

Miho Inaba: Second Language Literacy Practices and Language Learning Outside the Classroom

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Second Language Literacy Practices and Language Learning Outside the Classroom is written by Miho Inaba who has been involved with teaching Japanese language modules and the Pedagogy of Modern Foreign Languages module for exchange students. She has also been conducting research on second language learning and teaching, in particular, autonomous language learning, language learning motivation, L2 (second/foreign language) literacy, and sociocultural theory for language learning and teaching. Her teaching practices are based on insights from these research areas of applied linguistics.

This book delivers an overview of a study that explores out-of-class language learning activities used by 15 learners of Japanese at an Australian University; it sheds light on literacy activities while learning Japanese, in particular outside classrooms that can accelerate the language learning process. The development in information and communication technology in the 21st century has triggered a transformation in the language learning environments. For example, the expansion of the internet has provided learners with endless target language resources.

This book is well organized and divided into seven chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to explain the rationale behind writing this book. In addition, it manifests clearly the context of the research by defining essential terms in this study such as literacy activities and literacy practices, stating the research question and concluding with the general outline of the book.

The second chapter of this book demonstrates the impact of out-of-class learning from the sociocultural perspectives. The author outlines that the main framework of this book is the Activity Theory "the notion of mediation" which states that humans rarely interact with the world directly. However, they utilize different artefacts to achieve their objects in the social-material world. Key insights of Activity Theory such as motive, mediation, contradiction and agency are highlighted and defined. In addition, this chapter manifests the methodology by describing clearly the participants' background and their Japanese courses. There are five tools to collect data in this research: diary, collection of written materials, semi-structured interviews, interaction interviews and class observation.

Chapter 3 focuses on types of literacy activities that are performed outside of the classroom. The author divides these activities into class-related and non-class-related literacy practices. The main features of these practices are based on four dimensions: assessment, arrangement, content and pedagogy. Class-related literacy practices consist of assessment tasks that include vocabulary quizzes, oral test and final examination. On the other hand, the non-assessment tasks include

homework and preparation/revision for classes. Non-class-related literacy activities contain four main types: communication with Japanese speakers, reading activities, viewing activities and writing activities.

After that, the researcher in chapter 4 focuses on the participants' class-related literacy practices and reasons why several participants place more emphasis on Japanese class tasks than others, and she finds out that the most important factors that influence students' performance for class-related tasks can be attributed to the learners' histories as students and their beliefs about effective learning methods. In addition, the writer has demonstrated the constituents that trigger students' out of class-related literacy activities, and the detailed analysis of students' task-specific motives uncovers that the students' beliefs associated to authentic language usage and their interests in specific topics such as reading manga and the interest in the Japanese pop culture has alerted their voluntary L2 literacy learning.

However, chapter 5 concentrates on the differences and similarities in the non-class-related literacy practices among the participants. Many examples in this study demonstrate the significant role of the learners' interests in expanding the chances of out-of-class Japanese literacy activities. For instance, reading manga comic books shows that the learners' interests in that kind of topics can provide a driving force to accomplish activities. In addition, the writer highlights the importance of the learners' community members such as classmates, friends in Japanese-related communities and siblings in triggering their interests in Japanese popular culture.

Chapter 6 focuses on the techniques and manners of the students that may compensate the gaps in their language competence, for example, the students use of the computer technology such as digital dictionaries, Google and Wikipedia. With regard to non-class-related literacy practices, the internet and Japanese pop culture provide materials with L1 subtitles regardless of the students' L2 proficiency. In addition, this chapter examines the students' mediation for different activities (reading, writing and viewing) in class-related literacy practices, and it identifies some problems that the students face while engaging in these literacy activities.

Chapter 7 summarizes the major findings of this study and reports on L2 literacy practices outside of the classroom, distinctly in FL framework. It illustrates the reasons for how the language learners tackle activities requiring L2 literacy skills under the influence of different social and contextual factors. The writer examines the factors that may facilitate or impede the possibilities of language learning and authentic language use activities in out-of-class contexts.

Second Language Literacy Practices and Language Learning Outside the Classroom is a useful guide while teaching a target language when this language is not utilized as a common language of communication and there are no resources to the students to refine their knowledge other than their text books. It

draws the educators' attention to the important aspects of out-of-class literacy activities. The book contributes to more realistic understanding of the language learning motivation and autonomous language learning. I would recommend this book to educators and teachers who are interested in teaching a language to learners who do not have the chance to communicate with native speakers of the target language, as well as learners who aspire to assist their target language learning autonomously.

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