

## Internationalization and Diffusion Strategies of the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* as a Field

Noriyuki NISHIYAMA

Japan is home to several academic societies that focus on the research of foreign language education, including English, German, French, Chinese, and Korean, among others. The education of each language has its own characteristics and unique position in Japanese society and thus each society has its own approach and strategies for internationalization and diffusion of information. This paper will focus on French language education, examining the foundation of academic societies concerned with French language education as well as the issues they deal with in internalization and diffusion, and the directions in which they are heading.

The history of French language societies in Japan dates back to the Meiji Period. As space precludes discussion of the full history of such groups, this paper will focus on French language education post World War II.

### 1. The formation of the French language education as a *Field*

The history of French language education research organizations in the post-war era dates back to the founding of the Society for French Literature in 1946 (renamed the Japan Society for French Literature in 1950). Following this, the *Société de linguistique du français* [Society for French Linguistics], (renamed *Société japonaise de linguistique du français* [Japan Society for French Linguistics] in 1952) was established, before the two societies were amalgamated in 1962 to become the *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française* [Japan Society for French Language and Literature]. Following appeals from researchers desiring academic publications on French linguistics, the Research Association for French Linguistics was established in 1967, before being renamed the *Société*

*Japonaise de Linguistique Française* [Japan Society for French Linguistics], which it remains to this day.

Those involved with the French Language have referred to the *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française* as 'the [academic] society', thus essentially recognizing the organization as representative of French language and literature research in Japan. This custom of labelling in effect symbolizes French linguistics and French literature as legitimate academic fields in French language and literature research.

Academic societies have been defined as organizations that promote communication between academics, the advancement of research, exchange of knowledge and information and the furthering of academia through conferences, amongst other ventures (Kojien Japanese Dictionary). The notion of academic fields is rooted in Bourdieu's *field theory*, and represents a social space constructed by agents that produce intellectual and cultural commodities. A *field* is an autonomous space, self-contained, and unmoved by any other authority. A field is entered into and participated in by a number of agents who abide by the field's rules, and upon entering the field undergo rite of institution, and engage in the exchange of various capital, social and cultural (Bourdieu, 1987). The *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française* is an academic field that has been in effect consecrated as such by agents involved with French language and literature.

This academic society is almost entirely unconcerned with the education of the French language, and consequently, French language education has not been integrated into the academic field. Education has been excluded, and is a domain left to those outside the society. This is a result of the tacit hierarchy that exists between literature, linguistics, and language education. While agents of literature and linguistics are readily acknowledged by the society, and thus their participation recognized, education occupies a lower position and as such is regarded as beyond the borders of the academic field (Disson, 1996; Kato, 1998). This positioning of education is not unique to Japan, and can be seen in other countries. That language education has typically contented itself with its subordinate position, being seen as the mere application of linguistic theory, or as a tool for the study of literature or linguistics, may be the main reason for this. Nevertheless, members of

the society itself are not exclusively concerned with literature or linguistic research, but rather the for the majority French language education is their livelihood. Indeed, as if in acknowledgement and support of this, the society has in the past held training sessions on French language teaching.

With the financial backing of the Japanese Ministry of Education (at the time) *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française* and the French Embassy jointly conducted French language summer training seminars between the years of 1963 and 2009. The purpose of these seminars was to foster the French language ability of Japanese French language instructors, as well as to prepare them for workshops to be held in France following their year of participation. The Japanese Ministry of Education provided funding for travel costs, while the French government provided aid for workshop and accommodation costs<sup>1</sup>. Before the Plaza Agreement in 1985, and the accompanying increase in value of the yen, travel to France was not easy for Japanese teachers, and thus for them the publicly funded summer seminars were precious opportunities.

The seminars in Japan were intensive training courses over a two-week period, overseen by French native language teachers, and held in the summer holiday period in summer resorts, such as Hakone (1963), Karuizawa (1964-1968), Shiga Kogen (1969-1999), and Tateshina Kogen (2000-2006). The international workshops, held the year following participation in the domestic seminars, were an opportunity for teachers of French worldwide to mingle, and thus an important opportunity for the internationalization of those teachers. Many of the Japanese teachers of French specialized in literature or linguistics, mostly advancing the work of French researchers that preceded them, and conducted their educational pursuits with little interest in or opportunity for interaction with the rest of the French teaching world. In this sense, the opportunity for interaction gave the Japanese teachers of French a unique opportunity to catch a glimpse of French language education in entirely different contexts.

Whole most French language education in Japan is conducted at the tertiary level, for the rest of the world, the majority of instruction happens at the secondary level. In many cases, French language education at the tertiary level abroad is focused on the education of French language

specialists, or the training of teachers of French for the secondary level. In other words, countries that first offer French language education to students at the tertiary level, such as Japan does, are exceedingly rare. In this sense, for Japanese teachers of French, the workshops were important opportunities for interaction with foreign colleagues, an opportunity to experience the multiplicity of the globalized world, and provided a relative viewpoint from which to consider the state of foreign language education in Japan (Fukagawa, 2010).

## 2. FIPF and the founding of French language education societies in Japan

In 1969, when French language associations in Japan were still centered around literature and linguistics, headed by Belgian French language instructors, the *Fédération Internationale de Professeurs de Français* (FIPF) was founded on July 23 in Paris, as a federation of French language associations around the world, with participants from associations in 26 countries, with four Japanese participants attending the inaugural conference in Paris (Alexandre, 1983). Amongst the participants was University of Tokyo Professor and specialist in Stendhal's works, Tadashi Kobayashi (1916-1975), who after returning to Japan, encouraged the participation of the Japan Society for French Literature in the FIPF. Kobayashi was at the time, the vice president of the society, and having spent 3 years on a government funded exchange to France before the war, was motivated to engage in international exchange. Kobayashi himself, after the ban on privately funded student exchanges to France was lifted in April of 1965, financially supported the study abroad of Japanese students in France, and was closely involved with the founding in 1966 of the *Centre d'échanges culturels franco-japonais*, a center with the objective of enhancing cultural exchange between the Japanese and French. This center has seen several changes, renamed *Centre culturels franco-japonais* in 1970, before being reformed as the private organization *Association pour la promotion de l'enseignement du français au Japon* (APEF) in 1984. In 1986 it became an incorporated foundation, which remains to this day. Kobayashi was obviously not content to be idle, but put a great amount of

thought into French language, literature, and education in the international community.

In response to Kobayashi's appeals, the *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française* asserted that, "in accordance with the society regulations, (the objective of this association) is the furthering of research in French linguistics and literature, and as such are not directly concerned with French language education" (Tajima 2002, p.19), and refused funding, thus "Tadashi Kobayashi and several likeminded individuals, hoping to achieve international cooperation with French language education researchers" (ibid), were left with no option but to found their own, separate organization. This organization that they were compelled to found would later become the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* [Japan Society for French Language Education: SJDF].

However, the executive committee of the *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française* [Japan Society for French Language and Literature] were not the only ones indifferent to education. Members of literature and linguistic societies, while many of them were involved with the teaching of French as a second language, considered literature or linguistics as their respective specialties, and French language instruction as ancillary, depriving any discussion of language instruction of momentum. This was one of the factors that would lead to the formation of a new society.

426 Japanese, and 25 foreign nationals responded to Kobayashi's appeal for the creation of a new group, and on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 1970 the inaugural meeting of the *Association Japonaise de Professeur de Française* [Association of Japanese teachers of French] (so named at the time) was held at *Institut Français* (Nomura, 1997).

## 3. The Inaugural Japan-France French Language Symposium

To celebrate the formation of the *Association Japonaise de Professeur de Française*, the first symposium in Japan on French language education, was held at the *Athénée Française* Cultural Center in Tokyo from the 21<sup>st</sup> of April through to the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 1970. The symposium, entitled *Premier colloque franco-japonais pour l'organisation de la langue française au Japon* [The Inaugural French-Japanese Symposium for the organization French

Language in Japan], was jointly sponsored by the French Embassy, *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française*, the *Association Japonaise de Professeur de Française*, *Athénée Française*, the *Institut franco-japonais de Tokyo*, and the National Institute for Educational Research. The symposium was held over nine days, included several special interest groups, and 13 presentations conducted in the French language by 8 French natives and 5 Japanese, the majority of which covered issues in French language education; phonetics, psychology of learning, syntax, vocabulary, grammar, basic French, civilization, audiovisual instruction, and the direct method (Cortès, 1970). The symposium was concluded with Kobayashi's presentation discussing French education in Japan from the 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the present. Kobayashi touched upon French education under the former higher education system, and the systematic reform of French education under the new universities, lamenting the severe lack of class hours in French education in post-war education (Cortès, 1970: 220). Under the former system, French as a first foreign language was allotted around 10 hours of instruction time per week, amounting to a total of 750 hours over a three-year period (Tanaka, 2005). However, while the number of students taking French as a second foreign language under the new university system increased dramatically, the hours of instruction per week were significantly reduced to 3 hours, totaling a mere 160 hours of instruction over two years. Through this Kobayashi discerned the greatest problem facing French education in post-war Japan: that perhaps the issue with second foreign language education was not in the reform, but that the ideas driving the education remained fundamentally unchanged, inherited with little revision from the pre-war curriculum.

#### 4. The polarization of French Language Education Research Associations

Entering the late 1980's, the polarization of French Language Research Associations persisted. Taking the initiative was Keisuke Nakamura's *Tsudoi* [gathering], held in the Kansai region from 1982 (Nakamura, 2011). Gaining impetus from this, in 1987 the *Recontres pédagogiques du Kansai* [Meeting for Education in Kansai] (*Recontres* for short), was established,

and the *Journée pédagogique* [Education Days] (*Journée* for short) was launched by Dokkyo University in Tokyo, each organization bringing with it opportunities for educators to discuss educational practice freely in workshops. Furthermore, at the suggestion of the French embassy, the Seminar for French Language Education was held in 1989 through the cooperation of the embassy and the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français*. This seminar continued until the 2006 joint hosting of the Domestic French Language Symposium by the two associations.

In contrast to the summer seminars organized by the *Société Japonaise de langue et littérature française*, which were comprised of solely native French instructors, the Domestic French Language Symposium was conducted by both native French and Japanese instructors. The symposium was held on weekends over a three-month period in Tokyo, and focused on the training of teaching methodologies. In 1991, members of the seminar formed the majority in the creation of the *Pedagoji o kangaeru kai* [Thinking on Pedagogy Group] (*Peka* for short). Also free from the constraints of academic associations, *Peka* was a group formed at the initiative of teachers of French. According to an attaché at the French embassy<sup>2</sup>, at the time supervisor of French language education, the embassy believed that this group would in future take the leading role in French language education in Japan, and granted an equal amount of financial support as that provided to the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français*. On the other hand, nevertheless, were misgivings about the growing polarization of French language education groups, and the embassy sought to ease the tense relations and promote reconciliation between the two groups by transferring funds set out for *Peka* into the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* account, encouraging communication between the groups. Making use of the embassy's financial support, *Peka* began to circulate their own publications, aiming to establish a new field as a 'non-organizational organization'.

In this way, in the early 1990's, a total of four educational research groups had been founded, with *Recontres*, *Journée*, and *Peka* alongside the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français*. The administration of *Journée* was overseen by the Research Institute of Foreign Language Teaching at

Dokkyo University. As *Recontres* and Peka were groups organized and overseen by volunteers, they did not become academic societies. This fracturing was the result of the goal of the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* to become an authoritative association, which neither allowed the society to provide an arena for the earnest debate of pedagogical practice, nor allowed it to provide sufficient support or recommendations for practice to younger teachers. It may be said that the founding of these self-described non-organizational organizations were founded in opposition to the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* in order to address these lacks.

It is necessary now to pay heed to the fact that the term pedagogy became the emblem for this reform in the early 1990's. It is also important to point out that differentiation between the French terms *enseignement*, *pédagogie*, and *didactique* is not always obvious in the Japanese language. Each of the terms may be interpreted in the Japanese language as *kyoiku* (education) or *kyojuho* (teaching methodology). While the French term *pédagogie* (pedagogy) emphasizes methodology, or ways of teaching, and *didactique* [didactics] emphasizes the more scientific nature of language education, this distinction is often confused in the French language itself (Cuq, 2003). In 1997, the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* invited Henri Besse, a leading figure in French language education, to the Spring Conference, where he gave a presentation entitled "*D'une linguistique trop appliquée à une didactique trop éclatée*" [Overly divided education from an overly applied linguistics], addressing trends in didactics (Besse, 1997). Didactics, however, only began to truly show its presence in the society in 2005, with the reform of the society's journal, and its first publication under the title *Didactique*.

Incidentally, while one purpose behind the founding of the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* was to join the international organization *Fédération Internationale de Professeurs de Français*, as evident in its appeals to cooperation in the international community, the other research groups founded in the late 1980's and early 1990's were in a sense more inwardly-oriented, and were not proactive in coordinating with the global community.

Until recently, foreign language education has centered around the native speaker as a model, and the *native speaker fallacy* is as prevalent as ever. In French language education, French as spoken by the native has a symbolic power in practice, as a model, and as orthodox language. As almost all new teaching methodologies have been imported, Western knowledge has maintained its prestige. Notwithstanding, there was an understanding that French language education in Japan needed to be adapted to the Japanese social and cultural context, and in order to optimize education for Japanese learners, there was thus an implicit need distance itself from French-developed French language education, and not rely on foreign methodologies as models. In this sense, this passive stance to interaction with France in terms of educational research was an advance towards the independence of French language education in Japan.

### 5. Hosting the World Conference of the *Fédération Internationale de Professeurs de Français*

In 1996, the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* (SJDF) hosted the World Conference of the *Fédération Internationale de Professeurs de Français* at Keio University, with an attendance of close to 1,000 participants. It was the first world conference to be held in Asia, with French language instructors from Japan discussing not only French language education, but also importantly its diversity, including the state of, and issues in, French language education in various international contexts.

There was, however, division in the bid for hosting. Many members, though passionate about French language education, responded negatively to the bid. Their reluctance to prepare for, or participate in, the conference was to become the breeding ground for future troubles. The large financial burden of hosting the conference, and the unclear aims of its hosting, provided some pretext for this negative reception. The 1990 hosting of the Germanist international conference in Japan, as well following year's comparative literature world conference perhaps provided some impetus to host the IFPF's world conference. However, it appeared that the rather than encouraging the internationalization of French language education in Japan, the simple hosting of the conference was in itself the society's

objective. As a result, many members left the administration of the SJDF following the conference. For the society, the hosting of the world conference itself was to be aspired to, nothing more or nothing less. Furthermore, attracting the world conference to Japan was the fervent desire of the society's founder, Kobayashi. For Kobayashi, having experienced the war personally, just as the Tokyo Olympics had been symbolic of Japan's complete return to the international community, so the hosting of the world conference would represent Japan's renewed participation in the global academic community. In any event, the hosting of the world conference was an enterprise mired in controversy.

Not all of the members involved in the hosting of the world conference were French language education specialists. As previously mentioned, the greater part of the SJDF were Japanese teachers whose areas of expertise were either in French literature or linguistics. Whatever their specialties were in the narrow sense, however, the majority made their livelihoods through teaching the French language. Thus, as practitioners, the members of the society were directly involved with education.

Regardless of the language in question, there is a duality in between practitioners' narrow fields of research and language education, and this influences the social standing of language education. Practicing language teaching is often understood, or misunderstood, as specializing in language education. Very few Japanese French teachers join French language education societies in order to become specialists in French language education. Rather, they become members of these associations because they are practicing teachers. These circumstances differ greatly from those of English language education associations, often primarily comprised of English language education specialists. These underlying circumstances are likely to be shared by other foreign language communities, such as German or Japanese.

With these circumstances in mind, reflecting on the operation of the world conference, it is easy to understand the reason that the organizing committee was not primarily made up of French language education specialists. In other words, the world conference functioned not as an endeavor supported by French language education experts in the narrow

sense, but rather as a more flexible, practice-oriented platform for exchange. Thus if the society for French language education had been unable to maintain a rigorously academic approach to language education, the reason for this lay not only in the fact that French language education was a relatively new academic discipline, but also in the specialized fields and knowledge of French language instructors in Japan.

## 6. Strategies for internationalization in academic societies

Following the world conference, the society for French language education amended its French title, from the *Association Japonaise des Professeurs de Française* [Japan Association of French Teachers: AJPF], rechristening itself as the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* [Japan Society for French Language Education: SJDF], to reflect the society's orientation towards greater academic specialization. Furthermore, the society's conventions were revised to become more democratic and to avoid fossilization of the administration, introducing policy in which the president and directors would be decided through a vote open to all members, and restricted to two terms and a maximum of six years in their roles.

At present, the SJDF has just under 700 members, about one fifth of whom are native speakers of French. Accordingly, administration is in principle conducted bilingually, as can be seen on the society's websites and in publications which appear in both French and Japanese. General administration being conducted bilingually is not common in Japan, with only a few academic societies conducting their affairs in more than one language. In fact, the two academic societies for French language research in Japan are operated entirely in Japanese, and even amongst language education societies there are not many that are conducted bilingually. The annual SJDF spring conference however, invites researchers from France amongst other foreign nations yearly, to give lectures and research presentations in French. As a result, the annual conference of the society itself has taken the form of an international conference.

The French embassy sponsored cultural ambassadors to take part in the spring conference until 2009, when financial difficulties caused the program

to cease. Following this, grants from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and Japanese university budgets provided funding to continue to invite experts in the field, maintaining a lively academic exchange. Previously ambassadors had been dispatched at the inclination of the French embassy, and thus did not necessarily reflect the desires of the Japanese organizers. In this sense, funding provided from the Japanese side allowed for more autonomous international exchange. Furthermore, whereas previously the exchange had been unilateral, with cultural ambassadors lecturing to the Japanese members, with the funding changes putting the initiative in Japanese hands, research exchange became gradually more bilateral, engendering tangible accomplishments<sup>3</sup>.

## 7. Activities of academic fields in the international community

The hosting of the world conference in 1996 marked the beginning of Japanese teachers of the French language becoming more actively involved in the activities of the *Fédération Internationale de Professeurs de Français*. In 2000, nearly 100 Japanese participants attended the *Fédération's* conference in Paris, with many members continuing to participate regularly in following conventions; 2004 in Atlanta, 2008 in Quebec, and 2012 in Durban. The inauguration of the Asia-Pacific Regional Members Conference in 2006 drew the interest of members, further stimulating the exchange of research between practitioners and researchers outside of France or francophone nations. The first conference was held in Taiwan in 2006, followed by the Australian and Indian conferences in 2010 and 2014 respectively, and is scheduled to be held in Kyoto, Japan, in 2017. Presently, Japanese members are participating not only in the FIPF conferences, but are actively presenting research at other conferences both in France and other countries. Thus, there has been steady progress in diffusion of information and the results of research to the international community.

Serving as links in international academic exchange, Japanese members have also taken administrative roles, as board members and as vice-president to the FIPF, as well as on the committee of the Asia-Pacific Region chapter. Japanese members have also served as editors to the Federation's journal, *Recherches et applications*, making intellectual and

personal contributions to the international society.

As French language education is practiced not only in France, but in countries around the world, its center is diffusing. Caribbean author Édouard Glissant (1928-2011), advocates the view that francophones do not inhabit a world of concentric circles with France at the center, but rather just as the Antilles form one archipelago from its separate islands, so too do francophones exist together, albeit in a centerless world (Glissant, 1990). If France is to be seen as the center of this world, then countries such as Japan, where French is taught and used as a foreign language, are situated on the outermost boundary. If the French world may be viewed symbolically as diverse islands loosely bound, issues of authority between the center and peripheral will not arise. Rather, each country or region will maintain its own status, while engaging in cooperation with the other.

Exchange with the Korean French language & literature society, *Société Coréenne de l'Enseignement de Langue et de Littérature Françaises*, is an interesting example of this sort of geopolitical configuration. Through participation in world conferences post-2000, Japanese members became acquainted, and began to conduct exchange, with Korean instructors of French. This exchange has been normalized through the regular inviting of Korean researchers to the yearly research conference held at Kyoto University since 2006. In response to this, Japanese researchers have also been invited to give presentations at the Korean French language & literature society conferences. The exchange was further deepened with the joint hosting of a 2013 conference at Seoul National University by both the Korean and Japanese societies. Such exchange continued to gain momentum, and through cooperation with the Taiwanese French language education society, all three societies came together to host the joint Japan-Korea-Taiwan conference in Fukuoka in 2015.

Until recently, the French language had only a meager influence in Northeast Asia. Northeast Asia is home to a much shared cultures and histories. For both the Japanese and Koreans, however, French is not a second language commonly used in social life, but a foreign language. For this reason, the French language is an extremely neutral language between these two politically and historically indivisible countries, and as the

language of a third party, therefore lacking inherent bias, has the potential to function as a tool to encourage sincere and earnest debate. It is not, though, obvious to Japanese or Korean instructors of French that the language may fulfill this role as a medium of communication between the two countries. Most Japanese and Korean instructors of French were motivated to pursue their studies through an interest in France or francophone countries, and the intention of communicating with francophones. Most would never have imagined engaging in debate in French with people of their neighboring countries. The spread of globalization, however, has been fortuitous in creating a shift in the world of French language education, from France-at-the-center to a centerless world, and this has advanced exchange between neighboring countries in the French language. French language is achieving a shift in status from the language of the French people to a deeper significance as language shared by the international community.

### 8. Diffusion of information through academic publications

In the diffusion of academic knowledge into the international community, the role of academic journals cannot be ignored. Academic journals and specialist publications function as apparatuses that make clear who the members are that make up a particular field, what themes are acknowledged and dealt with, and the standards and norms upon which the field has been established. In this sense, academic publications are inherently bound to the creation of academic fields (Chevalier et Encrevé, 2006). This point of view will guide the discussion of academic publications on French language education in Japan, and their role they have played in such diffusion.

The *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* published its journal entitled *Enseignement du français au Japon* [French Language Education] from 1972 until 2005. The majority of the journal's articles were practitioner reports on certain teaching methodologies, with research articles on French language education in the narrow sense being sparse. This was unarguably due to the fact that the majority of the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* members conducted their research in

the fields of literature and linguistics, with few members specializing in French language education. Even under these circumstances, articles to be published underwent review by several peers. However, this process was not highly transparent, and as a result, the academic reputation of the journal suffered.

That French language education as a field lacked a strong academic tradition, and thus prestige, was one factor in its being unable to establish a solid reputation. This relatively poor reputation when compared to the fields of literature or linguistics resulted in little increase of researchers to the field, and thus stifled increased sophistication in research.

In other words, the lack of researchers throttled advancement in research, and the lack of advanced research meant that few researchers were drawn to the field. Incidentally, while it was in the 1970s that the word *didactique* [didactics] appeared in language education in France, it was not until the mid-1980s, and the founding of *Didactique du français langue étrangère* [Association for Education of French as a Foreign Language] that didactics began to emerge in education of French as a foreign language, and French language education had long been discussed under the umbrella of applied linguistics, lacking sufficient autonomy as an academic field of study in itself<sup>4</sup>.

From 2005, national universities in Japan underwent independent administrative institutionalization, and university instructors were now exposed to the threat of evaluation. Instructors were thus exposed to a greater compulsion to publish articles in respected journals. International journals were particularly highly regarded, and publication in these led to higher evaluation of both the individual, as well as their universities.

As a result of this change, French language instructors' academic achievements also underwent evaluation, and French language education needed to establish itself as a legitimate academic field, requiring complete reform in its academic publications. The *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* began reform on its publications in 2003, after receiving a JSPS grant, although the reform was only partial, never achieving a complete overhaul. Thereupon further reform was carried out, including a retitling, explicit stating of editorial objectives, internationalization of the peer



review process, and volumization of the publications.

The journal's previous title, *Furansu-go Kyoiku* [French language education], was somewhat lacking in academic credibility, and thus in 2005 was rechristened in French, *Revue japonaise de didactique du français* [Japan journal for French language education], and published in two separate volumes: *Études didactiques* [Educational research], and *Études francophones et françaises* [Research on France and francophones]. This volumization of the society's journal was deeply tied to trends in French language education as a research discipline, and an academic field. French language education did not deal only with the education of French as a language, but also included research into the countries and cultures in which the French language was used.

Until this time, articles in the journal had been centered around research on teaching methodology in French language education. Following the university reform, less gravity was put on the teaching of a second foreign language, and a stronger trend towards introduction seminars or lectures on France and the francophone sphere developed. Instructors of French were required to give such lectures in addition to their conventional French language classes, and thus required specialized knowledge in these areas. Expertise, or lack therefore, is the deciding factor in academic journal publications. Publication in academic journals signifies that one's work is a recognized product of that academic field, that the content producer has accepted and abided by the rules of that field, and has thus their participation in the field accepted.

Internationalization of the peer review process was also a necessary condition in raising the sophistication of the journal. Until the reform, the review process of articles written in French had been overseen by domestic Japanese or French members of the society, while post-reform peer review of French articles was entrusted to leading academics outside the country. At present, thirty supervisors from eleven different countries are responsible for conducting peer review, researchers in France, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, England, the United States, Australia, South Africa, Tunisia, China, and Korea. Articles submitted for publication in Japanese continue to be reviewed by Japanese members, although to ensure

transparency in the review process, the names of these members, as well as the overseas editorial panels, are made publicly available. As a result, there has been a steady increase in the prestige of the society's publications, and when compared to the *Furansu-go Kyoiku* era, the new system has seen a dramatic increase in publications, and resulted in a marked improvement in the academic quality of articles submitted.

The society's publications have also received submissions from the *Fédération Internationale de Professeurs de Français*, and has positioned itself at the center of research in the Asia-Pacific region. Publishing submissions from Taiwan, China, Korea, Indonesia, and Vietnam, the society's publications are an accumulation of the achievement of academic exchange in the region. The diffusion strategies in the internationalization of publications have in the past few years resulted in an increase in membership of foreign national researchers, and is increasingly being viewed as the base of French language education research in East Asia. Incidentally, the most recent publications (9(1) & 9(2), 2014) include submissions from both China and Korea.

This set of reforms and initiatives has led in 2015 to the official recognition of the society's publications by the *Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie* [Association of Francophone Universities]. This journal is the only publication in the Asian region to achieve this recognition, and can be seen as a statement that the journal has been acknowledged as an academically legitimate French language publication by the international community. Furthermore, the journal has been awarded the "A" rank by the National Taiwan University's committee for evaluation of academic publications. The international status of the journal in the field of French language education has clearly been recognized in the Asian region as well.

### Future prospects

Taking the *Société Japonaise de Didactique du Français* as an example, this paper considered internationalization and diffusion of knowledge in the field of foreign language education research. Three areas of internationalization raised were the internationalization of the societies themselves, their members' contributions to the academic community, and

the internationalization of academic publications. In this age of increasing globalization, there is a trend towards increase contribution to the international community, and at least with respect to French language education, Japanese diffusion of information is also increasing. However, as internationalization of societies and their publications are deeply bound with the internationalization of Japan's organizational culture, it is not something that may be achieved through suggestion at the individual level, but requires some sort of incentive from the country, or from the international community. Correspondingly, we must not forget that achieving successes in such ventures will require more time than individual endeavors.

#### Notes

- 1 This undertaking was continued until 2009, at which time, due to a decrease in the number of university instructors participating, and an increase in secondary level educators, as well as the comparative ease of travel to France for participation, funding by the Japanese Ministry of Education was halted. However, the French government continued to provide funding in a different manner for workshops in France.
- 2 Personal correspondence with former French embassy attache Jean Maiffredy, 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2015.
- 3 An example includes International Symposiums on contextualization of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages, and reports on their outcomes (Castellotti & Nishiyama, 2011).
- 4 The word *didactique* first appeared in the French literature with William Francis Mackey (1972). A Canadian-born linguist, he published *Language Teaching Analysis* in 1969. It was translated into French in 1972 under a title suggested by the translator, *Principe de didactique analytique*.

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## International Exchange among Japanese Academic Associations of Russian Language and Literature

Yukiko KUROIWA

### Introduction

Introduced and taken up in the mid-nineteenth century, Russian language and literature has the longest tradition of research and learning of a European language in Japan after Dutch Studies, and also had an influence on the establishment of modern literature in Japan. Today the number of Russian literature lovers in Japan is as high as anywhere in the world, and Russian language courses are available at over 200 universities and other institutes of higher education nationwide. On the other hand, having experienced the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Revolution and dispatch of Japanese troops to Siberia, the Second World War and the Cold War, relations of Japan with Russia and the Soviet Union have been antagonistic for long periods, and researchers, at the mercy of these bilateral ties, have frequently had their freedom of intercourse severely restricted. The situation, though, was utterly transformed with the conclusion of the Cold War and disintegration of the Soviet Union, and Russo-Japanese academic exchange subsequently developed to the level it enjoys today.

As well as offering an outline of Russia-related academic societies in Japan and the specifics of their international outreach, the purpose of this article is to introduce their current programs for international exchange and outline future problems and prospects. Were this to focus narrowly on Russian language and literature societies, it would descend into trivia, so it will seek to provide an overview of current trends applicable to all humanities and social scientific organizations with some relation to Russia.