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Career Awareness Transformation of Pre-service Japanese Language Teachers:

Through the Analysis of Participation Process
in the Japanese Language Teacher Training Course

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Abstract

Social change and globalization have had a tremendous impact on higher education. In 2011, the Ministry of Education has decided that universities in Japan need to provide resources and education for establishing career. The number of international students in Japan has sharply increased recently, and as a result, the demand for Japanese language teachers as a career opportunity has increased.

The aim of this research is to examine how pre-service Japanese language teachers in a university in Japan change their awareness toward their own careers. The participants of this research were 12 undergraduate students, majoring in teaching Japanese language courses. Data were analyzed using the trajectory equifinality approach. The two research questions posed were as follows:

- (1) What made students decide to take a Japanese language teacher training course? Is there any particular motivation or cause behind their decision?
- (2) How did students' awareness of their future career goal change by attending Japanese language teacher training courses?

For research question 1, I found four trajectory types: the "Japanese teacher direct type," "school-teacher direct type," "conflict experience type," and "own purpose type."

The "conflict experience type" is a group of students who pondered over and changed their career decisions after participating in a course. The "own purpose type" were those who took the course to achieve their own purpose, independent of their choice of occupation.

From these results, it was found that students in the course are not only those who aim to be Japanese language teachers and that there were students who aspire to become a Japanese language teacher through taking the course.

In addition, students who became Japanese language teachers after graduation had the common experience of participating in Japanese language education practice before reaching their final year, and then actively participated in multiple teaching practicums afterward.

The factors that promoted participation in the course are classified into: institutional factors, human factors, environmental factors, and other factors. Institutional factors include registration system and curriculum. Human factors include family in early years of college. At the time of making a career choice, friends and teachers are the driving factors. It was found that evaluations from the society, such as "Acquisition of qualifications is advantageous for employment" and "It is not difficult to teach the Japanese language" affect

environmental factors. Other factors include the gap between the ideal and reality of the college life.

For research question (2), the following points emerged:

First, it is a four-year curriculum. Ongoing courses allow for continued contact with multiple career models and mentors. Career awareness has changed with the involvement of multiple career models and mentors, as well as with long-term engagement with a single career model or mentor.

The second point is the transformation of evaluation based on experience. Evaluating things and yourself from a new perspective with experience also influenced career awareness. By actually participating in the community of practice and social culture, there was a change in career awareness regarding the working environment.

The third point refers to improved self-efficacy. I pointed out that the structure of Japanese language teaching practice includes activities and environments that are likely to facilitate the recognition of self-efficacy. In Japanese language teaching, practice judgment is evaluated by people in different positions. It was concluded that the accumulation of such experiences will promote problem-identification and problem-solving skills, and the development of global citizenship awareness with a view toward multicultural coexistence.

Finally, the Japanese language teacher training course that I researched was an activity of an educational nature, carried out within educational institutions. For this reason, gradual scaffolding was implemented, both in terms of institutional and educational guidance. I argue that such Japanese language education training and Japanese teacher training courses that connect society and career can be evaluated as programs that play a major role in career education at universities.