

A Preliminary Study towards the Re-examination of the Syllabus for Chinese Characters for JSL Students, with Reference to the Pronunciation of these Characters in Junior High School Science Textbooks

Isao Iori & Kyoko Hayakawa

There are growing numbers of children learning JSL (Japanese as a Second Language) in Japan, and the language education of these children is one of the most important issues the government must face when developing policies for immigration.

In this paper, we report on the results of our investigation of the actual distribution of the pronunciation of Chinese characters based on the analysis of a corpus composed of science textbooks used in junior high schools.

Our major findings are as follows: 1) about 40 % of Chinese characters have multiple ways of pronunciation; 2) there is a very strong co-relationship between word-types and pronunciation; and 3) only a restricted number of Chinese characters are used in Japanese-style pronunciation.

These findings strongly suggest that the current syllabus for the teaching of Chinese characters to JSL students is inefficient, and therefore needs to be re-examined.