōin-no shokumu 3-(1) Kokusai kyōiku-ka).

REFERENCES


Pavlenko, A. (2002). ‘We have room for but one language here’: Language and national identity in the US at the turn of the 20th century. Multilingual, 21, 163–196.


Kiri Lee
Lehigh University

Neriko Musha Doerr
Ramapo College