# A Theme-Based Approach: Curriculum Design
# for Teaching an Advanced Course
# of Japanese as a Foreign Language

Douglas Ogawa Masako*

Key words:    curriculum design, theme-based approach, ACTFL proficiency guide-
lines, communicative competence, advanced Japanese courses

This paper describes a process and procedure of designing a curriculum to
teach an advanced course of Japanese as a foreign language, utilizing a theme-
based approach. Curriculum for the advanced levels traditionally have fo-
cused on reading skills. While the beginning level of Japanese instruction has
experienced many changes to meet the communicative needs of the Japanese
learners, the advanced level instruction remains unchanged. This paper dem-
onstrates an example of a curriculum that aims at developing four skills in an
integrated way. Major components of the paper are: needs analysis of the
students, utilization and critiques of ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, discus-
sion of a theoretical model of communicative competence and its application
to the curriculum for the advanced level, rationale for employing the theme-
based approach, description of the curriculum for Advanced Japanese at
UCLA, and the results of the year-end program evaluation.

This paper describes an example of a curriculum designed to teach advanced courses
of Japanese as a foreign language. It utilizes a concept of theme-based approach,
incorporating a theory of communicative competence. The paper consists of six
sections. The first section briefly describes the current situation of the advanced
Japanese courses in American universities. The second section illustrates needs
analysis of the students who were enrolled in Advanced Japanese at UCLA. The
students' needs are analyzed by looking at their background and their purposes in
taking the course. Based on the analysis, the goals and objectives are determined by
referring to the Proficiency Guidelines established by ACTFL (American Council
on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) and a theoretical model of communicative
competence. The third section provides a rationale for utilizing the theme-based
approach. The fourth section describes the Advanced Japanese program at UCLA
in detail. The program evaluation by the students will be discussed in the fifth

---

* ダグラス　小川昌子 : Lecturer of Japanese, University of California, Los Angeles, U.S.A.

section. The final section will summarize the paper.

## Analysis of the Current Advanced Japanese Courses in American Universities

While the beginning level of Japanese instruction has experienced many changes to better meet the communicative needs of Japanese learners, it is generally true that the advanced level still remains unchanged. One common characteristic of advanced courses, according to Kamada (1990) and Kamiyama (1990), is that the curriculum emphasizes reading skills only. Makino (1986) and Miura (1986) indicate that this reading-focused instruction starts already in Intermediate levels. Kamada (1990) stresses the need for a communicative approach to teaching the advanced level as well as the beginning level, which aims at developing all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in an integrated way. He also advocates proficiency-oriented instruction based on ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines.

## Needs Analysis of the Students in UCLA Advanced Japanese

Prior to curriculum design for Advanced Japanese, the students' needs analysis was conducted. This was done by examining what ability the learners should develop in this level, considering the learner's ultimate goals in taking this course and observing the learner's proficiency level. The students' background information was collected

Table 1　Students' Background Information

| Year levels | | # of students |
|---|---|---|
| | Freshmen | 2 |
| | Sophomores | 2 |
| | Juniors | 12 |
| | Seniors | 17 |
| | Graduates | 3 |
| Majors | | # of students |
| | East Asian Languages & Cultures | 18 |
| | Economics | 10 |
| | Business | 4 |
| | History | 2 |
| | English | 2 |
| | Linguistics | 2 |
| | Political science | 2 |
| | Biology | 2 |
| | Asian American studies | 1 |
| | Math | 1 |
| | Urban planning | 1 |

Note:　1.　One freshman who enrolled in this course had previously learned Japanese at high school and took Intermediate Japanese in a summer intensive course offered at UCLA. The other went to a weekend Japanese-language school.
　　　　2.　Double majors were counted separately.

Table 2    Reasons for Studying Japanese

|  | # of students |
|---|---|
| General interest | 12 |
| Improvement of oral skills to go to Japan | 6 |
| Business | 4 |
| For future career | 4 |
| Requirement | 4 |
| To learn about heritage | 2 |
| Mastery of advanced Japanese | 1 |
| To improve reading skills for research | 1 |

by questionnaire in the beginning of the academic year. Table 1 shows the students' college year levels and majors. Table 2 shows the students' reasons for learning Japanese.

As the tables indicate, the population of the learners of Japanese is diverse in terms of both their majors and their goals in taking Japanese courses. Therefore, designing a curriculum which meets diversified needs is a very challenging task. When the students' reasons in Table 2 are analyzed, it is seen that the majority of the students take this course for general purposes such as "interest in Japanese language and culture," "oral skill development to go to Japan," and "for future career and business." Contents for Advanced Japanese, therefore, were selected to provide the students with various kinds of information on contemporary Japanese society.

In order to examine the students' needs for language proficiency, the students' proficiency was analyzed at the entrance to the advanced course, and the objectives of the advanced level, which are listed in Table 3, were established referring to the following materials: ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines (1987); ACTFL Generic Proficiency Guidelines (Omaggio-Hadley, 1993); "Statement on Competencies in Japanese" (1991), which is in broad agreement with ACTFL Guidelines, and the Canale and Swain model of Communicative Competence (1979 and 1981). The description in Table 3 applies to all four skills.[1]

The following subsections briefly describe the components in the table: ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, the Canale and Swain model for communicative competence, and academic skills.

---

[1] There is a commonly mistaken notion that oral skills are basic skills that are required only to satisfy daily communicative needs of the learners in a target language. The characteristics of the traditional curriculum, which emphasizes the development of oral skills only in lower levels and reading in upper levels, perpetuate this view. When we observe the activities in academic settings, however, we can find various oral activities such as discussing a given topic, expressing one's ideas clearly and coherently, and making presentations. These skills do not belong to basic daily communicative ability; rather, they are part of the academic language ability that needs to be developed in upper levels. Curriculum in upper levels should aim to strengthen these types of oral skills as well as literacy skills.

Table 3　Objectives of Advanced Japanese

| ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines (1987), Generic Guidelines (Omaggio-Hadley 1993) "Statement on Competency" (1991) | Canale and Swain (1981) | Academic Skills |
|---|---|---|
| **Linguistic Forms**<br>* Students need to be able to understand and produce discourse level utterance. (able to utilize connectives, omissions, repetitions, anaphora, etc.)<br>* Students need to be able to use Kango.<br>* Students need to be able to understand and use appropriate socio-linguistic features such as honorifics, in-group/out-group, male/female, and formal/informal differentiation. | **Linguistic Competency** | * Students need to employ academic skills such as note taking, literature review, data collection, data analysis, and presentation. |
| **Function**<br>* Students need to be able to narrate, describe, report, and persuade on a wide variety of topics. | **Socio-cultural Competence**<br>* Students need to gain socio-interpersonal knowledge and apply it appropriately. | |
| **Context**<br>* Students need to be able to deal with concrete topics.<br>* Students need to have access to current issues and events in Japanese. | **Strategic Competence**<br>* Students need to be aware of various cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies and ernploy them (or transfer them from their first language) appropriately to be proficient learners. | |

**ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines**

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (hereafter "the Guidelines") is "the first attempt by the foreign-language teaching profession to define and describe levels of functional competence for the academic context in a comprehensive fashion" (Omaggio-Hadley, 1993: 9). The Guidelines attempted to incorporate the components of communicative competence described by Canale and Swain (discussed below) and defined proficiency levels that are measured on a hierarchical scale ranging from Novice to Superior.

The theme-based curriculum for Advanced Japanese incorporated, as its goals and objectives, the descriptions of the advanced level in the Generic and Japanese Guidelines. As goals of linguistic competence, Advanced Japanese aims at enabling students to understand and produce discourse-level utterance that employs Kango (Chinese-character compound words). Students need to be able to control sociolinguistic features such as honorifics, and in-group/out-group, female/male, and

formal/informal differentiation. In the domain of function, students are expected to be able to narrate, describe, request, and persuade on a wide variety of topics. These functions are introduced and practiced repeatedly in in-class activities and applied to an outside class activity that is assigned as a project work. Contemporary social issues are chosen as context. Context will be discussed further below.

Linguistic forms, functions, and context as described in the Generic Guidelines were useful in establishing the goals for linguistic competence. Yet the Guidelines do not specify levels of two other competences, that is, sociolinguistic and strategic competence, in a way that could help practitioners measure their students' progress. Compared to research in the linguistic domain, much more work still remains to be done in these two domains. First, empirical research and analysis of natural data in the areas of interlanguage pragmatics, conversational analysis, communicative strategies of speaker and listener, and reading and writing strategies are awaited in the field of teaching Japanese as a foreign language. Secondly, based on the research findings, we need to determine the teachability of components that consist of sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Thirdly, we need to taxonomize those teachable components and position them on a proficiency scale.

Beside the issues addressed in this section, the Guidelines contain many other issues that need to be addressed in future research. The readers are referred to the following materials for the issues and problems: Bachman (1988), Clark and Clifford (1988), Lantlof and Fransley (1988), Omaggio-Hadley (1993: 28–32), and Shohamy (1988).

## Communicative Competence

In the 1970s, the definition of foreign-language proficiency shifted from monolithic structural components of language to various components of language ability that are required for successful communication. These components are referred to as communicative competence. The components that comprise communicative competence vary slightly among the researchers (Canale and Swain, 1979 and 1981; Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1972).

Canale and Swain (1981) had a great influence on the work in later studies on communicative language proficiency. Based on their preceding work, Canale and Swain formulated a model of communicative competence that consists of three major components: 1) grammatical competence, 2) sociolinguistic competence, and 3) strategic competence. Grammatical competence refers to knowledge of lexical items and of rules of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Sociolinguistic competence consists of two sets of rules: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The former addresses the ways in which utterances are produced and understood appropriately. Factors such as the topic, the role of the participants, and the setting will determine the appropriateness. The latter involves rules of cohesion in form and coherence in thought. Strategic competence, the third component, involves the use of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables and insufficient competence. Such strategies are related to both grammatical and sociolinguistic compensation.

Incorporating the existing research findings (Beebe et al., 1990; Carrell et al., 1988; Horiguchi, 1988, 1990; Komuro, 1995; Miyazaki, 1990; Ogawa, 1995; Ozaki, 1993; Spees, 1994), Advanced Japanese aims at enabling students to gain socio-interpersonal knowledge and apply it appropriately. The course focuses on the components that are cross-culturally different and thus require delicate interpersonal negotiation skills. Examples are: refusing invitations, offers, suggestions, or requests; expressing or responding to complements and complaints; and making request. As strategy training, Advanced Japanese aims to strengthen the students' ability to compensate for conversational breakdown by utilizing listening skills (such as clarification of unclear utterances by questioning, paraphrasing, or asking for repetition) and speaking strategies (such as paraphrasing unknown words with other words, and controlling topics by initiating conversation). Compensatory reading strategies, which range from employing linguistic knowledge of Japanese texts (bottom-up skills) to utilizing schematic knowledge (top-down skills), are introduced. Some of these socio-interpersonal and strategic components are introduced in lower levels. However, selection of the items for each level and ordering of the items over the cross-levels remain problems that need to be solved when more research findings are available.

**Academic Skills**
Students in Advanced Japanese need to transfer from their first language — or develop — academic skills that are commonly required to study for academic purposes at college. The skills included in this course are: note-taking skill, skill at obtaining information from literature review, skill at collecting data, skill at analyzing data and presenting results orally and/or in written form. These skills are introduced and developed in both in-class and out-class activities. See below for further discussion on training for these skills.

## Rationale for the Theme-Based Approach

In order to fulfil the learners' needs as listed in Table 3, a theme-based instructional model is used for Advanced Japanese at UCLA. Before explaining the rationale behind utilizing this model, the theme-based model will be briefly explained. The theme-based approach, according to Brinton et al. (1989) is one of the three models of content-based instructional models in which content is a driving force in designing a curriculum. The distinguishing features of the three models are shown in Table 4, which is an excerpt from Brinton et al. (1989).

The three models are: Theme-based model, Sheltered model, and Adjunct model. The primary purpose of the theme-based model is to help students develop L2 competence with a specific topic area with a focus on language skills and function while the other two models aim at content mastery. And the theme-based model can be implemented in a language course by a language instructor while the other models require an institutional framework or a large coordination between a language instructor and a content specialist.
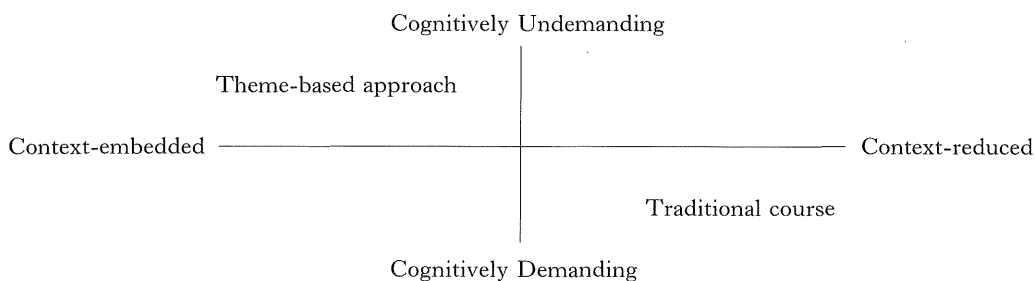
Table 4    Distinguishing Features of Three Content-based Models

|  | Theme-based Model | Sheltered Content Model | Adjunct Model |
|---|---|---|---|
| Prirnary Purpose | Help student develop L2 competence with specific topic area | Help student master content material | Help student master content material/ Introduce students to academic discourse and develop transferable academic skills |
| Instructional Format | Language course | Requires institutional frame work | A large amount of coordination between language course and content course |
| Student Population | Non-native speakers | Non-native speakers | Language course: non-native speakers Content course: native and non-native speakers |
| Instructional Responsibilities | Language instructor | Content area specialist | Language instructor and content area specialist |
| Focus of Education | Language skills and functions | Content mastery | Content mastery |

Source:   D. Brinton et al., 1989. Content-based second language instruction.

The theme-based model has been used for teaching Advanced Japanese at UCLA for the following reasons:

1. As Table 4 shows, the theme-based model is fairly easy to implement compared to the other two models in terms of cost and time necessary for preparation. A language instructor designs curriculum, collects materials, and develops activities. This model has the potential to develop to the adjunct model later if content specialists are available, and if language and content courses are well coordinated.

2. Learners in the advanced course need to further develop their communicative competence in the linguistic, socio-cultural, and strategic domains, and to transfer from their first language, or to acquire, academic skills. The course, therefore, has characteristics of a language class. However, the learners should be aware that language is a means of learning. They do not study in order to speak, listen, read, or write, but instead they speak, listen, read, or write in order to learn.

3. In this model, four skills are taught in an integrated way. Brinton et al. (1989: 15) shows an example of this integration. "The topic might be initially presented as a reading selection, the topic and vocabulary would then be recycled in guided discussions, related audio- and/or videotaped materials would pro-

Cognitively Undemanding

Theme-based approach

Context-embedded ——————————————————————————— Context-reduced

Traditional course

Cognitively Demanding

Source: J. Cummins and M. Swain, 1983. Analysis-by-rhetorical.

Fig. 1

vide the basis for listening activities, and finally, a writing assignment synthe-
sizing the various source materials would round out the topical unit."
4. One advantage of this model is that what the learner has learned, such as
linguistic, socio-cultural, and strategic knowledge, is recycled under the given
topic. This recycling makes learning easier.

According to Cummins' diagram in Fig. 1, language learning is very difficult when
the content is context reduced and cognitively demanding.

The traditional advanced courses focus on reading various materials that do not
have any connection in terms of linguistic, sociocultural, and strategic components
among them. Students read a literary work in one lesson, for example, then in the
following lesson they read a letter that appeared in the editorial section of a newspa-
per. Since there is no relation between these two materials in any aspect, students
experience a heavy load in cognition, which is repeated every time a new lesson is
introduced. In the theme-based approach, on the other hand, students recycle what
they learn; therefore, the more they learn, the more the content becomes context-
embedded and cognitively less demanding.

## Program Description

UCLA uses the trimester system, in which one academic year consists of three 10
week trimesters. Advanced Japanese is a continuation from Elementary (first year)
and Intermediate (second year) Japanese. Elementary and Intermediate Japanese
aim at developing basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS in Cummins,
1983) that are required to satisfy the daily-life needs in a target language. The
program aims at a well-rounded development of oral and literacy skills in BICS for
the first two years. Advanced Japanese is described as a transit stage to shift the goals
from BICS to the development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP
in Cummins, 1983), which is required to achieve academic tasks. Students who
enroll in Advanced Japanese have taken 300 hours of Japanese instruction and are
required to possess BICS at the entrance to the course. There were 40 and 60
students who enrolled in Advanced Japanese in the fall of 1993 and 1994, respec-

tively. Students attend 50-minute lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 50-minute discussion sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

The course consists of two major activities: 1) in-class activities in lectures and discussion sessions, and 2) out-class activities: project work, viewing theme-related and other video films, reading assignment, and skill improvement. Lecture time, when all the students attend, is used mainly for the following three activities: 1) to provide explanation for new vocabulary, grammar, oral and reading strategies, how to conduct project work, etc.; 2) to show videos; and 3) to practice reading for accuracy with attention to linguistic forms such as relative-clause structures and discourse features, which are still problematic for this level. Discussion sessions that consist of 15 to 20 students focus on practicing what is explained in the lectures, listening comprehension, summarizing the content of reading materials and stating opinions, fast reading to obtain necessary information, role playing based on cultural knowledge learned from the given theme, and simulation of data collection.

Project work, one of the out-class activities, is assigned as a group task. Each group, consisting of four to five students, selects a topic, plans and conducts data collection from native speakers of Japanese, analyzes data, and presents the results orally in class and/or in written form in the end of a trimester. This activity aims at enabling students to acquire the academic skills mentioned earlier while they use Japanese as a tool to obtain information for the topics they are interested in. Project work is planned in the beginning of the term and carried out during the term. In-class activities are introduced in connection with the progress of the project work. Note-taking skills are practiced while students engage in listening comprehension activities. Some written materials contain statistical data with which the students learn linguistic forms for data presentation. Information to make effective presentation is provided in lectures.

Topics for the project work are selected by students. In order to increase students' background knowledge about the issues in contemporary Japanese society, students are assigned to watch "Faces of Japan,"[2] documentary video series broadcast on television in the U.S. It presents people in various areas in Japanese life.

Reading assignments, another out-class activity, is given to students as an extra credit assignment. This assignment aims to provide students with more opportunity to read fast and get meaning from the text.

Themes throughout three terms focus on socio-interpersonal issues, which belong to what is called "small c" culture. The need for teaching cultural components within the language program has been addressed both in the field of teaching foreign languages in American institutions (Omaggio-Hadley, 1993) and in the field of teaching Japanese as a second/foreign language (Hosokawa, 1994; Kurachi, 1990).

---

[2]  The idea of using this video series came from Professor Noriko Akatsuka in personal communication. At her suggestion, all students in the Japanese program at UCLA, from elementary to advanced levels, are assigned to watch two episodes per term. By the end of the third year, students have watched at least 18 episodes. Some students were reportedly fond of them and watched all 25 episodes.

Table 5   Lafayette's Categorization of "Culture"

| | |
|---|---|
| Group I: | Knowledge of formal or "high" cultures:   Geographical monuments, major historical events, major artistic accomplishments |
| Group II: | Knowledge of everyday or "popular" culture: |
| | 1.   "active" cultural patterns, such as eating, shopping, travel, obtaining lodging, etc. |
| | 2.   "passive" everyday cultural patterns, such as social stratification, work, marriage, etc. |
| | 3.   act appropriately in common everyday situations |
| | 4.   use appropriate common gestures |
| Group III: | Affective domain:   value of different people and societies |
| Group IV: | Multicultural objectives:   recognition and explanation of target language-related ethnic groups in the United States |
| Group V: | Evaluate the validity of statements about culture. |

Source:   R. Lafayette, 1988. Integrating the teaching of culture into the foreign language classroom.

The definition of culture and inventories to be taught in foreign-language programs, however, vary widely among theorists and pedagogists, as Omaggio-Hadley (1993) indicates.

For selection of the themes for Advanced Japanese, Lafayette's goal statements (1988, cited in Omaggio-Hadley, 1993) were utilized.

Categories ranging from II-2 to V in Table 5 represent "small c" culture and the following themes selected for Advanced Japanese fall in somewhere in these categories: 「働き過ぎの日本人」 ("Workaholic Japanese"), 「日本人の言語行動様式」 ("Verbal behaviors of Japanese"), 「外国人が見た日本」 ("Japanese society from foreigners' viewpoint) for the fall trimester, 「女性と日本社会」 ("Women and Japanese society"), 「習慣の相違」 ("Cross-cultural differences in customs"), 「ステレオタイプ」 ("Stereotypes") for the winter trimester, and 「日本の教育」[3] ("Japanese education") with three subthemes of 「受験地獄」 ("Examination hell"), 「非行といじめ」 ("Youth delinquency and bullying at school"), and 「帰国子女」 ("Returnee children in Japanese society") for the spring trimester. Each term except spring covered three themes, each of which was covered in three weeks. One big theme with three subthemes was introduced in spring in order to examine students' preference for the size of the themes, which will be discussed below.

Cultural materials embrace the danger of stereotyping the target society. Instruction, therefore, should provide students with various opportunities to balance their view. Students, for example, need to engage in cross-cultural contrasting in in-class discussions, and to verify in project work to what degree the obtained information is generalizable.

An example of a theme unit taught at UCLA is shown in Table 6.

This unit 「習慣の相違」 was introduced as the second theme during the winter trimester. Materials used in this unit included four reading materials, one audio tape, and one video tape. The target function in this unit was to summarize what the

---

[3]   Ozaki and Neustupný (1986) state that this theme is highly appropriate in terms of student interest, topic popularity among Japanese people, and accessibility to resources.

Table 6    Theme Unit: 習慣の相違

| Materials/Content | Linguistic Features | Strategies | Function/Culture | Academic Skills | Project Work |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 「習慣の違い」(Reading) (Ujiie, 1990) | * complex structures in discourse level  * expressions to interveiw | * accuracy (garmmar analysis) | * summarize  * interview | * data collection  * note taking  * presentaiton | * interview native speakers |
| 「訪問とおもてなし」(reading) (オレンジページ, 1991: 70-75) | | * skip unfamiliar words & grammar  * look at titles & subtitles  * use visuals | * skim/scan  * visit someone | | |
| 「ほめられた時にうまく対応する：課長の家を訪問する。誉める、ほめられる」(待遇表現, 1991) (audio tape) | * honorifics/humble expressions  * colloquial  * male-female difference | | * express and respond to compliments | | |
| 「日常生活に見る日本の文化」(video) (先生訪問) (氏家, 1992) 「あいさつの基本」(visual) | | | * visit someone  * how to greet (paralinguistic features) | | |
| 5-minute activity: summary of news | | | * grasp main idea  * summarize orally | | |
| 「日本語とわたし この20年」(reading) (堀江インカピロムプリヤー, 1990) for composition assignment | | | * summarize the article  * express opinion | | |
| Discussion: summary of the theme | | | * synthesize what the students learned | | |

students read or heard. This function was repeatedly practiced in this unit. Other functions such as "conducting interviews," "expressing and responding to compliments" and "greetings" were also introduced in this unit in conjunction with project work. These functions are part of communicative and sociocultural strategies, which are crucial to make project work interviews with native Japanese speakers successful.

Accurate reading with attention to complex structures and discourse features, and fast reading with a focus on obtaining information, were provided in this unit as well as others. Utilizing visuals, titles, and subtitles for effective reading was also taught as a series of reading strategy lessons.

Academic skills taught in this quarter were those to be utilized in project work. Project work was controlled by students in almost all aspects, such as selection of topics, selection of informants,[4] and location for data collection, and mode of presentation of the results. However, method of data collection was determined by an instructor for the first two trimesters, so that all the students could become familiar with widely used methods. Survey and interview method were introduced in fall and winter terms, respectively. The former is easier than the latter in terms of language control, and was therefore introduced first. Survey method enables students to control the amount and types of input from Japanese native informants by adjusting the types of questions. Less proficient students, for example, can ask questions that require yes-no answers, which are easier than open-ended questions. An interview, on the other hand, requires more advanced linguistic and strategic competence to understand less predictable responses from the informants, to sustain conversation, and to compensate for conversation breakdown.

Data collection method for the last term, either survey or interview, was selected by students. As an additional activity for the last term, literature review for the project work was assigned. Students, consulting the instructors, individually selected reading materials, and synthesized their reading as a group to generate study questions to be addressed in data collection.

Evaluation for students performance included kanji quizzes, three tests that checked students' mastery of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge, project work presentation, homework assignments, composition with three-time revisions, extra credit, and attendance and class participation.

## Evaluation of the Program

In each term, formative and summative evaluation was conducted in order to improve and to examine the effectiveness of this approach. Students filled out questionnaires. Table 7 presents the results of the summative evaluation of the third term.

---

4  Compared to teaching Japanese as a second language, there is a limit to the accessibility of native speakers of Japanese in the situation of teaching Japanese as a foreign language. Major resources for UCLA students are Japanese tourists who visit the student store on campus, Japanese native students who are studying at UCLA, Japanese people in the local Japanese community, and relatives of Japanese–American students.

Table 7    Results of Summative Evaluation, Spring 1994

| Questionnaire Item | Mean Score |
|---|---|
| Did the theme-based approach help you learn Japanese? | 4.46 |
| Did you like this approach? | 4.42 |
| Choose the best description about your ability growth in the following areas since the Fall 1993 term | |
| Ability to communicate in Japanese on various social issues | 3.58 |
| Ability to produce discourse-level utterance | |
| Orally | 3.33 |
| Written language | 3.92 |
| Ability to summarize what you heard or read | 3.79 |
| Ability to state your opinion | 3.79 |
| Ability to use appropriate socio-cultural and socio-interpersonal features | 3.71 |
| Read fast, employing reading strategies to get meaning form the text | 3.75 |
| Read accurately, analyzing structures | 3.71 |
| Ability to write coherent text | 3.67 |
| Academic skills such as data collection, presentation in Japanese | 3.67 |
| Did you like the organization of this course, which was combination of reading materials, audio tapes, and video tapes? | 3.83 |
| Did you like project work? | 3.1 |
| Did it help you learn language use in an actual situation? | 3.37 |
| Overall rating of this course | 3.95 |
| Did you like the themes? (Japanese 100B and 100C)* | |
| 女性と社会 | 4.3 |
| 習慣の相違 | 4.4 |
| ステレオタイプ | 4.06 |
| 日本の教育 | 4.42 |
| Which do you like better  3 themes per term | 75% |
| one big theme with small sub-themes | 20% |
| no answer | 5% |

* This question was not addressed in the fall trimester.

The last term summative evaluation is used here because it asked students to evaluate the program as a whole. A total of 27 students filled out the questionnaires, and 3 of them were excluded because they did not take Japanese in the previous two terms. Students responded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very low; 5 = very high).

These results indicate that the students valued the theme-based approach. The students' rating of ability growth in several areas shows that the students' needs were fulfilled; therefore, the objectives of this course were achieved. The selected themes were well accepted by the students. The evaluation revealed that the students prefer three themes per term rather than one big theme for a longer period of time. Students' rating on ability growth in oral skills was lower than other items. This indicates that the students did not feel confident about their oral skills; thus, more oral activities are needed in lessons. Rating of project work was lower than expected. However, the students gave relatively high scores on their gain in academic skills that were designed to be acquired in the process of the project work. Therefore, the

project work at least contributed to help students learn academic skills.

## SUMMARY

This paper described a theme-based approach to teaching Advanced Japanese at UCLA, which is the last year for the students who have to fulfill the three-year language requirement. The paper provided a rationale for determining goals and objectives, utilizing a theme-based approach, and selecting thematic units. It also described one of the themes as an example and provided evaluation results.

The theme-based approach requires a relatively great deal of time and effort in order to accumulate materials. This problem, however, can be solved by sharing materials among instructors or institutions that develop different theme units. Once various themes are pooled, this approach provides flexibility to revise or update the content of a particular theme without changing the entire curriculum, which is an advantage of this approach.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACTFL Japanese Proficiency Guidelines. 1987.   *Foreign Language Annals* 20, no. 6: 589–603.

Bachman, Lyle F. 1988.   Problems in examining the validity of the ACTFL oral proficiency interview. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 10: 149–64. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Linguistic Club.

Beebe, Leslie, Tomoko Takahashi, and Robin Uliss-Weltz. 1990.   Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In *Developing communicative competence in a second language*, eds. R.C. Scarcella, E.S. Andersen, and S.D. Krashen. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Brinton, Donna M., Marguerite A. Snow, and Marjorie B. Wesche. 1989.   *Content-based second language instruction*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Canale, Michael and Merrill Swain. 1981.   A theoretical framework for communicative competence. In *The construct validation of tests of communicative competence*, eds. A.S. Palmer, P.J.M. Groot, and G.A. Trosper. Washington D.C.: TESOL.

————. 1979.   Theoretical base of communicative approaches to second language teaching. *Applied Linguistics* 1, no. 1: 1–47.

Carrell, P.L., Joanne Devine, and David E. Eskey. 1988.   *Interactive approaches to second language reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clark, J.L.D. and R.T. Clifford. 1988.   The FSI/ILR/ACTFL proficiency scales and testing techniques. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 10: 129–47. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Linguistic Club.

Cummins, Jim and Merrill Swain. 1983.   Analysis-by-rhetoric: Reading the text or the reader's own projections? A reply to Edelsky et al. *Applied Linguistics* 4, no. 1: 23–41.

Hymes, Dell. 1972.    On communicative competence. In *Sociolinguistics*, ed. J.B. Pride and J. Holmes. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.

Lafayette, Robert. 1988.    Integrating the teaching of culture into the foreign language classroom. In *Toward a new integration of language and culture*, ed. J. Singerman. Reports of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching Foreign Languages. Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference.

Lantolf, J.P. and W. Frawley. 1988.    Proficiency: Understanding the construct. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 10: 181–95. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Linguistic Club.

Omaggio-Hadley, Alice. 1993.    *Teaching languages in context*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Savignon, Sandra J. 1972.    *Communicative competence: An experiment in foreign language teaching*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.

Shohamy, E. 1988.    A proposed framework for testing the oral language of second/foreign language learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 10: 165–79. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Linguistic Club.

Spees, Hiroko. 1994.    A cross-cultural study of indirectness. *Issues in Applied Linguistics* 5, no. 2: 231–54.

"Statement on competencies in Japanese: Expected of entering freshmen" (draft), 1991.


小川治子 (1995)　「感謝とわびの定式表現——母国語話者の使用実態の調査からの分析」，『日本語教育』59 号.

尾崎明人 (1993)　「接触場面の訂正ストラテジー——聞き返しの発話交換をめぐって」，『日本語教育』81 号.

尾崎明人，J.V. ネウストプニー (1986)　「インターアクションのための日本語教育——イマーションプログラムの試み」，『日本語教育』59 号.

鎌田　修 (1990)　「Proficiency のための日本語教育——アメリカにおける上級の指導」，『日本語教育』71 号.

上山民栄 (1990)　「アメリカの大学における日本語上級の問題点と提案」，『日本語教育』71 号.

倉地暁美 (1990)　「学習者の異文化理解についての一考察——日本語・日本事情教育の場合」，『日本語教育』71 号.

小室郁子 (1995)　「"Discussion" における turn-taking——実態の把握と指導の重要性」，『日本語教育』85 号.

細川英雄 (1994)　『日本語教師のための実践日本事情入門』，大修館書店.

堀口純子 (1990)　「上級日本語学習者の対話における聞き手としての言語行動」，『日本語教育』71 号.

——— (1988)　「コミュニケーションにおける聞き手の言語行動」，『日本語教育』64 号.

牧野成一 (1986)　「ACTEL 言語能力基準とアメリカにおける日本語教育」，『日本語教育』61 号.

三浦　昭 (1986)　「アメリカにおける日本語教育の諸問題」，『日本語教育』61 号.

宮崎里司 (1990)　「接触場面における仲介訂正ネットワーク」，『日本語教育』71 号.


使用教材

アメリカ・カナダ大学連合日本研究センター (1991)　『待遇表現』，The Japan Times.

氏家研一 (1992)　『ビデオ講座日本語　日常生活に見る日本の文化 3』，東京書籍.

——— (1990)　『中級長文読解練習　日本を読む』，凡人社.

田坂和子編 (1991)　『オレンジページ　おつき合いと暮らしのマナー』pp. 70–75，オレンジページ.

堀江インカピロムプリヤー (1990)　「日本語とわたし　この 20 年」，『日本語ジャーナル』1 号.