Japanese Language Socialisation of Second-generation Japanese in the Australian Academic Context

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Abstract

Drawing on the language socialisation theory discussed by Duff (2003, 2007), this article examines the Japanese language socialisation of the second-generation Japanese in the Australian academic context. Participants in the study include sons and daughters of Japanese parents and also of inter-cultural marriage partners, who are enrolled in the advanced-level Japanese language course at an Australian university. Despite their growing presence in post-secondary Japanese language classrooms, there have been few investigations into their language situations and experiences in the Australian academic context to date. The case study presented here illustrates how these second-generation Japanese students participate in the Japanese classroom community and explores some of the issues surrounding their Japanese language socialisation. Some implications arising from the study are discussed and practical recommendations to the second-generation Japanese students will also be provided.

1 Introduction

Clyne (2005) takes the view that Australia as a whole is a nation rich in language resources, yet characterised by monolingual thinking. Based on his survey of language attitudes and multilingualism in today's Australia, he maintains that many Australians with considerable language potential remain happily and proudly monolingual, and that this attitude has increased in the past few decades. Japanese families and individuals who have settled in Australia, where Japanese language does not have high visibility or status in the surrounding society, inevitably face particular issues and challenges in pursuing Japanese language maintenance, including age-appropriate literacy development and inter-generational transmission of the language. Compared to other ethnic minorities, many Japanese people are relative newcomers to Australia and have had little experience of language loss in bi- or multilingual environments (cf. Clyne, 1991; Clyne & Kipp, 1997; Kipp & Clyne, 2003). Some first-generation settlers appear to be reluctant to foresee the potential problems for their children in maintaining and developing Japanese language while concentrating their attention on English acquisition so as to participate in the mainstream host or adopted country (Yoshimitsu, 1999, 2000, 2003). The language situation of the second-generation Japanese shares some of the features with those of other ethnic minorities in Australia. As Pauwels' (2005) study demonstrated, the family environment remains the main domain for community language use for many Japanese immigrants and their children, and supportive policies and educational provisions will only be of value if the family initiates the language acquisition and provides a practical environment for its continued use.

The children of Japanese parents or inter-cultural marriage parents, who are long-term residents or immigrants to Australia, acquire their Japanese largely in the family domain and also

through Japanese being the medium of instruction at the Saturday Japanese School. I have long been interested in how these children would further develop their Japanese beyond their childhood and adolescence into adulthood. I am particularly interested in how they develop their language not only as a means for inter-personal communication with a range of linguistic skills for everyday life, but also, and more importantly, as a cognitive academic language with the broader range of skills required when socialising in situations such as higher education and workplace-oriented situations, where highly discipline-specific and context-specific discursive socialisation occurs (Duff, 2008). Developing a cognitive academic language will open up new possibilities in their lives and transform them, but as demonstrated in earlier studies (Yoshimitsu, 1999, 2000, 2003), this requires a sustained effort with focused strategies and a long-term commitment by the individual. In this process, family, community and educational institutions have been shown to play vital support roles.

In contemporary societies where transnational human movements and technological advancement are becoming intensified, many people live in a dynamic linguistic environment. As Duff (2003, p. 24) rightly states, people in a multilingual society are concurrently negotiating and maintaining membership and identities in many different communities, in their first (L1), second (L2) and even third (L3), or a mixture of these, at any given time, and their degree of affiliation with each community and language may vary, waxing and waning over time. Along with a lifelong search for their own identities in Australia, Japanese language socialisation will become an important and lifelong process for the second-generation Japanese. Drawing on the language socialisation theory outlined by Duff (2003, 2007), the current study explores how the second-generation Japanese, who are undertaking Japanese language subjects at university, are engaged in Japanese language socialisation and what challenges they encounter. Participants of this study include sons and daughters of Japanese parents and also of inter-cultural marriage partners (so as to reflect the diverse backgrounds of this cohort). Some of them were born in Australia, while others migrated to Australia, or have become long-term residents along with their parents, often from a young age.

2 Second-generation Japanese students undertaking Japanese at university

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the second-generation Japanese (hereafter referred to as SGJs) who enrol in advanced-level Japanese language subjects at the Australian university where this study was undertaken. Japanese is the most popular foreign language studied. In 2007, for instance, it was observed that over 30 per cent of an advanced-level Japanese classroom consisted of these students. This emerging situation has raised pedagogical as well as administrative issues. The former concerns what educational approaches best serve these students, and the latter involves how to determine who should be eligible to undertake a Japanese language subject. To date, much of the post-secondary Japanese language education in Australia has targeted non Japanese-background students. The secondary education system in the State of Victoria, for example, differentiates Japanese-background students into L1 and L2 streams, divided according to the student's residence and educational experience in relation to Japanese. However, at the post-secondary level (for example, at the university in this study), a streaming system has not been established. It can be argued that in Australian multilingual settings, the notion of L1 and L2 is increasingly becoming a rather superficial and pointless distinction. As well, there has been a commonly accepted view that bilinguals' use of L1 and L2 is content-specific and that they often use the languages for different purposes and so are not expected to be fluent in all areas (e.g. Myers-Scotton, 2006). Therefore, placing these Japanese background students in an appropriate Japanese course would not be an easy task. I argue that the current situation at the university in question can be seen as an inevitable outcome of complex linguistic situations in contemporary society, where Japanese language learners are becoming increasingly diversified. Fostering the potential of these students, rather than excluding them from mainstream classes, is an urgent task. Tackling the current situation successfully in the one location could provide a significant model to advance Japanese language education in Australia as a whole.

There have been few previous investigations into the Japanese language socialisation or experiences of SGJs who are studying Japanese at the post-secondary level in Australia. Studies of Japanese language education (teaching and learning) in Australia have almost exclusively focused on non Japanese-background students studying Japanese as a foreign language. On the other hand, over the past decade, foreign language researchers in the US have increasingly examined the pedagogical issues of how best to assist bilingual and semi-lingual students from immigrant backgrounds who are in foreign language classrooms (the so-called "heritage language" education). Some of these studies have provided useful directions for the current study. For example, in the mid-90s, Valdés (1995) investigated the teaching of Spanish to bilingual minorities as an academic subject in the US, and noted that (foreign language) professionals were being suddenly overwhelmed by the presence in class of students whom they had not been trained to teach. His study suggested that there might be cases where students speak a language other than English fluently, but still struggle in foreign language classes due to poor literacy skills. Valdés pointed out that there was a pressing demand for teachers who were capable of managing programs appropriate for these students.

Kondo's (1998) study examined the problems in Japanese language education for *Shin Nisei* ("new second-generation Japanese") university students in Hawaii in relation to American language policy. She revealed that within the Japanese education community in Hawaii, the existence of semi-lingual and bilingual *Shin Nisei* students in foreign language classes had hardly been discussed and their language experiences in and out of foreign language classrooms were largely ignored. She recommended that Japanese language teachers and researchers in Hawaii should better educate this important but poorly understood group of semi-lingual and bilingual students, who constitute a key language resource in Japanese language classrooms (Kondo, 1998, p. 60). Another study on the *Shin Nisei* (Kondo, 1999) focused on the problems facing these students in traditional university foreign language classes, and discussed how teachers could better motivate these students to actively participate in learning Japanese. Less than a decade since these investigations were conducted, situations such as the *Shin Nisei* have received far greater attention. Kondo-Brown (2005, pp. 563–564) reports that heritage language education and heritage language acquisition are becoming sub-disciplines within the fields of foreign language education and applied linguistics, and in practice, many US educational institutions, especially at the post-secondary level, are now providing separate programs for heritage language (including Japanese) and foreign language learners as a pedagogically sound strategy.

3   Conceptual framework

This study draws on Duff's (2003, 2007) new perspectives of language socialisation and academic discourse socialisation. It is commonly perceived that "language socialisation" is a theoretical framework that emphasises the centrality of language for newcomers to a sociocultural group (a discourse community) to acquire membership by participating in sociocultural practices and internalising its norms to become an increasingly competent member (e.g. Heath, 1983; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Duff, 2003). The framework assumes that more competent members of the group (community) normally assist the newcomer to go through the process.

Whereas most language socialisation research has historically been situated in homes and schools with relatively young language learners, Duff (2003) observes that a growing number of studies investigate language socialisation well beyond childhood and adolescence into adulthood, and therefore we need to view language socialisation as a "lifelong" and "lifewide" process ("lifewide" referring to a person's concurrent participation in different sociolinguistic communities and activities) (Duff, 2003, p. 20). Through a critical review of the language socialisation concept in the past, and drawing on her own empirical studies, Duff has suggested alternative directions in socialisation research that better reflect the social, linguistic, cultural, political and educational conditions of contemporary society that affect people's participation in new discourse community. In her view (Duff, 2003, pp. 23–25), language socialisation in contemporary societies is often

quite different from the one discussed in a conventional framework, where the primary language socialisation, typically of young language learners, has often been assumed to be a relatively short, linear, monolingual process facilitated by experts such as parents or caretakers, who helpfully accommodate newcomers to their community, group or culture. It is expected that the newcomers will eventually appropriate the experts' skills and knowledge. In sharp contrast to this, Duff argues, the social contexts of learning in contemporary societies tend to be much more complicated, fluid, dynamic, competitive, multilingual, and potentially unwelcoming. Her consideration of new theoretical perspectives of language socialisation research subsequently leads her to call into question a number of assumptions about the nature of academic discourse and about our conceptualisation of linguistic socialisation, which, she claims, has too often been (mis)understood to be highly deterministic, a form of behavioural conditioning that inevitably leads to successful and complete integration within the target community (Duff, 2007, p. 1). For this enquiry, she has drawn on findings from recent language socialisation research in contemporary secondary and postsecondary settings, academic discourse socialisation in L2 (or bilingual) contexts specifically, and has discussed issues that stem from a common lack of understanding of the complexities of academic discourse socialisation.

The implications of Duff's (2003, 2007) studies are that without being constrained by the conventional assumptions, we need to: (1) better understand the actual discursive practices and requirements of various activities and experiences of participants who are being socialised; and (2) consider the possibilities of enhancing those experiences as well as students' potential to benefit from them. The scope of language socialisation research depends on the capacity to see things as they actually are and to examine possible interpretations of them. The present study follows these principles. It deals with a somewhat different socialisation, however, in that the target language/culture which SGJs are being socialised into, has been the L1/C1 of their early childhood. Therefore, they are not socialising into a totally new language/culture (L2), but rather are *re*-socialising into a language and culture that have been familiar to them in family, friendship and community domains, but are now being met in a totally new context. The study deals with what impact this background has on their socialisation into Japanese language classroom communities where the majority of students are non-Japanese engaged in L2 socialisation.

The concept of learning is expressed in many different ways. I take the following positions:

Academic discourse socialisation: Learning means developing the capability to participate in a new discourse community as a result of social interaction and cognitive experience, while also developing one's voice, identity and agency in a new language/culture (Duff, 2007, p. 4).

Wenger's (1998, pp. 3–4) central notion of learning as "community of practice": engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are. It refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to the more encompassing process of being active participants in the practice of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities.

Norton's (2000, pp. 10–11) notion of "investment": language learners have a complex history and multiple desires; the notion presupposes that when language learners speak, they are constantly organising and reorganising a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Therefore, an investment in the language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space.

4   Objectives of the study

Two factors prompted the current study. First, despite the growing number in recent years of SGJs in the Japanese program studied here, little attention has been paid to their Japanese language situation or experience. Second, in order for SGJs' experience at university to make a meaningful contribution to their lifelong Japanese language socialisation process, we need to know more about the quality of this experience. Coming from diverse Japanese language backgrounds, it is assumed that the students will possess a variety of needs, intentions, expectations and perspectives for learning Japanese at university, and that they will experience difficulties in learning the language

that may differ from those of their non-Japanese background classmates. Without empirical studies, members of Australian academic communities (students, teachers, researchers and administrators) can rely on limited observations and assumptions about their situation that may, in fact, not even be so. In order to engage in an inquiry into what educational approaches best serve these students, it is important to place the learners at the centre of inquiry so that their voices can be better heard. The study examines the context of Japanese language socialisation processes and experiences of a group of SGJs from the perspective of language socialisation. A qualitative case study is presented which illustrates how these students participate in the classroom community, and explores some of the issues surrounding their Japanese language socialization in the Australian academic context.

The broad objectives of the study are (1) to better understand SGJ students who participate in the Japanese language classroom community, so as (2) to provide the basis for the development of educational programs and strategies which better suit the needs of these students. More specifically, the study aims to address the following questions:

What Japanese language socialisation opportunities are available to SGJ students and what processes do they follow through the current educational system?

What participation patterns do SGJ students bring to their Japanese classroom communities?

Is there a gap between SGJ students' needs as perceived by others and in reality?

5   Methodology

The research methods used in much language socialisation research involves qualitative – often ethnographic – methods, including participant observation, interview with learners and teachers, analysis of the researcher's fieldnotes and journals and/or logs kept by participants. Some of the most instructive research is longitudinal, using in-depth case studies of learners' language socialisation or academic discourse socialisation processes (Duff, 2003, 2007).

The current study adopted an in-depth case study approach. The data presented here are from a learner questionnaire, three semi-structured interviews with each participant conducted by the researcher, and reports from participants outlining their learning experiences which were provided to the researcher at each interview. In addition, informal interviews were conducted with three non-Japanese students who had recent experience studying with SGJ students in their Japanese classrooms. A Japanese language instructor, who worked outside of the university was also interviewed about her experience in teaching SGJs. These supplementary interviews helped to broaden the researcher's perspectives on the Japanese language socialisation of SGJs.

In this article the experiences of three SGJ students, Mai, Aki and Ken (pseudonyms), who were at the time enrolled in an advanced-level Japanese course at one Australian university, are drawn on to illustrate some issues involved in their Japanese language socialisation. The three came from different backgrounds, as their profiles below show.

(i) *Mai*, a female student, was born in the United States, the only child of a Japanese mother and an Australian father, and migrated to Australia with her parents at the age of nine. She had completed Grade 3 of primary education in the US and undertook the rest of her primary and secondary education in Australian schools. She had had no experience of a Japanese school, but she had studied Japanese through the *Kumon* educational method from pre-school age until entering the Melbourne International School of Japanese, a supplementary Japanese school run on Saturdays by a committee of parents, where Japanese language and mathematics are taught in Japanese. It offers classes from Preparatory to High School level (enrolment as of April 2008 was 431.) There she learned Japanese from primary Grade Four level to Year Nine. She then undertook the Japanese as a second language course in the International Baccalaureate Program during Years 11 and 12, in order to fulfil university entrance requirements. At the time of the study, Mai was enrolled in a second-year advanced-level Japanese university subject (an upper level in a total of 12 levels offered in the Japanese program at the university). Mai still lives with her parents and she

normally communicates with her mother in Japanese, using English at home exclusively to talk to her father.

(ii) *Aki*, a male student, was born in Australia of Japanese parents, and completed primary and secondary education entirely at Australian schools, with no schooling experience in Japan. He had studied Japanese through the *Kumon* method from pre-school until he commenced at the Melbourne International School of Japanese on Saturday in Grade One. He continued there until Year 11, when he undertook Japanese as a second language for the Victorian Certificate of Education, a university entrance qualification which marks completion of secondary education in the state of Victoria, Australia. At the time of the study Aki was enrolled in a third-year advanced-level university Japanese subject. Aki lives with his parents and an older sister, and communicates exclusively in Japanese with his parents, while using a mixture of Japanese and English with his sister, for whom English has become dominant in recent years.

(iii) *Ken*, a male student, was born in Japan of a Japanese mother and an Australian father, and migrated to Australia with his parents at the age of seven. He had had primary education up to Grade Two in Japan and completed his remaining primary and all his secondary education at Australian schools. Ken had studied English through the *Kumon* method in Japan, but in Australia, he did not study Japanese either at school or in the Saturday program, until his last year of secondary school when he took Japanese and sat the subject Japanese as a second language for his Victorian Certificate of Education. At the time of this study, Ken was enrolled in a third-year advanced-level Japanese university subject. Ken lives with his parents and a younger brother, and communicates mostly in Japanese with his mother, exclusively in English with his father, and mostly in English with his brother.

6 Findings

6.1 *SGJ Japanese language socialisation opportunities and processes*

Mai and Aki were involved in Japanese language socialisation in academic contexts for a number of years before they came to the university. Both had commenced studying Japanese with the *Kumon* method from pre-school age and had enrolled in the Saturday Supplementary Japanese School from six and ten years, respectively, after which they had taken Japanese as a subject in their final school year. While Mai had not started her formal Japanese study in Australia until Grade Four, Aki was continuously engaged in Japanese discourse socialisation from a very young age. Initially, this was through a pre-school *Kumon* program in which he started to learn how to read and write Japanese letters, and then his parents enrolled him in Grade One at the Saturday Supplementary Japanese School, where he was taught Japanese language (called *kokugo*, meaning national language) and mathematics entirely in Japanese, using Japanese textbooks and following the Japanese school curriculum. Although initiated by his parents, Aki had a positive attitude toward Japanese discourse socialisation, and continuously maintained the wish to develop a high level of Japanese literacy. Whilst socialising in the mainstream Australian academic community in his primary and secondary schools, Aki also studied Japanese in the Saturday program for 11 years. When he needed to undertake VCE Japanese for his secondary certificate and university entry, he left the monolingual Japanese education mode of the Saturday program and began a new mode of Japanese learning at his Australian secondary school. He found VCE Japanese very different from his previous language socialisation experiences, in terms of its content, level, membership (the majority were non-Japanese students), and language of instruction which was in both Japanese and English. While the academic context and linguistic norms in the new VCE classroom community were obviously not very challenging for him, understanding the task of learning Japanese from the L2 learners' perspective and learning the language in a bilingual setting, interested him. Aki's main concern in participating in such situations was "how to maintain a balance of using Japanese and English in learning Japanese".

In contrast to Aki, Mai was initially hesitant at being involved in Japanese discourse socialisation, an initiative which was largely her mother's. However over the years she attended formal Japanese study, her attitude changed, as she explains in the following excerpt from her interview:

> I was reluctant to go to Japanese School on Saturdays in my primary school age. But my mother always encouraged me, saying that I should continue Japanese schooling at least until completing the Junior-high level (Year 9). Somehow I felt being obliged to go to Saturday School for my mother. But I felt like sacrificing other things for Japanese then. Actually I had to give up my ballet lessons on Saturdays. …… But, since I discontinued Saturday School after Year 9, I had gradually come to realise that I really should improve my Japanese. In a way, I started to miss Japanese. Now I'm very eager to learn it so that I can study at a Japanese university, then eventually live in Japan using my engineering expertise. It also means I can become independent and free from my mother too…. (Mai)

Ken followed a different Japanese language socialisation process to Mai and Aki in Australia. Since he came to Australia at the age of seven after completing Grade Two in Japan, his Japanese language socialisation has been situated mainly at home and within his family's private networks. He did not study at the Saturday Japanese School because English acquisition had always been a priority for him and his family. After a long absence from Japanese discourse socialisation, Ken decided to take up VCE Japanese with the aim of developing the language through university study for his future career in the area of interpreting and translation.

Despite their different Japanese backgrounds, Aki, Mai and Ken all aimed to undertake the VCE Japanese subject for second language learners. They found the course quite manageable and were able to achieve either a perfect score or a near-perfect score in the examination process. While their high score helped them to gain a university place, when reflecting on their Japanese discourse socialisation experiences in those final years, both Mai and Aki were unable to say they had gained much academically. After their years at the Saturday Japanese school, they said it had rather felt like "having a break from serious learning". Even after a long absence from formal learning of Japanese, Ken had found the content of the VCE Japanese was not challenging, except having to learn the required number of *kanji* (Chinese characters).

Upon entering the university, Mai and Ken had taken a Japanese placement test and all three had had an interview with a member of the teaching staff. With their Japanese background and high VCE Japanese scores, they were all recommended to take an advanced-intermediate level Japanese subject, which is the highest starting level for those aiming to complete Japanese as a major, or hope eventually to take the highest level subject offered in the program. In their first Japanese subject at university, they had all comfortably achieved the required learning goals and had obtained an excellent result. Thus, like doing the VCE course, socialising into the university first-year Japanese course had not been very challenging for them. While remaining at the recommended study level, Aki had shifted his learning focus more towards Japanese language teaching, observing his own teachers and the performance of his peers. He said:

> I was tutoring a secondary student in Japanese then, so it helped me to gain some idea of how to organise lessons and how to explain grammar points or expressions by using both English and Japanese. I gained from observing non-Japanese peers' learning processes too. For instance, I observed how they mixed up particles or tenses and thought about why. Some haven't mastered the basic grammar yet despite being in the advanced-intermediate class, and they seemed to just use the particles they know randomly in the sentences.…. (Aki)

Mai had been advised to move to an upper level Japanese earlier in the semester by her class teacher, but due to timetable inflexibility, she remained in the originally recommended level and spent most of four hour spent in class each week revising and refining her accumulated knowledge of Japanese. Mai said, "It was OK for me because I had more time to concentrate on my engineering units which were becoming quite demanding then." Similarly, Ken noted that he had been placed in an inappropriate level Japanese class, and commented, "If I knew that I would be placed in a level I'd started at the university, I would have chosen a higher level in the VCE Japanese [i.e.

L1 stream rather than L2] with a little more effort so that I would be placed in a higher level class". Thus the students' progression from secondary to tertiary programs did not follow a linear sequence of difficulty and hence did not allow for the socialisation processes in which the learner is engaged in developing his/her capability to participate in a new community. In theory, academic discourse socialisation predicts that learners will be fully accommodated and apprenticed within their new communities and will also have ample access to the target discourse practices they are expected to emulate (Duff, 2007, p. 5). In reality, for SGJs new learning was minimal and as a result they felt less stimulated to engage in the process, despite having an "investment" in the language.

In summary, the Japanese language socialisation trajectories of Aki, Mai and Ken demonstrate that SGJ students have very few chances to socialise into Japanese classroom communities in meaningful ways in the current educational system. This is because (1) the Japanese language socialisation which these students experienced in the Australian academic context was not academically challenging and hence contributed little to developing their capability to participate in the imagined community of their future language socialisation trajectories; (2) the language socialisation processes which they followed were not "smooth, linearly sequenced, facilitated and accommodated", and so not supportive of the kind of growth Duff (2007) writes about; indeed disjunction in the educational system had hindered smooth transition from secondary to tertiary Japanese language socialisation, and before that, from Saturday Japanese School to VCE Japanese; and, (3) when the students found their language socialisation situation less challenging than hoped for, two changed their participation patterns (e.g. Aki turning instead to observation of the instructor's teaching method and his peers' learning behaviours; Mai, revising on her own the Japanese she had learned previously), and the third regretted his earlier choice of study path. None of them negotiated to be able to actively contribute to the communities they found themselves in.

6.2 *What participation patterns do SGJ students bring to the Japanese classroom communities?*

Duff (2007) challenges the commonly assumed perception in L2 academic discourse socialisation field that "native speakers" of a language are somehow inherently superior in their knowledge of academic discourse and their ability to engage effectively in sophisticated language/literacy practices, hence she rejects the proposition that "native speakers" hold an "expert" position in relation to the "non-native speakers" who are "novices". As mentioned earlier, the notion of L1 and L2 does not apply to SGJ students who are being re-socialised into a language/culture that has been familiar to them at an earlier stage. The participation patterns they brought to the Japanese language classroom communities they found themselves a part of, where a majority of students were non-Japanese engaged in L2 socialisation, were a focus of interest in this study. A rich example occurred on one occasion when Aki and Ken were each instructed to pair up with another student and prepare a class presentation on a chosen topic. Aki paired up with a Malaysian female student and Ken with an Australian male student. The following excerpt reveals how Aki engaged in the process:

> I tried not to influence Y (his female partner) so much with my ideas. Rather I consciously avoided guiding her or taking initiatives because it was a joint project. Since I was more familiar with computer programs, I assisted her in technical matters when preparing slides. ….. We talked in English when discussing our presentation in class and also out of class. ….. Y prepared her talk in English, and then translated it into Japanese. It seemed like a very exhausting process to me. But I neither assisted her in translating nor made any changes or corrections of her Japanese in the draft. Y had a Japanese boyfriend (an international student), so I thought she could get help from him if she needed it. Actually, Y had a lot of help from him. (Aki)

An interesting point about the way Aki positions himself in the situation is that despite his awareness of being an "expert" (i.e. having superior knowledge of the practices in the language),

he neither offered this expert knowledge to improve his partner's Japanese draft, nor used it as a reason to exercise leadership in guiding her, beyond some technical support in preparing slides. Rather, he left these tasks to her Japanese boyfriend (a non-SGJ) who did not belong to the classroom community. In this way, Aki seems to avoid becoming a cooperative socialising agent for his non-Japanese partner in accomplishing the task.

In Ken's case, an Australian male student approached him to pair up and it was the Australian student who took the initiative in deciding on their topic and structuring the content. In interview, the partner told the researcher he had been surprised to find Ken reserved and rather negative in working on the joint presentation. It was always he, the partner, who had to chase up Ken to arrange a time to work on their presentation outside the classroom, and check on Ken's progress as the presentation day approached. Their discussions were also conducted in English. Ken commented about himself saying, "I cannot think fast enough to prepare my responses or opinions in Japanese when debating with (non-Japanese) classmates. I am not a talkative person anyway, both in Japanese and English". In saying this, Ken implicitly acknowledged that he was not in an "expert'' position in the Japanese classroom community, although his partner might have assumed so because of his background. Ken's behaviour demonstrates that he was not a good socialising agent in this context.

Both pairs of students used English predominantly in their academic discussions and so the language interaction which took place in this Japanese classroom was bilingual. Although there are no data on their direct interactions available to confirm this, it can be assumed that multiple norms were in play (Japanese, English, Malaysian, as well as possible "hybrid norms" (Duff, 2003)), and that negotiation of participation occurred at various levels in their language choice: Japanese or English, "expert" or "non-expert" positioning, speaking or being silent.

Mai viewed herself as not being an active participant in the Japanese classroom, and she was also concerned about how her classmates would judge her capabilities as a Japanese student. She became very self-conscious when speaking out in class, as the following excerpt shows:

> Some non-Japanese students in my class perform very well indeed, and this makes me a little hesitant to respond to the teacher's questions and also to join in the class discussions. I always become very nervous when speaking Japanese in front of classmates because I'm very worried not speaking properly or making some errors. I feel a stronger Japanese identity amongst my classmates and I feel ashamed of myself if I'm not performing appropriately. (Mai)

However, she feels differently about interactions with her teacher and her mother:

> I'm not worried so much about making mistakes when talking to my (Japanese) teacher (on a one to one basis), or my mother. Teachers are there to guide me in learning. I used to be really annoyed when my mother picked up my errors or inappropriate language use, but not anymore. I appreciate it now because I realise there are not many people who point out my mistakes that I'm not aware of, so long as the conversation flows. (Mai)

The above statements indicate that Mai tends to be a quiet even silent participant in the Japanese classroom, wanting to avoid possible embarrassment, but thus probably also missing the opportunity to be corrected and so to improve. The level of Japanese interaction Mai seeks is very high and while most of her (non-Japanese) peers are not competent to play the "expert" role, for fear of losing face she actually avoids interacting with those who could. It is not clear whether her teacher, whom she would permit to correct her, is able to be as alert and sensitive as her mother to her need to be picked up for using wrong or inappropriate language.

One non-Japanese Australian student commented on the lack of overt classroom participation by a fellow Japanese student:

> X (a SGJ student) always comes to class, but he doesn't seem to get involved in the things that are going on around him in the class. He never speaks out unless he is asked. I think he is behaving like an observer in the class … he is a watcher.

Norton (2000, p. 11) argues that "an investment in the language is also an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space." It is interesting to consider how SGJ students constructed their identities through their unique language socialisation situations in the Japanese classroom community. Rather than exhibiting their potential to be an "expert" (a good socialising agent), these students behave in quite the opposite way, as if they were peripheral members of the community. There may be a range of reasons why they remain as neutral, passive, quiet or silent participants in the Japanese classroom community as they do, but their behaviour can be interpreted as strategies or habits which have arisen through their discourse socialisation experiences. One factor that may be relevant in this is that SGJs seem to have fallen into an empty space in the Australian academic context, somewhere between the seriously attended to target learners ("novices"), and the explicitly acknowledged native speakers ("experts").

To summarise, in the Japanese language classroom community at the university in this study, in which non-Japanese and SGJ students participate, a productive relationship in co-constructing the target Japanese language community was not necessarily expected. This is because (1) some SGJ students are not always good socialising agents, despite their potential "expert" Japanese language backgrounds; (2) some tend to refrain from active classroom participation and prefer to be silent in the class, so that they can avoid the possible embarrassment from not performing at the level as [Mai assumes] is expected of a Japanese-background student by their peers; (3) bilingual language socialisation situations in the Japanese classroom can be dominated by English despite of the presence of SGJs; and (4) their previous and current Japanese language socialisation experiences in the Australian academic context may lead them to behave as peripheral members of the Japanese classroom community.

6.3   The perception and the reality of SGJ students' needs

In the previous section, it was posited that SGJ students may never have been seriously considered to be important target learners, nor explicitly acknowledged as native speakers. A further factor in their socialisation into the Japanese classroom is the common but erroneous assumption that they are all highly competent in all aspects of the language and only enrolled in the subject to get an easy credit.

As was the case of the study of semi-lingual and bilingual *Shin Nisei* ("new second generation Japanese") in foreign language classrooms in Hawaii (Kondo, 1998), language experiences of SGJ students inside and outside Japanese language classrooms have not been examined comprehensively. It is little wonder then that their problems, difficulties and needs in Japanese language socialisation in the Australian academic context have been largely ignored. One important factor that is known is that, as Duff (2007, p. 6) points out, native speakers vary considerably in their discursive communicative competence and this influences their ability to write well, to present well, or to relate to others well. This claim can be extended to the three SGJ students in this study, who though treated within the university very much as the same, have in fact traversed very diverse Japanese language socialisation trajectories in the past and have quite different family backgrounds. Both Ken and Aki were seeking future careers in the interpreting and translation field, while Mai was intending to enter the field of engineering in Japan. There are many skills to be developed and constantly improved in preparing for the discursive norms they are likely to encounter in their future language socialisation trajectories and "imagined communities". Learning is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but also a process of becoming a certain person (or, conversely, of avoiding becoming a certain person), therefore, learning is also an experience of identity (Wenger, 1998, p. 215). From the learner's perspectives, re-socialising into Japanese language classroom communities is a legitimate phase of their "lifelong" and "lifewide (Duff, 2003)" language socialisation process, one undertaken in order to develop and extend their potential.

The practice of SGJ students' undertaking advanced-level Japanese language subjects at the university is often perceived rather negatively by others involved, arising from simplistic assumptions about their linguistic proficiency. Clyne, Fernandez, Chen and Summo-O'Connelle's (1997, p. 137) study, for example, shows that the "background learners" taking languages other than English at secondary schools are seen by school community members as having an unfair advantage and are criticised for not needing to do any work in the subject, whilst others ("the real learners") have to work hard for little reward". A similar view exists toward SGJ students' taking Japanese at university. Assuming, mistakenly, that they are fluent in the language, some criticise them as simply seeking easy marks. Yet this was not the case for the participants in this study. Far from being "fluent" in Japanese, the students have many weak areas which significantly affect their language socialisation in certain contexts.

To illustrate the above claim, Ken singled out his poor knowledge of *kanji* (Chinese characters) as one main area of deficiency, which has been seriously affecting his overall Japanese literacy as his learning level advances. Whereas Aki and Mai had built up their *kanji* proficiency through the Japanese curriculum offered at the Saturday Japanese program, Ken, who had not studied there, had never had the opportunity to develop a systematic method of learning *kanji*. His Japanese schooling experience was only to Grade Two in Japan. Furthermore, because he was a Japanese background student with a high score in VCE Japanese, he was able to skip basic level Japanese subjects at the university, and thus missed another opportunity to acquire *kanji* learning skills. Considering his poor performance in the area, Ken commented:

> I know I have to do better with my *kanji* quizzes. I often feel very depressed for not performing as well as my non-Japanese classmates. I don't know any practical way to learn *kanji*, so I try to memorise them by writing them many times. But the number of *kanji* I have to learn each week amounted to more than I could possibly cope with. Because I've got enough to do in other subjects, I don't have time for learning *kanji*. (Ken)

Aki expressed concern about his lack of confidence in appropriately controlling his use of the different levels of speech levels between Japanese honorific expressions, casual speech and gender-specific expressions. This difficulty arose because he has had little opportunity to practise these in real situations, despite the abundance of information about such matters available on the Internet. To illustrate, he reported his experience in a "visitor session", a classroom activity in which a number of Japanese people residing in Melbourne are invited to the classroom to mix with the students and discuss a given topic in Japanese. On a self-evaluation sheet completed after the session, Aki evaluated himself as an "inactive" participant in the activity. He said what had hindered him from conversing actively with the visitors was mainly his concern over being rude to the visitors in case he used an inappropriate level of Japanese. It was also because he felt that he should not take away opportunities for other members (non-Japanese) in the group to speak with the visitors. Despite the opportunity to discuss the topic with Japanese visitors in Japanese being a rare and potentially valuable experience, Aki had been reluctant to take advantage of it. He became very concerned about his command of Japanese when interacting with Japanese native speakers of his age and it is clear he would need practice in more such situations if he were to build his confidence. As noted previously, Mai relies heavily on her mother's input and corrections to facilitate her Japanese language socialisation. She also spent a lot of time working to improve her Japanese during her vacations, but was then overwhelmed by the intense effort it took her to read a relatively small number of passages from Japanese newspapers by herself, using an online dictionary.

To summarise, the data indicate that contrary to common, often unexamined preconceptions about their high competence and base goals for studying their background language, the participants in this study are serious learners, who are (1) trying to develop their language and improve on their weak areas; and (2) seriously studying Japanese as an "investment" towards their future trajectories in their "imagined communities". There thus exists a gap between their needs as often perceived by others, teachers and fellow students, and their real needs.

7 Conclusion

Drawing upon the language socialisation and academic discourse socialisation theory discussed by Duff (2003, 2007), this article aimed to explore Japanese language socialisation situations of SGJs in the Australian academic context. The study adopted an in-depth case study approach and focused on the experiences of three SGJ students at an Australian university. It primarily dealt with the Japanese language socialisation opportunities that were available to these students and discussed the consequences and applicability of earlier and present socialisation for their future socialisation. The study demonstrates that their cumulative socialisation experiences affect subsequent socialisation patterns in other academic settings, sometimes negatively, and that these would not necessarily provide a solid foundation for their continuing socialisation (or future purposes). Within the specific context, the article examines the ways in which these students participate in the Japanese classroom communities, and reveals conceptions of them as experts is often wrong. The findings suggest that there is a strong need to better understand the complex socialising processes and outcomes of SGJ students.

Given the diversity within SGJ students in terms of their Japanese language learning backgrounds and their language environment at home, the three cases presented in this study cannot necessarily be said to be typical of SGJ students' language socialisation in the Australian academic context. The motivation and intensity of learning Japanese may differ among SGJ students, and this would also affect their learning behaviour of the language (e.g. Kondo, 1999). In contrast to the rather quiet and introverted participants observed in this study, others may be more outgoing and these would be expected to participate differently in the Japanese language classrooms. However it is argued that the observations made in this study still have important implications for teaching SGJ students and helping them to relate to other classroom members in ways which lead to an effective classroom community for the target language being constructed for both. As reported in this study, the three students studied experienced awkward situations in their Japanese classrooms (e.g. Aki speaking with Japanese native speakers at a visitor session; Mai speaking Japanese in front of non-Japanese classmates; Ken performing badly in *kanji* quizzes compared to most of the non-Japanese students). A very simple but practical strategy to address these situations may be to encourage SGJ students to flag their positioning at the initial stage of their socialisation process into a Japanese classroom community. Flagging can be performed through statements such as "My mother is Japanese but I grew up here and my knowledge of Japanese is imperfect. I'm happy for people to point out when I need corrections," or "My parents are Japanese but we moved here when I was very young and I was schooled here. I may know things you don't, but I also don't know many things that you've learnt in Japanese classes. I have a lot of learning to do in the Japanese course." Without knowing their actual language situations, their non-Japanese classmates may make wrong assumptions about them, and this may prevent SGJ students from performing more freely in the Japanese classrooms.

The immediate implication of the study is that we need to increase opportunities and support for SGJ students to engage in meaningful Japanese language socialisation in Japanese classrooms. A better understanding of their problems, difficulties and needs will be vital in considering how to best "scaffold" their learning of Japanese for both present and future purposes. The following measures can be suggested:

1. Observe SGJ students' actual classroom participation closely in order to grasp the nature of their interactions with their classmates and teachers;
2. Based on classroom observations, conduct interviews with these students individually to allow them to reflect on their classroom participation;
3. Organise focus groups (consisting of SGJ students only, as well as a mixture of students) where they can share their experiences in Japanese language classrooms. This would allow them to more freely raise and discuss issues which affect them in classroom situations as well as providing teachers with valuable suggestions to improve classes; and
4. Conduct a survey of SJG students' needs in relation to their future goals.

It is expected that the findings from the above measures would eventually lead to a review of teaching materials and teaching methods currently employed, which are primarily focused on the non-Japanese learners of the language. The recent steady increase in SGJ students who wish to take advanced-level Japanese language subjects may be inevitable in multicultural and multilingual academic settings, and over the long run, it will also be desirable. Their active participation in Japanese language classroom communities are important for non-Japanese students as well as for teachers in constructing a new, broader identity of "Japanese language learners" for present and future Japanese language education.

This study placed the learners as the focus of investigation and primarily examined their perspectives on their own language socialisation experiences, which provides a key to understanding their classroom behaviour to some extent. Future research should also aim to include participant observation in and out of the classroom and to take into consideration the perspectives of their teachers and their peers. The findings in this article are necessarily preliminary, however, I believe they are crucial in providing a basis for the development of educational programs and strategies which will match the needs of SGJ students.

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