Until the coming of World War II, little interest was shown in the teaching of Japanese outside Japan except for the elementary schools set up to inculcate the ways of the homeland among the offspring of Japanese emigrants to places like Hawaii, the Pacific Coast of North America, and Brazil. A few European and American universities offered limited instruction, primarily for Orientalists. The author describes the development of teaching materials and programs in Japanese during the 1940s and the ensuing years. His evaluation of major texts is followed by a suggested list of materials suitable for various levels of study. Also cited are common criticisms that have been made of some of the listed works. Current needs of courses for college level are discussed and the programs presently engaged in materials preparation and teacher training are described. Appendix I, "Sociolinguistic Notes on Japanese," and Appendix II, "Works Dealing with the Teaching of Japanese," conclude the paper. (AMM)
ON THE TEACHING OF JAPANESE: THE STATE OF THE ART

by Samuel E. Martin
Foreword

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ON THE TEACHING OF JAPANESE

The State of the Art

Until the coming of World War II little interest was shown in the teaching of Japanese outside Japan except for the elementary schools set up to inculcate the ways of the homeland among the offspring of Japanese emigrants to places like Hawaii, the Pacific Coast of North America, and Brazil. In those schools the teaching methods and materials were for the most part adaptations of what was prescribed by the Ministry of Education for elementary schools in Japan. A very few universities in Europe and America offered limited instruction in Japanese, primarily in order to train Orientalists interested in pursuing philological or historical research; stemming from this period (though published later) are the Elisséeff-Reischauer texts developed at Harvard. The most successful practical instruction for foreigners was that offered in Tokyo by the school of Naoe Naganuma, who developed a comprehensive set of materials to teach both spoken and written Japanese to foreign officials stationed in Tokyo. These materials, which have been revised several times, are still in wide use, not only at the Naganuma School in Tokyo, which now caters to all sorts of foreign students, but also at a number of other places. By and large, the materials have been superannuated by newer tools developed along the lines of the methodological advances made in second-language teaching in the United States during and after the War; yet a number of our universities have been slow to take advantage of newer approaches. (The principal defects of the Naganuma course are these: inadequate drill and explication of basic spoken sentence patterns; lack of clearcut distinction between
spoken and written language; text material that is overly long and poorly focused; a heavy vocabulary load that is ill controlled, little drilled, and abounding in hapax legomena. The principal asset is the ready availability of the entire set of well-printed "Readers" with auxiliary apparatus such as drill cards, notes, etc.)

World War II led to massive programs for training military personnel, notably the Army program at the University of Michigan and the Navy program that centered at the University of Colorado; both of these programs used the Naganuma materials, supplemented by locally produced aids. The ASTP programs at several universities developed materials of their own, the most lastingly successful being those created at Yale under the direction of Bernard Bloch and Eleanor Harz Jorden. Published under the title Spoken Japanese (SJ), the Yale course became a standard classroom tool for teaching the spoken language until the appearance of Beginning Japanese (BJ) by Jorden and Chaplin in 1962. The audiolingual methodology in both these books is part of a continuing mainstream of spoken-language pedagogy that can be succinctly characterized as ACLS - ASTP - FSI - MIA. Although some of the material in SJ is dated and there are a number of shortcomings (unnaturalness in some of the material—a common failure in textbooks of Asian languages; minimal treatment of speech levels; somewhat heavy vocabulary load), the book is still used as a basic text in a number of places, e.g. Columbia.

The Jorden and Chaplin text (BJ) has proved something of a milestone. A carefully crafted presentation of authentic modern Japanese with extensive drills on sentence patterns, it is extremely effective when used as intended. The very fine tape recordings which are available to accompany the text make it possible for bright students to master much of the material without the amount of tutorial attention that most other courses require, though these remarks do not mean that the tapes are to be regarded as a substitute for a well-trained and talented tutor. A number of later texts have been closely modeled on the approach of BJ, notably Niwa and Matuda's Basic Japanese
for College Students (1964). (A new audiolingual course prepared by a group of Japanese linguists has just appeared in Tokyo as part of the TEC series, but I have not had the chance to examine it.)

Certain questions that once seemed burning to teachers and students of Japanese are now practically dead. When did we last hear one of those heated discussions of the impossibility of learning to pronounce Fuji if confronted with the spelling Huzi? There is not a symbol in conflict between the Hepburn-type Romanizations in traditional use and the Japan-type Romanizations favored by the innovators; the student must learn to recognize words written in both ways, and whether he prefers to write in one or the other (or neither) is of little consequence. Indeed, only esthetics are harmed by mixing the two indiscriminately, since neither *Fuji nor *Huji is susceptible to more than a single interpretation! Ultimately the student makes a stab at learning the norms for syllabary-and-character "mixed script" as prescribed by the Ministry of Education, but those norms too turn out to be ideals that can be variously twisted and abused with no great harm done, though an attempt to live up to such ideal standards--like living up to all ideals--is certainly worth encouraging, especially on the part of teachers.

Still often debated is the question of which syllabary to teach first, the square-shaped katakana or the more intricately flowing hiragana. Following modern educationalist trends in Japan, Naganuma starts off with the hiragana, on the grounds that it is more widely used; he gradually introduces the katakana as foreign loanwords are inserted in the lesson texts. Because of the large-scale influx of loans in recent years, the frequency with which katakana hits the eye has risen considerably, however, and in Japanese educationalist circles this had led to an argument in favor of returning to the introduction of katakana first. Since both syllabaries must be mastered very early in the process of learning to read, it really matters little which the foreign student faces first; but the greater ease with which the clumsy-handed foreigner can learn the shape components and stroke-order of katakana make that system
perhaps preferable for his initial exposure to the active dynamics of the writing system. (Most teachers favor an active approach to the symbols, i.e. learning to write them properly as well as recognize them; in practice, however, few courses insist on this. Here is an area crying for research and new ideas.)

It now hardly seems open to question that all instruction should begin with some exposure to the spoken language, but there are conflicting views on when and how--or even whether--to introduce the writing system. At one time, linguists were perhaps overly cautious about the pernicious effect that they assumed would be brought to bear on the acquisition of audio-lingual skills if the student was introduced to the script too soon. Books such as SJ and BJ (and many others) were written with the assumption that the written language would be taught as a quite separate entity--ideally, after the completion of the basic spoken-language instruction. In practice, of course, anyone who plans to undertake the writing system (as most do) had better get started early, simply to cover the necessary ground; one of the headaches of university courses in Japanese and Chinese is the fact that the complexities of the writing systems obligate the student to devote from two to three times as much effort and time as is required to master a comparable level of overall proficiency in languages making use of only an alphabetic script, however complicated the orthographic quirks to which such a script may be subject. The Manual of Japanese Writing (MJW) was published by Chaplin and Martin in 1967 to introduce the essential 881 characters required by Japanese elementary schools. While apparently quite effective when used after the Jorden and Chaplin text, or when used for review, the book will probably cause some difficulties when the lessons are introduced alongside early work in spoken Japanese, since no effort was made to simplify the normal sentence structures met in written Japanese (though the notes attempt to clarify the difficulties), nor to substitute spoken synonyms for words that are common in written Japanese but are seldom heard in speech. Several recent texts (e.g. Modern Japanese by Mieko S. Han
and *Learn Japanese* by John Young and Kimiko Nakajima) have attempted to integrate learning of the written forms with the acquisition of the spoken structure; it is perhaps too early to decide how effective these particular approaches can be when used as intended.

After many years of major gaps in teaching materials, we are now fortunate to have so many different books available. In order to give some idea of what I feel is the best of what is available, let me offer the following rough idea of what I would recommend for various levels of university instruction (with no negative recommendation intended for works not mentioned). I assume four semesters of foundation work, with classroom instruction of from eight to ten hours each week, or the equivalent; I also assume a good deal of homework study of the writing system.

1. FOUNDATION WORK.

   Yale, 1962-3.


   Tokyo, 1961.

2. CONTINUING WORK.

2a. READING:

   Hibbett-Itasaka: *Modern Japanese, A Basic Reader*,  


DICTIONARIES:

   Nelson's *Japanese-English Character Dictionary*.


   Kenkyusha's *Japanese-English Dictionary*.
2b. SPOKEN:

Review drills in BJ.

3. ADVANCED WORK.


DICTIONARIES:

Kindaichi: Meikai kokugo ziten. Tokyo.
London, 1944 et seq.

O'Neill: A comprehensive index of Japanese names. Tokyo 1969?

Abolmasov and Nemzer: Slovar' yaponskikh geograficheskikh nazvaniy [Dictionary of Japanese geographical names].  
Moscow, 1959.


There are other texts and reference works which could be added, but I will forgo mentioning them here. Instead, I will spell out a few criticisms that have been made of some of the cited works and point to some gaps that remain. BJ has been criticized for the following features: a heavy vocabulary load, with early emphasis on items of immediate interest only to those living in Japan rather than to those studying abroad (e.g. comprehensive coverage of the numeral system very early); too much respect language (keigo) too soon, yet what seems like inadequate exposition in later lessons where it might be more appropriate; an unnecessarily complicated system of marking certain phonetic features (notably the accent). Criticisms of MJW include: uncompromisingly difficult syntax from the very beginning; lack of ACTIVE drills, quizzes, and the like, with over-reliance on the student’s initiative to make use of the given materials as active drills; Book III poorly edited and printed—largely owing to the peculiar strictures of the Office of Education with respect to cold- and-hot printing; poorly edited typing in the Romanized versions of the Text Lessons in Book I. The set of annotated disciplinary readers produced by Yamagiwa and associates have proved disappointing to a number who have tried to use them not only because of the unfortunately idiosyncratic Romanization used in the notes but also because of the inaccuracy of many of the glosses, which would seem to indicate inadequate supervision of the attention paid to context on the part of native speakers who prepared the annotations.
Current needs include the following:

- well-planned active drill materials for advanced spoken Japanese.
- Romanized versions of selected NHK tapes with accent and juncture marked.
- a thoroughly indexed reference grammar with emphasis on problems of syntax.
- basic research on case valences (particle-predicate ties), verb aspect, and prosodic features.
- up-to-date studies of flux in the standard language, with consideration of items of regional grammar and vocabulary that are widely used, and of the problems in maintaining such distinctions as those of nasal vs. oral g, hy vs. sy, tonic vs atonic adjective patterns, etc.
- detailed lexicographical studies of internal word structure.
- a comprehensive and well-indexed dictionary of Japanese place-names designed for English-speaking students (cf. the Russian work cited above and the Cincpac-Cincpcoa Bulletin No. 159-49 of August 1945 also known as "FADTMACK").
- an active drill book to accompany MJW.
- an advanced counterpart to MJW to teach the remainder of the 1850 standard characters (Tokyo kanji).
- revision and/or reprinting of certain out-of-print works (e.g. Ashikaga cited above).
- new materials to teach the dynamics of writing characters in the several forms of handwriting.
- materials designed to present Japanese in the most effective manner to those students who already know Chinese.

I have not gone into the differing needs of courses for schools below the college level. There are several groups at work creating materials for such courses, notably at the University of Hawaii. Some doubt has arisen as to the wisdom of encouraging the widespread teaching of Japanese at lower levels, because of the lack of teachers trained to do an effective job and the uneven talents of the students electing the courses. At the present time, in order to avoid the waste
of relatively limited resources, at all levels it would seem advisable to discourage the interest in Japanese of those students whose language-learning potential is low. Institutions offering Japanese-language instruction should concentrate on quality rather than quantity, and it may be necessary to educate their administrations to the desirability of this attitude.

A big step forward came with the formation of the Association of Teachers of Japanese (ATJ), and the publication of the Journal-Newsletter of the Association which began in 1963. The association now has 225 individual members (including a number in Japan and Europe), and the total circulation of the Journal-Newsletter is about 250 copies for each of the three numbers published every year. The Association arranges two programs during the year as part of the meetings of the Association for Asian Studies in the spring and of the Modern Language Association in December; the programs, which usually include an invited panel of speakers and discussants, have been well attended and much appreciated. Many of the stimulating papers that are offered on language and literature later find their place in the Journal-Newsletter.

In addition to special schools such as the Armed Forces Language School and the Foreign Service Institute, nearly fifty American universities are known to be teaching Japanese on a fairly regular basis at the present time. For many institutions, the effort is on a very small scale; at the University of Hawaii, on the other hand, Japanese is the major foreign language elected by the undergraduates. We can expect a continuing growth of interest in Japanese, probably at a gradually accelerating rate, both in America and elsewhere. In Japan itself there are a number of institutions actively engaged in the teaching of Japanese to foreign students and a growing interest in the field of teaching Japanese as a second language; this complements the longstanding and widespread interest in the teaching of English as a second language. The Japanese government has recently begun to show concern about the teaching of Japanese to foreigners but there are no signs that this concern is likely to be implemented in any
way that will be of use to those teaching Japanese in America.

In Japan there are said to be about 500 members of the "Society for teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language", many of whom have participated in the one-week Naganuma teacher training course or in the one-year teacher training course that is part of the regular program at International Christian University. The Japanese society puts out a publication Nihongo Kyōiku ("Journal of Japanese language teaching"), apparently at irregular intervals. Closer cooperation between the society in Japan and its American counterpart would seem desirable; for example, it might be possible to let members of each group regularly receive the journal of the other.

Aside from the Naganuma school and other private institutions, current programs of language study in Japan center at such institutions as International Christian University, Waseda University, Keio University, and Sophia (Jōchi) University. The Kokusai Gakuyū-kai ("International Friends Association") offers language training to large numbers of students mostly from Southeast Asia, under the auspices of the Japanese government, and their readers have enjoyed use in Japan almost as widespread as the Naganuma materials; the I.C.U. materials (Modern Japanese for University Students) are also well known. The Inter-University Center for Japanese Studies administered by Stanford University provides a year of advanced language training in Tokyo for graduate students from America; at present there are about twenty students, but twice that number could be accommodated without expanding their facilities. At the Center they are experimenting with the use of the relatively inexpensive TV tape recorders and cameras now available. Japanese television provides a wealth of excellent material for language study, especially at advanced levels. The surprising extent to which characters appear on the TV screen suggests the possibility of developing an integrated approach to the learning of both characters and vocabulary. In particular, the running headlines and summaries that accompany the colloquially paraphrased news reports offer an excellent opportunity to grasp meaning through simultaneous stimuli of eyes and ears. (With the TV tape recorder it is possible
to see and hear a given scene repeatedly— and to stop a scene at any
point; this is an advantage over live television.)

Some of the calligraphy lessons shown on Japanese educational
television would be of value in giving even beginners a real feel
for the dynamics of writing, brought home by slow-motion repetitions
of brushwork. As it becomes less troublesome and less expensive to
use the TV tape recorder in Japanese language classes in America, we
would like to see established some agency to facilitate the regular
acquisition of tapes from Japan, either directly from the stations or
from some group that would tape from the air on demand.

Although increasing numbers of students are arriving in Japan
without previous exposure to the language, it seems to be widely agreed
that the American student does well to begin his language study in
the United States, going to Japan only for advanced work. (The
elementary language training also serves as a good screening process,
to the extent that the results are available to sponsoring agencies.)
There is a shortage of well-trained teachers on both sides of the
Pacific. The most acute demand in American universities is for the
scholar trained in applying linguistic science to the analysis of
Japanese and to the organization of effective language courses; at
the same time there is a need for native speakers who are trained to
drill students in the language with skill and enthusiasm. Because
of the rapid changes taking place in all parts of Japanese culture,
it is important for the teachers to visit Japan at frequent
intervals in order to freshen their language and update their
knowledge. Perhaps tutor exchanges between American institutions
and their counterparts in Japan—for a year or just a term—will
provide stimulation for both sides if they can be arranged as a
regular pattern. The retraining of present teachers is no less
important than the training of new ones; in particular, many of the
present teachers would benefit from a program that helped them aim
toward a more ACTIVE coverage of the drill material that they are
often accustomed to going over in a passive way. The cogent remarks
on teacher inadequacies made in the Miller report seem to have
passed unheeded and the "state of the art" in the average classroom has hardly changed from the situation he deplored in 1964. Some very interesting observations on teaching Japanese to American students will be found in Miss Matsuda's new book, Soto kara mita Nihongo (Tokyo, 1968), written while back in Japan on a sabbatical from six years of teaching at the University of Washington. Finally, I should call attention to J. Seward's amusing book Japanese in Action (Tokyo, 1968), which contains lively criticisms—some apt, some inept—of our prevailing approaches to the teaching of Japanese along with a number of valuable pointers about the language and culture, as observed by a knowledgeable foreigner.
APPENDIX I: Sociolinguistic Notes on Japanese

Until 1945, in Korea, Taiwan, and the Japanese-mandated islands in the Pacific (the Mariana, Caroline, and Palau groups) the language of instruction was Japanese, so that a large number of middle-aged and older people in those areas are fluent in the language. Japanese occupation of much of Southeast Asia during World War II resulted in some knowledge of the language on the part of the local inhabitants in various places. Japan's preeminent position as the leader of Asian technology and research has made Japanese an important tool language for other Asians, and a renewed interest in the language has sprung up in Korea and Taiwan since the 1950s. In recent years the Japanese government has been bringing numbers of Southeast Asian students to Japan for their higher education, and these students are given training in the Japanese language.

The Standard Language (Nyōjun-go) is widely spoken throughout Japan, including the Ryukyus, since it is the major medium of communication and instruction. There are local variations with respect to pronunciation (especially accent patterns), vocabulary items, and the like, but the grammar is fairly uniform. The standard of reference for this language is supposed to be the speech of educated people in the "uptown" (Yama-no-te) area of Tokyo, but that speech is itself in considerable flux under the influence of the rapid changes taking place in the metropolis; the language being spread about the nation by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK)—comparable perhaps to BBC English in England—is rather conservative in most respects. In certain areas, notably Osaka and Kyoto, the local speech has flourished and maintains a vigorous growth alongside the standard language.

One of the striking characteristics of Japanese is the extensive use of special forms to show respect or deference to other people. This feature, which is also found in Korean, has been variously called "respect language", "honorific language", "courtesy language", "speech styles", "speech levels", etc. With the drastic changes taking place in Japanese society under the pressures of modernization, change
in the usage of these forms takes on special interest, and a number of studies have been directed toward this topic in recent years, e.g. a symposium at the Eighth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Kyoto in September 1968. The interested reader can be referred to these references in English:


APPENDIX II: Works dealing with the teaching of Japanese


22. "Summary of reports given at the panel on elementary Japanese teaching at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian studies 1963". Journal-Newsletter of the Association of Teachers of Japanese 1/2.2-8.
23. Yamagiwa, Joseph K. "The spoken language program of the Army Japanese Language at the University of Michigan". Language Learning 1/2.11-23 (1948).