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研究課題名(和文) Investigating multiethnic students' learning of their heritage languages at Japanese universities

研究課題名(英文) Investigating multiethnic students' learning of their heritage languages at Japanese universities

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研究成果の概要(和文)：本研究では、継承語学習者の大学卒業後の複言語使用に関する傾向が明らかになった。複言語使用は彼らのキャリア形成だけでなくアイデンティティとも関係し、社会文化的な複雑さを浮き彫りにしている。さらに両親との別居がしばしば継承語の習熟度の低下を招くことや、継承語の習熟度や学習モチベーションにおける生活環境の役割を明確にした。

また、継承語話者が日本語を優先する場面など、より広いコミュニティへの統合のための意図的な言語選択も見られた。さらに、エスニック・マイノリティが言語的・文化的アイデンティティを維持する上で直面する課題を明らかにし、言語的多様性を維持するための社会的支援の重要性を強調した。

研究成果の学術的意義や社会的意義

Our research on HL learners reveals how post-graduation settings affect their careers and identities. It reveals the intricate relationship between language learning and social integration and informs the importance of supporting HL learners to preserve linguistic diversity and foster inclusivity.

研究成果の概要(英文)：Our research on Heritage Language (HL) learners has revealed significant trends in language use post-graduation, where English predominates in professional environments. This shift not only influences career trajectories but also impacts the identity formation of HL speakers, highlighting the socio-cultural complexities they navigate. Furthermore, our findings underscore the role of living arrangements in HL proficiency, with separation from parents often leading to reduced HL practice.

Moreover, our research identifies deliberate language choices among HL speakers, such as favoring Japanese over heritage languages to facilitate integration into a broader community. Insights from a symposium on heritage language education further emphasize the challenges faced by ethnic minorities in preserving their linguistic and cultural identities. This highlights the critical need for societal support to sustain linguistic diversity among HL learners.

研究分野：Foreign Language Education

キーワード：heritage language identity diversity inclusivity

1. 研究開始当初の背景

With the increasing number of foreign residents, ethnic minority students are growing in various educational settings in Japan. Existing research has extensively explored the socioeconomic and sociocultural conditions of longstanding ethnic minorities like Chinese and Koreans (Fukuoka, 2000; Nakajima, 1994; Noiri, 2011; Okano, 2011), as well as “return migration” by Nikkei Brazilians and Peruvians (Ishi, 2003; Takenaka, 2003; Yamanaka, 2000). However, there is a noticeable gap in studies focusing on youth with ethnic roots from Southeast Asian countries. Given the recent influx of immigrants from Southeast Asia, there is a pressing need to provide educational support tailored to their requirements and to appreciate the cultural and ethnic diversity they contribute to Japanese society.

Central to this issue are multiethnic students studying their non-**Japanese parent’s home language, often referred to as “Heritage Language” (HL) learners. Efforts to understand the sociolinguistic circumstances of HL learners have gained recognition in countries like the U.S., Canada, Australia, and South Korea.** In Japan, while some studies have explored the heritage languages of indigenous populations such as the Ainu and the Ryukyans (Heinrich, 2008; Teeter & Okazaki, 2011), **there is a notable absence of research on recent immigrants’ children and their maintenance of heritage languages like Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Thai.**

Previous research (He & Xiao, 2008; Lee, 2014; Muramoto & Karsten, 2017) highlights that HL learners not only enrich language classrooms culturally and linguistically but also enhance **other students’ understanding and sensitivity to the cultures and societies where these languages are spoken.** Growing up multilingual and culturally aware, HL learners possess the potential to make significant contributions to both society and the nation. Despite this potential, Japan has only recently begun to recognize their role as positive forces for the **country’s future.**

Despite the likely accelerated ethnic diversification in Japan, social and educational policies specifically addressing HL learners have yet to gain prominence. Many language policies established by the Japanese government in the 20th century may no longer be entirely relevant (Gottlieb, 2011). Moreover, inadequate educational support systems have contributed to HL learners being perceived as underachievers, which could affect their academic achievements at tertiary levels. A study (Sugita, 2018) indicated that heritage language majors are often viewed differently by their Japanese peers, coming from diverse learning backgrounds and feeling somewhat isolated within mainstream classroom cultures. To foster a truly prosperous society embracing cultural and ethnic diversity, it is imperative to assess the current situation surrounding HL learners, identify their challenges in school life, and propose educational strategies that recognize and enhance the languages, literacies, and cultural competencies of youth from multiethnic backgrounds (Kondo-Brown & Brown, 2008; Li & Duff, 2018; Seals & Peyton, 2016).

2. 研究の目的

This study aims to explore the sociolinguistic characteristics of heritage language (HL)

learners majoring in Vietnamese, Indonesian, and Thai and to investigate their educational contexts in Japan. Initially, our goal was to identify and address the challenges faced by HL learners during their university studies. Research indicated that high school students with foreign roots were significantly more likely to experience academic difficulties, with some majoring in Southeast Asian Languages showing lower proficiency scores in English and Japanese compared to their peers in other majors (Asahi Shimbun, 2018).

Furthermore, recent demographic data revealed a notable increase in residents from Vietnam and Indonesia, supplanting previous foreign resident groups such as Nikkei Brazilians (Ministry of Justice, 2018). Despite the growing necessity for a better understanding of HL learners majoring in Southeast Asian languages like Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Thai in Japan, no prior studies had specifically focused on this demographic at the outset of our research.

3. 研究の方法

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to investigate heritage language (HL) learners majoring in Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Thai at Japanese universities. Initially, preliminary surveys and questionnaires were conducted to collect demographic data from HL learners at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS), and Osaka University. **These surveys aimed to gather information on students' ethnic backgrounds, linguistic profiles, and educational environments.** Simultaneously, interviews were conducted with faculty members in language departments to understand the institutional support available to HL learners.

Qualitative methodologies were employed to explore HL learners' attitudes, motivations, and identity development. These included focal group discussions and individual interviews. Questions were asked about **participants' experiences and reflections on HL, English, and Japanese language use.** Additionally, interviews with language instructors provided further **insights into participants' language learning experiences.**

The qualitative data, including interview transcriptions, were analyzed using a social constructivist framework. This approach aimed to uncover the developmental trajectories of attitudes, motivations, and identities related to HL learning. Qualitative analyses provided a comprehensive understanding of the sociolinguistic profiles and educational contexts of HL learners majoring in Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Thai.

4. 研究成果

Our research has explored the experiences of Heritage Language (HL) learners—individuals learning languages spoken at home but not widely used in their broader community. Our study aimed to understand how HL learning and use influence the identities of these learners. We gathered significant insights into HL learners' social, educational, and linguistic lives through interviews, Zoom meetings, and symposiums.

1) Profiling HL Learners: We created comprehensive profiles of HL learners by interviewing seven students from three universities majoring in Indonesian, Vietnamese, and Thai. Among them, two participants had graduated and started working, while five were still undergraduates. Our findings highlighted several key points:

- **Limited HL Use by Graduates:** The two graduates reported having few opportunities to use their HL skills in their professional lives, as their jobs did not require HL proficiency, limiting their use of heritage languages.
- **Consistent Use by Undergraduates:** The five undergraduates maintained a steady level of HL use despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, which restricted their travel to countries where their target languages are spoken.

2) HL Use and Identity Construction: We explored how HL learning and use contribute to identity construction among our participants, interviewing seven HL learners, including two graduates and five current students. Key findings included:

- **Shifting Focus to English:** Graduates emphasized English over their HLLs for career advancement, reflecting the dominant role of English in their professional and identity formation.
- **Impact of Living Arrangements:** Graduates living separately from their native-speaking parents experienced reduced daily use of their heritage languages, highlighting the familial role in maintaining HL proficiency.

3) HL Use in Different Contexts and Symposium Insights: We examined HL learners' language use across different contexts and identified:

- **Reduced HL Use Post-Graduation:** Graduates used their heritage languages less frequently after university, attributing this decline to a lack of professional necessity and social opportunities.
- **Intentional Language Choices:** Some HL speakers chose to use Japanese instead of their heritage languages to establish independence from non-Japanese proficient parents, aiming for integration into broader Japanese society.

A significant event in 2022 was the symposium on heritage language education at Kanda University of International Studies. The event featured a plenary speech by Dr. Kimi Kondo-Brown from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, discussing heritage language education in the US, followed by a panel discussion with Japanese university students of heritage language backgrounds. The symposium provided insights into:

- **Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities' Experiences:** Participants shared challenges faced in maintaining heritage languages and integrating into Japanese society.
- **Societal Support Needs:** It underscored the necessity for increased societal support for ethnic and linguistic minorities, stressing the importance of recognizing and valuing their linguistic and cultural identities.

Our research holds broader implications for society:

- **Support for HL Learners:** Educational institutions and workplaces must offer more opportunities for HL learners to utilize their heritage languages, promoting linguistic diversity and cultural enrichment.
- **Role of Families and Communities:** Encouraging intergenerational language transmission is vital for HL learners to retain their linguistic skills and cultural heritage.

- **Recognition of Multiple Identities:** HL learners navigate complex identities shaped by their heritage languages and societal influences, advocating for inclusive societal support.

In summary, our research from 2019 to 2023 provided deep insights into the lives of HL learners in Japan. It highlighted that HL use often declines post-graduation, influenced by professional and social environments favoring English. Family dynamics and societal support are crucial in maintaining HL proficiency, emphasizing the need for supportive environments to preserve heritage languages and promote cultural inclusion.

5. 主な発表論文等

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3. 雑誌名 言語教育研究	6. 最初と最後の頁 1-17
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〔図書〕 計0件

〔産業財産権〕

〔その他〕

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6. 研究組織

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7. 科研費を使用して開催した国際研究集会

〔国際研究集会〕 計0件

8. 本研究に関連して実施した国際共同研究の実施状況

共同研究相手国	相手方研究機関
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