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ABSTRACT

This study by Tokyo University of Foreign Studies collected data on actual conditions of teaching Japanese as a Second Language (JSL) to children coming to Japan without the language. The study analyzed tasks that needed to be addressed, presented ideas on teaching syllabi and student evaluation, and submitted policy recommendations for schools and governments. The study results touched on content and methods of JSL instruction, examining conditions and issues concerning JSL children, principles for JSL instruction, and tentative lesson plans for JSL classes. The study also highlighted school and educational administration of JSL education, including: conditions of school and educational administration of JSL education; national and local policies concerning JSL education; problems in school and educational administration of JSL education; issues to be considered for better administration of JSL education; and policy recommendations for effective administration of JSL education. Results provide data on teachers teaching JSL, inservice education, learning materials, organizational systems for JSL students within schools, JSL student enrollment, and collaboration with volunteer organizations. Five resulting policy recommendations for effective administration of JSL education are noted. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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An Analysis of Policy Recommendations for Japanese as Second Language Education

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Introduction

In September, 1996, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies(TUFS) decided to embark on a large scale study on teaching Japanese as Second Language(JSL) in public schools. The final report titled “ Study on Japanese Language Instruction for Japanese as Second Language Speaking Minors”¹ was issued in March, 1998. Although one can find a large number of reports or essays on JSL children in public schools, research which enriches our knowledge base for JSL education is still small in number. Those JSL research typically approaches JSL education with one of the two perspectives: language acquisition perspective (Hifumi, 1996; Ikegami, 1994; Kudoh, 1996; Nuibe, 1999; Okazaki,1995; Sekiguchi, 1994) and educational issue perspective (Asakura, 1999; Itoh, 1999; Matsumoto, 1999; Nakanishi & Satoh, eds., 1995; Ohta, 1999; Ono & Hirose, 1998). TUFS study is probably the first comprehensive study that has tried to integrate both language acquisition and educational issue perspectives in JSL education.

The Purposes and Organization of TUFS Study

Revision of Immigration Act in 1990 accelerated influx of JSL population in public schools. Varied efforts to respond to the needs of JSL children have been observed. However the increase of JSL children has occurred in so many districts in such a short time that many schools with JSL children have had difficulty in providing them with quality curriculum, learning materials, and quality teachers.

The purposes of the study were (1)to collect data on actual conditions of JSL instruction and analyze the tasks to be addressed, (2) to present some ideas on teaching syllabus, and assessment of student progress and (3) to submit policy recommendations for schools, local and national educational authority.

The TUFS study consists of Introduction and two parts: Language instruction and educational practices in general. Organization of the final report is:

Introduction

- 1. Purpose of the study**
- 2. Schedule of the Study**

Content and Methods of Japanese as Second Language Instruction

- 1. Conditions and Issues concerning JSL Children**
- 2. Principles for JSL Instruction**
- 3. Tentative Lesson Plans for JSL Classes**

The first chapter in this part is discussed in full details in the next section, “School and Educational Administration of JSL Education”. However we point out what the report has identified as significance of our commitment in JSL education.

In the section titled “Significance of Receiving JSL Children: Fundamental Viewpoint of JSL Education”, in Chapter 1, it reads:

To accept JSL children in public schools has offered chances for Japanese children to experience different cultures directly. Through these experiences, our children are learning the attitude essential in global community. That is: we people must recognize and respect the differences through some means of communication. That our children have experienced the importance of understanding different cultures through intercultural communication will be the first important step for them to acquire knowledge and attitude required to be global citizens.

Reception of JSL children with various linguistic and cultural backgrounds in Japanese schools evidently assumes personalized/individual instruction considering difference in personality and ways of thinking. This leads to diversity in education and it creates perfect opportunities for us to reconsider how education for individual needs should be. Based on this viewpoint, accepting JSL children has a significance to Japanese education. And should it be even for a short period, it may be one of our tasks in education to give educational assistance to contribute the sound development of those JSL children into independent individuals, who spend an important period for personality formation in their life. (TUFS, 13)

The first aim of accepting JSL children in Japanese schools is, for the authors of TUFS report is NOT to guarantee the basic human right to receive education, but how much it contribute to Japanese educational needs. The view is very utilitarian, and the essence is in line with the attitude of national government (local government as well with few exceptions) toward JSL children. That is “benevolence offer” of educational opportunities, not positive fulfillment of their right. Monbusho has shown no interest or efforts to survey on JSL children to gather data on JSL children

who don't go to school at all, who are not registered as residents at all, who have dropped out due to language, cultural or other problems, who have committed themselves with juvenile delinquency (Ohta, 1999).

Section two touches seven important points to develop effective curriculum for JSL children.

1. Awareness the difference between Japanese language education for Japanese and JSL
2. Systematic Instructional Planning of Language for Life and Language for Academic Learning
3. JSL Instruction beyond the boundary of schools and classrooms
4. Establishment of Model Schools for JSL instruction
5. Flexible Curriculum Organization to meet the needs of JSL
6. Criteria for good language textbooks for JSL children
7. Required knowledge, skills, Attitudes for teachers

This section portrays an ideal picture of JSL education. However the measures to achieve are left unclear. When teachers without any experience of JSL teaching are assigned to the job, and available teachers and/or school administrators are taking turns of teaching JSL, the picture is not very realistic. Practical advises for early JSL teaching given in #5 are very helpful. Idea of Model School is appealing to schools with a few JSL children where they can not enjoy the benefit of additional personnel.

Section 3 is allocated almost one half of the total pages of the report where they presents curriculum guidelines. The Study separates the adaptation phase and academic learning phase, whose target grades are lower elementary and higher elementary-lower secondary respectively. Presentation of curriculum guidelines is in the format of Principles of Curriculum organization, Content, Vocabulary list, and suggestions for lessons.

Adaptation phase has 22 lessons, and it is suggested to teach one lesson in 2 to 3 45 minute classes. Suppose that 3 class periods are used for each lesson, adaptation phase requires 66 class periods in total. In the report, no standard class schedule is given to complete the adaptation phase. JSL children are expected to have mastered hiragana syllables prior to this adaptation curriculum, and they may need

extra supplementary lessons to catch up in academic subjects. It may need two semesters to complete the whole curriculum.

JSL children who have come to Japan in higher elementary grades or in lower secondary schools will have enormous difficulty to master both Japanese for living and Japanese for academic purposes. Adaptation phase focuses on Japanese for living and it has adopted the situational language approach. On the other hand, later in their school life, their Japanese language learning will switch to accumulation of grammar/sentence patterns. The total sentence patterns to be mastered is 210 in higher elementary grades and 220 in lower secondary grades. If we teach as the report suggests, students need 6 to 7 lessons a week. This is almost impossible in schools where no additional teacher has been assigned to teach JSL children. However the report has said nothing about time required to implement the curriculum.

School and Educational Administration of JSL Education

- 1. Conditions of School and Educational Administration of JSL Education**
- 2. Outline of National and Local Policies concerning JSL Education**
- 3. Problems in School and Educational Administration of JSL Education**
- 4. Issues to Be Considered for Better Administration of JSL Education**
- 5. Policy Recommendations for Effective Administration System of JSL Language Education**

The survey data provided in these sections helps us to guess the quality and quantity of JSL education. Here are some of the survey results.

Of the teachers teaching JSL children,

- 85% have 6 or more years of teaching experience
- 77% have less than 2 years of JSL teaching
- 57% are classroom teachers and 20% are full time JSL teachers in elementary and 12% are full time JSL teachers in lower secondary schools

As to in-service education,

- 6 prefectures conduct 1 day in-service education
- 2 prefectures conduct 2 day in-service education
- 6 prefectures conduct 3-5 day in-service education
- 3 prefectures conduct 6 or more day in-service education

As to collection of learning materials,

- 10% of schools both in elementary and lower secondary answered “very satisfactory “ and “ satisfactory”.

As to organizational system for JSL children within school,

- 35% of both elementary and lower secondary schools has assigned a teacher to deal with JSL children
- 27% of elementary and 30% of lower secondary schools answered to have meeting for exchange and share of information when necessary
- 36% of both school types answered “Nothing particular”

JSL students enrollment

- JSL students are enrolled in 5061 schools
- 81% of schools have less than 4 JSL children
- JSL children live in 994 school districts throughout Japan
- 52% of the school districts have less than 5 JSL children

Collaboration with Volunteer Organizations

- 5% of local school boards and none of prefectural board of education have collaborative relationship with volunteer

On the basis of these survey data, the Study has submitted five policy Recommendations for Effective Administration System of JSL Education.

1. Establishment of Resource Center and networking system
R&D center which functions as “hub” for related data and information
2. Accepting JSL children in University Attached Schools
3. Professional Development of JSL Teachers
4. Establishment of Model District where model school, liaisons for Japanese language instruction, volunteers, community learning organizations collaborate for effective JSL education
5. Utilization of human resources, collaboration with volunteers and human resource bank

Recommendations 1,4, and 5 are practical, urgently needed and probably more feasible than providing professional development opportunity. Universities may take initiative in developing programs for in-service program in collaboration with local and prefectural

boards of education. National, prefectural, and local educational authorities should seriously consider effective and efficient share of the roles. National government spend more time in developing curriculum and its diffusion, diffusion of progressive teaching practices, allocation of JSL teachers, training of teachers.

Prefectural board of education should be accountable in obtaining precise number and background information of JSL children, offering information about progressive teaching practices, and developing learning materials to meet local needs. Local school boards are in favorable position to develop better collaboration among schools and with community organizations. They should collect data and information about various organizations and volunteers available in the community. Schools should keep and accumulate the records of JSL teaching. School-wide support of the classroom teacher with JSL children and JSL teachers is one of the keys to success.

We would like to add two important factors which the report has failed to mention. The first is to involve undergraduates in teacher education programs as volunteers. Ideally teaching certificate with JSL endorsement should be offered. Qualified JSL teachers should have teaching license to collaborate with other teachers in schools. JSL courses in universities often expect adult learners as target, and don't study other subject areas teaching. Before the JSL endorsement is introduced, undergraduates in teacher education program should be encouraged to have some experience of helping JSL children. The experience will benefit the school and the JSL children as well. The problem is how willing the schools and teachers to have "outsiders" in their old territory.

The second is the involvement of parents. Frequent communication with parents of JSL children was one of the factors contributing to the success of JSL teaching(Ono and Hirose, 1998). The survey of international residents in Takefu City in Toyama reveals that those international parents often didn't know what's going on in schools(Takefu, 1998).

Conclusion

TUFS Study has contributed to JSL education in two ways. First it has presented comprehensive data on circumstances of JSL education and children. It shows the public how poor the quality and quantity of JSL education are. Second curriculum guidelines they have developed is a good starting point for the local school boards and

schools/teachers to discuss about. In-service education should be planned to use the curriculum guidelines and should offer experiential, workshop type of training. The survey findings and curriculum guidelines should be communicated by as many teachers and administrators as possible.

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i In Japanese education, different terms are used for children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools. The report uses the term “gaikokujin-shijo” (外国人子女) in the title, which encompasses persons from Kindergarten to around 20 years of age.



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