



Snow Monkey and
Bee

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RECONSIDERING 'CULTURE' IN TEACHING JAPANESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: TOWARDS BETTER INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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“Culture is communication, and communication is culture.”

Edward T. Hall (1976)

“Culture is not an expendable fifth skill but the core of language education.”

Claire Kramsch (1993)

CULTURE IS NOT INTEGRAL TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

- US-based scholars, including Matsumoto and Okamoto (2003), Tai (2003) and Doerr (2015), view “ethnocentric” and “essentialist” narratives in JFL education problematic.
- Japan based scholars, like Terao (2002) and Iori (2016) framed debates about culture in terms of “international understanding education” and “multicultural coexistence”.

MODERNISATION OF JAPAN

- Threat of subjugation and unequal treaties with major Western powers, led by the US prompted Japan to modernise
- The various projects of modernity, which were forms of Westernisation, disregarded Japan's cultural identity

WESTERNISATION OF JAPANESE GRAMMAR



Photo by [Mmoka.](#) on [Unsplash](#)

- The Western concept of linguistics was introduced in 1886
- Rich indigenous traditions of language study continued into the early 1900s but were gradually displaced

LANGUAGE LEARNING TIMELINES

Category I Languages: 24-30 weeks (600-750 class hours)

Languages similar to English.

- ✳ **Danish, Dutch, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian and Swedish (24 weeks)**
- ✳ **French and Spanish (30 weeks)**

Category IV Languages: 88 weeks (2200 class hours)

“Super-hard languages - Languages which are exceptionally difficult for native English speakers.

- ✳ **Arabic, Chinese - Cantonese, Chinese - Mandarin, Japanese and Korean**

Source: Foreign Language Training, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-language-training/>



日常の第十六話 大工カフェ少しまとめ、ニコビデオ

Barrista: Anō, gochūmon wa?

Ah... (your) order ➡?

Girl: Esupresso no tī de.

Espresso, T. ➡

Barrista: **Anō**, **gochūmon wa?**

Ah... (your) order ➡?

This is an incomplete sentence, which should be:

'Anō, gochūmon wa okimari desuka?'

Ah... your order decided is?

Okimari desuka?'

Decided is?

It's derived from the verb **kimaru**, which is distinct from **kimeru**.

Girl: **Esupresso no tī de.**

Espresso, **T.**  **(would do)**

Here's a list of possible responses and what they mean:

Esupresso no tī wo (kudasai/onegaishimasu).

Could I have an Espresso T?

Esupresso no tī ga (ii desu).

I would (very much) like an Espresso.

Esupresso no tī wa (chotto) ...

I'm not sure about Espuresso.

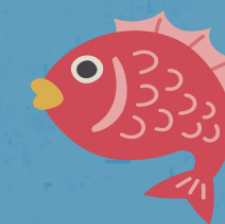
CONCLUSION

- Culture is central to JFL education, contrary to the current understanding
- Language should be recognised as a cultural artefact
- Learners need practical strategies for acquiring authentic language, not abstract rules
- The ultimate goal is to prepare them to participate more fully in Japanese society and promotes better intercultural communication

“Culture is a whole way of life.”

Raymond Williams

AN ALTERNATIVE GUIDE TO SPOKEN JAPANESE



Busting Myths About
Grammar and Beyond

DR. NOBUMI KOBAYASHI

日本語会話学習に役立つ情報満載

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!



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