

# Promoting Critical Reading in an Advanced-Level Japanese Course: Theory and Practice through Reflection and Dialogues

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## 1. Introduction

What is the nature of the reading ability that teachers of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) aim to develop among students at a college or university in North American contexts? The study reported here was prompted by a JFL teacher's questions as to what ideally should be the goals for advanced-level reading courses. Frequently articulated goals may be developing students' ability to comprehend written texts accurately (i.e., ability to retrieve accurate information from texts) and improving their fluency (i.e., ability to read at a relatively fast pace without stopping to look up words too often). However, some scholars who specialize in foreign language reading, such as Alderson and Urquhart (1984) and Kern (2000), have begun to question teachers' tendencies in foreign language classrooms to excessively focus on literal comprehension and to use written texts as materials merely for language exercises through which students learn new vocabulary, expressions, and structural patterns.

There is a commonly-held assumption that the development of reading and writing skills in JFL requires a great deal of time and work; therefore, there may be a tendency to spend much of the class time on language exercises that emphasize literal comprehension and learning of vocabulary and kanji in JFL classrooms. Not only does the Japanese writing system use an entirely different orthography from English (the language that many students in the United States are most familiar with), but they also utilize reading and writing conventions that are very different from English (e.g., no spacing between words; vertical writing still commonly used in books, newspapers, and magazines). Hence, JFL teachers who are involved in intermediate- and advanced-level language instruction

may feel compelled to focus on language (e.g., kanji characters, vocabulary, grammar) and on literal comprehension of texts.

Based on experiences of teaching an advanced-level course that focuses on reading newspaper and magazine articles, the first author of this study (referred to as “the teacher” below) posits that overly emphasizing the accurate retrieval of information from texts may undermine the content of readings. Furthermore, a result of such instruction may be that course activities are not as intellectually challenging or stimulating as desired. While students at this level still need to develop more language proficiency (e.g., reading strategies, fluency) and to gain knowledge (e.g., more kanji, vocabulary, use of syntactic cues in reading), it does not necessarily mean that alternative approaches are impossible. It might be possible to incorporate some of the principles of a critical reading approach as advocated by such scholars as Kern (2000) and Wallace (1992, 2003).

Wallace (2003) discusses three aspects which a critical reading approach aims to develop: linguistic, conceptual/critical, and cultural. Linguistic purposes involve “helping students to gain an understanding of the nature of ideological meanings embedded in texts as indicated by the way language is used” (43). By drawing on grammatical knowledge, students are encouraged to reflect on the effect of language choice. In developing conceptual/critical abilities, a critical reading approach aims to develop “epistemic literacy” (Wells 1991:63), which is an ability to move beyond the text and to develop a cogent argument around it. For this purpose, Wallace emphasizes the importance of “talk around text” because that provides the opportunity to discuss the implications of what is described in the text. In regard to the cultural purpose of the critical reading approach, the aim is not to teach students about, for example, “Japanese culture,” but to promote insights into cultural assumptions and practices, and similarities and differences across national boundaries.

Similarly, Kern (2000:16–17) discusses seven principles that are central in his critical reading approach. He suggests that it involves: (1) interpretation (both the writer’s interpretation of the world and the reader’s interpretation of the writer’s interpretations through their own conceptions of the world), (2) collaboration between the writer and reader, (3) cultural conventions that evolve through use and are modified for individual purposes, (4) knowledge about a cultural system from which readers and writers are operating, (5) problem solving to figure out relationships between words, between larger units of meaning, and between texts and real/imagined worlds, (6) reflection and self-reflection on language

and its relations to the world and themselves, and (7) knowledge of how language is used in spoken and written contexts to create discourse.

With these principles in mind, the teacher decided to direct students' attention from the literal meanings of texts to such aspects as: the writer's interpretation (of the world), the writer's language choice based on cultural (and linguistic) conventions, his/her purpose in writing and target readers, and the underlying socio-cultural background information. In doing so, the teacher aimed to help students engage in critical reflections on the texts and on the reading processes through which the students interpret the meanings of the texts, rather than merely decode words to retrieve the information.

The current study is action research that concerns the teacher's self-inquiry into her teaching practices in the advanced-level JFL course and her endeavor to promote the students' ability to read critically as described above, going beyond literal comprehension. The study also aims to shed light on how critical reading advocated in contexts other than JFL may be realized in actual practices in a JFL classroom.

## **2. The Current Study**

### **2.1. Method of Inquiry**

The commonly cited definition of action research, according to Burns (2005), is from Carr and Kemmis (1986:162):

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out.

In order to carry out informed action research and to facilitate her own learning through "dialogic inquiry" (Wells 1999), the teacher conducted this action research in collaboration with the second author, who is also a teacher as well as a scholar at another institution (hereafter referred to as "the peer").

Both authors have extensive experience in teaching JFL at the college/university level, but have backgrounds that are quite different in terms of academic focus and emphasis in professional training. While the teacher's background is primarily in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition, the peer has had her training in foreign language education with a special emphasis on sociocultural theories and literacy studies.

Hence, we approached our research from different stances, bringing multiple perspectives to JFL teaching. On the one hand, the teacher approached this study primarily from a classroom teacher's stance, exploring ways to enhance her advanced-level reading course. On the other hand, the peer, with her research interest in critical literacy, sought ways to apply a critical approach in the JFL classroom.

Wells (2000:67) argues that "knowledge is created and re-created between people as they bring their personal experience and information derived from other sources to bear on solving some particular problem." With this understanding about knowledge-making, we designed this research project as a collaborative, action-oriented endeavor, using "dialogue" as a primary tool to generate meaning. Together, through this action research, we aim to understand changes that a critical approach requires and to illuminate challenges and possibilities in adopting a critical approach in an advanced JFL classroom. Further, we hope to provide ideas for improving the teaching of JFL reading at an advanced level and discuss implications for future classroom practices.

The research consisted of two stages. The first stage dealt with the teacher's perspectives, as observed in her self-reflections and her dialogues with the peer. The second stage examined students' perspectives through interviews conducted after the course was over. The current paper is devoted to the discussion of in-depth analyses of the first stage—the teacher's reflections along with her own observations of students' reactions to the newly-adopted "critical approach" during the course (through students' class participation and in their writings). Though the focus is on the teacher's reflections, the teacher's perceptions of students' reactions are included because they influenced her reflections and further actions in implementing changes in the classroom.

## **2.2. Data and Analysis**

This collaborative action research involves the two teacher-scholars who engaged in critical reflections and in two types of dialogues: on-going e-mail and post-course face-to-face dialogues. The teacher kept a reflective journal in English throughout the quarter, which consists of approximately 18 single-spaced typed pages (9,636 words) with 15 entries. Our dialogues were carried out in two stages. First, we communicated by e-mail in English approximately once a week throughout the course, with communication occurring more frequently in the first few weeks of the course. Both the materials (readings and worksheets, along with the

weekly course schedule) and the teacher's reflective journal were attached to the e-mail messages for the peer to read and comment on. (See §2.3 below for details on the materials.) After the course was over, we met face-to-face to discuss the course in depth in Japanese. The dialogues were usually initiated by the peer's inquiries and were based on the comments she wrote in the margins of the printed out materials and of the teacher's reflective journal. The subsequent responses and reflections by the teacher were followed by in-depth discussions. These dialogues were tape-recorded, transcribed, and later analyzed for emergent themes. In analyzing the data, we took an interpretivist approach in which we recursively and inductively analyzed the data in order to identify emergent themes. While the reflective journal entries and dialogues serve as the primary data source, we also refer to students' assignments and their journals in order to illustrate the students' voices (when relevant) as they relate to the themes that are highlighted in the teacher's reflective journal.

### **2.3. The Advanced JFL Course**

The study concerns a newly revised advanced (4th-year) Japanese course entitled "Readings in Newspapers and Magazines" at a large state university on the West Coast. The class met four times a week for 50 minutes. Three of the four meetings, called lecture sessions, were used for discussing readings for the entire class time, while the other one, called a discussion session, was used for group discussions or other activities. Eighteen students were enrolled in the course, and another was auditing but actively participating in it. Among the 19 students, nine were of Japanese heritage, five of Chinese heritage, and five of non-Asian background. Discussion sections were used for such activities as group discussions, project presentations, or for writing to e-mail pals at a university in Japan about what they had read in the course.

Course schedules were provided on either a weekly or bi-weekly basis. The reading materials (pdf files of newspaper or magazine articles), along with accompanying worksheets and word lists that the teacher created, were uploaded to the course website at least two days before the material was scheduled to be discussed.<sup>1</sup> The students' assignments included reading the texts before classes, providing answers to the worksheet questions, and writing reaction papers on a reading of their choice once a week.

We will discuss the changes that the teacher implemented in this

course, following a review and discussion of how reading is perceived and dealt with in foreign language education. We then present our findings centered around the emergent themes and provide alternative ways to further promote critical reading. In the final section, we elaborate on the pedagogical implications and future directions.

### 3. "Reading" in Language Teaching

#### 3.1. Traditional Approach

In order to understand how the teaching of reading is traditionally conceptualized and practiced, we reviewed previous studies that are relevant to reading pedagogy in foreign language (FL) education. In particular, we looked at issues such as traditional notions of reading, scholars' concerns, and alternative approaches for teaching reading that have been suggested in the field. We also examined the following six published JFL textbooks, targeted at intermediate- to advanced-level learners with an emphasis on reading:

*Nihongo chūkyū kara jōkyū e: Asahi Shinbun dokusha no koe*  
(Ōura et al. 1994)

*30 no sozai kara miete kuru Nihonjin no ima: Nihongo jōkyū dokkai*  
(Kakikura et al. 2000)

*Nihon o yomu: Chūkyū chōbun dokkai renshū*  
(Ujiie 1996)

*Chū-jōkyū Nihongo dokkai kyōzai: Asahi Shinbun de Nihon o yomu*  
(Ito et al. 1990)

*Chūkyū kara manabu tēma betsu Nihongo*  
(Arai et al. 1991)

*Ikita kyōzai de manabu chūkyū kara jōkyū e no Nihongo*  
(Kamada et al. 1998)

Our review of pedagogical literature on FL reading suggests that the goal of reading instruction is primarily literal comprehension of reading material (e.g., Alderson and Urquhart 1984). Very often, one correct answer, being referred to as the "one-meaning approach," is assumed for each question a teacher or a textbook author poses (Alderson and Urquhart 1984:46). Instructional activities or tasks are designed to develop various reading techniques such as skimming and scanning or to develop

bottom-up or top-down reading skills (Cooper 1984; Everson 1994; Paran 1996). The role of reading materials is often seen as providing a “linguistic sample” from which to learn new vocabulary, phrases, grammar, and text structures (Alderson 1984; Grabe 1991) and introducing topics of discussion for speaking practice (Scott 1996; Wallace 2003).

Our examination of textbooks designed for intermediate- and/or advanced-level JFL students reveals that indeed there is a heavy emphasis on literal comprehension, as evidenced by the types of exercises that follow the texts, such as true/false statements, multiple-choice questions, and wh-questions. These comprehension questions are often followed by language exercises (i.e., those that facilitate use of vocabulary, grammar, essential phrases, etc.), which are often not related to the content of the reading text. This reinforces the view that the text is treated merely as a “linguistic sample.” The topics presented in the texts are often used for speaking practice through questions and exercises that encourage students to state their personal opinions or experiences related to the topic (such as likes/dislikes, agree/disagree, compare/contrast with your own experiences). These observations corroborate the summaries of the literature, describing the reading instruction status quo.

In response to the reading instruction in FL described above, there are several concerns. The first concern is that the current practice undermines the richness of both content and textual features of the authentic texts used in language courses (Kramersch 1993). Authentic texts can be considered a window for students to look into sociocultural and linguistic practices in Japan. This is because, unlike texts written for instructional purposes, authentic language diverges from normative or prescriptive use of language (e.g., the use of katakana for native Japanese words, or mixture of the polite *desu/-masu* style and the plain *da* style), and such divergence is not random but is due to the writer’s intentional choices for the purpose of bringing about certain effects (as discussed below in §4).

The second concern is that there is a gap between language courses and literature courses. Often students in advanced-level literature courses engage in rhetorical analysis or literary critiques, while students in basic language courses learn and acquire language skills (Byrnes 1998; Byrnes and Maxim 2004; Kern 2000; Kramersch and Nolden 1994). Because the “comprehension model” (Wallace 2003:3) is the dominant reading instruction through which students are trained to read the FL texts, they are often ill-prepared to engage in the types of reading activities that are necessary in advanced-level literature courses.

This leads to the third concern, which is that the role of language classes may be merely construed as transmitting knowledge and information about language and cultural facts or as a place for students to “practice” language skills (Kubota 2004; Wallace 2003). Informed by principles of critical pedagogy, more and more second language (including FL) scholars have begun to question the traditional role assigned to the language teacher as a “language technician” and to start advocating that teachers assume a more active role in facilitating students’ development of critical understanding about languages and cultures (Canagarajah 2005; Guilherme 2002; Kumagai 2007; Kumaravadivelu 2003; Norton and Toohey 2004; Osborn 2000, 2006; Reagan and Osborn 2002).

### **3.2. Critical Approach**

The concerns raised above underscore the need for alternative approaches. Traditionally, foreign language education has its theoretical basis in cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics. More recently, however, we have started to see the influence of sociocultural theories in foreign language education. One of the concepts that is particularly informative in thinking about alternative approaches for teaching reading is the notion of “literacy.” From the sociocultural perspective, literacy is broadly defined as a social practice embedded in historical, sociocultural, and political contexts (Barton 1994; Baynham 1995; Gee 1990, 1991, 2000; Street 1993, 1995). This notion of literacy encompasses more than reading or writing. It includes talking about and talking around texts.

Some of the ideas from critical literacy (Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic 2000; Cope and Kalantzis 2000; Luke 1995; New London Group 1996) can be meaningfully and productively incorporated into FL reading courses (Kubota 1996; Ramos 2001; Wallace 2003), particularly at the advanced level. Critical literacy is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the importance of developing students’ critical language awareness (Fairclough 1992), including the understanding of political and ideological roles that a language plays. Critical language awareness aims to “empower learners by providing them with a critical analytical framework to help them reflect on their own language experiences and practices and on the language practices of others in the institutions of which they are a part and in the wider society within which they live” (Clark and Ivanic 1997:217). Critical literacy requires self-reflection by both teachers and students leading to “problematizing” or “interrogating” the taken-for-granted concepts. Kubota (1996:47), one of the leading advocates of crit-

ical literacy in JFL, argues that, in addition to teaching the four skills of language (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing), language teachers need to help develop students' critical consciousness.

Some scholars in FL education (Berman 1996; Kramsch 1993; Kramsch and Nolden 1994; Mueller 1991) view some insights provided by sociocultural theories and critical literacy as helpful in allowing the FL classroom to become an arena for introducing the social and cultural contexts of that language. They view FL literacy as a way to encourage students to engage in more reflective inquiry into their own cultures—and in the discourses that shape culture—as well as into the cultures of others through the use of authentic texts.

Kern (2000), who coined the term “literacy-based FL teaching,” explains that his proposed approach not only places an importance on developing communicative ability in a new language, but also emphasizes the development of learners' ability to analyze, interpret, and transform discourse and their ability to think critically about how discourse is constructed and used toward various ends in social contexts. In conducting this study, we used Kern's definition of literacy-based FL teaching as an organizing principle in conceptualizing and designing an instructional approach as it encompasses the objectives the teacher in the study set out for her own advanced-level reading classroom.

#### **4. Changes toward a Critical Approach**

The advanced JFL course described in §2.3 was revised because the teacher wanted to emphasize the importance of the content and textual features of texts in the course. In the first entry of the teacher's reflective journal, the teacher reflected on her past experience:

[Last year] . . . I kept feeling that we were only touching the surface of texts in newspaper articles. After checking the comprehension of the content of the articles, I had students discuss the topic or the writer's opinion. But I often felt that students were talking or writing about the topic just because they were told to. (September 30, 2004)

Students were previously not guided to read and think deeply about the content of the texts, at least not to the extent to which they would spontaneously and willingly discuss the content.

The first step for change was the revision of the course objectives to include the development of students' ability to read critically. The teacher

aimed for critical reading in a rather limited sense in order to make the objectives manageable in a 10-week course, restricting them to what seemed the most relevant and useful to students who had completed three years of Japanese language instruction. She was also not entirely certain to what extent she could implement the approach. Her reflective journal prior to the beginning of the course reveals her uncertainty as to the objectives:

I don't know to what extent I will succeed in implementing the approach. I will keep it simple—the course objectives (among others) will be to cultivate the students' ability to critically analyze and interpret texts. (September 30, 2004)

The teacher's goal for critical reading was to help the students consider multiple interpretations of texts rather than to view what is written as simply fact, and to help the students think critically about what writers say, and how and why they say it. Specifically, students were encouraged to take into account such issues as the writer's perspective, the writer's purpose and target readers, and to become sensitive to the effects of the writer's language choices, including vocabulary, style (i.e., plain style vs. *desu/-masu* style), and orthography (e.g., hiragana, katakana, and kanji). The course objectives also included a critical examination of the content of the readings, such as how writers' opinions are presented and supported with evidence and how events or social phenomena in Japanese society are portrayed by the writer.

In traditional literal comprehension exercises, the purposes and effects of language choices may be neglected, since the focus of reading is on its referential meaning. Japanese writers, however, strategically make decisions about the choice of styles and orthography in writing in order to bring about certain effects (e.g., evoking certain images, associations, or emotions in readers). For example, written and spoken languages are often mixed in writing “to create desired expressive effects” (Maynard 1998:16), and the polite *desu/-masu* style and plain *da/-ru* style are often mixed in texts (see Noda 1998, for example). The *desu/-masu* style, often associated with spoken language, may give readers the impression that the writer is directly talking to the readers, while the plain style, which students may associate with casual, informal spoken language, is the dominant style when writing is addressed to a group or audience in novels and newspapers (Maynard 1998).<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Japanese writers strategically utilize types of words (loanwords, native Japanese words,

and Sino-Japanese words) and orthographic subsystems (hiragana, katakana, kanji, and occasionally the Roman alphabet). By so doing, writers create the most desired effects for their purposes.<sup>3</sup> For example, a word such as *kotoba* ‘language’ evokes different semantic images and emotional reactions from Japanese readers depending on whether it is written in katakana (コトバ), in hiragana (ことば), or in kanji (言葉) (see Iwahara et al. 2003, for example).

Being aware of writers’ choices is important when reading almost any text (across different topics and genres), yet these aspects of writing are rarely addressed in the intermediate/advanced textbooks that we have reviewed. Thus, the students who were enrolled in the course in the current study were likely to benefit from this “critical” approach that the teacher felt was manageable and attainable within a one-quarter (10-week) course.

The second step was to develop activities which would help the students accomplish the objectives stated above. The teacher created worksheets that incorporate questions that address the aspects of writing discussed above, which she expected students to think carefully about before coming to class. Specifically, the teacher incorporated “critical reading questions” (i.e., questions asking students to consider multiple interpretations and to analyze textual features) on the worksheet so that the students would be ready to discuss them in class. For example, for the first reading, entitled *Nihonjin mo iroiro, kimetsukezu ni* ‘There is diversity among Japanese; discard your preconceptions’, which was taken from an *Asahi shinbun* readers’ column (*Koe* ‘voice’), the following questions related to textual features were given. (These are English translations of the original questions.)

- (1) The writer uses direct quotes twice. What kinds of effects do the direct quotes have?

The first quote is “*Kimigayo ga utaenai n ja Nihonjin ja nai n ja nai no?*’ *to sensei ni iwareta tooji . . .*” (At the time I was told by the teacher “If you can’t even sing *Kimigayo* [the national anthem], you can’t possibly be Japanese, can you? . . .”). This can be written in an indirect quote as “*Kimigayo ga utaenakereba Nihonjin ja nai no de wa nai ka to sensei ni iwareta tooji . . .*” (At the time I was told by the teacher that I couldn’t possibly be Japanese if I can’t even sing *Kimigayo* . . .).

- (2) In the quote “*Sakki ushiro de Eigo o perapera shabette iru hito ga*

*ita. Kao wa baribari Nihonjin no kuse ni.*” (Just a moment ago, there was someone in the back who spoke English fluently despite her/his completely Japanese-looking face).

- a. What effects do you think the words such as *perapera* (as opposed to *ryuuchoo ni* ‘fluently’) and *baribari* (*ikanimo* ‘obviously’) have?
  - b. Have you heard the expression *kuse ni* before? In what contexts did you hear the expression? When do you think this expression is used?
- (3) The writer poses a number of questions at the end. What do you think her purpose is in doing so?

Following the peer’s suggestion, the teacher also encouraged the students to reflect on their reading by writing in a “reading journal” (either in English or Japanese) while they prepared for class. The purpose of the reading journal was to provide a venue for students to reflect on their own reading processes and to communicate with the teacher their thoughts, concerns, and other issues they wanted to express about the content of the reading materials and the course activities.

## 5. Emergent Themes in Reflective Journals and Dialogues

There were a number of important issues that were raised both in the teacher’s reflective journal and in the teacher–peer dialogues. In this paper, we focus on four issues: (1) the selection of reading materials, (2) the amount of time to be spent on each text and promoting critical reading, (3) the role of the teacher, and (4) the gap felt by the teacher between the teacher’s goals and the students’ beliefs about “reading.”

### 5.1. Material Selection

Prior to offering the revised course, the teacher had selected materials based on four criteria: (1) the content is related to many of the students’ interests, as elicited in a background information survey in the first class; (2) the content presents diverse and dynamic perspectives of Japanese culture (Kubota 2003), challenging stereotypes or reporting changes in Japanese society; (3) multiple articles are available about the same topic written from different perspectives; and (4) the language (e.g., vocabulary and syntax) is relatively easy to comprehend. Moreover, with her assumption that extensive reading would help students develop reading

fluency, she tried to include a relatively large number of articles with various topics. “Extensive reading” is generally defined as “reading in quantity and in order to gain a general understanding of what is read” and is “intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading” (Richards, Platt, and Platt 1992:133).

In terms of the selection of materials, the teacher contemplated whether or not to consider additional criteria for the present course. The fundamental question she considered was whether certain texts are more suitable for and effective at promoting critical reading, as suggested by some scholars. Duzer and Florez (1999:3) suggest that one critical literacy strategy is starting with information sources “that are obviously biased or ideologically loaded.” Wallace (1992:70) also mentions that she occasionally chose “texts with a very clear ideological loading.” E-mail communication between the teacher and the peer reflects the decision-making process. Messages are shown in chronological order, with the last response being sent on October 12.

Teacher:

I try to choose *yomimono* [readings] which might be interesting to the student population. On the first day of class, I asked students to rate their interest in about 15 different types of topics . . . Also, another thing that I look for in *yomimono* is whether they illustrate changes of what is assumed to be true of Japan (i.e., stereotypes). I do not usually select articles because “the text has interesting features” or “the author’s intention is worthy of discussion.” Should I?

Peer’s Response:

I cannot say you “should.” It all depends on what the teacher wants to accomplish with the texts, right? It’s just that they are also some of my criteria for choosing the texts besides topics and also challenging the stereotypes (as you mentioned). When I said, “the author’s intention is worthy of discussion,” that was partially to do with “stereotypes,” too. Did the author try to promote certain stereotypical images of Japanese people/society of particular values? Or did s/he try to challenge them? — sort of things . . .

Teacher:

This is related to another question. I was assuming that every text comes with some interesting features and sociocultural assumption or bias. So whatever article you choose, there must be something to discuss. Or do you try to choose an article which does have interesting language features or is heavily loaded with political or social issues?

Peer's Response:

I absolutely agree with your assessment that every text comes with interesting features and sociocultural or political assumptions/bias that we can discuss. It is just that we traditionally tend not to foreground such aspects when using the texts, and I thought it is important that such issues would also be raised during class (which means we need to be aware of them when choosing the texts).

As seen above, both the teacher and the peer agreed that every authentic text has some textual features, language choices, or writer's views that are worthy of discussion. Hence, after the series of e-mail communications, the teacher decided to choose materials using similar criteria as before. The entire list of materials selected for the course is given in the Appendix.

## **5.2. Amount of Time to Be Spent on Each Text and on Promoting Critical Reading**

The quantity of materials posed more of a problem than the selection of materials. The teacher was frequently concerned about pace. She assumed that extensive reading would facilitate students' development of skills in "reading," but it was difficult to provide large amounts of materials and to encourage students to analyze texts and think critically about them at the same time. Very often, too much time was spent going over comprehension-based questions, leaving insufficient time to discuss what appeared to be important questions to promote in-depth critical reading (e.g., questions about the writers' intentions and language choice).

There was also a contradiction in that, while the teacher was asking students only to grasp the gist (as instructed on the worksheets), she often ended up spending substantial amounts of time checking students' comprehension in detail. During a post-course dialogue (carried out in Japanese and translated into English below), it became evident that the teacher, despite her intention to go beyond literal-based comprehension, ended up posing a large number of questions as a literal comprehension check:

Peer:

But there were still many literal comprehension-based questions; in particular, yes-no type questions. . . . And even looking at this worksheet, the important questions are posed towards the end.

Teacher:

Well, this may be my own preconception, but unless the students understand the content to a certain extent, I feel that more of the issues that I want them to discuss cannot be discussed.

Peer:

That's true, but you said that you could not quite proceed to discuss those issues in depth. So, it was due to the fact that the number of comprehension questions was too large. It is as though the students may no longer have had enough energy to think about these important questions.

Despite the teacher's decision to promote critical reading, it appeared that it was easy to fall back on the pattern of teaching practice that she was used to.

The dialogues also focused on whether to place more importance on the amount and variety of texts in a course, or to spend more time on each text, thereby accommodating opportunities to have students delve deeper into a text through such activities as analyzing textual features and discussing their effects. A guiding principle in "extensive reading" (Day and Bamford 1998; Everson 1994; Grabe 1991; Matsui 1997; Paran 1996; Swaffer 1991) is that the more students read the better readers they will become, and the teacher in this study shared this view.

The important question, however, is: What aspects of "reading" are we aiming for students to develop? It is probably the case that when the students read more, they gain more vocabulary, become familiar with more expressions and text structures, and develop reading fluency. However, if our aim is to help students sharpen their awareness regarding the effects of textual features that an author employs in order to deliver certain messages, it is necessary to spend more time discussing and examining each text. Talking about texts is important, and this was one of the first things that the teacher became aware of when deciding to adopt a critical approach, as seen in this journal entry from the first week:

I asked students to form groups of three and discuss the questions on the worksheet. My first question/concern was whether distributing such questions in class and asking them to think would really allow them to have time to think about the questions. Immediately after they formed the groups there was silence . . . Soon, they started talking. I heard some students use English in their discussion. Usually, it would bother me if upper-division course students started speaking English. But in this case, it didn't . . . because I felt rather confident that they were engaged in meaningful discussion about the text written in Japanese. It is possible that students' speaking English in class might

have bothered me last year because the students were often either merely checking the content of the text in pairs or what they thought about the content. (October 4, 2004).

Despite her awareness of the importance of discussing texts, much of the time was spent on comprehension checks and reinforcement of accuracy of comprehension. This is because the teacher felt that students could think about the texts critically only after they understood what was written. However, the question remains whether and to what extent the students need to understand the detailed information written in the texts in order to engage with texts critically.

Perhaps one way to reduce the teacher's dilemma is to develop activities to promote general comprehension of the text's main ideas and at the same time give students opportunities to think more deeply about the content and/or textual features. For example, rather than providing a number of yes/no type literal comprehension-based questions, students could work in groups to discuss what they think the "key words" in the assigned reading material are and the reasons for their selections, or identify where the writer's opinions surface (even in reporting an event) and why they think they represent the writers' opinions (e.g., sentence endings that contain modality markers such as *ni chigai nai* 'must be the case that').

The teacher attributed the lack of in-depth discussions of critical reading questions to insufficient time. However, through dialogues with the peer, it became evident that it was also due to the teacher's ways of posing and discussing the critical reading questions that made these types of discussions rather superficial. The peer noted, as in her statement below, that often the teacher posed questions in a yes/no format for critical reading questions as well, assuming that students would think of the reason why:

In posing such questions as "Do you think that the writer can achieve his goal?" you might have assumed that the reason why would also be considered, but students can just say "yes, I think he can," right?

In addition to asking students explicitly why they came up with "yes" or "no" answers, having students exchange their opposing views and reasoning might have made students think more deeply. If the students' answer is "no," then the students may also be invited to discuss (and rewrite the text to show) how the writer could change his argument, sup-

porting evidence, or language (e.g., style, vocabulary) in order to better achieve the goals.

Another aspect that the peer felt was problematic was that the significant questions were not posed in such a way that students would feel they were important to think about:

And these questions are placed towards the end of the worksheet and numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, . . . which gives the impression that these questions are listed in the same way as comprehension questions (with the same weights). This bothers me greatly.

It is perhaps more beneficial to clearly pose the most important critical reading questions before students read the material so that they would be more mindful of what aspects of the text they should be paying attention to, and of the sociocultural or textual phenomena that are important to discuss.

Moreover, the teacher often asked students to think about the writer's opinion without giving students sufficient opportunities to become familiar with such sociocultural background information, as noted by the peer in the dialogue:

There are kinds of questions to which I feel "one cannot answer this question without having background knowledge." I myself cannot even answer them. So, what you can aim for is to provide some preparatory steps such as "think about this issue," or "do research on this issue." If you do that, then they may be able to think about these questions better.

For instance, when the material students read was a commentary about a film created by a new female director who questions the Japanese value of uniformity ("Kosei naki Nihonjin ni mono moosu" [Daring to object to the Japanese who lack individuality]), the teacher felt it was important to consider the film director's suggestion in light of the emphasis on rules and uniformity in the Japanese society. However, without prior discussions and knowledge of relevant sociocultural background (e.g., strong emphasis placed on "conformity" in schools), students could not understand the author's viewpoint, and subsequently often expected to hear answers from the teacher.

Through dialogue it became evident that teachers should not only consider what to ask students to promote critical reading but also how to pose such questions. For students to critically read certain articles, they may need to be provided with sufficient preparatory steps to become familiar with the sociocultural background or they may need to be ques-

tioned in such a way that they would have to think deeply. Students may also be able to better focus on critical questions if the importance of those questions is made clear to them.

### 5.3. The Teacher's Role

The reflective journal revealed that the teacher often experienced dilemmas related to the teacher's role in the classroom. Firstly, she found herself in a dilemma over the contradictory notions of the teacher as an authority figure or as a co-participant in discussions. She struggled with uncertainty as to how to lead critical reading discussions and how to provide the kind of current sociocultural information necessary for students to understand the materials (also discussed above) without giving the students the impression that her views or interpretations were **the** "correct" views or interpretations.

The students generally needed more sociocultural information than she had expected in order to understand the social meanings of the texts. For instance, when reading an opinion written in a reader response column stating how important it is not to pressure youth by always telling them *ganbare* 'do your best', most students disagreed with the writer, arguing that one should always encourage children or students to work harder. For the teacher, the writer's opinion seemed very relevant to the post-bubble-economy social situation in Japan, where, for example, unemployment rates are high and the threat of not finding a job is great regardless of individual efforts. The teacher wrote in her journal:

As a mediator between the text and readers (i.e. students), do I present my understanding of the sociocultural context? But that would be like going back to the notion of a teacher's role as transmitting some kind of knowledge. Maybe I do not understand the role of the teacher in critical reading . . . (October 22, 2004).

She wondered whether and how she could possibly contribute to the discussions as a co-participant, and not as an authoritative teacher. This concern prevented her from sharing her views straightforwardly; yet, in some cases it is likely that the students could have benefited from the teacher if she had played a more traditional role of presenting sociocultural contexts behind the texts and sharing her knowledge and views. Furthermore, she realized that she had been used to asking literal comprehension-based questions (to which she had the correct answers), and felt somewhat uneasy when discussing questions that did not have

single answers (such as a question about the writer's purpose in writing an article and/or the effects of language choices). This seems to stem from her preconception that the teacher should always have and provide answers. Her uneasiness, coupled with her concern that what teachers present would be taken as **the** answer by students, may have made it difficult to facilitate full-fledged discussions.

Ironically, there were also cases in which the teacher could have familiarized students with widespread stereotypes to allow students to question and challenge such stereotypes. The teacher often selected reading materials that she thought represented changes in Japanese society in order to help students understand the dynamic and diverse nature of society and culture. However, some students interpreted the texts in such a way that reinforced the stereotypes. It was partly because they did not know what is often (too simplistically) assumed about Japanese people and society (e.g., being homogeneous) and, as a result, they neither understood the significance of the changes that some of the articles discussed nor why some of the events were newsworthy.

For example, an article discussing the introduction of an advisory dismissal policy at a university ("Gakusei yo, jinsei no bijon o toi-naose" [Students! Rethink your life vision]) had been selected with the intention of showing students a recent shift in some universities—from a stereotypically easy-to-graduate university where Japanese students play rather than study to a university that places more importance on academic performance. Some students were intrigued by the report in its mention that most universities in Japan—at least until recently—were considered to be "leisure lands" where students played more than studied. Consequently, contrary to the teacher's intention, the article introduced and promoted the stereotypical view of Japanese universities among some of the students.

In an English essay assignment comparing Japanese and American education based on course readings and additional readings, a student who had some experience living in Japan reaffirmed his conception of a Japanese university as being a "leisure land." He wrote, "While studying abroad in Japan, I discovered that Japanese students almost never study. . . . This trend is exemplified in the article 'Gakusei yo, jinsei no bijon o toi-naose,' which states that in one Japanese college 126 students would be receiving warnings that they were close to expulsion. This may be the result of many students seeing the relaxed atmosphere of college." Another student (with no experience living in Japan) noted that the new pro-

bation system allows dismissed students to return to the university if they gain work experience for more than one year after dismissal, while American universities rarely re-admit previously dismissed students; furthermore, she stated, “The university’s attitude supports the theory that Japanese colleges are easier to graduate from, while American universities are simply easier to get into.”

As the above examples show, simply providing reading material that reports diversity or change turned out to have the opposite of its intended effect, defeating its purpose. Native Japanese speakers, who are most likely the target audience, are probably most struck by the fact that students can no longer complete their college education as easily as assumed in the past at some universities. However, for students who do not share such knowledge, the texts had different social meanings (Kramsch 1997). In order to provide students with the assumed contextual knowledge (including stereotypes) necessary to understand the texts, teachers can give students opportunities to explore stereotypical views themselves before reading the materials. It is also important for the teacher to discuss the stereotypes with students and allow the students to consider the reasons for the significance of the news to Japanese readers. (See also our discussion about the importance of pre-reading activities as a way to help students become familiar with sociocultural and background information in §6.)

Another role that the teacher felt she should play but was unable to play successfully was the role of a judiciary “intervener” (see, for example, Benesch 1999:578, and Wallace 2003:75–76). For example, in a class where the effects of using dialects for certain expressions (*omoro obachan* オモロいおばちゃん ‘interesting auntie’) in the text were discussed, some students displayed strong bias against some of the dialects (e.g., Kansai dialect used in the text here and Southern dialect in the United States). One student was biased against the Kansai dialect, and used the derogatory expression *paa* ‘idiot’ when talking about the image of the speakers of the dialect, which made the teacher wonder whether and how to intervene in such a situation. She wrote in the reflective journal (November 24, 2004):

I was rather surprised by some of the students’ prejudiced views (i.e., *kansai-ben* makes speakers sound like idiots — sounds like *paa* [idiot]). But is a language class a place where you should ‘correct’ their views when they are honestly sharing their views?

The view that a teacher as an intervener should “correct” the students’ prejudice/bias is also related to her own conception of the teacher as authority; yet, she did not always intervene. She merely expressed her personal disagreement, and did not intervene further. The importance of intervening is argued by Wallace (2003), but balancing the two roles of authority and co-participant was a challenge to the teacher. Later during a dialogue, the peer, as shown in the excerpt below, asked the teacher why she did not ask the reason that the students formed that impression in order to make them rethink their perceptions:

Peer:

And other cases include instances in which students make comments that you do not want them to make. In such cases, how to deal with them becomes important — like the comment made about the *Kansai* dialect.

Teacher:

Right. And also it concerns the comment that the dialect of Southern states sounds stupid. The question is how to respond to them. I wouldn’t want students to have such preconceptions, but I would like to encourage students to share their views. I think it is important that the class has such an atmosphere in which you can say what you think.

Peer:

But sharing such views without any follow-ups may result in opposite effects. The student might have said it because he did not consider expressing it as being problematic. Or rather, he may think that it is a fact, and may not think that such a comment may hurt others. He might not have been very thoughtful.

Teacher:

But it is possible that such comments stem from the students’ limited language proficiency. It wouldn’t be too problematic if they say that many people may have such a view.

Peer:

But if so, then you might want to follow their comments by asking whether that is really the case. If the students make definitive comments and proceed, they should be asked such questions as “why?” “why you think that is the case?” “is that what people generally think?” and “what do the others think?” I would want the students to think critically and reflect on what they say.

Teacher:

I wasn’t quite sure how to spontaneously proceed in such cases. I just disagreed with them saying “I don’t think that is the case” and let it go. . . .

Perhaps, posing such follow-up questions (rather than “correcting” stu-

dents' opinions) as suggested by the peer would have made the students re-examine their own attitudes and thoughts by explicitly articulating and discussing them. In other words, asking students to reflect on how they formed their views, and also to verbalize and share their thoughts with others, may help them become critical about their own perceptions (and biases) and interpretations of the language and of the world.

Our dialogue concerning the teacher's role in promoting critical reading generated two questions that we believe are important to pursue. First, how can a teacher become a co-participant instead of being considered **the** authority? We agreed that this may be a particularly challenging question for Japanese teachers (those from Japan and educated there), where teachers tend to be regarded as the ultimate authority. Second, how can we scaffold learning so that students gain access to the (multiple versions of) sociocultural information needed to read materials without introducing (or reinforcing) stereotypes or presenting essentialized pictures? We found that when information was presented in such a manner as "there was this phenomenon X in Japan, which is no longer necessarily true," such information, in fact, may form stereotypes in the students' minds. This points to the importance as well as the difficulty of teaching culture as fluid, diverse, and always changing (Guilherme 2002; Kubota 2003, 2004).

#### **5.4. Perceived Gap between Teacher's Goals and Students' Beliefs about "Reading"**

Another area of concern that the teacher raised in her reflective journal and in e-mail communication was related to her perception of the students' beliefs about a teacher's role and about what is considered "reading" in FL classrooms. It appeared to her that the students were anxious to hear one answer and/or straightforward explanations (common in textbooks); that is, they were expecting the teacher to operate in a "traditional" way—or at least so it seemed to the teacher. The students also seemed to have focused on retrieving information from the texts rather than trying to interpret what was written. They seemed to be placing emphasis on finding English equivalents for new expressions, vocabulary, and kanji. The teacher thought that many students were too concerned with unfamiliar words, kanji, and phrases to read the texts. She formed these perceptions primarily by reading the students' journals. Grammar, kanji, and vocabulary were often what they talked about, especially at the

beginning of the quarter, as shown below in the fourth entry from a student (a female student without any Asian language background).

This article was particularly difficult for me due to the density of kanji and the long sentences. . . . Perhaps an explanation of particularly long sentences on the board would be helpful. This could break down “who” “what” “when” and “why” more explicitly. I find myself struggling a lot with sentence structure.

This entry shows both the student’s concern with kanji and grammar and her desire to retrieve the information accurately. It also suggests her expectation that a teacher is someone who stands in front and explains the texts to the class. Around the same time, on October 8, the teacher wrote in an e-mail to the peer:

I asked the students to write about their reading experience (i.e., any difficulties they encountered and any observations they made while reading). Later, on e-mail I told the students that the purpose of the reading journal was for them to reflect on their reading experience and also for me to understand what experiences they are going through. But most of the time what students said was “kanji in the article is too difficult” or “the structures of the sentences are very difficult,” etc.

Such concern for detail, which unfortunately might have been reinforced by the format of the worksheet, as discussed earlier, may have prevented students from reading the text more critically and more deeply, and from grasping the bigger picture. When students successfully decode the text, they tend not to question the information, as if they assume that all the information is accurate. This may be related to the students’ understanding of what “reading” in FL classes entails.<sup>4</sup>

The teacher’s impression was that students regarded the ultimate purpose of reading in a JFL classroom as “to know what is written” rather than “to learn how to read critically.” In other words, they seemed to think of “reading” in a foreign language class as a task that focuses on understanding the content of the materials as opposed to becoming an autonomous, independent reader and a competent language user in the real world.

We spent substantial time in our dialogues discussing students’ beliefs about “reading,” and our discussion generated an area of inquiry to be explored regarding this issue as well. It concerns whether the students’ beliefs (if in fact the teacher’s perception reflects the students’ actual beliefs) may have been a product of their past learning experiences within FL classrooms (Ohta 1999; Schieffelin and Ochs 1986). Therefore, in or-

der to understand why the students engage with the materials the way they do, we need to examine what students read and how they were taught to read in previous FL classrooms. In order to change the way students engage with FL texts, it may be necessary that we rethink and redesign reading instruction from the beginning level.

## **6. Pedagogical Implications and Future Directions**

The teacher's reflective journal and her dialogues with the peer shed light on future directions for us and for those who are interested in promoting critical reading in FL classrooms. The first implication that we regard as important is for a teacher to engage in dialogues with students to encourage reflective thinking about texts in the classroom. In other words, we should provide students with more opportunities for "dialogic inquiry" (Wells 1999), where they engage in their own problem-posing and are encouraged to take a problematizing stance (Kern 2004; Wallace 2001)—by questioning what is taken as normal or natural and raising their own concerns and questions rather than by solving problems presented by teachers. To enable teachers to do this, it is necessary to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of eliciting the students' own thoughts and then reflecting on their thoughts. It is also important for teachers to develop their ability to pose effective questions that facilitate students' critical thinking and reflection.

Secondly, there needs to be more emphasis on communication between teacher and students about the notion of reading, the role of the teacher and materials, the purposes of critical questions, and the expectations for each activity. In order to shift language teaching practices from a "traditional" approach to those that incorporate critical reading, it is crucial to change not only the types of activities implemented in classrooms but also both the teacher's and students' views about what "reading" in FL means, as well as the roles the teacher and materials play in learning a language. The importance of this shift in views has to be clearly explained and recognized at the beginning of the course, as it requires effort and desire from both the teacher and the students.

Further, the importance of critical reading also needs to be discussed at the beginning of the course. The first step in doing that is to allow the students to associate their reading activities in their first language with their JFL reading. For example, a teacher can pose such questions as what people expect from reading newspapers, what different newspapers

offer (e.g., how students expect their local newspapers to differ from national papers and/or why they favor a certain newspaper over another), and what the target readership of each newspaper is in terms of factors such as political views, ages, and occupations (see, for example, Kimura 2004 for a comparison of the target readerships of various Japanese newspapers). Analyzing with students the different characteristics of various U.S. newspapers and magazines and explicitly comparing and contrasting the differences between them may help students become aware that readers cannot take the content of newspapers or magazines at face value. Students may engage in critical reading in their first language, but not see the need to do so in a foreign language. That is, there may be a disconnect between students' reading activities outside the class and their reading in FL classrooms because they may perceive reading in FL classrooms as "exercises for language learning." The teacher can help students make connections between reading in their first language and in JFL.

If the goal of each activity is clearly communicated, students will know what to pay attention to in their preparations for classes. Students themselves need to understand the purpose and importance of engaging in each of the activities. Successfully communicating with the students on such aspects may also enable students to take a more active role in posing critical reading questions themselves as the course progresses.

It is also important to develop concrete objectives, attainable for a JFL course that aims to promote critical reading, as well as tools that offer students "structured guidance" (Kern 2004:7). We believe that using the existing tools for critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed for English (Fairclough 1993) may serve as an effective first step to raise students' critical language awareness (Fairclough 1992). CDA was originally developed for examining how relations of power are actualized and circulated through discourses that occur mainly in public domains such as media reports, magazine articles, government reports, political debates, and such institutionally-situated interactions as doctor-patient conversations (Fairclough 1989, 1995). More recently, the benefits of teaching the methods of CDA to language learners and having them engage in text analysis in order to develop critical reading skills have been discussed and reported (Byrnes 2006; Colombi 2006; Fairclough 1992; Pennycook 2001; Teruya 2006; Wallace 1992, 2003). As Wallace (2003:42) points out, foreign language learners have an advantage over native language users because they have a metalanguage (i.e., a way of talking about

texts) which is supported by their formal study of grammar. That is, students' knowledge can be meaningfully used in "looking not just at propositional content but ideological assumptions" (Wallace 1992: 69). Therefore, instructing students to pay attention to an author's use of language regarding basic grammatical and linguistic aspects such as pronouns, subject-object relationships, and/or the use of active/passive voice, as well as to the choice of particular nouns, would certainly help sensitize them to the textual features that are important in interpreting an author's intentions.

Because students in North American contexts are more familiar with English texts than Japanese texts, exemplifying textual analyses using English texts may prove to be a good way to start. Such materials as English articles written by writers with differing views and positions on the same issue will provide students a chance to compare how each author uses language differently to convey intended meanings by conducting text analysis using CDA. We can then discuss textual features that English and Japanese have in common to a certain extent, e.g., the choice between active and passive voice or between transitive and intransitive verbs. Such choices in both languages depend on the writer's perception of who is the active participant in the event. Then, we could proceed to Japanese-specific textual features such as the choice between plain and *desu/-masu* styles and orthographic choices—again, comparing articles written by writers with differing perspectives. Ultimately, we would like to help students use what they learn from such analyses for their own purposes—especially in their writing so that they can act on the world with their own choice of linguistic devices.

The other areas we need to explore include placing more emphasis on pre-reading activities and developing ways to help students' comprehension without encouraging them to be overly concerned with details. Kern (2000) underscores the importance of engaging learners in discussions in which a teacher leads students to recognize the kind of textual phenomena and information that are important to analyze before they read. We need to develop pre-reading activities that help students become familiar with sociocultural backgrounds—activities such as having students gather background information about the texts or considering multiple viewpoints to understand the texts. For example, in order for students to understand the dynamic and diverse nature of culture, we may first ask each student to take an active role in gathering information through media in English to become familiar with popular views (or assign a

reading from English resources such as introductory Japanese culture books, which often present stereotypical views of Japanese culture), and then have them discuss whether the popular or stereotypical views are compatible with their own understanding of the Japanese culture. With such preparatory steps, students may be better prepared to view culture and society as dynamic rather than static when they read newspaper articles that are related to changes or diversity in Japanese culture.

The role of writing in advanced-level JFL classrooms needs to be re-considered as well. Often, writing in JFL classrooms is viewed as primarily a strategy of “knowledge-telling” (Bereiter and Scandamalia 1987:339), where texts serve only as a transmission function without critical engagement (Wells 2000). Instead, we could treat writing as what Lotman (1988:40) calls “a thinking device” and “a generator of meaning,” which allows students to transform knowledge through dialogic engagement with the text being composed. In-class writing activities, particularly in groups, such as rewriting a paragraph from a different perspective or with a different audience in mind, could be meaningfully incorporated to facilitate such constructive and critical engagement with texts. Group writing activities could be considered an opportunity to collaboratively construct knowledge through dialogue.

Through this collaborative action research, we illuminated some challenges that the classroom teacher faced when implementing a critical approach in an advanced-level reading course. Shifting the pedagogical approach from traditional, “comprehension-based” reading lessons to those that incorporate critical reading requires not only rethinking the purposes and goals of reading instruction, but also re-conceptualizing the role of teachers. The next step in our collaborative research endeavor is to understand the students’ perspectives in participating in the critical-oriented JFL reading course, which we believe will provide us with further insights into how to improve our curriculum for the advanced-reading course.

## APPENDIX

### List of Reading Materials Used in the Course

SOURCE	DATE	TITLE
1 朝日新聞	12/07/00	声「日本人も色々、決めつけずに」(高校生、16才)

- |    |  |          |   |
|----|--|----------|---|
| 2  | 朝日新聞                                   | 01/21/02 | ニュース批判できるかな<br>「メディアリテラシー教育広がる」                                     |
| 3  | 朝日新聞                                   | 01/21/02 | 声「子ども励まし忍耐力養おう」(主婦、39才)   |
| 4  | 朝日新聞                                   | 10/27/01 | 「頑張れ」でなく<br>励ますならば相手に合わせ(無職、71才)                                    |
| 5  | 朝日新聞                                   | 01/10/01 | ニッポンのことば 第一部何が起きているか4<br>NOと言おうよ 現代っ子に特訓                            |
| 6  | アエラ                                    | 08/19/96 | 日本人とナショナリズム：米国体験<br>(小林弘人 ワイアード誌 日本版編集長)<br>イエスでもノーでもない曖昧な部分を捨てたくない |
| 7  | アエラ                                    | 02/23/04 | 日本人なのにバイリン家族  |
| 8  | 日本論点<br>2004                           | 11/10/03 | 英語教育の重視が日本人の教養をさらに低下させる<br>のはまず間違いない(藤原正彦)                          |
| 9  | 朝日新聞                                   | 06/30/01 | お作法、無作法 不愉快だよ 過剰な敬語<br>若者敬語に「敬意」なし 社会が変化、仕方ない?                      |
| 10 | 朝日新聞                                   | 10/01/00 | 世界のくらし<br>上司を「きみ」と呼ぼう 敬語禁じイメチェン 仏の<br>企業                            |
| 11 | <i>The New<br/>York Times</i><br>(Web) | 10/30/03 | Japanese workers get word from on high: Drop<br>formality           |
| 12 | 朝日新聞                                   | 10/26/00 | 「学生よ 人生のビジョン問い直せ」<br>126人に退学勧告へ                                     |
| 13 | 朝日新聞<br>(Web)                          | 10/25/04 | 入試：<br>ニートやモラトリアムの学生はいらない 大阪電通大                                     |
| 14 | アエラ                                    | 04/12/04 | 注目の若手女性監督・萩上直子<br>個性なき日本人に物申す                                       |
| 15 | アエラ                                    | 06/23/03 | 米映画が描けぬ現実<br>リンダ・ホーランド  |
| 16 | 朝日新聞                                   | 11/27/01 | J-culture-NOW!<br>フリーター 職業人への予備過程                                   |
| 17 | アエラ                                    | 11/08/04 | 自信過小、自分探し世代の憂鬱<br>20代おおう「心はニート」                                     |

## NOTES

1. The word list contained words the teacher felt students needed to know in order to understand the text, words that occur frequently in newspapers and magazines that students would benefit from learning, and words that might be difficult for students to understand on their own. Students were in-

structed to look up the first two types of words and remember them. Explanations and notes were provided for the third type of words.

2. Further, there is subtle difference between the usage of the plain copula *da* and expository *de aru* in some contexts. Maynard (1998), for example, discusses *da* and *de aru*, stating that “the narrator is psychologically closer to what is being described” (104) when using *da*, while *de aru* in her example sentence is used to convey “the narrator’s comment reached after a longer thought process” (105).
3. For the effects of word choice, see Sasaki 2005.
4. One of the reviewers suggested that the students’ beliefs about (and attitudes towards) reading FL texts may not be necessarily “foreign language” phenomena but may also be observed in reading in L1 academic contexts. While we agree that many readers may exhibit similar beliefs and behaviors towards reading in both L1 and L2, it is possible that JSL readers may be more preoccupied and overly concerned about the accuracy of their understanding of texts because their reading proficiency is significantly lower in Japanese as compared to that in their L1.

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