

Bridging the Gap From Use to Grammar: Semiotic-Based Instructional Material for Determiners in French as a Foreign Language at the University Level in Japan

Loïc Renoud

(renoud@okayama-u.ac.jp)

Okayama University, Japan

Abstract

This article introduces instructional material for a four-week study of the partitive article, the indefinite article, the definite article, and the demonstrative determiner in French as a Foreign Language at the university level in Japan, as well as its study design. First, the grammatical presentations of these determiners are analyzed in four widely distributed textbooks. It is shown that utterances are presented out of context and that translation favors the search for morphosyntactic rather than functional equivalence. Second, the instructional material and its study design are introduced. The phases of materialization and verbalization are borrowed from Concept-Based Language Instruction. The conception of the material is based on the triadic relationship of the sign in Peircean semiotics, the partial object corresponding to the semantic properties of the determiner, and the sign to the determiner. In the study, participants are asked to verbalize their understanding of the material and then to explain the use of the determiner in the context of a short video excerpt of a conversation where the determiner is used. They are expected to build up links between the generalization of the grammatical explanations and the use of the determiner in the context of the excerpt.

Share and cite

Renoud, L. (2025). Bridging the gap from use to grammar: Semiotic-based instructional material for determiners in French as a foreign language at the university level in Japan. *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching [e-FLT]*, 22(1), 62–80. <https://doi.org/10.56040/lore2214>

1 Introduction

This article introduces instructional material for learning the basic determiners in French as a Foreign Language at the university level in Japan and presents the design of its study. From a pedagogical standpoint, it is the near-obligatory use of a determiner in the French noun phrase that represents an issue for learners¹, even more so when their first language has none (Zribi-Hertz & Levet, 2017), which is the case with the Japanese language. The determiners on which this study will focus are the partitive article, the indefinite article, the definite article, and the demonstrative determiner. In the French language, all determiners come before the noun and have grammatical gender: masculine and feminine forms in the singular, respectively for the four determiners *du / de la, un / une*,

¹ Bare noun phrases are limited to vocative, predicative nouns, and other specific contexts. Owing to the syntactical difference between English and French, attention should be drawn at early stages of instruction to the structure of the predicative noun phrase which does not require an indefinite article in French (“*je suis étudiant*” “I’m a student”), but learners are made aware of this structure since it is learned and used early on.

le / la, ce / cette, and a plural form irrespective of grammatical gender *des, les, ces*, where *des* serves the function of the plural indefinite article (see Table 1).

Table 1. Morphology of the four determiners

number	gender	partitive article	indefinite article	definite article	demonstrative determiner
singular	masculine	<i>du</i>	<i>un</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>ce</i>
	feminine	<i>de la</i>	<i>une</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>cette</i>
plural		<i>des</i>	—	<i>les</i>	<i>ces</i>

The general approach to teaching these determiners – or every other grammatical feature – in the university classroom in Japan is a legacy of the past. The history of French instruction in Japanese higher education evolved from its initial literary orientation in the ‘60s and ‘70s toward the actual spoken use of the targeted language first under the successive influence of audiovisual methods in France and then, in the ‘80s, of the Communicative approach (Nakamura, 2011). Later, when the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* was translated into Japanese in 2002, the action-oriented approach advocated in this framework, the normative influence of level descriptors, and a general conception of learning oriented towards learner autonomy were gradually introduced (Chevalier, 2011). However, Chevalier (2011) also observes that in shared representations of what learning should be, memorization, repetition, and formal mastery of the language remain more valued than creativity and production. Today, grammatical instruction remains a key expectation of institutions, teachers, and students, and continues to receive significant instructional time. In universities, the weekly schedule of French instruction at the initial level (1st year) usually includes one grammar course taught by a Japanese teacher and a conversation course taught by a native speaker. In the grammar course (45 hours over a year), the traditional approach in the form of the grammar-translation method—or its Japanese equivalent – is still in effect (Chevalier, 2008, 2011), involving identical or near-identical default grammatical descriptions found in every textbook, that Delbarre (2013), after Beacco (2010), calls “ordinary grammar”. Delbarre (2023) recently reviewed grammatical presentations for the indefinite, definite, and partitive articles in about fifty textbooks in Japan. It was shown that pedagogical adaptation is essentially based on terminology borrowed from French as a first language and, invariably, on translation. The same author also observes that few textbooks provide a synthesis where determiners would be presented in the system they constitute (Delbarre, 2023).

The summary above highlights both an attachment to the formal teaching of grammar and the relative ineffectiveness of a communicative approach to teaching determiners. In this context, how can we reconcile in the limited time allocated to actual practice the need to teach the communicative value of determiners—aligned with a communicative approach to foreign language teaching—with the continued emphasis on metalinguistic knowledge? The perspective chosen is to design a material that visually displays how the meaning that determiners acquire in use is iconically represented in the form of the noun phrase. The visual representation associated with the determiner is supposed to support the understanding of its value in use, defined – see below – in terms of orientation towards the thing, notion, or substance evoked by the noun. This pedagogical resource, arguably unusual for learners, is, however, accompanied by textual indications about each determiner’s discursive function which overlap broadly with those in the grammar textbooks.

As a theoretical framework for the design of this material, the determiners will be envisaged from the perspective of Peircean semiotics. This perspective focuses on the mediation that a sign (in this case the noun phrase in an utterance) achieves between an object (how is the notion or thing shown and its identifiability assessed within the idea or scene the speaker wishes to express) and an intended interpretant (the orientation towards this notion or thing the speaker expects this sign to trigger). The justification of this theoretical choice is that the triadic relation of the sign corresponds

to the common representation of what an utterance in a verbal exchange is (Bergman, 2009): Someone thinking about something says something to someone with a view to an affective and cognitive effect on this person. The theoretical framework chosen for designing the experiment will draw on Galperin’s approach, where concepts represented in instructional materials are to be internalized (Haenen, 2001; Arieviditch & Haenen, 2005).

Before turning to the pedagogical material and its study, excerpts from the pedagogical presentations in four different first-year grammar textbooks edited and widely used in Japan will be analyzed. This analysis complements Delbarre’s (2023) review by critically examining the implications of the overreliance on written language and translation.

2 How are determiners introduced in grammar textbooks at the university level in Japan?

2.1 Data

The textbooks for the analysis below are reprints, indicating they are widely used, and likely representative of the materials available on the Japanese market. Indeed, the content of textbooks edited in Japan is highly similar, an observation already made over twenty years ago (Mouton, 2023). Table 2 below provides their bibliographic reference along with the codes assigned to each.

Table 2. The four textbooks

T1	Saitō, S. (2010). <i>Le français</i> . Tokyo : Hakusuisha.
T2	Ono, Y. & Muramatsu, M.-E. (2018). <i>Ma grammaire</i> . Tokyo : Hakusuisha.
T3	Imoto, H. <i>et al.</i> (2023). <i>Nouvelle grammaire française</i> . Tokyo : Asahi
T4	Kurakata, H. (2021). <i>Nouvelle grammaire systématique du français</i> . Tokyo : Sobi-Shuppansha.

In the translated excerpts from the textbooks below, the following conventions are applied: Words originally in French or English are in italics; French determiners are set in bold for readability; and words left in the original language appear between brackets. For transliteration, the revised Hepburn romanization system is used.

2.2 Analysis

2.2.1 The teaching approach

As previously mentioned, the textbooks analyzed here are intended for the weekly first-year grammar course, usually taught by a Japanese teacher alongside a conversation course, usually taught by a native teacher. The approach to teaching language in the grammar course meets the definition of the grammar-translation method, characterized by “brief presentations of grammar points and massive translation practice”, where the translation is “considered a necessary preliminary for the study of literary works” (Stern, 1991: 453-454). More specifically in the case of Japan, Chevalier (2011) believes that the influence of the translational-reading approach (*yakodoku* in Japanese) is still felt in the French as a (second) Foreign Language course. Originally used for reading Chinese texts, this approach essentially relies on two successive steps: word-for-word translation and subsequent syntactic reorganization (Hino, 1988). As Gorsuch (1998) observes, the result is that the text is ultimately understood in Japanese.

Translations remain nearly systematic in the pedagogical presentations found in French grammar textbooks published in Japan. As a result, the explanation provided for each grammatical item applies in fact to the translation itself, which results in meaning being accessed through the first language. For instance, in T1, the indefinite article

[p]recedes a noun that expresses something that can be counted individually: in the singular “one...[hitotsu no...]”, in the plural “several...”

un crayon: one pencil

des arbres: (several) trees

une étoile: one [hitotsu no] star

des maisons: (several) houses

futeikanshi koko no kazu o kazoeru koto ga dekiru mono o arawasu meishi no mae ni tsukete, tansū de wa “hitotsu no...” fukusū de wa “ikutsu ka no...”

un crayon: ichi hon no enpitsu

des arbres: nan hon ka no kigi

une étoile: hitotsu no hoshi

des maisons: nan ken ka no ieie (p. 10)

The example “*une étoile*: hitotsu no hoshi” repeats the same translation suggested in the metalinguistic description above, “hitotsu no...” (“one...”). Another example, similar in T1, T2, and T3, concerns the final particles “-ci” and “-là” attached to the noun for the proximal/distal distinction. In T2, the distinction is repeated in the translation with the proximal and medial pronominal adjectives “*kono*” and “*sono*” (although the explanation translates “-là” with the distal adjective “*ano*”):

To distinguish between something near (this, these) and something far away (that, those), -ci and -là are added after the noun.

<i>J'aime</i>	<i>cette voiture-ci mais je n'aime pas</i>	<i>cette voiture-là.</i>
	this car	that car

chikaku no mono (kono, korera no) to tōku no mono (ano, arerano) o kubetsu suru ni wa meishi no ushiro ni - ci, -là o tsukeru.

<i>J'aime</i>	<i>cette voiture-ci mais je n'aime pas</i>	<i>cette voiture-là.</i>
	kono kuruma	sono kuruma (p. 24)

The nature of the learning expected here seems to involve metalinguistic reflection on the Japanese language itself, from the explanation to the translation, and the resulting interpretation would stand as the meaning of the noun phrase in the foreign language which was bypassed in the process. As a hypothesis, this observation can be generalized to the whole data, and possibly to the grammar course itself. Indeed, this course lectures about the foreign language and not its actual use. Chevalier (2008) addresses the pervasive socio-psychological reasons behind this apparent contradiction, which relate as much to school culture as to issues of identity.

In a similar vein, another characteristic is the authors' choice to remove any enunciative anchoring. For the nominal sentences in the above excerpts, for example, no information is provided (nor likely expected) regarding the circumstances of speech, starting with the speakers' identity. The rationale behind this choice, it can be argued, is that examples divorced from their enunciative context allow the foreign language to be maintained as an external, non-embodied object, thereby neutralizing the intercultural dimension of learning. This choice would converge with the reservations expressed by Nakamura (2019) on the Communicative Approach in the Japanese context (see also Sagaz (2011), and calls into question the need to require Japanese students to communicate at all costs).

In short, actual language use was never the objective of the grammar course. Grammatical items are, more often than not, presented outside any context of real use. On the contrary, it is assumed in

grammatical presentations that translation is a learning objective, as learners’ attention is specifically drawn to the equivalents in the first language. The author of T4 explicitly adopts this stance, providing specific indications for appropriate translation: “it can be expressed as...”, “it has the meaning of...” “it corresponds to...” followed by expressions in Japanese. This is not to question the legitimacy of translation as a learning objective. However, it can be argued that the pedagogical presentations in these four textbooks miss out on addressing the process by which one arrives at these translations.

2.2.2 Semantic properties of the determiners in the textbooks

Table 3 below provides an overview of the teaching contents in the textbooks, showing the order in which the determiners are introduced and the respective semantic properties emphasized by the authors: the “uncountable”/“countable” distinction (*du* vs. *un*, *le*), the non-identification of the referent/its identification (respectively for *du*, *un* vs. *le*, *ce*), shorten with “discourse” in the table, and the “specific”/“generic” distinction for the specific/generic interpretation of the definite article.

Table 3. Order of presentation and corresponding semantic properties of determiners in the textbooks

T1	T2	T3	T4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>du</i> vs. <i>un</i> (uncountable/countable)• <i>le</i> (discourse, generic)• <i>ce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>un</i> (discourse, countable)• <i>du</i> (discourse, uncountable)• <i>le</i> (discourse, generic)• <i>ce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>un</i>, <i>du</i> vs. <i>le</i> (discourse, generic)• <i>du</i> (uncountable)• <i>ce</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>le</i> vs. <i>un</i>, <i>du</i> (discourse)• <i>le</i> (specific/generic)• <i>ce</i>

These are the semantic distinctions usually found in conventional grammar handbooks (see, for example, Grevisse & Goosse, 2008; Riegel *et al.*, 1994), and, as Delbarre (2014) observes, also adapted in Japanese grammar textbooks. While in T2 information is scarce, probably supplemented in class by the teacher, T3 and T4 seek to provide a consistent rationale for the use of the articles. In T4, the referent’s identifiability arises from its specificity, while in T3, the generic interpretation of the definite is associated with the referent’s identifiability (i.e. its existence and uniqueness, see Riegel *et al.*, (1994: 147) by the interlocutor. In T3, the following pertains to the indefinite and partitive articles:

- 1) Indefinite determiners are used when expressing something that is unspecified or that the listener does not know about yet.
- 1) *fu tokutei no mono, kikite ni wa mada ryōkaisareteinai mono o arawasu baai.*

The definite article is used:

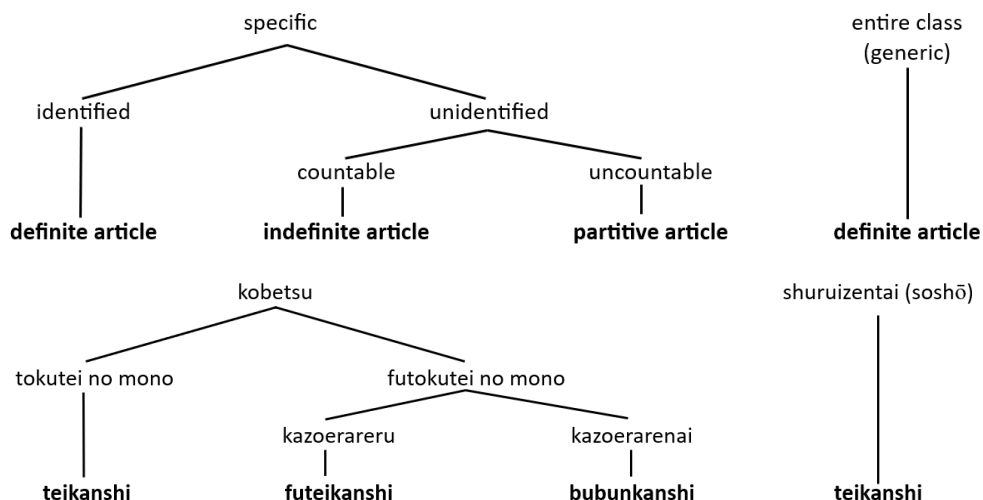
- 2) When expressing something that is known by the speaker or listener, that is delimited, or with a generic meaning.
- 2) *hanashite/kikite ni ryōkai sareteiru mono, genteisareteiru mono o arawasu baai, aruiha sōshō o arawasu baai.* (p. 13-14)

In T4, terms such as “determined” and “undetermined” are introduced in the text and appear in a diagram (translated and reproduced below) that summarizes the determiners’ use.

“Determined” refers to cases where the listener knows which person or entity is being pointed to, based on the situation, context, or common sense.
[...]

“Undetermined” refers to cases where the listener does not know “which...” person or entity is being pointed to or when not knowing which one is not problematic. Generally, when a person or entity is introduced as a topic, the indefinite article is used.

“tokutei” to wa, bamen ya bunmyaku ya jōshiki ni yotte, sashiteiru hito ya mono ga dore de aru ka ga kikite ni mo waku baai de aru.



In T1, the anaphoric use of the definite article is made explicit, although the supplementary explanation in the translation of “*le livre*: the [sono] book (I just talked about)” is more informative than the general explanation, but the discursive use of the indefinite article is left out. Finally, in the four textbooks, the demonstrative determiner is introduced separately, probably because according to the ordinary terminology in French conventional grammar, “ce” is not classified as an article but an adjective.²

The analysis above raises several issues. Firstly, were there more natural translations? In the Japanese language, the referent’s identifiability in discourse is predominantly organized using the subject marker “ga”, for the introduction of the referent (1. below), and the topic marker “wa”, when the speaker assumes it is identifiable (2.) (Hasegawa, 2018; Imoto, 2011; Klingner, 2003), for instance:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. inu ga hoe-te i-ru
dog NOM bark-GER BE-PR
A dog is barking. | 2. inu wa hoe-te i-ru
dog TOP bark-GER BE-PR
The dog is barking. |
|--|--|

The generic interpretation in Japanese is also expressed with the topic marker (Hasegawa, 2018: 282). Yet, the authors of the four textbooks did not exploit this general functional correspondence between the two languages but rather sought correspondence on the morphosyntactic level. Indeed, there are pronominal adjectives (kono, sono, ano...) or quantifiers (hitotsu no...) in Japanese that precede the noun, and it is these that are associated here with the determiners in translations (other grammar textbooks we know of are not different). However, these elements are not required when the speaker assumes that the information is retrievable.

Translations for the partitive article are another example of this preferred option for morphosyntactic correspondence. The authors’ strategy in T1, T2, and T3 is identical: extending the use of the

² More commonly, “the all-purpose syntactic category of words expressing the type of referent(s) of a noun [are referred to] as determiners” (Fagyal *et al.*, 2010: 107).

quantifier “a certain amount of...” so that a parallel between the two languages is established. The examples in T1 read

de la viande: (a certain amount of) meat

de la viande: (ikura ka no ryō no) niku (p. 10)

while in T4, the translation, without any quantifier, is appropriate. The author warns that in French, “[a]s a principle, nouns are preceded by an article”, that is, in comparison with the Japanese language where no quantifier is usually required:

de la viande: meat

de la viande: niku (p. 11)

Overall, it seems as though the authors assume that, through the morphosyntactic parallel, the French determiners could be eventually “understood” in Japanese. What Gorsuch observed about the *yakodoku* method seems still to be the case (see above 2.2.1.). The overuse of prenominal adjectives and quantifiers also leads to the unfortunate overlap in the translations of the definite article and the demonstrative determiner, both with “sono” in T1, T2, and T4. Besides, the reluctance to compare the two languages on a functionalist level, as the markers “ga” and “wa” are concerned, seems to pertain to an estimation by the authors of their lack of “transferability”, in Kellerman’s sense (1979, cited in Ortega (2008: 38-39)). Indeed, since the French language has no particles for case marking (relying instead on a fixed word order), the authors likely deemed this peculiarity of the Japanese language not “transferable” and discarded it from the resources that could play a role in the metalinguistic reflection.

2.2.3 Limits

The limitations of the grammatical presentations analyzed above come from a representation of grammar as distinct from usage. To introduce the determiners to learners, the textbooks’ authors thus allow themselves to present, explain, and translate noun phrases out of context. This, it can be argued, is a mistake since the determiners achieve contextual anchoring in the circumstances of use. One consequence is the lack of naturalness of the translations of the examples, as the authors chose to enforce noun phrases in Japanese that would resemble those in French on a morphosyntactic level. This situation is contradictory to the objective of acquiring translation skills. It was also shown that access to meaning depends on reflection in Japanese, initiated by the grammatical description, on the Japanese translation of the example. The experimental instructional material introduced in the following section was designed considering these limitations.

3 Approach, instructional material, and study design

A pivotal feature in the original material introduced here is to show the four determiners as they stand in contrast from one to the other. It is done in a way that reflects how the speaker represents the information about the object, showing in visuals how she or he wants to orient the interlocutor’s attention to the thing, notion or substance evoked by the noun. As a result, while the contextual anchoring in the circumstances of use is irrelevant in the Japanese grammar textbooks, it is central in the approach followed here. Moreover, for the accompanying learning activity, an important dimension is the use of very short video excerpts of spontaneous interactions with their translated transcript. The purpose of the material is to promote the construction of links between grammatical generalizations and singular use in the context of each of these excerpts. This objective also fits with the preference of some students to avoid individual expression in the Foreign Language course (see above 2.2.1.). First, the theoretical options for the design of the approach and a perspective on the four determiners are introduced.

3.1 Approach

The design of the approach takes inspiration from Concept-Based Language Instruction (C-BLI), an adaptation of Galperin's approach in the field of foreign language instruction (see Lantolf et al., 2020). Galperin's approach is based on the Vygotskian theory of mental development. Essentially, in this theory, concepts (understood as the significations of words in the case of language) are used to orient one's cognitive processes – significations mediate thinking –, and learning occurs as concepts are internalized and develop through interactions, mainly in an educational context. In essence, Galperin's approach aims to provide learners with instructional material that functions as externalized thought during problem-solving activities. The approach distinguishes three successive phases in the learning process, during which learners act on the material, verbal, and mental levels. Learners are first given a sheet where the knowledge to be learned and every step of the action it enables to achieve (solving the problem) are represented by a diagram or a schema. This first phase of "orientation" is followed by one of "communicative thinking" (verbal level), where learners talk about the action they achieve, but "without any direct dependence on the tangible objects or their materialized representations" (Haenen, 2001: 163). Progressively, speech is abbreviated, and the internalization of knowledge builds up a mental level at which the action is solely achieved by thought (Haenen, 2001; Arieviditch & Haenen, 2005).

What is taken from this approach is essentially the "materialized representations" of concepts and the phase of "communicative thinking", in the form of pair work activity and individual verbalizations (see below). Indeed, verbalization is a condition for instructional material to be internalized (Suzuki & Storch, 2020: 3), and the data obtained are expected to be a window through which internalization can be observed.

3.2 Theoretical perspective on the determiners

The theoretical perspective on using determiners borrows from Peircean semiotics, a choice justified by the following two reasons. First, as Bergman (2009) contends, the triadic relation of the sign "takes in something of the character of an ordinary communicative exchange" (p. 87). Consequently, it shares a common ground with the general orientation of Foreign Language Instruction. Second, it provides a basis for grammar whose premise is interactional, which is deemed appropriate for instructional material development. It is worth mentioning that the intrinsic interactional dimension of Peircean semiotics distinguishes the material presented here from others in C-BLI, where material development essentially draws on Cognitive Linguistics. Making the case for the integration of Sociocultural Theory and Cognitive Linguistics, Lantolf (2011) highlights how both approaches share the assumption that meaning "emanat[es] from culturally organized experiences (this includes bodily experiences as well) with the world" (p. 314). In the case of the material presented here, the speaker's phenomenological experience of the thing, notion, or substance evoked by the noun is certainly a dimension that the visual depiction aims to render. From a semiotic standpoint, however, emphasis is further given on how the speaker wants to orient the interlocutor's attention towards the object (see below 3.2.1)—and this interactional perspective also materializes in the choice of using video excerpts as support for the verbalizations.

To introduce the theoretical perspective on the determiners, only the relevant notions of Peircean semiotics will be introduced, namely the triadic relation of the sign and the trichotomy of the object-to-sign relation, starting with the latter. Semiotics as conceived by Peirce is an all-encompassing theory of cognition and representation, revolving around the central tenet that "[t]he only thought [...] which can possibly be cognized is thought in signs." (CP 5.251) An entry point is perhaps Peirce's claim that experience, understood as the totality of phenomena one attends to or each of these phenomena as the senses perceive it, is already felt as interpretation:

experience can only mean the total cognitive result of living, and includes interpretations quite as truly as it does the matter of sense. Even more truly, since this matter of sense is a hypothetical something which we never can seize as such, free from all interpretative working over (CP 7.538, cited in Bergman (2009: 33))

Interpretation, according to Peirce, then occurs in three categories of relation from an object to the sign that represents it, be it a similarity (icon), a correlation in space and time (index), or a convention, requiring the interpreter to know rules (symbol).

The symbolic sign – those of languages for instance – exemplifies the triadic relation of the sign, as it involves a third instance familiar with other signs. This relation evokes a communicative act where an utterer wishing to express something (object) utters words (sign), intending a cognitive or affective effect (interpretant) upon the interpreter. On her/his side, the interpreter tries to determine what the utterer has in mind – the object – from the correspondence she/he infers between object-to-sign and object-to-interpretant relations (see Shapiro, 2022: 3-42).

Jappy (2013) rightfully emphasizes that from the utterer's standpoint, the interpretant can only be intended. Consequently, the sign's mediation and the correspondence into which the interpretant enters vis-à-vis the object can be schematized as follows:

utterer: object \rightarrow sign \rightarrow intended interpretant
 interpreter: object such that [object \rightarrow interpretant] \approx [object \rightarrow sign]

Present on both the utterer and interpreter's sides, the object-to-sign relation becomes instrumental for mutual understanding. Coming back to an interactional grammar for determiners, the theoretical basis for the experimental material is that the determiner's partial object represented by the determiner is the speaker's representation of what should be the listener's orientation toward the partial object whose sign is the noun, which means her/his readiness to access it or not in the environment (identifiability) as well as, even figuratively, to handle it or not (countable/uncountable). Here, "partial objects" refer to the object's elements that are attended to in the scene, situation, or idea represented, see CP 8.178. Put simply, in the noun phrase S, the determiner and the noun iconically stand for O's two partial objects, the orientation and the thing, notion, or substance, as shown in the figure below.

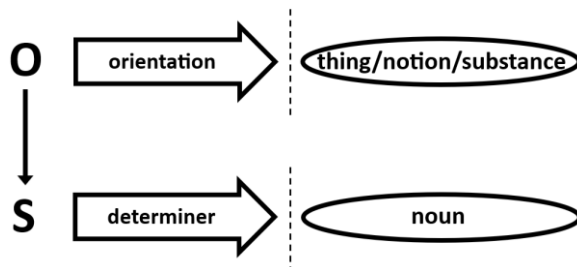


Fig. 1. The object-to-sign relation in the noun phrase

This figure will serve as the pattern for depicting in the instructional material the object-to-sign relation in the noun phrase for each of the four determiners *du*, *un*, *le*, and *ce*.

3.3 Instructional material

3.3.1 Overview

The experiment period is four weeks. The material is introduced in class, and the first part of the verbalization is practiced in pair work for one determiner each week. Individual verbalizations are realized outside the classroom as homework (see below 3.3.2). The material includes a four-page handout, four video excerpts for the activity of verbalization (see the accompanying video files), and

a transcription in French and Japanese from the part where the video excerpt is taken so that the circumstance of use is understood (see in the annex Tables 1 and 2). The verbalization constitutes the learning activity as well as the means to collect data. The first page of the handout includes a title, “French determiners” and the following indications: “In French, determiners are almost always obligatory. To choose, I need to know first how I show the object and whether the object is in the environment of my interlocutor or in her/his memory.”

For its presentation in the context of this article, all texts in the material are given in their English translation. Pages 2 and 3 reproduced in Tables 5 and 6 constitute the main content and provide information on the four determiners. These pages include from top to bottom the pragmatic value the determiner has (depending on the referent’s unidentifiability/identifiability), a visual representation intuitively depicting the determiner’s partial object for *du*, *un*, *le*, and *ce* (at the phase of materialization, the partial object takes the role of the concept in C-BLI), a summary explanation of its use, its morphology with examples in the masculine, feminine, singular, and the plural forms, its negative form, and the segment from the video excerpt.

Table 4. Page 2 of the material, with the grammatical presentation for the partitive and indefinite articles

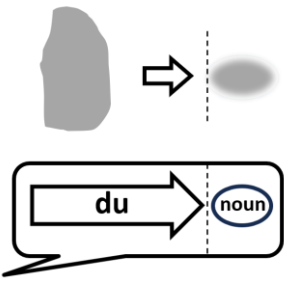
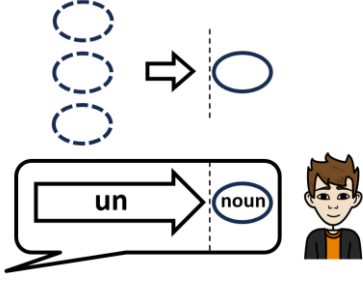
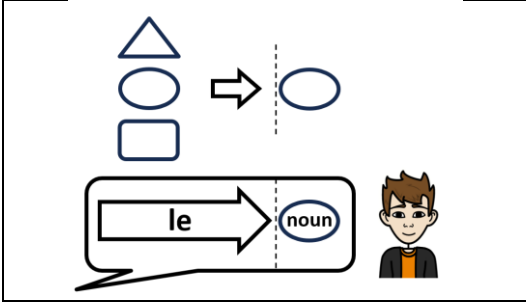
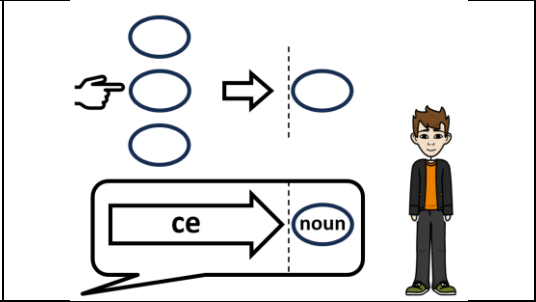
Information not yet in the listener’s memory/environment			
			
du, de la, de l’ → substance or a certain quantity of a thing → thing or notion without a particular angle (neither indicated with ‘un’ nor ‘le’) des → things or notions in an indeterminate number		un, une, deux, trois... → thing(s) or notion(s) in a given number, taken at random (no expectation assumed) → thing(s) or notion(s) from a particular angle	
du rouge de l’ temps de la argent intelligence bière musique des étudiants étudiantes informations		un rouge une film intéressant intelligence bonne idée bière belle musique deux étudiants trois étudiantes ... informations	
Nég.: ... pas de rouge		Nég.:... pas de rouge	
ben pa’ce que c’était d’l’é tonnement (1)		nan mais c’était une blague (2)	
well because it was astonishment		nah but it was a joke	
mā, odoroki datta kara		jōdan datta kedo	

Table 5. Page 3 of the material, with the grammatical presentation for the definite article and the demonstrative determiner

Information already in the listener's memory/environment			
			
le, la, les deux, les trois... les → thing(s) or notion(s) distinguished by a distinctive “sign” (one word or more) familiar to all		ce, cette, ces deux, ces trois... ces → thing(s) or notion(s) distinguished by an actual or imaginary pointing gesture	
le l’ la les deux les trois les	rouge temps argent intelligence musique que j’aime solution étudiants étudiantes étudiantes informations	ce cet cette ces deux ces trois ces	rouge temps argent étudiant étudiante solution étudiants étudiantes étudiantes informations
Nég.: ... pas le rouge		Nég.: ... pas ce rouge	
- pour aérer l’ vin tu vois - ah d’accord (3)		pour lui heu ce village allemand (4)	
- to air the wine you see - ah ok		for him er this German village	
- wain ni kūki o ireru koto desu yo - naru hodo ne		kantoku ni wa, ano o, kono doitsu no mura wa	

3.3.2 Structuring

3.3.2.1 Unidentifiability/identifiability

The main structuring of the material is the non-identifiable/identifiable dichotomy, as in T3, the choice that, in our opinion, is the most suitable. It seems right indeed to subordinate the generic meaning to the identifiability trait, contrary to the choice made by T4’s author: in the definite arti-

cle's description (Table 5 above), "familiar to all" is considered consistent with the notion of genericity.³ Consequently, the formulations at the top of pages 2 and 3 (Tables 4 and 5) consider the information deemed to be in or not in the listener's environment or memory and are based on the opposition between "not yet" and "already".

3.3.3 Order of presentation, semantic and pragmatic properties

The order in which the determiners are displayed in the material is *du*, *un*, *le*, and *ce*. This order, it is argued, corresponds to the degree to which they operate as indexical signs. The reason that the partitive comes first is deduced from the fact the partitive noun phrase is rarely used as grammatical subject (Grevisse & Groosse, 2008: 746; Riegel et al., 1994: 161; Wilmet, 2003: 165), while, as suggested by Peirce, the grammatical subject – often the topic –, functions as an index (while the predicate is an icon, see CP 3.433, cited in Thibaud (1986: 35)). The indefinite article is "more" indexical in the sense that its partial object has a delimited contour, which makes it an iconic shape of the concept "un" ("one"), also the indefinite article. The functioning of the definite article is indexical because the partial object that corresponds with the noun is supposed to be in the interlocutor's environment or memory, which is not the case for the indefinite article. Finally, the demonstrative determiner is intrinsically deictic (Gary-Prieur & Léonard, 1998). It is "more" indexical than the definite article in the sense that the partial object corresponding to the noun of the noun group is in the speaker's space and time, which is the deictic reference point. The degree of indexicality is represented by the increasing visibility of the interlocutor, figuratively from his absence to his complete presence.

As previously assumed, each of the four visuals is conceived as an intuitive depiction of the determiner and the noun's partial objects. The accompanying explanations explicit the concepts represented in the visuals and supplement them with others that could not have been depicted.

The explanations for the partitive article include, first, those that are found in textbooks for uncountable objects, "substance or a certain quantity of a thing", a property also depicted in the visual and which corresponds to a frequent pattern of use. The second property is usually not spelled out in textbooks. The partitive article is used, indeed, for indicating an object with nothing more than the informative value carried by the noun, in response to a request where no complementary information is expected: "je fais **de la** musique" ("I play music") opposed to "je fais **une** musique que l'on pourrait considérer avant-gardiste" ("I make music that could be considered avant-garde"). The pedagogical terms chosen to refer to this use are "thing or notion without a particular angle (neither indicated with 'un' nor 'le')". The terms "without a particular angle" are opposed to "from a new angle" for the indefinite article. It is worth mentioning that the French partitive article is an "exotic feature", which was inserted in the article system in contrast both to countability and definiteness, as expressed by "un" and "le" (Carlier, 2007). Consequently, the material highlights that this article is used as an obligatory syntactic buffer for indicating an object with these two contrasting traits, whence the redundant parenthesis "neither indicated with 'un' nor 'le'".

The visual for the indefinite article expresses the characteristic idea of a prior absence of the object itself. In this regard, the visual characteristics for the choice of the partial object corresponding to the noun are signified by the dotted lines of potential objects of the category, one of which is indexically designated by the indefinite article, and it appears in solid lines. On this point, the explanation that accompanies the visual explains the fact that the choice of the partial object does not presuppose any specific expectation: the speaker does not ask the interlocutor that the choice in the

³ Yet the indefinite article can also express genericity. In the example "un chercheur est obstiné" ("a researcher is stubborn") as opposed to "le chercheur est obstiné" ("researchers are stubborn"), the indefinite article extracts virtually all the items from the category one by one. In contrast, the definite article generalizes an average characteristic (Wilmet, 2003: 135). More simply, Riegel *et al.* (1994) suggest that with the indefinite article the object that the noun refers to is representative of all its category (p. 160).

category be made of a specific item (typically in the utterance “Une baguette, s’il vous plait” (“A baguette, please”) in the bakery, where the numerical value merges with the pragmatic meaning).

The distinction between the definite article and the demonstrative determiner is important. Japanese first-year university students have previously completed six years of English study in junior high school and high school and can rely on the distinctions between “the” and “this/that”. However, the system of determiners in English differs from that in French, mostly because of the frequent expression of definiteness by the zero article in cases where the use of the definite article in French is imperative. Above all, as previously mentioned, grammar textbooks published in Japan often make the questionable choice of suggesting the pronominal adjective “sono” for the translation of both the definite article and the demonstrative determiner (that is the case, in our corpus, for T1, T2, and T4). The choice made here in the visuals and explanations follows Corblin (1987), for whom the distinction lies in how the entity (partial object) is selected: The definite article contrasts an entity from others based on the categories it belongs to (“external contrast”), whereas with the demonstrative determiner, the contrast operates between the entities in the noun’s category (“internal contrast”, see p. 202). Since the lexical content of the noun is not the information that allows the distinction, the designation with the demonstrative determiner requires an additional means that is, by definition, non-verbal, represented in the visual by another indexical sign, the pointing gesture.

3.4 Study design

3.4.1 Overview

The target group is composed of Japanese university students at the initial level who follow the standard curriculum in French (two weekly courses, one of grammar, one of conversation, see Introduction), and the implementation is planned during the second semester. Their proficiency level corresponds to the A1 level of the CEFR. The data will be collected in three sets over four weeks:

1. Biodata questionnaire (age, gender, university level, language learning history)
2. Individual verbalizations (see below for details)
3. Retrospective written questionnaire

Regarding the participants’ language learning history, their exposure to six to seven years of English during primary school, junior high school, and high school calls for the following observations. Although the material experimented warns that “[i]n French, determiners are almost always obligatory”, participants may approach the determiners in French through the lens of the English language, given, indeed, the relative typological proximity of the two languages relatively to the Japanese language. One issue for learners is that of the “zero article” in English, translated either with the partitive or the definite article in French. As Larroque (2019) puts it, the two systems essentially differ in terms of a preference in English for a determination based on notions, while in French determination further requires a category from which the notion is extracted (*du, de la, des*), or the (anaphoric) identification of the notion in a given situation (*le, la, les*). The retrospective questionnaire offers an opportunity to obtain qualitative data on that matter, since participants are directly asked about their eventual reliance on English (see below 3.3.3, question 1.1).

Coming back to the experiment design, the investigator – and author of these lines – justifies the absence of a pre-test post-test design, control group, or even an initial test of metalinguistic knowledge by a strong ethical commitment to avoid a quantitative approach to any matter relating to the field of education research. Our goal is to interpret how the material is used, not to measure the participants’ performances in the experiment. In the application for the applicability of this research to the Research Ethics Board of our institution, this experiment was designed as a classroom activity and homework for every student in the class. Only those of the students who will agree to do so will participate in the experiment.

3.3.2 Individual verbalization

“Individual verbalization” is understood as instructed “self-directed talk” and is closely linked with “communicative thinking” in Galperin’s approach (see above 3.1.). In this study, individual verbalization is made up of two parts, the first where the learners are asked to verbalize their understanding of the material as they read it, and the second where they explain the use of the determiner in each excerpt without referring to the material. The first part is practiced in class in pair work during the four weeks of the experiment, focusing on one determiner each week. Finally, learners are asked to film themselves going through the two parts. Instructions for learners are reproduced in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Instructions for individual verbalizations

Film yourself
1) describing the visual on the material, reading the explanations for “du”, “un”, “le”, “ce” and explaining how you understand the visual and these explanations in the case of some examples given in the list
2) explaining why this determiner <u>and not another</u> is used in each of these excerpts (you will need preparation before achieving this part of the activity):
• partitive article
(1) ben pa’ce que c’était d’l’ étonnement
• indefinite article
(2) nan mais c’était une blague
• definite article
(3) pour aerer l’ vin tu vois - ah d’accord
• demonstrative determiner
(4) pour lui euh ce village allemand
Don’t forget!
- pronounce the excerpt in French
- refer to the situation of the video excerpt
- refer to the material
Upload your video(s) on [LMS name]. (A single video or four.)

3.3.3 Retrospective written questionnaire

The retrospective written questionnaire’s goal is to bring circumstantial information about the completion of the activity in anticipation of case studies planned in the context of this project. The questionnaire is reproduced in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Retrospective written questionnaire

1. Other resources
1.1. What other resources did you use during this activity?
<input type="checkbox"/> textbook (title:)
<input type="checkbox"/> dictionaries
<input type="checkbox"/> other resources (online resources included).
1.2. Did you compare du, un, le, ce with any/some, a(n), the, this/that? What correspondences did you use (if any)? What differences did you see (if any)?
2. Time
2.1. How long did you spend on this activity in total?
2.2. How many times did you work on this activity?
3. Video recording
3.1. What do you remember of your state of mind during the video remember?

-
- 3.2. When you explained the use of the determiners in the excerpts, what information did you retrieve from memory? (the written transcription, the video excerpt, the material...)
-
4. Understanding
4. 1. Has this experience changed your understanding of French determiners? Please explain.
4. 2. Has this experience changed how you see grammar? Please explain.
-
5. The activity
5. 1. What do you think are the advantages of this material?
5. 2. What do you think are the drawbacks of this material?
5. 3. Did this activity require any effort? Please explain.
-
6. Other comments:
-

3.3.4 Expected outcomes

The first part of the verbalization, “describing the visual on the material, reading the explanations for “du”, “un”, “le”, “ce” and explaining how you understand the visual and these explanations in the case of some examples given in the list”, serves the objective to focus learners’ attention to the visual materializations and the descriptions. This part of the verbalization data could provide the possibility to determine whether the visualizations can help with the conceptualization of the semi-otic “object” that is represented. As previously mentioned, the visuals represent one “object” while, for the two indefinite determiners, two traits are specified: the “uncountable”/“countable” distinction (respectively “substance or a certain quantity of a thing” and “thing(s) or notion(s) in a given number, taken at random (no expectation assumed)”) and the neutralization of any expectation for further information or on the contrary the orientation towards it (“thing or notion without a particular angle (neither indicated with ‘un’ nor ‘le’)” and “thing(s) or notion(s) from a particular angle”). Learners are asked to verbalize their understanding in the case of some examples given in the list. Contrary to the editorial choice made in the textbooks analyzed, it is argued that learners should be responsible for translating examples, provided that sufficient resources are available to them to do so, which is assumed.

However, the most significant data should be obtained from the second part of the verbalization: “explaining why this determiner and not another is used in each excerpt”. The expected outcomes are that in their verbalizations learners tie together the determiner’s particular context of use, which is the real (ontological) setting where the words were spoken, with the generalization of meaning that the instructional material provides both through the visual representations and the explanations. A summary analysis of the use of each determiner in the excerpts points out the following core elements, with which the participants’ verbalizations should converge (see in the annex the translations of the transcriptions for the extended excerpts):

- (1) “ben pa’ce que c’était **d’l’**étonnement” (“well because it was astonishment”)

This is Aline’s answer to Justine’s question, “But why do they call it ‘astonishment report’? The use of the partitive article corresponds to the case where the object is a “thing or notion [denoted] without a particular angle”. The indefinite article would convey the expectation of a particular angle onto the predicate. The definite determiners are excluded because Aline expects Justine to understand that the answer is in her question. She orients her into considering “étonnement” as new information so that it answers her query.

- (2) “nan mais c’était **une** blague” (“nah but it was a joke”)

Justine’s joke refers to her previous comment mocking Arnaud’s cooking ambitions when he suggested cooking a turkey for New Year’s Eve: “You need a big oven.” The definite determiners are excluded because Justine expects Arnaud to consider “blague” (“joke”) as new information with which he now can understand her comment. The partitive article must be rejected because the mocking comment’s number – one – is iconic to the partial object’s number of “blague” (“joke”) – which also is one – itself iconic to the sign’s number – the sound image [blag]. Yet,

participants will probably not go further than the acceptable tautology according to which “une blague” is countable.

(3) “- pour aérer l’ vin tu vois - ah d’accord” (“- to air the wine you see - ah ok”)

Arnaud is opening a bottle of wine. When the cork breaks in half, he jokingly pretends this was on purpose to air the wine. The indefinite determiners are excluded because Arnaud expects Justine to find the partial object whose sign is “wine” in her immediate tangible environment even though it was not previously referred to. The demonstrative determiner is excluded because “vin” as a “sign” – the term is also used in the material – is sufficiently informative to distinguish the object from others since no other objects around can be denoted by this sign. This pragmatic functioning is what Corblin (1987) describes as “external contrast” (see 3.2.3 above).

(4) “pour lui euh ce village allemand” (“for him er this German village”)

Arnaud explains the plot of Haneke’s movie *The White Ribbon*, where the director (“réalisateur”) settles in a German village. In the second occurrence, the partial object of “German village” is indicated with a demonstrative determiner. First, indefinite determiners are excluded because Arnaud expects Justine to look for the partial object in her memory. The object of the demonstrative determiner in this case is the only one of its category, yet it is argued that the determination implies backgrounded items of the category of “German villages” from which the object pointed at is distinguished. Participants will probably comment along these lines, explaining that the village in question is “this one and not another”.

It is expected that in the multimodal discourse analysis of the video data, the unfolding of gaze orientation, hesitations, other pauses, and reformulations in speech show significant moments in the process of tying together contextual and general knowledge. In the context of qualitative case studies, video data are expected to provide a window for describing phenomena in learners’ verbalizations that might be indices of internalization of the knowledge represented in the material. The goal of question 3.2. in the retrospective questionnaire is to bring complementary information to this point.

It is also expected that the effort realized in achieving the verbalization constitutes an opportunity for self-assessment of the ability to understand these determiners’ use in the French language as well as for reflecting on the role of grammar, issues both addressed in questions 4.1. and 4.2. of the questionnaire.

4 Conclusion

The instructional material and its study presented here aim to complement the teaching of determiners in the first year of French as a foreign language at the university level in Japan. For reasons related to representations of what language teaching should be, grammar textbooks favor a depersonalized approach to Foreign Language Instruction. As a result, in these textbooks, examples of determiners are explained but given out of context, despite the fact that determiners function primarily to establish contextual anchoring. The translations in the textbooks tend not to reflect natural usage, but are instead morphosyntactic imitations of French, which *a priori* limit the acquisition of translation competence.

On the contrary, the material presented here aims to make learners reflect on the link between the general level of grammar and the level of contextual use. The use of determiners was considered from the perspective of Peircean semiotics, where in a noun phrase the determiner and the noun are considered the respective signs of two partial objects, the representation that the speaker makes of the identifiability of and accessibility of the entity (thing or notion) denoted by the noun, and this entity. In other terms, the determiner orients the interlocutor’s attention to the partial object represented by the noun. The task for the study draws on Concept-Based Language Instruction, by taking

up the idea of materializing concepts (in this case, the partial objects) and implementing a verbalization task. The study is designed to compel learners to make connections between grammatical generalizations, such as those provided in the material, verbalizing their understanding in both the cases of the examples given and the use of the determiners in the excerpts.

This project demonstrates that, in the context of determiners and considering the specificities of the Japanese university setting, material development should be grounded in actual language use. However, the implications extend beyond this particular context and should prompt reflection on how material can be designed for other grammatical features and adapted for non-Japanese learners. Essentially, a Peircean semiotic approach to material development highlights the role of a sign pointing to another, mirroring the relationship between one partial object and another in the situation, scene, or any ideational content that the speaker has in mind. The pointing sign is indexical, the other is iconic. The dual correspondence of, on one hand, indices with grammatical words or morphemes and, on the other, of icons with lexical words is worth exploring. This should be done both theoretically to avoid hasty conclusions and empirically to test whether instructional material based on this principle supports learning. The tasks designed to test the approach should ideally take the form of problem-solving group activities. These tasks encourage learners to adopt a reflexive stance on language use, prompting exchanges and new insights (see Swain's "collaborative dialogue" (2000)). Examples include picture narration, translation, writing/adaptation of a dialogue, transposition of a narrative into the past, elaboration of a procedure of choice for the appropriate form(s) (essentially aspect, tense, and determiner), etc. In each context, however, the role of the first language needs to be examined in terms of what it provides—a sense of security and conformity for all participants—and what it hinders—greater autonomy in using the foreign language. In the case of the material presented in this article, flexible adaptations could emphasize the indexicality of grammatical words and morphemes, that is, their role in orienting communication. The objective remains to help learners become more aware of the specificities of the foreign language, sometimes using gestures (Lapaire, 2013) or scripts (Bottineau, 2014). Indeed, visuals—such as those designed here for *du*, *un*, *le*, and *ce*—, gestures, or scripts are various semiotic tools. They are alternative signs that stand for grammatical concepts to scaffold learning.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by a grant from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP22K13162). I would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers whose comments and suggestions helped improve and clarify an earlier version of this article.

References

- Arievitch, I. & Haenen, J. (2005). Connecting sociocultural theory and educational practice: Galperin's approach. *Educational Psychologist*, 40(3), 155–165. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4003_2
- Beacco J.-C. (2010). *La didactique de la grammaire dans l'enseignement du français et des langues*. Paris: Éditions Didier.
- Bergman, M. (2009). *Peirce's philosophy of communication*. London / New York: Continuum.
- Bottineau, D. (2014). Grammaire éactive et didactique du FLE. In C. Martinot & A. Pegaz Paquet (Eds.), *Innovations didactiques en français langue étrangère* (pp. 185–200). Paris: CRL.
- Carlier A. (2007). From preposition to article. The grammaticalization of the French partitive. *Studies in Language*, 31(1), 1–49. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sl.31.1.02car>
- Chevalier, L. (2008). Les facteurs à l'œuvre dans le maintien de l'enseignement traditionnel de la grammaire au Japon. *Revue japonaise de didactique du français*, 3(1), 67–83. https://doi.org/10.24495/rjdf.3.1_67
- Chevalier, L. (2011). Contextualisation du CECR au Japon: pour un dialogue entre cultures éducatives. *Français dans le monde. Recherches et applications*, 50, 105–112.
- Corblin F. (1987). *Indéfini, défini et démonstratif*. Genève: Droz.
- Delbarre, F. (2013). Adaptation de la grammaire aux contextes d'apprentissage locaux. *Revue japonaise de didactique du français*, 8(1), 121–135. https://doi.org/10.24495/rjdf.8.1_121

- Delbarre, F. (2014). Pratiques et concepts grammaticaux du JLE/M et de l'ALE en rapport avec le FLE au Japon : propositions pour une grammaire contextualisée du FLE. *Revue japonaise de didactique du français*, 9(1&2), 60–75. https://doi.org/10.24495/rjdf.9.1-2_60
- Delbarre, F. (2023). Les articles dans les manuels de grammaire du FLE japonais: tradition et contextualisation. *Revue japonaise de didactique du français*, 18(1&2), 45–62. https://doi.org/10.24495/rjdf.18.1-2_45
- Fagyal, Z., Kibbe, D & Jenkins, F. (2010). *French. A linguistic introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gary-Prieur, M.-N. et Léonard, M. (1998). Le démonstratif dans les textes et dans la langue. *Langue française*, 120, 5–20. https://www.persee.fr/doc/lfr_0023-8368_1998_num_120_1_6265
- Gorsuch G. J. (1998). Yakudoku EFL instruction in two Japanese high school classrooms: an exploratory study. *Japan Association for Language Teaching Journal*, 20(1), 6–32. <https://jalt-publications.org/jj/articles/2777-yakudoku-efl-instruction-two-japanese-high-school-classrooms-exploratory-study>
- Grevisse, M. & Goosse, A. (2008). *Grammaire française. Le bon usage*. 14e édition. Bruxelles: De Boeck Université.
- Haenen, J. (2001). Outlining the learning-teaching process: Piotr Gal'perin's contribution. *Learning and Instruction*, 11, 157–170. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-4752\(00\)00020-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0959-4752(00)00020-7)
- Hasegawa, Y. (2018). Subjects and topics. In Hasegawa, Y (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of Japanese linguistics* (pp. 276–300). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hino N. (1988). Yakudoku, Japan's dominant tradition in foreign language learning. *Japan Association for Language Association Journal*, 10(1&2), 45–53. <https://jalt-publications.org/jj/articles/2811-yakudoku-japans-dominant-tradition-foreign-language-learning>
- Imoto, H. (2011). Le défini et l'indéfini dans une langue sans article. *Langue française*, 171(3), 13–26. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lf.171.0013>
- Jappy T. (2013). *Introduction to Peircean visual semiotics*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Klinger, D. (2003). Spécificité du dispositif créé par le marqueur wa en japonais. Comparaison avec le français. *Travaux de linguistique*, 47, 163–179. <https://doi.org/10.3917/tl.047.0163>
- Kellerman, E. (1979). The problem with difficulty. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin*, 4, 27–48.
- Lantolf, J.P. (2011). Integrating sociocultural theory and Cognitive Linguistics in the second language classroom. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. Volume 2 (pp. 303–318). New york / London: Routledge.
- Lantolf J., Xi J. & Minakova V. (2020). Sociocultural theory and concept-based language instruction. *Language Teaching*, 54, 327–342. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444820000348>
- Lapaire, J.-R. (2013). Gestualité cogrammaticale : de l'action corporelle spontanée aux postures de travail métagestuel guidé. Maybe et le balancement épistémique en anglais. *Langages*, 192(4), 57–72. <https://doi.org/10.3917/lang.192.0057>
- Larroque P. (2019). *Essai de grammaire contrastive anglais-français*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Mouton, G. (2023). Les changements des progressions d'enseignement du FLE en contexte universitaire japonais: analyse des manuels japonais de FLE de ces 35 dernières années. *Revue japonaise de didactique du français*, 18(1&2), 224–229. https://doi.org/10.24495/rjdf.18.1-2_224
- Nakamura, K. (2011). Une histoire de l'enseignement du français au Japon de 1960 à 2000 – vue à travers l'expérience d'un enseignant et de ses activités dans le domaine de la formation pédagogique –. *Revue japonaise de didactique du français*, 6(1), 251–259. https://doi.org/10.24495/rjdf.6.1_251
- Nakamura, N. (2019). Certaines différences interculturelles à respecter dans le cadre des exercices de communication en classe de FLE. *Colloque international conjoint 2019 à l'Université Nationale de Mongolie: L'Enseignement du français en Asie-Pacifique: Traditions et tendances*, 1–15.
- Ortega, L. (2009). *Understanding second language acquisition*. London: Hodder Education.
- Peirce C. S. (1965). *Collected papers. I-VIII*. Second edition. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Riegel, M., Pellat J.-C. & Rioul, R. (2004). *Grammaire méthodique du français*. 3ème édition. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

- Sagaz, M. (2011). Contextualisation du CECR et pratiques méthodologiques locales : le cas du Japon. *Synergies Europe*, 6, 75–83. <https://gerflint.fr/Base/Europe6/sagaz.pdf>
- Shapiro M. (2022). *The logic of language. A semiotic study of speech*. Cham: Springer.
- Stern, H. H. (1991). *Fundamental concepts of language teaching*. Oxford / New York: Oxford University Press.
- Suzuki, W. & Storch, N. (2020). Introduction. In Suzuki, W. & Storch, N. (Eds.), *Languaging in language learning and teaching. A collection of empirical studies* (pp. 1–16). Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J.P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97–114). Oxford (UK): Oxford University Press.
- Thibaud P. (1986). *La notion peircéenne d'objet d'un signe*. *Dialectica*, 40(1), 20–43. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42969067>
- Vygotsky, L. (2012). *Thought and language*. Revised and expanded by Alex Kozulin. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. (Original work published 1934)
- Wilmet, M. (2003). *Grammaire critique du français*. 3e édition. Bruxelles: Duculot.
- Zribi-Hertz, A. & Levet, D. (2017). *Le nom et son groupe*. <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01652988>

About the Author

Loïc Renoud (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9929-507X>) is an Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Okayama University, Japan, where he teaches in French Studies (language, culture, and linguistics). He holds a master's degree in modern literature from Jean Monnet University, Saint-Étienne, France, and a PhD in language sciences from Lumière University Lyon 2, France. His research interests include postcolonial Francophone literature, semiotics, and foreign language instruction, focusing on material development.