AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE LEARNING: A SINGLE CASE STUDY OF MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE LEARNING:
A SINGLE CASE STUDY OF MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

By
Yuki Ozawa

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
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Major: Educational Studies

Under the Supervision of Professor Aleidine J. Moeller

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The purpose of this single case study was to explore authentic communication for Japanese language learning in second-year Japanese classes at a small, private university in the Midwest. Types of authentic Japanese communication and materials in and outside of Japanese class were studied from four learners’ and one professor’s perspectives.

Data were collected throughout one academic year, the first semester of 2004 through the second semester of 2005. Multiple methods of data collection were used in this study including personal interviews, casual conversations, participant observations of classes and related events, and studying relevant documents including the textbook, students’ study sheets, videos, oral exam transcripts, e-mail copies, reflection sheets, and web log copies.

Qualitative research procedures were used to study second-year Japanese language learners’ authentic communication. Data were analyzed by categorizing into codes then themes and sub-themes. Five themes emerged in this study: 1) the e-mail writing process, 2) the e-mail reading process, 3) the learning process, 4) learning through e-mail, and 5) authentic Japanese. Lastly, implications and recommendations based on the data were concluded.
DISSESSATION TITLE

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A SINGLE CASE STUDY OF MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

BY

Yuki Ozawa

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Preface

This dissertation includes information about authentic Japanese communication for Japanese language learning including e-mail communication between Japanese language learners and native Japanese speakers. When I read my participants’ first e-mail messages in Japanese, I was greatly impressed by the participants’ ability and creativity to write Japanese message as second-year Japanese language learners. I was also impressed that the participants devoted a lot of time to write and read Japanese e-mail messages.

I would like to note that the e-mail messages by the participants and native speakers were copied as they were, except for pseudonyms, so that the e-mail communication process in the target language could be understood in an authentic way. For this purpose, I did not modify any of the participants’ Japanese language use and the native Japanese speakers’ English language use.
Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Second and foreign language learners should learn a language using authentic materials and communication (Hadley, 2001; Moeller, 1992; Samway & McKeon, 2002). Authentic materials are unedited texts or speech samples (Spelleri, 2002) written or spoken for and by native speakers. “Authentic materials offer real language that is contextually rich and culturally pertinent” (Spelleri, 2002, p.16).

Even if instructors realize the importance of using authentic material in the classroom, some Japanese language instructors may find it difficult to use authentic Japanese written texts due to the large number of new kanji characters. Japanese written language is a combination of hiragana, katakana, and kanji (Chinese characters). Hiragana and katakana consist of 46 different letters respectively plus diacritic marks for voicing (Chikamatsu, 2003). Japan’s largest character dictionary consists of approximately 50 thousand kanji (Araiso & Moore, 1989). Japanese newspapers and magazines include fewer than 3,000 kanji (Taylor & Taylor, 1995). Among these kanji characters, students in Japanese courses in American colleges typically study three to five hundred characters in the first two years (Makino, Hatasa, & Hatasa, 1998 and Tohsaku, 1999 cited in Chikamatsu, 2003). Authentic Japanese readings such as newspaper articles include many unfamiliar kanji for first- and second-year Japanese learners. A small number of kanji consists of only one stroke such as 一 and 乙, and some
characters consist of over 20 strokes such as 鰹 and 鷲. Seventy percent of kanji have over seven strokes (Hourse, Yokoi, & Yasuda, 2002).

Jorden, Lambert, and Wolff (1991) wrote that authentic Japanese is extremely difficult for Americans learning Japanese language. The Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State categorized the difficulty of Japanese language into Category 4, the most difficult foreign language category for American learners (Jorden, Lambert, and Wolff, 1991). Jorden, Lambert, and Wolff (1991) rated Japanese as the most difficult language for American language learners to master even among the languages in Category 4, which include Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, when both written and spoken languages were considered. The difficulty is determined by the amount of instructional contact hours required to reach the proficiency levels that range from level 0, no functional proficiency, to level 5, educated native speaker proficiency (Walton, 1992). Walton (1992) explained that American learners need 480 contact hours of language instruction for languages in Category 1 such as French, German, and Spanish to reach the proficiency level 2 while they need 1,320 contact hours for languages in Category 4. Japanese is included in Category 4 not only because of the linguistic difference, but also due to various factors of the Japanese language that differ from English such as the lack of the phenomena that Americans tend to assume to be universal, semantic mismatch, the writing system, and rules in social or cultural contexts (Jorden, Lambert, & Wolff, 1991).
Effective use of technology can solve the difficulty of comprehending authentic materials for Japanese language learners. Technology plays an integral role in teaching today (Lam, 2000) and could serve as a means to enhance second language learning and teaching (Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Sokolić, 2001). Professional productivity increases when educators use technology including e-mail efficiently and effectively (Calderon-Young, 1999). “In today’s wired, networked society it is imperative that students understand how to communicate using technology” (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2005).

Many researchers have found that e-mail exchanges with native speakers have the potential to help foreign language learners gain cultural understanding and insights. Some researchers have written that e-mail exchange can motivate foreign language learners’ communication with native speakers (Carey & Crittenden, 2000; Fedderholdt, 2001; Gonzalez-Bueno & Perez, 2002; Koubek, 2004; Lawrence, 2002; Leh, 1997; Liaw, 1998; McGrath,, 1998; Torii-Williams, 2004; Trenches, 1996; Yamada & Moeller, 2001). Foreign language learners have the opportunity to receive authentic information (Kataoka, 2000; Lawrence, 2002; Moeller, 1997; Silva, Meagher, Valenzuela, & Crenshaw, 1996) and engage in interactive activities (Carey & Crittenden, 2000; Gondelewski, Meloni, & Brant, 2001; Jogan, Heredia, & Gladys, 2001; Lawrence, 2002; Lee, 2002; Liaw, 1998; Moeller, 1997) that may enhance their language proficiency (Kubota, 1999; Lawrence, 2002; Leh, 1997; Torii-Williams, 2004) and increase their cultural
understanding (Fedderholdt, 2001; Jogan, Heredia, & Gladys, 2001; Kubota, 1999; Lawrence, 2002; Leh, 1997; Torii-Williams, 2004).

E-mail communication allows second language learners to use the language in a learner-centered environment (Hertel, 2003; Lawrence, 2002) that is non-threatening and is likely to lower anxiety to communicate with native speakers (Fedderholdt, 2001; Jogan, Heredia, & Gladys, 2001). E-mail communication can help learners to develop positive attitudes toward the target language (Gonzalez-Bueno, 2000; Hertel, 2003).

Little research on the use of e-mail in the foreign language classroom is available (Fischer, 1998; Tella, 1992) even though a large amount of research has been done on the use of technology in general in foreign language classrooms. In addition, e-mail communication related to the Japanese language is very limited. Past research about alphabetical language learning might not be applicable to Japanese language learning since Japanese writing and typing systems differ from alphabetical languages. The contribution of this study will be to understand the process of authentic communication for Japanese language learning by deeply studying a case of Midwestern university students.

The Japanese language complicates the typing process because the language has three different kinds of scripts (hiragana, katakana, and kanji) and many homophones due to the relatively small sound inventory (Taylor & Taylor, 1995). Having multiple pronunciations for the same kanji (Hatasa, 1997) might complicate the typing process. Typing Japanese involves two or three steps: “mapping sounds to syllabic symbols (hiragana or katakana), converting some
hiragana into appropriate ideographs (kanji or Chinese characters) according to the context, and altering the word boundaries if automatic hiragana-to-kanji conversion resulted in inappropriate parsing” (Kubota, 1999, p.206). Learning new kanji characters by computer does not require practicing strokes and might not be beneficial to remember kanji. Thus typing Japanese language may not help learners remember how to write kanji characters. It is not known whether typing logographic languages such as Japanese is as beneficial as typing alphabetical languages (Chikamatsu, 2003).

The results of this study will be significant for Japanese language learners, instructors, and administrators. It will help Japanese language learners consider effective ways of e-mail communication to improve their Japanese language proficiency and enhance their cultural knowledge. Instructors will better understand the effective ways to integrate the e-mail communication in their foreign language instructions by understanding learners’ process of e-mail communication. The findings may help administrators investigate if computers at universities have computer issues for foreign language learning and improve technology environments.

The purpose of this single case study was to explore the authentic communication for Japanese language learning. Data were collected from four students and a professor of one second-year Japanese course at one small, private university in the Midwest. For the purpose of this study, authentic communication was defined as foreign language learners communicating with
native speakers so they learn to produce authentic language much like that of native speakers.

**Research Questions**

The grand tour question for this study was: How do Japanese language learners use authentic communication in second-year Japanese classes at a small, private university in the Midwest? The sub-questions were:

1. How do Japanese language learners describe their use of e-mail communication with native Japanese speakers via e-mail?
2. How do Japanese language learners describe the process of writing and reading Japanese through e-mail communication?
3. How do Japanese language learners develop cultural understanding through the use of authentic e-mail communication?
4. How do Japanese language learners receive authentic language input (in class and outside of class)?
5. How do Japanese language learners produce authentic language (in class and outside of class)?

**Definitions**

The following terms were used in this study:

*Authentic communication:* Foreign language learners communicate with native speakers and receive natural language input that is not modified or simplified for learners.
Acquisition: According to Krashen’s (2003) acquisition-learning hypothesis, acquisition means that learners pick up features of a language sub-consciously.

Cultural knowledge: It refers to “information, skills, attitudes, conceptions, beliefs, values, and other mental components of culture that people socially learn during enculturation” (Definitions of Anthropological Terms).

E-mail or electronic mail: Electronic mail consists of messages transmitted and sent through a computerized system used as a type of postal service (Chesebro & Bonsall, 1989, p.98).

Foreign language learning: It refers to learning a language in a region where the language is not used commonly (Shrum & Glisan, 2000).

Japanese Meetup: A participant in this study is the organizer of Japanese Meetup. According to the organizer, “Meetups are groups of people interested in a particular topic who organize meetings using the website ‘meetup.com.’” Japanese language learners and native speakers “get together for conversation in Japanese.” Each meeting lasts one hour per month. The meeting takes place at a coffee shop located in the downtown area.

Keypal: It is defined as a pen pal who exchanges e-mails.

Language proficiency: The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) defined what foreign language learners were “able to do with the language in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, at various levels of performance” in terms of functions, contexts/contents, and accuracy (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p.27-28). The ACTFL website, http://www.actfl.org, includes proficiency guidelines.
**Learning**: According to Krashen’s (2003) acquisition-learning hypothesis, learning means that learners consciously learn language rules.

**Second language acquisition**: Acquiring a language in a region where the language is used commonly (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). This term is sometimes used as another language studying in the region where the language is not used commonly (Ellis, 1997). The term, second language, refers to a foreign language in this study.

**Target language**: It refers to the language being learned (Ellis, 1997).

**Delimitations and Limitations**

The delimitations include that this study was restricted to four students and one professor’s perceptions about the use of e-mail as authentic communication in one Japanese course, at a small, private university in the Midwest. This study was restricted to two interviews per participant, weekly observations, reviewing the students’ copies of e-mail messages and English summaries of received e-mail messages, a participant’s web log, and related event observations for two semesters (October, 2004 through May, 2005). The focus was primarily on the exchange of e-mail communication.

The limitations include that the findings in this research may not be generalizable as the purpose of qualitative research is not to generalize. Case studies provide in-depth information and thick, rich description of a few cases (Johnson, 1992). The findings may not be applicable to other foreign language
cases because of the small number of cases and some unique features of Japanese language and culture.

Significance of the Study

Foreign language learners need to receive a large amount of authentic language input and have opportunities to use the target language. However, not every learner has access to interact with native speakers without traveling abroad. Some American cities may not have native speakers of Japanese with whom language learners can interact. In this case, Japanese language input can be limited to the classroom. The vocabulary of Japanese learners might be limited to the textbooks and course materials. Students may be able to talk only about the topics that appear in textbooks in the target language. Learners need to have opportunities to increase their vocabulary beyond the vocabulary covered in classes by interacting with others.

The professor of Japanese in this study started a pen pal project six years ago in order to provide her students with opportunities to use functional Japanese by applying what they learned into real situations. She was aware of the importance of implementing the five goals of the national “Standards for Foreign Language Learning” (Nebraska Department of Education, 1996) in her Japanese classes at the post secondary school level. Those five goals are communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities (5Cs). The professor was looking for language tasks that emphasized the “communication” and “culture” goals. Dr. Kudo knew that her students could
communicate in their Japanese classes to some degree, but she felt the need for expanding language opportunities for her students to use “functional Japanese” in the “community” by applying and expanding what they learned in their Japanese classes through authentic communicative situations. She also wanted to integrate technology in her curriculum. She believed that “typing skills in Japanese are necessary for Japanese language learners.” However, computers on campus did not allow the students to exchange e-mails in Japanese yet. She thought that the e-mail exchange could allow her students to continue using Japanese after they completed all of the Japanese courses at Midwestern Methodist University.

The pen pal projects turned into an e-mail exchange after a computer lab at the university enabled the students to type and read Japanese language. When the professor started the pen pal project six years ago, her students enjoyed exchanging letters with Japanese university students and reported that they learned Japanese culture from their Japanese pen pals. However, the professor started to observe that some students felt burdened to write and read Japanese e-mails even though she wanted her students to enjoy these online interactions. Every year the professor changed ways to assign e-mail activities and sought more effective ways so her students could enjoy their online conversations, improve their Japanese language proficiency, and enhance their cultural knowledge. The professor has a strong desire to maximize student learning through e-mail communication.
Individual students’ willingness to communicate with native speakers and the degree of learning through e-mail communication varies. Instructors need to be able to guide their students so they learn the target language and culture while enjoying communicating with native speakers. Studying the case of Japanese language learners’ e-mail communication processes may help Japanese language learners and instructors understand the issues and consider effective ways of using e-mail for Japanese language learning. Since existing literature is mainly about alphabetical language and culture learning through e-mails, the use of e-mail communication specifically for non-alphabetical languages including the Japanese language needs to be explored. The existing literature lacks studies focusing on e-mail communication processes for Japanese language learning, so it is not known how Japanese language learners compose and comprehend messages online deeply.

Understanding the importance of e-mail communication for foreign language learning may encourage administrators to investigate whether or not their universities have technology issues related to foreign language learning and how to resolve the issues. The issue that Japanese characters on one system cannot be used by another due to the proprietary nature of computer hardware and software is acute among users outside of Japan when they lack the necessary hardware processing Japanese kanji characters (Harrison, 1998). Foreign language programs offering non-alphabetical languages need to investigate if they have computers that can encode and decode different languages.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction

This study is about the use of authentic communication such as e-mail communication for Japanese language learning. This study explores the process of four students’ e-mail communication for their Japanese language learning and their professor’s perspectives in one second-year Japanese course at a Midwestern university.

The current status of the literature on this topic is about the use of e-mail communication for the potential effectiveness of foreign language and culture learning. The literature shows that receiving language and culture input through authentic materials and communication is critical for foreign language learning. Spoken and written language produced by and for native speakers reflects the true target culture.

The literature related to the significance of using authentic communication for foreign language learning was reviewed as well as the use of e-mail as authentic communication for general foreign language learning. Lastly, in order to understand the use of e-mail communication specifically for Japanese language learning, characteristics of Japanese language, typing Japanese, and reading Japanese messages on the screen were reviewed.
Significance of Authentic Communication for Language Learning

Second and foreign language learners need to learn the target language through authentic materials (Hadley, 2001; Moeller, 1992; Samway & McKeon, 2002) since these authentic materials are an effective means for real language, integrating cultures, and heightening comprehension (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). Second and foreign language classes in the United States have revealed “a great deal of enthusiasm regarding the classroom benefits afforded by ‘authentic texts’ – those written and oral communications produced by members of a language culture group for members of the same language and culture group” (Galloway, 1998).

If second language learners learn a new concept in the target language from the edited or simplified materials, the learners may not interpret the foreign concept accurately because people tend to apply their own views to see the world (Evans & Gonzalez, 1993). Authentic materials are helpful for second language learners to acquire authentic culture that is hidden in the language. Since authentic texts are written for native speakers, those texts show authentic information including the values and deeper meanings culturally from the insiders’ views (Evans & Gonzalez, 1993). Understanding authentic culture is critical for second language learning as Hinkel (1999) wrote that a learner can hardly learn a language without understanding the culture.

Foreigners who have learned how to interact with Japanese with appropriate behavior, even if they know no Japanese language, can communicate more successfully than those who have studied the language in terms of isolated vocabulary or sentences or even passages, translated from English, with no notion as to when or where or by whom

Communication styles differ from culture to culture. Understanding the communication style in the target language can help second language learners communicate effectively. For instance, Condon (1972a) mentioned that he might begin with a joke when addressing an American audience while he might begin with an apology addressing a Japanese audience at a conference.

The Japanese language does not have a neutral speech style, so a speaker must consider the relationship including in-group/out-group membership, social status, age, and gender (Jorden & Walton, 1987; Nakajima, 1999). Japanese people are overtly status-conscious, and various grammatical categories including nouns, pronounces, and verbs are coordinated for polite speech (Niyekawa, 1991). While Americans like facts and specifics, interpersonal reality or feelings of individuals can be more important than objective reality for Japanese people (Condon, 1972b).

Japanese people value group harmony over individuals and have to think of the others’ feelings all the time to avoid hurting their feelings (Ueda, 1972). The group orientation of Japanese people is reflected in their speech. They use humble forms to address themselves and members of their groups while they use honorific forms to address their addressees and members outside their groups (Niyekawa, 1991). For example, people use humble forms to talk about themselves or people in their groups, such as family members, to outside people or people in higher status. The level of politeness is most obvious in the ending of verbs, and even words can differ depending on the social level of the individual
Being aware of this feature may be more important and time-consuming than memorizing irregular verb forms (Jorden & Walton, 1987). The deep culture, or the mind-set, reflects how people talk, listen, read, and write (Jorden, Lambert, & Wolff, 1991).

The group-orientated culture reflects Japanese “high-context communication” system. Hall (1976) cited in Ting-Toomey (1999) categorized communication systems into ‘low-context communication’ and ‘high-context communication.’ The characteristics of high-context communication include group-oriented values, mutual-face concern, spiral logic, indirect style, status-oriented style, self-effacement style, listener-oriented style, and context-based understanding (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Understanding communication styles in the target language help second language learners communicate effectively. If Americans and Japanese do not understand the other country’s communication style, they may misinterpret each other as Barnlund’s (1972) example:

The Japanese, frustrated by the flippant attitude toward formalities, insensitivity to status, embarrassing criticism, unnatural physical intimacy, prying questions, hasty decisions – there are meanings that he applies to such behavior as it is manifest in his American associates… The American talking to Japanese is baffled by rituals that are endless, conversations that seem pointless, silences that waste time, humor that seems childish, by delays that are inexcusable, by evasive and misleading statements, by distant and cold demeanor of his colleague (p.4).

Vagueness as euphemism and circumlocution has an aesthetic value in Japan (Niyekawa, 1991). Verbs come at the end of sentences in Japanese grammar, so listeners do not know where the speaker stands until the speaker completes the whole sentence (Doi, 1972). People can change their stand before
ending sentences. If people talk too exact, direct, and detailed, they are viewed as unsophisticated (Niyekawa, 1991).

Meanings through nonverbal communication can differ from culture to culture. For example, the beckoning ‘come here’ gesture in many Asian countries including Japan with the palm down and the fingers waving toward the body means ‘go away’ in North America (Ting-Toomey, 1999). A Japanese smile can mean happiness or mask embarrassment, displeasure, or anger (Ting-Toomey, 1999). In general, Japanese use fewer and more restrained hand gestures to complement conversations than Americans do (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Vocal segregates such as ‘uh-huh’ in English and ‘\textit{hai, hai}’ in Japanese can be categorized as nonverbal regulatory devices (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Japanese people would say ‘hai’ more frequently than American people would say ‘uh-huh.’ American people might feel interrupted when Japanese say ‘hai’ a lot to show attentiveness. Vocal pause-filler cues in Japanese such as ‘hai’ means ‘I’m hearing you,’ while the literal translation is ‘yes’ (Ting-Toomey, 1999). This can cause great misunderstanding. When a Japanese person says ‘hai’ to show that he or she is listening, an American person may misunderstand that the Japanese person agrees with the statement (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Nonverbal communication can convey more powerful messages than verbal messages. Condon (1972a) wrote that “the area of nonverbal behavior seems to be far larger and deeper, in a sense, than that of spoken language” (p.9). The real feelings may be shown more often nonverbally than verbally in Japanese communication (Niyekawa, 1991). Japan and the United States have
many differences in nonverbal communication. Physical intimacy is a type of nonverbal communication. Japanese are reluctant to display physical and verbal intimacy and might use less touching behavior and reinforcing gestures than American people (Barnlund, 1972).

_E-Mail Communication for Foreign Language Learning_

*Introduction to E-Mail Communication*

According to the literature related to technology in second language learning, e-mail exchanges with native speakers may enhance learners' linguistic (Kubota, 1999; Lawrence, 2002; Leh, 1997; Torii-Williams, 2004) and cultural (Fedderholdt, 2001; Jogan, Heredia, & Gladys, 2001; Kubota, 1999; Lawrence, 2002; Leh, 1997; Torii-Williams, 2004) understanding of the target language. “The resources for teaching culture and for accessing authentic materials have been increased substantially in recent years, particularly with the advent of new technologies” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1997, p.346). E-mail messages can help second language learners’ reading skills as well as writing skills. Computers can provide learners with authentic experience in the target language (Cononelos & Oliva, 1993; Kubota, 2000; Lawrence, 2002). Online authentic materials help foreign language learners acquire the cultural knowledge similar to experience abroad (Lafford & Lafford, 1997). Learners are likely to be active learners when they engage in writing and reading e-mail messages as authentic activities.

E-mail communication provides second language learners with a real audience with whom to communicate (Silva, Meagher, Valenzuela, & Crenshaw,
Trenches (1996) concluded that elementary school students learning Spanish seemed to write with an audience in mind. Successful writers focus on readers and meaning (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). In Fukai’s (2004) study, the Japanese language learner participant mentioned that her Japanese instructor is used to American learners’ common errors and thus understands learners’ intentions better than other native speakers. When the participant wrote e-mail messages to her keypal in Japan, she felt that she needed to be more careful in her writing since her keypal would not be used to understanding her errors.

Flovez-Estrada (1995) conducted two pilot e-mail projects between American learners of Spanish and native-speakers of Spanish in Mexico in 1991 to 1992. The Spanish language learners began to imitate native speaking keypal’s language use and pay attention to vocabulary, grammar, and linguistic forms. The authentic input from native speakers helped the foreign language learners produce authentic language.

E-mail communication can make learners learn a second language with emotion. “Good learning engages feelings. Far from an add-on, emotions are a form of learning” (Jensen, 1998, p.81). People become active learners when they learn by doing (Cunningham & Redmond, 2002). Learning is maximized when they engage in their activities (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Koubek’s (2004) and Fedderholdt’s (2001) participants described their e-mail exchanges with native speakers in the target language with enthusiasm and as fun. Jogan, Heredia, and Gladys’ (2001) participants experienced empathy from their keypals that led the participants to understand their keypals’ culture more deeply. If learners establish
a friendship with their keypals (pen pals via e-mail) and become motivated to write and read messages or enjoy the e-mail communication, it might be easier for second language learners to recall expressions in the target language than writing or reading materials with little or no excitement.

Children have to feel that talking is enjoyable and worth while for their first language development (Wells, 1986). It is the same as second language learning, and learners want to know more when they feel that the messages are interesting or important for them. People learn a language when they are in a real situation talking about interesting or important matters (Samway & McKeon, 2002).

**Advantages of E-Mail Communication**

E-mail communication has advantages for second language learning. E-mail communication can motivate and facilitate interactions with native speakers, lower learner anxiety, solve time and location issues, and contribute to positive attitudes toward the culture in the target language.

Motivation is important in foreign language learning (Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Yule, 1996) and teaching (Noels, Clement, & Pelletier, 1999). Motivation is one of the affective variables that influences successful language learning (Shrum & Glisan, 2000). Writing is complex and difficult even in the first language (Florez-Estrada, 1995). Not all learners are motivated to write in a second language (Fedderhodt, 2001). However, an e-mail exchange in the target language can motivate learners to write messages in the target language. Some researchers believe that e-mail communication motivate second language learners to communicate with native

Koubek (2004) reported that the participants in the first-year Czech course at a Midwestern university showed significant motivation in writing messages in Czech based on her case study. The E-mail exchange played a role as a bridge connecting the target language and the first-year foreign language classes. The participants wanted to continue exchanging e-mails with their keypals even after the semester ended (Koubek, 2004).

Liaw (1998) studied the integration of the keypal activity in two English as a foreign language (EFL) classes at a college. Liaw (1998) found that creating potential friendships through e-mail exchanges motivated EFL students to continue writing based on the survey and group interview results. Similarly, Leh (1997) conducted a survey, a cloze-test, and interviews in two Spanish 313 classes at a college. All of the 18 participants in the e-mail group thought that e-mail use was great for foreign language learning. The participants believed that e-mail should be incorporated into foreign language instruction (Leh, 1997).

Until the late 1960s the theory of behaviorism dominated the second language acquisition field (Johnson, 2004). Behaviorists believed that individuals learn a language by habit formation with stimuli and responses (Johnson, 2004), imitation, practice, and reinforcement (Lightbown & Spada, 2003). A language is learned by imitation in one sense, but they do more than simply repeating the
words of others (Wells, 1986). There are many factors that influence language learning.

One of the important factors in second language acquisition is learner interaction. Interactionists believe that a language is learned mainly through interaction (Lightbown & Spada, 2003), communication, and language use (Fu, 1995). Language learners need feedback from others when using a language (Wells, 1986). Rice (2002) wrote that children require a lot of opportunities to interact with others for their language development. “There are many parallels between learning a first and second language” (Samway & McKeon, 2002), and the interaction is equally important for second language learners as well as first language learners.

Interactions are not only verbal communications but also written communications. E-mail activities are interactive (Carey & Crittenden, 2000; Gonglewski, Meloni, & Brant, 2001; Jogan, Heredia, & Gladys, 2001; Lawrence, 2002; Lee, 2002; Liaw, 1998, Moeller, 1997) since learners receive responses after sending messages. In Fedderholdt’s (2001) study about Japanese EFL college students, many of the participants did not have previous experience of writing relatively long sentences creatively in English. However, the e-mail activity provided the participants with written interactions with English learners of Danish. Even in the situation where no native speakers are available in the learners’ environment, learners can experience interactions similar to face-to-face communication through CMC. Gonglewski, Meloni, and Bront (2001) wrote that e-mail communication is similar to verbal communication since it is informal
and interactive. Since literacy grows through interaction (Rodby, 1992), technology as a language learning tool has to be fully interactive (Cubillos, 1998). Making use of e-mail system is an example of using interactive technology for language learning.

Long’s Interactive Hypothesis explained that the input that second language learners receive becomes comprehensible when the interaction is modified through comprehension checks, clarification requests, and repetition (Shrum & Glisan, 2000; Lightbown & Spada, 2003). E-mail communication as well as face-to-face communication allows native speakers to modify expressions according to the second language learners’ comprehension levels. For example, e-mail receivers can ask for clarification if the meaning is not clear. Long (1983) conducted a study about discourse between a group of only native speakers and a group of both native and non-native speakers. Long (1983) concluded that modification made the input comprehensible in conversations between native speakers and non-native speakers. Long (1983) found that native speakers modified their interactions greatly for non-native speakers.

Researchers also found that the e-mail activities could create a learner-centered learning environment (Hertel, 2003; Lawrence, 2002). Ballman (1999) wrote that many classroom activities are still teacher-centered, but learners need language student-centered activities to ensure they use the target language. The decentralized environment created by computers can allow learners to be independent and responsible for their own learning (Beauvous, 1997).
Written communication can have advantages over oral communications between different cultures. In Ma’s (1996) study, twenty American students taking junior-level communication courses at a university had “natural conversation” sessions through online relay chat with East Asian students and American students. East Asian students in the study were Chinese, South Korean, and Taiwanese students in American universities. Ma (1996) wrote that East Asians may not say “no” directly when they have to reject a proposal in face-to-face communication because they are afraid that the direct rejection might hurt someone’s feelings. However, individuals may need to be more direct through computer-mediated communications because of the lack of contextual cues. Both American and East Asian students in Ma’s study stated that they were more direct and self-disclosed in online conversations than face-to-face communication. Even though some American students did not agree that East Asian students were not direct but “polite, reserved, and indirect,” it is possible that second language learners can get more direct answers and messages through computer-mediated communication than face-to-face communication. Even if East Asians avoid direct answers, second language learners may learn the indirect style while communicating with native speakers through e-mail communication.

Second language learners might be more willing to communicate through CMC than face-to-face communication since the learners’ anxiety or affective filter to use a second language may be lowered. Krashen’s (2003) Input Hypothesis explains that comprehensible input utilizes second language
acquisition. Even if learners receive enough comprehensible input, such input
can be mentally blocked by learners if they experience anxiety.

English as a Second Language (ESL) students may often miss
opportunities to talk due to their anxiety or embarrassment in the classroom, and
native speakers might not be patient enough to communicate with those ESL
students tended to be reluctant to communicate with people from other countries
due to their lack of confidence in English, but they tried hard to write e-mail
messages to other English learners in Denmark. In Jogan, Heredia, and Gladys’
(2001) study of elementary Chilean EFL students felt that the e-mail activity
lowered their anxiety. In Ma’s (1996) study, online chat communication lowered
the Taiwanese participants’ anxiety.

In Beauvois’ (1994) survey research, 41 students participated in
discussions in the computer lab and classroom in an intermediate French course
during a summer session at a southwestern university. In this study, the
participants noted that the discussions in the computer lab had an almost stress-
free atmosphere and attention was paid to individual learning styles.

In the second language classroom, using a language for instructor
evaluation can cause learner anxiety. Fedderholdt (2001) pointed out that the
participants were excited to write messages for real audiences who were
interested in the content of the messages not for evaluation purposes. If
individuals write for readers for real communication purposes, they may feel freer
to express themselves than when writing for grades.
Language programs often lack interactive time to negotiate meanings in second language classes (Carey & Crittenden, 2000). The interaction time in the classroom is limited. Second language learners may feel more comfortable writing e-mail messages than to communicating face-to-face since learners have time to write and revise (Beauvous, 1997) unlike oral speech. According to Warschauer (1997), e-mail communication provides learners with pauses and the opportunity to pay closer attention as needed to reflect during the interaction. Beauvous (1997) explained that allowing time for learners to respond to a question led learners to have positive attitudes and performance. Online discussions can be “a bridge between limited oral skills and expressions of ideas because it slows down the communicative process” (Beauvous, 1997, p.182).

Chatting as a synchronous type of communication with native speakers allows foreign language learners to receive immediate feedback and responses similar to face-to-face communication. For example, Xie’s (2002) participants who were in a third-year Chinese course at a university in California enhanced their Chinese writing and reading skills. However, Xie (2002) pointed out that the different time zones made the synchronous chatting communication difficult to schedule. E-mail communication as an asynchronous form of communication solves the problem of time difference between countries. E-mail communication is time- and place-independent, so learners can send and receive messages in their convenient time (Warschauer, 1997). While synchronous communication makes Americans and Japanese difficult to schedule for real time discussions.
due to the great time difference, e-mail communication allows learners to respond without being worried about time.

If native speakers are available in the learner’s community, the language learner can have real, face-to-face verbal interactions. However, it is hard to find native speakers with whom to have face-to-face communication in some regions. E-mail communication allows everybody in any region to communicate with native speakers without time and geographical obstacles.

Exchanging e-mails with native speakers may help second language learners to eliminate their negative stereotypes or attitudes toward the target language and culture. “Positive attitudes toward self, the native language group, and the target language group enhanced proficiency” (Brown, 2000, p.181). Brown (2000) explained that negative attitudes can be removed by being exposed to the authentic culture and people in the target language. Every learner should have the opportunity to interact with people from different cultures including e-mail or videoconference communication for language learning, participating in project, or sharing viewpoints on international events (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory).

In Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez’s (2000) study, the participants suggested that electronic journals improved their attitudes toward learning and using their second language. E-mail communication can help learners have positive attitudes toward writing in the target language. E-mail communication can also help learners have positive attitudes toward the culture in the target language. For example, Hertel’s (2003) participants had positive attitudes toward Mexican
people and culture as a result of exchanging e-mails with native speakers in Mexico. Hertel's (2003) participants eliminated their previous stereotypes and became more open to the people and culture.

Disadvantages of E-mail Communication

E-mail communication has some disadvantages such as absent or delayed response, lack of verbal and nonverbal cues, and the absence of listening and speaking processes. Absent or delayed response is a big obstacle, and second language learners need to have responsible keypals who always e-mail back immediately (Fukai, 2004). It is also possible that the receiver ignores a sender’s question.

When people communicate face-to-face, they receive important messages from vocal quality, pitch and tone, as well as the context (Chesebro & Bonsall, 1989). Those cues are lacking in e-mail messages. “Non- and para-linguistic cues such as eye gaze, nods, intonation, and pitch used in spoken discourse to communicate meaning, signal, a transfer of the floor, or indicate an end of one topic of another are absent in CMC” (Smith, 2003, p.43-44). Nonverbal communication is especially important for second language learners since nonverbal communication such as facial expressions and gestures can be a good substitute for words. Nonverbal behaviors carry more weight than verbal codes for communication (Ma, 1996). Although being aware of nonverbal communication in the target language is important, CMC removes the nonverbal channel. All meanings have to be expressed through a verbal mode (Chesebro & Bonsall, 1989) and cannot be left unwritten (Fischer, 1998).
Emotions or emotive icons can express some emotions or intentions in text messages to some degree. Emoticons such as smiley faces have spread around the world (Selection, 2005). While the original English emoticons are read sideways such as :-)\), Japanese emoticons known as *kaomoji* are read up such as (\_^\_) and are used to outline the face using parentheses ( ) (Selection, 2005). Examples are: (^_^) basic face, (^o^)/ hurray!, (>_<) frowning, and (^_^-;) cold sweat (Selection, 2005). Although e-mail senders can use some emoticons in their messages, it is not as powerful as actual facial expressions or nonverbal communication. Furthermore, e-mail senders might use emoticons only in certain situations related to the personal relationship, age, and gender.

In Smith’s (2003) study about the chatting among eighteen intermediate-low level ESL students from various first language backgrounds at an American university, the participants used capitalization and punctuation for enhancing meaning and tones. Capitalization was used to show tones would not work in Japanese language since the language does not have capital letters or small letters unlike alphabetical languages.

Ma (1996) wrote that people from different cultures are not bound by a particular set of cultural rules though computer mediated communications since they do not occupy a common physical space. This can be both an advantage and disadvantage of communication in another language. An advantage could be that learners may lower their anxiety in order to observe rules in the target language culture. However, a disadvantage could be that second language learners cannot pick up unspoken cultural rules through conversations. For
example, Japanese language learners may observe that Japanese people bow when greeting when they see native speakers face-to-face. Japanese language learners cannot observe this behavior. Similarly, when Japanese language learners visit native Japanese people and bring a gift, they may observe that Japanese people receive gifts with both hands and wait to open it instead of opening it immediately in front of the person who gave the gift. Second language learners cannot observe cultural behaviors or customs through computer-mediated communication.

Another weakness is the lack of evidence that second language learners can learn the target language and culture effectively through e-mail communication. Gonzalez-Bueno and Perez (2000) did not find significant benefits of journal writing through e-mails over the paper-and-pencil writing. Professor Y. Sakakibara, MA (personal communication, May 13, 2005) assigned an e-mail communication project to her Japanese 201 and 401 students at an American university. The students received five extra points if they completed their e-mail project with native speakers at a university in Japan in 2003 to 2004. Some students, who planned to study in Japan, participated to the project in order to gather information and make a friend. Sakakibara observed that the students’ writing improvement depended on the individual and topic selections. Sakakibara noted that some students improved their writing skills by using many newly-learned expressions or new kanji, and others seemed to use what they had learned in the first-year Japanese course according to their topic selections. Sakakibara determined that the e-mail project could have been more meaningful.
for her students to learn new vocabulary and expressions if they chose topics such as social issues and news. Some students did not complete the project because they were busy with other assignments or found nothing in common with their Japanese keypals.

Sakakibara’s project revealed that the e-mail communication would not be helpful for second language learning in some situations when students were too busy to exchange e-mails, were not motivated to communicate via e-mails, or did not know what to write to their keypals. When the learners do not know what to write, it may be good to suggest some topics to discuss. Florez-Estrada’s (1995) participants gradually moved to take risks to write about unfamiliar topics to their Mexican keypals. However, some learners may require guidance such as suggested topics until they are ready to take risks or are more comfortable with their keypal.

Some studies showed that second language learners write faster by computer than by hand (Chesebro & Bonsall, 1989; Kubota, 1999), but a good writing plan and the quality of writing may be more important than the speed of writing. In Ma’s (1996) study, a Korean participant, who communicated with American students though online chat relays, mentioned that individuals cannot always learn the partner’s culture through computer-mediated communication.

Furthermore, one cannot solely rely on e-mail communication for second language learning since one needs to be able to understand both verbal and written communication. Since learners cannot use the target language to speak
and listen to the language through e-mail communication, the e-mail exchange
cannot be the only means of language learning.

E-Mail Communication for Japanese Language Learning

Characteristics of Japanese Language

The basic characteristics of Japanese language should be understood
before considering the issues in Japanese e-mail communication. The Japanese
language (Nihongo or Nippongo) is used by over 125 million people who live in
Japan (Nihon or Nippon) as of 1998 (Iwasaki, 2002). The writing systems all over
the world are categorized into three groups: word writing, syllable writing, and
alphabetic writing (Fromkin & Rodman, 1974). Written Japanese consists of the
combination of two kinds of kana (hiragana and katakana) and kanji (Chinese
characters). Kanji characters were adopted from China in the 4th or 5th century
(Taylor & Taylor, 1995). Kanji has kun yomi (Japanese readings) and on yomi
(Chinese readings). Even though on yomi is similar to Chinese sounds (Taylor &
Taylor, 1995), the Japanese language is completely different from the Chinese
phonology, syntax, and vocabulary form (Habein, 1984).

Kanji is used for content words, hiragana is used “for grammatical function
words such as particles and inflectional ending” (Comrie, 1990, p.858), and
katakana is used for foreign loan words. Romaji, the Romanization of Japanese
words, are used for some purposes such as street signs for visitors from other
countries, transcription of names for the use in another language context,
dictionaries and textbooks for non-native Japanese language learners, or for
typographic emphasis (Wikipedia, 2005). Table 1 identifies the characteristics of Japanese language.

Table 1: Characteristics of Japanese Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time developed</th>
<th>Hiragana</th>
<th>Katakana</th>
<th>Kanji</th>
<th>Romaji</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Old Japanese period (the 8th century) (Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Old Japanese period (the 8th century) (Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• The earliest script use was in the 4th/5th century A.D. when adopted Chinese characters (Taylor &amp; Taylor, 1995).</td>
<td>• The first Romanization was for missionaries around 1548 (Wikipedia, 2005)</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When to use</td>
<td>• For function including particles and inflectional endings (Iwasaki, 2002) “such as verb inflections, suffixes, and postpositions” (Nakajima, 1999, p.xiii)</td>
<td>• To transcribe foreign loan words, computer terms, and onomatopoetic words (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• To write nouns and verb stems whenever there are relevant kanji (Nakajima, 1999; Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Original purpose was for European missionaries preaching without learning to read Japanese (Wikipedia, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>• To write nouns and verb stems whenever there are relevant kanji (Nakajima, 1999; Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Street names and signs for people from outside Japan and typing characters on computers (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
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<td>• To write nouns and verb stems whenever there are relevant kanji (Nakajima, 1999; Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Never became a major Japanese script (Taylor &amp; Taylor, 1995)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>• 46 basic syllabaries (Iwasaki, 2002; Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• 46 basic syllabaries (Iwasaki, 2002; Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• Logographic or ideographic (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• Use of alphabets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>• Phonetic (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• Phonetic (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• Japan’s largest character dictionary has approx. 50 thousand kanji (Araiso &amp; Moore, 1989)</td>
<td>• Original system was based on Portuguese for missionaries (Wikipedia, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>• Developed based on kanji (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• Developed based on kanji (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td>• The commonly used kanji consists of 1,985 kanji with 3,406 readings (Nakajima, 1999)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>• Each symbol represents a mora (Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Each symbol represents a mora (Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Word/morpheme writing system (Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Word/morpheme writing system (Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Represent semantic and phonetic values (Iwasaki, 2002)</td>
<td>• Many have at least two different meanings (Iwasaki, 2002).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of alphabets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Typing Japanese

“Certainly increasing numbers of foreign language educators and students are familiar with and feel at ease” on computers when they compose sentences (Martinez & Herren, 1998, p.148). Many institutions incorporate electronic communication in the foreign language curricula (Martinez & Herren, 1998). Typing seems to be “more flexible, more fluid, more akin to the flickering of light than to the fixity of print” partly because it is easier to make words enlarge, withdraw, or dance across the screen (Costanzo, 1994, p.11). While many researchers found the potential effectiveness of e-mail communication for second language and culture learning, the related research is mostly about English language or Indo-European language learning. The related research in Japanese language learning is very limited. Because of some unique features of the Japanese language, the findings about e-mail communication for alphabetical languages may not be applicable to Japanese.

“The acceptance of Japanese word processing spread more slowly than that of European languages because Japanese people had to make a transition from hand-written language to keyboard language skipping the intermediate stage of the typewriter” (Hatasa, 1997). Having a large number of kanji prevented the Japanese people from widespread typewriter use (Nakajima, 1999). Japanese typewriters required keys for hiragana, katakana, a few special symbols such as a bar for the long vowel symbol, and approximately 3,000 kanji (Taylor & Taylor, 1995). Typing was time-consuming since a typist needed to search for a kanji, replace a kanji tray when necessary, and punch it on paper
The word processors and computers made Japanese typing much easier and faster than Japanese typewriters. Despite the convenience of modern computers, Japanese language learners may still have some technical issues.

Japanese CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) was not widespread until the early 1990s due to the incompatibility between the encoding systems for Japanese character processing (Harrison, 1998). Harrison explained:

Because of the proprietary nature of computer hardware and software, information and programs written on one system could not be used on another, this problem being most acute for computer users outside of Japan who did not possess the necessary hardware processing Japanese Kanji characters. The emergence of software extensions to operating systems has eased this problem by doing away with the need for specialized hardware for processing Kanji, meaning that Japanese can be displayed and processed on all of the major computer platforms currently used today. However, because different computer platforms process Japanese indifferent ways, there is still a problem in sharing information when computer networks are used. For example, the text in e-mail messages often cannot be shared between users of different systems, as characters become corrupted, a problem known as bakemaji [mojibake] (p.442).

Even if Japanese language learners solve the problems of encoding and typing Japanese, some may find it difficult when typing Japanese until they become accustomed to this. Hatasa (1997) summarized how Japanese typing works:

Typing Japanese requires a piece of software called a front-end-processor (FEP), which traps key types, typically in romanization, converts them into kana, and displays them. Upon the user’s request or sometimes automatically, an FEP converts kana into a kana-kanji mixture. In order to do this, every FEP must have a special kind of dictionary, and it must also have a mechanism to let the user choose the desired kanji (and kanji compounds) when there are homophones.
When typing Japanese using a computer, a person types letters phonetically first (Taylor & Taylor, 1995) and the letters are shown as hiragana with a dotted underline. When the person uses these hiragana as it is, they hit the ‘enter’ key, and the dotted underline disappears. When the person needs to convert hiragana to kanji or katakana, he or she hits the ‘space’ key. If the screen shows the appropriate letters or characters immediately, the person hits the ‘enter’ key and the underline disappears to finalize the selection. Since there are many kanji characters and character sets with same readings, there are cases where the automatically converted kanji is not the appropriate one in the context. In this case, the person hits the ‘space’ bar to see character options from the pop-up. The person scrolls down the bar on the right side of the pop-up or go down using an ‘arrow’ key to find correct kanji. When they find the appropriate kanji among options, they hit the ‘enter’ key to convert to the characters. The typist can also type the number on the left side of kanji characters to select instead of scrolling the bar in the pop-up. Second language learners may think that typing Japanese is a little complicated since they must find the correct kanji among homophones.

Fukai (2004) noted that computer keyboards sold in Japan have keys with both kana and alphabets, which allows hiragana to be typed directly instead of typing alphabets to convert them into kana or kanji. Fukai believed that more Japanese people choose the typing alphabet option to convert letters into Japanese instead of typing kana. Figure 1 shows a picture of Japanese keyboard.
Chesebro and Bonsall (1989) indicated that word processing could increase language learners’ writing speed for second language learning. Kubota (1999) studied computer-assisted Japanese language learning in a Japanese course at an American university. Kubota (1999) conducted pre- and post-study surveys, classroom observations, and the participants’ reflections. As a result, the researcher found that the participants enjoyed word processing such as journal writing and creating web pages and felt that they could write faster by computer than by hand. In contrast, Chikamatsu (2003) found that the college students, who had experience learning Japanese as a foreign language, tended to write slower by computer than by hand.
Japanese language learners may develop their kanji recognition skills through e-mail communication even though it may not be useful to develop their kanji production skills. In Chikamatsu’s (2003) study, the participants showed improvement in word accuracy through their typing experience based on their word and essay exams. Kubota’s (1999) participants also felt that typing Japanese improved their kanji recognition skills.

Fukai (2004) conducted research on an online newspaper project for fourth-year Japanese language learners at an American university. The participants read assigned online newspaper articles, exchanged opinions about the articles with a native Japanese speaker at a Japanese university via e-mail, and wrote short summaries and opinions about the articles. Then participants typed their own newspaper articles (such as issues in their town or university), and the researcher posted their articles to the Web as a class newspaper. The participants asked their Japanese keypals to read their articles and asked for feedback. The participants modified their newspaper articles and presented their articles orally in the class. All the materials and communication including the e-mail exchanges, reading and writing newspaper articles, classroom discussions, and presentation were in the target language. As a result, the researcher observed the participants’ writing improvement including the increased use of kanji. A participant in the study mentioned that she could pick correct kanji characters by recognizing them among the options in the word processing program even though she was terrible at remembering how to write characters.
Jorden and Walton (1987) wrote that recalling and writing kanji requires much more cognitive effort than recognizing and reading the characters. Jorden and Walton pointed out the psychologists’ simple comparison that recognizing someone’s face requires much less cognitive effort than describing the person’s face to another person. Jorden, Lambert, and Wolff (1991) wrote that most Japanese language learners drop out before they can read connected discourse even if they spend a lot of time learning kanji due to the complex writing system. Typing Japanese may reduce Japanese language learner’s burden to produce complex kanji characters by hand, which may help learners have a more positive attitude towards learning. Since the Japanese language learners do not have to spend a lot of time looking up kanji by dictionary when typing the language, the learners can pay more attention to the larger unit (Nakajima, 1991). Learners may be able to spend more time to improve the content and the language use by reducing time using a paper dictionary and handwriting complicated characters.

Yamada and Moeller (2001) conducted research about pen pal projects between second language learners in a second-year Japanese course at an American university and native speakers in a Japanese university. Yamada and Moeller (2001) found that the pen pal projects could promote Japanese language and culture learning through the use of persistence, independent practice, and critical thinking skills. Even though this study was a handwritten letter writing pen pal project, similar effects may be observed in e-mail communication.

Some learners might not have accessibility to type and read Japanese using their computers at home or school. According to Lafford and Lafford (1997),
some learners complained that they were only able to type romaji on the *Electronic Forum*. Even when e-mail senders can type Japanese, there are cases where the receivers’ computers cannot show the characters. Harrison (1998) monitored the most frequent obstacles of illegible texts in Japanese e-mails due to the damaged character coding systems. Although the computer facilities for Japanese language learning are better at American universities, technical issues may remain. Since research about e-mail communication in Japanese is limited, the effect of typing e-mail messages in Japanese for Japanese language learning is unclear.

*Reading Japanese Messages on the Screen*

Krashen (2003) pointed out the overwhelming evidence for recreational, free voluntary, or sustained silent reading for enhancing second language learners’ language competence. Exposing meaningful reading texts to second language learners led to successful reading and vocabulary acquisition (Raptis, 1997). Second language learners can learn vocabulary used in the e-mail messages from native speakers.

Kol and Schcolnik (2000) studied screen reading strategies among 47 English for Academic Purposes students at a university and found that the participants who read on the screen performed as well as the participants who read on paper. However, Kol and Sccolnik’s (2000) pilot study showed different results, and the participants skimmed better when they read on paper.

Research about reading Japanese as a foreign language on the screen is extremely limited. When Kubota’s (1999) participants read web pages in
Japanese, they were overwhelmed by a large number of kanji characters. One of Fukai’s participants was intimidated by a page with full of kanji when she read an online Japanese newspaper for the first time. Many of Japanese learners’ unfamiliar words in written texts are in the form of kanji compounds (Mori, 2003). According to Krashen’s (2003) Input Hypothesis, the input has to be “i (input) + 1” that means a little beyond the learners’ current language level. If there are too many unfamiliar kanji characters or unknown words, learners might be overwhelmed, lose confidence in the target language, or lose motivation to read. Foreign language learners tend to be overwhelmed to read pages filled with unfamiliar words in the target language regardless of their first language ability (Martinez-Lage, 1997).

When the text level is too difficult to comprehend, online programs can be helpful for understanding texts. For example, when Japanese language learners use Rudick’s Rikai program, they can place the mouse on unfamiliar kanji characters, then pop-ups show the readings of the characters and the meanings. The pop-ups do not pop up when learners put their mouse on hiragana or katakana letters. The Rikai program may prevent learners from feeling overwhelmed by a large number of unfamiliar kanji.

When learners read texts online, it may be easy to look up words using online dictionaries. Learners can simply copy and paste words on the online dictionary to look for the meanings. Learners can reduce the time to look up unfamiliar words online, which allows learners to have more time for actual reading (Doulas, 1999). If learners encounter new characters and want to count
the stroke numbers in order to use a kanji dictionary, it is easier to see the strokes if they copy these characters and paste them with large fonts. Learners can adjust font sizes on the screen (Doulas, 1999). Even though some possible advantages and disadvantages are considered, reading Japanese messages on the screen are not clear and need to be further explored.

**Conclusion**

Communicating with native speakers via e-mail is one way to have an authentic communication. E-mail communication has some advantages such as motivating foreign language learners to communicate in the target language, facilitating interactions, lowering anxiety, and contributing to have positive attitudes towards the culture in the target language. On the other hand, e-mail communication has some disadvantages such as lacking verbal cues and nonverbal communication. Another disadvantage is that foreign language learners cannot improve their listening and speaking proficiencies through e-mails.

The evidence of effectiveness of e-mail communication for foreign language and culture learning is missing in the existing literature. In addition, the literature about the process of e-mail communication for Japanese language learning is missing. This study will add to the existing body of knowledge about the process of Japanese e-mail communication for foreign language learning.
Chapter Three: Procedures

Rationale for a Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that seeks to understand a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2002). Qualitative researchers collect text data instead of numbers to capture the richness and complexity of human behaviors (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Qualitative researchers typically engage in long-term, in-depth interaction with their participants in one or multiple research sites (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Qualitative researchers typically study a small number of purposefully selected participants or situations (Maxwell, 1996). Qualitative researchers are more concerned with process than products (Maxwell, 1996; McMillan, 1992) and are interested in how the participants make sense and how their understandings influence their behavior (Maxwell, 1996). Reality is socially constructed by the individuals in the research and multiple realities exist (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative researchers understand and interpret the participants’ multiple perspectives (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Qualitative research is exploratory and descriptive, and the goal is to paint an in-depth picture (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The use of thick, rich description including the use of participants’ verbatim quotations and extensive detail provide readers with an in-depth picture (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena in their natural settings. Qualitative researchers
observe in the settings where the phenomena occur, and that helps them understand the context of the subject studied (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Qualitative researchers use themselves as research instruments and are actually engaged in the research process in the research process and interact with participants and the data in a personal way (Frankel, 1999). Qualitative researchers often use first-person to convey personal views (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Qualitative research is inductive and is typically not guided by apriori theory, rather patterns and themes emerge from the data as researchers make sense of them (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997).

This dissertation study is best suited for qualitative research because of the small number of students in the research site. The second-year Japanese courses at a university in the Midwest had four students during the fall Semester, 2004 and the spring Semester, 2005. This study explored the process of participants’ e-mail communication in Japanese to learn the process of e-mail communication. The researcher was interested in the participant students’ processes of writing and reading Japanese e-mail messages rather than measuring their actual Japanese language improvement as a result of e-mail communication. The researcher was also interested in the participant professor’s views about the process of her students’ e-mail exchanges. This study described the reality of e-mail communication in a Japanese course from the participants’ views. This study investigated how the participants made sense of e-mail communication and how their understandings and beliefs about their e-mail communication as an authentic communication influenced their attitude toward
Japanese language and culture learning. The participants’ e-mail process was described in as much detail as possible. The researcher went to the research site and observed classes and related events as a human instrument in order to have a broader view of the e-mail communication by learning their Japanese language proficiency and attitudes towards the Japanese language learning. This was helpful to better understand what and how the participants studied the language in classes and applied their knowledge in their e-mail communication. An inductive approach without hypotheses was used in this case study. Themes emerged from the collected data.

**Rationale for a Case Study**

A case study explores a person, event, situation, program in-depth in a real-life context (Merriam, 1988). Case study researchers retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of complex, social phenomena (Yin, 1989). Case study researches a case or cases because the case or cases are of interest (Stake, 1995). Creswell (1998) recommends researchers use a case study when they want to study a case over time.

Case study research is the study of a bounded system. Case studies may be bounded by time, place, events, or participant criteria (Merriam, 1988). Case study researchers use multiple methods of data collections including some combination of interviews, observations, and or review of relevant documents, artifacts, or visual materials in order to have a holistic view (Merrian, 1988; Yin, 1989). The case of interest may be a single case that is referred to as a single
case study or may be multiple cases that is called a multiple case study. “The more cases an individual studies, the greater the lack of depth in any single case” (Creswell, 1998, p.63).

The case study tradition was an appropriate methodology for this study for several reasons. This single case study explored a particular Japanese language program bounded by time as the Japanese language class was conducted over two semesters. This was considered a case of interest because the researcher was interested in the process of university students’ e-mail communication for Japanese language learning. This study provided an in-depth look at the authentic e-mail communication that occurred in one Japanese language class with four students. In addition, understanding the professor’s perceptions and the course structure provided vital contextual information to help understand the phenomenon in greater depth. This study was bounded by time, place, events, and the participants’ criteria. Multiple methods of data collection were used in this study including personal interviews, casual conversations, participant observations of classes and related events, and studying relevant documents including the textbook, students’ study sheets, videos, oral exam transcripts, e-mail copies, and web log copies. The unit of analysis for this study was one Japanese language class, which consisted of four students and one professor. Therefore, this research was identified as a single case study.
Qualitative researchers choose participants and sites intentionally as purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2002). Purposeful sampling is a technique that researchers select “information-rich” participants who have experienced the phenomenon and are knowledgeable about it (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). This purposeful sampling technique allows qualitative researchers study the case in-depth. The focus on the “information-rich” participants increases the utility of a small sample (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997).

The specific type of purposeful sampling strategy used in this study started with a “site selection” termed by McMillan & Schumacher (1997). Site selection means that researchers choose a site where particular events are expected to happen. This research site was selected since the professor had assigned the e-mail exchange project for six years. This research site was the only place where Japanese language learners exchange e-mails for their Japanese language learning in the region. The sampling strategy was also “comprehensive sampling” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997), that is, selecting a whole group by criteria. After the second-year Japanese course at a small, private university in the Midwest as a research site was selected, the researcher chose all of the four students and the professor (n=5) from the site as participants. The university required students to take a foreign language for a year. One of the participants was male, and the other participants including the professor were female. Three of the participants were Caucasians, one participant was Vietnamese, and the professor was a native speaker of Japanese.
Data Collection

Data collection lasted for two semesters, the Fall Semester of 2004 through the spring Semester of 2005. The data were collected through individual interviews with students and one professor at the end of each semester, through weekly classroom observations, copies of e-mail messages between participants and their keypals, and the review of participants’ reflection sheets.

Personal interviews with each of the participants (n=5) were conducted at the end of the fall Semester of 2004 and at the end of the spring Semester of 2005 (total of 10 interviews). Participants were interviewed in their first languages intentionally so they could describe their perceptions more accurately. All of the four participant students were interviewed in English. Three of the participant students’ first language was English. One of the participant student’s first language was Vietnamese, but she immigrated to the United States when she was “six or seven” and was fluent in English. The participant professor was a native speaker of Japanese and was interviewed in Japanese. Each interview lasted 30 to 60 minutes (Appendix A).

The interviews were semi-structured and were guided by the use of interview protocols. The first interview protocol for participant students consisted of seven open-ended questions (Appendix B) and the protocol for the participant professor consisted of eight open-ended questions (Appendix C). The second interview protocol for student participants consisted of ten open-ended questions (Appendix D) and the protocol for the participant professor consisted of four questions (Appendix E). Additional probes were used to ask participants to
elaborate or clarify what they said. The purpose of interviews for qualitative studies is to understand the participants' meanings of their experience, so the researcher avoided asking leading questions (Seidman, 1998). In addition, each student participant filled out a demographic information sheet (Appendix F).

Researchers are able to collect first-hand information through observation (Crewswell, 2002). The second-year Japanese classes were conducted 50 minutes a day, Mondays through Fridays. The researcher observed the participants' Japanese classes as a participant observer and learned what and how students learned Japanese language in their regular Japanese classes in total of 25 times (Appendix G). After sending and receiving e-mail messages, the participants handed in copies of messages summarizing the content from the received messages to the professor. The researcher did not grade the participants' e-mails but observed the professor evaluating the participants' messages and reading comprehension. The professor evaluated the messages aloud during the observations. The participants handed in their writing and reading reflection sheets (Appendix H & I) to the researcher. These reflection sheets were not a part of the participants' grade but were used only for research purposes.

Observing the participants' classes in a natural setting helped the researcher to understand each learner's personality, language proficiency, attitude, and verbal interactions in regular Japanese classes. The researcher did not observe the participants' process typing and sending e-mail messages to
their keypals since the participants’ e-mail projects were assignments outside the classroom.

Before the students received the e-mail assignments, their professor told them how to set the Japanese language option on the computer, type Japanese language, and use a dictionary function through a website, rikai.com in a foreign language lab. The researcher studied one of the participants’ personal, a voluntary web log including his Japanese language learning. In order to understand the participants deeply, the researcher participated in a Japanese taiko drum dinner at the university cafeteria and a Japanese Meetup as related events.

As part of the second-year Japanese course requirement, the participants exchanged e-mails with native speakers from a Japanese university. A Japanese exchange student who assisted the second-year Japanese course recruited volunteer keypals from her English Speaking Society Club at her university in Japan. The Japanese professor believed that the exchange student could communicate with the Japanese keypals when no responses were forthcoming from Japanese keypals. During the fall semester of 2004, participants exchanged e-mails four times. The participants received assigned topics during the fall semester of 2004. The topics were related to the curriculum and expressions that the participants learned in their Japanese classes in order to apply and expand what they learned in the classroom (Appendix J). The professor and the researcher decided to assign topics to the participants based on the professor’s past experience and Hertel’s (2003) and Liaw’s (1998) recommendations based
on their participants’ suggestions regarding assigned topics. The professor and the researcher discussed and chose topics together.

The participants exchanged e-mails six times during the spring semester of 2005. The participants chose one topic among three topic options during the spring semester of 2005. The first topic option was to ask about issues in Japan in which participants may be interested such as current news, culture, and social issues. The participants were asked to write what they knew about the topic. The second topic option was to exchange recipes since they had a chapter about cooking in their Japanese class. The third topic option varied each time when the participants wrote a message (Appendix K).

The participants were required to write at least ten sentences excluding opening and closing sentences in Japanese each time they wrote messages during both semesters. The participants’ keypals in Japan belonged to an English learning club at their Japanese university and were eager to learn English. The participants were told to add English messages beyond the ten sentence requirement for their Japanese keypals’ English language learning.

Data Analysis

There is no certain moment when data analysis begins in a case study, and the “analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final completions” (Stake, 1995, p.71). Qualitative data analysis is done concurrently with data collection (Merriam, 1988). The data analysis process is eclectic and there is no one right way (Tesch, 1991). It is a creative and intuitive
process to some extent (Merriam, 1988). Qualitative data analysis is a process of “reduction” and “interpretation” because researchers reduce large volume of information to meaningful units and interpret them (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p.114). Data analysis is also a process of “decontextualization” and “recontextualization” and qualitative researchers take data apart, examine pieces, and put them back together again to form a mass consolidated, holistic picture of the phenomenon (Tesch, 1991, p.97).

The first step for data analysis was reviewing raw data with possible interpretations (Stake, 1995). All the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. The researcher reviewed raw interview transcripts and the participants' reflection sheets about their e-mail activities as a first data analysis step. The researcher obtained a general sense through this process (Creswell, 2002).

The second step for data analysis was looking for patterns of data. The researcher coded interview transcripts and organized the participants' reflection sheets in order to search for patterns. “Codes are labels used to describe a segment of text or an image” (Creswell, 2002, p.267). The researcher used “in vivo” coding that means identifying codes as closely as possible represented participants' words (Miles & Huberman, 1994) on the left margin of interview transcripts. After coding the transcripts, the researcher made a list of codes and reduced the list from long list to small with 30 codes as recommended by Creswell (2002). Then the codes were alphabetized for the purpose of later audit trail. Codes were categorized into five themes. Themes included similar codes to
shape an idea (Creswell, 2002). The last step for data analysis was drawing tentative conclusions, organizing issues and final reports.

Verification Strategies

All researchers are concerned about the validity and reliability of their studies. However, validity and reliability in qualitative studies are viewed differently than they have been traditionally viewed in quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that rather than using quantitative constructs to evaluate the validity of qualitative research, it was important to use criteria better suited to the qualitative paradigm. They not only identified key procedures to examine the “trustworthiness” of qualitative data, but also proposed the use of language that better fit qualitative inquiry.

While quantitative researchers examine if they have measured what they said they were measuring for the internal validity, qualitative researchers make sure if their data credible and have accurately represented participants’ realities. Key strategies to ensure internal validity in this study were long-term, repeated observations, two forms of triangulation, clarification of researcher bias, and member checks.

The researcher repeated the long-term (two semesters) observations. The two forms of triangulation were the use of multiple sources of data (five participants) and multiple methods of data collection (interviews, observations, and documents). In order to avoid imposing researchers’ own frameworks, the researcher listened to the participants’ meanings without asking leading, close-
ended questions during interviews (Maxwell, 1996). The researcher clarified in the “Role of the Researcher” section at the end of this chapter. The researcher also conducted member checks. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim as recommended by Maxwell (1996). Each participant reviewed or waived their right to review the verbatim transcripts (Creswell & Miller, 2000) (Appendix L). When the participants noticed mistakes, they corrected those mistakes. Participants examined drafts and reviewed materials of the study to see if they were accurate (Stake, 1995). When writing the final report, the researcher included a detailed description so the audience could understand the text more accurately.

External validity relates to generalizability. While the goal of quantitative research is generalizability, qualitative research seeks to develop a unique interpretation of a phenomenon. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that rather than generalizability, qualitative researchers are interested in the transferability or applicability of their findings to other settings. The primary strategy for addressing applicability is the use of thick, rich description. In writing the report, the researcher provided in-depth contextual information, discussed participants’ perspectives in detail, using their quotes extensively.

Reliability, as a quantitative construct, relates to the replicability of a study. Because of the human dynamics of a qualitative study, literal replication is problematic (Creswell, 2002). However, other researchers could replicate a study’s methodology if the researcher provides sufficient detail about it. The primary method for addressing this issue in a qualitative study is a clear audit trail
that other researchers would follow. Researchers need to keep documents of all research decisions and activities for an audit trail (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The researcher kept all documents for this study and kept a research log.

**Ethical Considerations**

Before this study was started, the researcher gained an official permission letter to conduct a study from the professor at the research site (Appendix M). The professor received permission from the Modern Language Department at her university to allow the researcher to recruit participants from her.

After the researcher received the permission letter from the research site, the research design including information about methods and procedures, participants, recruiting procedures of participants, and confidentiality was submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The IRB reviewed the documents such as the consent forms for participants and interview questions to make sure to protect the participants’ rights and privacy. The informed consent form is important for participants since it explains the meaning of participating in the study, known risks or benefits, and the research purpose (Lipson, 1994).

Participants need to know the purpose and procedures of the research and how the results will be used before they make a decision about participation (Creswell, 2002). Participation in research also needs to be voluntary (Seidman, 1998). Participants have the right to be anonymous (Seidman, 1998). In addition,
participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions (Creswell, 2002; Seidman, 1998).

After the IRB approved the study (Appendix N), the researcher went to the research site and explained about the purpose of the dissertation project to the participants, provided consent forms (Appendix O & P), and explained that their participation was voluntary. All participants, their university, city, and state were assigned pseudonyms. Participants’ decision whether or not to participate in this study did not affect their grades for their second-year Japanese courses.

Participants have the right to know which information from their interviews will be reported (Seidman, 1998). Participants were asked to review the interview transcripts. The interview tapes were stored in a locked drawer. Only the researcher’s advisor (a secondary investigator) and the researcher have access to the interview tapes, transcripts, and documents (i.e., demographic information sheets and keypal reflection sheets). The interview tapes and data will be destroyed three years after the study is completed.

**Role of the Researcher**

Qualitative researchers are human instruments who conceptualize their studies, collect data, analyze data, and interpret the results (Frankel, 1999). Because of the human nature of the qualitative method, researchers bring their own beliefs and biases to a study. Marshall and Rossman 1995) suggested that qualitative researchers need to acknowledge these biases as they begin their study.
The researcher was a research instrument and collected data based on observations, interviews of the participants, the participants' reflection sheets, and copies of the e-mail. A researcher has multiple roles in the study. Stake (1995) explained that case study researchers' roles are much like teachers who teach readers. They are advocates for a model of judging, evaluators selecting criteria for evaluating the case, biographers describing people, and interpreters finding connections and making them comprehensible.

Human research instrument biases may occur in the study. The researcher is a native speaker of Japanese and an English language learner. The researcher was interested in studying how English speakers learn the researcher's first language, Japanese. The researcher volunteered to assist Japanese classes at a Midwestern high school for a year and taught Japanese language and culture at the Japan Pre-Departure Orientation through a non-profit organization for ten days. The researcher's interest as an Educational Studies major includes people's process of second language learning. This situation may allow the researcher to understand Japanese language learner's learning process through e-mail communication better. The researcher may be able to relate to the Japanese language learners and is knowledgeable about the language that the participant students were learning. At the same time, the researcher may have certain biases due to the personal experience and knowledge. The researcher made every attempt to suspend biases to objectively as possible represent participants’ realities. The researcher strongly believed that participants were experts in qualitative studies. The researcher listened to
participants’ voices without being judgmental and viewed multiple realities from participants’ perspectives.
Chiemi-san,
How do you do? I am Margaret Perry. The weather in Midwestern City is cloudy occasionally rainy today. It is a little cool.
I am a junior at Midwestern Methodist University. I transferred to Midwestern University from a university in Colorado. My major is English. What is your major?
I came from Colorado Springs, Colorado. My parents still live in Colorado. My mother was a teacher. However, she retired. My father works at a bank. I have an elder brother. He lives in Philadelphia.
I play volleyball at Midwestern Methodist. The team is strong. It is very fun. Do you like sports?
Well, I will write you on November 15th again.
Margaret

(English translation of Margaret’s e-mail)
and a health and fitness center. Midwestern Methodist University has approximately 1,500 students and 300 faculty and staff members.

A magazine ranked Midwestern Methodist University as one of the top liberal arts universities because of the students’ top performance in their high school and the university’s small student-to-professor ratio. The average classes have fewer than 20 students, and most upper-level classes have fewer than ten students. The university has excellent technology facilities and the student-to-computer ratio is 6:1 on campus. All the computers on campus have internet access. Over 60% of Midwestern Methodist University students go to graduate schools within five years after completing their undergraduate programs. The university offers 48 undergraduate majors and two graduate majors. Over 85% of the professors hold doctoral degrees or equivalent. Over 90% of the students come from the Midwestern State. The other students are from 22 states and eight countries.

The Modern Language Department is in a red, old, brick building on the Midwestern Methodist University campus. The building has been located there since the university was founded. The second-year Japanese classes are offered in a conference room on the third floor, which is the top floor of the building. There is one door to enter the classroom. There are three windows with sun shades and a clock with a black frame in the back. There are heaters or air conditioners in front and back. The classroom has eight large, black conference tables and 14 red chairs with black legs. The white wall on one side has a large, green chalkboard. The wall on the other side has a huge, pacific centered wall
map. In front the classroom has a television and a VCR hangs from the ceiling. A gray trash can, an overhead projector, a small wooden table with black, long legs, and a fire extinguisher are also in front. Figure 2 shows the classroom and seating arrangement.

Figure 2: The Classroom and seating arrangement

*Seating: #1: Dr. Kudo, the Japanese professor
  #2: Alex
  #3: Abby
  #4: Margaret
  #5: Lily
  #6: Ryoko, a Japanese exchange student/teaching assistant
  #7: Researcher
The Modern Language Department offers majors and minors in French, German, and Spanish plus a minor in Japanese. The Modern Language Department offers the maximum of 20 credit hours (5 credit hours per semester) of Japanese as a foreign language. Students can declare Japanese as their minor after they complete two-years of Japanese. The Japanese professor Dr. Kudo’s office is located at the entrance of a lounge at the second floor. The lounge has some historical sofas, a table, a sink, a refrigerator, and a microwave. Students often read or have conversations with others between classes in the lounge. Some faculty members come to the lounge and take out their drinks from the refrigerator or warm up their lunch with the microwave during the lunch hour. The “Japanese Language Table” offers students to have casual Japanese conversation in this lounge on Friday afternoon. French, German, and Spanish language conversations take place on different days.

Within a couple of blocks from the campus there is an historical enclave. The enclave has a small gallery, shops, and restaurants. The enclave with one- or two-story buildings might make people feel as if they are downtown in a small town. The strip mall within five blocks from the campus has shops including a grocery store, a movie rental store, a restaurant, and a bank.

Midwestern City is the second largest city in Midwestern State and has a population of approximately 225,000. It is approximately a ten to twenty minute drive from Midwestern City downtown to Midwestern Methodist University. There are city buses between downtown and the university neighborhood. On the way from downtown to Midwestern State University, the bus passes two Midwestern
State University campuses. Few students seem to commute to campus by buses. Probably most students live on or around campus or commute by car. A couple of bicycles are always parked in front of the university library. I received the impression that Midwestern Methodist University has a friendly atmosphere because people said “hi” to me when they saw me. When a few professors saw me on campus, they asked me if I was a Midwestern Methodist University student, so I explained to them that I was a graduate student at the University of Nebraska and was collecting data for my dissertation in a second-year Japanese course.

*Introduction to the Participants*

Four students enrolled in the second-year Japanese courses at Midwestern Methodist University during the first semester of 2004 and the second semester of 2005. The participants for this study were all of the four students, Abby, Alex, Lily, and Margaret, and one professor, Dr. Kudo from the second-year Japanese classes. This section introduces each participant’s background information.

*Abby*

Abby Johnson was born and raised in a city in Maine with approximately 2,000 people. She transferred to Midwestern Methodist University last year. She was a senior majoring in psychology. She was a home schooled student before starting her college education. Abby chose Midwestern Methodist University
because she wanted to go to a small college with a good psychology program outside Maine.

Abby’s hobbies are “anime (animation), showing dogs, animal husbandry, and rock music.” Watching Japanese anime in her childhood influenced her decision to take first-year Japanese. Abby explained:

I’ve always been very interested in Japanese culture ever since I was a little kid. I watched a lot of anime. The American dubs are weird, so I wanted to understand it in Japanese. It was kind of a silly reason. But I have always been really interested in the culture as well and hope to go over there at some point. So, I figured it was a good language to take once I got to Midwestern Methodist University.

Another part of Abby’s reason to take the first-year Japanese courses was music. “I’ve always been introduced to a lot of music. My father is very interested in music all over the world, and I always liked the Asian style of music as well.” Abby believed “learning the language is very important.” She studied Latin, Spanish, and French before learning Japanese.

Abby decided to take the second-year Japanese courses because she “really wanted to be able to speak a language.” She explained:

The first year foreign language was required at Midwestern Methodist University for general education, but it didn’t make sense. When I got out of Stage II (the second semester in the first year), I knew how to say some things, but... what is the point of being able to ask where the bathroom is... I wanted to actually be able to speak the language more, so I continued on.

Abby uses Japanese language approximately eight hours per week outside the classroom including doing homework for her Japanese course.

Abby visited Japan for two weeks last summer with other students from her Japanese class and with her Japanese professor. She would like to teach English in Japan by participating in the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET)
program “operated by local authorities in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR)” (CLAIR, 2005). Abby’s future goal is “to get a job in zoological education at a zoo or research facility.” She wants to obtain a job where she can help educate and preserve tradition and nature.

Alex

Alex Meyer is working full-time at a computer company and taking five credits of Japanese courses without seeking a degree at Midwestern Methodist University. Alex already has a bachelor’s degree in computer science from Midwestern State University. Since his wife works at Midwestern Methodist University, he chose to take Japanese courses at the university where his wife works instead of at Midwestern State University. When Alex was a Midwestern State University student, he did not think about taking a Japanese course. Alex stated:

When I was an undergraduate student, I was looking for something I thought would be easy and I thought German would be of the choices that I had. I was working with schedule issues and I was looking for something to fill a requirement that wouldn’t take work away from my actual major. That’s why I took German over Japanese at that time.

Alex is currently taking Japanese classes for his personal interest. His initial interest in the Japanese language came from martial arts. Alex said:

I have studied martial arts for a number of years and most of my teachers have been English speakers with no Japanese background except what they got through martial arts. I wanted to learn the Japanese language and get some basis in the language so I could understand the terms that were being used out of context and what they meant.
Alex likes studying languages and had fun studying German and the first-year of Japanese. He decided to take second-year Japanese classes since he wanted to work “toward functional ability in Japanese” and “wanted to continue to get a deeper knowledge and understanding” of the language. He added that he wanted to keep having a good time on his lunch hour because the second-year Japanese classes began at noon.

Alex visited Japan for two weeks with Abby’s group last summer. He “would like to return to Japan within the next year” and “see Hokkaido and spend more time around Kyoto.” His future goal is to expand his “career into IT consulting or liaison for Japanese and American companies and teach martial arts.” His hobbies are iaido (traditional Japanese swordship), gardening, home restoration, computers, and information systems.

Lily Tran was born in Vietnam. Her family moved to the United States when she was six or seven years old. Midwestern City has a small Vietnamese community. Lily enjoys Lunar New Year celebration with people from the community every February. Her hobbies are reading, music, and art. She likes to read romance.

Lily is a sophomore majoring in international business management. Lily originally decided to take the first-year Japanese courses because she “was interested in the language itself.” She also thought that Japanese language “would be related to” her major because Japanese would be a good language to
learn for her future business career. She took French for two years in high school. Lily did not like it and wanted to learn a different language in college.

Lily chose to take second-year Japanese classes because she liked to learn the language. She has never been to Japan, but she may visit Japan in the near future. She is interested in studying abroad. She uses Japanese language to complete her assignments approximately four hours a week outside classes. After completing her undergraduate degree, she wants to study to get her master’s degree. Her future goal is to work in a company where she can learn more Japanese.

*Margaret*

Margaret Perry is from Colorado. She transferred to Midwestern Methodist State University from a college in Colorado last year. She is a junior majoring in English. Margaret’s hobbies are playing volleyball, reading, and writing. She belongs to a volleyball club at Midwestern Methodist University. Her university has a strong volleyball team.

She originally chose to take her first-year Japanese courses because of her third-grade teacher’s influence. After Margaret’s third-grade teacher visited Japan, her teacher taught Japanese tradition and culture such as making five or six, simple kinds of origami (folding papers) and teaching four Japanese words to her class. Margaret took Spanish in high school and did not have a chance to learn Japanese until she transferred to Midwestern Methodist University.

Margaret was an excellent student and received A+s during her first- and second-year Japanese courses. Margaret said that Dr. Kudo, her Japanese
professor, talked her into taking the second-year course. Because Margaret did not have a minor at that time, she “figured out it would be a probably good idea” to minor in Japanese by taking the second-year Japanese courses. English majors are encouraged to minor in “a foreign language” at Midwestern Methodist University. In addition, Margaret likes Dr. Kudo as an instructor and enjoys writing kanji. When I observed second-year Japanese classes, I noticed that Margaret always wrote Japanese letters and characters neatly following stroke orders. Whenever Dr. Kudo introduces new kanji characters, Margaret listens to the explanations and observes stroke orders carefully.

Margaret wants “to work in publishing or go to graduate school somewhere on the East Coast” and “to become a published writer” in the future. She has never been to Japan and did not have a plan to visit there in 2004. However, Margaret decided to apply for the English teaching position through JET Program in 2005. Dr. Kudo encouraged Margaret to apply for the JET Program because Margaret was not sure about her plan after college graduation. Dr. Kudo said that Margaret wrote an excellent essay for the application.

Dr. Kudo

Dr. Masae Kudo was born and raised in Japan and has taught Japanese for 11 years at Midwestern Methodist University. She is the only Japanese instructor at the university and teaches two first-year Japanese courses and one second-year course (a total of 15 credits) and supervises the Modern Language Computer Lab.
Dr. Kudo holds a Ph.D. degree from a university in the Midwest. Her major was education with an emphasis in second language acquisition. She holds a teaching certification in Japanese, English Language Learners (ELL), and Fine Arts (visual arts) at the secondary school level in the Midwestern State.

Dr. Kudo provides individual instruction to students who need assistance. When the homework is difficult for her students, she encourages them to do the homework in her office or with exchange students or a teaching assistant. Dr. Kudo believed that she was “teaching” when she began to teach, but she emphasizes “learning” over “teaching” now. Dr. Kudo reflects that the shift from teaching to learning was partly because she has taught a small number of students in her university and needed to retain them. Dr. Kudo views learning from a student perspective and analyzes how students learn or why they do not understand certain concepts to facilitate the learning process. Dr. Kudo creates curriculum based on students’ backgrounds.

Table 2 provides an overview of the students’ background information.
Table 2: Students’ Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Abby</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year in university</strong></td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Non degree seeking</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Junior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major</strong></td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Has B.S. in computer science</td>
<td>International Business</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First language</strong></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second/Foreign languages</strong></td>
<td>Latin, French, &amp; Spanish</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>English &amp; French</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>besides Japanese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Has been to Japan</strong></td>
<td>Yes (2 weeks)</td>
<td>Yes (2 weeks)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japanese typing experience prior to 2nd-year Japanese course</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japanese language use after 2nd-year Japanese course</strong></td>
<td>Yes (Coordinator of Japanese language table)</td>
<td>Yes (Japanese Meetup organizer &amp; martial arts)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (Japanese teaching assistant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continued e-mail communication after 2nd-year Japanese course</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes (5 or 6 times)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes

Five themes emerged in this study: 1) the e-mail writing process, 2) the e-mail reading process, 3) the learning process, 4) learning through e-mail communication, 5) authentic Japanese language practice. The sub-themes for the first theme, the e-mail writing process, were 1) writing steps, 2) new words and kanji, 3) motivation, and 4) typing. The sub-themes for the second theme, the e-mail reading process, were 1) reading steps and 2) time. The sub-themes for the third theme, the learning process, were 1) personal reflections and 2) confidence in language. The sub-themes for the fourth theme, learning through e-mail communication, were 1) culture, 2) vocabulary, and 3) assessment. The sub-themes for the last theme, authentic Japanese language practice, were 1) classroom interactions, 2) videos and movies in classes, 3) cultural activities in classes, 4) authentic materials, and 5) interpersonal communication. Figure 3 displays the themes of sub-themes.
Figure 3: Visual Display of Themes and Sub-Themes

1. The E-Mail Writing Process
   1) Writing Steps
   2) New Words and Kanji
   3) Motivation
   4) Typing

2. The E-Mail Reading Process
   1) Reading Steps
   2) Time

3. The Learning Process
   1) Personal Reflections
   2) Confidence in Language

4. Learning through E-Mail
   1) Culture
   2) Vocabulary
   3) Assessment

5. Authentic Japanese Language Practice
   (Outside of Class)
   1) Interactions
   2) Videos & Movies
   3) Cultural Activities
   4) Authentic Materials
   5) Interpersonal Communication

5. Authentic Japanese Language Practice
   (In Classroom)
   1) Interactions
   2) Videos & Movies
   3) Cultural Activities
Theme One: The E-Mail Writing Process

The first theme that emerged in this study was the e-mail writing process. This theme had four sub-themes. The first sub-theme was writing steps. The second sub-theme was new words and kanji. The third sub-theme was motivation. The last sub-theme was typing.

Writing Steps.

Students in the second-year Japanese course at Midwestern Methodist University had homework exchanging e-mails in Japanese with their Japanese keypals (pen pals exchanging e-mails). The Japanese exchange student, Ryoko, contacted her friends from her university in Japan and recruited for volunteers who wanted to exchange e-mails in Japanese with Midwestern Methodist University students. Ryoko was sophomore, majored in sociology, and belonged to English Speaking Society (ESS) Club at her Japanese university, thus all of the Japanese keypals were female, sophomore, sociology majors, and members of ESS Club. The students in the second-year Japanese course randomly drew papers with Japanese keypal names and found their Japanese keypals' names and their e-mail addresses.

The homework exchanging e-mails required the students to correspond with their Japanese keypals four times during the first semester of 2004 (Appendix J) and six times during the second semester of 2005 (Appendix K). When the students wrote e-mail messages, they were required to write at least ten sentences excluding the opening and closing sentences. After they wrote ten sentences or more, they could write English sentences. Because the Japanese
keypals belonged to ESS Club, they requested Ryoko that they wanted to receive some English messages for their English language learning. The students were assigned topics related to topics and expressions in their classes.

Students printed each e-mail copy and handed it in to their Japanese professor, Dr. Kudo. Students also filled out a writing reflection sheet (Appendix H) each time after they wrote a Japanese e-mail message and submitted to me. The reflection sheet was for research purposes and did not affect their grades for their Japanese course.

Each time when students received e-mails from their Japanese keypals, they wrote an English summary and submitted it to Dr. Kudo. Students filled out a reading reflection sheet (Appendix I). The reading reflection sheet was for research purposes but did not affect students’ grades for the Japanese course.

Dr. Kudo assumed that her students followed more steps to write Japanese messages than native speakers. When native speakers typed Japanese, they converted kanji based on their memory. However, second language learners, especially in the stage of second-year Japanese, needed to follow more steps. Dr. Kudo added, “Native speakers sometimes look for words, but not so much. Second language learners need to look for words and think about grammar and word meanings.” Dr. Kudo thought that Japanese language learners needed to follow three or four steps to write Japanese e-mail messages. Dr. Kudo explained that writing Japanese e-mail messages required the learners to apply what they have learned in their Japanese classes. Dr. Kudo said that the purpose of the e-mail exchange was meaning formation. The students could
make meanings expanding their language skills. Dr. Kudo believed that the students could improve their Japanese language skills a lot through e-mail exchanges. The e-mail exchange was continual in that the students wrote a message for their keypals, received and read a message from the person, and wrote further based on what they read. Dr. Kudo thought the e-mail exchanges played a role of interaction with native speakers. Since Dr. Kudo valued meaning formations, she did not correct her students’ errors before sending the messages.

Students said that their process writing Japanese e-mails was basically the same throughout one academic year. When students composed Japanese messages, their first writing step was to look at an e-mail assignment sheet and identified a topic to write. The topic for the first e-mail during the first semester was self-introduction and family. The second topic was hometown and life in general or school life. The third topic was their favorite city that they have been to, a city where they wish to go in the future, and the reasons. The last topic was holidays or their vacation plans.

Students had three topic options each time when they sent e-mails during the second semester. The first option was to ask their keypals what they wanted to know about Japan, such as current news, social issues, and culture. They needed to describe the topic as much as possible before asking questions. The second topic option was to exchange recipes. The third option was to write about the topic assigned each time sending e-mails: 1) winter break, 2) favorite book, movie, or play, 3) Valentine’s Day, 4) area in which they excel, such as music
and sports, or spring break, 5) high school life or future dream, and 6) summer vacation.

The students’ second writing step was to plan what students wanted to write about the topic and to begin typing an e-mail message. Abby explained this process, “Usually I looked at the topic and figured out what I wanted to say first like, ‘Okay, this is what I know about my topic or what I did.’” The students did “not write anything on paper” by hand. Margaret typed messages in her e-mail message box on computer directly “because writing by hand first takes too much time.” Abby and Lily typed drafts in the Microsoft Word document then copied and pasted them into the e-mail. Alex explained:

I use the Linux operating system and the software that I use for entering Japanese is called Kinput 2. Another program that translates from kana into kanji is called Canna. I just use a text editor. I don’t write in the e-mail program.

Japanese is written in the combination of hiragana, katakana, and kanji. Hiragana and katakana is consisted of 46 syllabary characters plus 25 diacritics and 36 glides. Kanji has over 4,000 characters. Makino, Hatasa, and Hatasa (1998) explained when to use hiragana, katakana, and kanji in Nakama, the textbook that the students used when they were in their first-year Japanese course:

Hiragana, the most basic type, is used for function words (words such as in, at, and on) and inflectional endings (to show negatives, tense, and so on) as well as words of Japanese origin. Katakana is used mainly for words borrowed from other languages, such as keeki (cake), and words for sounds, such as wanwan (the Japanese word for bow-wow). Kanji, which is of Chinese origin, is used for content words, such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives (p.2).
Students learned to read and write hiragana first then katakana in their first-year Japanese course. Then, they learned to read and write some kanji. The textbook that the students used for the first-year Japanese included 90 kanji characters. In other words, the students knew all of the hiragana and katakana, but not all of the kanji.

When students typed Japanese messages, they typed *romaji* (Roman characters) using their keyboards with alphabets first. When they typed *romaji* with the input mode of hiragana, the typed words were converted to hiragana automatically. For example, when they typed k-a, it was shown as か with a dashed underline. When students wanted the word as hiragana, they hit the “enter” key. When they wanted to convert the hiragana to katakana or kanji, they hit the “space” bar shown in Figure 4.

*Figure 4: The “Enter” Key and the “Space” Bar on a Keyboard*
After that process, the screen shows a possible kanji. Because there are many homonyms, it is likely that the kanji shown is not the appropriate one in the context. If they hit the “space” bar again, a pop-up shows a list of kanji and katakana to select as Figure 5 shows.

Figure 5: Selecting Kanji from the Kanji List on the Computer Screen

When Abby, Lily, and Margaret planned what they were going to write to their Japanese keypal, they thought in “English first then Japanese.” Alex “started to think in Japanese by writing the first introductory paragraph about the weather” and consciously tried “to think only in Japanese.” Alex explained his thought process, “Obviously English comes first... I try to think in Japanese, but the
constructs of thoughts come in English. Then, I try to turn them into Japanese without verbalizing."

Writing Japanese e-mail messages required Alex to have “two composition processes” or “dual cognitive process” both in Japanese and English. Ales explained:

It is trying to keep my cognitive process in Japanese while subconsciously there’s cognition going on in English producing ideas that are beyond my ability to express in Japanese. So, there are almost two composition processes going on. There is the Japanese composition process, which is going on consciously, and the English composition process, which is going on subconsciously, and at the same time. One is going much faster than the other… It seems like it takes a long time to write just a few paragraphs. It seems like I spend a lot of time sitting and thinking “what can I say,” “what do I know,” and “how to say” knowing that I could easily write something in English and then translate it instead of going right from the thinking straight into Japanese. So, there’s almost like a cognitive dissonance going on between knowing that whatever I’m trying to express in Japanese would be simple to express for me in English. And then, there would be a little bit of work to try and break the English sentence down into things that I can express in Japanese. That would probably be an easier thing to do than writing it directly in Japanese, but I want to write directly in Japanese.

While Alex was trying to compose sentences only in Japanese, there was "the other process of trying to translate from English into the Japanese at the same time." While he was "thinking in English and Japanese and trying to translate from English to Japanese trying to pick the interesting things to say out of English," the process of thinking in English was "running ahead." Alex was composing sentences "much faster in English" than in Japanese. For example, when Alex was in the process of writing about going to his friend's house or going to see a movie this weekend in Japanese, he would think, "Oh, that's something interesting that I'll be able to say in Japanese" in English when he “got to that
point." While composing a message, Alex had to remember the ideas that came up in English faster than what he would think in Japanese. Alex said, "I'm trying to remember those things at the same time while I'm trying to keep thinking in English into Japanese. Alex stated:

\[
\text{When I'm working in Japanese, if I think about movies, } eiga, \text{ I try not to think } eiga \text{ means movie in English. I just try to think } eiga \text{ means } eiga \text{ and have a concept separate from the English word. So, there's that middle process the mediation between Japanese and English going on at the same time.}
\]

When Alex came up with good ideas in English, he did not take notes but had "to remember" them. "Different things were all going on" while Alex composed Japanese messages. He said, "That's what makes it hard trying to keep everything on track."

The students' third step in writing a Japanese message was reading a draft of the message and editing it before sending it to their keypals. Alex, Lily, and Margaret went through this editing process immediately after completing a draft. Margaret re-read her draft and hoped that it made sense. When Margaret found the parts that might not make sense, she modified them. Lily said, "After I write the keypal messages, I go over it and make sure that I write the message correctly. Then, I use a dictionary to check the grammar." Alex described his editing process:

I'll read through the draft and see if I can read it. I often go through it checking the kanji that I do know to see if I got it right. I'll read through it. I know what it's supposed to say, so I'll see the kanji, the new words that I've picked out of the dictionary, and I will try and associate those with the meaning that I know is there because I put it there when I was looking it up. That is good to some extent because it helps me recognize them later
if my keypal sends a message back to me. I can sometimes recognize the kanji because I’ve reinforced the meaning by trying to read through my message again.

After Abby wrote a draft of a Japanese e-mail message, she did not immediately re-read and edit it. Abby explained:

I usually go away and try to think of something else. Then, I come back and try to read my message to see if I made any sense because sometimes I look at them and I notice that I did not say at all what I was going to say. So, I’ll edit it.

Abby went through this editing process once or twice per message.

The students’ fourth step was to send the e-mail message to their keypal and to print the copy so they could submit it to their professor, Dr. Kudo. The last step was to fill out a writing reflection sheet including the time spent writing the message, the number of new words and kanji that they used, frequency of dictionary use, if somebody helped them write the e-mail, the level of enjoyment in writing the message, and what they learned through writing. Figure 6 provides a summary of the writing process of these Japanese students.
Figure 6: Students’ Japanese E-Mail Writing Process

1. Identify a topic
2. Plan what to write (Think in English)
3. Type a Japanese message (Think in Japanese)
   - Look up words
     - Verb book
     - Dictionary (Paper/online)
   - Unsure how to say in Japanese
   - Modify expressions
   - Unsure kanji
4. Read the message
5. Revise the message
6. Send the message to keypal
7. Fill out a writing reflection sheet
8. Hand in the e-mail copy to professor
9. Hand in the reflection sheet to researcher
10. Do something else
New words and Kanji.

While students wrote a Japanese e-mail message, they had some words and expressions that they did not know “how to say” in Japanese. Students needed to figure out how to say these words or what they could say alternatively. Even when they knew how to say certain words, they sometimes were unsure if these words included kanji and which kanji character sets they needed to use.

Abby spent a lot of time thinking about what she could write about in Japanese. Abby said, “I looked at the topic for a long time and tried to figure out what I could say because there were a lot of things that I wanted to say that I didn’t have the ability to say yet.” When Abby wrote Japanese sentences in her Japanese course, she tended to spend more time to think and write than her classmates. Probably, Abby spent a lot of time planning what to write to her keypal when she wrote e-mail messages at home, too.

When Margaret did not know how to write some expressions in Japanese, she changed expressions from what she “wanted to say” to what she “could say.” Margaret stated, “I first figure out what I want to say. If I don’t know how to say that in Japanese, I change what I’m going to say.”

Alex explained the gap between what he could say in English and Japanese:

Probably, the hardest part of writing Japanese e-mail messages is knowing what I could say in English compared to what I’m capable of saying in Japanese. So, I start thinking of these things and immediately I start… cutting off the ideas to try to come up with an idea that I can express in Japanese directly.
When the students tried to figure out their unfamiliar words and expressions in Japanese, they used their English Japanese dictionaries. Abby said, “I would look at my dictionary and see if I could figure out how to say some of the things that I couldn’t say.” For Alex, “the dictionary came in handy sometimes.” Abby, Lily, and Margaret used the paper dictionary that was recommended for their Japanese class. Alex used both paper and online dictionaries. Before Alex looked up something in his books or online aids, he went through the process of determining “if the word was a noun, a verb, or a word that may have a kanji translation.” When he knew a word but not the kanji for the word, he used an online bilingual dictionary. The online dictionary has English to Japanese and Japanese to English dictionary functions. Alex explained his process of using his dictionaries:

I’ll just cut the hiragana word, paste it into the dictionary, look up the kanji, and then enter the kanji if I can. If I can find one, often I’ll get several matches. If I can find one that makes sense, I’ll use that. I may cross reference with my simpler, student dictionary. I’ll often see many kanji selections that all have similar meaning. If I’m not sure which one of those, I go to the student dictionary and look it up in the book and pick the simple one.

“Sometimes” when Alex knew there should “be a way to express something in Japanese” but he did now know how, he used “a verb book called Japanese Verbs at a Glance by Naoko Chino.” According to Kodansha International, the book, Japanese Verbs at a Glance, “is unique in its concise coverage of Japanese verbs from four points of view: conjugation, usage, compound verbs, and idiomatic expressions. This diversity makes the book a godsend to students at both beginning and intermediate levels.” The examples
were written both in romaji and Japanese scripts. The book showed different forms of verbs in everyday life in both informal and formal situations. The book taught readers how they could combine two verbs into one form such as the expression equivalent to ‘start to rain.’ The book also included idiomatic expressions with special verb usage. Alex said:

I will look in the verb book and see if there’s a verb form that will say what I want to say. For example, when I wanted to write a subordinate clause like ‘If I’m doing something, I’ll do this other thing,’ I will look that verb form up to try to come up with the correct way to say that.

Alex explained, “In that way, I’m expanding my capabilities in Japanese beyond what we’ve learned in class.”

Alex “was looking for a good book on verbs” because he had learned “maybe 20” verbs when he was in the first-year Japanese course. He often found himself “trying to think of a new” verb when he used Japanese language and wondered, “What’s the verb to say whatever it is?” Alex thought that finding a book on verbs would be helpful. When Alex “was in Japan last summer, (he) went to a bookstore and saw the book, Japanese Verbs at a Glance, in the learning Japanese for English speakers section.” Alex added, “When I picked it up and I flipped through it, it looked good.” I understood that Alex believed knowing verbs was important when I went to a Japanese Meetup, a meeting that Japanese language learners and native speakers enjoyed casual conversations in Japanese. When he could not come up with a Japanese verb while speaking Japanese, he murmured in English that Japanese is a language with difficult verbs.
If students could not figure out how to communicate a certain expressions from their dictionaries, they modified their original idea or expressions that they were going to write. Abby explained, “If I couldn’t figure out how to say something, I tended to edit and it tended to start off very broad as what I’d say in English. Then I’d narrow it down to what I can say in Japanese.” Margaret expressed, “Probably the hardest part of writing Japanese e-mail messages is what I want to say doesn’t always translate exactly into Japanese, so I had to figure out how I could say it differently or else what I could say instead.”

While writing messages, the students tried to convert hiragana to kanji as much as possible because they believed that Japanese sentences with a lot of kanji were more natural than sentences with few kanji. When the students began the e-mail exchange with their Japanese keypals, Dr. Kudo told them that they needed to use the kanji that they had already learned in their Japanese classes but did not have to use non-taught kanji. However, Dr. Kudo told me that the students this year tried to use new kanji as much as possible.

Alex wanted “to write as much in kanji as” he could because he found "it’s easier to read when the kanji is there.” Abby had similar thoughts about kanji. Abby said, “I like to use the kanji and I like reading the kanji because I know it’s right. There are so many words that are pronounced the same, so if the kanji’s there, I know the word is right.” While Abby tried to use as many kanji as possible, she found that one of the hardest parts of writing Japanese messages included “definitely finding the kanji.”
When the students tried new kanji, they “rarely guessed” nor randomly selected kanji out of the kanji list on the computer screen. When Margaret wanted to change hiragana to kanji, she looked those words up “in the dictionary.” Alex explained the reasons for using dictionaries instead of guessing a right kanji character:

I rarely guess because I’m worried that I won’t get the kanji right. I think I have made a mistake before not by guessing but by just picking the wrong one off the list when the list comes down to choose (on the computer screen). But if I don’t know what the kanji is, I always look it up because I’m worried about getting it wrong and saying something completely different from what I mean.

As Alex said, there are many homonyms written in different kanji characters. For example, the words, 变える, 買える, 帰る, 蛙, 代える, 換える, 替える, 返る, 孵る, and 飼える are all read /kaeru/ but each has different meanings. Once when Alex’s keypal Mizuho converted a verb to a wrong kanji, he was confused. Mizuho wrote that "その日の気分で帰る事ができるほど種類があります。(There are so many kinds (of ingredients) that we could return depending on the mood of the day)" instead of "その日の気分で変わること事ができるほど種類があります。(There are so many kinds (of ingredients) that we could change them depending on the mood of the day)." When Alex received the message including this sentence, he knew that “帰る” meant “return” and thought the sentence did not make sense. However, he did not doubt that Mizuho misspelled the kanji. Alex asked me the meaning of the sentence before class started. After I read the sentence, I noticed that his keypal did not convert the kanji appropriately and pointed out that the verb "帰る (return)" should be “変える (change).” On his
reading reflection sheet, he wrote that “A misspelling in Japanese can lead to severe confusion for a kanji novice. Without working knowledge of kanji pronunciations, I was pretty lost on a kanji where a homonym was intended to be used.”

When Margaret used her new kanji, she “guessed a few times” among kanji list on the screen, but mostly looked up her dictionary during the first semester. Margaret did “not like to make mistakes.” When the students looked up words, their dictionary usually showed multiple Japanese words equivalent to the English words. Margaret always made sure to use the appropriate one. Margaret explained:

A lot of time when I look up words, I look them up in English first and then I’ll look up the word in Japanese to see if the English corresponds. For example, when the words have a lot of kanji, I can look and see what the Japanese word specifically means and choose the one that’s most what I want to say.

After Lily wrote her first message to her keypal, she commented, “This is my first time writing e-mail in Japanese, so there are words I don’t know how to type” on her first writing reflection sheet. Alex wrote that “It was a little difficult to fit my thoughts into Japanese” on his first writing reflection. He further wrote that “It feels difficult to be expressive in simple, declarative sentences. I worry some about using words or expressions we haven’t learned in class incorrectly.” When Lily wrote Japanese e-mail messages, she had “to think how to write and what to write.” Lily explained, “My Japanese is limited, so I have to think a lot. I try to use the grammar correctly to make sure that my keypal can understand it.”
Margaret said that she "didn't know what to say things" that she "wanted to say." Margaret stated, "I don't like to make mistakes, so I didn't want to try anything real extreme. So, I tried to keep it to what I knew. A lot of times I just didn't know what to say or didn't know how to say it." Margaret's e-mail messages were grammatically accurate applying expressions that she had learned in her Japanese classes.

Students spent a lot of time planning what to write, looking up words, and writing e-mail messages in Japanese. The students' average time to write a Japanese e-mail message during the first semester of 2004 was 97.8 minutes. Table 3 shows the average writing time of each student.

Table 3: Average Time to Write Messages during the First Semester of 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Abby</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing time (Minutes)</td>
<td>117.5</td>
<td>127.5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>86.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>20.25 sentences</td>
<td>37.25 sentences</td>
<td>17.5 sentences</td>
<td>15.75 sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>347.25 letters</td>
<td>684.25 letters</td>
<td>241.25 letters</td>
<td>261.25 letters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students' average time to write a Japanese message during the second semester of 2005 was 92.1 minutes, which was 5.7 minutes shorter than the first semester. Table 4 shows the average writing time of each student.
Table 4: Average Time to Write Messages during the Second Semester of 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Abby</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing time (Minutes)</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>20.4 sentences</td>
<td>26.8 sentences</td>
<td>17.2 sentences</td>
<td>19.2 sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>514.2 letters</td>
<td>560.33 letters</td>
<td>238 letters</td>
<td>313.43 letters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the students could not figure out “how to say” words in Japanese, they tended not to write English sentences even though they were allowed to use English after writing at least ten sentences in Japanese for the Japanese keypals’ English learning. Alex added some English sentences at the end of his messages for his keypal Mizuho but not for himself. After Alex wrote a first message in Japanese to Mizuho, he added an English paragraph at the end of the message:

Ryoko-san (the Japanese exchange student) told me that you are studying English, so I thought I’d write some in English. Julie (My wife) and I are in the middle of remodeling our kitchen. I have demolished the floor, and removed the sink and counter-top. I took some pictures of the work we are doing. You can see them here:
(A link to the pictures)
Oh! I also visited Japan over the summer. That’s when I met Ryoko-san. My pictures from the trip are here:
(A link to the pictures)
Thank you for reading my bad Japanese. I’m looking forward to hearing from you. Take care!

Alex wanted to teach interesting English words to Mizuho for her help writing Japanese messages for his Japanese language learning. Alex said:

Because my keypal is interested in English, I’ve been trying to include a little English text each time. It’s an interesting exercise to learn about this person, learn what she’s interested in and what she does. So, I feel like she’s doing me a favor by helping me with my Japanese and in a way I owe it to her to write in good Japanese to help. So, what she is doing is helping me learn and then I’m giving back to her by writing in English. I
hope I’m writing things in English that are interesting for her to read and try to figure out if she has to figure it out at all. Maybe she just gets it.

Alex tried to teach interesting English expressions to Mizuho. He described one example of teaching an English expression:

In English, there’s an expression for when there is frost overnight. We sometimes say, “There’s frost on the pumpkin.” If you get up in the morning, look out the window and see frost, you might say, “Oh, look. There’s frost on the pumpkin this morning.”

Alex described the other two expressions that he taught Mizuho:

A week or two ago, we had a “cold snap.” When the weather has been warm but suddenly turns cold, we call that a cold snap. It had been so warm, it seemed like spring had arrived. One day, it was 18 degrees centigrade, but the next day it was -9!

In English, “花粉症 (kafunsho)” is called “hay fever.” Some people have hay fever in the spring, some in the fall. Really unlucky people have hay fever in the spring and fall. Lucky for me, I only have it in the spring. *achoo!* (That’s the sound of a sneeze in English. アチュウ！）

When I communicated with Mizuho via e-mail about the e-mail exchanges with Alex, she said that she was glad that he added interesting English messages after Japanese messages. Lily’s keypal Sachiko appreciated that Lily used English for Sachiko’s English language learning while Sachiko wrote messages in Japanese for Lily’s Japanese language learning.

Abby’s keypal Mariko added a short paragraph in English in her first message:

Dear Ms. Abby
I'm glad to get the e-mail from you! I am also interested in talking with foreign friends. I want to get good friends with you.
Mariko Inagaki

On the first e-mail message, Chiemi wrote to Margaret:
Now, it takes about 2 hours to go to the university. Almost all of the day [everyday], it’s [it takes] about 10 or 11 o’clock when I get my home. So, now I try to ask my parents if I can live alone. By the way, you said you belong to a volleyball club. To my surprise, I also belonged to volleyball club for 6 years!!! I like volleyball very much. What is your position? I’m really waiting for your e-mail!! Please use English also.

The second time when Chiemi used English was in the third message during the second semester. At the end of the message when Chiemi cheered Margaret’s incoming volleyball game, Chiemi added an English sentence, “I wish your best of luck!” Margaret’s e-mail sometimes ended with the sentence, “もうすぐ英語にてがみを書きます。（‘I will write you in English soon.’）” Therefore, Margaret and Chiemi seemed to exchange e-mails in English. When Chiemi wrote her the last message during the first semester, a paragraph included:

話は変わりますが、マーガレットさんにお願いがあります。英語でスピーチを書いたのですが、文法などがまちがっていないかチェックしてほしいのです。出来れば早く見てもらいたいのですが、お願いできないですか？今年の授業も終わるので、学校の英語の先生に会う機会がなくてとても困っています。どうかよろしくお願いします。

The English translation of the message is:

In the meanwhile, I have a favor to ask you. I wrote an English speech draft and would like to ask you to check if there are grammar errors. If possible, I would like to ask you to check at your earliest opportunity, but may I ask you? This year’s classes are ending, and I am having a hard time getting in to see my English instructor at school. Thank you very much.

Only Lily has used English sentences to express something that she was not sure how to say in Japanese. For example, when she wanted to write the phrase, “because my birthday is December 24,” she wrote that “Because 誕生日 (/tanjobi/ or birthday) is on the 24.” Lily tended to answer her keypal’s questions in English at the end of each message. For example, when Lily’s keypal Sachiko
asked her reasons for studying Japanese and if there was karaoke in the United States, Lily answered these questions in English after she wrote a message with the topic of a favorite city in Japanese:

Hi. How are you? I’m doing well. I was really glad to communicate with you by mail also. I thought this is something really interesting. This is also a good opportunity for me to learn more about Japanese culture. Karaoke? I heard about it and I actually learned it in class that karaoke is something very popular in Japan, isn’t it? Well over here there are places that we can go and sing karaoke I believe, but not so well known like in Japan. The reason I study Japanese is just because I want to know more about the culture as well as the Japanese language itself. I hope that one day, well maybe next year, I can study abroad in Japan. I hope you have a good weekend and have fun. Anyways I got to go now. I’m looking forward to your email. See ya.

When Lily received the first message from Sachiko during the second semester, the message included the sentence:

１月１０日には２０歳を記念する行事があり、２０歳のわたしは着物を着てセレモニーに参加しました。アメリカでは、２０歳を記念する行事などはあるのですか？

The English translation is:

There was a ceremony to celebrate 20 years old people on January 10th. I am 20 years old and attended the ceremony wearing kimono. Is there an event to celebrate 20 years old in America?

Lily responded to the question in English after she wrote a Japanese message:

“In America we don’t celebrate the coming of age like people in Japan. I wish we had that kind of celebration because I think it is interesting to have such an event.”

Motivation.

Students were motivated to write e-mail messages to their Japanese keypals because they found writing messages “fun” even though it was
“frustrating” at the same time. Students liked to challenge themselves conveying meanings in their second language. Margaret said:

Sometimes writing Japanese e-mail messages can be frustrating just because I don’t know enough that I want to say. I don’t know how to say everything I want to say in Japanese, so I feel like I have to leave out a lot. But other than that, it’s fun to get messages from someone different than my parents and friends.

It was “frustrating” for Margaret to write Japanese messages when it took long to write sentences. However, “for the most part,” writing Japanese messages was “fun” for Margaret “because you can write what you want to say instead of like in class homework, we just have to write what the teacher wants you to write.”

When Margaret wrote about her vacation in her third message during the first semester, she wrote on her writing reflection sheet, “I like writing about my vacation because it brings back happy memories.” Margaret also wrote, “I learned that writing can be a lot easier and go a lot faster if you’re interested in what you are writing, no matter what language.” Margaret’s third message that she enjoyed writing about her vacation was:

ちえみさん、
こんにちは。ミッドウエスタンシティの天気は曇りですがちょっと暖かいです。コロラドの天気は先週末雪が多かったです。私は雪が好きなので、コロラドに帰りたいです。
私の好きな都市はニューヨークです。大きいと海のちかくなので、好きです。私と家族は先夏休みニューヨークに行きました。とても楽しい。じゅうの女神の像(Statue of Liberty)やグラウンドゼロ(Ground Zero)を見ました。私はまたニューヨークに行きたいです。ちえみさんの好きな都市は何ですか。
私もロンドンに行きたいです。この夏クラスがあって、ロンドンに旅行をするでしょう。シェークスピール(Shakespeare)を勉強します。面白いと思います。ちえみさん、何都市に行きたいですか。
手紙を待っています。
マーガレット
The English translation of the message is:

Chiemi-san,
Hello. Midwestern City’s weather is cloudy but a little warm. Colorado’s weather was very snowy last weekend. Because I like snow, I want to go back to Colorado.
My favorite city is New York. I like it because it is big and close to the ocean. I went to New York with my family last summer. It is very fun. I saw the Statue of Liberty and Ground Zero. I would like to go to New York again. Where is your favorite city?
I also want to go to London. I will have a class and travel to London this summer. I will study Shakespeare. I think it is interesting. Which city do you want to go?
I am waiting for your mail.
Margaret

Margaret said she “always liked writing Japanese just because it’s so different from English. We don’t have anything like Japanese writing in English... I feel a little bit freer to write and use a different kanji which is neat.”

Lily felt that writing Japanese e-mail messages was difficult. Lily said, “I have to think of what to write and because I’m not a native-born-Japanese, I don’t know how to say or how to write it. I can’t really say what I want to say something that I haven’t studied yet. So, it is hard.” Even though writing Japanese e-mail messages was “hard” for Lily, the e-mail exchange motivated her to write messages: “I thought it was interesting because you can exchange e-mails with someone overseas and get to know the person. So, at first, it was real interesting to get to know the person and the culture.”

As well as Lily, her keypal Sachiko was motivated to exchange e-mails in Japanese. After the e-mail exchange was over, the Japanese exchange student, Ryoko, asked Sachiko about her thoughts exchanging e-mails with Lily. Sachiko responded that she enjoyed communicating with Lily in Japanese while they
would not be able to communicate with each other if Lily knew only her native language, Vietnamese. Sachiko’s difficulty in writing Japanese messages to Lily was that Sachiko did not know Lily’s Japanese proficiency level. Sachiko was not sure how she should modify expressions and how much kanji she should use to write comprehensible messages for Lily. Also, Sachiko knew that Lily had due dates for the e-mail assignment for the Japanese course, but she was not sure what to do when Lily’s responses were late.

Similar to Sachiko, Alex’s keypal Mizuho wrote that she truly enjoyed exchanging e-mails with him. Mizuho did not find phrases or sentences that she could not understand in Alex’s messages even though there were minor parts that were a little difficult to comprehend. Mizuho thought that Alex’s messages were attractive especially because he occasionally sent links to view pictures. Mizuho enjoyed seeing the pictures that Alex sent. Alex was the only person who sent pictures to their keypals. Her only concern was whether Alex could understand her messages because she could not tell that from Alex’s responses.

Writing Japanese e-mail messages was “a little bit frustrating but in a good way” for Alex. Abby and Alex enjoyed “challenging” themselves to write Japanese e-mail messages. Abby shared her perspectives on writing Japanese e-mail messages:

I just really like writing e-mail messages in Japanese. It requires me to challenge myself. I like corresponding with someone in a different country. It’s fun, someone new, not from Midwestern State. Even though I can’t always say exactly what I want, I think I can get close enough that we’re saying something mildly productive.
Abby, Alex, and Margaret always added that the writing process was “fun” after they expressed a certain degree of frustration. Alex explained:

It’s fun and interesting to correspond with another person and learn about that person... Having someone who is reading what I write and responding to it helps me to write more, makes me want to write more so that she’ll write back to me and I can read what she wrote and figure it out. So, there’s a circle of positive reinforcement going on. I write to my keypal who reads it and then responds. Reading the response knowing that she’s able to extract meaning from what I’m writing means that I’m not writing in gibberish and that’s encouraging. And then being able to read it and understand what she’s saying is also encouraging. I want to respond to what she’s saying, so I write more in Japanese. It’s like a circle.

Writing Japanese messages was not too difficult for Alex and Margaret. Margaret said that writing Japanese e-mail messages was “not extremely difficult. It’s in the middle. It’s not real easy, but it’s not hard.” Alex stated:

I don’t really find writing Japanese messages terribly difficult... There is a tiny little bit of frustration with wanting to express things wanting it to come easy. I say it’s not hard, but it’s not easy for me to express myself in Japanese because I’m learning it, my vocabulary is limited, and my knowledge of the different verb forms is limited. What the difficulty is going from my mental processes which are working in English and trying to scale down to working in Japanese. I find myself wishing that I knew more Japanese so that I could express myself more clearly as I write. I sometimes worry that I’m not saying something what I want to say exactly, but I’m not sure because I’m not a native speaker. I wonder two things. I wonder if it’s just a funny way to say the right thing. I wonder also if I’m saying something that is idiomatically wrong or misleading if it’s going to take my keypal extra time to think about what I’ve written because it doesn’t make any sense because the idiom is different or is wrong.

Lily wanted to write her keypal everything about herself. Lily said, “I just want my keypal to know me as much as I want to know her. So, I just write whatever I can think of.” However, she sometimes did not know what to write about certain topics. Sometimes Lily would "run out of ideas" for writing because
she needed to write in Japanese, "not in English." Lily did "not know how to say something in Japanese" about some topics, so writing Japanese messages for some topics was "hard." Lily said, "There are only certain things that I can say in Japanese. If I can write in English, it's easier for me." For example, Lily did not know what to write when she wrote about her winter break. Lily wrote to her keypal:

ますいさんへ
あけましておめでとうございます。
今日は一月二十八日です。木曜日です。天気はくもりです。気温は30度ぐらいです。
ますいさんお元気ですか。私はとても元気です。冬休みに私はカナダに行ったり、ともだちに会ったり、アルバイトをしたりしました。たのしかったです。今日は私は朝ご飯を食べながらテレビを見ました。そしてクラスに行きました。今晚は歴史のクイズに勉強します。そして私はがんばって集中する。歴史のきょうじゅはむずかしいです。
私は二月九日にemailをおくります。お元気で。

The translation of the message is:

Miss Masui,
Happy New Year.
Today is January 28th. It is Thursday. The weather is cloudy. Today’s temperature is approximately 30 degrees Fahrenheit.
How are you? I am very fine. I went to Canada, saw my friends, and worked part-time over winter break. I had fun. I watched TV while eating breakfast today. Then I went to classes. I will study for a history quiz tonight. I will concentrate hard. My history professor is hard.
I will send you an e-mail on February 9th. Take care.

Lily added an English message:

Hi. How are you? I’m glad to hear from you again. I was about to email but when I was about to I saw your email. Yes I’m looking forward to the keypal project also. I bet we will have a lot of fun writing. I heard from Ryoko-san that you guys will have final somewhere around this month right? Well if so good luck on your finals. I just had a long winter break; therefore it was kind of hard to have class again. I have to go now. Hoping to hear from you soon. Just in case if you can’t read my message, I will attach it.
Because Lily did not expand her writing over winter break, Dr. Kudo wrote on the copy of Lily’s message: “Write more about what you did in Canada, etc. Minimum sentences. Need more elaboration for each event or topic. But this is a good start. 18/20 (18 points out of 20 points).”

When Lily wrote about her future dream, her message was short:

ますいさん
今日は四月二十六日です。火曜日です。天気はくもりのち晴れです。今日の気温はせっせと50どくらいです。
こんにちわ!! お元気ですか? 私はまあまあです。
私は二年生です。せんこうはこくさいけいえい学です。将来の夢は私はかいしゃいんと思っています。私はけしきかいにしゅうしゅうしよくしたいたいです。そしてしゅっちょっとします。ますいさん将来の夢は何ですか。

The English translation of the message is:

Miss Masui,
Today is April 26th. It is Tuesday. The weather is cloudy later sunny. Today’s temperature is approximately 50 degrees Celsius. Hello!! How are you? I am ok.
I am a sophomore. My major is international management. I think my future dream is to be an office worker. I would like to work at a company with a good view. Also, I would like to go to business trips. What is your future dream?

At the end of the last second-year Japanese course, Dr. Kudo recommended her students to continue exchanging e-mails with their Japanese keypals. The students’ last messages to their keypals included that they wanted to keep exchanging e-mails.

Margaret wrote her keypal Chiemi in her last message: "千江美さん、夏に英語か日本語でメールを送り続けたいですか。忙しいのに、私は続けたいです。千江美さんのメッセージは面白いです。(‘Would you like to continue exchanging e-mails either in English or Japanese in the summer? Even though I am busy, I
want to continue. Your messages are interesting.’)’ However, when I asked her if she continued exchanging e-mails after the second semester ended in fall 2005, she responded, ‘I do not exchange e-mails with my keypal anymore, nor did I over the summer. I would have liked to, but was busy with other things and forgot about it.’ Lily wrote her keypal Sachiko, ‘ますいさんメッセージをつける (‘Miss Masui, I will continue sending messages.’)’ Sachiko wanted to continue exchanging e-mails with Lily, too, but she did not hear from Lily again.

Abby wrote to her keypal Mariko, ‘この夏、私は動物園にアルバイトがあるので私はとても急がしいのに、私は稲垣さんとメールを送り続けたいです。稲垣さんは続けたいですか。 (‘Although I will be very busy because I will work at a zoo part-time this summer, I would like to continue exchanging e-mails with you. Would you like to continue exchanging e-mails?’)’ When I asked Abby if she was still exchanging e-mails with Mariko in fall 2005, she responded that she was busy with her part-time job at a zoo and left her laptop computer in her home in Maine, so she could not send Japanese e-mails to Mariko. In addition, Abby was busy with her classes as a senior.

Alex wrote, ‘瑞穂さんが書くメッセージありがとうございます。本当に、私に日本語を習うのを手伝わされました。瑞穂さんは忙しそうじゃないなら、僕は英語と日本語で文通を続けたいです。続けてもいいですか？ (‘Thank you for writing messages. You really helped my Japanese learning. If you are not too busy, I would like to exchange mails both in English and Japanese. Is it okay to exchange e-mails?’)’ Mizuho enjoyed exchanging e-mails and wanted to continue corresponding messages, too. Alex and Mizuho exchanged e-mails five or six times after the
last semester of Japanese, but they did not exchange e-mails any more by October 2005. Alex was one of the most motivated students exchanging Japanese e-mails, but he was very busy. Alex was an organizer of Japanese Meetup, but he could not come to the meeting in October 2005 because he was busy remodeling his house. Even though the students wanted to continue e-mail exchanges with their keypals after they completed the second-year Japanese course, they were too busy to correspond with their keypals.

*Typing.*

Before the second-year Japanese students started the e-mail exchange, Abby and Alex had previous experiences typing Japanese. On the other hand, Lily and Margaret had no previous Japanese typing experiences. The students found both advantages and disadvantages of typing Japanese over handwriting.

Abby, Alex, and Margaret did not have big problems typing and reading Japanese e-mails even though Margaret had a “computer problem” once. However, Lily experienced great inconvenience because of the lack of computer accessibility to type and read Japanese. The Modern Language computer lab was the only place for Lily to exchange Japanese e-mails while the other students found that they could type Japanese at home or in the computer labs in their dormitories. Lily said that the assignment exchanging Japanese e-mails was hard because she did not have a computer to type and read Japanese at home. Lily mentioned, “I have classes and a job and I have to write in the lab.” Lily had a hard time adjusting her schedule to the computer lab hours, especially when she had the flu toward the end of the first semester of 2004.
Lily also found it inconvenient when her Japanese messages showed *mojibake* or garbage characters when she sent those messages to her keypal Sachiko.

The following is the description about *mojibake*:

*Mojibake* is often caused by forced display of writing **writing systems** or **character encodings** that are "foreign" to the user's computer system: if a computer does not have the software required to process a foreign language's characters, it will attempt to process them in its default language encoding, usually resulting in gibberish. Messages transferred between different encodings of the same language can also have *mojibake* problems. Japanese language users, with several different encodings historically employed, would encounter this problem relatively often. An improperly configured or badly written **web browser** may not distinguish a page coded in **EUC-JP** and another in **Shift-JIS** if the coding scheme is not assigned explicitly using the **HTML** document's **meta tags**. A well-defined dictionary can usually avoid this problem (Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia).

When Lily sent her first message to her keypal Sachiko, Sachiko e-mailed the exchange student Ryoko that the Japanese characters showed *mojibake*. Ryoko e-mailed me about this. When I talked to Lily about this and asked her if she saved her message, she responded “yes.” Therefore, Lily did not have to type the same message to resend it to her keypal. Sachiko was using her Japanese university's e-mail account, then she opened her personal e-mail account to see if that showed Japanese characters from Lily correctly. Fortunately, Sachiko's new e-mail showed Japanese characters from Lily correctly. Lily said:

Most of the time, I saved my messages, but a lot of times I didn’t save them. So, I had to retype Japanese messages when I had to resend messages and it's hard. But I usually type in a Word document and then copy and paste it to my e-mail.

In addition to the issue of computer accessibility, for Lily, “typing Japanese was difficult.” After the first semester of 2004 ended, Lily said, “I don't like typing
Japanese because I’m not really used to it. I’d rather write by hand because that’s easier than typing.” At the same time, Lily felt that it was nicer to type than to handwrite. Lily believed that “If you get used to typing, it’s easier to type than to handwrite Japanese. But at first, it’s hard and takes forever because I don’t really know the keyboard. After you type for a while, you get used to it. Then you get faster.” At the end of the second semester of 2005, Lily still felt it was inconvenient to go to the computer lab in the Modern Language Department. Sometimes when Lily went to the computer lab, she found that there were classes in the lab. However, Lily was more “used to typing Japanese” at that time.

Alex used his own laptop computer to e-mail his keypal. Abby used the computer at a computer lab in her dormitory in the beginning of the semester, but she “installed the Japanese language program” on her laptop computer. Abby felt that using a Japanese language system on computer at home was “complicated.”

Abby described:

I keep getting on computers that can’t read Japanese and then my e-mail doesn’t show up. I went home for Christmas and I hadn’t turned my e-mail back to English. And none of the computers at home could read my e-mail at all. This is a problem.

Abby liked typing better than handwriting Japanese when she typed her first e-mail message. When Abby typed her second Japanese message, she liked handwriting better than typing. Then she sometimes switched her preference. When Abby was interviewed after the first semester of 2004 ended, she said:

I probably like writing by hand better and that’s just the way my mind works. I can be writing it and then processing through my brain into my hand or something… My thought processes are working better when I
handwrite than when I type... I'm able to process my thought better actually when I'm writing by hand. It's so mechanical when I'm typing. Also when I'm typing, I'm on the American keyboard obviously, but I'm typing phonetically like k-i gives me /ki/ whereas when I'm writing Japanese by hand, I just go with the character. An advantage of typing over handwriting Japanese was that my hand doesn't get as tired. It's like, "Hey, look, it's all there."

"Writing by hand was faster" for Margaret because she "could just write the symbols without having to think of how it sounds" in the alphabet." Margaret explained:

Since I got used to writing Japanese by hand, I can just write the symbols. But when I'm typing, I'll type the wrong letter, so I do that a lot. It's not a problem when I'm writing by hand, but only when I'm typing. I'll just get mixed up with sounds and what they correspond to English... Because I've got myself trained, I don't think about how it is written anymore when I'm just writing by hand.

Even though it took Margaret longer to type than to handwrite, she found "it easier" to type kanji than handwrite the characters because she did "not have to remember much kanji, but (she) just scrolled through the list." Typing "is helpful if I don't remember the kanji." Margaret added, "But you have to make sure you have the right kanji." When Margaret scrolled through the kanji options, she often saw "several" kanji characters with same readings on the list. Margaret said, "If I don't know which kanji, I have to look it up, and that can sometimes be a problem."

During the first semester of 2004, Alex liked typing better than handwriting Japanese. It was "pretty easy" for him to type Japanese because he typed "all the time." Alex explained:

The only thing that occasionally gets me is that because when you write /de/ by hand, you write /te/ and then add the marks. When you type English, you add an apostrophe that comes after. So, if you want to type
“don’t,” you type d, o, n, apostrophe, and t. But in Japanese, if I want to type で /de/, I have to type on the English keyboard で, de, instead of て… Frequently… one out of five times, I’ll type “te” and then realize that I can’t type that extra mark and I’ll back space and type “de…” But I find typing in Japanese easier than writing in Japanese because when I handwrite in Japanese, I have to spend more effort on keeping track of which writing system, which set of characters I’m using. I often find that I’ll write something that needs to be in katakana, in hiragana, or I’ll switch between the two as I’m writing one word, I’ll switch from katakana to hiragana and back to katakana or I’ll write something halfway in hiragana and then realize, “Oh, no, I know the kanji for that” and I have to cross it out and write the kanji. Whereas when I type, I’m typing in hiragana, if I want it to be katakana, I hit the space bar and I pick the katakana form. If I want it kanji, I hit the space bar and I pick the kanji form. It seems much more natural.

If Alex typed what was written on paper, “typing would be faster than writing it by hand.” Alex added:

Because I’m thinking about composition while I’m typing, it’s probably about the same speed writing, writing it down or typing it. There would be more errors, I think, in the written form. There would be more writing the wrong thing and crossing it out and writing something else… I tend to be less error prone when I type than when I write because I don’t have to think about which set of characters I need to use. I just type and then when I’m finished with a word, I chose the right character set, whether it’s hiragana, katakana, or kanji. That makes the process of writing a little choppier because I reach a point where the sentence or the phrase has a natural break like after a particle (postposition)... At that point I stop and think about which character set I should use for the word and that makes me less prone to error. Whereas when I write, it flows to a greater degree. I just write without stopping. But I will often catch myself in the middle of a word having used the wrong set of characters whether I’m using hiragana to write katakana or I’m using hiragana to write something that I know how to use a kanji to write. It’s harder to correct my mistakes when I’m typing by hand because I usually write with pen and I have to cross it out and start again, whereas there’s just that stopping point at the end of a word or phrase where I pick the characters that I want to use when I’m typing. So, in a sense, choosing the characters that I want to use is more natural when I’m typing… Expressing the thought that I want to express is more natural when I’m writing by hand because I don’t stop or it would be if I didn’t stop... I like typing. But on the other hand, I enjoy learning the kanji, learning the strokes and producing the strokes and trying to write neatly, which is challenging for me because I don’t write English neatly.
Alex exchanged Japanese e-mail messages with Dr. Kudo before he began his e-mail communication with his keypal. There was a technical problem that Japanese characters showed *mojibake* at that time. However, he did not experience such problems with his keypal even when his computer was broken and he needed to use a laptop computer borrowed from his company to send his first message during the second semester. Alex “set up and learned how to use Window’s Japanese Input System” when he used another computer. He commented on his writing reflection sheet:

Because of hardware problems, I had to switch computers to write this message. Also, I switched operating systems, from Linux to Windows. The Japanese input method in Windows looks nicer but works slightly less well than the Linux version.

Alex wrote about his discovery of the Japanese language through e-mail communication in his web log:

I realized today that mastering Japanese actually requires acquisition of three separate skills, one more than I thought before. First, you must learn to speak Japanese. This means developing a lexicon and studying the grammatical constructs. I'm kind of ignoring learning the sound system, as that is part of learning to say words. Separately, but concurrently, you must learn to read Japanese. Learning the sound system is wrapped up in this too, because it comes along with hiragana. It's not enough, though, to learn the sounds and their associated symbols. You have to learn to recognize kanji and their meanings. This may be the biggest hurdle for English speakers learning to read Japanese, just because it's so different from the way we're programmed, the sounds being divorced from the pictograms as they are. I wouldn't be surprised to find that you could learn to read Japanese without ever being able to understand spoken Japanese (or produce it). There are many kanji that I recognize for their concept, but I have no idea how to pronounce them. Many kanji I've acquired through formal study have pronunciations I have not learned, and therefore the associations don't exist for spoken Japanese. I would not necessarily recognize the text for a sentence that I might understand when spoken. Finally, you have to learn to write Japanese. Again, this is complicated by kanji. In languages that have alphabets or syllabaries (like English or
Korean), you can build any word out of a relatively small set of simple characters. I have been typing a lot of Japanese lately, as I've been exchanging messages with my Japanese keypal. I've found that, with the web and a word processor that I can look up and produce kanji relatively quickly for “words” that I haven't learned to write yet. However, this is not at all the same thing as being able to write those kanji. Producing Japanese text using a word processor and a kanji dictionary is much more an application of reading than it is writing. Many of the kanji I use in my messages to my keypal I might be able to recognize (and maybe not that) by sight, but I would have no idea how to write them. Disregarding the fundamentals of stroke types and order, I might be able to sketch some shapes suggestive of the symbol, but it's unlikely that a person fluent in Japanese would be able to recognize it.

Until today, I thought there were two skills involved: speaking/understanding and reading/writing. Probably this is nothing new. Linguists, I'm sure, and researchers in second language acquisition have covered this ground before. There are times I despair that I'll never really know this language.

Typing Japanese requires learners to be able to recognize kanji but not to be able to produce it. Students learned to read some of new kanji characters while typing Japanese even though they did not learn to write new characters without handwriting them.

Theme Two: The E-Mail Reading Process

The second theme that emerged in this study was the e-mail reading process. This theme had two sub-themes. The first sub-theme was reading steps. The second sub-theme was time.

Reading Steps.

Before the first e-mail exchange started during the first semester of 2004, Dr. Kudo took her students to the Modern Language Department’s computer lab and instructed them to select and install Japanese language from the “regional and language options” in the control panel so they could type and read Japanese language. Dr. Kudo also instructed the students how to use the Rikai program
(Rudick, 2001) online. In order to use the Rikai program to find how to read kanji characters and their meanings, students first went to the website, http://www.rikai.com. Secondly, they selected “English to Japanese” at the top right part of the box on the page. Thirdly, they copied a Japanese message from their keypal and pasted it in the box on the top left. After they clicked on “Go,” they placed a mouse on kanji, and the pop-ups showed kanji readings and meanings as Figure 7 shows.

Figure 7: The Text Box to Paste Japanese Sentences on the Rikai Program

Figure 8 shows an example of the Rikai program showing how to read kanji with English translations.

Figure 8: Example of Kanji Readings and Meanings on the Rikai Program
When the students read e-mail messages from their Japanese keypals, they understood the messages using their knowledge and aids including the Rikai program. Alex, Lily, and Margaret read e-mail messages on the computer screen. Margaret copied the messages from her keypal and pasted them in the “Plain Text Reader” box of the Rikai program in order to learn how to read kanji characters and their meanings first. Margaret explained the next steps reading e-mail messages:

I go through that first and try to figure out the main words and phrases. Then, I’ll pick out the other words that I know from class. If there’s anything left over, I’ll look them up in the dictionary and try to figure them out from the context of the sentence.

Margaret received many new kanji from her keypal, but she could “look it up easily in Rikai.” Margaret used the Rikai program “a lot” because it was “easier” to find kanji readings and meanings “than trying to look it up” by paper dictionary. Rikai was “pretty helpful” for Margaret to comprehend Japanese messages.

Since Rikai did not show meanings of hiragana and many of katakana, Margaret could not completely depend on Rikai to understand Japanese words. Margaret guessed the meaning of new words “a few” times, but she looked up most of the unfamiliar words during first semester of 2004. Looking up words was not always a simple task for Margaret. Margaret said:

Japanese doesn’t leave spaces between words, so it’s hard for me sometimes to figure out where one word ends and one word begins. So, there’s a lot I have to look up different combinations of letters to make sure it’s a word or not.

When Lily read messages from her keypal, she read through the messages to see if she found words that she could understand. Then, Lily used
the Rikai program and her dictionary to understand words and kanji that were unfamiliar to her. Lily explained her reading process:

What I do first is I try to read its message first to see if there’s a word I understand. Then I used Rikai to check the kanji, read it again and write down the meaning of it, and try to make sense out of it. If there are words I don’t understand, I use a dictionary that I bought in school. There are words that I don’t understand, so I have to try to figure it out. Sometimes it’s hard because the dictionary doesn’t have everything. There are words that I haven’t learned yet, so I have to just guess what I understand and try to understand the whole message. If I can’t really guess, I have to ask Kudo-sensei.

Lily “was frustrated” when she read the first message from her keypal because she “only knew certain words and there was a lot of question marks about what” her keypal meant. Lily stated, “I sat there and read again and again, then I could figure out only some. At the same time, I was curious what my keypal was trying to say. I wanted to know.” Lily spent one hour and a half reading the first message. The message was:

リリーさんへ

Email ありがとうございました。とても読みやすい日本語でした。日本語は漢字やひらがな、カタカナを使うわけないといけないので難しいと思いますが、どうですか？

私のなまえはますい さちこです。私も大学二年生です。せんこうはしゃかい学です。私はならけんのかしはらというところに住んでいます。私の家族は七人家族で、父、母、おばあさん、2人の弟、妹と私です。私は二十歳ですよ。

私のすきなスポーツはサッカーとバレーボールです。スポーツを見るのもだいすきです。

ミッドウエスタン州は気おんがせっし15どぐらいなんですね。さむくないでですか？日本は20どぐらいでした。今日はともだちとカラオケに行っえて、うたをうたいました。アメリカにもカラオケありますか？リリーさんはどうして日本語をべんきょうしようと思ったのですか？私は、しょうらい世界中のくにに行ってしごとをしたいので英語をべんきょうしています。

ではまた email します。お元気で…
The highlighted words show kanji and the underlined words show hiragana that can be converted to kanji. The English translation of this message is:

Lily-san,
Thank you very much for your e-mail. Your Japanese was very easy to read. I guess Japanese is hard because you have to use kanji, hiragana, and katakana, but how do you think?
My name is Sachiko Masui. I am a sophomore, too. My major is sociology.
I live in a city named Kashihara in Nara Prefecture. There are seven people in my family, my father, mother, grandmother, two younger brothers, one younger sister, and me. I am 20 years old.
My favorite sports are soccer and volleyball. I love to watch sports, too.
You wrote that the temperature in Midwestern State was approximately 15 degrees Celsius. Are you cold? It was approximately 20 degrees in Japan.
I went to karaoke with my friends and sang songs today. Do you have karaoke in America, too?
Why did you want to study Japanese? I am studying English because I want to work in countries all over the world in the future.
I will e-mail you again. Take care…

Sachiko avoided kanji for the words that Lily did not write in kanji such as なまえ (name), せんこう (major), and せっし (Celsius). Although Sachiko intended to write a comprehensible message by avoiding difficult kanji, using less kanji made the message harder for Lily to comprehend than the message with a lot of kanji. The first reason for this was because Lily did not know where words began and ended with a lot of hiragana. Kanji can make readers identify important words. The second reason was that the Rikai program did not show meanings for hiragana. Therefore, Dr. Kudo asked the Japanese exchange student Ryoko to ask Japanese keypals to use a lot of kanji when writing messages.

Lily thought that reading Japanese messages was “challenging,” “hard,” and “complicated” because she did “not know anything about the online dictionary” and could “rely on only the dictionary” and the Rikai program. Lily said,
“Rikai really helped the kanji,” but “the bad part of it was that it didn’t show meanings for anything else but kanji.”

When Alex read Japanese e-mail messages, he read them by himself first before using dictionaries or the Rikai program. Just as Alex tried to think in Japanese to write e-mail messages, he wanted to read messages without English. Alex described his process of reading Japanese e-mail messages:

I just look at the message in my mail reader and the first thing I do is scan and look for kanji that I recognize. At the same time, I’m looking for hiragana sequences that look familiar as well. I find it, even though I don’t know many kanji, I like having the kanji because they break the sentences up, the structure of the message into chunks, and I know this part has some meaning. This part is probably a noun because there’s the は /wa/ particle and this part is probably a verb because there’s the conjugation after it, and these things with で /de/ and に /ni/ are the parts of speech, the adjective, adjectival phrases, and the verbal phrases. If I recognize the kanji, I start to work out from the kanji in the sentence to see what I can figure out. So, I don’t necessarily read top to bottom. I’m scanning top to bottom, but when I hit something that I recognize, I stop there and try to piece together the sentence working out from the kanji that I recognize. When I get to a point I can’t really make anything out anymore, I start scanning again looking for the next thing like that and I work through the whole message that way just trying to find little pieces that I can understand the meaning of.

Alex wrote long e-mail messages, and his keypal Mizuho wrote long messages back. Mizuho’s long messages included a lot of unfamiliar words and kanji. After he read messages by himself, he used the Rikai program or dictionaries in order to understand the parts that he did not understand. Alex explained:

When I’ve exhausted my ability to do read messages without aids, I will either use Rikai or if I see a kanji that is particularly interesting that I don’t recognize, I’ll look it up in my paper dictionary right away just to see what it is without moving he message into Rikai. Once I’ve done that and I’ve exhausted my ability to decipher the meaning of these parts, and often it’s just parts of sentences, it’s rarely a complete sentence because there are
almost always kanji that I don’t recognize it seems, I’ll paste it into Rikai
and try to do the same thing again and use Rikai only when I need to see
a meaning because I’m trying to think in Japanese and I don’t want the
English.

Alex said that “if I need the English, it’s nice that the Rikai program will
pop up and show me what the kanji means.” After Alex used his dictionary and
Rikai for a while, he tried to read the message without such aids again. Alex
stated:

Usually I can get 75 or 80% of the message just by reading it. If I see a
kanji I don’t know, hover over that with my mouse in Rikai and see the
meaning and go on. So, I think I can almost entirely read a message that
way. There will be a few phrases that are idiomatic that I don’t understand.
If my keypal didn’t, for example, translate a particular sentence of
hiragana into kanji and it’s a new word for me, I won’t recognize it and
Rikai won’t give it to me that way that maybe 20% of the message is that
way after I’m done with Rikai. While I’m working in Rikai, I read through it
once and try to get the overall meaning so that I can think about what was
actually said and then for the assignment. Once I read through it and think
I understand about 80% of it, I’ll start transcribing it into English. As I’m
transcribing it into English, if I hit that 20% or part of that 20% that I don’t
understand, I’ll try looking it up in a dictionary first and the online dictionary
I use works well for that because it will take hiragana and do a lookup on
that and give me a bunch of options. And again, the student dictionary I
have is pretty good for that because it only gives one option instead of 20
or 40. So, I’ll look and see if I can get something online first from my
electronic online dictionary and if I don’t see something obvious, I’ll switch
to the paper dictionary. Then, I found it interesting to if I still don’t
understand some idioms and I wish I could think of one right now that I
had trouble with…

Alex “found it useful to type romaji into Google and see what Google
comes up with for the romaji.” Alex said:

I’ve also tried google.co.jp with the hiragana sequence, but often it’s like a
rabbit hole and it keeps going. I could keep just looking up things and
trying to figure out what it’s saying. But it’s in Japanese, so it’s not helping
me get the meaning in English.
Alex “learned” to use the website, http://google.com, to see “how many times the English phrases are used in English text on the web.” Alex “just took that technique that (he) used for English and applied it to Japanese and romaji so that (he) can find it on English language pages and see some context for it.” Alex did “not often get a direct translation” from Google, but he “will often get a context that (he) might be able to discern a meaning from.” When Alex could not comprehend one sentence, he asked his colleague at work. Alex explained:

Where I work we have a Japanese language version of our software, so we have a Japanese person who is the translator... I’ve gone to him with one phrase. The phrase was in English, “I liked it so much I’d go back again,” that’s what I translated it to and it was もう一度 moichido (‘one more time’) was there and 好き suki (‘like’) was in there. I liked it as much as going back again was the literal translation. I had a really hard time parsing the Japanese. I couldn’t see the sub-clauses and how they fit together... My co-worker helped me parse it. He just showed me that it was saying like this as much as going back again and that cleared up my ability to parse. I said, “Oh, here’s this sub-clause and here’s this sub-clause and it all fits together this way.” I’ve only had to do that with that one phrase. I’ve also asked Kudo-sensei about 時に tokini (‘when’). I couldn’t find 時に tokini anywhere. 時に tokini in the context of something is going on, if something is going on, then I get up in the morning at such and such a time, 時に tokini I sleep until later. And I could find 時に tokini, but I didn’t understand how it fit together with に nil, 時に tokini and I asked Kudo-sensei about that.

Alex summarized the steps he took to read Japanese messages: “I go from just trying to read a message, to Rikai, to my dictionaries, to Google, and then I ask for help if I need to.”

Abby was the only student who did not read e-mail messages on the screen but read the printed messages. Abby first “blew up” the font of the messages so she could see Japanese characters well, printed them, and read them. Abby described the process she used to read Japanese e-mail:
What I usually do is I’ll sit down with a blank piece of paper and the message and I’ll see what I can read first just by myself. Even if I don’t know specific words that my keypal is using, I’ll see if I can understand what the conjugation is. I’ll see what she’s trying to say about the word or if I can read the words but not the conjugation. Then I will just write that down either on the e-mail itself or on a separate page. Often I’ll actually use different colored highlighters for sentences I understand all of, sentences I understand some of, and sentences I don’t understand at all. I’ll write that down and afterwards I’ll go to Rikai. I like using the computer program last just because it’s so less intensive. It requires me to interact more with the e-mail and learn the kanji and the conjugation if I’m using my dictionary or my own knowledge, whereas the computer just tells me like, “Hey, I put my mouse over it, so that means that.”

Figure 9 summarizes Japanese e-mail reading process that the Japanese students followed.
When the second-year Japanese students read Japanese e-mail messages, they encountered a lot of unfamiliar words and kanji. Margaret and Lily made most of the Rikai program in order to see how to read kanji and its meaning while Abby and Alex tried to use the program minimally.

The first message that Abby received from her keypal, Mariko, during the first semester of 2004 was:

こんにちは！
私のなまえは稲垣真理子（いながき まりこ）です。
Hello!
My name is Mariko Inagaki.
I am twenty years old. I am a sophomore in the Sociology Department at Tozai Gakuin University. I like to play the piano and make sweets. Because my age is close to yours, I think we will be good friends. My family members are my father, mother, elder brother, and me. I live in Hyogo Prefecture with my parents. My father is a company worker. My mother is a nurse. Her hobby is table tennis. My older brother is a graduate student and lives by himself. I would like to get to know you better by exchanging a lot of e-mails. Nice to meet you☆
I look forward to your next e-mail.

From the second time, Abby received messages including more kanji that Abby did not know partly because Japanese keypals were asked to use many kanji so the Japanese language learners could make use of the Rikai program. Another reason could be because Abby used more kanji as she read more e-mail messages. Mariko used kanji as naturally as writing to native speakers. The message was:
こんにちは☆アビーさんのメールを読んで、私もウニテに行ってみたいと思いました。私の育った町は明石（あかし）というところで、田舎でも都会でもないところです。私の町は海に近いので、タコやタイなどの新鮮な魚がたくさん売られています。明石焼きという食べ物が有名です。私の家の近くには、大きな映画館があります。私はいつもそこで映画を観ます。

私の大学は、西宮というところにあります。私の家からは少し遠いですが、私は毎日家から通っています。私は大学では社会学を学んでいます。今、私が興味をもっていることは、環境問題についてです。語学は英語とフランス語を勉強しています。

私は大学で英語研究部というクラブに入っています。主に英語のスピーチ大会やシンポジウムを開いて、英語を学んでいます。毎日忙しいですが、楽しんで英語を学んでいます。

それではまた次回のメールを楽しみにしています。
稲垣真理子

The highlighted words show kanji characters that were new to Abby. The English translation of the message is:

Hello☆After I read your e-mail, I want to visit Unity. The city where I grew up is called Akashi, which is not rural or urban. My town is getting cold recently, too.

Because my city is close to the ocean, a lot of fresh seafood such as octopus and sea bream is sold. The food called Akashiyaki (baked, soft octopus dumpling made by fish fumet, eggs, and flour) is famous. There is a big movie theater close to my house. I always go there when I see movies.

My university is in a city named Nishinomiya. It is a little far from my house, but I commute from my house everyday. I study sociology at university. I am interested in environmental issues now. As far as language learning, I am studying English and French. I belong to the English Language Learning Club at my university. We learn English mainly though speech contests and symposiums. I am busy everyday, but I enjoy learning English. I look forward to your next e-mail.

Mariko Inagaki

Abby said:

I received a fair amount of kanji back because I used a fair amount in my e-mails. Probably if I used less, my keypal would write me less, but I like learning them even if I’m not learning how to actually write them and
learning specific participle and even if I wouldn’t recognize a particular kanji.

When Abby encountered some of the new kanji, she told herself, “This kanji which I know has the same particle, one of the same particles in it as this kanji which I don’t know.” In this way, Abby “learned about kanji and where they came from.”

Time.

Students spent a lot of time reading messages from their Japanese keypals. It took a longer time for the students to read Japanese messages than to write because the messages from native speakers of Japanese included a lot of words and kanji that were unfamiliar to the learners. Students were sometimes “frustrated” to read Japanese messages when it took a long time to understand the meanings even though they found it “fun” at the same time. Margaret said:

It’s neat to see what I do know and how much I can pick out just from what I’ve learned in class. If I look up certain words, I can put it together and figure things out. It can be frustrating, too, if there’s a certain phrase that I can’t understand at all… Those get frustrating and it takes me a while to try and figure those out. If I get it pretty fast, it’s fun. But if it takes too long, I get a little frustrated with it.

The first message from Margaret’s keypal Chiemi during the first semester was:

マーガレットさんへ
はじめまして、私はまつざき ちえみです。メールありがとう(^_^)
私は大阪にすんでいます。私の家族は5人います。父は英語の先生です。
母は音楽の先生でしたが、今はもう教えていません。私の専攻は社会学です。
社会学はとてもおもしろいです。今はクラブ活動がとても忙しいです。
私はクラブで英語を勉強しています。英語が好きなので、将来は英語を使うことのできる仕事がしたいです。マーガレットさんの将来の夢は何ですか？
The highlighted words were new kanji for Margaret and underlined parts were new words and expressions. The words with highlights without underlines mean that Margaret knew the words in hiragana but not in kanji. The English translation of the message is:

Margaret-san,
How do you do? I am Chiemi Matsuzaki. Thank you for your e-mail (^_^) I live in Osaka. There are five people in my family. My father is an English teacher. My mother was a music teacher, but she is not teaching any longer. My major is sociology. Sociology is very interesting. My club activities are very busy now. I study English in my club. Because I like English, I would like to have a job that I can use English in the future. What is your future dream?

For example, Margaret knew the words 専攻 /senko/ ('major'), 社会学 /shakaigaku/ ('sociology'), and 勉強 /benkyo/ ('study') in hiragana but not in kanji.

When Margaret wrote her initial message to her keypal, she used the word for major, せんこう, in hiragana because she had not learned the kanji for the word yet. Margaret spent one hour and thirty-five minutes comprehending this message.

The third message that Margaret received during the first semester was long. It included 51 unfamiliar kanji and 23 new words or expressions. It took three hours and twenty minutes for Margaret to read this message:

マーガレットさんへ
返事遅くなって本当にごめんなさい！！！！本当に申し訳ないです。しばらくパソコンを開いていませんでした。なぜなら、クラブの役員の交代選挙があって、その準備で寝る暇もなかったからです。たくさんメールくれていたのにごめんなさい。
しばらく書けなかった分、今回はいっぱい書きたいと思います。まずマーガレットさんの質問に答えてたいと思います。私の行きたい都市は、東京です。なぜなら東京にはテレビに出ているような有名なお店がたくさんあるからです。先日、スピーチ大会に出るために東京に行ってきました。しか
し、時間がなくて、お店に行ったり観光することができませんでした。とても悔しかったです。だから次に行く時には、東京を思いっきり満喫したいです。
マーガレットさんはニューヨークが好きなんですね。私も行ってみたいです。今まで私は一度しか海外に行ったことがありません。だから、次にあってニューヨークは映画の中に出てくるようなものでしかありません。でもとても興味があります。いつか絶対行きたいです。その時は、マーガレットさんにニューヨークについてたくさん聞きます☆
私の冬休みはテスト勉強やクラブ活動、アルバイトをたくさんするのでとても忙しくなりそうです。マーガレットさんに質問です。アメリカには“お年玉”はありますか？日本では、お正月に大人が子ども達に少しのお金をあげます。私はもう20才なのできっともらえないでしょう。残念です。
そろそろ宿題をしなくてはいけません。またメールします☆日本もとても寒くなってきました。マーガレットさんも体調を崩さないように気をつけてください！

The English translation of the message is:

Margaret-san,
I am really sorry for the late reply!!! I am very sorry. I did not open my computer for a while. The reason was that there was a club officer election, and I did not even have time to go to bed for the preparation. I am sorry about that even though you sent me a lot of e-mails.
Because I could not write you for a while, I would like to write a lot this time. First of all, I want to answer your question. The city where I want to visit is Tokyo. The reason is because there are many famous shops shown on TV. The other day I went to Tokyo for a speech contest. However, I did not have time for shopping or sightseeing. It was very regrettable. When I go to Tokyo next time, I want to fully enjoy it.
Your favorite city is New York, isn’t it? I would like to visit there, too. I have traveled overseas only once. Therefore, New York is only what appears in the movies for me. However, I am very interested in the city. I would definitely like to visit there someday. When that time comes, I will ask you a lot of questions about New York.
It seems that I will be very busy studying for exams, attending club activities, and working part-time over winter break. I have a question. Do you have “otoshidama (‘money gift for New Years’)” in the United States? In Japan adults give some money to children. I am already 20 years old, so I am sure that I will not receive money. It is too bad.
I have to do my homework now. I will e-mail you again. It is getting cold in Japan, too. Please take care of yourself so you will not be sick!
Lily thought that reading Japanese e-mail messages was “hard.” It took “some time” for Lily to read Japanese e-mail messages. Lily stated:

I don’t think there’s an easy part of reading Japanese e-mail messages, but I guess since I like the e-mail exchange, I’m so interested and want to find out what my keypal means… It takes me to read English e-mails five minutes, but it takes me to read Japanese e-mails half an hour or longer. It takes me more time to figure out.

It took “a long time” for Abby to read Japanese e-mail messages and that can be frustrating and fun. Abby said:

It’s interesting. Sometimes reading Japanese messages gets really hard if I find a conjugation that I’ve never seen before. It’s just like I stare at it for a really long time… It gets frustrating when I know all the vocabulary in the sentence, but I have no idea what the sentence is saying. I had that happen to me a couple of times. But I definitely like it for that same kanji comparison thing. It wouldn’t be very fun just to sit with a dictionary and start comparing all the kanji. This way I’m seeing them used in a context and I’m motivated to know what they say, so I really like it. It’s fun.

Alex wrote a long message to his keypal when he sent his initial message. Probably because Alex’s initial message was long, his keypal Mizuho wrote him long messages. The first message from Mizuho was:

はじめまして、アレックスさん。私の名前は金森瑞穂（かなもりみずほ）といいます。こちらこそ、よろしくお願いします。返事がこんなに遅くなってしまってごめんなさい。まずは、楽しい写真つきのメールをありがとうございました。アレックスさんが家族の紹介してくださいので、私のことと、家族のことを少し紹介します。私は20歳の大学生です。東西学院大学に通っています。私は日本の真中にある岐阜（ぎふ）県出身です。しかし大学は兵庫（ひょうご）県にあるので、今は1人暮らしをしています。家族は6人家族です。祖父、祖母、父、母、兄と私がいます。それに犬が一匹います。名前は「ペイ」といいます。祖父と祖母は農業をしています。父は公務員、母は幼稚園の先生、兄は運輸会社で働いています。アレックスさんは日本語を勉強したり料理をするのが好きなんですね。どんな料理が得意なんですか？ぜひ教えてください！
Alex spent 30 minutes reading this message with a lot of new kanji (highlighted words) and new words or expressions (underlined words). The English translation of the message is:

How do you do? My name is Mizuho Kanamori. Nice to meet you, too. I am sorry that my response is so late.
First of all, thank you very much for your e-mail with fun pictures. Because you introduced your family, I will briefly introduce myself and my family. I am a 20-year-old college student. I go to Tozai Gakuin University. I am from Gifu Prefecture which is located in the middle of Japan. However, because my university is in Hyogo Prefecture, I live by myself now.
There are six people in my family. There are my grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, an elder brother, and me. Also, there is a dog. His name is "Bei." My grandfather and grandmother are farmers. My father is a civil servant, my mother is a kindergarten teacher, and my brother works at a transportation company.
You seem to like studying Japanese and cooking. What kind of cooking are you good at? Please let me know!
I like reading, traveling, and shopping. I do not like to study very much. However, my major sociology is interesting. Did you like to study when you were a student?
Well, I will try to reply sooner next time. I look forward to your reply.
Mizuho

Even though Alex spent a lot of time comprehending Japanese e-mail messages, he enjoyed reading messages and preferred to think about reading Japanese messages as challenging rather than difficult. Alex explained:

There are lots of new words and lots of new kanji. That’s the only thing that really makes it a challenge. If I start thinking of it in terms of challenge, it’s easier. It’s challenging to try and find the meaning of or use the context of the message to find the meaning of things that I don’t know. That’s the most challenging thing and I find that a lot of fun. And after that, looking things up is easy. Rikai makes things easy to look up, almost too easy. So, that’s the way I challenge myself when I read the message.
Alex emphasized his desire to read Japanese messages by thinking only in Japanese. Similar to his writing process, both Japanese and English cognitive process took place while reading. Alex said:

I don’t want to be told immediately what something that I don’t know meanings. I want to try and use the context to figure out what it means if I can. I want to try and understand it by thinking in Japanese… I don’t have maybe enough vocabulary and enough expressiveness in Japanese to be able to write about what my keypal is writing in Japanese. So, I have to also think in English at the same time and I have to translate it into English at the same time. So, I want to try and think in Japanese, but I have to think in English both at the same time again. So, there’s almost a dual process going on, trying to have a Japanese cognitive process and trying but at the same time having to have an English cognitive process and requiring that English process in order to understand everything that’s being written. It’s fun. It’s very much like solving a puzzle and I think that because I’m getting new phrases and new kanji with each message, I’m learning a lot, and that’s fun, too. That’s interesting for me. So, I haven’t found anything about it that I don’t like.

Dr. Kudo started to tell her students about the Rikai program a couple of years ago. Before she allowed her students to use Rikai, she had some students who felt burdened to exchange e-mails with Japanese students due to the difficulty of reading messages. Dr. Kudo said:

I don’t have such students this year and didn’t have last year, but I had some students who had a difficult time to read messages from their Japanese keypals or whose keypals wrote difficult sentences two or three years ago. I helped them read the messages individually like tutoring. Some of the students wondered why they were helped specially or if their Japanese proficiency was lower than their classmates. I also had some time for keypal reading time in the class. I let my students form pairs and helped each other read messages. When both partners did not understand, I told them in class. Then the students seemed to feel relieved psychologically that they were not the only people who did not understand messages or received difficult messages. (Translated from an interview in Japanese)

After Dr. Kudo’s students started to use Rikai, almost all of her students could comprehend Japanese e-mail messages over 80% by themselves. Dr.
Kudo told her students that they could ask for help from her, a Japanese exchange student or me in order to comprehend messages. Some of the past students often asked for Dr. Kudo and the Japanese exchange students helped, but the students this year rarely asked for help. Alex and Margaret asked me questions a couple of times, but Abby and Lily never asked me questions. Abby and Lily’s reflection sheets showed that they never asked others for help.

Students spent a lot of time reading e-mail messages. The students’ average time spent reading Japanese messages during the first semester of 2004 was 118.0 minutes. Table 5 shows the average reading time of each student.

Table 5: Average Time to Read Messages during the First Semester of 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Abby</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading time (Minutes)</td>
<td>141.25</td>
<td>127.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>141.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences Letters</td>
<td>18.5 sentences 422.25 letters</td>
<td>37.0 sentences 706.5 letters</td>
<td>16.5 sentences 322.5 letters</td>
<td>22.33 sentences 463.75 letters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average time spent reading Japanese messages during the second semester of 2005 was 106.3 minutes, which was 11.7 minutes shorter than the first semester. Table 6 shows the average reading time of each student:

Table 6: Average Time to Read Messages during the Second Semester of 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Abby</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading time (Minutes)</td>
<td>132.0</td>
<td>132.0</td>
<td>54.17</td>
<td>120.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences Letters</td>
<td>18.8 sentences 429.0 letters</td>
<td>31.2 sentences 704.4 letters</td>
<td>15.83 sentences 324.33 letters</td>
<td>21.5 sentences 512.0 letters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theme Three: The Learning Process

The third theme that emerged in this study was the learning process. This theme had two sub-themes. The first sub-theme was personal reflections. The second sub-theme was confidence in language.

Personal Reflections.

Students reflected and wrote short comments each time after they wrote and read Japanese e-mail messages. The personal reflections showed how the students enjoyed writing and reading messages. Abby and Alex enjoyed writing e-mail messages as they exchanged more e-mails with their keypals in Japanese. Margaret and Lily enjoyed writing e-mail messages as they became busier with other things including homework for other classes, part-time jobs, and club activities.

Margaret generally liked to write messages, but she did not enjoy writing greatly when she lacked time. Margaret "was a little rushed" when she sent her first e-mail message to her keypal because she "put off writing until the last minute." She "couldn't just have fun with writing" of the first e-mail due to that reason. Margaret wrote that "I learned I shouldn't procrastinate" to write e-mail messages on her first reflection sheet. Margaret enjoyed writing her second and third e-mail messages. She wrote that "I am getting more comfortable with the language, so it is fun to try and use it creatively" on her second writing reflection sheet. Margaret did "not enjoy writing" the last message during the first semester of 2004 "as much as the others because (she) had a lot of other homework (she) needed to do also, so it was a little rushed."
Margaret enjoyed writing her first message during the second semester of 2005 even though she "had to look up more than normal which got tedious after a while." During the rest of the second semester, Margaret enjoyed writing Japanese e-mail messages less. After Margaret wrote the second message during the second semester, she wrote on her second writing reflection:

There were a lot of things I wanted to say but didn't know how, so my letter was pretty simple, even though I didn't really want it to be. I felt my e-mail sounded very elementary, but I don't know enough to make it more interesting. I looked up words but wasn't sure if the usage was the same in Japanese as it was in English, and I didn't want to get it wrong.

Margaret's third reflection showed that "I don't know what to say and it takes so long to figure how to say something." Margaret "tried to use new words and phrases, but they didn't apply to what (she) was writing" in the message. Margaret said, "Because I only know basic Japanese, I always feel my messages sound very plain and simple. I would like to say more, but I don't want to make a lot of mistakes and not be understood at all." Margaret's fourth reflection included that "I have a lot of other homework so I tried to write it quickly." Margaret "still tried to use some of the new grammar even though the message was simple and short." Margaret mentioned, "I don't have very much to say to my keypal, so I'm just writing the same types of things or really basic things."

Margaret felt that she was "writing the same types of things." For example, Margaret wrote about her favorite book, Harry Potter, three times. She wrote about Harry Potter in her second message during the first semester:

千江美さん、
こんにちは。お元気ですか。今日の天気雨です。日本の天気はどうですか。私の読むのが大好きです。だから、たくさん本が好きです。子供の本が一番好きでしょう。私は未来に本を書きたいです。楽しいと思います。私の
一番好きな本の一冊はハリーポッターです。千江美さん、読んだことがありますか。とてもよかったです。どきどきさせると面白いいと思います。映画もよかったです。千江美さん、何本が一番好きですか。私も映画を見るのが好きです。スター・ウォーズ(Star Wars)は一番好きな映画です。五月に新しい映画を見たいです。千江美さん、が好きですか。手紙を待っています。

マーガレット

The English translation of the message is:

Chiemi-san,
Hello. How are you? The weather is rainy today. How about the weather in Japan?
I love to read. So, I like a lot of books. I like children’s books the best. I would like to write books in the future. I think it is fun. One of my favorite books is Harry Potter. Have you read it? It was very good. It is fun when stories capture my attention in such a compelling way that I became totally involved in the plot.
I also like to watch movies. My most favorite movie is Star Wars. I want to see a new movie in May. What is your favorite? I am waiting for your mail.
Margaret

Margaret wrote about Harry Potter in her fifth message during the second semester:

千江美さん、
こんにちは。メールをありがとうございました。ミッドウエスタンシティの天気は今日雨と曇りです。でも、私はもうすぐコロラドに帰ります。コロラドの気はちょっと涼しいそうです。良い気と思います。千江美さん、お元気ですか。私はとても忙しいです。昨日英語のクラスにレポートを三つ書かなければなりませんでした。それから、明日日本語のテストがあります。大変です。でも、テストの後、春休みが始まります。千江美さん、クラスはどうですか。私は子供の本をかきたいです。ハリーポッターが大好きなので、J. K. Rowlingは一番好きな作家です。私も Roald Dahlや Beverly Clearyが好きです。千江美さん、知っていますか。子供の本は楽しくてどきどきさせるとおもいます。では、私はもうすぐメッセージを書きます。

マーガレット

The English translation is:
Chiemi-san,
Hello. Thank you for your e-mail. The weather in Midwestern City is rainy and cloudy today. But I will go back to Colorado soon. I heard that the weather in Colorado is a little cool. I think that is a good weather. How are you? I am very busy. I had to write three papers for my English classes yesterday. Also, I will have a Japanese exam tomorrow. It is hard. But spring break will begin after exams. How are your classes? I would like to write children’s books. Because I love Harry Potter, my most favorite author is J. K. Rowling. I also like Roald Dahl and Beverly Cleary. Do you know them? I think children’s books are fun and exciting. I will write a message soon.
Margaret

Margaret wrote about Harry Potter in her last message again:

千江美さん。
こんにちは。お元気ですか。こんねんメールを送ってありがとうございました。私は日本のつえて、新しい情報を習いました。楽しかったです。千江美さん、夏に日本語か英語でメールを送り続けたいですか。忙しいのに、私は続けたいです。千江美さんのメッセージは面白いです。私は夏休みに三週間ロンドンに行って、Shakespeareを勉強します。楽しいでしょう。旅行の後、七月に一番友達の結婚式に行くつもりです。とても楽しくて、してくれでしょう。ハリーポッターが大好きなので、私は新しい本を買いたいです。興奮しています。千江美さん、夏何をするつもりですか。
お返事待ってえます。
マーガレット

The English translation is:

Chiemi-san,
Hello. How are you? Thank you very much for sending me e-mails this year. I learned new information about Japan. It was fun. Would you like to continue exchanging e-mails either in Japanese or English in summer? Even though I am busy, I want to continue. Your messages are interesting. I will go to London and study Shakespeare for three weeks in summer. It will be fun. After the trip, I am going to go to my best friend’s wedding. It will be very fun and beautiful. Because I love Harry Potter, I want to buy a new book. I am excited. What are you going to do in summer? I am waiting for your reply.
Margaret

Margaret wrote about her volleyball twice to her keypal. Margaret’s second e-mail during the first semester was:
ちえみさん、
お元気ですか。今日の天気は晴れです。暖かいと良いです。
私はクラスが五つあります。私の好きなクラスは文学です。私は今モービデイク (Moby Dick)を勉強します。おもしろいです。つまらないので、
私は健康のクラスが好きじゃないです。
ちえみさんの好きなクラスは何ですか。
私はクラスに行った後、図書館でアルバイトをします。そして、二時間バレーボールの練習をします。
たくさん走るので、たいって練習が大変です。でも、練習も楽しいです。
私は練習した後、ぱんこはんを食べたり、宿題をしたり、テレビを見たりします。ちえみさん、クラスに行った後、何をしますか。
では、もうすぐ英語でてがみを書きます。
マーガレット

The English translation is:

Chiemi-san,
How are you? Today’s weather is sunny. I hope it is warm.
I have five classes. My favorite class is American literature. I study Moby Dick. It is interesting. I don’t like my health class because it is boring.
What is your favorite class?
After I go to classes, I work in the library part-time. Then I practice volleyball for a couple of hours.
Because I run a lot, the practice is usually hard. But I enjoy the practice.
After I practice volleyball, I eat dinner, do my homework, and watch TV.
What do you do after going to classes?
I will write you in English soon.
Margaret

Margaret wrote about her volleyball in her third message during the second semester:

千江美さん、
こんにちは。今日の天気はミッドウエスタン州で雨と曇りです。とても蒸し暑いので、私は天気が好きじゃないです。コロラドで、雪が多いです。
空港と道路は閉まられます。でも、春コロラドで雪は典型的です。千江美さん、日本の天気はどうですか。
私のメッセージは遅くなってすみません。とても忙しいです。春休み以来、午前六時に私はバレーボールのチームとフットボールのチームとエアロビクスのクラスがあります。私達は走ったり飛んだりします。楽しくないです。私も毎日バレーボールの練習があります。だから、今とても疲れています。
千江美さん、休みはどうですか。何をしましたか。五週だけ私の夏休みまであります。私はもう来年に興奮しています。大学がもう一年だけあります。バレーボールのチームは強いです。私達はゲームをするためにシカゴに行きます。楽しいです。でも、バレーボールが終わっていた後、私はとても悲しいです。終わりたくないです。千江美さん、来年に何をしますか。私はもうすぐ英語でメッセージを書きます。
マーガレット

The English translation is:

Chiemi-san,
Hello. Today's weather in Midwestern State is rainy and cloudy. Because it is very hot and humid, I do not like the weather. Colorado has a lot of snow. The airport and roads are closed. But it is typical to have snow in Colorado in spring. How is the weather in Japan?
I am sorry that my message is late. I am very busy. I have a volleyball team, a football team, and aerobics classes at 6:00 a.m. since Spring. We run and jump. It is not fun. I also have volleyball practice everyday. So, I am very tired now.
How is your break? What did you do? I have only five weeks until summer vacation. I am already excited about next year. I have one more year in college. My volleyball team is strong. We will go to Chicago to play a volleyball game. It is fun. But after I finish playing volleyball, I will be very sad. I do not want to finish playing. What are you going to do next year? I will write you a message in English soon.
Margaret

Margaret felt "rushed to get the assignment turned in, so it's harder to enjoy." Because she had a lot of other homework, she tried to keep her e-mail "simple so it wouldn't take so long" when she sent her fifth message to her keypal.
Margaret did not enjoy writing her last e-mail and wrote that "I have a lot of other things I need to do, so I couldn't focus on the message." Margaret "came up with some phrases that (she) wanted to use, such as 'learned a lot about Japan.'"
However, Margaret gave up using the phrase and "had to change because (she) couldn't figure out how to say it." Margaret said that the e-mail exchange "was kind of an assignment. It got tedious after a while because I had other work that I had to do. It became more forced than fun."
Alex expressed his interest in e-mail communication during the second interview at the end of the first semester:

I was interested in the subject to start with and I still am. If there’s a difference emotionally, it’s that I have an appreciation for my keypal taking the time to read my message and respond to it. I am grateful to her taking that time… and being interested enough to want to do it.

Alex enjoyed writing and reading Japanese messages. After Alex wrote his first message during the first semester, he reflected that “It was fun trying to think in Japanese and looking up expressions we have not yet learned.” When Alex wrote his second message, he reflected that “Along with communicating with my keypal, it’s like a puzzle I’m trying to solve.” Alex said, “I spend most of the time trying to figure out how to say what I want to say.” Alex did not enjoy writing his third message because he “was a little rushed and… just stuck in some things that were required by the assignment.” Even though Alex was rushed, he spent two hours writing this long message. Alex’s third message to his keypal Mizuho was:

瑞穂さんへ、
おはよう。お元気ですか。木の葉は今ほとんど散りました。でも、ちょっととあたたかいでした。瑞穂さんは大丈夫ですか。風邪はわるくなかったんですか。

イギリスに行くことがありましたか。ほんとう。すごいですね。私たちは2000年にヨークシルやロンドンに行きました。そして、2002年にコーンワルやロンドンに行きました。ウェブサイトに写真があります。（写真へのリンク）キングアーサーの物語は面白いと思うので、キングアーサーのサイトを見たかったです。瑞穂さんはキングアーサーを知っていませんか。すごい旅行でした。私もイギリスに帰るのが好きです。瑞穂さんはイギリスでどこに行くことがありますか。

夏私は日本に行った時、妻のジュリーはイギリスにいました。ヨークシルにサザン州立大学の学生と大学の図書館を戻していました。
ロンドンが好きですが、京都や奈良も好きです。アトランタも、違うので、私は全部に行きたいです。ニューオリエンツに行ったことがあるので、あそこに行きたいです。
ミッドウエスタン州のミッドウエスタンシティはいい都市です。余りに大きいじゃないですが、余り小さいじゃないです。人は2万5千人ぐらいです。余りに大きいじゃないので、自転車にスーパーか大学かオフィスに乗るのが易しいです。大学なので、たくさん文化的な行事があります。冬は寒いです。そして、夏は暑いです。秋と春はちょっと短いでしょう。でも、この秋はとてもいいと思います。瑞穂さんの故郷について、教えてください。
先週末映画のたけしきたのの「ざといち」を見ました。楽しい映画ですが、とても乱暴ですね。瑞穂さんは見たことがありますか。
木曜日はサンクスギビングデーです。私の母はテキサスから来ます。そして、弟の家族もミッドウエスタンシティの近くのセントラルタウンから来ます。たいてい大きい食事を作ります。でも、台所を直すので、私達はレストランで食べています。
では、またもうすぐ書きます。アメリカの旅行の勧めがあって、教えたいです。返事を楽しみにしています。
アレックス

The English translation of the message is:

Mizuho-san,
Good morning. How are you? Almost all leaves are gone now. However, it was a little warm. Are you okay? Was your cold severe?
You wrote that you have been to England. Really? It sounds great. We went to Yorkshire and London in 2000. Also, we went to Cornwall and London. There are pictures on a website. (A link to pictures) Because I think King Arthur’s story is interesting, I wanted to see the site. Do you know King Arthur? It was a great trip. I like to go back to England, too. Where in England did you visit?
When I was in Japan, my wife Julie was in England. She returned to a university library in Yorkshire with Southern State University students. I like England, but I like Kyoto and Nara, too. I like Atlanta, too. Because they are different, I want to visit all of these cities. Because I have never been to New Orleans, I want to visit there.
Midwestern City, Midwestern State is a good city. It is not very big but not very small. The population is approximately 225,000 people. Because it is not very big, it is easy to ride a bike to grocery stores, universities, and my office. Because it is a college town, there are many cultural events. Please tell me about your hometown.
I watched “Zatoich” by Takeshi Kitano. That is a fun movie, but it is very violent. Have you seen this?
This Thursday is Thanksgiving Day. My mother will come to Midwestern City from Texas. Also, my brother’s family will come to Midwestern City from Central Town. We usually cook big meals. However, because I will remodel our kitchen, we are going to eat at a restaurant. Well, I will write you soon. I have recommendations for trips to the U.S. I look forward to hearing from you.
Alex

Alex added an English message:

PS:
How did your club elections go? It’s interesting that you are involved in a club learning English. I’m afraid my Japanese ability isn’t good enough to be able to debate and discuss anything, though I keep trying. What sorts of discussions do you have in ESS?
When I was in college, I was in the fencing club. We could practice two or three times a week, and competitions on the weekend. Sometimes we competed against other universities. Sometimes we would travel to competitions with fencers from all over the country. It was hard work, but fun.
Now, I am the local organizer of a “Japanese Language Meetup” here in Midwestern City. Meetups are groups of people interested in a particular topic who organize meetings using the website “meetup.com.” We get together for conversation in Japanese. Many of the people who come are Japanese, so sometimes the conversation goes beyond my ability to comprehend.
Take care.

Alex spent two hours writing this message. He reflected that “たのしかったです (‘It was fun’).” Alex added: “I was a little rushed, so I don’t think I did as good a job as I should have.” Alex commented, “I keep thinking there are things I want to express and all I need is the correct verb form.” Alex “found a website that does a decent job with verbs because (he) didn’t have (his) verb book” on that day. At the end of the first semester, Alex said that he even thought about writing Japanese e-mail messages at work:

I wouldn’t tell anybody at work this, but I spend more time at work thinking about how or even writing what I’m going to write than I probably should. When I’m working, if I start the message the night before and I don’t finish
it, the next morning at work I’ll pull it up and work on it instead because it’s fun and interesting.

Alex still enjoyed writing messages during the second semester. Alex said that he “had fun puzzling out how to say things like, ‘I thought I would not be able to write’” after he wrote the first message during the second semester. Alex’s message was a little shorter and included a few more errors than usual probably because he did not type Japanese during the winter break, and his lap top computer was out of order:

瑞穂さんえ、きれいなよる。そして、僕はきっさえんでかきます。ご無沙汰おりあます。僕のラップトップは冬休みに壊れたので、日本語のメールやや書けませんでした。でも、仕事で新しいラップトップを借りました。だから、またメールを書けます。
瑞穂さんの冬休みはどうですか。僕の冬休みはやっぱり静かでした。私達はクリスマスに隣の人のうちに行って、歌を歌ったりDVDの「Lord of the Rings: Return of the King」を見たりすしやピザやケーキを食べたり話したりしました。とても楽しかったです。後に、仕事に旅行をしなければなりませんでした。アラバマ州のハンツヴィルに一週間行きました。たくさんミチングがありました。面白かったです。でも、忙しかったので、ハンツヴィルを見られませんでした。でも、ホテルはよかったです。僕は多分二月から三月ハンツヴィルに帰って、NASAの物館やハンツヴィルのダウンタウンを見たいです。
瑞穂さんが冬休みに旅行をしましたか。どこに行きましたか。
では、これをおくるほうがいい。来週また書きます。返事を楽しみにしています。
アレックス

The English translation of the message is:

Mizuho-san,
Beautiful night. I am writing at a coffee shop. It has been a long time.
Because my laptop computer was broken over winter break, I could not write Japanese e-mails. I thought I would not be able to write this e-mail. However, I borrowed a new laptop at work. So, I can write e-mails again.
How was your winter break? My winter break was quiet as I guessed. On Christmas we went to our neighbor’s house, sang songs, saw “Lord of the Rings: Return of the King,” ate sushi, pizza, and a cake, and talked. I had
a good time. Later I had to go to a business trip. I went to Huntsville, Alabama for a week. There were many meetings. It was interesting. However, because I was busy, I could not see Huntsville. But the hotel was good. Perhaps I will go back to Huntsville in February or March and want to see the NASA Museum and downtown Huntsville.

Did you travel during winter break? Where did you go?
Well, it is better to send this. I will write you next week again. I look forward to your response.
Alex

Alex added an English message:

PS:
I was surprised by the assignment I received from my company, which led me to go to Alabama. On the other hand, it’s a good assignment with lots of responsibility.
Take care.
Alex

When Alex spent two hours and a half writing his second message, he was “a little busy, so it felt somewhat rushed.” However, Alex enjoyed writing his third message because he “had interesting things to write about.” Alex visited his father for Easter in Virginia and wrote a message from there, so he had interesting stories about an Easter basket for his daughter or the book that he was reading. Alex “thought about spring in Japan and *hanami* (cherry flower viewing) vs. spring in the United States and Easter” when he wrote the message. Alex truly enjoyed his fourth and fifth messages, too.

After Alex wrote his fourth message, he reflected that “It was fun to write about the ducks” that he saw in a little pond near his company. He discovered that “‘science fiction’ can be expressed as a series of kanji, which includes the kanji translated as ‘novel.’” After Alex wrote about his high school life in his fifth message, he said, “It was kind of fun to wax nostalgic about high school in
Japanese.” Alex wished “it were easier to go back and read” what he had written. When Alex wrote the last message to his keypal, he enjoyed it but “it was a little rushed.” Alex was supposed to write about his plans for summer vacation, but he did not have many plans for the summer. Therefore, Alex “had to think hard to have enough to write about.”

One of the reasons Alex sometimes needed to rush to write messages to his keypal during the second semester was because of the difference between American and Japanese university vacations. It was less of a priority for Alex to write messages when Mizuho’s spring break began. Because the Japanese academic year started in April, Japanese college students had a long break before their school year began. Mizuho’s responses were delayed when she went to camp and on a trip. One day Alex wrote in his web log during the second semester:

I’m working on my essay for the Central University Japanese essay contest. It’s coming along, but I still have… work to do… one to finish composition, one to write it out longhand. (Is it longhand, if I’m writing in Japanese?) Penmanship (brushmanship?) is one of the criteria on which it will be judged. I was considering brushing it, but I think that will end up taking too much time. I’ll have to see… I desperately need to write and send a message to my keypal, Mizuho-san… In fact, I think it’s more important that I get that done than write the essay for the contest. I should do that tonight.

Lily moderately enjoyed writing messages to her keypal. Lily only occasionally wrote comments about her writing. Lily “thought it was interesting” that they “could contact someone over in Japan.” Lily reflected that she liked “to e-mail and learn more about Japanese culture” and that she enjoyed writing the
e-mails. Because Lily often came to class late due to a schedule conflict and always left class in a hurry, it was hard to talk with her about writing messages. When Lily wrote her third and fourth e-mail messages, she did not enjoy writing because she had the flu. She missed her Japanese classes and wrote that she was ill in her messages. Her third e-mail message was:

Miss Masui,
Today is November 17th. It is Thursday. The weather is rainy. The temperature is approximately 40 degrees Fahrenheit. How are you? I am a little (sick). I feel sick. So, I want to go to my classes. However, I will not go. Also, I am busy. What are you going to do over winter break? Are you going to make a trip? I am going to travel this year. I am planning to go to Canada. I like traveling. I traveled to China, Vietnam, and Austria. Because it is raining, I cannot play tennis today. Also, I will see a movie. I will send an e-mail on November 30th. Take care........

Lily added an English message:

Hi this is the Japanese email that I was supposed to send it to you on the 16, but due to the computer problems that I had and I didn’t come to class that day, I am sending this now). I hope you have a good day. I’m looking forward to your next email.

Lily spent an hour writing this message. Her fourth e-mail was:

Hello, it is December 9th. It is Thursday. The weather is cloudy. The temperature is about 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

The English translation of the message is:

Miss Masui,
Today is November 17th. It is Thursday. The weather is rainy. The temperature is approximately 40 degrees Fahrenheit. How are you? I am a little (sick). I feel sick. So, I want to go to my classes. However, I will not go. Also, I am busy. What are you going to do over winter break? Are you going to make a trip? I am going to travel this year. I am planning to go to Canada. I like traveling. I traveled to China, Vietnam, and Austria. Because it is raining, I cannot play tennis today. Also, I will see a movie. I will send an e-mail on November 30th. Take care........
ますいさんお元気ですか。私はちょっと。私はきぶんがわるいんです。たから学校を休みました。クリスアス何をするよていですか。私は旅行する。カナダに行くよていです。私はクリスマスイブ好きです。私もプレゼント好きです。私はうつもプレゼントをばいもらいます。Because 誕生日 is on the 24th。
私は十一月三十日に email をおくります。お元気で。。

The English translation of the message is:

Miss Masui,
Today is December 9th. It is Thursday. The weather is cloudy. The temperature is approximately 30 degrees Fahrenheit. How are you? I am a little (sick). I feel sick. So, I missed school. What are you going to do over Christmas? I will travel. I am going to go to Canada. I like Christmas Eve. I like presents, too. I always receive double presents. That is because my birthday is on the 24th. I will e-mail you on November 30th. Take care.

Lily added an English message:

This is my 4th email will you please reply to it as soon as possible because I need to turn it in before my final day. Thank you very much. Since I have the flu, I missed a few days of classes, so I'm kind of behind everybody else. I'm really happy to have you as a keypal and exchange messages with you this couple of past month and I hope we will continue to keep in touch after this. I will write to you more after I finish with all my finals. I shall see you later.

Lily used some of the same sentences in her fourth message as her third message possibly because she had the flu and became behind in classes. Lily spent 45 minutes writing this e-mail. When Lily's keypal Sachiko received the third message, she did not know that Lily was very sick. Sachiko responded:

リリーさんへ
お元気ですか？私はとても元気です。一人でくらすことにも慣れてきまし た。もうすぐ冬休みです。私はともだちと東京ディズニーランドに行くで しょう。リリーさんはディズニーランドに行ったことがありますか？ 私も旅行は好きです！しかし、私は今まで海外にはシンガポールにしか行 ったことがありません。いつかアジアやカナダ、もちろんアメリカにも行 きたいです。リリーさんの好きなアメリカの観光地はどこですか？教えて ください。
最近はとても寒くなってきました。リリーさんも体にきをつけてください。
返事楽しみにしています。
ますい さちこ

The English translation of the message is:

Lily-san,
How are you? I am very fine. I am getting used to living by myself. Winter break is coming soon. I will go to Tokyo Disneyland with my friends. Have you been to Disneyland?
I like traveling, too! However, Singapore is the only country where I have traveled overseas. Someday I want to go to Asian countries, Canada, and America, of course. Where are your favorite American places for sightseeing? Please let me know.
It is getting very cold recently. Please take care of yourself.
I look forward to your response.
Sachiko Masui

Sachiko learned that Lily was still sick when she received the next message. Sachiko wrote:

リリーさんへ
きぶんがわるいのはなおりましたか？気温がかし30度くらいというのは、せっしでいうと何度なんですか？日本は気温を“せっし”であらわすのでなかなかイメージしにくいです。
リリーさんはもうすぐ誕生日なんですね！！私は9月28日です。クリスマスにはどんなプレゼントをもらう予定ですか？
私は新しい服がほしいです。リリーさんはカナダに行く予定なんですね。
うらやましいです。私は今のところ予定はないです。でも、ケーキをおいっぱい食べたいです。
クリスマスを楽しくすごすためにも早く元気になってください。私は明日から部活の用事で東京に行きます。楽しみです♪東京は日本の中で一番都会なので、わくわくしています。

The English translation of the message is:

Lily-san,
Are you feeling better? How many degrees Celsius is approximately 30 degrees Fahrenheit? Because we use Celsius for temperature in Japan, it is hard for me to understand Fahrenheit.
So, your birthday is coming soon!! Mine is September 28th. What presents are you expecting to receive on Christmas?
I want new clothing. You are planning to go to Canada, aren’t you? You are very lucky. I do not have plans at this time. However, I would like to eat a lot of cakes.
Please get well soon so you could enjoy your Christmas. I will go to Tokyo for my university club from tomorrow. I am looking forward it. Because Tokyo is the most urban city in Japan, I am excited.

Sachiko added an English message:

How are you, Lily san? I hope you can be [get] well as soon as possible!! I'm fine on all seasons! I really want to give my power [energy]!! Recently our university right [light] up the Christmas tree!! If I can, I send the picture to you.
I'm also enjoy(ing) key pal project. I also want to continue to keep exchanging email!!! I'll send email as much as possible.
Then, I hope you can welcome your birthday and Christmas with good condition.
Have a nice weekend.
Sachiko Masui

Lily indicated that she did not enjoy writing the third and fourth messages even though she said, "I enjoy contact with my keypal." On her fourth writing reflection sheet, she added that "Japanese language sometimes can be complicated." Lily said:

I do enjoy the e-mail exchange, but I don't have time for it because the only way that I have access to the Japanese e-mail is just the language lab. Then I always have classes and everything else, so I don't really have time to write in Japanese. I don't have the program to exchange Japanese e-mails at home.

At the end of the e-mail exchange, Dr. Kudo thought that the Japanese e-mail exchange seemed to burden Lily. Lily's overall Japanese performance and proficiency declined partly due to the long period of illness during the first semester of 2004. Lily always looked busy. Lily was always doing homework for her Japanese or other classes before Japanese classes began when Lily came to class early.

The second-year Japanese students made some suggestions for future foreign language learners including their opinions about sharing e-mail messages
with their peers. Lily thought that e-mail communication should be done “individually” instead of sharing with others. Margaret did not want to share her e-mails with others, either. Margaret stated:

Personally, I don’t like sharing e-mail messages with my classmates just because I don’t like to share, but I could see how they’re using the language, too, like if they had something to say. It’s not necessarily private, but it’s just my personality. I’m not a big sharer, but I could see where it would be helpful. If you did require it, I wouldn’t object to it. I would do it.

Alex “was not sure what the benefit” of sharing messages with the class at first. Then, he thought that “that might be good” to share “a particularly interesting phrase, sentence, or subject to talk about” with his classmates. Therefore, he “wouldn’t have any problem sharing (his) messages if the class was interested in them.”

Abby said that sharing messages in the class “would very much depend on the student.” Abby described:

I don’t say anything particularly personal because I’ve known my keypal for ten e-mails. It’s not really a long-term, intimate relationship, but it may be interesting if there was a cultural part that was required to speak about them. Maybe they would do a report on that... That might get a little weird. I told my keypal about how I lived in Maine and raised dairy goats... All four of us in the second-year Japanese class write very different things in our e-mails... It’s like we’re all over the place. I’m here discussing television and dairy goats and Alex is doing much more professional things... So, it would be hard... But if there was something comparing cultures or something, then maybe they could discuss that in class like, “Okay, here’s your cultural section that you were supposed to do with your keypal. What did you say and what did your keypals say back to you?”

Confidence in Language.

When students wrote their initial e-mail messages, they were not completely confident in their Japanese writing. They reflected on the challenges
when they completed their reflection sheets. After Alex wrote his first message, he wrote:

> It feels difficult to be expressive in simple, declarative sentences. I worry some about writing words or expressions we haven't learned in class correctly… It was a little difficult to fit my thoughts into Japanese.

The hardest part of writing Japanese messages for Abby was “probably not being to able to say what (she) wanted to say.” Abby felt she was “writing very caveman sentences just like ‘me do’ and ‘me like to do.’” It took Abby “more time to figure out how to express what (she) wanted to say than anything else.” On her first writing reflection sheet, Abby wrote that “My poor keypal is going to think I am absolutely insane because I'm not entirely sure how to express some things” and “I still don’t quite understand particles (postpositions).” Abby “had a hard time making sentences that expressed multiple things.” Margaret discovered that she had “a very limited vocabulary and understanding of grammar.”

The second-year Japanese students developed their confidence in their use of Japanese as they wrote and read more Japanese messages. Alex was “more confident” at the end of the first semester:

> I may look at the dictionary less because I'm more confident. I’ve learned to recognize more kanji through writing and reading… I can see when I’ve got the right one more often now than before.

Margaret was a busy student maintaining high grades in her classes, practicing and playing volleyball on the university’s volleyball team, and working part-time in the library. She suggested that “the keypal project should be more towards the middle than the beginning of the semester just because homework
builds up at the end and it just gets lost." Even though Margaret enjoyed writing
Japanese messages less during the second semester than the first semester,
she said:

It's easier to write because a lot of the structure is more natural than it was
first semester. A lot of things that we learned first semester seemed
awkward then I've kind of gotten used to. But I still think simple because I
don't try a lot of new things that I don't know how to say.

Lily said that she did "not know how to explain it," but she became more
"used to" write e-mail messages as she wrote more. "When I get closer to my
keypal, I get to know that person more, so I have more things to say." At the
same time, Lily "thought it was hard to type in Japanese." Lily enjoyed writing her
initial and second e-mail messages. Lily wrote, "I like to e-mail and learn more
about Japanese culture" on her second writing reflection sheet.

Abby could write messages "probably faster both in typing and looking
things up in the dictionary" as she wrote more Japanese messages. When Abby
sent her first e-mail to her Japanese keypal, she "had a hard time making
sentences that expressed multiple things." Abby enjoyed the e-mail exchange
moderately. After she wrote her second message to her Japanese keypal, she
felt that she could not "really say what (she) needed to or wanted to." She felt
that her problem was mostly "trying to find the right kanji connected with the word
(she) was trying to use." Even though Abby still thought she "couldn't really say
what (she) wanted to," she enjoyed writing her second, third, and fourth e-mail
messages. On her fourth writing reflection sheet she wrote, "I have fun trying to
figure out how to say what I want… I'm not sure how to make things sound
exciting."
The students tended to understand better and to guess more during the second semester than the first semester. Abby’s reading process was “pretty much the same pattern,” but she used her dictionary less to comprehend messages during the second semester than the first semester. Abby explained:

I definitely understand a lot more now, especially when in kanji, I don’t quite have to do the same in-depth thing as I used to because I can usually nowadays recognize at least one radical so that kind of gives me an idea about what the actual kanji might mean, so I’ll take a wild guess. I’ll read the rest of the sentence and like “Okay, it has that radical in it, which means whatever and I know it’s this. Let’s see if it’s this word,” and then I’ll see if I’m right, but a lot of it is now more just guessing. I’m not always right. Sometimes I will have to count the stroke orders and then go through (looking up kanji meanings using a kanji dictionary), and I feel, “Whoa, this takes forever.” But I still do try to stay away from Rikai as much as possible just because I don’t think I learn as well if I stick it in the computer and put the mouse over it.

Abby “would try to read” without Rikai “as much as” she could. Abby said, “If I had a sentence with a kanji or two or three that I didn’t know, I would read as much of the sentence that I could so I would have it out on my computer.”

Alex also used his dictionary less during the second semester than the first semester. Alex stated:

I try harder not to look at the dictionary and try to gain the meaning through the context just because it goes faster and maybe I’m learning more that way. But I go through and if there are places that I’m not sure of, I’ll check that against the dictionary.

Even though Alex used his dictionary less frequently during the second semester than the first semester, he used the Rikai program more because his keypal Mizuho wrote more complicated messages during the second semester than the first semester. Alex said:

This semester the messages are more complicated and the kanji are clearly things that I’ve never seen before often, so using Rikai is almost
required to get anything out. If a sentence has kanji that I haven’t seen before, I’m not even going to try because I can’t. I have to run through it with Rikai.

The second message from Alex’s keypal Mizuho included many new words and expressions that were new to him. A paragraph of Mizuho’s message describing hay fever included a lot of unfamiliar words and expressions. The underlines show Alex’s new words or expressions and the highlights show his new kanji:

さて、冬も終わりに近づいてきましたが、アレックスさんはどうお過ごしですか? 私は春は花もたくさん咲くし、雰囲気が明るいので大好きな季節です。しかし、私は花粉症という病気に悩まされています。花粉症とは春ごろに山の木々の花粉が原因で起こるアレルギーの病気です。主な症状はくしゃみや鼻水、目のかゆみ、頭痛などです。私は今年からこの病気がひどくなりました。本当につらいです。

The English translation is:

Well, the winter is ending, but how are you doing? I love spring because many flowers bloom and the atmosphere is cheerful. However, I am suffering from sickness called kafunsho (hay fever). Kafunsho is a kind of allergy caused by the pollen from trees in the mountain around spring. The main symptoms are sneezing, running nose, itching of the eyes, headache, and so on. This sickness became worse to me this year. It is awful.

When Alex used the Rikai program, he read messages without being distracted by the pop-ups from the program. Alex explained how he used the Rikai program:

What I usually do is I’ll have two windows open: one which is not Rikai but my e-mail, and one which is Rikai… one helps me focus when I’m reading to move the mouse… along the sentence… if I get to a point where there’s a kanji I don’t understand, I can switch to the other window very quickly and look and read. I don’t try to read it in Rikai. I refer to Rikai.

Although Alex developed confidence in his use of Japanese at the end of the first semester, receiving long sentences during the second semester lowered his confidence. Alex stated:
I really sometimes have to think very hard... when it's a particularly long sentence, what is being said, what is the meaning of the sentence, and it might take me minutes to puzzle that out and I think, “Boy, if somebody was saying this to me, I would have no idea what it means.”

Before the second semester's e-mail exchange started, Abby said that the e-mail exchange "was great." She added, "I loved it. I'm really looking forward to the next semester." When she was asked for her thoughts about having topic options during the second semester, her first word was "scary." She restated:

I mean I love the e-mail communication... Since I like to challenge myself to figure out what I wanted to say about our topic last semester, having topic options is going to challenge me to figure out what I can say and then write it down.... I like that we're being given more free reign for conversation, but it's a little scary.

When Abby wrote her first e-mail during the second semester, she really enjoyed writing the message. Abby said, "I like challenging myself to convey what I want." Abby wrote about "really conversational" issues in her second message. Abby described her interests such as her favorite music bands, anime, birds, television programs, and books. She started to write long messages after that. Abby enjoyed writing her second message. On her second writing reflection sheet, Abby commented, "It's fun being able to be more conversational." Abby was enjoying the conversation with her keypal when she wrote her third message. Abby wrote, "I had a better time with figuring out how to say what I wanted but need to look up a lot of vocabulary." Abby added, "I'm beginning to think that I can finally begin to... communicate what I want to."

Abby "had a few sentences that were very difficult" when she wrote her fourth message. Abby "hoped that the e-mail was simple." Abby "liked" her fifth message “for the casualness of the conversation.” Abby “didn’t want to say a lot
of really complicated things, so this was fairly simple." Abby enjoyed typing better than handwriting her fifth message because she "was able to use a lot of kanji that (she) wouldn't have otherwise." Abby said that her last e-mail message "was a fun e-mail to write, although it's sad that this is the last one." Abby "needed to look up more words than usual," but thought that "overall this one was fairly simple."

Even though it was "a little scary" for Abby to have topic options, she enjoyed the e-mail exchange "more" during the second semester. Abby explained:

About the second keypal message we started a conversation. It's been an ongoing conversation. We've completely diverged from, not required, but the recommended topics because Kudo-sensei said we didn't have to write about assigned topics anymore. Now we're into all sorts of things about what kind of wildlife we have living around here and what kind of TV we watch. We started this conversation about our second e-mail, so it's been much more fun. It's just been talking rather than exchanging information.

Abby enjoyed having "ongoing" conversations" with her keypal Mariko and built her confidence in using Japanese language. Abby and Mariko always commented about each other's message and answered each other's questions. Abby wrote about her favorite Japanese bands in her second message during the second semester. The message was:

こんにちは！
きょう、ミッドウエスタンシティの天気はちょっと寒いです。だから、とても晴れです。私は晴れが大好きなので、この天気が好きです。
二月十四日はバレンタインデー。アメリカに二月十四日も国観覧車デー。私はかれしそうじゃないで、私と私の友達は国観覧車デーを祝います。この伝統はちょっとべなです。でも、とても楽しいです！
私の好きな日本の楽隊はX-Japanでした。私はすべてX-JapanのCDがあります。X-Japanは分けて後、私は悲しいでした。私はGACKT（ガク
トさん）の古い歌が大好きです。でも、私はGACKTの新しい歌がまます
と思います。今、私の好きな日本の楽隊はPIERROT（ピエロ？）です。
私はPIERROTのうたがとても面白いと思います。私はたくさんCDがあ
ります。私は私のへやの壁に私のたくさんアニメのポスターにPIERROT
のポスターがあります。-_-;; 私は稲垣さんにイーメルを出すつもりです。
アビー

The English translation of the message is:

Hello!
The weather in Midwestern City is a little cold today. So, it is very sunny.
Because I love sunny days, I like this weather.
February 14th is Valentine’s Day. February 14th is also the National
Wheels Day in the United States. Because I do not have a boyfriend, my
friend and I celebrate the National Wheels Day. Because we ride on a
wheel and exchange candies, we will have a little party. This tradition is a
little minor. But it is very fun! My favorite Japanese band was X-Japan. I
have all of the CDs. After X-Japan was disbanded, I was sad. I love
GACKT (Gakuto-san)’s old songs. But I think his new songs are so-so. My
favorite Japanese band now is PIERROT (Piro?). I think PIERROT’s
songs are very interesting. I have a lot of CDs. I have a lot of anime
posters and a PIERROT poster on the wall in my room. -_-;; I am going to
e-mail you at the end of February.
Abby

Abby spent two hours and ten minutes writing this message. Mariko
commented about Abby’s Valentine’s Day then wrote about her Valentine’s Day.

Then, Mariko commented about Abby’s favorite bands. The message was:

こんにちは☆
今日の天気は雨で、すこし寒いです。でも、そろそろ春に近づいてきて最
近はあたたかい日もふえてきました。
アメリカには国観覧車デーというものがあるのですね。初めて知りました。
私も彼氏はいません(::_;) でもバレンタインデーは何か作りたかったの
で、クッキーを作って女友だちにわたしました。そして、友だちのチョコ
レート作りを手伝ったりしました。
アビーさんはX-Japanが好きなのですね！
日本では今でも彼らの熱狂的なファンがたくさんいます。
PIERROT（ピエロ）は日本でX-Japanほど有名ではないです。なのでア
ビーさんが彼らのことを知っているのはとても驚きました。
アビーさんはアニメも好きなのですね。
日本のアニメで好きなものはありますか？また教えてくださいね☆
では、またメールを送りますね！
稲垣真理子

The English translation of the message is:

Hello☆
Today’s weather is rainy, and it is a little cold. However, spring is coming, and the number of warm days has been increasing recently.
You wrote that you have National Wheels Day in America. This is the first time for me to hear about that.
I do not have a boyfriend, either (;_;) However, because I wanted to make something on Valentine’s Day, I made cookies and gave them to my girl friends. Then, I helped my friend make chocolate.
You like X-Japan, don’t you?
Even now they still have many passionate fans in Japan.
PIERROT (Piero) is not as famous as X-Japan in Japan. So, I was very surprised that you know the band.
You seem to like anime.
Do you have your favorite Japanese anime? Please let me know.
I will e-mail you again!
Mariko Inagaki

After spending two hours reading this message, Abby reflected, “I’m really starting to get to know my keypal, and I greatly enjoy the exposure to new words.” Abby’s response to Mariko included the information about her spring break plan and her favorite music band and anime. Abby wrote:

こにちは！
今日、ミッドウェスタンシティの天気はちょっと寒いです。でも、私は冬を大抵終わったと思います。でも、ミッドウェスタン州の冬はときどきおわり、だから、ときどき藻一度始まります。これで、二月はときどき華氏六十五度ぐらい、そして、四月は三十度ぐらい。私はミッドウェスタン州の冬をちょっと面白いと思います。
友達とを過ごすのはいだので、私は稲垣さんのバレンタインインデーを楽しとと思いました。
これ春休み、私は私のルームメートと、ルームメートの大牧場に行きます。これルームメートの家族はたくさん牛肉の牛と馬があります。私は動物好きです。私の母は新しい子犬があるので、私は私の家族の家にちょっと行きたいです。でも、両親のうちはミッドウェスタン州からたくさん遠くい
で、春休みは短いので、私は家に帰るなら、私は家族ととても小さいじゃないかんです。
私は二年前ピエロを書きました。私の友達は日本に三年住みました。アメリカに帰って、この友達はとてもCDをもって帰りました。この友達はピエロのCDを弾いて、私はCDを大好きでした。それとき、私はピエロのファンです。
アニメとして、私は数次のアニメが好きです。私の一番好きなアニメはセン
ト星矢です。でも、セント星矢はとても古いです。今、私の好きなアニメは綱の錬金術師です。ときどき、綱の錬金術師はフルメタルアルケメツ（Full Metal Alchemist）を呼びます。私は、綱の錬金術師はとても面白いと思います。今、アメリカのテレビは英語で綱の錬金術師があります。今、アメリカのテレビはとてもアニメがあります。とても楽しいです。でも、ときどき、アメリカの吹き替えはちょっと悪いです。アメリカに、アメリカのテレビ会社はせい優をときどき下手ないです。だから、私は日本語でアニメを見て、英語の字幕を読むたいです。
私は、四月七日に、稲垣さんにらいメールをおくりつもりです。

The English translation of the message is:

Hello!
The weather in Midwestern City is a little cold today. But I think the winter is almost over. However, winter comes back after it is over sometimes in Midwestern State. Therefore, it is sometimes approximately 65 degrees Fahrenheit in February and it is sometimes approximately 30 degrees Fahrenheit in April. I think Midwestern State’s winter is kind of interesting. Because it is good to spend time with your friends, your Valentine’s Day sounded fun.
My roommate and I will go to her big farm this spring. Her family has a lot of cows and horses. I love animals, but my university does not allow animals. So, I like to go to visit my family. Because my mother has a new puppy, I kind of want to go to my family’s house. However, because my parents’ house is very far from Midwestern State and spring is short, if I go home, I can spend very little time with my family.
I listened to Piero a couple years ago. My friend lived in Japan for three years. When she came back to America, she brought a lot of CDs. She played a Piero’s CD, and I loved it. Since then I am a fan of Piero.
Speaking of anime, I like some anime. My most favorite anime is Sento Seiya. However, that is very old. My favorite anime now is Hagane no Renkinjutsushi. Sometimes it is called Full Metal Alchemist. I think it is very interesting. American TV shows it now. American TV now has a lot of anime. It is very fun. However, American dubs are kind of bad. I think American TV companies do not think voice actors are important. Therefore, I want to see anime in Japanese and read English subtitles.
I am going to send a next e-mail on April 7th to you.
Abby

Abby spent two hours and 15 minutes composing this message. The third message from Mariko included the information about a bird singing, which meant that spring had come, her spring break plan, and comments about Abby’s spring break and anime. The message was:

こんにちは★メールありがとう!こちらでは、もうだいぶあたたかくなっ
てきました。桜の花も少しずつ咲き始めて、とても気がいいます。先日はうぐいすの鳴き声を聞くことができました。うぐいすというのは鳥の名
前で、日本では春になって暖かくなったら鳴き始めます。とてもかわいい
鳥ですよ。そちらにもそのような鳥はいますか。
私はこの春休みは友達とスキーに行きました。バスに乗って8時間くらい
かけてスキー場までいきました。なので行くだけで少し疲れてしまいまし
た（^_^;）でも、スキーはとてもうまくなったと思います。友達にも
「上達が早いね」と、ほめられました。
アビーさんは、牧場に行くのですね！私も動物や自然が大好きなので、と
てもうらやましいです。アビーさんの家の子犬もきっととてもかわいいの
でしょうね☆見てみたいです。
日本のアニメが海外で放送されているという話はよく聞きます。海外で、
日本のキャラクターがどんな声で話しているのか、とても興味深いです。日本語
には日本語独特の雰囲気を持っているので、それを英語で表現する
のはとても難しいだろうと思います。日本では外国のアニメはほとんど放
送されないので、一度アメリカのアニメも見てみたいのです。
では、またのメール楽しみにしています。
稲垣真理子

The English translation of the message is:

Hello★ Thank you for your e-mail! It is getting pretty warm over here.
Cherry flowers are gradually beginning to bloom, and I feel very good. I
was able to hear the singing voice of uguisu (Japanese nightingale) the
other day. Uguisu is a bird name and they start singing when spring
comes and it becomes warm in Japan. They are very cute birds. Do you
have such birds over there, too?
I went skiing with my friends this spring break. It took about eight hours to
get to the ski resort by bus. So, only going there made us tired (^.^;) But I
think I improved my skiing. My friend complimented that “you improved
quickly.”
You are going to a farm, aren’t you? Because I love animals and nature, too, I envy you a lot. I bet your puppy is very cute. I would like to see her. I hear that Japanese anime is shown overseas. I am interested in the voices of Japanese characters overseas. Because Japanese language has unique atmosphere, I think it would be very difficult to express it in English. Because a little foreign anime is shown in Japan, I would like to see American anime once.
I look forward to your e-mail☆
Mariko Inagaki

After Abby spent three hours and 45 minutes reading this message, she spent one hour and a half responding to Mariko. Abby described a bird that she saw in Midwestern City and anime. Abby asked Mariko which television programs she liked. The message was:

こんにちは！
今日、風が強いので、ミッドウエスタンシティの天気はとても寒いです。私は自転車をのりたいなので、風が強いながら、自転車をのろは今天気が好きじゃないです。
稲垣さんのこの前のメール、稲垣さんは、私に「どんな鳥がありますか」といいます。今、ミッドウエスタンシティにたくさんのカジンアルの鳥です。雄のカジンアルはちょっと簡素ですね。でも、雄のカジンアル赤くてとてもきれい鳥です。でも、ミッドウエスタンシティに少数の鳥があります。マイン州にはとても鳥があります。私は動物と鳥が大好きなので、ミッドウエスタンシティに時、私はちょっとかなかなかしです。
アメリカにアメリカのアニメを見る人はおもに子供なので、アメリカのアニメの筋はときどき複雑ないです。だから、私はテレビでドラマを見るのが好きなので私はたくさんアメリカのアニメをちょっと面白いじゃないと思います。でも、私はとてもうるさいです。とても大人はアメリカのアニメはときどき面白いと思います。稲垣さんはどんなテレビがすきですか。
私は稲垣さんに今週の週末に次メールをおくるつもりです。
 Abby

The English translation of the message is:

Hello!
Because it is very windy, the weather in Midwestern City is very cold today. Because I want to ride a bike, I do not like this weather to ride a bike with a strong wind.
You asked me, “What kind of birds do you have?” in your previous e-mail. There are many cardinals in Midwestern City now. Female cardinals are a
little simple. However, male cardinals are red and very beautiful. However, Midwestern City has a few birds. There are many birds in Maine. Because I love animals and birds, I am a little sad when I am in Midwestern City. Because mainly children watch American anime in the United States, the plots of American anime are not complicated sometimes. Therefore, because I like to see drama on TV, I don’t think American anime are very interesting. However, I am picky. Many adults think that American anime are interesting sometimes. What kind of TV do you like? I am going to send you the next e-mail this weekend.
Abby

Mariko responded to Abby’s question about her favorite television programs. The message was:

お元気ですか。
私はとっても元気です。食欲がありすぎて少し困っていますが…。
（＾O＾;）
こちらの気候は、とても快適です。でも最近は、もう暑く感じるまでになってしまいました。ずっとこんなごしやすい天気ならよいのにと思います。
私は日本のアニメはほとんど見ません。普段私は忙しいので、朝のニュース番組くらいしか見ることができません。でも、私はお笑い番組が好きで、特に漫才（知っていますか？）が好きなので、そういったバラエティー番組は見ることがあります。日本では、今、漫才師や芸人と呼ばれるエンターテイナーがとてもブームになっています。アビーさんは好きな芸能人や俳優はいますか？
それでは、次のメール楽しみにしていますね。☆
I look forward to the next email.
稲垣真理子

The English translation of the message is:

How are you? I am great. I have a little problem that I have huge appetites though… (^O^;)
The weather here is very pleasant. However, it has recently become hot. I hope the weather is always pleasant like this all the time.
I hardly watch Japanese anime. Because I am usually busy, I cannot watch TV besides morning news. However, because I like comedy shows, especially *manzai* (‘comic backchat’) (do you know this?), I sometimes watch such variety shows. In Japan entertainers called *manzaishī* (‘stand-up comedians’) or *geinin* (‘entertainers’) are popular now. So, there are many TV programs with such people. Do you have favorite performers or actors?
Well, I look forward to the next e-mail.
Mariko Inagaki
Abby spent two hours and ten minutes reading the message. Abby wrote about her favorite books and asked Mariko about Mariko’s favorite books. The message was:

こんにちは！
今日、そろそろ春の終わりなのでミッドウエスタンシティの天気はとても暑いです。暑いので、私は嬉しいです。
今週、私の大学の最終試験の週です。たくさん勉強するのに、私はちょっと心配しています。でも、一生懸命に勉強ならば、私はテストでいいと思います。
アメリカには少しバラエティーのテレビの番組があります。でも、たくさん喜劇があります。ときどきアメリカのテレビの番組は漫才が似ています。でも、アメリカのテレビの喜劇は最も続き物です。私は喜劇が好きです。
でも、私はたくさんアメリカに喜劇をちょっとお菓子じゃないと思うので、私はあまり喜劇を見ません。でも、アメリカのテレビ会社はときどき、いい新しい喜劇の番組を作って、私は嬉しいです。
私は稲垣さんとテレビを話し合うのに、本を話し合いません。私は空想文学の小説や歴史小説が好きです。稲垣さんはどうな本が好きですか。
すみません。私はたくさん勉強しなければならないので、このメールはちょっと短いです。
私は稲垣さんに来週のはじめに次メールをおくつもりです。
アビー

The English translation of the message is:

Hello!
Because spring is about to end, the weather in Midwestern City is very hot today. Because it is hot, I am happy.
This week is my university’s finals week. Even though I study a lot, I am a little worried. However, if I study hard, I think I will do well on exams.
There are only some variety TV shows in America. However, there are many comedy shows. Sometimes American TV programs have similar comic backchats. But American comedy shows are mostly series. I like comedies. However, because I do not think American comedies are very funny, I do not see them a lot. However, American TV companies make good, new comedies sometimes, and I am happy.
Even though I talk about TV with you, I do not talk about books with you. I like fantasy novels and history novels. What kind of books do you like?
I am sorry. This e-mail is a little short because I have to study a lot.
I am going to send you the next e-mail in the beginning of next week.
Abby
Mariko wrote about her favorite Japanese author and the book that she wanted to read next. The message was:

こんにちは！
こちらの気候も昼間は暑いと感じるくらいになってきました。でも朝と夜はまだちょっと寒いです。
私がよく読む本は、エッセイです。好きな作家は原田宗徳さんという人で、とてもユーモアのある文章を書きます。また、その人が書く物語は、エッセイとはガラッと雰囲気が変わってシリアスな感じになるのですが、それでも面白いです。また、今から読みたい本はハリーポッターシリーズです。私は、ハリーポッターの映画は見たのですが、実は小説のほうはまったく読んでいません。とても面白いという話をよく聞くのですが、なかなか読む時間が取れないのです。アビーさんは空想文学小説が好きみたいですがハリーポッターシリーズは読んだことがありますか。もしあればまた感想を聞かせてくださいね。
では、またのメール楽しみにしています★
稲垣真理子

The English translation of the message is:

Hello!
The weather here is getting hot during the day, too. But it is still a little cold in the mornings and nights.
I often read essays. My favorite author’s name is Mr. Munenori Harada, who writes humorous sentences. His writing style in his stories, which differs from his style in his essays, is serious. That is interesting. The books that I want to read from now are Harry Potter series. Although I saw the Harry Potter movie, in fact, I have not read the Harry Potter series. I often hear that the books are very interesting, but I hardly have time to read them. You seem to like fantasy novels, but have you read the Harry Potter series? If you have, please let me know your thoughts.
I look forward to the next e-mail★
Mariko Inagaki

Abby enjoyed the “ongoing conversation” with her keypal in Japan. Abby read the first Harry Potter book four times” and wrote that she thought that the books were “fun,” “good,” “unique,” and “better than the movie.” Abby wrote on her writing reflection sheet “that Harry Potter can be discussed across countries!!”
At the end of the second semester, Abby expressed her thoughts about topic freedom. Abby said:

Last semester I really liked the way that it was done here where you had the topics and would completely have to talk on your topics... Then you were given more leeway your second semester, especially if you are going to keep the same keypal.

Abby tried to write interesting messages to her keypal. Abby described:

I cannot make as complicated sentences in Japanese as I can in English, so it was more of a how do I say this so that it sounds like what I want to say. So, if I were having a conversation with someone, I would know how to make it interesting in my own conversation about it. In Japanese I’d just have to try to figure out how things sound more interesting... I wanted to tell her more about myself. I actually had a really hard time coming up with questions to ask my keypal... I really don’t know her well enough to ask her anything of interest. So, a lot of times I don’t know what to ask her, so I’m just going to tell her all sorts of things about myself.

Abby did not have confidence in her use of Japanese language and felt that her keypal would think she was “insane” when she sent her first Japanese message. However, the more Abby wrote, she became “more confident” in her use of Japanese and “learned more.” Abby knew that “it was obvious” that her keypal understood what she had “been saying” because her keypal “replied back to” her. Abby said, “I got more confident that my keypal understood what I was saying... so I just got more relaxed in my sentences.” Abby advised other language learners to send e-mails in the target language. Abby said:

Have fun with is the e-mail exchange. Don’t think that your keypal’s going to think you’re an idiot. In the first, probably even the first one of the semester, definitely at least last semester, I felt that my keypal is going to think I’m a complete and udder idiot. It’s like some of the things I had to say had ten sentences to get one point across just because I knew so little... But just have fun with it. Seriously I don’t think... really stuck-up, snobbish people to be keypals anyway.
Theme Four: Learning through E-Mail Communication

The fourth theme that emerged in this study was learning through e-mail communication. This theme had three sub-themes. The first sub-theme was culture. The second sub-theme was vocabulary. The last sub-theme was assessment.

**Culture.**

Students learned about Japanese culture through writing and reading Japanese e-mail messages to some degree. They learned about their Japanese keypals' lives and interests. Some of the e-mails described the lives of the Japanese keypal including cultural information where the students in the second-year Japanese course discovered both similarities and differences between the United States and Japan.

Abby learned how her keypal lived in Japan. When Abby read the first e-mail message from her keypal, she learned that her keypal lived with her parents and her brother, who was a graduate student, lived by himself. Abby found “it interesting that it was pointed out that her brother lives alone.” Abby learned about her keypal’s hometown by reading her keypal’s second message. Her keypal wrote:

私の育った町は明石（あかし）というところで、田舎でも都会でもないところです。私の町も最近だんだんと寒くなってきました。私の町は海に近いので、タコやタイなどの新鮮な魚がたくさん売られています。明石焼きという食べ物が有名です。

The English translation is:

The city I was raised is called Akashi, which is not rural or urban. My city is getting cold, too. Because my city is close to the ocean, a lot of fresh
fish such as octopuses and sea bream are sold. The food called Akashiyaki is famous.

When Abby read the fourth e-mail message from her keypal during the first semester, her keypal wrote that she wanted to go out for dinner with all of the family members during winter break. Abby said, “It seems that winter vacation is a time when the youth of both countries try to spend time with family.” At the end of the second semester, Abby described what she learned about Japanese culture through e-mail communication, “I learned some things about family structure, learned about the kind of birds the Japanese have there, and I had to figure out how to write the katakana of some really complicated sounding birds.”

When Abby wrote bird names, she wrote the English names in katakana instead of writing Japanese translations. Abby thought that many English bird names such as cardinals included “L” sounds, but the Japanese language does not have “L”s. Therefore, she needed to figure out how the Japanese would read English sounds in katakana. Abby said, “Why do English bird names all have Ls in them?”

During the first semester of 2004, Alex's keypal’s messages included cultural information that he “had heard about before either when (he) was in Japan or through... cultural projects” in his first-year Japanese classes." Alex thought that cultural information from his keypal was "reinforcing things that (he) already knew through learning the language and the study of the culture” in his Japanese classes. Alex stated about his cultural knowledge from his Japanese classes and his experience in Japan. Alex stated:
Each one dealt with a different aspect of Japanese culture in cultural projects. So, there was some exposure to aspects of Japanese culture I hadn't been exposed to before through these presentations... I've often had exposure through those presentations or through my experience even though it was short (two weeks) in Japan.

When Alex read Mizuho’s message that she lived by herself to attend her university, Alex inferred Mizuho’s loneliness because of the difference between Japanese and American family structures. Mizuho's family was a traditional, extended family while Alex’s family was a nuclear family. Alex described:

One thing that I noticed that I attributed to cultural differences was my keypal has remarked on the fact that now that she's not living at home because she's going to college... There's a sense in her message that she feels disconnected from the group that she is used to feeling connected to, even though she's connected to a different group, her ESS (English Speaking Society) Club at the university. She talks about how now she's by herself even though when I was in college I had a sense that I was less by myself than I was when I was at home with my family. My family is four people. Her family is her parents, her grandparents, and her brother. Mine was my parents, my brother, and me. She had a bigger family. I assume because of Japanese cultural differences with American culture, she felt very connected to that and being at school disconnects her from it, whereas I felt like I was connecting with something bigger than me when I went away to school.

Alex learned the importance of the university club activities for Mizuho because she wrote about her club activities all the time. Alex stated:

Kudo-sensei told us that clubs were so important in Japanese universities in ways. I mean in the United States, people are members of several clubs, but Mizuho, my keypal, talks about doing things with her club in every message, and I was a little surprised at that. Even knowing it by having been told, it was surprising how important it became to her to be in this club.

Similarly, Margaret sensed the importance of a university club to her keypal, Chiemi. On the first reading reflection sheet, Margaret wrote, “In Japanese colleges, students are more involved in club activities than they are
here.” Margaret also wrote, “It was fun to see the kanji for words I already knew and discovering that I know more than I thought.” During the first interview Margaret commented, "It's interesting to learn the culture like what Japanese college students do compared to us and how it seems Japanese college students are busier or more involved in clubs and activities than American students." Lily's keypal wrote that she went to karaoke with her friends and asked her if there are karaoke in the United States. On her reading reflection sheet, Lily wrote that "teenagers in Japan go singing karaoke in the United States we don't."

Margaret learned about Japanese New Year’s from her keypal. The third message from Chiemi during the first semester included:

私の冬休みはテスト勉強やクラブ活動、アルバイトをたくさんするのでとても忙しくなりそうです。マーガレットさんに質問です。アメリカには“お年玉”はありますか。日本では、お正月に大人が子ども達に少しのお金をあげます。私はもう20才なのできっともらえないでしょう。残念です。

The English translation of the message is:

Because I will be studying for exams, doing my club activities, and working part-time a lot, my winter break will be very busy. I have a question for you. Do you have “otoshidama (New Year’s money gift)”? Adults give some amount of money to children on New Year’s in Japan. I bet I will not receive any more because I am already 20 years old. It’s disappointing.

Margaret learned more about Japanese New Year’s Day when she received the first message from Chiemi during the second semester. The paragraph related to the New Year’s Day was:

年始は田舎のおじいちゃんの家に行って、いとこに会いました。いとこはとても小さくてかわいかったです。お正月はお雑煮をたくさん食べました。お雑煮は、日本各地で作り方が様々です。お吸い物といってしょうゆ味のダシにお餅を入れるものもありますが、私のおじいちゃんの家では、味噌汁にあんこの入ったお餅を入れます。私はとてもこのお雑煮が好きです。ほかに、おせち料理を食べました。マーガレットさんはおせち料理を知って
いますか。おせち料理は日本の伝統的な料理です。お正月は特別な時なのでお母さんもこの時期に休むために、おせち料理を年末に作っていただいてお正月にそれを食べるのでです。でも最近では、あまりおせち料理を作らない家も多いようです。

The English translation is:

I went to my grandfather’s house and saw my cousin on New Year’s. My cousin was very small and cute. I ate a lot of ozoni (rice cake soup). How to cook ozoni differs region to region in Japan. Some are in soup called osuimono that is based on soy sauce, but we put rice cake with sweet bean paste inside in miso (bean paste) soup in my grandfather’s house. I love this ozoni. In addition, I ate osechi ryori. Do you know what is osechi ryori? It is Japanese traditional dish. Because New Year’s is a special time, mothers make osechi ryori before New Year’s comes, and we eat the dishes during the New Year’s. However, it seems that there are many homes where they do not make osechi ryori recently.

After reading this message, Margaret "learned a lot about Japanese New Year's celebrations, which isn't that big in the U.S."

Margaret discussed learning about Japanese culture including New Year’s:

It was interesting to read my keypal’s messages because she would talk a lot about holidays and culture that we just don't have out here and I don't really know about. For example, she sent me a whole e-mail on New Year’s and I didn't know any of that, so that was interesting to learn.

Lily found a similarity between Japanese New Year and the New Year in her Vietnamese community. The first message from her keypal during the second semester of 2005 included:

冬休みは初詣（はつもうで）に行きました。初詣というのは、日本の伝統的な習慣の一つです。1月1日～3日（日本では“正月”と言います）くらいに神社やお寺に今年一年の健康や成功を願うために行きます。リリーさんはどんなNew Year dayをすごしたのですか？日本ではNew Year day（1月1日）を元旦と言います。この元旦に日本人はおせち料理と呼ばれる伝統的な家庭料理を食べます。おばあさんやお母さんが作ってくれます。
正月は日本の子どもたちにとって、とても待ち遠しいものです。なぜなら、親や親戚からお金をもらえるからです。でも、私はもう20歳なのでもらえません。
1月10日には20歳を記念する行事があり、20歳の私は着物を着てセレモニーに参加しました。
アメリカでは、20歳を記念する行事などはあるのですか？

The English translation is:

I went to hatsumode (New Year’s visit to a shrine) over winter break. Hatsumode is one of the Japanese traditional customs. We visit shrines or temples to wish for health and success for the New Year around January 1st through 3rd (this period is called “shogatsu.”)

How did you spend your New Year’s?

New Year’s Day (January 1st) is called gantan in Japan. We eat a traditional homemade dish called osechi ryori. Mothers and grandmothers make osechi ryori.

Japanese children really look forward to New Year’s. That is because they can receive money from their parents and relatives. However, I cannot receive money any longer because I am 20 years old.

There was an event to celebrate 20 years on January 10th, and I joined the ceremony wearing kimono.

Do you have events to celebrate 20 years in the United States?

Lily mentioned that the customs of Japanese New Year’s are similar to “Chinese New Year’s” that she celebrated in her Vietnamese community in February. Lily said, "We give out money to relatives and eat some dinners." On her reading reflection sheet, she wrote that she learned how Japanese people celebrate New Year’s for “three days” and "the coming of age" is celebrated when they are 20 years old. When Dr. Kudo asked Lily about Vietnamese New Year dishes in a class, Lily could just say that they eat special dishes. Dr. Kudo asked Lily which kind of dishes they eat for New Year’s, and Lily responded that she could not describe it. The Japanese exchange student Ryoko had to miss her Coming-of-Age Day Ceremony (seijinshiki) because she was studying at Midwestern Methodist University when she was 19 and 20 years old. However,
her friends in Japan sent her some pictures of the ceremony. Ryoko shared these pictures with the second-year Japanese students. During the interview Lily said that she did "not have" ceremonies like Coming-of-Age Day Ceremony in the United States, so the information was "interesting" and "cool" to her.

Lily responded to her keypal's questions about New Year's and 20-year-old celebration in English after she wrote a Japanese message:

Hi!!!!!! How are you?? I'm glad to hear from you. So your new year seemed really fun to me. Did you receive any money from your parents? This year you celebrated your 20th birthday?? Happy belated birthday the ceremony sounds so fun. In America we don’t celebrate the coming of age like people in Japan. I wish we had that kind of celebration because I think it is interesting to have such events. About my new year, it was great I was with my family in Canada. We went to the new year count down at China Town. I had a lot of fun.

Lily found similarities that both Japanese children and Vietnamese children receive money from parents and relatives on New Year's.

Lily's and Alex's keypal wrote about nabe parties. Lily's second e-mail message from her keypal during the second semester of 2005 included:

日本は冬にちかづいています。だから夜はほんとうにさむいです。日本では冬によく鍋パーティーをします。4〜5人くらいで鍋をかこみ、いろいろな野菜や肉をにこみます。とてもおいしいです。また、からだもあたたまります。アメリカでは季節のたべものはありますか。教えてください。日本語に興味をもってくれてありがとうございます。

The English translation is:

The winter is coming in Japan. So, it is really cold at night. We often have nabe parties in winter in Japan. Four or five people sit around nabe (a pot) and cook various vegetables and meats. It is very delicious. And our body becomes warm. Do you have seasonal dishes in America? Please tell me. Thank you for being interested in Japanese language.

Alex's keypal's first e-mail message during the second semester of 2005 included:
最近、私の大学の友達の間では鍋が流行っています。「鍋」とは日本の冬の定番の料理のことです。大きな土鍋に、様々や野菜などを入れて、1つの鍋を4、5人で囲んで食べるのです。味付けはキムチや味噌など様々です。その日の気分で食べる事ができるほど種類があります。日本の寒い冬にはとても合う料理です。アメリカには冬などの寒い季節ならではの料理や食べ物はありますか。

The English translation is:

Recently it is popular to have nabe among my college friends. "Nabe" is a popular winter dish in Japan. In a big pot we put various ingredients such as vegetables and four to five people eat together sitting around the pot. The seasoning for the soup varies such as kimchi (Korean hot pepper pickles) and miso (bean paste). There are so many kinds of ingredients that we can change depending on our mood of the day. The dish matches Japanese cold winter. Do you have dishes or food for cold seasons in America?

On his reading reflection sheet, Alex commented, "I think I'd like to have a nabe party."

Alex read about cherry blossom viewing in spring. The related paragraph in his keypal's message was:

それから、春といえば、日本では「お花見」というイベントが行われます。それは桜という木の花を観賞することです。日本では川沿いや公園などにたくさんの桜が植えられています。それを散歩しながら眺めるだけの人もいます。また、お弁当を持って、その桜の木下で友達や家族の人と食べて楽しむ人たちもいます。だから春は本当に陽気な雰囲気が漂っています。

The English translation is:

Japan has events called ohanami (cherry blossom viewing) are held in spring. That is enjoying viewing flowers of trees called sakura (cherry blossoms). Many cherry trees are planted along rivers and parks in Japan. Some people just view cherry blossoms while walking. Some people bring packed food and enjoy eating with their friends and family members under cherry trees. Therefore, spring has cheerful atmosphere.

On his reading reflection sheet, Alex wrote that they have "nothing like hanami (cherry blossom viewing) in America."
Margaret’s keypal also wrote about cherry blossoms in the beginning of the third message during the second semester. The paragraph was:

日本はネブラスカと違って暖かくなってくるので、とてもよい季節です。桜がたくさん咲き、私の大学にも桜の木があるのでとても美しいです。私は桜がすごく好きです。明日の夜、クラブの友達と桜で有名な場所へ花見に行きます。とても楽しみです。マーガレットさんは桜を知っていましょうか？桜は日本を代表する木です。薄いピンク色の花をたくさん咲かせます。見たことがなかったら是非見てほしいです。

The English translation is:

Because it is getting warm in Japan unlike Midwestern State, it is a very good season. Flowers of cherry trees are blooming a lot, and my university also has cherry trees, so it is very beautiful. I love cherry blossoms.

I will go cherry blossom viewing with my friends from my club to a place which is famous for cherry blossoms. I am very much looking forward to it. Do you know cherry blossoms? The cherry tree is the representative tree of Japan. It blooms a lot of light pink colored flowers. If you have not seen it, I hope you will have a chance to see it.

Margaret reflected that “I don’t think Americans have anything comparable to the cherry blossoms in Japan” on her reading reflection sheet. Margaret wrote her keypal, “私は桜をちょっと知っていています。未来に日本に行くなら、私はとても見たいです。きれいそうです。(‘I know cherry blossoms a little bit. If I go to Japan in the future, I would love to see them. It sounds beautiful.’)” Margaret’s keypal wrote a little about cherry blossoms in her fourth message during the first semester, too. The paragraph was:

マーガレットさんはもう冬休みですね。とてもうらやましいです。明日から休みです。明日は、クラブでパーティーがあります。とても楽しみです！明後日の（12月）24日はボーイフレンドと京都へ行きます。マーガレットさんは京都を知っていますか？京都はとても日本らしい町です。京都にはたくさんの有名なお寺があって、私はとても大好きです。春には桜がたくさん咲き、秋にはきれいな紅葉が見れます。クリスマスに京都に
So, you are already on winter break. I envy you. My break starts tomorrow. I will go to my club party tomorrow. I am very much looking forward to it! I will go to Kyoto with my boyfriend the day after tomorrow, (December) 24th. Do you know Kyoto? Kyoto is a very Japan-like city. Kyoto has a lot of famous temples, and I love it very much. We can see many cherry blossoms in spring and leaves turned into red and yellow beautifully in fall in Kyoto. It is not common to go to Kyoto on Christmas, but I am looking forward to because there will not be many people there.

Alex and Abby found common books with their keypals. When Alex wrote to his keypal, “今僕は「孔子の論」を読んでいます。面白いです。瑞穂さんはこれを知っていますか。(I am reading “Confucius” now. It is interesting. Do you know this?)” His keypal responded:

本ですか！私も読むのは大好きです。「孔子の論」、知っています。日本では、全部ではありませんが、高校の国語の授業で「孔子の論」学びます。私も学びました。全部は読んだ事がないので、読んでみたいです。しかし、難しくないですか？アレックスさんはすごいですね。

The English translation is:

Books! I love to read, too. I know “Confucius.” In Japan we learn some “Confucius” in high school in Japanese language arts classes though not all together. I learned it, too. I have not read it all, so I want to read it all. But isn’t it difficult? You are awesome.

On his reading reflection sheet, Alex wrote that "In America, Shakespeare is read in high school. In Japan, it's Confucius."

Abby’s keypal wrote that she wanted to read Harry Potter:

また、今から読みたい本はハリーポッターシリーズです。私は、ハリーポッターの映画は見たのですが、実は小説のほうはまったく読んだことがありません。とても面白いという話をよく聞くのですが、なかなか読む時間が取れないのです。アビーさんは空想文学小説が好きみたいですがハリー
The English translation is:

The book that I want to read from now is the Harry Potter series. In fast, even though I have watched the movie, I have not read the novels. I often hear that the books are interesting, but I can hardly find time to read them. You seem to like fantasy stories, but have you read the Harry Potter series? If you have, please tell me your thoughts of them.

Abby was excited that her keypal had the same interest. Abby responded to her keypal’s request about Harry Potter:

The English translation is:

I have read Harry Potter. I love it. I read the first Harry Potter four times. Since Harry Potter is written for children, I think that it is fun and good for many adults. Harry Potter is very creative. I don’t like the Harry Potter movie very much. The book is better.

Abby was excited to learn that some books such as Harry Potter series were read and could be discussed across countries.

Vocabulary.

The students expanded their vocabulary through writing and reading e-mail messages. The students used a lot of new Japanese words and kanji to compose messages. Margaret wrote the second message during the first semester of 2004:

The English translation is:

ちえみさん、
お元気ですか。今日の天気は晴れです。暖かいとよいです。
私はクラスが五つあります。私の好きなクラスはアメリカの文学です。私は今モービ・デイク（Moby Dick）を勉強します。おもしろいです。つまらないので、私は健康のクラスが好きじゃないです。
りょうこさんの好きなクラスは何ですか。
私はクラスに行った後、図書館でアルバイトをします。そして、二時間バレーボールの練習をします。
たくさん走るので、たいてい練習が大変です。でも、練習も楽しいです。
私は練習した後、ばんごはんを食べたり、宿題をしたり、テレビを見たりします。ちえみさん、クラスに行った後、何をしますか。
では、もうすぐ英語でてがみを書きます。
マーガレット

The English translation is:

Chiemi-san,
How are you? The weather is sunny today. I hope it is good.
I have five classes. My favorite class is American literature. I study Moby Dick now. Because it is boring, I don't like a health class.
What is your favorite class?
After I go to classes, I have a part-time in the library. Then I practice volleyball for two hours.
Because I run a lot, the practice is usually hard. But it is fun to practice, too. After I practice, I eat dinner, do my homework, and watch TV. What do you do after you go to your classes?
I will write a letter in English soon.
Margaret

On the second writing reflection sheet, Margaret wrote that “I learned a few new words, such as ‘run’ and ‘literature,’ and some several new kanji. The highlights show kanji that were new to Margaret. The underlines show words that were new to Margaret.

Alex used some of the new words or phrases that were written in his keypal Mizuho’s messages. For example, the first message from Mizuho included the sentence, “まずは、楽しい写真つきのメールをありがとうございました。‘First of all, thank you very much for your e-mail with fun pictures.’” Alex circled the word as his new word. In his reply, he wrote, “まずは、瑞穂さんの質
問に応えいます。('First of all, I will answer your questions.') Mizuho’s first message also included the question, "学生時代、勉強するのが好きでしたか?" ('Did you like studying when you were a student?')." Alex circled the word, 学生時代 (when you were a student), as his new word. He responded to Mizuho, "学生時代、勉強するのがちょっと好きじゃないです。("When I was a student, I do [did] not like to study very much")."

Before Alex began his e-mail communication with his keypal, he wrote about his desire to increase Japanese vocabulary in his web log:

*Pera pera* is Japanese for *fluency*, and it’s something I'm striving for in my study of Japanese. In pursuit of that I'm looking to expand my vocabulary. One way I could expand my vocabulary is through reading, with a good dictionary at my elbow. (I notice Japanese exchange students all keep their electronic dictionaries handy for quick translations.) Unfortunately, being able to translate a character from Japanese into English is not at all the same as being able to use that entity in a conversation. Most obviously, you might not even know which pronunciation to use. Most kanji have at least two, the Chinese (onyomi) and the Japanese (kunyomi). Some of them have more than two; some, many more. I'm looking for methods for vocabulary expansion. According to one article I read, the obvious use of word lists give good short-term results but poor long-term retention…Of course, figuring it out is half the fun, but also may hinder progress. And, of course, maybe there’s no magic bullet.

Alex believed that e-mail communication was helpful for his vocabulary learning. Alex described how e-mail communication helped him expand his vocabulary. Alex said:

I think the e-mail communication is very helpful for learning new vocabulary. It makes you want to go beyond the limits of your own vocabulary and look things up and find out what they mean. And that plants a seed in my memory. However, often because I’m not fortunate enough to be able to use my Japanese that much outside of class, it doesn’t receive the reinforcement that maybe the vocabulary we’re learning in class does that we repeat over and over and over and over. So, it’s there in my memory but it’s almost like passive vocabulary rather than active
vocabulary. I probably wouldn’t produce it without having a dictionary there. I could think of, “Oh, I want to say something” and I know how to say it, I’ve used it in a keypal message so I know this phrase exists or this word exists in Japanese, I need to look it up because I haven’t had the reinforcement to bring it into my active vocabulary. So I think it’s a good exercise for building passive vocabulary and through some repetition, some of those things are being repeated through the messages. It’s to a lesser extent building active vocabulary.

Similarly, Abby felt that e-mail exchanges helped students learn vocabulary that is used in daily conversations. Abby said:

E-mail communication helped a lot with the vocabulary. All of us in the second-year Japanese class were talking in class this morning that... as far as learning useful conversational vocabulary, it’s been incredibly useful because in class we learn useful vocabulary, but it’s more in a business/academic setting vocabulary whereas in our keypal messages we’re talking about random things, and so we’re learning vocabulary we can use if we’re just having conversations with people.

Students sometimes used the same words or phrases that their keypals used. When Margaret received the third message during the first semester, her keypal’s message began with:

返事遅くなって本当にごめんなさい！！！本当に申し訳ないです。しばらくパソコンを開いていませんでした。なぜなら、クラブの役員の交代選挙があって、その準備で寝る暇もなかったからです。たくさんメールくれていたのにごめんなさい。

The English translation is:

I am really sorry for the late reply!!! I am very sorry. I did not use my computer for a while. The reason is because I was so busy for the club officer elections so I did not even have time to go to bed for the preparation. I am sorry even though you sent me a lot of e-mails.

Later Margaret wrote her keypal, “お返事遅くなって本当にごめんなさい！！”

(I’m really sorry for the late reply!!)” Again Margaret apologized for the late reply in her next message: “私のメッセージは遅くなってすみません。 (I'm sorry that
my message is late.” Margaret underlined “遅くなって” as new words. She did not copy the whole sentence from her previous message but used a different word for “sorry.” Margaret wrote that “I tried to use some of the phrases my keypal uses, so I learned how to say 'I'm sorry for something.'” Margaret reflected that “Japanese are more apologetic than Americans,” and she incorporated the Japanese style in her writing.

When Margaret read the second message from her keypal during the first semester, she noticed that “there are phrases in both Japanese and English that do not make much sense when translated, such as ‘Take care of yourself.’” After Margaret wrote the third message to her keypal, she reflected that “Japanese has a lot of phrasing that sounds awkward when translated directly into English, such as ‘I’m sorry’.”

When Dr. Kudo evaluated her students’ messages, the evaluation criteria included creativity, the length of sentences (at least ten sentences excluding opening and closing sentences in Japanese), and elaboration on the topic. Dr. Kudo encouraged the students to enjoy the communication and to be creative, so she did not grade language errors. Dr. Kudo told her students that she would not correct all the errors because their keypals could ask questions if they did not understand. She corrected only the parts that she really wanted her students to know. For example, Alex’s first message included: “家族は三人家族です。私と妻のジュリーさんと娘のエミリーちゃんです。（There are three people in my family. They are me, my wife Julie-san (‘Ms. Julie’), and my daughter Emily-chan (‘Ms. Emily’ or ‘little Emily’).)” Dr. Kudo wrote a note, “For your own family
member, do not use さん /san/ (‘Mr.,’ ‘Miss,’ or ‘Mrs.’).” When Dr. Kudo read Alex’s second message, the message included the mistaken word, "大きいじゃない /okijanai/ (‘not big’) instead of “大きくない /okikunai/ (‘not big’).” Dr. Kudo corrected it because Alex always made the same mistake in Japanese classes.

In Abby’s case, she always spelled “こんにちは” for “こんにちは /konnichiwa/” to write “hello.” Abby’s keypal wrote her back, “こんにちは,” but Abby kept spelling the word こんにちは differently. When hiragana は /ha/ is used as a particle that marks a subject, it is pronounced as わ /wa/. When it is written with romaji, it is written as “konnichiwa” but is written as “konnichiha” in hiragana. Dr. Kudo did not correct the mistake during the first semester of 2004, but she corrected it during the second semester of 2005. She indicated that “This should be は” instead of わ.” During the interview at the end of second semester, Abby said, “I don’t mess up with は /ha/ any more when I’m trying to write it. I used to always use hiragana わ /wa/ instead of は /ha/.” When Lily wrote that “Because 誕生日 is on the 24,” Dr. Kudo wrote how to say in Japanese, “1 2月24日は私の誕生日なので (Because December 24 is my birthday).” Except for these minimal corrections, Dr. Kudo usually provided short feedback to her students such as “よく書けています (well-written)” and “たくさん書きましたね。とてもいいです。 (You wrote a lot. Very good.)” When points were reduced, she wrote the reasons such as “a very short message.”

When the students used katakana for English words, they tended to spell differently than Japanese people write conventionally. Alex used a lot of
katakana to write about himself such as his favorite books. His katakana use was more like Japanese people’s than Americans during the second semester. Alex explained:

I try to think through how it would sound to a Japanese person. There are sounds that are obviously not in Japanese and if those sounds are in the English word, you have to think about how they’d be transliterated and that was hard for me at first, but I’ve learned some rules maybe or taught myself some rules… For example, when there’s an ‘r’ at the end of a syllable, it’s a long vowel instead of the \( /ru/ \). I learned over time that it’s a long vowel instead. But other than that, it hasn’t been hard to learn… Listening to spoken Japanese, hearing the sounds and then especially hearing English words spoken as katakana they sound different. They sound, I mean I don’t know how else to describe it, you hear it and it becomes ingrained.

Alex used a lot of katakana when he wrote a second message during the second semester. Katakawa words are underlined:

瑞穂さんへ
お元気ですか。ミッドウエスタンシティに冬は春になっています。今日はいたい暖かいですが、今日の朝僕は仕事に行きながら、雨と雪を降りました。春はとても待ち遠しいです。
今僕は喫茶店でこのメールを書いています。たくさんの面白い人を見て、いい音楽を聞いて、おいしいコーヒーを飲みます。だから、ここで書くのが好きです。時々ここに来て、仕事をします。
瑞穂さんの週末はどうでしたか。何をしましたか。僕は土曜日アジアの美術館を行って、すごい日本刀のエキシビジョンを見ました。きれいな刀が十剣ぐらいあって、古い中国の剣二剣と奈良時代の剣を二件網羅しました。そして、諸鍔もありました。たくさんの人もいました。すごいです。また行きたいです。日曜日弟のマットはセントラルタウンから来ました。僕と妻はマンションを有します。そして、弟は大工なので、弟は二階のアパートを補修するのを手伝いたいでしょう。二時間一緒にアパートで話した後、イタリアのレストランで昼食を食べました。私達は来週アパートを補修するのを始めるつもりです。
一番好きな小説を教えなければならないが、たくさん小説が好きなので、ちょっと難しいですね。学生の時、ウィリアムギブソンさんの「ヌーロマンサー」が大好きでした。サイエンスフィクションの諸説です。そして、あの本で「サイバースペース」を作りました。この頃一番好きな著書は Stephenson さんです。Cryptonomicon や Baroque Cycle の Quicksilver を書きました。面白い本です。言うまでもない、JRR Tolkien 先生の本も大
好きです。僕は近頃 The Silmarillion を読みました。とても良かったです。瑞穂さんはどうな本が好きですか。教えてください。瑞穂さんは来週末何をするつもりですか。僕はコンピュータの仕事をしたりそうじをしたりするでしょう。妻はテネシー州のナシュヴィルに仕事で五日間行かなければなりません。だから僕は一人で数日間でしょう。では、またメールします。返事をたのしみにしています。

アレックス

The English translation is:

Mizuho-san,

How are you? Midwestern City’s winter is turning into spring. It is usually warm during the day, but it was rainy and snowy when I went to work this morning. I can’t wait for spring.

I am writing this e-mail at a coffee shop now. I am watching a lot of interesting people, listening to good music, and drinking delicious coffee. So, I like to write here. I sometimes come here and work.

How was your weekend? What did you do? I went to an Asian museum and saw a great Japanese sword exhibition on Saturday. There were about ten beautiful swords and covered two old Chinese swords and two swords in Nara Period (the period in 710 through 794). Also, there were (guards?). There were many people. It is great. I would like to go there again. My younger brother Matt came from Central Town on Sunday. I and my wife have an apartment. Because my brother is a carpenter, he will want to help me remodel the second floor of the apartment. After we talked for a couple of hours in the apartment, we ate lunch at an Italian restaurant. We are going to begin remodeling my apartment next week. I have to tell you my most favorite novel, but it is a little difficult because I like a lot of novels. When I was a student, I loved William Gibson’s “Neuromancer.” That is a science fiction novel. Also, a “cyberspace” was made. Recently my most favorite author is Mr. Neal Stephenson. Of course, I love Dr. TRR Tolkien’s books. I read the Silmarillion recently. It was very good. What types of books you do like? Please let me know.

What are you going to do next weekend? I will do my computer work and clean the house. My wife has to go to Nashville, Tennessee for five days on a business trip. Therefore, I will be by myself for several days. Well, I will e-mail you again. I look forward to your reply.

In this message Alex used katakana for American names and borrowed words from Western words such as ウイリアムギブソン /Uiriamu Gibuson/ (William Gibson), ヌーロマンサー /Nuromansa/ (Neuromancer), サイエンスフィクション /saiensu fikushon/ (science fiction), and コンピュータ /konpyata/ (computer).
Alex tried to see if Amazon Japan (www.amazon.co.jp) had “Japanese edition” of the English books that he read. On his writing reflection sheet he wrote, “On amazon.co.jp authors with English names are listed with their names printed in romaji. Book titles, too.” When he used Amazon Japan to see if a particular book had a Japanese edition, it seemed that it was “not translated” into Japanese. When Alex wanted to know about Japanese titles for the English books, he sometimes tried Amazon Japan.

Alex used to guess that English “r” would be expressed as “ル /ru/” in katakana as Margaret wrote “Shakespeare” as “シェイクスピール /Sheikusupiru/” instead of “シェイクスピア /Sheikusupia/.” Margaret wrote “Star Wars” as “スターウォールス /Staworusu/” instead of “スターウォーズ /Stawozu/.” Alex discovered the rule that English words ending with “r” turns into long vowels. For instance, “hamburger” is “ハンバーガー /hanbaga/” and the American last name “Meyer” is “マイヤー /Maiya/.” Probably Alex thought that borrowed words with “r” would be written as ル /ru/ in katakana since the words with ‘l’ tended to be ル /ru/ in katakana. For instance, his real name ends with an “l” sound and his name ends with “ru” when converted in katakana. For example, if his name was “Paul,” it was written “ポール /Poru/.” If his name was “Michael,” it was written “マイケル /Maikeru/.” If his name was “Carl,” it was written カール /Karu/.

It was “harder” for Alex “to read” katakana “than it is to write them.” Alex often became “stuck” when he was “reading Japanese” and “hit a katakana word.” Alex said:
I have to go back over it two or three times and sound it out and then sometimes look ahead and figure out the context... If I didn’t read, I have to read the whole sentence. I would have to read the whole sentence and then try and figure it out from the context... It’s harder to read than it is to write... I was talking about a book that I’m reading right now, a novel, and the Amazon Japan site gave the title in English, so it wasn’t any help at all... I think it’s not translated and there wasn’t of this particular book.

Assessment.

When the students took Japanese oral tests at the end of each semester, a couple of questions of oral tests were related to the topic that they wrote to their keypal (Appendix R & S). The oral tests showed the students' retention of some of the vocabulary that they used in their e-mail messages. The second oral tests also showed that the students improved their oral proficiency.

For example, the eighth question of the oral test during the first semester was answering to the question, "ぶんを四ついてください。冬休みに何をするつもりですか。何をしたいですか。 ('Say four sentences. What are you going to do over winter break? What would you like to do?')" The students wrote about their plans for their winter break to their keypals.

Abby said during the oral test:

メイン州はとっ…たくさん雪があるので、私はスキーをするつもりです。Umm 私のお母さんのうちにクリスマスをし…するつもりです。ワシントンに私の姉を…no, 私の姉にダンスをするのを見るつもりです。

The English translation is:

Because Maine has a lot snow, I am going to ski. Umm I am going to do [celebrate] Christmas in my mother’s house. In Washington I am going to my elder sister… no, I am going to see my sister dancing.

Abby wrote about going back to Maine for Christmas and to see her sister
dancing to her keypal. Abby self-corrected three parts in the oral tests, but she could tell her plan for winter break very well. Abby was supposed to use four sentences, but she used only three sentences.

Alex did an excellent job responding to the question:

I have to work. My family is not going to come (to my house). Therefore, I will have a quiet spring [winter] break. However, because I have a wedding anniversary on 28th, I am going to a romantic restaurant with Julie.

Margaret said what she wanted to do over Christmas perfectly:

I am going back to Colorado with my mother by car over winter break. I want to watch football with my father on TV and read Harry Potter. I am going to stay in my (brother’s?) apartment for a week and go to a Christmas party. I would like to play video games with my brother everyday.

When Lily recorded her response, there were a few words that were difficult to understand, but she did a good job. Lily expressed about her winter plan in detail more than her message to her keypal:

The English translation is:
I am going to make a trip with my family over winter break. I am going to do [go to] Canada. Before I go to Canada, I am going to write... buy a guidebook and a map. I am going for two weeks.

The ninth question of the oral test was, "Tell where you have been to and how the trip was, and what you did before the trip. ぶんを五ついってください。('Tell five sentences.')" That question was related to the topic of the course and a topic of their favorite city for the students' e-mail assignment. Abby did good job expressing the meanings:

Umm 私は日本のことがあります。Umm 旅行前私はパスポートを取りました…ました。傘が買いました。日本の旅行はとても面白いかったです。日本の旅行後、家族と沢山写真を見ました。

The English translation is:

Umm I have (been to) Japan. Umm I get... got a passport before the trip. I bought an umbrella. My Japan trip was very interesting. After the Japan trip, I saw a lot of pictures with my family.

Alex responded with a couple of self-corrections:

２年前イギリスに行く…すみません、２年前イギリスに行く…行ったことがあります。とても面白かったです。今晚はきれいです。旅行をする前、飛行機のチケットを買って…買ったり、イギリスのウェブサイトをったりしました。

The English translation is:

Two year ago I go to England... excuse me, I went to... I have been to England. It was very interesting. It is beautiful this evening. Before I traveled, I bought an airplane ticket and viewed websites about England.

Margaret recorded her response with one self-correction:

ニューヨークに行ったことがあります。とても楽しかったです。私は Statue of Liberty と Empire State Building をしたり、電車を使ったりしました。そして、セントラルパークで風と…すみません、そして、セントラルパークで家族と昼ご飯を食べました。旅行をする前、ガイドブックと飛行機の切符を買いました。
The English translation is:

I have been to New York. I had a great time. I saw the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building and used trains. Then I ate lunch with my wind… excuse me, with my family at Central Park. Before I traveled, I bought a guidebook and an airplane ticket.

When Margaret wrote about New York to her keypal, she used the Japanese translation, 自由の女神, for the Statue of Liberty, but she used English words for the Statue of Liberty and Empire State Building in her oral test.

Lily had a little difficult time to tell about her previous trip:

私はフロリダに旅行したことがあります。去年、夏休みに2週間友達と行きました。Umm私は(whispering something)私はだ…楽しかったです。私は旅行前ホテル…

The English translation is:

I have traveled to Florida. Last year I went there with my friends for two weeks over summer vacation. Umm… I (whispering something) I had fun. Before the trip, I… hotel…

The second question for the second semester's oral test was to talk about their summer plans for a minute. Abby showed great improvement of her oral proficiency when talking about her plans. Abby talked much more fluently during this oral test than during the last test. I did not hear her saying “umm” in her monologue while she often said "umm" and restated during her oral test during the first semester. Abby talked about her summer plans:

私は夏休みのアルバイトがあるので、私は夏休みはウエストバージニア州に行きました。アルバイトので、私はとても忙しいのに私はとても面白いと思います。アルバイトの前、私はメイン州に行きます。だから、私の姉と叔母さんを会うつもりです。

The English translation is:
Because I have a summer part-time job, I went [am going] to West Virginia over summer vacation. Because this is a part-time job, even though I will be very busy, I think it is very interesting. Before the part-time job, I will go to Maine. Therefore, I am going to see my elder sister and aunt.

When Alex wrote about his summer plan, he had a hard time to write because he did not have a lot of plans yet. Even though it might have been difficult for him to talk about his plans for a minute without a lot of plans, he talked about his plans well by restating some words:

夏休みですか。5月は忙しいでしょう。でも楽しそうです。Ummはじめに umm 映画のスターウォーズを見たいです。Umm 大きい人ごみは大きい人ごみが嫌いなので、1週間か2週間待って友達と行き…行くでしょう。Uh 見たくないと思いました。でも、umm 子供の時 umm スターウォーズが大好きです。そして映画はウエストモールにいるならすいてはだめです。夏休みなのに私は仕事をしなければなりません。

The English translation is:

Summer vacation? I will be busy in May. However, it seems to be fun. Umm first, I want to see the movie Star Wars. Umm because I do not like being in crowds, I will wait for one or two weeks then go… will go to see it with my friends. Umm I thought I did not want to see it. However, umm when I was a child, I love(d) Star Wars. Also, if you see the movie at the West Mall, do not (?). Even during summer vacation I have to work.

Margaret talked about her summer plans fluently:

私は夏休みに umm 3週間イギリス…イギリスに行って、シェイクスピールを勉強します。忙しい。でも、とても楽しいでしょう。旅行は高いので、私は行く前沢山仕事をしなければなりません。そして、7月に1番の友達の結婚に行くつもりです。きれいと思います。

The English translation is:

I will go to England… England and study Shakespeare for umm three weeks over summer vacation. I will be busy. However, it will be a lot of fun. Because the trip is expensive, I have to work a lot before going to the trip. Also, I am going to my best friend's wedding. I think she will be beautiful.
Lily told her summer plans more fluently than her winter plans last semester:

夏休みに私は友達とカリフォルニアに行きたいんです。そして私は旅行の前ガイドブックと地図を買わないかえもなりません。私は私たち買い物する うむ でしょう。そしてデズニーを行きます。

The English translation is:

I want to go to California with my friends over summer vacation. I might not buy a guidebook and a map before the trip. I... We umm will go shopping. Also, we will go to the Disney.

Abby developed some vocabulary through writing e-mail messages. I went to the language table after the data collection period of this study was over on September, 2005. Five Americans and three Japanese including Dr. Kudo and I attended the table. When I asked Abby how her summer internship at a zoo was in Japanese, she responded that she enjoyed it. When Abby was asked which animals she took care of, she listed animal names in Japanese without a problem. She did not learn some of the animal names such as yama yagi (mountain goat) in her Japanese classes but learned when she wrote e-mail messages to her keypal. None of the other American students knew the word, yama yagi, and Abby told them the meanings.

When I joined the language table in October, 2005, I said that my classmate, who moved to another state, stayed with me and went to a zoo in the biggest city in Midwestern State with her. When one student Erin asked me what dobutsu (‘zoo’) meant, I said, “Dobutsuen niwa takusan dobutsu ga imasu” (‘There are many dobutsu or animals in dobutsu or zoo’). On that day, we included some English explanations because there was a student who just began
studying Japanese a couple of months ago in the language table, but I did not include an English translation because Abby might be able to explain to the other students. Abby wrote that she wanted to work at a zoo in the future in her first e-mail message during the first semester and wrote that she was going to work part-time at a zoo during the summer in her last message during the second semester. When I looked at her, Abby said that she should have known the word, but she did not remember it any longer.

Theme Five: Authentic Japanese Language Practice

The fifth theme that emerged in the study was authentic Japanese. This theme had five sub-themes. The first three sub-themes were related to Japanese language practice in the classroom. The first sub-theme was classroom interactions. The second sub-theme was videos and movies in classes. The third sub-theme was cultural activities in classes. The last two sub-themes were related to Japanese language outside of class. The fourth theme was authentic materials. The last theme was interpersonal communication. Figure 14 shows authentic Japanese materials that students in the second-year Japanese course received in their classroom.
Figure 14: Authentic Japanese Materials in Classes

Materials in Classes

- Professor
- Native speakers
- Peer
- Books
- Presentations (Culture/current news)
- Modified textbook
- Pictures for story telling
- Videos
- Movies
- Food (Snack, cooking, restaurant)
- Calligraphy
- Music (Song & koto)
- Origami
- Native speakers
- Peer
- Books
- Presentations (Culture/current news)
- Modified textbook
- Pictures for story telling
- Videos
- Movies
- Food (Snack, cooking, restaurant)
- Calligraphy
- Music (Song & koto)
- Origami
Classroom Interactions.

Dr. Kudo created the Japanese language learning environment where the second-year Japanese students have interactions as much as possible. Dr. Kudo made study sheets and materials on transparencies using vocabulary from the textbook so the lessons become communicative. Dr. Kudo said:

The assigned textbook for this course is *Nakama* (Volume 2 by Hatasa, Makino, & Hatasa, 1998). Because the goal is a communicative way of learning, I modify the textbook in the way that the content could be more realistic to the students. Because the textbook has a large amount of contents, I select materials and make them more interactive between students and comprehensible using transparencies. My students have a lot of pair work.

When her students did not understand some parts, she emphasized the difficult parts on the next day’s review.

Abby said that she had “a lot of conversation” in Japanese classes. Abby added that the Japanese language in the classroom was “a mix” of authentic use because the students “never knew all the vocabulary they wanted to know, so they threw random English.” Abby, Lily, and Margaret said that the students had Japanese conversation time on Mondays. Abby described about the conversation time on Mondays. Abby explained:

On Mondays, we tried to have Japanese conversations that would last at least 25 minutes or so. Some days we did better than others. Some days Kudo-sensei talked to us the whole time because we couldn’t figure out what to say. But… we tried to have real conversations. Then we’re supposed to respond back to her, too, if she asks us a question in Japanese. Anytime we’re supposed to answer back in Japanese as long as we can. But if we can’t, we speak in English.

Alex commented that the conversation time “didn’t seem to last the whole semester.” Alex mentioned:
It seemed like some Mondays we did, and some Mondays we didn’t, so I was surprised. I thought we were going to talk about everyday things in Japanese such as what we did over the weekend... Maybe it became so informal that I didn’t even notice it. It was short in that case. If it were every Monday, it was very short... Maybe it wasn’t as I thought it would be.

When students made conversations in Japanese, Margaret said that they were “real basic questions like what’d you do on the weekend. Whoever answers would ask the next person, and then they would answer and they would ask somebody else.” Alex explained about the use of Japanese in the second-year Japanese classes:

We tried not to use English. We had to say when we were going to use English, and I remember Kudo-sensei telling me, at least once, not to use English. We resorted to English occasionally, but during conversation time, it was all Japanese. When we were talking about what we did over the weekend, we tried really hard not to use any English and we were limited somewhat by our vocabulary. I think people were a little bit afraid to interact in Japanese because they were embarrassed by what they knew or what they didn’t know. We would talk a tiny little bit. Margaret and I would talk a little bit in Japanese before class, but it was stock phrases mostly such as, how are you, hello, how are you, and that kind of thing. When we were working on class work, we would help each other, but that was usually one word at a time maybe giving hints or reminders. There wasn’t a lot of interaction... unfortunately.

Abby stated, “We’re supposed to speak Japanese as much as possible. We’re not allowed to speak English unless we absolutely cannot say what we need to in Japanese. And we speak back and forth to each other as well.” Alex thought that the rule of using Japanese in classes was less stricter than outside classes. Alex said:

Outside of class, Kudo-sensei was a lot tougher. She would ask me to speak Japanese more than she would. She was more tolerant of English in class I think than she was outside of class. If I would go talk to her about something, she would ask me to speak in Japanese instead of English. It was a little surprising. I kind of wish we had done it in class more, but maybe it would have been harder for everybody else.
I observed that the other students nodded when one answered or the others helped when one did not know how to say something in the classroom. Alex said that “there was a lot of help” among classmates and the instructor in their Japanese classes. Alex described:

Everyday someone would stumble over something and would be surprised that there was a hole in their knowledge and then somebody else would help. That was really good... There’s a little side conversation in Japanese with Margaret. When we’re talking, we try to talk in Japanese... There’s also, of course, the comprehension going from Japanese sentences into English. It’s almost all spoken.

When I observed classes, I joined in conversations with Abby and Lily. The Japanese exchange student, Ryoko, joined in conversations with Alex and Margaret. Alex talked about conversations in a group:

It wouldn’t have been very helpful to have unstructured conversation time because we probably would’ve just sat there unless we could’ve broken up into groups with a Japanese speaker and worked in a group.

Margaret said, “We were supposed to use Japanese to talk each other, but the conversations didn’t go very far because they didn’t have a lot to say. So, Kudo-sensei got little cartoons.” Students told a story in Japanese by seeing a cartoon without characters (Appendix Q). Alex explained about the cartoons:

We used some pictures as cues to develop a story conversationally... a couple of times... One topic was the events that happened to a person over the course of the day. It was a sequence of pictures, and we described the pictures in Japanese. And another one was celebrating a holiday. It was Christmas.

Dr. Kudo asked questions when students did not know how to describe some pictures. Students occasionally laughed while telling a story. For example, students laughed when Alex called Santa Clause as “Santa-san (Mr. Santa).”
Dr. Kudo used such cartoons from her teaching for English Language Learners (ELL) book. Dr. Kudo said that she was looking for more books with pictures for students to tell stories, but it was hard to find good ones. When Dr. Kudo ordered one book online, she could not see inside the book before the purchase. She was disappointed when she received it because the book had only single pictures instead of a sequence of pictures for story telling. Lily said:

I don’t talk a lot in class… I think I write okay. My grammar isn’t that bad. But speaking is an issue for me… I don’t talk to people a lot in Japanese. That’s why when I speak Japanese, it’s difficult. I couldn’t find a word because I don’t have any Japanese person to communicate one-on-one everyday. If I study abroad, I will be fluent.

Although Lily said that she did not talk a lot in Japanese classes, she tried to answer questions “when Kudo-sensei asked something.” Lily e-mailed Dr. Kudo “in Japanese or sometimes in English” when she needed to communicate with Dr. Kudo. Lily said, “Sometimes asking questions in Japanese is hard. It’s easy to ask in English.”

Margaret said that sometimes Dr. Kudo and the exchange student Ryoko brought some brochures, books, or posters from or related to Japan. The students “studied them.” Margaret was not talkative, but her Japanese pronunciation was very good when she spoke Japanese. Margaret indicated that she tended “to pick up languages pretty easily.” Margaret thought that “the grammar” and “whatever Kudo-sensei presents something made sense to” her. Margaret explained, “We have a lot of examples in class that that makes them stick with me a little bit better.” Margaret also believed the “repetition” in class
helped. Lily described how she learned Japanese in her Japanese class, “I listen to the lesson. But when I have questions, I would just ask my classmates.”

Students sometimes practiced writing kanji and wrote Japanese sentences on the chalkboard. Abby said that “Kudo-sensei gives us sentences that we have to write on the chalkboard which is pretty much vertical.” Traditionally Japanese language is written vertically, top to bottom, right to left. Japanese students today would write vertically to take notes for Japanese language arts classes and write horizontally for the rest of the subjects. When students in the second-year Japanese course took notes, they wrote Japanese horizontally. However, when the students wrote sentences on the chalkboard, they wrote vertically. Abby said, “I still haven’t figured out what kanji goes on which line when I’m trying to write vertical.” When the students wrote sentences or kanji on the chalkboard, the pair of Alex and Margaret wrote Japanese smoothly. Abby and Lily sometimes could not remember kanji and took a little longer time than the others. Abby often wondered, “Does this go here?” when he wrote Japanese vertically on the board. Abby said that students had “a lot of writing assignments.” In Japanese classes, Abby “took notes in Japanese as much as” she could even though she could “not always do it when (she) was learning new grammar.”

Videos and Movies.

Dr. Kudo sometimes showed a series of video, Yan-san to Nihon no Hitobito (Mr. Yan and the Japanese People), related to lesson topics or vocabulary. Dr. Kudo explained:
Students need to use authentic materials. It is ideal to use real Japanese such as TV commercials. But the students of intermediate-low or intermediate-middle have difficulties to understand such authentic materials. In order to fill the gap, I use the video, *Yan-san to Nihon no Hitobito*. This film was made in the 80s, so it is old. But this is authentic: The setting is in Japan, and I think the speed of the language is close to authentic. When I use the video, I select the topics or words in chapters. The students skim and scan when they watch the video. The students watch the video a couple of times without scripts. Then the students read scripts and see more details. When the students have questions, I answer them. After the students read the script, I ask questions.

Mr. Yan from Malaysia works in Japan and interacts with Japanese people in the video series of *Yan-san to Nihon no Hitobito*. One story was that Mr. Yan visited the Kato family with pictures when he visited *Nikko Toshogu* Shrine in Tochigi Prefecture. Before watching the video, Dr. Kudo passed out a book with Nikko’s pictures to the students. One story was that Mr. Yan went to a baseball game with Taro and Midori Kato. Dr. Kudo usually showed the video without scripts to her students once or twice. Then she distributed a script, the students read the script together, and watched the video again.

One day the students wrote a Japanese summary with their partners. Then, the students told the story, and Dr. Kudo wrote the main points on the chalkboard. Lastly, the students answered questions in Japanese about the video. The questions were shown on transparencies and an overhead projector. The first part of the questions was true or false. Then the students had questions to answer using sentences. Students took turns reading the questions and answering them. They worked with a partner, so either person from the pair answered:

**Question 1:** 何曜日ですか。（What day is it?）
**Margaret:** 日曜日です。（It's Sunday.）
Question 2: 季節はいつですか。 (What season is that?)
Alex: 夏だと思います。 (I think it is summer.)

Alex guessed that it was summer. Dr. Kudo asked the students why they thought it was summer. Alex guessed it was summer because people were wearing half-sleeve shirts. Dr. Kudo agreed with Alex that would be summer because there was a summer festival in the video scene. Regions in Japan have various festivals in summer. Some people say that the origin of summer festivals is to appease evil spirits. The rest of the questions and the answers continued:

Question 3: 「大丈夫」って英語で何ですか。 (What is "daijobu" in English?)
Alex: It’s ok.

Question 4: 迷子のお母さんは何をしていたと思いますか。 (What do you think the mother of the lost child doing?)
Alex: 買い物をしていました。 (I think she was shopping.)
Dr. Kudo: そうですね。袋を持っていました。 (I agree with you. I think she carried a shopping bag.)

Question 5: ヤンさんは加藤さんの奥さんに何をしてあげましたか。 (What did Mr. Yan do for Mrs. Kato?)
Lily: 買い物を助けてあげました。 (He helped her shopping.)
Abby: 手伝ってあげました。 (He helped her shopping.) (Lily’s partner Abby the corrected the answer.)
Dr. Kudo: 買ってあげましたか。 (Did he buy for her?)
Alex: 持ってあげました。 (He carried for her.)
Dr. Kudo: 買い物を持ってあげました。 (He carried what Dr. Kudo bought.)

After Alex answered that the department store was going to deliver the gift in response to the question, "What was the department store going to do for Mrs. Kato?" Dr. Kudo asked the students, "アメリカのデパートでは配達をしますか。 (Do American department stores deliver?)" Alex responded, "お金をあげると時々配達します。 (If you give money, they sometimes deliver.)" Dr. Kudo asked about a couple of American department stores. Then she added, "クリスマスに
はするでしょうね。（"I guess they deliver for Christmas."") The next question was if the students thought the service at Japanese department stores was good. Abby, Alex, and Lily answered that they thought the service was good. Only Margaret did not respond because she did not know the answer. Dr. Kudo said that Japanese department stores had free wrapping service then asked the students if American department stores had free wrapping for wedding gifts. The students responded that the stores would wrap wedding gifts. Dr. Kudo asked them if the stores have free wrapping for gifts other than wedding gifts, and they responded that the stores would not.

The students had some positive perspectives about the video series of Mr. Yan. Lily thought that watching the video helped her understand “different” speech styles by “different people.” Lily said, “It was interesting.” Lily learned “not only the language, but also Japanese culture” through the video. Lily learned how Japanese people worked and interacted with their co-workers and friends through the video. Alex also received cultural information from the video. Alex mentioned, “there was a video that was about the pedestrian heaven which is something that I’ve never seen before, and the matsuri (festival) was covered in the Yan-san video.” The pedestrian heaven (‘hokosha tengoku’) was that the area of streets where vehicles were not allowed on festivals or on Sundays. During the period of hokosha tengoku pedestrians could walk in the middle of the street without being worried about cars.

Abby rated the video as “good” but “not great.” These videos helped Abby see how much Japanese she was learning while watching the video. Abby said:
You actually thought that maybe you were learning something when you understood it more than you were actually learning things. I think we learned more from reading the scripts as far as vocabulary and conjugation than watching the videos, but the videos gave it a thrill because you could watch it and you could understand 70% or 50%... and feel, “Wow, maybe we’re learning something.”

Alex commented that watching videos were “helpful” for him to be exposed to authentic Japanese. The video series included “expressions and idioms” that Alex did not hear in class, but he could understand their meanings “in context.” Alex could understand the video series “maybe 60-70%.” Margaret said that the video series are “learning videos, so they have to be really simple and obvious” even though “they were funny to watch. Margaret thought that reading scripts helped her understand what people were talking.

Second-year Japanese students watched three movies in total during the academic year. When Dr. Kudo was out of town for a business trip, the students watched the movie, *Shiko Funjatta*, in the Modern Language computer lab. Dr. Kudo explained to me how to operate the lab before she left the town, and I showed the movie. The students watched individual screens with headsets. That movie was about a sumo club at college and had subtitles both in English and Chinese. Abby sometimes laughed out aloud, but the other students were watching the movie quietly. Alex wrote a comment about the movie time in his web log:

> While Kudo-sensei is away, we are watching a movie in Japanese class. It's a nice change of pace from class. It's a rather silly film, but it's interesting to learn that Japanese guys are self-conscious about wearing *mawashi* ('sumo loincloth') as I would expect to be, put in the position of having to wear one. The film is subtitled in both English and Chinese, too. It's fun to watch the Chinese characters, and match them up (as much as is possible) with the spoken Japanese.
During the final’s week, the students watched the movies, *Shall We Dance?* (1996) written and directed by Masayuki Suo and *Twilight Samurai* (*Tasogare Seibei*) (2002) written by Shuhei Fujisawa and directed by Yoji Yamada. Both movies had English subtitles.

The original version of the movie, *Shall We Dance?* did not have an opening narration. However, the version of the movie that was released in the United States started with the narration explaining the Japanese cultural background:

日本では、ボールルームダンスはとても偏見を持たれている。男と女が人前で抱き合って踊るなんて恥ずかしいことだ。そう思われている。なにしろ夫婦が腕を組みパーティーに出かけることも恥ずかしい。その上一緒に踊るなんてもっと恥ずかしい。ちなみに夫婦の間で愛してるなんていうこともない。夫婦なら口に出さなくても分かり合えるというのが日本人の考え方だ。踊る相手が妻以外、夫以外となると、今度は下心があってのことだと思われてしまうからやっぱり恥ずかしい。そんな日本人でも、音楽にのって楽しく踊れたらどんなに素晴らしいだろうと心密かに思っている。

The English subtitle for this narration in the movies showed:

In Japan, ballroom dance is regarded with much suspicion,
In a country where married couples don’t go out arm in arm,
Much less say ‘I love you’ out loud…
Intuitive understanding is everything,
The idea that a husband and a wife should embrace and dance in front of others is beyond embarrassing.
However to go out dancing with someone else would be misunderstood and prove more shameful.
Nonetheless, even for Japanese people, there is a secret wonder…
About the joys that dance can bring.

Besides the cultural background in the opening narration, some students might have observed culture. For example, Mr. Sugiyama, the middle-aged accountant, put rice in his rice bowl from the rice cooker for breakfast, biked to a station and took a train to go to work, and wiped his sweat using his handkerchief.
while most people in the Midwest would not eat rice for breakfast, commute to work by bike and train, and carry handkerchief all the time. The office scenes that a boss put a stamp instead of signature or being in a large office without individual cubicles were other examples of differences between Japanese and American workplaces. While watching the movie, Lily observed that Japanese wives and husbands “don't interact much.” Lily said that the Japanese husband “is always at work and the Japanese wife is always at home wondering what her husband is doing.” Lily picked “some of” the Japanese language through movies though “sometimes people in movies talk really fast that (she) could not really catch it.”

Alex said that comprehending Japanese language through movies was “tougher” than Yan-san movies because of the subtitles. Alex explained:

I would try not to look at the subtitles a little bit. I would only look at them after I heard what was said to see if I was hearing things correctly. I understood the language in the movies maybe 30 or 40%. Sometimes I could get entire meanings. I might not understand it word for word, but I could understand what was being said. But sometimes I didn’t understand any of it...

Dr. Kudo said that she has shown Japanese movies without subtitles before. Dr. Kudo said:

The students' attention span lasted only for 15 minutes. Even with subtitles, some students like Alex picked some words such as word ending particles and asked me questions. Some students told me the parts they understood. Some students said that they might have understood about ten sentences. The students can read subtitles when they get tired of listening and listen to the movie again when they recover their attention span.
Cultural Activities in Classes.

The students learned Japanese culture through presentations and various activities during the first- and second-year Japanese courses. Alex explained, "In first year we did cultural presentations, and I got a lot out of those." Abby described the cultural presentations. Abby explained:

In Stage 1 and 2 (during the first-year), we had cultural presentations that we had to do. Kudo-sensei really wanted us to understand culture, so we did things like etiquette, clothing, sports, and all sorts of things… The topic is just what we chose… We chose some part of the culture that interested us or we thought might interest us. And then we did a presentation on it to the class. It was a 20 minute presentation. So, a lot of that just ended up being by the virtue of all the things that you hear about in America like the samurai and sumo wrestling, which is traditional and current and Asian clothing and things like that.

Abby believed that the students prepared for the cultural presentations by using at least one book. Abby added, “Kudo-sensei has a big collection of books that we were allowed to use if we wanted to… however, most people used the internet… that is such a great resource.” Lily evaluated Dr. Kudo, “Kudo-sensei did a good job making us learn Japanese culture. We pretty much keep in touch with Japanese culture itself.”

The students made “current news reports” in their second-year Japanese course. Abby said:

Current news reports are very informative as far as figuring out modern culture because we can read them and understand how the government works and how the society works. Whereas a lot of the cultural presentations were historical things such as kimonos which are still worn but not very much, the current news reports definitely help us understand modern culture a lot.

Abby said that the students “had a couple of reading assignments… especially during the end of the semester.” These books were written in
Japanese, but Abby thought that they were “technically not completely authentic” because “they were written horizontal, not vertical.” “The last one we had to do was a basically a facts sheet about Japan. It had information like population and geography.” The students did not read fiction stories but read “about facts” for the course. Alex talked about “the Japan book” for the course:

We’ve been reading the Japan book which we all kind of agreed that it was not in depth enough. There were things that we wanted to look at in greater depth than the Japan book would give us. It was very in depth about the economics of Japan. Well, even that was high level overview, none of us were economists. So, it went over our heads and we thought it was too in depth. But there were other cultural chapters that we wanted to study more and wanted to talk more about ceramics, more about family life, and that kind of thing. There’s information imbedded in the language that you pick up on the festivals and hanami (cherry blossom viewing) and tsukimi (full moon viewing on lunar calendar year August 15th) and just even through the cognitive structure of the language. You get that listening to the tapes what people talk about and how they talk about it.

Alex realized “a significant difference at least linguistically between English speaking culture and Japanese culture” when he learned “the humble language and the honorific language” in Japanese. Japanese people use different verbs according to the listeners’ status. For example, the dictionary form of the word that is equivalent to “give” is “ageru” in Japanese. The humble form of the same verb is “sashiageru,” and its honorific form is “kudasaru.” Alex listed Japanese verbs for “give” and “receive” “just for the record (and practice)” in his web log:

- **ageru** - to give
- **sashiageru** - to give (to an out-group social superior)
- **kureru** - to give (when me (watshi) is the indirect object)
- **kudasaru** - to give (when me (watashi) is the indirect object, and the subject is an out-group social superior)
- **morau** - to receive
- **itadaku** - to receive (when the giver is an out-group social superior)
The students had cultural activities at the end of semesters. Based on the students’ interests they practiced calligraphy at the end of the first semester and origami at the end of the second semester. Students usually wrote their names in katakana since people use katakana for Western names. However, some students wanted to write their names in kanji. So, Dr. Kudo showed each student a couple of ways to write their names in kanji explaining each kanji meaning and let them select one before they practiced calligraphy. The students had calligraphy for two days. The first day was a practicing day and the second day was the final product day. Dr. Kudo said that especially Alex practiced hard while writing calligraphy in the class.

When Alex went home, he “expressed an interest in it” to his wife Julie and “was doing some reading about it.” Julie “bought some brushes, ink, and books” for Alex “as a gift for Christmas.” Julie researched where she could obtain them. “She loves to research that sort of thing and did a lot of reading about it.” Alex was “trying to learn something about” calligraphy “as much as” he could. Alex stated:

It’s fun. It’s interesting. The martial art I practice is aikido and one of the books that I got is called Brush Meditation and it’s really about calligraphic technique, but it’s written by a high level aikido practitioner. The technique as he describes it in his book is very similar to aikido techniques the way it comes from the center of you and everything is connected as you draw the character. It’s very similar to aikido technique and everything is connected as you perform the technique. So, there’s similarities there I’m discovering all the time.

Alex was “trying to” practice calligraphy “about an hour a week.” Lily thought that calligraphy “was fun” but “really hard.” “It required a lot of time” to practice it.
Dr. Kudo and I brought Japanese snacks sometimes so the students could be exposed to Japanese food. One day I brought cookies from Shizuoka Prefecture in Japan whose main ingredients were flour, sugar, butter, and a little bit of eel powder. These cookies are famous as a souvenir from western part of Shizuoka, so the exchange student Ryoko knew them even though her hometown was far from Shizuoka. When I gave these cookies to the students, I told them the product name in Japanese. The name included the name, unagi (‘eel’), and I did not ask the students if they knew the word. Each student took one out of the box. Alex said that he knew the snack because he ate it when he stayed with his host family in Shizuoka. When Dr. Kudo asked the class if they knew what unagi meant, Abby, Lily, and Margaret did not know the word. When the students learned that unagi meant an ‘eel,’ I noticed that Margaret made a little surprising face and put the snack on the table. Abby, Alex, and Lily ate the snack. When Dr. Kudo asked the class, “Suki desuka? (Do you like it?)” Alex responded, “Hai, suki desu. (“Yes, I like it.”). Abby and Lily nodded, then Margaret was polite and nodded even though she did not try it. When Dr. Kudo brought green tea flavored chocolate snacks to the class, Margaret passed the plate without taking one. When I observed classes, I saw Margaret eating Japanese snacks only once.

The students cooked okonomiyaki, Japanese vegetable and meat pancakes after the chapter about cooking at the end of the first semester. Lily liked “to interact” in Japanese in activities like cooking. Alex and Lily seemed to enjoy eating it, but Abby and Margaret did not eat a lot after cooking. The
students went to a Japanese restaurant at the end of the second semester of 2005. Lily and Margaret could not join the restaurant tour due to their finals schedule. Abby and Alex enjoyed it.

The students did origami during the last cultural activity week. Lily “liked it.” Lily “learned” origami for the first time when she was in “elementary school.” She did that for her art project and folded some types by learning from “books.” Alex also did origami when he was a child. He checked out books “from the library” and learned to fold different patterns such as “a train, a boat, a candy dish, and a box.” So, folding papers “wasn’t new” to Alex even though he had “never made the ball” before.

The students listened to Okina Furudokei (‘Big, Old Clock’) translated from the American song, Grandfather’s Clock by Henry Clay Work written in 1876. Dr. Kudo played his song after she passed out the course syllabus on the first day of the first semester of 2004. She thought that her students would be able to pick up some words based on their familiarity of the original song in English. The translated song was first introduced through NHK (Nihon Hoso Kyokai)’s Minna no Uta (‘Songs for Everyone’) program in 1961 (Sekai no Minyo Doyo). The first part of the Japanese lyric was:

大きなのっぽの古時計　おじいさんの時計
百年いつも動いていた　ご自慢の時計さ
おじいさんの生まれた朝に　買ってきた時計さ
今はもう動かない　その時計
百年休まずにチクタクチクタク
おじいさんと一緒にチクタクチクタク
今はもう動かない　その時計

The original English lyric was:
My grandfather’s clock was too large for the shelf,
So it stood ninety years on the floor;
It was taller by half than the old man himself,
Though it weighted not a pennyweight more.
It was bought on the morn of the day that he was born,
And was always his treasure and pride,
But it stopped, short, Never to go again,
When the old man died.

Ninety years without slumbering
Tick, tock, tick, tock,
His life sounds numbering,
Tick, tock, tick, tock
It stopp’d short, Never to go again
When the old man died.

The Japanese translated song was widely sung among Japanese children.
A pop singer Ken Hirai sang the song and the CD was popular in Japan in 2002.
The students picked only a few words after listening to the song about three times. Dr. Kudo understood that the words in songs were hard to pick. For example, “clock” means 時計 /*tokei*/ in Japanese. The students already knew the word, 時計 /*tokei*/. However, “old clock” means 古時計 /*furudokei*/, so the pronunciation of the noun, ‘*tokei*’ conjugates to ‘*dokei*’ when it is used after an adjective. Nobody in the class noticed that the word was pronounced as ‘*dokei*’ instead of ‘*tokei*.’ Dr. Kudo was surprised that none of the students knew the original song in English. Around Christmas time Dr. Kudo invited two people who played koto, thirteen-stringed horizontal Japanese harp, to the class. In addition to such cultural activities, the students had guest speakers who had studied at the sister school in Japan and listened to their stories about Japanese college life.

*Authentic Materials.*

Students had materials related to Japanese language and culture outside of the class. Some students had a lot of materials while others had few. One of
the common Japanese materials among the second-year Japanese students was movies. Alex watched Japanese movies “probably two hours a week like homework.” Alex explained that “My wife, Julie, lets me watch Japanese movies because I tell her that it helps with my Japanese class.” Alex watched Japanese movies because he wanted “to improve in the language and because they are interesting.” Alex described types of Japanese movies that he watched: “Some of them are anime. Some of them are just whatever I can get a hold of that sounds interesting.” Alex liked “samurai movies” and often watched samurai dramas. When Alex listed his “top five movies” on his web log, two samurai movies ([Seven Samurai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Samurai) and [Samurai Fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samurai_Fiction)) were in his ranking. Alex watched “modern” Japanese movies sometimes. One of the recent movies that Alex watched with his wife was *Ikiru*. Alex likes Akira Kurosawa films.

Margaret “watched Japanese movies with friends like anime movies every once in a while.” Margaret added that those movies were “not actual Japanese” because “most of them are dubbed.” Lily “watched Japanese cartoons a couple of times last summer.” They were “in Japanese with English subtitles.” Lily said that the cartoon characters “talked really fast” and she “couldn’t understand” them “at first.” After she listened to the characters for a while, she could “catch up” and understood them better.

While Lily did not watch Japanese movies or cartoons regularly, Abby regularly watched Japanese anime. Abby went to Midwestern State University’s “Anime Club meetings” on Fridays. The members of the club were “all American, all geeks… The geeks hang out and watch anime.” Probably two thirds of”
that the members watch during the meetings is in Japanese with English subtitles. The rest were English “dubs.” The number of the people coming to the meetings “varied week to week,” but “anywhere between 10 and 30” people came to the club. “Most of the anime is what people own.” Abby explained how the club members obtained anime. Abby said:

A lot of what we’re watching is stuff that has not been commercially released in the United States yet, and we’re downloading it off the internet called Fan Clubs. It’s a wonderful thing. Fans who speak Japanese subtitle it to English who are not quite up with our Japanese use.

When Abby talked about her fall break during the Japanese conversation table on October, 2005, she said that she went to the Anime Club on Friday. Abby talked with people in a Midwestern State University student’s dormitory room until 5:00 a.m. and came back to her dormitory on Midwestern Methodist University campus by bike. At a language table on another day, there was a topic that an animator, Hayao Miyazaki, received an award. When Abby was asked if she had watched these animations such as *Princess Mononoke* and *Howl’s Moving Castle*, she said that she watched all of the anime movies by Hayao Miyazaki.

Abby, Alex, and Margaret were interested in Japanese books. Margaret is an English major and loves to read books. Margaret saw “a Japanese book” “in a bookstore and “flipped through the book.” Margaret thought that “It’s fun to flip through and see how much I know.” She had a book of “Japanese fairytales” translated in English “at home.” Abby had “some novels in Japanese.” Abby said:

I still can’t really read mostly because a lot of it’s in casual form, and I can’t figure that out yet. I can usually figure out in semiformal, but in casual form, I don’t quite get what they’re trying to say. It doesn’t seem
that it should be that hard to tell the difference, but it really is when it comes to more complicated sentences. If it’s just a verb like “I did this, so you did this,” I can figure out.

Alex read “a lot.” When Alex read *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* by Ruth Benedict, he learned “Japanese culture from a postwar perspective.” Alex had “some books in Japanese.” Alex said, “It’s so slow to read them.” He read Japanese books “maybe once a month for an hour.” He bought a book at a bookstore and also loaned one from “a friend who studied Japanese at Midwestern State University.”

Lily read Japanese “newspapers on the internet.” Abby also visited websites that were related to Japan “from time to time.” Abby visited websites in order to learn “the follow-up” in her dormitory after her classmates made current news report in her classes. Abby spent “a lot of time” searching for the information.

Abby listened to “Japanese pop and rock music” among students in the second-year Japanese course. Abby commented, “I know more about the Japanese pop culture than I know about their actual societal culture which is kind of sad.”

Alex “listened to NHK (*Nihon Hoso Kyokai*) radio webcast” ([www.nhk.or.jp](http://www.nhk.or.jp)) “maybe an hour a week.” When he went to the NHK website, he could listen to both real time news and recorded news from 7:00 am, noon, 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. news in Japanese. When he listened to the recorded news, he could choose the speed among three options, regular, slow, and fast. Alex stated, “Sometimes
when I’m writing my keypal message, I’ll listen to NHK. I don’t know if it helps. It may actually hurt because it’s distracting.”

Alex had “20 minutes that” he drove “either on (his) way from work to class and from class to work.” Alex came up with the idea to “listen to a Japanese tape” attached to his textbook in his car. Alex had “been listening to the tape that comes with” the Japanese textbook when he drove “to Japanese class.” The tape was “lessons from the book and it parallels” his textbook. “Some of the sections of the textbook referenced the cassette.” Alex said, “maybe that’s an exposure to authentic Japanese…because it isn’t as rigidly defined as we do in class.”

The student cafeteria in the Student Union at Midwestern Methodist University had international dinners every month. The cafeteria served food with different cultural themes once a month. When the cafeteria had the theme of Japan, the cafeteria cooks served some dishes imitated to Japanese dishes, with Japanese taiko drum performance. A Midwestern Methodist University graduate who taught English at a Japanese high school for a year learned to play taiko drums and organized a taiko drum group. The group performed taiko for the Midwestern State University’s Japan Night and the Midwestern Methodist University’s taiko dinner. The exchange student and the teaching assistant, Ryoko, was one of the performers.

When I went to the taiko dinner, I was sitting with Dr. Kudo and her colleagues including Traci, the director of the International Education, and Anna, a university librarian who was originally from Taiwan. Soon Alex and his daughter Emily joined our table. Traci commented that having international dinners at a
student cafeteria was a good idea because students on campus were forced to be exposed to different cultures when they came to eat dinner. When Traci asked me names of some dishes served at the cafeteria, some were hard to guess what they were supposed to be. Even though the food was not authentic Japanese food, the taiko performance was authentic.

Alex studied martial arts, aikido, and used Japanese such as “counting to ten and specific words” for the practice. However, Alex said that the Japanese language in aikido was “very out of context.” Alex added, “The people who say them may not even know what they mean. They just know that this word ties to this technique, for example.”

*Interpersonal Communication.*

Margaret shared some features of Japanese language in a couple of English classes. “Since I’m an English major, I study a lot of languages.” In “Linguistics” and the “Origin of the English Language” classes, people talked “about Japanese a little bit like grammar.” Margaret could never attend the Japanese language tables on Fridays since she had volleyball practices. She could never attend the monthly Japanese Meetup, either, since she did not “have a car” to go downtown, Margaret said, “Beside the keypal messages, I don’t use Japanese language a lot.” Margaret could not think of any Japanese person besides people in her Japanese classes.

Abby had three “friends online that” she talked to in Japanese through “e-mails and message boards.” One of them was a “Japanese girl who speaks six languages” and Abby talked “back and forth in Japanese sometimes just for the
fun of it mostly” with her. Two of them were Americans who “lived in Japan for three years.” When Abby communicated with them, she “randomly hauled off into Japanese from time to time.” Abby talked to them through “e-mails and message boards.” When Abby typed Japanese language in her online messages, she used kana and kanji but romaji. Abby said:

I hate romaji. Now that I’ve had more Japanese, I have a harder time reading romaji. Kudo-sensei will send us e-mails in romaji from time to time because it’s hard to type on the computer. I have a harder time figuring out what those say than if she just used kana and kanji. I have a really hard time reading those. It’s weird. If it’s English, it’s supposed to be English. If it’s Japanese, it’s supposed to be Japanese. My brain makes that distinction and it doesn’t work.

When Dr. Kudo sent e-mails to her students, she often sent them through the university’s Blackboard. When she typed messages through Blackboard, she had to use romaji because the system did not show kana and kanji. That made it harder for Abby to understand the messages. Abby did not have Japanese friends “other than the one online” and her keypal. Abby expressed that “there’s just so little interaction with anyone else” in Japanese. “There are just so little ways to get Japanese experience because there’s so few people.”

Alex had a Japanese colleague and “some Japanese friends” in Midwestern City. Alex talked to his Japanese colleague “a little bit,” but they “are so busy at work that there is hardly time for conversation.” His friends included Ayako “a Ph.D. student in the English Department” at Midwestern State University and Honami who worked also at Midwestern State University.

Alex “did the tsukimi (viewing moon and serving tsukimi dango or sweet dumpling, Japanese silver glass, and aroids to the moon on lunar calendar year
August 15th) with his friends including these Japanese people. “I don’t know if you’d call that a cultural experience more than a language experience because the only Japanese speakers were Ayako and Honami and me a little bit and everyone else were English speakers.” Ayako and Honami made *tsukimi dango*, miso soup, and sushi. Alex ate *dango*, sweet dumpling dessert “the first time in Japan at” his host family’s. Alex thought that *dango* was also served at the Japan Night held at Midwestern State University. Abby also went to the Japan Night “for two years.” Abby described that the Japan Night included “incredibly interesting demonstrations like *kyudo,*” Japanese archery.

Although Alex had more Japanese friends than the other students, he felt that he did not have a lot of people to communicate in Japanese. Alex described:

I am limited to the amount that I can speak Japanese because there aren’t many people for me to speak Japanese with. There are several whom I could speak with, but there are often English speakers around and it seems rude to go off and have our own conversation. So, we speak English. Through Japanese meetup, I’ve got more opportunity to speak Japanese, but that’s only once a month for an hour.

On the Japanese Meetup website, Alex as an organizer wrote an introduction: “Hajimemashite. Arekkusu Maiya desu. Dozo yoroshiku. Midwestern Methodist daigaku de Nihongo o benkyoshite imasu. (How do you do? I am Alex Meyer. Nice to meet you. I am studying Japanese at Midwestern Methodist University.)” Alex also wrote how he became interested in learning Japanese on the website: “I was exposed to Japanese language and culture via judo in the fifth grade. I’ve been interested since then, though I only started studying the language formally in 2004.”

Alex changed the website for the Japanese conversation group the next
year. The Japanese conversation group name was changed to "Kaiwa (conversation)" from "Japanese Meetup." The website included the information:

*Kaiwa* is a group of people interested in the Japanese language in Midwestern City and southeastern Midwestern State. We arrange regular times to get together and talk in Japanese, discuss Japanese language and culture, and attend events of interest in Midwestern City area. All levels of proficiency in Japanese are welcome.

When I went to the Japanese meetup in February, 2005, there were two native speakers of Japanese including me and several Americans. Alex actively used Japanese and sometimes explained the meanings when somebody could not understand them. When I went to the Japanese meetup in September, 2005, I was surprised that Alex was by himself and writing Japanese on paper. Alex said that nobody participated in the meetup during the summer. He said that he did not study Japanese during the summer. Later, a Japanese person Honami showed up. Alex looked excited when he said that his wife Julie encouraged him to join the JET Program and teach English in Japan for a year. Julie wants to visit Alex in Japan if he decides to live in Japan for a year. It is possible that he can have a year off and join the JET Program.

None of the students in the second-year Japanese course could find time to attend the language table during the first semester of 2004 and the second semester of 2005. In the Japanese language table, students from other stages, international students, Midwestern Methodist University graduates, and students who were interested in Japan and came back from Japan have casual conversations in Japanese for an hour. The participants of the meetings were small. Dr. Kudo suggested other students come to the meeting, but the students
responded that they liked small meetings because their opportunities to speak Japanese would be reduced and they would not feel comfortable with many people. The students preferred to have conversation tables with five or six people.

The Japanese exchange student Ryoko coordinated the language tables during the first semester of 2004 and the second semester of 2005. Because the Japanese language learners did not talk a lot in Japanese, Ryoko created a board game where the students rolled a dice and moved their pieces. The learners were supposed to talk about the topic shown in the space where their piece was placed. Dr. Kudo was not sure if this was the cause, but three students stopped coming to the table the next week. Dr. Kudo tried to make the language table a relaxing place rather than a nervous place. One of the students came from Stage 2, the last semester of the first-year Japanese course. Dr. Kudo said that it is difficult for Stage 2 students to make conversations in Japanese, so, there were some English explanations. Dr. Kudo explained that some students did not feel comfortable if they were forced to talk in Japanese, and they could learn something even if they joined the table and listened to conversations. When they were forced to talk, they could have been nervous or shy to speak to others. Dr. Kudo believed that the students should be relaxed and feel comfortable at the language tables though she thought that they sometimes needed to be challenging. Since language tables were not classes, she thought it was fine even if the students just came to the meetings.
Once a week, the Modern Language Department hosted a meeting with students who were taking French, German, Japanese and Spanish at the university. Abby stated:

We speak four languages in there. One is in French Stage 4, one is in German Stage 3, and one is in Spanish Stage 2. Some days we'll just start talking in our respective languages and we'll have conversations. We still don't know how we do it because we're speaking four languages and somehow know what’s going on… I just want to know if I can say something in Japanese, so I’ll just look at a sentence and see if I can figure it out.

The Modern Language Department website at Midwestern University organized the coffee hours or “random conversations” that Abby had. Students, Professors, and administrators spoke the four languages through games, skits, and presentations with coffee every week.

Abby and Alex stayed in Japan for two weeks last summer when Dr. Kudo took students who signed up for the trip. “The only word for” Abby to describe the trip was “incredible.” “We visited so many places and it was so busy.” Abby “learned” Japanese culture in Japan, and “it was absolutely amazing.” The students who joined the Japan trip visited “six cities in two weeks,” so they “were on the move a lot.” They stayed with their host families for “three nights,” which “was really fun” to Abby. Abby thought that “really traditional temples” where they visited were “absolutely beautiful.” The students stayed “in hotels” and a university sports facility during the rest of the days. Alex’s web log included some journals when he was in Japan. A part of his journal was:

… Yes, I went to Tokyo and the first place I went was Wendy’s. It was close; it was open; the menu was comprehensible. Since we were in Japan, I ordered the sweet potato apple pie and melon soda. We
managed to order through an elaborate and ad hoc process of pointing
and interpretive dance.
I'm learning that my own Japanese is just good enough. I can get my
meaning across, but I probably won't be able to understand what is said in
response. I did manage to ask a group of sarariman (business men) to
take our picture in Wendy's as a memento of our first meal in Japan...
Eating has been a minor hassle. The meals on the flight were not
vegetarian, which is my own fault. This morning I was really hungry.
Fortunately, the hotel serves a moderately-priced (which is to say, slightly
expensive but I'm willing to pay it) but excellent buffet breakfast. There’s
some western food, but mostly it's Japanese-style cuisine. I had rice, miso
soup, rice porridge with umeboshi (sour plum) paste, fresh fruit and yogurt
for breakfast. Really good. Veggie tempura for lunch. Kudo sensei got the
restaurant to remove the shrimp and supply more vegetables on my order.
As a result of two good meals, I'm not at all hungry now...

A part of next day's Alex's log included:

After breakfast at the Ochiai’s (host family’s last name) this morning,
which was just as copious as dinner, I met the rest of the group on the
Shinkansen (train), and we returned to Tokyo instead of visiting Mt. Fuji.
The weather is just too rough to spend on Fujisan (Mt. Fuji), because of
the typhoon that went through last night. I am disappointed to miss Mt. Fuji,
but I am also happy to have spent the day in Tokyo, as you will soon
understand.
First we went shopping in Shinjuku. It was interesting, especially the Sony
building. It was crowded, like you'd expect. We also hit a few shops.
Then we went to the Tokyo Sword Museum. I now have a much better
understanding of some of the things I’ve been reading about, with regard
to Nihon-to (sword). The sword museum was surprisingly small, but it’s the
highlight of the trip so far, for me. The blades on display were breathtaking.
About the Ochiai’s house: I sleep in an eight tatami (thick straw mats that
cover the floor) room, surrounded by shoji (paper sliding-doors) and low
tables. It’s Japan as I imagine.
Tonight… Ochiai-san and his two sons… wrangled with our dictionaries to
communicate, they with Japanese/English, and I with English/Japanese. It
was great fun...

Abby thought that people “probably learn the most about culture from
individuals.” Abby explained:

You can read a thousand books and not learn the same amount of stuff
that you can just from speaking to someone… I have other friends who
have been to Japan as well. I know several people that have actually done
the JET Program (and taught English in Japan). So, I talk back and forth
to them. We have conversations. We compare the cultures all the time. I don't have a lot to compare it since I only spent two weeks in Japan, but I learn culture through individuals.

Alex believed that “culture is made of people” and he learns Japanese culture “just by being exposed to the people and interacting with Japanese people.” Alex said:

I suppose you learn in a more subtle way than engaging in going to Japan Night where it’s very blatant… I’m interacting with a Japanese person and I’m subliminally gaining insight maybe into Japanese culture that way. Not specific things but just learning how people are.

In summary, each of the four students in the second-year Japanese courses had different reasons for taking the language and the sources of authentic Japanese communication and materials differed greatly. Table 7 shows their Japanese language and communication materials outside the Japanese classroom.
Table 7: Authentic Japanese Communication & Materials outside Classes during First Semester of 2004 and the Second Semester of 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Abby</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Lily</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having Japanese friends</td>
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<td>Having Online conversation besides assignment</td>
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<td>Having been to Japan</td>
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<td>Attending monthly Japanese Meetup</td>
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<td>Attending Japanese cultural events in the community</td>
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<td>Having folded origami prior to second-year Japanese course</td>
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<td>Cooking Japanese food at home</td>
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<td>Practicing calligraphy at home</td>
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<td>Listening to Japanese music</td>
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<td>Listening to tapes attached to the textbook</td>
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- All of the four students have watched Japanese movies or anime.
- Three of the students have visited Japanese websites.
- Three of the students have folded origami prior to second-year Japanese course.
- Two of the students have read Japanese books.
- Two of the students have been to Japan.
- Two of the students have attended Japanese cultural events in the community.
Chapter Five: Summary, Implications, and Recommendations

Summary

This case study described the use of authentic communication in second-year Japanese classes at a small, private university in the Midwest. The findings were based on qualitative data from personal interviews, casual conversations, participant observations of classes and Japanese events, and studying relevant documents including the textbook, students’ study sheets, videos, oral exam transcripts, e-mail copies, and web log copies. The grand tour question was: How do Japanese language learners use authentic communication such as e-mail communication in second-year Japanese classes at a small, private university in the Midwest? The findings were based on themes that emerged from the participants’ words and e-mail messages composed by the participants. The findings were reported using the participants’ words extensively. The participants’ e-mail messages were reported without modifications except for the pseudonyms so the participants’ writing in the target language could be represented correctly. Their Japanese keypals’ English language use was not modified for the same purpose.

Learners had authentic communication and used authentic materials in their foreign language (FL) classes. Learners tried to use Japanese as much as possible when they communicated in their Japanese classes. At the same time, they felt that their conversations in Japanese did not last long because they did not have a lot to say in the target language. Abby felt that the communication in
their Japanese classes was not truly authentic because her peer learners did not always know words or expressions in the target language. One learner appreciated that native speakers came to the Japanese classes and joined the conversations.

Most learners liked visual materials such as videos and movies to understand oral language from the context. Japanese videos for the second-year Japanese classes were authentic in terms of the speed and the language use. However, they were not 100% authentic based on the definition by Spelleri (2002) that authentic materials are created for and by native speakers. Three of the learners had positive attitudes toward the learning video series. Alex felt such learning videos were helpful to understand word meanings in context, Lily felt that they were good to get used to different speech styles, and one felt that she could monitor her language development when they could understand the oral language. Margaret felt that she did not understand a lot from the learning videos until she read the transcript. She felt that the content of learning videos was simple and obvious.

Compared to learning videos, truly authentic materials, which are for and by native speakers, seemed to be more attractive than materials made for FL learners. While truly authentic materials were more complex and harder to comprehend than learning materials, learners seemed to enjoy the stories more than simple learning videos and learned some features of the target language and culture through context, background knowledge, and their interpretations.
Learners read Japanese fact books for their classes. They did not read fiction books while the professor gave a children’s book to each student on the last day of the class. Japanese learners learned polite forms of verbs during the first-year course and learned casual and honorific forms when they were in the second-year Japanese course. Abby had difficulty understanding her fiction novel because casual forms were used, but fact books written in the polite forms seemed to be easier to comprehend the language.

The amount of authentic communication and materials outside FL classes depended on the individual. Alex had access to a great amount of authentic Japanese language input such as friends, movies, books, and internet. Lily and Margaret had a few materials besides assignments including e-mail exchanges. Even though Abby said that the second-year Japanese language learners had a lot of time for conversations, the class meeting time was limited (50 minutes a day, five days a week). They needed opportunities to use Japanese outside classes to expand their target language use. As a means of authentic communication in the target language community, the learners’ assignment to exchange e-mails with native speakers played a significant role in allowing language learners the opportunity to express themselves and read authentic messages in the target language in a low-anxiety environment. Learners could participate in authentic communication that is time- and place-dependent (Warschauer, 1997). Learners who had jobs or were involved in university club activities could have written conversations with native speakers online in their
convenient time. They did not have to worry about the time difference between Midwestern City and Japan.

In general, the learners were highly motivated to write and read Japanese e-mail messages. They were required to write at least ten sentences excluding the opening and closing sentences. It may sound short to write ten sentences in the target language without understanding the process of writing and reading Japanese messages. However, second-year Japanese learners’ interviews and reflection sheets showed that they devoted a great amount of time and effort to compose and comprehend each message.

The learners tried to improve their writing and reading skills through e-mail communication. Even though their Japanese keypals requested the use of some English for their English language learning, the learners in the second-year Japanese course did not try to use English for the expressions that they did not know in Japanese. Instead of taking advantage of being allowed to use English, the learners either tried to find alternate ways to communicate using their dictionaries or find other ways to express in Japanese when they did not know how to write a certain expressions. A lot of English words are polysemous words that have multiple meanings and uses (Andrews, 2001). The learners were aware that many Japanese words also had multiple meanings. In addition, the Japanese language has a lot of homonyms, and kanji has multiple readings. Andrews (2001) wrote that second language learners need to know how to choose the most appropriate definitions out of the listed definition of the entry word when learners use dictionaries. The learners in this study knew how to
select appropriate definition from the dictionary. Margaret even looked up some English words first before she used her bilingual dictionary. The learners used the writing strategy of trying to think simply so they could express their thoughts and facts in the target language.

The learners made writing plans without writing or typing outlines or taking notes. Abby, Lily, and Margaret made their writing plans in English. Alex learner tried hard to think in Japanese without English mediation. He analyzed that he used both Japanese and English cognition processes when composing Japanese e-mail messages and found the former process is slower than the latter.

The learners wrote messages for their keypals for their audience. Learners paid attention to the target language accuracy so their keypals could understand their meaning. Learners tried to convert kanji as much as possible and looked up appropriate kanji so their keypals could read their messages easily. Some learners noticed that having kanji in sentences would help readers to break words into chunks in Japanese sentences with no space between words. More importantly, learners tried to write interesting messages so that their keypals enjoyed reading them. As learners wrote and read more, they became more confident with their target language skills and felt more comfortable using the language. As they wrote and read more, they tended to use their dictionaries less and inferred word meanings through context. Margaret used the dictionary less because she had a lot of things to do besides e-mail communication while Alex used the dictionary less because he felt that he
learned more in this way than using his dictionary for every unfamiliar word. Abby and Alex made efforts not to depend on online Rikai program that showed kanji readings and meanings for their Japanese learning.

Learners enjoyed writing messages when they wrote about their interests while they had a harder time writing when they did not know what to write. Topic interests and topic familiarity assisted learners to write in a second language. Alex wrote long messages because he had a lot of things that he wanted to write and know about his keypal’s life. Abby began to write long messages after she began to write about topics of interest to her and felt that she was having ongoing conversations. Alex’s and Abby’s e-mail communications appeared to be ongoing conversations responding to each other. Lily’s and Margaret’s e-mail communication sometimes appeared to be messages on different topics with less questions or comments about their keypals’ messages. Margaret’s Japanese language input was restricted largely to her Japanese classes, and she used her linguistic knowledge to accurately express herself, taking minimum risks. Because her language use was limited to classes and dictionaries, she felt that she was writing about similar contents to her keypal. Her strong knowledge of English as her first language seemed to help her Japanese language use. Lily felt that she did not know the target language well and did not know what to write on some topics.

Some learners in Koubek’s (2004) study expressed that their keypal did not understand some of their e-mail messages. However, none of the learners in this study had this experience. None of the learners made clarification requests
to their Japanese keypals. When the learners were not sure what their keypal meant, they tried to figure out using the context, dictionaries, or Rikai. Abby and Lily never asked for anyone’s help while Alex and Margaret asked their Japanese professor or the researcher of this study a couple of times.

Japanese keypals modified their Japanese language use for their audience as a FL learner. First, Japanese keypals used polite forms most of the time. Because the second-year Japanese learners had not learned casual and honorific forms yet, the Japanese professor requested the Japanese keypals to use polite forms. Secondly, the Japanese keypals seemed to try to write comprehensible sentences judging from the language use by the Japanese language learners. Japanese keypals tried to avoid difficult kanji in their messages until the Japanese professor asked the keypals to use a lot of kanji so the learners could reference Rikai program. The Japanese keypals tended to add brief descriptions when they used Japanese terms that seemed to be unique to Japanese culture or asked the learners if the learners knew the term. Long (1983) observed that native speakers modified their speech during interactions with FL speakers, and this was validated during the Japanese e-mail communication.

Learners who had no previous Japanese typing experience did not like typing Japanese. Some learners valued the art of handwriting and enjoyed writing Japanese characters because they are different from English. However, some learners realized the advantages of typing and handwriting. Both typing and handwriting the target language are necessary skills today. Lily had a
problem that her Japanese characters were not shown on her keypal’s computer screen appropriately a couple of times. The learners did not have problems with typing and reading Japanese using computers at home or school. Lily had a difficult time adjusting her time to go to the Modern Language Department’s computer lab. The other learners had easy access to computers to type and read Japanese at home, work, or campus dormitory.

The Japanese professor tried to facilitate the learners to continue learning Japanese after they completed all of the Japanese courses offered at the university. She appointed a learner to be a teaching assistant and another to be a Japanese language table coordinator. At the end of the last class, the professor announced to the class that everybody was welcomed to audit the second-year Japanese course next year. E-mail communication is one of the easiest means of becoming independent, lifelong learners of foreign languages.

Implications

Qualitative researchers have to see what lessons are learned about the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2002). The following lessons were learned in this study.

Theme One: The E-Mail Writing Process

E-mail communication with native speakers provides language learners with an authentic communication (Ducate & Lomicka, 2005; Gonglewski, Meloni, & Brant, 2001; Lawrence, 2002; Lee, 1997). Learners are motivated and enjoyed writing and reading e-mail messages in the target language (Hertel, 2003;
Koubek, 2004; Leh, 1997; Liaw, 1998; Torii-Williams, 2004; Yamada & Moeller, 2001). Even though learners may experience a little frustration at the same time, they like challenging themselves. The e-mail communication engages FL learners in an interactive activity and to have meaningful social communication with native speakers in an authentic context (Absalom & Marden, 2004; Florez-Estrada, 1995; Lawrence, 2002; Lee, 1997). Having interaction is important for second and FL learning because learners develop literacy out of interaction including ongoing conversations and texts (Rodby, 1992). Foreign language learners can communicate with real audiences through e-mail communication (Silva, Meagher, Valenzuela, & Crenshaw, 1996). E-mail communication is more spontaneous and natural style than other written forms (Absalom & Marden, 2004).

One way that e-mail communication can motivate learners to write in a FL is writing about personally interesting topics. Margaret in this study reflected that she could write more easily and faster when she was interested in the topic both in her native language and FL languages. For example, she recalled her happy memories when she wrote about her enjoyable trip to her favorite city, New York, with her family. “The sustainability and quality” of e-mail messages depend on individual’s interests (Absalom & Marden, 2004).

The big factor that can hinder second language learners’ motivation to exchange e-mail is time. The e-mail communication became more forced than fun for one learner in this study because she had a lot of work to do besides e-mail communication. All of the learners wished to continue e-mail communication.
after the second-year Japanese course ended as Koubek’s (2004) participants noted in their e-mail exchange with Czech native speakers. However, the participants in this study could not continue exchanging e-mails because they lacked time.

When the learners in this study made a writing plan for an e-mail message, three of them planned in English without writing outlines. In Friedlander’s (1990) study, 28 Chinese students made writing plans in their native language Chinese more effectively than in English as a foreign language when they wrote about the topic of a Chinese festival familiar in China. As one learner in this study tried to think in Japanese without English mediation, the learners may start thinking in Japanese when they become more used to using the language.

When learners write messages for their audience, they make sure that they are conveying meaning. All of the learners in this study read their messages after they wrote their draft and edited. When they converted hiragana to kanji, they used their dictionary to make sure to choose correct kanji because they wanted their keypals to understand what they meant. As most elementary school students in Trenches’ (1996) were worried about the accuracy of their Spanish language use and overused their dictionaries, the learners in this study used their dictionary a lot during the first semester. Learners in this study learned a lot of new words and expressions from their dictionaries (Torii-Williams, 2004) to express themselves and from their keypals’ messages to comprehend.

One learner in this study showed high accuracy of the Japanese language use even though she had almost no Japanese input besides the e-mail
communication and homework outside Japanese classes. That may be partly because she was an English major and was highly knowledgeable in her native language, English. Pichette, Segalowitz, and Conneors’ (2003) study indicated that adult language learners’ reading proficiencies in the target language were greatly associated by both their knowledge in the target language knowledge and their reading ability in the first language while other social and psychological factors must have been also affected. That may be also partly because she paid attention to Japanese language. Attention to language may allow language learners to notice a mismatch between their knowledge and the produced language by native speakers (Gass, 1997). The learner paid attention to language and also noticed that translating English to Japanese could sound awkward as “the semantic match between Japanese patterns and vocabulary and the closest equivalents in English is never perfect” (Jorden, Lambert, & Wolff, 1991).

There are both advantages and disadvantages of typing Japanese messages over handwriting. One advantage is that it is easier for learners to revise a message when they type than handwrite it on paper (Kataoka, 2000). Learners in this study felt that typing Japanese helped them with their kanji recognition training while they valued writing the language by hand. Similarly, Kubota’s (1999) participants felt that they learned kanji by typing Japanese because it reinforced kanji recognition skills while some appreciated the value of handwriting the language.
When people type Japanese, they need to know the exact pronunciation in order to convert kana to kanji (Kubota, 1999). Learners can make most of this feature to improve their Japanese language proficiency. For example, common errors of Japanese use in this study were related words with double consonants that are written with っ (small ‘tsu’ in hiragana) and long vowels. “Some Japanese words have very slight pause between two sounds” called a double consonant, which meant that “the consonant of the second syllable has the duration of one syllable” (Makino, Hatasa, & Hatasa, 1998, p.20). One learner in this study said that he did not hear the difference between words with and without double consonants. When he intended to type, 小説 /shosetsu/, he misspelled it as 諸説 /shosetsu/ because a long vowel was missing when he typed しょうせつ /shosetsu/ for しょせつ /shosetsu/ in kana. Because the long vowel was missing, the computer screen did not show the appropriate kanji for kana, thus he misspelled the kanji. When learners are more used to typing, they may notice that they did not type kana correctly when they cannot find the appropriate kanji.

When Japanese language learners handwrite Japanese sentences, their attention may be more on kanji writing than the content. When they type Japanese, they do not need a lot of time to recall the shapes of kanji (Taylor & Taylor, 1995) or search for the correct kanji in the dictionary (Nakajima, 1999). Therefore, learners typing Japanese can pay more attention to the larger unit such as the order of idea presentation (Nakajima, 1999).
Japanese language learners may feel more encouraged to use new kanji when they type than when they handwrite. That is because they do not have to produce it. When people type words in hiragana and hit "enter" key, possible kanji is shown on the screen and one can choose a right one among kanji options. It takes much more time to handwrite new kanji than to recognize and choose one. Because of the easier process of using new kanji, Japanese language learners may feel more comfortable to try new kanji. In addition, being able to type and send e-mails in the target language is one of the necessary skills for second language learning as Chesebro and Bonsall (1989) noted that "major social institutions have increasingly maintained that computing skills are an educational necessity" (p.33).

A disadvantage of e-mail communication is that second language learners do not use listening and speaking skills in the target language. When Japanese language learners listen to native speakers, they might notice some of the characteristics of Japanese language. For example, Japanese has pitch accent compared to stress accent in English, and Japanese people tend to pronounce each syllable with the same length and as briefly as possible (Kindaichi, 1978). It is difficult for second language learners to observe such tendencies from written communication without oral communication.

The participants and their keypals experienced an occasion that their questions were not answered (VanDevender, 1998). It is possible that the respondent forgot to answer, did not know the answers, or did not know how to respond. It may be easier to fail to answer one other's questions when
responding through asynchronous communication, such as e-mail communication, compared to face-to-face and synchronous communication.

A disadvantage of typing Japanese is a lack of kanji production training. While Japanese language learners may reinforce their kanji recognition skills through typing messages, they do not learn how to produce kanji by typing the language. Taylor and Taylor (1995) wrote that learners need to practice kanji constantly in order to be able to produce it. Learners need to write kanji by hand so they can actually produce it.

Even though it is easier for learners to type kanji that are new to them rather than to handwrite, they still need to look up the word in dictionary to make sure which character combinations are appropriate among the character list of words. It will be easier to type new kanji for learners who have more knowledge in kanji than kanji novice learners. For example, the learners in this study knew the word, せんこう (/senko/ for 'major') in hiragana but not in kanji. When learners hit the ‘space’ bar to select an appropriate kanji, the pop-up of the kanji list would show homonyms such as 選考, 専攻, 先行, 潜行, 線香, 潜航, 穿孔, 閃光, 専行, 選好, and 先攻. If learners have recognized the kanji character, 専攻, for the meaning as 'major,' it is easy to select it. However, if learners never saw the kanji, 専攻, they may have to spend time figuring out which character combinations are the appropriate ones. If learners cannot recognize kanji, they have to make sure to select a correct kanji among homonyms.
**Theme Two: The E-Mail Reading Process**

Learners may not realize the pleasure of reading texts in a second language until they find reading materials that interest them. Krashen (2003) wrote that even FL learners who were good readers in their native language might not realize the options for pleasure reading in the target language. However, extensive reading can help second language learners have positive attitudes toward reading (Leung, 2002). Learners in this study were motivated to read e-mail messages in the target language as well as writing messages. They said that they became used to reading Japanese e-mail messages as they read more.

Learners were interested in reading what their keypals wrote because they wanted to understand their keypal and their keypals' lives in the target language culture. Learners’ interests seemed to help learners understand e-mail messages in the target language. Baldwin, Peleg-Bruckner, and McClintock’s (1985) study showed that students comprehend texts better when they were interested in the topic even when they lacked their prior knowledge while the previous knowledge greatly helps learners comprehend texts in the target language.

One learner in this study thought that she knew more than she had thought when she read the first message from her keypal. When the level of the input is a little beyond their current level (Krashen, 2003), the learners were encouraged to read more. When it takes too long to comprehend messages, the learner frustration increased. When the text is too easy, learners may not sense
that they are learning to enhance their target language proficiency. Learners seemed to like reading materials that were a little challenging to them.

One Japanese keypal in this study felt encouraged to learn English when reading her keypal’s messages in Japanese and felt that her keypal was putting forth a great deal of effort into the study of Japanese. Native speakers can learn second language learners' culture through e-mail communication. Gonglewski, Meloni, and Brant (2001) wrote that native speakers were not always motivated to correspond with second language learners because they might question the advantages of e-mail exchange. However, a “tandem exchange” where learners of each other’s native languages exchange e-mails provides both learners with benefits (Gonglewski, Meloni, & Brant, 2001). In this way both learners are in the role of language learners and native speakers. As well as language learners, native speaker keypals can be motivated to write to second language learners.

The learners in this study used their dictionaries less during the second semester than the first semester as Koubek’s (2004) participants and used their dictionaries as a last resort. As learners write and read more e-mails, they were more confident and used to the target language (Leh, 1997). Advanced FL learners do not want to interrupt the flow of reading by spending a lot of time inferring or looking up unfamiliar word meanings (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996). FL learners often overused dictionary when they read in the target language (Aebersold & Field, 1997). In contrast, some past studies showed that FL learners did not use their dictionary frequently (Hulstijn,
When unfamiliar words are not crucial to the meaning of the context, readers can comprehend the main ideas (Aebersold & Field, 1997). Learners need to know strategies to deal with unfamiliar words and learn when to use and when not to use their dictionary (Aebersold & Field, 1997). Aebersold and Field (1997) recommended learners to look up words only when they encountered the unfamiliar words several times and did not have a general meaning or when the unfamiliar words seemed to be crucial for comprehension.

One advantage of reading Japanese messages on the screen over printed texts is that learners can enlarge fonts. One learner in this study blew up the fonts and could read complicated kanji characters more easily than smaller fonts. That helped her looking up kanji dictionary process to count stroke numbers. Being able to count stroke numbers is one way to look up kanji readings and meanings by kanji dictionary. Bigger fonts are also helpful for learners if they want to copy the characters to learn how to write.

The learners in this study received a lot of unfamiliar kanji from their keypals, but the online Rikai program helped them understand the kanji readings and meanings quickly. Kubota’s (1999) participants were overwhelmed and discouraged by a large number of new kanji when they read Japanese web sites. Readers become frustrated when they read incomprehensible materials (Birch, 2002). However, by taking advantage of online aids such as the Rikai program, authentic texts can be comprehensible. It is advantageous for learners to know
how to read kanji even though pop-ups from Rikai would display multiple readings of each kanji. Being able to make use of online aids such as dictionary functions is an advantage of reading Japanese on the screen. Learners can copy sentences and simply place a mouse to learn kanji readings and meanings to use online aids. Learners can comprehend or learn word meanings when they know how to pronounce them (Birch, 2002). A difficulty is that since each kanji has multiple pronunciations, learners may still not know which pronunciation is appropriate in the context even when they use aids such as the Rikai Program and dictionaries. In addition, it may hinder the flow of reading texts if learners depend on the Rikai Program too much. Learners may use Rikai less when they do not need it as a couple of learners in this study did.

A disadvantage of reading Japanese on the screen is the possibility of mojibake problems that may occur where the computer screen fails to display characters appropriately. One learner in this study experienced mojibake a couple of times. In case of mojibake problems, learners should always save their e-mail copies before sending their messages.

Theme Three: The Learning Process

Learners in this study seemed to enhance their learning through personal reflections. They discovered some Japanese language rules and culture by reflecting upon their writing and reading. Letting learners have time to write personal reflections including what they discovered from their writing and reading e-mail messages each time help them learn the target language and culture. Learner reflection helps learners identify problems for their learning and seek
solutions (Bray, 2000) while learners may wonder why they are not improving their target language without personal reflection (Santos, 1997). Learners increase their sense of learner ownership through personal reflections, and their instructors can take informed actions by understanding their learners' reflections (Santos, 1997). Oral interviews at the end of each semester about their learning also helped learners learn. Learners in this study sometimes discovered new things while talking about their own learning during the interviews.

While motivated learners like to be challenged, learners should know that it is okay to ask for help when necessary. If learners ask for native speakers' help, that will be a good opportunity to communicate with them orally. When learners ask for their peers' help, the other learners can also learn by cooperating with each other. Learners can learn both from experts and peers.

If FL curriculum allows, it will be useful for learners to have time to discuss what language and cultural aspects they have learned from their keypals. Sometimes learners may overgeneralize the target language culture concluding from only one person in the target language culture. For example, the learners' keypals in this study were actively involved in university club activities. One learner inferred that Japanese university students were more involved in clubs than American university students. When language learners receive messages from native speakers, it is possible that they regard that their keypals’ views represent the whole target cultural group’s view. It is important that learners do not assume that one author’s perspectives represent an entire cultural group’s (Ducate and Lomicka, 2005). Having face-to-face or online discussions with
classmates and their keypals may result in learners overgeneralizing information from their keypals.

If the curriculum does not allow instructors to have classroom discussions, an alternative way to share learners' learning from their keypals with their peer is writing some points of learning on an online system such as Blackboard and a web log that the learners share a password to log in. If their keypals can access the web log, their keypals may be able to answer questions that the learners have.

The learners in this study gradually increased their confidence in their Japanese use as they wrote more Japanese messages. They were worried about their Japanese language use when they wrote their first message to their keypals. One learner commented that she did not know enough particles on her first writing reflection sheet. Particles are defined as a unit of speech to express some general aspect of meaning, some connective, or limiting relation to a word (Mish, et al, 1994) They are usually written in one hiragana and shown “right after a noun or at the end of a sentence… to assign a grammatical function to the processing noun” (Makino, Hatasa, & Hatasa, 1998, p.36). However, when she gained confidence in the target language, the volume of her e-mail messages increased. Her concern shifted from language form to the content as she exchanged more e-mails. She felt freer to write about her personal interests.

One learner in this study described the e-mail communication as a circle of positive reinforcement. Learners understood that they could make meanings in Japanese because their keypals responded to their messages. Learners felt
more comfortable using the target language and gained confidence. When second language learners have more confidence in the language, they may take more risks and write more.

E-mail communication is an independent way to communicate and promotes lifelong foreign language learning after students complete their courses. Instructors facilitate lifelong learning by helping learners acquire strategies for using authentic materials (Scinicariello, 1997).

**Theme Four: Learning through E-Mail Communication**

“Language both shapes and is shaped by culture” and having cross-cultural awareness is one of the FL programs’ goals in American schools (Savignon & Sysoyer, 2005, p.364). It is not an easy task for instructors to foster learners to understand target language culture beyond food and national dress in the FL classroom (Murray & Bollinger, 2001). However, FL learners can learn beyond surface culture to some degree through e-mail communication by learning how their keypals lived in the target language community.

As participants in Jogan’s (2001) and Yamada and Moeller’s (2001) studies improved their understanding and commitment to the target culture, learners in this study reported that they learned some aspects of Japanese culture through e-mail communication. For example, after New Year's, the second-year Japanese learners’ keypals wrote about their New Year’s Day. Second language learners learned some Japanese culture at the interpersonal level. Learners in this study received some cultural information such as **hanami** (cherry blossom viewing) in spring and **nabe** (dishes in a big pot) parties in winter.
When the Japanese keypals wrote about Japanese terms that were unique to Japanese culture, they described the meanings. For example, when one learner's keypal wrote about *ozoni*, rice cake soup, she described that the recipe differs from region to region and then described the one in her grandparents' house.

One Japanese keypal wrote about a bird, Japanese nightingale. The keypal described that the type of birds sing when warm, spring comes. However, it is less likely that the Japanese language learner could understand that Japanese people feel that spring comes when they hear that kind of bird singing from the short description. It may be sometimes difficult to read deeper culture beyond written words through e-mail messages. It is also possible that the learner did not know what the bird looked like. If the keypal sent links to pictures, as one learner did sometimes, it might have been helpful for the learner to understand the type of birds that are not seen in the Midwest. It may also be helpful if learners have opportunities to share and discuss what they learned or found interesting through e-mail communication with peers and native speakers for deeper understanding.

One learner in this study mentioned that cultural information that he received from his keypal was mostly what he already learned from his classes or personal experience. However, the information in e-mail communication could reinforce his knowledge. In addition, second language learners’ previous knowledge would make learners understand the text easier than having no
previous knowledge. Reading texts in a FL without background knowledge makes it difficult for learners to comprehend in the FL.

The goal of foreign language education is to create a communicative environment where learners express themselves in the target language (Lee, 2002; VanPatten, 1993). Foreign language learners are in a communicative environment writing and reading in the target language when they exchange e-mails. Building empathy for learners’ keypals while exchanging e-mails could help learners understand culture deeper (Jogan, 2003). For example, one learner in this study had empathy about his keypal living alone and feeling disconnected from her family or suffering from hay fever. This made him consider the culture first hand at a deeper level and see the connection between language and culture (Schwartz & Kavanaugh, 1997).

Second language learners may be able to develop their language proficiency through e-mail communication. The learners in this study said that they developed active vocabulary through e-mail communication. E-mail messages provide learners with meaningful and interesting contexts. Vocabulary has to be learned through context. Florez-Estrada’s (1995) study indicated that learners need language input that exposes them to various contexts in which to put their language skills to use. When learners’ unfamiliar words are in a meaning and interesting text, vocabulary will be reinforced and learner enthusiasm of reading texts will be generated (Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 2000).
Limiting second language learners “to repeating verb paradigms, answering teachers’ questions of dubious communicative value, asking each other preformulated, teacher- or textbook-generated questions, and filling in blanks with discrete linguistic artifacts, students will never be able to create meaning with language” (Brooks, 1993). When learners wrote e-mail messages in the target language, they had to make meaning to express their thoughts or wrote facts. Language programs often lack the sustained concentration of interactive time for negotiating meaning in the target language (Carey, 2000). However, the e-mail communication can increase the amount of interactive time with native speakers. A couple of the participants in this study tried to use some of the native speakers’ expressions or words. That is similar to Florez-Estrada’s (1995) participants who were the university students in an American university exchanging e-mails with Mexican students. They began to imitate language use by native speakers.

E-mail communication is an individualized, interpersonal communication process. Learners have to use the target language to correspond with native speakers. When the participants had conversation time in classes, each student did not talk long. However, each learner wrote at least the required amount of messages when they wrote messages. E-mail communication is a learner-centered activity (Jogan, 2001). One way to ensure learners use the target language is by incorporating linguistic learner-centered activities (Ballman, 1998; Lawrence, 2002; Trenches, 1996). When learners feel empowered or confident and in control of their learning, they can do more in the learning environment.
(Sabieh, 2002). One of the factors for learners to feel empowered is an individualized learning process (Sabieh, 2002). Having time to think, reflect, and compose a message at each learner’s pace with less anxiety encouraged learners use the target language (Beauvois, 1997).

As the majority of the learners in past studies (Lee, 1997; Liaw, 1998; Leh, 1997) felt that e-mail communication improved their writing in a second language, the participants in this study improved their writing in quantity and quality in general. FL language learners keep an audience in mind when they write e-mail messages (Trenches, 1996). One learner indicated that she wrote messages with the audience in mind by expressing that she was not sure how to write interesting messages in the target language when she began the e-mail exchange with her keypal. She also commented that she tried to figure out how to sound interesting while writing Japanese e-mail messages. One learner also wished that he was writing interesting messages to his keypal and wanted to know more Japanese to be a better writer and reader in the target language. FL learners can receive personalized messages from their keypals.

E-mail communication improved learners’ writing fluency (VanDevender, 1998). One learner in this study always had a lot of things that he wanted to write and wrote much longer messages than the other learners. The learner was over fifteen years older than the other learners who participated to this study. Absalom and Marden (2004) wrote that learners’ age and life experience are one of the crucial factors for quality e-mail exchanges. One learner improved her quality of writing and the length of e-mail messages much more than the other learners.
While she was worried about her Japanese language use in the beginning, she developed her writing skills once she learned that her keypal understood what she meant and began taking a lot of risks.

Foreign language instructors can learn about their students by reading their students’ e-mail messages to their keypals. Each learner in this study had a different major, different reasons to take Japanese, and different interests. As each learner’s personality, personal interests, and writing styles were able to be understood by analyzing their Japanese e-mail messages to their Japanese keypals, instructors can learn more about individual students’ personalities and their expectations for the Japanese language learning by reading e-mail messages.

*Theme Five: Authentic Japanese*

The findings of this study implied that some of authentic language materials by and for native speakers (Spelleri, 2002) can motivate second language learners to learn the target language. Authentic materials can be any source recorded for native speakers including books, newspaper, live or online recorded radio programs, live or recorded television programs, and e-mail messages. The learners in this study enjoyed various authentic Japanese materials such as movies and e-mail communication both in and outside Japanese classes. Using authentic materials for second and foreign (FL) learning is important because such materials can present contextually rich and culturally pertinent languages (Spelleri, 2002).
The series of video programs used for the second-year Japanese course in this study are designed for second language learners. Therefore, they are not completely authentic by Spelleri's (2002) definition that authentic materials are for native speakers. However, the videos were authentic in the way that people in the video talked in a natural speed. Learners can hear a variety of speech styles from the video and could infer meanings of unfamiliar words in context. Learners learned Japanese culture through the video series. Ito's (1996) survey results showed that many Japanese language instructors chose to use videos for their university classroom instructions to reinforce learner linguistic skills and to provide learners with related cultural aspects.

Movies are more difficult for second language learners to understand than learning videos since they are 100% authentic aimed at native speakers. For example, one learner in this study estimated that he understood 30 or 40% of movies while he understood 60 to 70% of Japanese learning videos. While learning videos may emphasize culture that learners should understand, authentic movies do not emphasize cultural parts. Learners can find some cultural characteristics through movies as one learner inferred that Japanese men are always at work and their wives were always at home.

The content of truly authentic language materials such as movies and e-mail communication with native speakers seems to be more attractive to Japanese language learners than partially or mostly authentic materials such as Japanese learning videos. Movies are more intrinsically motivating than learning videos specifically created for second or FL language learners because such
movies are made “to be enjoyed rather than a lesson that needs to be tested on” (King, 2002, p.510). Authentic full-length movies provide learners with extended, interesting context for FL learning (Ishihara & Chi, 2004). Learners are exposed to wide range of native speakers in real life contexts (King, 2002).

Music into the language classroom is also a great way to learn a language when learners like music and or are willing to perform. Music in FL classes can play an important role in culture and communication and can motivate learners to engage in the target language with memorable, enjoyable experience (Abbott, 2002). “Music and musicality of speech in language teaching provide a rich-sounding environment” (Mora, 2000, p.152). Learners in this study were interested in reading Japanese books. Bray (2002) wrote that learners in the intermediate and higher levels often have a desire to read authentic books. Learners in this study enjoyed various authentic cultural activities in and outside their Japanese classes such as practicing calligraphy, making origami, listening to authentic music, cooking Japanese food, watching movies.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations have been made for multiple audiences. The following is the recommendations for foreign language learners and instructors.
Recommendations for Foreign language learners

- Learners should make use of technology such as videos, DVDs, internet including websites, e-mail, and online radio programs in order to use authentic materials and communicate in the target language.
- When learners exchange e-mails with native speakers, they should write about their interests and enjoy the communication. Learners should write creative, interesting messages with the audience in mind.
- When learners make writing plans, it may be easier to write or type outlines rather than to make plans in their minds.
- Learners should always save e-mail drafts before sending messages in case technology problems such as mojibake of non-alphabetic languages happens. It will save learners a great deal of time when they have to re-send messages.
- Learners should know when and how to use of dictionaries and online aids such as Rikai program. They should not rely on such aids too much.
- Learners should reflect after writing and reading e-mail messages. Reflections help learners understand the target language and culture deeply.
- Learners should not assume that one keypal’s perspective represents the entire cultural group’s views. They cannot overgeneralize from one person’s descriptions or views.
Recommendations for Instructors

- When FL instructors assign e-mail communication to their students, they should provide students with suggested, not required topics. Some students have a lot of topics that they want to write or ask their keypals. Required topics may prevent learners from writing about topics in which they are truly interested. On the other hand, some students may not know what to write. Suggested topics will help such students to find topics and would be helpful to let students write something related to foreign language classes.

- FL instructors should have time to discuss their students’ e-mail communication with native speakers. Incorporating what students learn from e-mail exchanges into classroom discussions regularly would be beneficial to foreign language learners (Hertel, 2003). The participants in this study expressed that conversation time in classes often did not last long because they did not have a lot to say. However, students would know what to say if they talk about what they learned from their keypal, what they found interesting about their keypal, or what they found informative or interesting about the expressions or language used by their keypals. Talking about what learners wrote and read to their classmates may reinforce the listening and speaking skills. Talking about e-mail exchange may prevent the students from overgeneralization of cultural understanding because other students may comment on the similarities or differences about cultures. Discussing the students’ e-mail communication
may help learners be more critical and reflective. The participants in this study realized the learning that had occurred by talking about it during the interviews. Some learners noticed their own learning by writing and reflecting about their writing and reading process. If the curriculum does not allow time for classroom discussions about e-mail exchange, online discussions such as Blackboard or shared web logs are alternative discussion venues.

- If there are Japanese exchange students, it is convenient to find Japanese keypals who are peers through a Japanese university. Exchange students can facilitate communicating when issues arise, such as technical issues.
- If learners do not know how and when to use dictionaries and aids such as the Rikai program, they should help their learners use such aids effectively.
- Japanese instructors should correct learners’ errors minimally so the focus is on the content more than the target language form.
- Instructors encourage learners to enjoy the e-mail communication.
- Instructors should remind the learners to save their messages all the time in case the learners have to resend messages due to technical issues.
- Instructors should suggest learners send visual images such as pictures of their city so keypals can better understand each other’s culture.
- Instructors should promote life-long learning. They should encourage their learners to continue using the target language such as continuing e-mail communication with native speakers.
• Instructors should facilitate learners to reflect what they discovered and learned from writing and reading e-mail messages orally or written.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study emphasized authentic communication using e-mail and authentic resources in the second-year Japanese course. Other types of authentic communication and materials used in and outside FL classes needs to be studied further. In addition, the effectiveness of e-mail communication as an authentic communication needs to be further examined. A future quantitative study with a large number of participants will allow researchers to learn the effectiveness of authentic e-mail communication for Japanese language and culture learning. Qualitative research observing Japanese language learners’ e-mail typing and reading process by asking them to type and read aloud would help understand the e-mail communication process better.

All research raises additional questions. The following questions emerged from this study and could be examined in future research.

• What sources of authentic communication and materials do FL learners use in and outside classes?
• How effective is the use of authentic materials compared to materials created specifically for FL learners?
• How do FL learners develop their target language skills through e-mail communication?
• How do FL learners develop their target culture knowledge through e-mail communication?
• How do the instructors' perspectives of authentic materials in the target language differ from the learners’ perspectives?

• What advantages and barriers of authentic communication and materials exist for Japanese language learners?

• How do FL learners edit their e-mail messages in the target language?

• What are effective ways to use authentic materials in the target language for FL language and cultural learning? What are effective ways to use authentic movies for the target language and culture learning?
REFERENCES


White Plains, NY: Longman.


Appendix A

Interview Log
### Interview Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participant (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Date &amp; Time of Interview</th>
<th>Length of Interview</th>
<th>Number of pages of transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>12/2/2004 5:30pm-6:30pm</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
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<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Fall, 2004</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dr. Kudo</td>
<td>1/11/2005 1:30pm-2:30pm</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Abby</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>2/16/2005 4:00pm-4:30pm</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Spring, 2005</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Abby</td>
<td>5/4/2005 1:00pm-1:50pm</td>
<td>50 minutes</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>5/6/2005 4:00pm-4:30pm</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>5/9/2005 6:00pm-7:00pm</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>5/12/2005 3:00pm-3:30pm</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dr. Kudo</td>
<td>5/18/2005 1:30pm-2:30pm</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

First Interview Protocol for Participant Students
**Interview Protocol**

Name: ______________________ Date & Time: ________________________________

Location: ____________________ Pseudonym: ________________________________

---

**Introduction**

I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views accurately. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you have said with an incorrect interpretation.

In this study I am interested in how you perceive your keypal project for Japanese 101 course. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views. I may ask you some additional questions that you have not reviewed as we go along in order to clarify what you mean. Are you ready to begin?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am interested in the process of writing and reading e-mail messages in Japanese. Please walk me through the steps to write a message to your keypal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What did you do first? (What did you do before you started writing?)
• What was the hardest part to compose messages?

• What was the easiest part to compose messages?

• What was the hardest part to type Japanese?

• What was the easiest part to type Japanese?
2. Please tell me the process you use to read a message from your keypal.

- What did you do first when you received a message from your keypal?

- What was the hardest part to read messages from your keypal?

- What was the easiest part to read messages from your keypal?
3. I want to understand your keypal experience deeply. Please share with me what it is like for you to type and send e-mail messages in Japanese.

- What did you feel about typing and sending Japanese e-mail messages?

- How did you enjoy writing messages?

- What difficulties did you experience in writing messages?
• Please describe how this keypal project encouraged/discouraged you to write Japanese messages.

• How have your feelings about writing changed since you started this project?

4. Please describe what it is like for you to read e-mail messages in Japanese.

• How did you feel about reading Japanese e-mail messages?
• How did you enjoy reading messages?

• What difficulties did you encounter while reading messages?

• Please describe how this keypal project has encouraged/discouraged you to read Japanese messages.

• How have your feelings about writing changed since you started this project?
5. What did you learn from this keypal project?

- How do you feel about Japanese culture and language?

- What similarities and differences between English and Japanese or American culture and Japanese culture?

- How was the keypal project useful for your Japanese learning?
6. What differences did you find between typing and writing Japanese by hand?

- Please describe some positive aspects of typing e-mails in Japanese based on your experience.

- Please describe some negative aspects of typing e-mail messages in Japanese based on your experience.

7. What else would you like to tell me about your experiences about keypal that we haven’t discussed already today?

Thank you very much for your cooperation.
Appendix C

First Interview Protocol for Participant Professor
Interview Protocol

Name: ___________________________ Date & Time: ___________________________
Location: ________________________ Pseudonym: ____________________________

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views accurately. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you have said with an incorrect interpretation.

In this study I am interested in how you perceive your keypal project for Japanese 101 course. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views. I may ask you some additional questions that you have not reviewed as we go along in order to clarify what you mean. Are you ready to begin?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 6年前にキーパルのプロジェクトを始めることになったきっかけは何ですか。</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Please explain why you decided to assign keypal projects to your second-year Japanese students six years ago.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. 今までの経験からキーパルの宿題が学習者の日本語や日本文化の習得にどのように役立っているか教えてください。
(Please describe your evaluation and observation of second-year Japanese students’ development of Japanese language and culture through the keypal project.)

3. 今までの経験から学習者にとって日本語でメールを作成する利点を教えてください。
(Based on your experience, what do you believe are positive aspects of writing Japanese e-mail messages?)
4. 今までの経験から日本語でのメールの作成が日本語学習の弊害となる点があれば教えてください。
(Based on experience, what do you believe are the negative aspects of writing Japanese e-mail messages?)

5. 今までの経験から学習者にとって日本語でメールを読解する利点を教えてください。
(Based on your experience, what do you believe are positive aspects of reading Japanese e-mail messages?)
6. 今までの経験から日本語でのメールの読解が日本語学習の弊害となる点があれば教えてください。
(Based on your experience, what do you believe are the negative aspects of reading Japanese e-mail messages?)

7. 日本語でのメールの交換について学習者はどのように考えていますか。
(What do your students think about exchanging e-mails?)

8. キーパルに関して補足する点はありますか。
(What else would you like to tell me about keypal that we haven’t discussed already today?)

ご協力ありがとうございました。
(Thank you very much for your cooperation.)
Appendix D

Second Interview Protocol for Participant Students
Interview Protocol

Name: ______________________ Date & Time: ______________________
Location: ____________________ Pseudonym: ___________________

---

**Introduction**

I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views accurately. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you have said with an incorrect interpretation.

In this study I am interested in how you perceive your keypal project for Japanese 102 course. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views. I may ask you some additional questions that you have not reviewed as we go along in order to clarify what you mean. Are you ready to begin?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please describe the type of authentic Japanese input you receive in your classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Which sources of Japanese language do you have in your classes? Please explain. (Give examples.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Describe the classroom activities in your Japanese classroom.

• How do you learn Japanese language in your classes?

2. Please tell me how you receive Japanese language input outside classes.

• Which sources of Japanese language do you have outside your classes? Please explain.
• Which events or activities have you experienced, listened to, or read that use the Japanese language?

• How do you learn Japanese outside classes?

3. Please explain how you use Japanese language in your classes.

• How do you interact with other students?
• How do you interact with your professor?

4. Please describe how you use Japanese language outside classes.

• Which kind of events or activities have you attended where you speak or write Japanese?

• To which source of Japanese input do you have access?
5. Please describe how you develop your cultural understanding in your Japanese classes?

- Which kind of classroom activities do you have for Japanese cultural understanding?

6. Please tell me how you develop your cultural understanding outside Japanese classes?

- How have you learned Japanese culture through events?
• How have you learned Japanese culture from other people?

7. I will ask you about your kepal project. You explained to me your writing process of Japanese e-mails. How has your writing process changed since the beginning of the project last semester?

8. How has your reading process changed since the beginning of the project last semester?

9. What did you learn through your kepal project?
10. Do you have suggestions for Japanese language learners and instructors about keypal projects?

Thank you very much for your cooperation.
Appendix E

Second Interview Protocol for Participant Professor
Interview Protocol

Name: __________________________ Date & Time: __________________________
Location: ______________________ Pseudonym: __________________________

Introduction

I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views accurately. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you have said with an incorrect interpretation.

In this study I am interested in how you perceive your keypal project for Japanese 102 course. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views. I may ask you some additional questions that you have not reviewed as we go along in order to clarify what you mean. Are you ready to begin?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 日本語のクラスで学習者はどのようにオーセンティックなインプットを受け取っていますか。 (Please describe how your students receive authentic Japanese input in your classes.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• どのような教材から学習者は日本語のインプットを受けていますか。
  (Which sources of Japanese input do your students have?)

• どのような言語活動が行われていますか。
  (Which kind of Japanese language activities do you have?)

• 学習者はクラスでどのように日本語を学んでいますか。
  (How do your students learn Japanese in your classes?)
2. 学習者はクラスでどのように日本語を使用していますか。
(Please explain how your students use Japanese language in your classes.)

- 学習者は他の学生とどのように話していますか。
  (How do your students interact with other students?)

- 学習者は先生とどのように話していますか。
  (How do your students interact with you?)
3. 学習者はクラスでどのように日本語文化への理解を深めていますか。
(Please tell me how your students develop their cultural understanding in your classes.)

- 日本語文化への理解を深めるためにクラスでどのような活動が行われていますか。
  (Which kind of classroom activities do you have for your students’ cultural understanding?)

4. 大学内外で催されたことのある日本文化に関連した活動や行事の例を挙げてください。
(Please tell me examples of Japanese cultural activities outside classes in this university or community.)

ご協力ありがとうございました。
(Thank you very much for your cooperation.)
Appendix F

Demographic Information Sheet for Participant Students
Demographic Information

1. Name: ___________________________

2. Grade: □ freshman  □ sophomore  □ junior  □ senior  □ graduate
   □ other (→ Please specify: ________________________________)

3. Major: ___________________________________________________________________

4. The language(s) you can speak, understand, read, or write: ______________________

5. How long have you studied Japanese? _____ year(s) and _____ month(s)

6. Have you typed Japanese prior to Japanese 101 course?
   □ No
   □ Yes

7. Reasons to take a second-year Japanese:
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________
   _________________________________________________________________

8. Average time per week to using Japanese language outside the classroom (including
   homework and communicating with Japanese speakers): _____ hour(s) _____ minutes

9. Have you visited Japan?
   □ No
   □ Yes → Where? __________________________
   → How long? ________ year(s) / ________ month(s)

10. Are you going to visit Japan in the near future?
    □ No
    □ Yes → Your plan: __________________________

11. Your plan after college graduation:
    __________________________
    __________________________

12. Your future goals:
    __________________________
    __________________________

13. Hobbies/Interests:
    __________________________
Appendix G

Classroom and Event Observation Log
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Observation</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/20/2004</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21/2004</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25/2004</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
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<td>10/27/2004</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8/2004</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/17/2004</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/1/2004</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>1/26/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 101 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/2/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/7/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/9/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/16/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/23/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/24/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/2/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/9/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/23/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/6/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/13/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/20/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/3/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/4/2005</td>
<td>12:00 p.m. - 12:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Japanese 102 Classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Observations</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/10/2005 (Japanese taiko drum dinner)</td>
<td>5:20 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Cafeteria on campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/8/2005 (Japanese meetup)</td>
<td>7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>A coffee shop in downtown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H

Writing Reflection Sheet
日本語 101 (2004 年秋学期)

Keypal Writing Reflection Sheet（第 1 回）

Note: The answers on this sheet will not affect your grade for your 日本語 101 course.

1. Name: _______________________________

2. Time to write a message: _____ 時間 _____ 分

3. On the copy of your e-mail, please circle new words/expressions that you used.

4. On the copy of your e-mail, please underline new kanji that you used.

5. Frequency of dictionary use while writing: _____ times

6. Did somebody help you write?  ☐ はい  ☐ いいえ

7. Do you like typing Japanese better than writing by hand?  ☐ はい  ☐ いいえ

→ Reasons: _________________________________

8. Please rate your level of difficulty while writing this message (1 = very easy, 5 = very difficult):

   ☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3  ☐ 4  ☐ 5

→ Reasons: _________________________________

9. Please rate your level of enjoyment while writing this message (1 = very enjoyable, 5 = painful):

   ☐ 1  ☐ 2  ☐ 3  ☐ 4  ☐ 5

→ Reasons: _________________________________

10. What did you think/discover while writing?

   _______________________________________

11. What you learned today:

   _______________________________________

12. Please write other comments on the back of this sheet if any.

   Thanks! 😊
Appendix I

Reading Reflection Sheet
日本語 101 (2004 年秋学期)
Keypal Reading Reflection Sheet (第 1 回)

Note: The answers on this sheet will not affect your grade for your 日本語 101 course.

1. Name: ________________________________

2. Time to comprehend the message from your keypal: ____ 時間 ____ 分

3. On the copy of the e-mail from your keypal, please circle new words/expressions.

4. On the copy of your e-mail from your keypal, please underline new kanji.

5. Frequency of dictionary use while comprehending: ____ times

6. Frequency to use Rikai Program:
   □ For most of the sentences    □ For many of the sentences
   □ For some of the sentences   □ A little    □ None

7. Did somebody help you comprehend the message? □ はい □ いいえ

8. Percentage of information you can recall about the message from your keypal:
   □ Almost all    □ Over 80%    □ Over 50%    □ Over 20%    □ Almost none

9. Please rate your level of difficulty while comprehending this message (1 = very easy, 5 = very difficult):
   □ 1    □ 2    □ 3    □ 4    □ 5

   → Reasons: ____________________________________________

10. Please rate your level of enjoyment while comprehending this message (1 = very enjoyable, 5 = painful):
    □ 1    □ 2    □ 3    □ 4    □ 5

    → Reasons: ____________________________________________

11. Similarities/Differences between English and Japanese languages that you found this time:

   ________________________________________________________

12. Similarities/Differences between American and Japanese cultures that you found this time:

   ________________________________________________________

13. Please write other things you learned or comments on the back of this sheet if any.
Appendix J

E-Mail Assignments for Students (First Semester of 2004)
**Purpose & Goals:**
The purpose of this project is for you to **enjoy** communicating with college students in Japan and expand what you have learned in Japanese classes. You are able to tell your keypal about your life as a college student and to gain knowledge about your keypal’s life as a Japanese college student.

**I. Writing messages:**

**Topics & Contents:**
Write at least **10 sentences** about the following topics in your e-mail messages. Use the grammatical structures that you have learned as your foundation and **be creative** using the dictionary or Rikai on computer. Feel free to add other topics that you want to learn or share with your keypal. You may send e-mails in English for your keypal’s English language learning, but write in Japanese at least 10 sentences four times a semester. **Do not worry about making grammatical errors.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>第1回</td>
<td>じこしょうかい かぞく \ 自己紹介・家族 \ (Self-introduction &amp; family)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第2回</td>
<td>こきょう せいかつ だいがくせいかつ \ 故郷・生活（大学生活） \ (Hometown &amp; life in general/school life)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第3回</td>
<td>すとしりゅう \ 好きな都市とその理由 \ (Your favorite city that you have been to, a city where you wish to go in the future, and the reasons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第4回</td>
<td>きゅうじつ けいかく \ 休日の計画 \ (Holidays or your vacation plans)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Format:**
At the beginning of a message, describe weather conditions in Lincoln. At the end of your e-mail, tell your keypal when you will send the next message. The first sentences about weather conditions and the ending sentence will not be counted within the required 10 sentences. When you send an e-mail message to your keypal, also send it to yourself and Yuki (yuki3e@yahoo.co.jp) as bcc. Print your message and submit it to sensei.

**Grading:**
Each outgoing message is worth **20 points.**

**Rubric for Writing:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>優</th>
<th>良</th>
<th>可</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Conveyed meanings clearly.</td>
<td>Conveyed good meanings.</td>
<td>Meanings are not clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Wrote creative messages.</td>
<td>Showed some creativity.</td>
<td>Mostly copied from samples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td>Elaborated on the activity/event.</td>
<td>Elaborated on the activity/event some.</td>
<td>Did not elaborate on the activity/event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Wrote at least 10 sentences about the topic.</td>
<td>Wrote at least 7 sentences about the topic.</td>
<td>Wrote at least 4 sentences about the topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Reading messages:

Your keypal will write you at least 10 sentences in Japanese per message. Type/write the content of the message from your keypal in English. Submit a copy of the message from your keypal and the reading comprehension to さんせい.

Grading:
Each reading comprehension is worth 20 points. For your reading comprehension, you are required to comprehend with 80% accuracy.

Rubric for Reading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>優</th>
<th>良</th>
<th>可</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Comprehended with 80% accuracy.</td>
<td>Comprehended with 65% accuracy.</td>
<td>Comprehended with 50% accuracy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Dues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Send &amp; submit a message &amp; reflection sheet</th>
<th>Receive a message</th>
<th>A copy of a message from keypal, reading comprehension, &amp; reflection sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>第1回</td>
<td>10月26日 (火)</td>
<td>10月29日 (金)</td>
<td>11月2日 (火)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第2回</td>
<td>11月5日 (金)</td>
<td>11月9日 (火)</td>
<td>11月12日 (金)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第3回</td>
<td>11月16日 (火)</td>
<td>11月19日 (金)</td>
<td>11月23日 (火)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第4回</td>
<td>11月30日 (火)</td>
<td>12月3日 (金)</td>
<td>12月6日 (月) (Portfolio due)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Conference:

You will have a conference with Yuki on November 30 through December 6. It will take approximately 30 minutes for the interview. This time will be scheduled before Thanksgiving Break. Thank you for your cooperation!

Enjoy your online conversations with your Japanese keypal! If you need assistance with writing or reading e-mails, please feel free to ask Yuki after Wednesday Japanese 101 classes or by appointment.
Appendix K

E-Mail Assignments for Students (Second Semester of 2005)
日本語 102 (2005 年春学期)

キーバルプロジェクト

Purpose & Goals:
The purpose of this project is for you to enjoy communicating with college students in Japan and expand what you have learned in Japanese classes. You are able to tell your keypal about your life as a college student and to gain knowledge about your keypal’s life as a Japanese college student.

I. Writing messages:

Topics & Contents:
Each time you write a message, choose ONE topic from the three topic options below.

* Topic options (You may choose option 1 or 2 as many times as you want.)

- Option 1: Ask your keypal what you would like to know about Japan, such as current news, social issues, and culture. Describe about the topic as much as you know.

- Option 2: Exchange recipes.

- Option 3: Topics vary each time you write a message. See the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Option 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>第 1 回</td>
<td>Winter Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第 2 回</td>
<td>Your favorite book/movie/play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第 3 回</td>
<td>Valentine’s Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第 4 回</td>
<td>Area you excel (music, sports, etc.) / Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第 5 回</td>
<td>High school life / future dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>第 6 回</td>
<td>Summer Vacation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write at least 10 sentences each time you write a message. Use the grammatical structures that you have learned as your foundation and be creative using the dictionary or Rikai on computer. Feel free to add other topics that you want to learn or share with your keypal. You may send e-mails in English for your keypal’s English language learning, but write in Japanese at least 10 sentences four times a semester. Do not worry about making grammatical errors.

Format:
At the beginning of a message, describe weather conditions in Lincoln. At the end of your e-mail, tell your keypal when you will send the next message. The first sentences about weather conditions and the ending sentence will not be counted within the required 10 sentences. When you send an e-mail message to your keypal, also send it to yourself and Yuki (yuki3e@yahoo.co.jp) as bcc. Print your message and submit it to sensei.

Grading:
Each outgoing message is worth 20 points.
Rubric for Writing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>優</th>
<th>良</th>
<th>可</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Conveyed meanings clearly.</td>
<td>Conveyed good meanings.</td>
<td>Meanings are not clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Wrote at least 10 sentences about the topic.</td>
<td>Wrote at least 7 sentences about the topic.</td>
<td>Wrote at least 4 sentences about the topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Reading messages:

Your keypal will write you at least 10 sentences in Japanese per message. Type/write the content of the message from your keypal in English. Submit a copy of the message from your keypal and the reading comprehension to 佐藤先生 sensei.

Grading:
Each reading comprehension is worth 20 points. For your reading comprehension, you are required to comprehend with 80% accuracy.

Rubric for Reading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>優</th>
<th>良</th>
<th>可</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Comprehended with 80% accuracy.</td>
<td>Comprehended with 65% accuracy.</td>
<td>Comprehended with 50% accuracy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Dues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A copy of e-mail message &amp; writing reflection sheet</th>
<th>A copy of a message from keypal, reading comprehension, &amp; reading reflection sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>聖 1 回 1 月 2 6 日 ( 水 )</td>
<td>2 月 4 日 ( 金 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聖 2 回 2 月 9 日 ( 水 )</td>
<td>2 月 1 8 日 ( 金 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聖 3 回 2 月 2 3 日 ( 水 )</td>
<td>3 月 1 1 日 ( 金 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聖 4 回 3 月 2 3 日 ( 水 )</td>
<td>4 月 1 日 ( 金 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聖 5 回 4 月 6 日 ( 水 )</td>
<td>4 月 1 5 日 ( 金 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>聖 6 回 4 月 2 0 日 ( 水 )</td>
<td>4 月 2 9 日 ( 金 )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Conference:

You will have a conference with Yuki on April 18 through May 6. It will take approximately 30 minutes for the interview. Thank you for your cooperation!

Enjoy your online conversations with your Japanese keypal! If you need assistance with writing or reading e-mails, please feel free to ask me.
Appendix L

Interview Verification Form
Interview Verification Form

Dear Research Participant:

Please review the enclosed transcript of our interview regarding the keypal project. Please feel free to note any errors that you find in order to make all information as accurate as possible. Please sign on the proper line below to indicate your level of approval for your part in this project. Thank you very much.

My signature below indicates my approval of the taped interview at one of the following levels:

___ I approve of the interview transcript without reviewing in.

___ I approve of the interview transcript without changes.

___ I approve of the interview transcript with noted changes.

___ I do not approve of the interview transcript.

Signature of participant ___________________________ Date ________________

Yuki Ozawa – principal investigator
Appendix M

Approval Letter from Research Site
October 25, 2004

Yuki Ozawa  
3463 Starr St.  
Lincoln, NE 68503

Dear Yuki Ozawa:

I reviewed your request to conduct a dissertation project involving my Japanese 101 course at [University]. I am pleased to approve your request to conduct this research. Your project will provide valuable feedback and insight into how second language learners of Japanese acquire writing skills in a computer based environment.

Please contact me if you have any questions and/or future requests.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Ph.D.
Coordinator of Japanese Instruction
Appendix N

Approval Letter from the Institutional Review Board
November 29, 2004

Yuki Ozawa
3463 Starr St.
Lincoln NE 68503

IRB#: 2004-11-099 EX

TITLE OF PROPOSAL: Keypal Projects for Japanese Learning

Dear Yuki:

This letter is to officially notify you of the approval of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. This project has been approved by the Unit Review Committee from your college and sent to the IRB. It is the Board’s opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study. Your proposal seems to be in compliance with this institution’s Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as exempt.

Date of EX Review: 11/22/04

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 11/29/04. This approval is Valid Until: 11/28/05.

1. Enclosed are the IRB approved Informed Consent forms for this project. Please use these forms when making copies to distribute to your participants. If it is necessary to create a new informed consent form, please send us your original so that we may approve and stamp it before it is distributed to participants.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board. For projects which continue beyond one year from the starting date, the IRB will request continuing review and update of the research project. Your study will be due for continuing review as indicated above. The investigator must also advise the Board when this study is finished or discontinued by completing the enclosed Protocol Final Report form and returning it to the Institutional Review Board.

If you have any questions, please contact Shirley Horstman, IRB Administrator, at 472-9417 or email at shorstman1@unl.edu.

Sincerely,

Dan R. Hoyt, Chair for the IRB

Shirley Horstman
IRB Administrator

cc: Faculty Advisor
    Unit Review Committee
Appendix O

Informed Consent Form for Students
Informed Consent Form

Keypal Projects for Japanese Learning

The purpose of this dissertation project is to explore Japanese language learners’ Japanese cultural and language development through keypal projects at a Midwestern university. It will take two semesters to complete the project. You must be 19 years of age or older to participate. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a student in Japanese 101.

The research will be conducted in November 2004 through May 2005. The research consists of classroom observations, interviews, and your keypal portfolio. The observation will be conducted once a week. I would like to conduct an interview with you about your keypal experience in this research at the end of the Fall Semester, 2004 and Spring Semester, 2005. Each interview will require approximately 30 minutes of your time. The interview will be held in a conference room in the Old Main Building or in the library at [University]. The interview will be audio taped with your permission. The audiotape will be used only for the purpose of helping the researcher transcribe the data accurately and review the data as often as necessary. I would also like to review your keypal portfolio to help me understand your writing and reading Japanese e-mail process.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research.

You may find the learning experience enjoyable and the information may be helpful to you when you exchange e-mails with your Japanese keypal in Japanese 101. If you need assistance in writing and reading Japanese e-mails or Japanese language learning in general, I will happy to help you. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand the effectiveness of keypal projects for foreign language learning.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data including interview tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator’s office and will only been seen by the investigator during the study and for three years after the study is complete. The data will be destroyed after three years. The data will be reported as aggregate data. You will be assigned a pseudonym to assure your confidentiality in the dissertation. The audiotapes will be erased after three years.
You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate or during the study. Or you may call the investigator at any time, home phone, (402) 325-9547. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska, or University. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

__________

Please check if you agree to be audio taped during the interview.

__________________________________________
Signature of Research Participant

__________________________________________
Date

Yuki Ozawa, MS, Principal Investigator
Aleidine Moeller, Ph.D., Secondary Investigator

Phone: (402) 325-9547
Phone: (402) 472-2024
Appendix P

Informed Consent Form for Professor
Informed Consent Form

Keypal Projects for Japanese Learning

The purpose of this dissertation project is to explore Japanese language learners’ Japanese cultural and language development through keypal projects at a Midwestern university. It will take two semesters to complete the project. You are invited to participate in this study because you are a professor in Japanese 101.

The research will be conducted in November 2004 through May 2005. The research consists of classroom observations, interviews, and your evaluation process of your students’ e-mail messages and reading comprehension. The observation will be conducted once a week. I would like to conduct an interview with you about your experiences assigning keypal projects to your students in this research at the end of the Fall Semester, 2004 and Spring Semester, 2005. Each interview will require approximately 30 to 60 minutes of your time. The interview will be conducted via e-mail. I would also like to review your students’ keypal portfolio to help me understand your writing and reading Japanese e-mail process.

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand the effectiveness of keypal projects for foreign language learning.

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. The data including your students’ e-mail copies will be stored in a locked cabinet in the investigator’s office and will only been seen by the investigator during the study and for three years after the study is complete. The data will be destroyed after three years. The data will be reported as aggregate data. You will be assigned a pseudonym to assure your confidentiality in the dissertation. The e-mail messages from you in my e-mail inbox will be erased after three years.

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate or during the study. Or you may call the investigator at any time, home phone, (402) 325-9547. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board, telephone (402) 472-6965.
You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators, the University of Nebraska, or University. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

______________________________
Signature of Research Participant

______________________________
Date

Yuki Ozawa, MS, Principal Investigator
Aleidine Moeller, Ph.D., Secondary Investigator

Phone: (402) 325-9547
Phone: (402) 472-2024
Appendix Q

A Cartoon for Story Telling
Christmas
Appendix R

Oral Test (First Semester of 2004)
1. 今日は何月何日、何曜日ですか。 昨日は何月何日、何曜日でしたか。

2. 今日の天気はどうですか。 (Answer with sunny/cloudy/rain/snow, cold/cool, temperature, and wind)

3. 「でしょう」か「そうです」をつかって、答えてください。
   明日の天気はどうでしょうか。 (Answer with sunny/cloudy/rain/snow, cold/cool, temperature, and wind)

4. えを見て、答えてください。「___ので, cannot V」or 「___んです。だから, cannot V」
   のふんを二つ作ってください。

5. えを見て、答えてください。「前」と「後」をつかって、ふんを二つ作ってください。
6. 答えてください。Say 3 different types of sentences—definite, intend/plan to, probably will. Say each sentence as extensive as you can.

   しゅうまつ、何をしますか。

7. 日本ごで 何ですか。

   Are you okay?/ What happened?/ I don't know / I don't understand

8. 答えてください。ぶんを四つ いってください。

   冬休みに何をするつもりですか。何をしたいですか。

9. Tell where you have been to and how the trip was, and what you did before the trip.

   ぶんを五つ いってください。

10. 「---ないで」をつかって、ぶんを二つ作ってください。

11. 「I know how to V」のぶんを一つ作ってください。「I don't know how to V」のぶんを一つ作ってください。

End Test
Appendix S

Oral Test (Second Semester of 2005)
Final Oral Test #1 - Computer # _____ 名前__________________
Section 1: Say the number in Japanese, then say the word. You have 1 minute.

1. 勉強  2. 昨日  3. 週末  4. 両親  5. 映画  6. 友達
18. 手紙  19. 昼  20. 病気

Section 2: One minute monologue

Section 3
a. Prohibition  
b. Obligation

c. Excessiveness  
d. Passive sentence

Section 4
a. While (simultaneous actions)  
b. Trying to V

c. Although, In spite of  
d. Condition if

Section 5
• I received 30,000 yen from my professor on my wedding.
• I gave a watch to my father on Father’s Day.
• I went to a supermarket for my friend (as a favor).
• I made a document for my boss (as a favor).

Section 6: Use honorific forms する、話す  Use humble forms 行く、食べる

Final Oral Test #2 - Computer # _____ 名前__________________
Section 1: Say the number in Japanese, then say the word. You have 1 minute.

1. 会社  2. 家  3. 今日  4. 病気  5. 猫  6. 漢字
13. 手紙  14. 両親  15. 赤い  16. 誕生日  17. 本当
18. 勉強  19. 週末  20. 英語

Section 2: One minute monologue

Section 3
a. Prohibition  
b. Obligation

d. Excessiveness  
d. Passive sentence

Section 4
a. While (simultaneous actions)  
b. Trying to V

c. Although, In spite of  
d. Condition if

Section 5
• I received a car from my parents on my graduation.
• I gave flowers to my mother on Mother’s Day.
• I read a book to my little sister (as a favor).
• I made coffee for my boss (as a favor).

Section 6: Use honorific forms 行く、する  Use humble forms 吹く、作る