JAPANESE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Japanese Brazilians are the biggest ethnic group of Japan residents living overseas and they have long history of Japanese education. The migration started to be supported by both Brazilian and Japanese governments in 1908, and at almost the same time, Japanese education in Brazil began.

This paper will attempt to show a diachronic overview of Japanese language education in Brazil on the basis of empirical studies which were conducted both in Brazil and Japan. Furthermore, how changes in both ethnic communities and host society had affected the Japanese language education will be discussed. Although there have been some studies on Japanese Brazilians in Brazil their language, the studies concerning the change of Japanese language education according to changes in social environment have not been well developed. As the Japanese used by Japanese Brazilians is an ethnic (or minor) language in Brazil, their language education is undoubtedly influenced by the relationship between ethnic communities and the host society. For the discussion, this paper will begin with a brief review of the history of the Japanese migrants followed by a description of Japanese education in Brazil.

For the overview of the Japanese education in Brazil, it is appropriate to divide the history into three stages according to time and major
generations. The first stage of the education is the pre-war period, from 1908 to 1941. In this stage, the majority of the ethnic communities of Japanese were first generation migrants. Therefore, the education in this period was carried out by the first generation, and recipients of the education were their children, the second generation. The second stage of the education was the post-war period, from 1942 to the end of the 1970s, following which Japanese education was prohibited. In this stage, the majority of the ethnic communities was the second generation, thus, education was provided from the second generation to the third generation. In these first two stages, the education seemed to be provided from parents to their children regardless of the children's intentions. The third stage is from 1980 when there were no new migrants because the official migration supported by the governments was finished. In this period, the education seemed to change. The older generations seem to have given up forcing their children to learn Japanese language. These changes occurring in education will be discussed later.

Despite two significant points, such as the long history of the education of Japanese language overseas and Brazil having the biggest population of ethnic Japanese of any country, the studies on Japanese education and Japanese language in Brazil have not been well developed. Hopefully, this overview and discussion on Japanese education in Brazil might prompt further studies.

2. JAPANESE MIGRANTS IN BRAZIL

Migration from Japan to Brazil started in 1908 and finished in 1973. This 65-year can be divided into three stages, two stages prior to W.W.II, from 1908 to 1924 and from 1925 to 1941, and the post-war period, from 1953 to 1973. In the first stage, the number of migrants reached 40,000, and in the early 1930s, 20,000 people migrated to Brazil every year. At the end of the second stage, the number of first generation migrants and
their families reached 150,000. From 1942 to 1951, diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil ceased due to W.W. II, and immigration was prohibited. However, the diplomatic relationship was re-established in 1952, and in the following year, immigration started again. During the final stage, 60,000 Japanese arrived in Brazil as immigrants. Over these 65 years, the number of first generation migrants reached 250,000 and at the 80th anniversary of the start of migration in 1988, the number of Japanese Brazilians including those from the first generation to the fifth generation numbered about 1 million.

Although the time of migration varies, there is a common reason for migration based on economics. Concerning the migration of the first stage, two reasons relating to economics can be suggested. Firstly, many farmers had lost their own land due to the policy of agrarian reform of the Meiji government in Japan. As a result, the rate of unemployment increased and many people emigrated to such places as the U.S.A., Canada Peru and Brazil. Secondly, prohibition of slaves and the repeal of emigration from Italy caused a shortage of labour on coffee plantations in Brazil. Therefore, the migration of this stage was supported by the Brazilian government, especially the Sao Paulo State Government, and many Japanese travelled to Brazil as labourers to work on coffee plantations. Migration in the second stage was also motivated by economic reasons. Continuation of wars, specifically the Russo-Japanese war and W.W. I, meant that large numbers of soldiers returned to Japan and the rate of unemployment rose. Moreover, the worldwide depression exacerbated the situation in Japan. Thus, the Japanese government supported emigration. After W.W. II, the same phenomena occurred. In addition to returned soldiers, there were a number of returnees from overseas. They were mainly from Manchuria, which was colonised by Japan. The total number of unemployed at this time was estimated to be 13,240,000. Migration continued until the period of high economic growth in Japan in the 1970s. In contrast with the migrants travelling to Brazil
independently before W.W. II, most of the migrants at the third stage were summoned by former migrants.

Throughout the 65-year history of migration from Japan to Brazil, migrants travelled to Brazil with a desire for economic success. The migrants at the early stage desired to "return home loaded with honours". Their mentality relating to their attitude towards education will be discussed later. It is significant that this motivation of migration could be an influence on the formation of an ethnic society and language education.

3. EARLY STAGE OF JAPANESE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

3 – 1 Education of Japanese as a national language

According to the survey conducted by the Japan Foundation in 1993, there are 274 institutions of Japanese language education and more than 18,000 learners in Brazil today. More than 75 per cent of the learners are children under 15 years old. Moreover, Ota (1997) pointed out that more than 95 per cent of the institutions were established and managed by Japanese migrants associations (nihonjin-ka). In other words, most of the learners of Japanese are children who learn at private institutions. This tendency started from the early stages of Japanese education. Two facts could be suggested as reasons. Firstly, foreign language education including Japanese language had not been approved in Brazil because of the assimilation policies of the government, thus, many institutions of Japanese education were established without government support. Secondly, Japanese language education in Brazil had the same characteristics as national language education in Japan and the learners were children of Japanese migrants. Most of the Japanese institutions have been in the state of Sao Paulo from the first stage until today because migration was supported by that state and thus migrants settled there.
Japanese education in Brazil started at the very early time of migration because migration schemes took the form of "family migration". Therefore, many families included their children. However, Takahashi (1997) suggested that the migrants in the earliest stage did not have any time or money to spend on education for their children. At this stage, the migrants just intended to make enough money to return home, thus, they wanted their children to join the workforce too. However, the situation on the plantations was harder than they expected, hence, they decided to stay longer although they still desired to return home eventually. Their decision led to the formation of ethnic communities and the establishment of Japanese schools. At the early stage of Japanese education in Brazil, the Japanese schools were very small and supported only by migrants who lived in each area, and were not authorised by the government, as noted above. The teachers were selected from among the migrants themselves. Handa (1980) mentioned that people who could not work because of their age and delicate health, often performed the role of teacher. These teachers taught mainly reading and writing of Japanese but they also stressed moral education.

The period from the 1920s to 1930s was the peak period of migration before W.W. II. In this period, many Japanese schools were established, although most of them were not authorised or supported by the Brazilian government. According to the survey conducted Yamashita (1992), there were 61 Japanese schools in 1926, 122 schools in 1931, 187 in 1932, and in 1939 the number reached 486. There were 30,000 students and 554 teachers including 276 qualified teachers in 1939. During this period, some state-wide and nationwide organizations of Japanese institutions, teachers and parents were developed. In addition, a few public schools for Japanese children were established, although there were still a number of private or non-authorised schools. However, Japanese education at this point still stressed moral education and Japanese as a national language. Moreover, Handa (1980) claimed that the education at
this time was the same as the nationalism-based education in Japan. The first generation migrants desired to educate their children as good Japanese citizens.

Although many Japanese schools were established, the 1930s were also the period when control of foreign language education started. In 1933, 219 Japanese schools were closed and teaching of foreign language to illiterate children under 10 years old was prohibited by the state government of Sao Paulo. In 1938, an injunction to closure all institution of foreign language educations was presented in Brazil. At this time, the Brazilian government embraced a policy of strong nationalism because of the unstable situation in Europe leading to W.W.II influenced Brazil society which consisted of many immigrants. However, according to Yamashita (1992), although the injunction was presented in 1938, a few public schools for Japanese children were established in the following year. This may have been the result of a conflict between the nationalism of the Brazilian government and the remarkable number of migrants. However, nationalism in Brazil increased and the prohibition against Japanese language education continued until re-establishment of the diplomatic relationship in 1952.

3 – 2 Discussion - First generation migrants and Japanese language education -

It can be suggested that the attitude of first generation migrants towards Japanese education was positive and the migrants made significant efforts to give their children education, although they were very poor and suffered from the unfamiliar lifestyle and the threat from malaria. Their intentions for education were motivated by a strong desire to return home, as previously stated. Takahashi (1997) claimed that many of the migrants provided education for their children to prepare them for returning home. The first generation thought that they could not take their children back to Japan without educating them, even
though they had become rich. Therefore, they intended to educate their children as good Japanese citizens. At the time, education seemed to mean mainly teaching reading and writing. In fact, reading and writing had been regarded as important and this knowledge, particular of Chinese characters, was a symbol of intelligence.

For the Japanese migrants, the role of language as a core value of culture can be suggested as a significant factor in the Japanese education. The core value theory was developed by Smolicz (1981) and described as "pivots" which are of fundamental importance for the continuation of viability of the ethnic group. In language-centred cultures, the language is a symbol of ethnic identity, not only a means of communication and self-expression. In fact, Handa (1980), who is a first generation migrant and a researcher of Japanese language in Brazil, claimed that language could be suggested as the first factor for cultural continuation. Furthermore, he stressed that people who could not speak Japanese could not been regarded as Japanese nationals, even if they were the children of Japanese. This attitude seemed to be common among the entire first generation. In other words, they regarded themselves and their children as Japanese, and the basis of their identity was the language. Therefore, the prohibition of language education mentioned before made a strong impact on the mentality of these migrants.

4. JAPANESE EDUCATION AFTER W.W.II IN BRAZIL

4-1 Education of Japanese as an inherited language

Japanese education in Brazil re-started in 1952 followed by the re-start of immigration due to the re-establishment of diplomatic relation between Brazil and Japan, mentioned above. Some researchers, such as Ota (1997) and Suzuki (1994) categorised education until the 1970s as the education of "inherited" language. This contrasts with the pre-war period, when language education was the same as it was in Japan. After W.W.II, the
The majority of Japanese communities consisted of second-generation migrants, thus, the education in this period was carried out by them. These second-generation migrants were characterised as bilingual in Japanese and Portuguese. After the war, there were those who still believed in Japan’s victory and they returned to Japan. However, many stayed in Brazil and decided to reside there permanently. The second-generation migrants who carried out Japanese education were also concerned about adjusting to Brazilian society and they were aware of the importance of Portuguese at the same time. Their attitude towards the dominant language and community led to their ethnic language becoming an inherited language.

Although Japanese education was re-started in 1952, the number of learners and institutions was very small. Kokubo (1991) pointed out a low degree of interest in Japanese at this time, and analysed the reasons as the impact of Japan’s defeat in W.W.II, and the confusion after the war. However, due to the increase of the amount of immigration from Japan at the end of the 1950s to the beginning of the 1960s, Japanese education became prosperous again. It is significant that textbooks were produced for the first time in Brazil during this period. Kokubo (1991) reported that the textbooks have been used by about 96 per cent of institutions in Brazil until today. The Japanese migrants were aware that the education as a national language was not appropriate for their children and they tried to develop education fitting for the younger generation.

At the end of the 1960s, the amount of immigration from Japan decreased dramatically because of the high economic growth in Japan. Therefore, migration supported by the governments of Brazil and Japan ended in 1973. During this period, Japanese education was depressed while the number of Japanese monolingual in Portuguese increased in the third generation. In this period, various issues and problems with Japanese language education in Brazil have been examined as the subject
of research. Nomoto (1974) argued that the change to education of Japanese as a foreign language was an important development. Takeuchi (1973) suggested that there was a necessity for education to include non-Japanese Brazilians as students. The 1970s can be regraded as the time when education of Japanese as a foreign language begun to be discussed. However, concerning Japanese as a foreign language, it was not considered an attractive language to learners in Brazil. According to the survey conducted by Nichi-Haku Bunka Renmei (Japan-Brazil Cultural Federation 1980), it was suggested that motivating factors for learners of Japanese were practical reasons (research, jobs and travelling), interest in Japan and Japanese culture and the necessity for family relationships. The first two factors were common to learners of Japanese as a foreign language. However, these factors could not be considered very substantial because the institution’s analysis of the learning environment showed some significant points. Firstly, it could not be considered that Japanese language has significant advantages in Brazilian society. In fact, according to the survey, the opinion was stressed that English was more important. Secondly, there was criticism that Japan did not have a positive attitude towards its relationship with Brazil. Therefore, it was difficult to understand Japanese culture, even if the learners were interested in it. Under these circumstances, it was not easy to develop the education of Japanese as a foreign language at this stage.

4 – 2 Discussion -Second generation migrants and Japanese language education-

Second generation migrants can be characterised as bilingual. Some researchers, such as Kanazawa and Loveday (1988), Nagata (1990) and Hondo (1981), pointed out that significant language shift from Japanese to Portuguese occurred in this generation. Two factors significantly affecting this phenomenon in the second generation were W.W. II, and the policy of the host community towards ethnic communities. As mentioned before, W.W. II and the confusion following the war caused a change in
mentality in many migrants. Formerly, they had intended to return to Japan, but now they decided to reside permanently in Brazil. Consequently, their bilingualism can be regarded as the result of their efforts to adjust to the host community. In addition, the prohibition against education of foreign languages reduced opportunities for these migrants to learn Japanese.

On the other hand, although the second generation endeavoured to adjust to, and attain a position in the host community, they still desired to maintain their ethnic language. They seemed to possess an identity as a Japanese and the language was regarded as a core in their cultural values in the same way as for the first generation. They expected their children to inherit their identity and their cultural values. Therefore, they tried to provide Japanese education for their children while encouraging them at the same time to learn Portuguese to be successful in Brazil.

Family issues can be suggested as another significant point. The relationship between family members must be respected in Japanese culture, thus, the second generation desired that their children learn Japanese for conversation with their grandparents, as the first generation were monolingual in Japanese.

However, with the depression of Japanese education in the 1960s and the 1970s, and the increase of Portuguese monolingualism in the third generation, the attempt to teach Japanese language was not able to obtain excellent results. With the increase of the degree of adjustment to the host community, the practical necessity of using the Japanese language decreased. In other words, their residential areas changed from rural to urban, hence closed ethnic communities were dissolved. The third generation thus did not need Japanese language, except for a few domains relating to family matters. In contrast to the second generation's expectation for them to inherit their cultural values and identity, the third
generation seemed to establish their identity as Brazilian. According to the survey conducted by Nichi-Haku Bunka Renmei (Japan-Brazil Cultural Federation 1980), reference to "Japanese Brazilians" has disappeared, and in the future, they will regard themselves as just "Brazilians". Japanese education as an inherited language could not be accepted by the third generation.

5. CURRENT JAPANESE EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

5 - 1 Education of Japanese as a foreign language

Although Japanese education was dramatically depressed in the 1970s, the 1980s constituted a new phase for Japanese education. Shiratori’s (1988) study reported that 80 per cent of all institutions in Brazil concentrated in Sao Paulo with a number of 187. Kokubo (1991) stated that the number was about 450 to 500. The survey conducted by the Japan Foundation in 1993 indicated the number of institutions was 274 and the number of learners was 18,372. As mentioned above, the results of the surveys were varied. This could be caused by the fact that there were very small private schools and the schools were not under control of official organizations, such as the government. However, it could be estimated that overall there were more than 250 institutions and about 20,000 learners in Brazil. This number was quite large for a country outside of Japan.

The high rate of Japan’s economic growth can be suggested as an affective factor for the prosperity of Japanese education in the 1980s in Brazil. Due to the economic growth, the amount of trading between Japan and Brazil increased, and Japanese enterprises developed subsidiaries in Brazil. Learning Japanese was seemed to be of actual benefit to learners. Because of Japan’s economic growth, a huge number of foreign workers immigrated to Japan. Many people, not only Japanese Brazilians, went to Japan from Brazil to work in the 1980s as well. Furthermore, the
amendment of Japan’s immigration regulations making it easier for children of Japanese migrants to enter Japan and the depression of Brazil’s economy prompted migration to Japan from Brazil. According to the study by Komai (1997), there were 6,000 immigrants of Japanese Brazilian in Japan in 1988, the number reached 60,000 in 1990, and there were more than 165,000 re-immigrants in Japan in 1994. At this point in 1994, there were 1,280,000 Japanese Brazilians in Brazil, thus, this number indicates that about more than one-eighth of Japanese Brazilians migrated to Japan.

The economic relationship between Brazil and Japan mentioned above, affected the education of Japanese language. The increase of learners who were non-Japanese Brazilians and adults was significant. Although the majority of the learners were still children of Japanese migrants, other types of learners gradually increased. Corresponding to change, Japanese education developed differently from the former education. Some universities developed Japanese studies and language as subjects or courses and other institutions for adult education were improved. At the same time, the tendency that younger generation migrants should be regarded as Brazilian increased, thus, education of Japanese as a foreign language was stressed more than before. Therefore, there was an endeavour to develop teaching methods and textbooks.

However, some problems still exist. Although the importance of education of Japanese as a foreign language was stressed by researchers, it was difficult to disseminate. For instance, at small private schools, which were still the majority of the institutions of Japanese education, Japanese language was still taught as an ethnic language. The textbooks which were used at these schools were intended for national language education in Japan and the students were forced to go to school by their parents because they were Japanese Brazilians. In addition, the shortage of teachers as experts is a problem. At the early stage of Japanese
education, teaching was an occupation for those who could not work. After the migrants ceased doing plantation labour, the social status of Japanese teachers was still low because the occupation was regarded as not needing any speciality except Japanese language proficiency. Due to these traditions, Japanese teachers were not regarded as experts; hence, their working conditions were not satisfactory. Furthermore, study of teaching methods, and textbooks, training for teachers was not well developed.

5-2 Discussion -Younger generations and Japanese language-

Some researchers stress that the third generation and younger generations are monolingual in Portuguese. For instance, Kanazawa and Loveday (1988) claimed that the language shift from Japanese to Portuguese having been completed in the third generation, they are categorised as monolingual in Portuguese. However, there are studies which oppose this, conducted by Hondo (1981) and Nagata (1990). According to Hondo’s (1980) study, about 27 per cent of the third generation used both Portuguese and Japanese, while about 70 per cent of them used only Portuguese. Nagata’s (1990) study showed the same tendency, and in addition to this, he claimed that half of the third generation used Japanese with parents and aged people. These investigations suggested that Japanese language had remained in the third generation at least from the 1980’s to the early 90s. During the 10 years following these investigations, the rate of monolingualism in the third generation may have increased with a decline in Japanese language. However, it might be excessive to regard the third generation as completely monolingual.

There is a necessity for education of Japanese as a foreign language, based on the recognition that the third generation is monolingual. However, it might be inappropriate that education of Japanese as a foreign language aims at both the third generation and young
generations as well as non-Japanese Brazilians. The attitude that learners of the third and subsequent generations should be regarded as the same as non-Japanese Brazilians seems to be excessive. It may be a reflection of the negative attitude that people who cannot speak Japanese are not regraded as Japanese, even though they were children of Japanese. Even though younger generations cannot speak Japanese at all, they might have the same cultural background or might have limited passive proficiency in Japanese. Although they are Brazilian rather than Japanese in their mentality and their first language is Portuguese, they are Brazilians with meaningful characteristics for learning Japanese. There is definitely a need for education of Japanese as a foreign language in Brazil. However, the education should be more flexible.

6. FINAL DISCUSSION

This paper discussed Japanese education in Brazil and examined how and why education has changed. It also demonstrated the necessity of Japanese education as a foreign language in that country. Concerning the first question, Japanese education in Brazil started as national language education. This was supported by the first generation who desired to return home. Thus, the education aimed to educate children as good Japanese citizens and the content was common to the education conducted in Japan during the pre-war period. However, this education ceased due to nationalism in Brazil and W.W. II. After this stage, Japanese education was re-started mainly by the second generation. The education of this time can be characterised as "inherited" language education. While the second generation was the generation who started to adjust themselves positively to Brazilian society, they desired strongly to pass on their cultural values and identity as Japanese. However, their desire was not accepted by their children who were well adapted to the host community. Therefore, Japanese education declined dramatically at this stage. However, education became prosperous in the 1980s due to
Japan's economic growth. At this time, the necessity of education of Japanese as a foreign language was stressed, and there were efforts to develop this type of education.

The education of Japanese as a foreign language is certainly needed. Due to the increase of learners of non-Japanese Brazilian and the tendency towards monolingualism in the third and proceeding generations, it is necessary for Japanese education to develop differently from before. However, it could be suggested that the education of Japanese as a foreign language should be based on fair views without negative perception of language use by the third and proceeding generations. Moreover, the education should be more flexible according to the characteristics of learners.

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