The Results of the Fall 2018 Survey on Teachers’ Attitudes Toward and Beliefs About Japanese Language Education

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Jisuk Park (Columbia University)

OUTLINE

- **Introduction – Why this now?** (Mori)
- **The 2018 Online Survey (Hasegawa & Suzuki)**
  - Demographic information
  - Beliefs about Japanese Language and Culture
  - Perspectives/Experiences with Teacher Diversity
- **Future steps – What’s next?** (Mori)
INTRODUCTION

WHY THIS NOW?

SURVEY ON TEACHERS’ ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS TOWARD JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Diversity and inclusion have become a forefront of discussions in academic and professional institutions in recent years. However, we have not sufficiently examined the extent to which a culture of diversity and inclusion has been fostered and actually practiced within our profession.

We are conducting a survey research to learn about Japanese language educators’ perspectives on this issue.
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

United States, 1/1/04-3/15/19 Web Search

It is critical that universities continue to be afforded the appropriate discretion to make thoughtful judgments on who to admit and how best to conduct higher education.

Mary Sue’s Desk
Mary Sue Coleman is president of the Association of American Universities and a former president of the University of Michigan and the University of Iowa.
Social science research finds that when confronted with challenging problems, groups of people with diverse backgrounds and views perform better than those with like backgrounds and views, even when the latter group consists of those deemed to be the best individual performers.

JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

- Diversity of Japanese language learners
- Lack of diversity of Japanese speakers portrayed in language textbooks
- Importance of diversified contents and activities to raise learners’ critical awareness…

However,
- Diversity of Japanese language educators?

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2015年度 海外日本語教育機関調査 (国際交流基金)

米国では今回機関数と学習者数が増加した一方で、教師数が減少に転じる結果となった。教師数が前回比で8．8％減少した主な理由としては、外国語教育に関する政府予算が縮小される傾向が依然としてつづいていること、また現地において日本語教師の人材が不足していることなどが挙げられ、特に中等教育段階ではその傾向が顕著である。
2015年度 海外日本語教育機関調査 (国際交流基金)

<table>
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<th>教師１人あたりの学習者（人）</th>
<th>日本語母語教師（人）</th>
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朝日新聞 DIGITAL
将来の親日家育てる 米国で不足の日本語教師、どう確保
ワシントン＝土佐茂生 2018年10月14日06時33分

在米日本大使館は12日、米国で日本語学習者が増え
なるなかで不足する日本語教師をいかに確保するかなど
を話し合う「日本語教育懇談会」の初会合をワシント
ンで開いた。将来の親日家・知日派を育てることで、
日米関係の重要な基盤にしたい考えだ。
（中略）

外務省は、外国の青年を外国語指導助手などとして日
本に招く「ＪＥＴプログラム」を活用し、米国に帰国
後、日本語教師になる考えがある青年や学生には、特
別に日本語教師の養成プログラムを提供するなどの案
を検討している。
（後略）
Diversity Requirement

Diversity and inclusiveness are core AAS values. Diversity encourages innovation and creativity, and strengthens the community by harnessing a variety of skills, perspectives, talents, and resources to meet new challenges. We ask that session organizers keep these values in mind as they assemble session participants so that our conference will reflect the diversity in our membership.

In particular, we expect panel submissions to demonstrate:

• Gender diversity
• Institutional diversity (no more than 2 participants from the same institution)
• A mix of professional roles (graduate students, junior and senior scholars, adjunct faculty, and other professionals working in areas connected to Asian studies)
THE 2018 SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS

- The online survey (October 30-November 30, 2018)
  1. Demographic information
  2. Beliefs about Japanese Language and Culture
  3. Beliefs about Teacher Qualification
  4. Perspectives/Experiences with Teacher Diversity
  5. Other comments

- The invitation sent to AATJ member list, CAJLE member list, and Sensei Online.

- 355 responses received from Japanese language educators located in North America.

355 responses received from Japanese language educators located in North America.
The majority of the survey respondents (99.7%) agreed that learning Japanese will help develop flexibility and sensitivity towards cultures/societies with which they are not familiar.

But

The respondents varied in their beliefs about the importance of teaching/emphasizing cultural uniqueness, diversity among Japanese speakers, Standard Japanese, grammatical correctness, and native-like proficiency.

The majority of respondents (58%) considered the Japanese language educator community in North America lacks diversity in regard to ethnic/cultural background, gender & sexuality, and age & generation.

Many comments submitted to the open-ended questions illustrate microaggressions either experienced or witnessed by the respondents.
THE 2018 SURVEY
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

WHO RESPONDED?

Gender

15

59

281

Female  Male  Prefer not to say
WHO RESPONDED?

Institution Type

- 4 Year: 20
- K-12: 121
- 2 Year: 22
- Other: 192

Highest Degree (higher ed.)

- Master: 80
- Doctorate: 6
- Bachelor: 0
- Other: 126

Highest Degree (K-12)

- Master: 24
- Doctorate: 5
- Bachelor: 4
- Other: 88
WHO RESPONDED?

First Language (higher ed.)

- Japanese: 176
- English: 8
- Other: 28

First Language (K-12)

- Japanese: 70
- English: 50
- Other: 1

THE 2018 SURVEY
BELIEFS ABOUT
JAPANESE LANGUAGE & CULTURE
TEACHER BELIEFS/ATTITUDES

a) variety of Japanese  
b) standard Japanese  
c) native speakers of Japanese  
d) accuracy (grammar, intonation, etc.)  
e) Japanese culture  
f) goals of Japanese learning  
g) Japanese language teachers  

Based on Heath Rose, Natsuno Funada, and Jessica Briggs

ON GOALS OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

5. Learning Japanese will help my students develop flexibility and sensitivity towards cultures / societies with which they are not familiar.  
   99.7% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed  

3. I would like my students to use Japanese in a multilingual community.  
   94.9% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed  

    94.4% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed  

12. In order to be accepted by Japanese society, students have to understand the language and culture.  
    89.2% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed
ON GOALS OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

5. Learning Japanese will help my students develop flexibility and sensitivity towards cultures / societies with which they are not familiar.

3. I would like my students to use Japanese in a multilingual community.


12. In order to be accepted by Japanese society, students have to understand the language and culture.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L1 Japanese</th>
<th>L2 Japanese</th>
<th>Higher Ed</th>
<th>K-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strng Ag</td>
<td>106 (46.6%)</td>
<td>63 (72.4%)</td>
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<td>80 (73.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>73 (32.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smwht Ag</td>
<td>32 (14.0%)</td>
<td>7 (8.0%)</td>
<td>30 (16.0%)</td>
<td>7 (6.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smwht Dg</td>
<td>7 (3.1%)</td>
<td>1 (1.1%)</td>
<td>7 (3.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dg</td>
<td>8 (3.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 (4.3%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strng Dg</td>
<td>2 (0.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (1.1%)</td>
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Wilcoxon Test: P=<0.0001

Kruskal-Wallis Test: P=<0.0001

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bachelor's</th>
<th>Master's</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strng Ag</td>
<td>26 (78.8%)</td>
<td>113 (55.1%)</td>
<td>28 (38.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>5 (15.2%)</td>
<td>65 (31.7%)</td>
<td>18 (24.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smwht Ag</td>
<td>2 (6.1%)</td>
<td>18 (8.8%)</td>
<td>18 (24.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smwht Dg</td>
<td>3 (1.5%)</td>
<td>5 (6.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dg</td>
<td>6 (2.9%)</td>
<td>2 (2.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strng Dg</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (2.7%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Kruskal-Wallis Test: P=<0.0001
ON JAPANESE LANGUAGE

1. A good Japanese teacher provides opportunities for learners to learn about different varieties of Japanese (dialects, etc.).
   88.7% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

14. Awareness of different varieties of Japanese (dialects, etc.) will enable students to learn about a greater range of Japanese speakers.
   96.2% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

7. Standard Japanese is more correct than other varieties of Japanese, including regional dialects.
   70.7% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed/Somewhat Disagreed

   65.7% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

4. Only grammatically correct Japanese should be taught in Japanese language classes.
   Mixed (almost 50-50)

7. Standard Japanese is more correct than other varieties of Japanese, including regional dialects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Higher Ed</th>
<th>K-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strng Ag</td>
<td>2 (1.1%)</td>
<td>1 (1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>8 (4.4%)</td>
<td>13 (12.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smwht Ag</td>
<td>29 (15.8%)</td>
<td>29 (27.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smwht Dg</td>
<td>29 (15.8%)</td>
<td>22 (21.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dg</td>
<td>45 (24.6%)</td>
<td>21 (20.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strng Dg</td>
<td>10 (38.3%)</td>
<td>19 (18.1%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Wilcoxon Test: P=<0.0001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strng Ag</td>
<td>3 (9.7%)</td>
<td>2 (1.0%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>7 (22.6%)</td>
<td>14 (7.1%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smwht Ag</td>
<td>6 (19.4%)</td>
<td>46 (24.5%)</td>
<td>6 (8.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smwht Dg</td>
<td>5 (16.1%)</td>
<td>43 (21.9%)</td>
<td>7 (9.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dg</td>
<td>6 (19.4%)</td>
<td>35 (17.9%)</td>
<td>24 (32.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strng Dg</td>
<td>4 (12.9%)</td>
<td>54 (27.6%)</td>
<td>35 (47.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kruskal-Wallis Test: P=<0.0001
ON NATIVE-NESS

8. One of the goals of learning the Japanese language is to speak with a native-like accent.

59.1% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

13. The role of the teacher is to help students develop native-like proficiency.

62.8% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

2. When I think of a Japanese speaker, I imagine a speaker from Japan.

72.6% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

6. The true owners of Japanese are anyone who uses Japanese.

80.9% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

11. Being a native speaker is not an important characteristic of a good Japanese teacher.

90.7% Strongly Agreed/Agreed/Somewhat Agreed

ON NATIVE-NESS

8. One of the goals of learning the Japanese language is to speak with a native-like accent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
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</thead>
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<td>7 (21.9%)</td>
<td>8 (3.9%)</td>
<td>5 (6.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>9 (28.1%)</td>
<td>45 (22.2%)</td>
<td>6 (8.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Ag</td>
<td>6 (18.8%)</td>
<td>72 (35.5%)</td>
<td>24 (32.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somewhat Dg</td>
<td>4 (12.5%)</td>
<td>29 (14.3%)</td>
<td>15 (20.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dg</td>
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<td>31 (15.3%)</td>
<td>15 (20.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strong Dg</td>
<td>1 (3.1%)</td>
<td>18 (8.9%)</td>
<td>9 (12.2%)</td>
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</table>
ON NATIVE-NESS

11. Being a native speaker is **NOT** an important characteristic of a good Japanese teacher

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<th>L1 Japanese</th>
<th>L2 Japanese</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Smwht Ag</td>
<td>46 (20.1%)</td>
<td>8 (9.5%)</td>
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<td>Smwht Dg</td>
<td>17 (7.4%)</td>
<td>2 (2.4%)</td>
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<td>Dg</td>
<td>6 (2.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strng Dg</td>
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<td>2 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY

- Consensus on general goals of language education
- Some discrepancies on items regarding Japanese language and native-ness
  - Institution type
  - Highest degree
  - First language
  - Individual differences (what makes differences?)
1. Do you believe the Japanese language educator community in North America is a diverse one? If not, in what respects is it lacking in diversity?

1. What factors do you think contribute to limit the diversity of the Japanese language teaching community?

2. What are the consequences of a lack of diversity? Please describe any episode(s) you have observed or experienced below, including any attitudes, utterances, or actions that may point to bias.
RESPONDENTS

- 248 respondents
- 81 responded in Japanese
- 167 responded in English

Q1-1. DO YOU BELIEVE THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATOR COMMUNITY IN NORTH AMERICA IS A DIVERSE ONE?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Higher Ed</th>
<th>K-12</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>144 (58.0%)</td>
<td>98 (68.5%)</td>
<td>46 (43.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither/No Direct Response</td>
<td>55 (22.2%)</td>
<td>27 (18.9%)</td>
<td>28 (26.7%)</td>
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</table>
Q1-2. IF NOT, IN WHAT RESPECTS IS IT LACKING IN DIVERSITY?

<table>
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<th>Whole Group</th>
<th>Higher Ed</th>
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<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender &amp; Sexuality</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age &amp; Generation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
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</table>

Q2. What factors do you think contribute to limit the diversity of the Japanese language teaching community?

FACTORS FOR THE LIMITED DIVERSITY IN ETHNIC/CULTURAL BACKGROUND

- **Bias/perception** impacting community membership and hiring
- **Students’ bias against non-native teachers**
- **Teaching Japanese is not an appealing job** for Japanese learners
- **Japanese language teachers’ community and Japanese society being closed** toward non-native speakers / minorities
FACTORS FOR THE LIMITED DIVERSITY IN GENDER AND SEXUALITY

- **No job security** - few full-time positions/heavy use of adjuncts
- **Low salary** - cannot be the breadwinner of the household, having a partner who has a financially secured job
- Language instructors being considered as **low status/second citizen**
- **LGBTQ teachers feeling vulnerable** to not being accepted by the Japanese language teachers’ community, and worrying that they may not be hired

FACTORS FOR THE LIMITED DIVERSITY IN AGE AND GENERATION

- **Limited number of graduate/training programs** in the field of Japanese language education
- **Demanding teaching requirements**, yet Japanese teaching is often still unstable (part-time positions etc.) and low pay
- **Lack of available teaching positions**
- **Lack of young people/learners of Japanese who wish to become Japanese teachers.**
- **Lack/decline of the number of Japanese language learners**
Q3. WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF A LACK OF DIVERSITY?

- Personal episodes to share the thoughts and experiences
  - Re-affirmation of Native-Speakerism
  - Enforcement of Tokyo-based Standard Japanese
  - Language Choice
  - Bias in Hiring
  - Persistence of Nihonjinron

RE-AFFIRMATION OF NATIVE-SPEAKERISM

I have heard teachers discuss is whether non-native speaking teachers should teach pronunciation or not, and an often expressed idea is that it would be bad for students to imitate the accent of a non-native speaker. When I hear these kinds of comments, it seems to me that people have an overly narrow idea of what “counts” as acceptable Japanese pronunciation. (College)
ENFORCEMENT OF TOKYO-BASED STANDARD JAPANESE

I have heard Japanese language teachers make negative comments about the accents of teachers who are not from Tokyo, and I have heard teachers say that if someone usually speaks with a non-Tokyo accent (e.g., Kansai, Tohoku etc.), then that person should “hide” their accent and adopt a Tokyo accent when teaching. (College)

LANGUAGE CHOICE

The divide between the secondary and tertiary education contributes to a damaging tacit belief that non-native speakers will never be able to achieve a particularly high level of proficiency. I left a working group which had met for multiple months in which I was the only non-native instructor, and for which the meetings were conducted entirely in Japanese. The majority of K-12 instructors may have never learned Japanese terms for linguistic and pedagogical terminology. (K-12)
LANGUAGE CHOICE

One specific example was a job interview where I was asked how I would handle correspondence with Japan-based grant funding agency. The question was clearly aimed at the perception that I would not have the cultural and linguistic skills necessary to successfully navigate professional relationships with funding agencies. I do not know if native-speaker candidates were also asked this question, but I very much doubt that they were. (College)
Critical reflection of microaggressions and discriminations in our everyday interactions
STEP 1
Sunday, March 24, 9:00 – 10:45 a.m., Tower Court D
Diversity, Inclusion, and Professionalism in Japanese Language Education

Chair: Junko Mori (University of Wisconsin, Madison)
Panelists:
Mahua Bhattacharya (Elizabethtown College)
Kimberly Jones (University of Arizona)
Ryuko Kubota (University of British Columbia)
Suwako Watanabe (Portland State University)
STEP 2, 3, 4...

- Implementation of ideas discussed at the Sunday Roundtable.
- Further analysis of the survey data → Publications to disseminate the results to a broader audience.
- Continuous informal and formal discussions at program, regional, national and international levels.

Please join us! We are in this together!

WHO ARE WE AND WHO DO WE ASPIRE TO BE?