

Exploring the Japanese-Chinese Writing Systems in Classroom: the Past, the Present, and the Future

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Abstract

It is desirable for language students to develop critical language awareness and intercultural competence (Byram 2008). Accordingly, this presentation introduces a joint project to be carried out in a Chinese class and a Japanese class at Kalamazoo College. It explores the visual intersections and divergences between Chinese characters and Kanji that occurred in history and are visible in present, as well as possible changes in future. The activities include students' experimental communication through Chinese characters and Kanji and visual arts, and group projects on loan words and digital humanities. It is expected that students would renew their understanding of the history of their target languages, and that they would acquire some knowledge of the intercultural aspects of Asian languages. It is also expected that students would understand better how a living language has been constantly shaped and will continue to be renewed by various cultural and technological factors.

Bios

Noriko Akimoto Sugimori is an associate professor and chair of the Japanese program at Kalamazoo College, where she teaches courses in Japanese languages, sociolinguistics, and anime/manga. She earned her PhD in applied linguistics from Boston University. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, language ideology, language policy, corpus linguistics, critical discourse studies, and foreign language pedagogy. She has also collected the oral histories of Japanese-speaking World War II survivors with her students.

Leihua Weng completed her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. She is interested in transcultural and interlingual comparative studies and pedagogical approaches. She has taught at different liberal arts colleges, and she currently holds a position of Assistant Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at Kalamazoo College, Michigan.