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Conference theme: *Changing nature of Japanese language teaching in a multilingual world*

Title:

Learning to make sense of self, others and the world through Japanese language in a multilingual world

多言語世界における自己、他者、世界の理解：日本語を通しての学び

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Abstract

Japanese is used in diverse domains and by diverse populations in a globalising and increasingly multilingual world. This means that Japanese language education needs to address emergent changes, purposes and contexts of language use. Japanese is not only an additional language taught in language classrooms but also a resource for communication and meaning making. Learners' use of Japanese is no longer confined to the classroom: they may already have been 'users' of Japanese outside the formal classroom context, using and encountering Japanese in various social situations and divergent genres. The nature of their language use may also shift or expand in the future.

This talk addresses the challenge for Japanese language teaching of enabling learners to navigate a range of contexts in a multilingual world. Through an example of a tertiary Japanese program and its attempts to address this challenge in multicultural Australia, it is argued that language programs should aim to equip learners with a range of discursive semiotic resources as users of Japanese from the beginners' level, while empowering them through critical and intercultural approaches to education. It is suggested that this calls for critical reflections on the part of the curriculum designers and teachers on native-speakerism and excessive emphasis on cultural norms and conventions. Furthermore, the paper illustrates the increasing potential for Japanese language programs to engage with Japanese-speaking communities around the world. By nurturing the intercultural, humanistic and intellectual capacities of Japanese language learners, and learning from them at the same time, Japanese language education can make important contributions to the future of the global community.

Bio

Ikuko Nakane is Senior Lecturer in Japanese Studies at the Asia Institute, University of Melbourne. She has taught Japanese, sociolinguistics and intercultural communication in Australia over twenty years. Her research areas include intercultural communication, institutional discourse and Japanese sociolinguistics. She is the author of two monographs: *Silence in Intercultural Communication* (John Benjamins, 2007) and *Interpreter-mediated Police Interviews* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); and is a co-editor of *Languages and Identities in a Transitional Japan* (Routledge, 2015). Her publications have also appeared in journals such as *Multilingua*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *TESOL Quarterly* and *Japanese Studies*. She is currently a co-representative of Global Network of Japanese Language Education for Australia.