

**International Research Symposium 2012**

**September 8-9**

**Tokyo, Japan**

## **What do I aim for in my class?**

**Language teaching and Identity in pluricultural and plurilingual environments**

<http://gbkk.jp.org/symp2012/>

### **Call for participation: Objectives of the Symposium**

Within the context of a pluricultural and plurilingual society, we will plan an International Dialogue Project about foreign language education from April 2012, and hold an International Research Symposium on the following September.

The notions of plurilingualism and pluriculturalism such as they were defined by the *CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)* have introduced the concept of “PLURI” for plurilingual and pluricultural. These concept describes a person who has the abilities to communicate in different languages and experiences his/her life in a cross-cultural environment. On the other hand “MULTI” (for Multiculturalism and Multilingualism) reveals a state of the society. We may think that the people who fit into this definition are people whose identity entitles them to think deeply about society's diversity and complexity. As “doers” going beyond stereotyped and superficial visions of the society, they are more predisposed to understand this diversity and complexity. In language education, we assume that most of the people who cross borders and nations are pushed by the necessity for mutual understanding, and that learning a language entails learning about the diversity and complexity of people and societies who speak that language.

What can such a thought on plurilingualism/pluriculturalism bring forth in language education in Japan? In order to answer/approach this question, we need to investigate the links between language teaching as it is practiced in Japan and pluriculturalism/plurilingualism. Concerning school education for example and national language studies, more and more young people can't follow Japanese language classes because they lost the comprehensive vision of the

links between society and people in the context of the excessive globalization. Even though the importance of immigrant childrens' became obvious over the last years, there are still few studies that address the problem of identity and language education for migrants and their families.

In post-war Japan, English was introduced without any reflection as part of foreign language teaching in the age of globalization. And presently in the curriculum of elementary schools, there is no room for English language education that makes children think about the links between language and human beings or between language and society. From the viewpoint of plurilingualism/pluriculturalism, one can criticize this since English and globalization are directly linked. We should face the reality that language teaching cannot accomplish this primal function of shaping human being and language. We are not considering language education as just teaching language in an arbitrary way; we are searching for a concept of new language teaching practices, which take into account multiple identities and the hypothesis of diversity and complexity.

We have to acknowledge the fact that many language teachers impose their teaching material in a non interactive way. But on the other hand, without teaching material, the professors can be afraid of not to know what to do in class. We can think that this absence of student interaction comes from the lack of teacher's questioning "What do I aim for in my class?" Many teachers never had the opportunity to exchange ideas on the subject, especially teachers who suddenly find themselves in a foreign country teaching Japanese language. In order to improve this situation, it becomes necessary to build networks where people concerned by education can face this question: "What do I aim for in my class?"

For this, starting April 2012 Waseda University Japanese Studies will offer the following on demand course: "What do I aim for in my class?" An international dialogue for Japanese language teachers. The aim of this project is to clarify the meaning of the question "What do I aim for in my class?" for Japanese language teachers (or teachers to be) in all parts of the world through discussions on the Internet. First of all, following the publication of the program on Internet, we will write down the name of the people willing to participate and take them as a subject of study. Through various email exchanges, we hope to gather the diverse teaching practice they are interested in, and henceforth to publish a report on this.

We will then hold an International research symposium based on the results of this dialogue on September 2012 with the following title: "What do I aim for in my class?: Language

teaching and Identity in pluricultural and plurilingual environments.” We will invite foreign researchers at the forefront of the field, who play an active role in the circles of language education in Asia and in Europe.

From Europe, we will invite **Pierre Martinez**, French researcher, specialist of language education who has been working for a long time on language teaching at University of Paris 8. We will also invite from the neighboring country, Korea, **YI, Dok Bong** (이덕봉). He is a highly respected Japan specialist scholar. He also participated to the writing of the Korean book *Essentials in Education* and is one of the few scholars who can create a bridge between language education and the politics of language education. Lately, he received a prize as newcomer in “Essays in International Literature” for his essay called *The wisdom to throw away language*. We may thus hope to receive from him advices full of hints on new practices of language teaching. And We will invite also **MORIMOTO, Ikuyo** (森本郁代) from the Kwansei Gakuin University. She works in the field of socio-linguistics.

These three guests will exchange opinions together with **HOSOKAWA, Hideo** (細川英雄). They will investigate carefully the subject taking into consideration policies in language education. Within this framework and the new global trends on the subject, they will study the new state of language teaching practices around the question of identity. They will search for a radical argumentation aiming at a re-contextualization of pluricultural and plurilingual education.

Concerning the results of the dialogue project, they will be published here, open to the public through a poster. This place will also be the center where a qualitative exchange of ideas, as well as diversified interactions will take place. The plan is not to study foreign theories in a one-sided way, but rather to create mutual exchanges with a research symposium seen as a language teaching practice place. We will set up a place for interdisciplinary discussions, and at the same time advertise publicly the presentations of the research, thus opening up the field. In the end, we will present the results to the general public by publishing a book.

We hope that building such a network of people as well as holding a collaborative research symposium like no other before, will have a strong impact on language education in Japan and abroad. These last years in Japan, migrant populations and their families have revealed new characteristics in nature and number that had never been seen before, and it has thus become imperatively necessary to deepen the discussions on concepts about new practices of lan-

guage teaching which will take into account the different identities but also the state of ideas on multiplicity and diversity.

We seek the participation of numerous people involved in the field of language teaching.

Head of the Symposium Committee:

HOSOKAWA, Hideo (Professor, Waseda University)

#### Contact

- Organizing Committee: [symp2012@gbkk.jp](mailto:symp2012@gbkk.jp)