

President's Address/Greetings: What do we learn from the "role language"?

Masahiko Minami, NCJTA President

Dear Members of the NCJTA,

How did you spend your summer vacation? I guess some of you visited Japan and encountered something totally bizarre that you had never seen in San Francisco and something that even puzzled you. I mainly spent my time for reading and had a meaningful and quiet time. In San Francisco State University, I teach graduate-level linguistics courses: (1) a sociolinguistics seminar, which covers such areas as cognitive semantics, pragmatics, geographical linguistics, and dialectal geography; such as cultural anthropology and multi-cultural psychology, and (2) a second language acquisition seminars, which covers such areas as psycholinguistics, applied linguistics, and language education. To make seminars continuously fascinating, it is essential that I collect the latest information on socio-linguistics and other fields. For instance, please take a look at the table below, and imagine person, (a) – (h), utters which of the Japanese sentences (A – H)?

A	<i>Sō yo, atashi ga shitteru wa.</i>	(a)	Samurai warrior
B	<i>Sō ja, washi ga shitte oru.</i>	(b)	(Fake) Chinese
C	<i>Sō ya, wate ga shittoru dee.</i>	(c)	Old gentleman
D	<i>Sō ja, wagahai ga zonzite oru.</i>	(d)	Girl
E	<i>Sō desu way o. Watakushi ga zonzite orimasu wa.</i>	(e)	Country bumpkin
F	<i>Sō aru yo. Watashi shitteru aru yo.</i>	(f)	Boy
G	<i>Sō da yo. Boku ga shitteru no sa.</i>	(g)	Princess-style girl
H	<i>N'da, ora shitteru da.</i>	(h)	Kansai-area people

To prepare the table above, I summarized the contents of "The Mystery of Virtual Role Language in Japanese" written by Satoshi Kinsui (published by Iwanami Shoten Publishers in 2003). In the past ten years I have picked up the issues of role language calling as "yakuwari kotei go (role fixation words/expressions)" in my graduate-level classes. However, it seems strange that the role-language plays powerful role although we seldom see a woman who speaks "... te agete yo." Or "... desu mono" as Ms. Shiratori and a princess-style woman like Mrs. O-cho. Although I have met only one woman who speaks like that, I did not transcribe her speech and do not even remember what she exactly said. Likewise, I have never seen a Chinese person who uses simplified expression, "... aru yo." Similarly, if we were able to find a country bumpkin who speaks in a hick's style described above in the modern information-technology-driven society, it would be almost a miracle. However, just listening to the unique conversation like A - H above, we are able to guess the speaker's identity, occupation, and/or image. Here we find the difference between the reality in our actual world and the reality in the virtual world.

Next, please guess what the following verbs and adjectives newly created by Japanese youngsters mean: *kafe-ru*, *koku-ru*, *kopi-ru*, *jiko-ru*, *sutaba-ru*, *biyo-ru*, *biri-ru*, *maku-ru*, *mosu-ru*, *utto-i*, *ero-i*, *kisho-i*, *kimo-i*, *goru-i*, *keba-i*, *musa-i*, and *mendo-i* [source: "Shingo wa koo shite tsukurareru (how new words are invented)" by Haruo Kubozono, 2002]. Native speakers of Japanese highly likely are able to guess the meaning of these newly created words. Even their

guess is not completely accurate, they would understand the design process to construct words expressions: to keep the initial two syllables and add “*ru*” for a verb, and “*i*” to an adjective. These youngsters’ words are very creative. For instance, ‘*sutaba-ru*’ means to go and spend time at Starbucks coffee shop; ‘*sebu-ru*’ is to go to a Seven Eleven convenience store; ‘*maku-ru*’ means to go to McDonald; ‘*tako-ru*’ to eat *takoyaki*. To sum, the suffix, ‘*ru*’ is added to any expression make a new verb, and the suffix, ‘*i*’ is attached to make a new adjective; for instance, a noun or the initial two morae of that noun is followed by a suffix: ‘*kimo-i — kimoichi waru-i,*’ ‘*zatsu-i — zatsu da,*’ ‘*bimyo-i — bimyo da,*’ ‘*goro-i — grotesque da,*’ ‘*ero-i — erotic da.*’ The following examples are combined words: ‘*kimo-kawai-i*’ — the combination of ‘*kimoichi waru-i*’ and ‘*kawai-i,*’ which means although it is wired but cute; ‘*kimo-sawayaka*’ — the combination of ‘*kimoichi waru-i*’ and ‘*sawayaka,*’ which feels wired but refreshing. Whichever cases the emphasis is on the latter expressions such as ‘*kawai-i*’ and ‘*sawayaka.*’ A person has both positive and negative dimensions. Therefore, people receive a stronger impression of positive aspect. It could be a kind of praising expressions that women fondly use; for instance, ‘*hachu yasashi-i*’ — even if he looks like a *hachuu-rui* (reptile), he is a warm-hearted person,’ ‘*nechi-kawai-i*’ — although he is insistent/demanding, he is cute.’ In a similar manner, ‘*saborijinii*’ is designed to combine the verb, ‘*saboru*’ — ‘to be lazy’ and the name of Australian habitants, Aborigine; ‘*jimotorian*’ — ‘local people’ and ‘*mendorian*’ — ‘people who hate to work on complicated issues’ is derived from the suffix to refer to people such as “American.” It is amazing that Japanese youngsters create these new words with a few vocabulary items. If we have our students guess the meanings of these newly designed words, they would be able to the design rules. However, whether they are able to answer what it means is highly questionable. If you are interested in this issue, I recommend you try to ask your students. You will probably find that they are unable to answer. Why? It is same as the case of role language. It would be interesting to analyze why it is difficult for non-native speakers to guess. Also, I think this is a significant issue in term of the orientation of future Japanese-language education.

This fall various kinds of events are scheduled. First of all, along with the Japan Information Center from San Francisco Japanese consulate, we are going to offer the workshop, “Advocacy and the AP programs” for the Japanese-language educators in elementary school, middle school, high school, community colleges, universities, and private school. High school educators are strongly interested in the workshop regarding the AP program. The guest speakers are Dr. Yoshiko Abbott-Saito from California State University Monterey Bay and Dr. Kazue Masuyama from Sacramento State University. Ms. Maki Watanabe from Japan Foundation will also visit the workshop. Please tell your colleagues to attend this workshop with you.

Also, the 34th Japanese Speech contest is going to be offered by San Francisco Japanese Consulate and Japanese American Association of Northern California on November 4th, Sunday. The place will be the Japan Information Center, the Consulate General of Japan, 50 Fremont Street, suite 2200, San Francisco, CA 94105. The NCJTA will join them as a supporting group from this year. Also, the presentation of the Foreign Language Association of Northern California (FLANC) is scheduled on November 10, Saturday in San Francisco State University. This time at least one Japanese-related topic will be presented in each session; therefore, we are sure that you will be able to enjoy their presentation all day long. As usual, the fall semi-annual meeting of the NCJTA is included as one of the sessions of the FLANC. Please participate in the NCJTA meeting because this is a great opportunity to expand your network. Finally, the

Japanese Language Proficiency Test, which objectively evaluates students' competency acquired and acknowledges them officially, will be offered at San Francisco State University. This fall we hope to study with all members to develop and further activate the NCJTA.

2007 Spring Semi Annual Meeting Report

The meeting was held from 1:00~3:00pm, May 6, Saturday

Place: San Francisco State University

Number of participants: 31

Agendas:

1. From the Consulate General of Japan: Ms. Kashiwara and Ms. Takahashi from the Consulate General of Japan announced the government-sponsored scholarship to study oversea.
2. Membership fee: The membership fee has been decided to go up although the costs for the newsletter such as postage, print, and paper will be diminished due to the usage of e-mail delivery. However, the cost to keep on the transaction to be a non-profit organization conducted by lawyers is incurred.
3. Completion of the process to non-profit organization: We received the official documentation to acknowledge the NCJTA Inc. The following three names are officially registered: CEO: Minami, Secretary: Sakakibara, and Accountant: Saito.

Presentation:

Teaching method that emphasizes the contexts

by Dr. Emiko Konomi from Mountain View High School.

Summary: Although the common goal of Japanese-language instruction is the state that students are able to speak like a native speaker of Japanese or they are ready to reach that level, there are so many altered settings. If students acquire the sense to handle what to say at what kind of timing upon the presently confronting situation, they will be able to communicate properly in the situation given. However, we tend to believe that students learn the basic Japanese in the classrooms and later they would handle the situation when they are in Japan. However, I believe Japanese-language teachers should teach how to respond to more realistic settings that students would encounter in Japan.

In term of culture, the contents to teach must include authentic Japanese language that is actually used by native speakers because language and culture are unable to separate from each other.

There are two types of culture: (a) culture that a native speaker of Japanese learns via study, and (b) culture that a native speaker of Japanese spontaneously acquires, such as behavioral patterns, way of thinking, way of feeling, value, etc. It is important to teach the latter (b) in the classroom.

To teach these elements above, I introduce a unique method: to create a natural context and have students speak naturally. Japanese teacher are expected to check if a student uses unnatural Japanese stating right sentences, but stereotypical long, entire sentences described in textbooks. For instance, a question like "what are there in this room" should not be used. After your

students practice conversation, you design the setting where they have to use that particular content they have just finished practicing, and you have them think what to tell. For instance, you pretend to try to smoke in the classroom; then your students will spontaneously say, "Don't smoke here." In this method, your students frequently ask questions because you (an instructor) may play three roles: coach, model, speech partner. A joke example--you return the pen that you have borrowed to a wrong student-- would be effective. If a class of 30 students, you may interpret that 30 students' brains are dynamically turned on by one student's verbal performance even if other 29 students are silent.

There is no perfect textbook or teacher for Japanese-language education, each teacher is responsible to design the context settings in this manner. Also, it is important to conduct looping to review the contents covered previously so that your students will refresh what they have learned.

After Dr. Konomi's presentation, the participants actively made various questions. We felt the time was very short due to Dr. Konomi's fascinating presentation. Dr. Konomi has taught at several universities as assistant professor, and instructed for the Japanese-teacher education programs in various institutions including Ohio State University, Cornell University. She is also an aerobics instructor.

(Recorded by Sakakibara)

2007 Fall Officers' Meeting Report

The NCJTA Officers' Minute August 27, 2007

Participants: Minami, Saito, Kosaka, Morioka, Goji, Morse, Shimabe, Scarce, Kambara, Takahashi, Sakakibara

Agendas:

1. The Consulate General of Japan intends to sponsor the workshop twice a year. After discussion it is decided that they offer in spring and fall respectively. In fall we set an interval between the speech context and the workshop upon setting the dates. It would be a great opportunity to meet the CAJLT (California Association of Japanese Language Teachers) members and associate with each other. The topic of the next meeting scheduled on October 7, 2007 is "Advocacy of AP program and Japanese-language teaching." This time, the event will be offered as it is. However, is it possible that the event will be possibly co-sponsored by the NCJTA and CAJLT in future? Should we worry about the participation rate of the FLANC? The FLANC is also important because the Japanese education at high school must have connection with other languages; therefore, we need to take the FLANC seriously and send message toward them. Dr. Minami received the message about the time allotment of Japanese presentations. The order of Japanese presentations had been changed from the initial plan; however, it was returned to the original order after negotiation.
2. About the fall semi-annual meeting: Time/date: 3:05~4:00pm November 10 Theme: The activity on the first day of instruction — the way of ice breaking. The officers will prepare such items as water, rice crackers, and cookies.
3. About the Newsletter: the columns writers are decided. The due date is September 25, Tuesday, to be sent to Ms. Kosaka, newsletter organizer: skosaka@berkeley.edu, Ms.

Sakakibara, editor. The newsletter will be distributed to all members via e-mail. The US mail will no longer be used.

4. The NCJTS web page: The officers' photos will be uploaded (Mr. Imase in charge). The FLANC newsletter: We think about rotate the responsibility to write articles in the Japanese-language column. This time the first and second-prize winners will write the articles.
5. The international linguistics conference in next spring is highly likely held in San Francisco State University. So far, it has been the joint event with the NCJTA spring semi-annual meeting. However, it expected that the donation to the conference from the NCJTA could be managed by the donation from the outside organizations. Therefore, we will observe and evaluate the issue.

Kotoba no Mado

Karite kita Neko

Tomoko Takeda, San Francisco State University

I found quite a few numbers of expressions using “cat” in the reading material used in one of my classes in this semester. In Japanese language, there are expressions using dogs and/or cats that are familiar to our daily lives. I asked my students if their first languages have similar expressions using animals and found it interesting that there are common metaphoric images among these animals; for instance, a fox is crafty. In English expression, there is a lovely example, “cat’s pajamas.” This means something/someone wonderful as wonderful as one is moved. For instance, to talk about a new computer he bought, he might say, “My new computer is the cat’s pajamas!”

After we finished reading the material with the cat expressions, one of my students said, “When I used the expression of “cat’s forehead” to my Japanese friend, he was unable to understand.” His friend seems to be a Japanese student. I talked about it to my colleague, and they were surprised to hear it. Then I conducted a short survey as I was interested in also. Currently, I am going to present the result below although I have collected the answers from only eight samples, which is not reliable enough to analyze statistically. The result is shown as follows:

- *Neko no hitai hodo no niwa* (A yard as big as a cat’s forehead): Five participants answered that they knew the meaning. Among them only one participant has actually used this expression. Three participants did not know the meaning.
- *Neko no te mo karitai* (I want to borrow the cat’s hand): Seven participants knew the meaning. Five among these seven had used the expression. One did not know the meaning.
- *Neko ni koban* (Coins for a cat): Seven participants knew the meaning. All seven participants had used the expression. Only one participant did not know the meaning.
- *Karite kita neko* (A cat that has been borrowed and taken here): Three participants knew the meaning. Among them only one had actually used. Five participants did not know the meaning.

One of the participants claimed that he not only did not know the meaning but also he had never heard any of the expressions except for “coins for a cat.” How to interpret the result depending upon educators; however, it is a problem that learners believe what Japanese students say must be correct. My student described previously was simply confused because the expression learned in the classroom was not simply understood by his Japanese friend. However, I have actually encountered the cases that students say, “Sensei, a Japanese friend of mine stated that they don’t use ~.” Then I recognized the importance to explain the underlined complexity among written language, oral language, and polite level along and so forth, along with the language spoken between a student and his/her Japanese friend.

Announcements: 2007 Workshop and Events for educators in the North California region

Guest speaker: Ms. Maki Watanabe (Japan Foundation Academic Specialist), Dr. Yoshiko Saito-Abbot (California State University Monterey Bay, AP Program Test Committee Member, Advisor of College Board), Dr. Kazue Masuyama (Sacramento State University, AP Program Test Committee Member, Vice President of the NCJTA)

Topic: Advocacy and AP Program

Date/Time:

10:15 am ~	Reception
10:30~12:30	“Advocacy: How to reinforce Japanese-language education
12:30~1:15	Lunch (Please bring your own lunch.)
1:15~3:15	AP Japanese Program

Place: Japan Information Center at Consulate General of Japan San Francisco
50 Fremont Street, Suite 2200 (22th Floor), San Francisco, CA 94105
http://www.sf.us.emb-japan.go.jp/en/e_m01..htm

We are going to offer the workshop, “Advocacy and the AP programs” for the Japanese-language educators in elementary school, middle school, high school, community colleges, universities, and private school. High school educators are strongly interested in the workshop regarding the AP program. The guest speakers are Dr. Yoshiko Abbott-Saito from California State University Monterey Bay and Dr. Kazue Masuyama from Sacramento State University. To correspond to those solid requests, we focus on the following points: (1) reinforcement of Japanese-language education based on the political and economical point of view, and (2) the issues after the first AP Japanese-language program. Ms. Maki Watanabe, Dr. Yoshiko Saito-Abbot, and Dr. Kazue Masuyama are going to present speech. Please join the workshop by all means with your colleagues.

Foreign Language Association of Northern California (FLANC)

Date: November 10, Saturday

Place: San Francisco State University, College of Humanities

The Foreign Language Association of Northern California (FLANC) is going to implement the presentations in San Francisco State University. This time at least one Japanese-related topic will be presented in each session; therefore, we are sure that you will be able to enjoy their presentation all day long. As usual, the fall semi-annual meeting of the NCJTA is included as one of the sessions of the FLANC. Please participate in the NCJTA meeting because this is a great opportunity to expand your network.

The 34th Japanese Language Speech Contest

The 34th Japanese Speech contest is going to be offered by San Francisco Japanese Consulate and Japanese American Association of Northern California on November 4th, Sunday. The place will be Japan Information Center, Consulate General of Japan, 50 Fremont Street, suite 2200, San Francisco, CA 94105. As well as the last year, the contests for middle and high school students is scheduled in the morning; the contest for college students and adults in the afternoon.

The college students and adult participants must fulfill the following conditions: (1) must be 18-years or older with the US citizenship or the permanent-resident status, and (2) must NOT have lived in Japan for two-years continuously after the age of six. The previous first-prize winner is not qualified to participate. The monetary reward will be awarded to the participants who win the first to fifth prizes respectively. Besides, the trophies will be given to the participants with the first, second, and third prizes. Also, one of the participants will be given the round ticket from Japan Airline. Those who would like to participate in the college and adult contest, please contact the Northern California Japan-US Office at 415-921-1782 (Tel), 415-931-1826 (Fax), or Mr. Masakazu Sato at 925-876-9543 / 556-3792, or Mr. Takehiko Yasuda at 415-637-1113.

The conditions for the middle/high school students are as follows: s/he must NOT have lived in Japan for two-years continuously after the age of six. The certificates and commemorative articles will be awarded to all winners. The previous first-prize winner is not qualified to participate. The participants will be divided into the two groups: (a) participants who speak Japanese daily with his/her family members, and (b) participants who don't use Japanese at home. The contests will be held in each group (a) and (b). The committee is accepting the applications—one participant with recommendation from each school. The maximum number of recommendation is one per school, and one as substitute applicant.

The middle/high school applicants must contact Ms. Takahashi from Japan Information Center at Consulate General of Japan, San Francisco: 415-356-2416, education@cgsf.org The applications of middle/high school students are accepted in Japan Information Center.

The application deadline for college students, adults, middle and high school students is October 12, Friday at 5:00pm. All Japanese educators and those who are interested in transferring Japanese language to the next generation, please support the participants in the Japanese-language speech contest. (Article contributed by Masahiko Minami)

Japanese Language Proficiency Test

Japan Foundation has implemented the Japanese Language Proficiency Test for the Japanese-language learners since 1984 not only within Japan but also overseas. The Japanese Language Proficiency Test objectively evaluates students' competency acquired and acknowledges them officially. In the West Coast, the test was conducted only in Los Angeles; however, applicants have been able to take the test in San Francisco Bay area for the past four years. This year the test will be offered at San Francisco State University. The test is classified into the four different levels. The level one is the most difficult level. The level four is the least difficult one. An applicant is able to select one of the four levels. Each level consists of (1) vocabulary, (2) listening, and (3) reading and grammar. The fee is \$50 for the level one and two, \$40 for the level three and four. The application may be sent by mail or online. If the applicant is sent by mail, s/he must fill in the application form and mail it to Japan Foundation Language Center in Los Angeles. Applicants may find more details in <http://www.jflalc.org/?act+tpt&id=23>, or contact 213-621-2267 (M~F 9:30~5:30); or noryoku@jflalc.org. The deadline of application is October 5. All Japanese educators and those who are interested in transferring Japanese language to the next generation, please support the participants in the Japanese-language speech contest. (Article contributed by Masahiko Minami)

Introduction of Teachers

Taeko Morioka-sensei

- 1) What's your name?
My name is Taeko Morioka.
- 2) What is the name of the school(s) you teach?
I teach at a private elementary school, "Rosa Parks JBBP Elementary School" in San Francisco.
- 3) How long have you taught?
This year is my 25th years of teaching.
- 4) What's your hobby?
My hobby is reading books.
- 5) Which part of Japan are you from?
I was born and raised in Tokyo. I was living in Kanagawa also for two to three years.
- 6) How long have you been in the United States of America?
I came here in 1969. I moved back to Japan time to time. It's about 34 years.
- 7) Are there any thoughts on your job?
I feel satisfied teaching Japanese language and culture to elementary school children when I see them grow up and continue to study Japanese. If students start learning

Japanese when they are little children, they acquire normal intonation and are able to speak natural Japanese. I believe I am able to help American children to be fine citizens who have international sense. Also, It is a great pleasure to learn a lot from children.

- 8) Do you have any messages to NCJTA Members?

Every time we participate in the meeting, we find various kinds of issues. I would like to dedicate to Japanese-language education. Please work together.

Yu Goji-sensei

- 1) What's your name?

My name is Yu Goji.

- 2) What is the name of the school(s) you teach?

I am the Japanese program coordinator at Clarendon Elementary School in San Francisco.

- 3) How long have you taught?

I have taught since September 2000.

- 4) What's your hobby?

My hobby is to play basketball.

- 5) Which part of Japan are you from?

I am from Kunisaki in Oita prefecture. Kunito became 'city' after merging with other area. When I was living there, it was called Kunito County.

- 6) How long have you been in the United States of America?

It is my ninth year as I came here in August, 1998.

- 7) Are there any thoughts on your job?

Recognition of Japanese-language education in the elementary school system is still less compared to other languages, at least in San Francisco, I believe. In such a condition, I do my best believing that those children will transfer the message—it was a great experience to study Japanese at elementary school!—as many children as possible.

- 8) Do you have any messages to NCJTA Members?

Although I have joined the NCJTA recently and do not have a long-teaching experience, I look forward to seeing other members and learning something valuable.

Seiko Kosaka-sensei

- 1) What's your name?

My name is Seiko Kosaka

- 2) What is the name of the school(s) you teach?
I am teaching at University of California at Berkeley and Soko Institute in San Francisco.
- 3) How long have you taught?
I taught in 1999 in Taiwan for the first time.
- 4) What are your hobbies?
My hobbies are tennis, travel, movie, physical exercises, and discovering gourmet restaurants.
- 5) Which part of Japan are you from?
I was born at Himeji in Hyogo Prefecture and raised in Hitachi, Ibaragi Prefecture.
- 6) How long have you been in the United States of America?
It is my sixth year as I came here in July, 2001.
- 7) Are there any thoughts on your job?
I got interested in teaching Japanese when I taught as a volunteer. I would like to enjoy teaching without forgetting my original intention.
- 8) Do you have any messages to NCJTA members?
I see Japanese teachers with various experiences. I would like to learn from them.

Editors' Notes

We suppose all the members and educators are having busy days as the new semester began. This time new people have joined the newsletter, and the contents are more solid. We welcome your opinions and ideas. Please feel free to contact:

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Published by Northern California Japanese Teachers' Association

Foreign Language Association of Northern California (FLANC)

Date: November 10, Saturday

Place: San Francisco State University, College of Humanities

Sessions	Topics	Presenters and affiliations
Session 1 9:00 a.m. ~ 9:45 a.m.	Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Programs for Teaching Japanese	Masahiko Minami (SFSU) Yufuko Kurioka (Soko Gakuen Institute of Buddhist Studies), Shiori Hoke (CSU East Bay, Soko Gakuen), Shiho Nishida (Soko Gakuen)
Session 2 10:30 a.m. ~ 11:15 a.m.	Japanese Songs for Teaching	Junko Hosoi (Aragon High School)
	Using Manga Characters for teaching Giving and Receiving Relationships in Japanese	Tazumi Otsuka Scarce (De Anza College, Mission College)
Session 3 1:15 p.m. ~ 2:00 p.m.	How to Best Handle Back-to-School-Day	Atsuko Morse (College Preparatory School), Kumiko Sakamoto (Menlo School), Naomi Okada (Lowell High School)
Session 4 2:15 p.m. ~ 3:00 p.m.	After the 1 st Japanese AP Test: Observation and Feedback from the AP Committee	Yoshiko Saito-Abbott (CSU Monterey Bay)
NCJTA Fall Meeting 3:10 p.m. ~ 3:55 p.m.	Activities for Networking	

(Translated by Tazumi Scarce)