

Title of Session: Benkyoukai - A Pilot test on Japanese particles

Moderator: Keiko Schneider

Guest Speaker: Andy Vajirasarn

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Room: After School Online Room

Andy_vGst1: It's exciting for me. I haven't really check out this TAPPED IN site

Andy_vGst1: It's very cool.

KeikoS grins

KeikoS: You will like it.

NaofumiGst2 joined the room.

KeikoS: Welcome Naofumi

Andy_vGst1 bows

KeikoS: Meet Andy sensei

Andy_vGst1: Welcome!

NaofumiGst2: Hello.

Andy_vGst1: Hello.

Andy_vGst1: I hope this will be an interesting experience for you. This is my first benkyoukai.

KeikoS: Naofumi sensei, have you read Andy sensei's paper?

NaofumiGst2: I'm not sure which room I'm supposed to be in.

KeikoS: You are in the right place

KeikoS: Andy sensei is the presenter

Andy_vGst1: Yes.

Andy_vGst1: Should we wait a little longer?

KeikoS: I am going to put the URL for your paper, Andy sensei.

KeikoS: <http://andysensei.tripod.com/jtestpaper.htm>

Andy_vGst1: Sure

NaofumiGst2: I'm afraid not yet. I just came back from a trip and found out this benkyoukai.

KeikoS: Naofumi sensei, if you haven't read his paper, click on that blue link.

KeikoS: Andy sensei, could you give us a few minutes to go over your paper?

Andy_vGst1: Of course.

KeikoS bows

Andy_vGst1 returns bow

KeikoS: Humm, must have been a lot of work.

Andy_vGst1: It was slow at first, but after I collected the data it was just me and the data.

Andy_vGst1: Then, I spent a lot of time calculating the stats, and thinking about the revisions.

KeikoS: Once Naofumi sensei is back, we should get started

Andy_vGst1: Sure

KeikoS: We do short intro and you can start with some remarks

KeikoS: And I guess we jump in with questions...

Andy_vGst1 shows thumbs up

KeikoS smiles

BJ smiles. Andy certainly has mastered emoting!

KeikoS: Intro first

KeikoS . o O (Andy sensei?)

Andy_vGst1: By me?

KeikoS: I am Keiko Schneider, the organizer of benkyoukai.

KeikoS . o O (please)

KeikoS: And Naofumi sensei, quick short one

Andy_vGst1: Good morning/afternoon/evening.

KeikoS giggles

NaofumiGst2: I'm Naofumi Tatsumi, working on my master's degree in University of Southern Mississippi.

KeikoS bows hajimemashite

NaofumiGst2: Hajimemashite.

KeikoS looks at Andy sensei

Andy_vGst1: I am Andy Vajirasarn, currently teaching in Japan, but in the US on summer break. Hajimemashite.

KeikoS: Great! Now I would like some comments from Andy sensei first

KeikoS: Then we will go into Q&A

KeikoS . o O (more like jump in because there are just three of us)

Andy_vGst1: Ok. I carried out this Japanese test developing project in France.

Andy_vGst1: I was an assistant English teacher at a French HS at the time, so I had lots of time on my hands.

KeikoS grins

KeikoS: And..?

Andy_vGst1: Okay. Some opening comments.

KeikoS nods to Andy sensei

Andy_vGst1: Yes, I think so.

Andy_vGst1 nods vigorously

Andy_vGst1: so...

Andy_vGst1: I decided to carry out this Japanese Test Development project because I was in the unique position of being an assistant English teacher in a French HS.

Andy_vGst1: This meant that I actually had time on my hands to do data collection, etc. since I didn't need to correct HW, grades tests, etc.

KeikoS listens

Andy_vGst1: Teachers with full schedules don't have the luxury of time that I had.

Andy_vGst1: The two basic principles I was aiming for were:

Andy_vGst1: 1) trying to make a test for a program that I was not directly teaching in (to see how well I could make a test to match the needs of the program

Andy_vGst1: 2) trying to use authentic materials in test making

KeikoS: good part

Andy_vGst1: I discovered that it was difficult to manipulate the magazine article I chose.

Andy_vGst1: I had to cut sentences into two parts, or simplify others.

KeikoS: If you simplify, that is not authentic, is it?

Andy_vGst1: right.

Andy_vGst1: That's something I had to wrestle with.

KeikoS nods solemnly

Andy_vGst1: Another challenge was test validity.

Andy_vGst1: I provided glossary for the test takers

KeikoS . o O (bilingual?)

Andy_vGst1: Yes. This was because the test was on particles, and not kanji or vocabulary.

Andy_vGst1: I tried to make sure that particles were the only items being assessed.

KeikoS nods

Andy_vGst1: Another challenge was the test administration.

Andy_vGst1: The school that agreed to let me give the test to their students is basically an evening school.

Andy_vGst1: People finish school or work and then they take Japanese class. It's like Eikaiwa in Japan.

KeikoS . o O (naruhodo)

Andy_vGst1: This meant that I couldn't be there with them while they took my test.

Manak16Gst3 joined the room.

KeikoS: Welcome Manak

KeikoS . o O (Andy sensei is giving us overview of the paper)

Manak16Gst3: Hello

Andy_vGst1: I couldn't give it to them during their class time, because they were paying for Japanese classes.

Andy_vGst1: Hi!

Andy_vGst1: So....I actually had to design this test to be a take home test!

KeikoS nods

Andy_vGst1: I provided a letter of introduction, the kanji/vocabulary list (Japanese/French), and the actual test.

Andy_vGst1: Week One I distributed the papers. Week Two I collected them.

Andy_vGst1: I got so few back!

KeikoS: URGH

Andy_vGst1: Students were sick, or they...(cough) forgot.

Andy_vGst1: Fortunately for my statistics, the few that I DID receive were from three different levels of Japanese classes

Manak16Gst3: Did the marks from this take-home test count toward their final grades?

Andy_vGst1: No. It was purely for my research. They understood that they were helping me out with this project.

KeikoS: You didn't have any models that you could use?

KeikoS: I can understand there is probably not much resource in teaching Japanese in France...

KeikoS . o O (if that is the case)

Andy_vGst1: One other dimension to this project soon became clear to me. It's the issue of being a non-native teacher. and yes, I didn't quite have resources at the time.

KeikoS . o O (oh, tell me more about that...)

Andy_vGst1: So many times I wish I could've had someone check my stuff before

handing it over.

Andy_vGst1: But, c'est la vie.

KeikoS grins

Andy_vGst1: The fun part was that I was able to play with statistics using real data that I collected.

Andy_vGst1: It was a really good experience for me to go through the steps.

Andy_vGst1: Descriptive stats, split-half reliability coeff, item discrimination/facility, etc.

KeikoS: Anybody has comments, questions?

Andy_vGst1: Though this project is less than earth-shattering, it did help me keep up with test design practices and statistics.

Manak16Gst3: The one student who scored perfect in all of the questions, what was his/her background in Japanese?

Andy_vGst1: I don't recall exactly, but I think s/he was.

Andy_vGst1: Also, this person was in the highest level.

Andy_vGst1: However, the other one at that level just got 80%

Andy_vGst1: Sorry I didn't bring the Ss background data with me

Manak16Gst3: That's OK. I was thinking maybe this student was second/third generation Japanese-French who had been exposed to Japanese at home.

Andy_vGst1: That could be the case, I do remember one Japanese sounding name in the batch.

NaofumiGst2: Possibly.

Andy_vGst1: Is / has anyone using/used Minna no Nihongo?

NaofumiGst2: Japanese particles are as difficult as English articles to me.

KeikoS shakes her head

Andy_vGst1: Same here!

Andy_vGst1: I took a Japanese composition class this past semester... particles were my MAIN weakness.

NaofumiGst2: Mine is Genki.

Manak16Gst3: Yes! Also, the English prepositions are just as difficult!

KeikoS thinks

Manak16Gst3: We are using Genki as well.

Andy_vGst1 wonders what Keiko is thinking

KeikoS: So why particles, Andy sensei?

KeikoS: The test was for particles, right?

Andy_vGst1: yes

Andy_vGst1: well...

Andy_vGst1: Two reasons

Andy_vGst1: I thought it would be easy to design a test for, practically speaking.

Andy_vGst1: And it's one of my own trouble spots in learning Japanese.

Andy_vGst1: Regarding my French research, I have research the preposition "de", because it's tough for me.

Manak16Gst3: Have you thought of looking into the possibility that there is some influence from UG (universal grammar) or their first language?

Andy_vGst1: Could you elaborate?

Andy_vGst1: Oh, and what age level are you using Genki for?

Manak16Gst3: As Lydia White and her followers have been claiming, somehow UG is still operating at many levels of second language acquisition. So in this case, "Case Assignment"... don't get me wrong, I'm not expert on this but have read some of Lydia White's articles, that's all.

Manak16Gst3: We use Genki I and II for first and second year Japanese, respectively.

Andy_vGst1: This sounds intriguing. I will look into it more. Thank you.

KeikoS: Any more Qs, comments?

Andy_vGst1: Is anyone designing tests?

Andy_vGst1: Or using pre-made ones?

Manak16Gst3: Andy sensei's paper is inspiring and can be used as a model.

Andy_vGst1 bows

Andy_vGst1: Thank you.

KeikoS: Assessment in US are getting more attention these days, I think, because of..

KeikoS: No Child Left Behind

KeikoS: Less \$ available these days, people want results

KeikoS: scores

Andy_vGst1: That scares me.

KeikoS: But news is tests are not always good

KeikoS . o O (bad news)

Andy_vGst1: People need to understand test types, purposes, etc.

Manak16Gst3: At our school, we are still struggling with what constitute good tests, so we have so much to learn still. This type of research is quite stimulating for me others.

KeikoS nods solemnly

Andy_vGst1: Thank you for your kind words.

Andy_vGst1 bows deeply

KeikoS: Maybe final comments?

Andy_vGst1: I worry about test scores being touted around. As I just mentioned, administrators, parents, etc. need to be explained about assessment.

KeikoS nods solemnly

Andy_vGst1: Criterion ref, norm-ref

Andy_vGst1: and how to interpret scores

Andy_vGst1: Since last year I've been teaching a full load, so I just haven't had the time to carry out such a project.

Andy_vGst1: However, I think it's important not to lose sight of "good assessment".

Andy_vGst1: There will always be that tug of war between "doing it well" and doing it quickly"

Andy_vGst1: It's good as teachers, test-makers, etc. to find that balance.

KeikoS: Andy sensei,

KeikoS: I am sorry, I have to be leaving for a minute

KeikoS bows

Andy_vGst1: And I think that's it from me.

Andy_vGst1: Water works?

Andy_vGst1: Manak, what is your situation? HS ? College?

KeikoS: Well, anybody else has last comment?

Andy_vGst1 looks around the chat room

KeikoS: Well, I think this is just time to close the event.

Manak16Gst3: It's a university.

KeikoS: Thank you very much Andy sensei.

KeikoS bows and claps.

NaofumiGst2: I have to leave too. Thank you very much, Andy sensei. It was quite thought-provoking.

Andy_vGst1: Thank you .

KeikoS: If you can stay here feel free to continue the discussion.

Manak16Gst3: Thank you so much!

Andy_vGst1 waves bye

KeikoS: Thank you Naofumi sensei of your patience.

KeikoS: And Manak sensei for precious comments

NaofumiGst2: No problem.

Andy_vGst1: yes, thanks

KeikoS: And of course Andy sensei for his valuable contribution!

Andy_vGst1: My pleasure.

Manak16Gst3: arigatou gozaimashita!

KeikoS: I will put a short report later

KeikoS . o O (when water work is done <g)

Andy_vGst1 smiles a knowing smile.

Andy_vGst1: If you like, I can be reached at andysensei@yahoo.com

Andy_vGst1: or at my university account andyman@soka.ac.jp

KeikoS . o O (andyman)

Andy_vGst1: Yep!

Andy_vGst1: Bye for now!

KeikoS: doumo arigatou gozaimashita.

KeikoS bows

<http://www.sabotenweb.com/bookmarks/about/35thbenkyoukai.html>