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Multilingualism in Africa: Problems and Prospect

Sayaka KUTSUKAKE

Abstract

Since the 1990s, multilingualism has been viewed as indispensable due to its perception as a “universal value” and some scholars have argued strongly for the introduction of mother languages in education. However, in light of the fact that English seems to be intrinsically connected to the processes of globalization, the attitude towards English in many African countries is as positive as ever (Kamwanagamalu 2010). In addition to this, there are also studies that criticize aspects of multilingualism in Africa as being inconsistent with the African norm.

In this study, I analyze why in the African context multilingualism does not seem to be a priority and discuss the factors which have meant that the attempt to establish multilingualism has been in vain. I point out that the current idea of multilingualism is still based on the European context and as such will not work in Africa. Furthermore, the debate around multilingual education is problematic because of the widening gap between the African elite, who support the promotion of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in schools while sending their own children to schools where a former colonial language is used, and the masses, who are marginalized because they have no access to the latter language. This study views it as a problem to insist, patronizingly, that they use a given language ‘for their own good’. I conclude this study by considering further prospects of multilingualism in the African context.

Keywords : Multilingualism, multilingual education, mother tongue, African languages, elite

Is it Reasonable to Announce, “No Problem with Your Silence” in Philosophical Practice?

Yui KATSURANOGUCHI

Abstract

This paper emphasizes that Japanese practitioners of philosophy must philosophize about a participant’s silence rather than to accept it as being “no problem”. Japanese practitioners of philosophy have often iterated that there is “no problem with your silence” in their philosophical café or philosophy for children (P4C) sessions. This is because many practitioners of philosophy are trying to make philosophy more accessible for people.

However, with reference to Oscar Brenifier, a French philosopher who facilitates philosophical dialogue with the idea “stay with others”, this paper first points out that such a “no problem with your silence” attitude may be problematic. It can conceal the questions and problems which may arise for the silent participants. The problem is that we cannot really understand what is happening during philosophical practices without engaging such participants fully.

Secondly, we argue that this problem in philosophical practice has its roots in the post-colonialism of Western philosophy. Historically, orthodox philosophy kept social minorities from participating in arguments. Philosophical dialogue should not repeat that error. It should rather act affirmatively for the participants who have little voice in society.

This paper discusses the possibility of philosophical practices which are not based on the “no problem with your silence” attitude and which can act as a supplement to Brenifier’s “stay with others” approach by referring to the practices preceding the philosophical dialogue activities.

As a conclusion I insist that the true worth of philosophical dialogue exists in the practice in which we pursue the questions and problems existing in the participant’s silence with love (philo-) and wisdom (-sophy).

Keywords : philosophical dialogue, speaking out, minorities, invisibility

New Challenges within Migration: A Case Study of Nikkei Brazilians in the Amazon Basin

Kousuke YAMAMOTO, Yoko NAKASHIMA, Akira KOJIMA

Abstract

Brazilian-Japanese immigrants immigrated before the war that began in 1908. Immigrants continued entering Brazil after the Second World War, and migration from Japan to Brazil and Japanese who "return home" ("Dekassegui") also continued. "Dekassegui" tends to be regarded as a "risk" that impedes learning and identity formation for young people. However, Nikkei Brazilian young people who have experience of living in Japan are active in Brazil utilizing various abilities. These cases would be good examples to relativize education with permanent residence. In this survey, it seems that educational resources are accumulated by repeating migration. In this paper, we examine the lives of contemporary immigrants considering the "New Challenge" of Nikkei Brazilians who have experience of living in Japan.

In this study, it was revealed that experience of migration was important for young people who returned to the Amazon from Japan. In addition, young people thought that they could live either way rather than living in either "Japan or Amazon" in the future. These young people were regarded as "opportunities" rather than "risk" as migration. "Nikkei resource" having a historical background was supporting the "New Challenge" as a transnational practice in a manner consistent with the reality. Through this research, We point out the possibility of Nikkei Brazilian young people trying to build careers through moving from one place to another.

Keywords : Brazil-Japan immigrants, Japanese Brazilian, Dekassegui, transmigrant

The Communication between Students with Chinese Roots and Teachers: A Case Study of Subject Classes in a Japanese High School

Yiqiong WANG

Abstract

As the world becomes global, the number of foreign students attending Japanese public schools has increased dramatically. How to provide them better study support has become an urgent task for Japanese public schools. The lack of Japanese language proficiency among foreign students and the elusive content of different subjects are making this task even harder. Therefore, this paper discusses how native Japanese teachers and non-native students overcome the two barriers of the Japanese language proficiency and the contents of textbooks.

In order to find answers, I conducted participant observation in a Japanese public high school named X which is located in Kansai (the west of Japan). I noted that there is a lot of special support provided for foreign senior high school students, including pull-out classes, the teaching of JSL (Japanese as a second language) and immigrant language support. This paper discusses the communication between students with Chinese roots and teachers in pull-out classes. It starts with the results of my participant observation which focused on "the considerations from teachers" and "the autonomic activities of students". In an attempt to emphasize the important roles of students who are always positioned as "hearers" in the class, "participation status" is used as an analytical method in this paper. Furthermore, based on the results of the participant observation, semi-constructed interviews were also designed and conducted.

Following on from the results of my investigations, this paper shows that there are different kinds of practices which help both teachers and students communicate with each other in the class, but demonstrates that there are still some problems. Finally, this paper discusses the contradictions in utilizing different languages during pull-out classes and the reversal of social roles through employing different languages.

Keywords : students with Chinese roots, pull-out classes, multilingual, nonverbal communications

The Formation of a School Culture which Enables Special Treatment for Foreign Students: A Case Study of High Schools in Osaka Providing a Special Admissions Process for Foreign Students

Rio ITO, Yiqiong WANG, Takaya HAYASHI,
Kousuke YAMAMOTO

Abstract

Through interviews with teaching staff who are in charge of assisting foreign students in high schools in Osaka, this paper explores how a school culture which promotes special treatment for foreign students is formed and investigates how teachers take into account the role played by different social contexts. The influence of school systems and practices is also discussed. As a result, this paper clarifies the kind of roles are teachers are playing in the adoption of this particular school culture.

Surveys were conducted in three different schools. All of these schools adopt a special admissions process for foreign students, however, there are variations in the roles taken up by the teachers in charge of forming the school culture which allows for this process since each school is influenced by a particular context. Teachers from different schools face different difficulties. Therefore, the formation and maintenance of a school culture which promotes special treatment for foreign students is greatly influenced by the role played by the teachers. It is not sufficient enough to form a school culture devoted to special treatment for foreigners by merely adopting a common template drawn from the concept of human rights education. This paper demonstrates that teachers who operate and practice within their school system constitute an important factor in the formation of the school culture which enables special treatment for foreign students.

Keywords : foreign students, a school culture promoting special treatment, special treatment for foreigners in high schools in Osaka

Roles and Problems of the ‘WeChat Mama Group’ in Chinese Overseas Childcare: From the Perspective of Chinese Mothers Living in Japan

Qianhua ZHANG

Abstract

This paper focuses on ‘WeChat Mama Group’ that is widely used by Chinese mothers who are living in Japan. The purpose of this research is to clarify the role and problems of using the ‘WeChat Mama Group’ by analyzing the function of five different means of social support. 26 Chinese mothers living in Japan were interviewed on their basic status (such as the type of visa, the length of the total stay period, the number and age of their children, etc.), childcare, usage of the ‘WeChat Mama Group’ and evaluation of the ‘WeChat Mama Group’. Furthermore, the author participated in eight events organized and planned via the ‘WeChat Mama Group’. Consequently, this paper clarifies that the ‘WeChat Mama Group’ provides information support, emotional support, companion support and proof of existence but not tool support. This helps to make it clear what kinds of support can be acquired and what elements they can improve in the use of the ‘WeChat Mama Group’ for future use.

Keywords : overseas childcare, WeChat Mama Group, Chinese mothers in Japan, social support

“No One Will Be Left Behind” Confronts Politics: A Fuel Subsidy Reform by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)

Kazuki OHTAKI

Abstract

In July 2018, IMF and MEF caused “riots” by introducing a fuel subsidy reform, and the Government of Haiti (GOH) was forced to dissolve the cabinet. As a condition of implementing structural reform including the fuel subsidy reform within six months, IMF agreed to finance 96 million US dollars. This paper examines the reasons why the reform for “the most vulnerable” caused “riots”. However, few reports are available on these “riots”. Therefore, based on public information and participant observation, this paper focuses on the political side of the structural reform, and investigates the process of implementation and the historical background.

Since the 1980s, IMF has implemented a structural adjustment program (SAPs) in this military dictatorship regime. However, under the name of “democratization”, IMF disrupted the domestic politics as a result of neglecting the political side of the structural reform. IMF and GOH were in conflict until the early 2000s not only due to fiscal consolidation, but also the promotion of export trade, trade liberalization through tariff reform, and privatization of state enterprises. The primary cause of the “riots” was that GOH used the structural reform as a means to exclude the opposition parties and the private sectors. In addition, GOH had to carry it out in a hurry due to financial difficulties, the influence of US sanctions against Venezuela, and the pursuit of corruption by the opposition. Inclusive dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders, and a social protection policy for “the most vulnerable” has not been fully implemented. The development aid community has not shown enough respect for domestic politics, and the progress of aid coordination has been limited.

Keywords : Haiti, inclusive society, peacebuilding development politics, International Monetary Fund (IMF), “the most vulnerable”