

Book Reviews

Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism

By Carol Myers-Scotton

Malden: Blackwell Publishing (2006) 457 pages

To my mind, the majority of works in the field of bilingualism studies can generally be classified into one of two crude categories. On the one hand there are the overly simplistic and prescriptive ‘how to’ manuals that typically fail to present to readers the complex socio-cultural and socio-political intricacies of bilingualism, and on the other, specialized academic works that remain inaccessible and intimidating to the lay reader. Carol Myers-Scotton’s excellent addition to the literature avoids falling into either of these two categories. *Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism* is a textbook that has been written for upper level undergraduate and beginning level masters students, and, as the preface maintains, while it assumes no prior knowledge of linguistics, it certainly cannot be described as ‘bilingualism for dummies’ either. This book not only successfully canvasses bilingualism as a socio-political phenomenon, but also includes chapters dealing with its grammatical and cognitive aspects.

The introductory section (Chapters 1–3) provides the foundations from which the reader can tackle the other more specialized chapters. Arguing that bilingualism is “a natural outcome of the socio-political forces that create groups and their boundaries” (p. 9), Myers-Scotton explains how languages, dialects and registers differ in terms of both structural and socio-political criteria, and how linguistic varieties are influential markers of social identity. Titled ‘Who is Bilingual?’, Chapter 3 considers questions of linguistic proficiency—both structural and pragmatic/sociolinguistic—as well as factors promoting bilingualism. Myers-Scotton clearly explains how bilingualism can be a result of either *close proximity* (when people are in regular contact with speakers of other languages, such as through intermarriage, or living or working in a multi-ethnic environment) or *displacement* (e.g. migration, colonialism, national integration, socio-economic mobility, or economic globalization).

In Chapters 4–7 the social dimensions of bilingualism are investigated. In Chapter 4, Myers-Scotton uses a diverse selection of representative case studies to discuss the key issues relating to the maintenance and shift of languages. She argues that what happens to bilingual communities over time is context specific, and that despite numerous studies, no one factor or set of factors can reliably predict language maintenance or shift. In Chapter 5, the notions of language attitudes and language

ideologies are used to explain how and why linguistic varieties are never equally valued. Myers-Scotton skillfully guides the reader through the sometimes conceptually challenging notion of a political economy of language, and explains how language attitudes, ideologies, and uses are intrinsically tied to the construction of identities. The social motivations for language use in interpersonal interactions are the focus of Chapter 6. Here Myers-Scotton considers what the language choices of bilinguals might reveal about how they perceive themselves in relation to others. And finally, Chapter 7 deals with the enormous body of work concerning intercultural communication—all in just 33 pages. She wrestles this field by surveying the (almost cliché) concepts of individualist and collectivist societies, as well as high/low context communication. Using concrete examples, she discusses approaches to intercultural communication by examining the themes of silence, politeness, requests, power differentials, and ideas of appropriateness in conversational exchanges.

In the following two chapters the structural aspects of language contact are examined. Chapter 8 provides an overview of lexical borrowing, and makes a distinction between cultural and core borrowings. The author illustrates how lexical borrowings almost always involve morphological integration while phonological integration is less common. In Chapter 9, the grammatical implications of bilingual contacts are explored. Theoretically, this chapter is particularly dense, offering thorough coverage of issues relating to codeswitching, convergence and attrition, and the development of pidgins and creoles.

Next, in Chapters 10 and 11, psycholinguistic research into bilingualism is reviewed to highlight the cognitive intricacies of multilingual acquisition for children and adults alike. In Chapter 10, the nature of the bilingual lexicon, levels of activation, as well as issues relating to word recognition, memory, and aphasia are examined. Myers-Scotton makes the point that although the majority of psycholinguistic research is restricted to experimental methodologies, the discipline has—due in part to advances in brain-imaging techniques—made important contributions to our understanding of language processing. Chapter 11 will be of particular interest to parents attempting to raise bilingual children as it considers the extent to which age correlates with successful bilingual acquisition. In what amounts to a comprehensive literature review, the author canvasses the generally well documented consensus that children tend to acquire languages easier than adults. The focus, Myers-Scotton argues, should now be turned to specifically *why* this is the case—something that has to date been largely ignored by psycholinguistic researchers.

Chapter 12 is concerned with issues related to language policy and planning in a globalizing world. Myers-Scotton asserts that four major socio-political developments

have shaped debates about language policy: immigration trends; the education of these minority language-speaking migrants; the increasing prominence of English as a *lingua franca*; and the establishment of the European Union. These developments, she argues, are intrinsically tied to the question of language rights. Myers-Scotton explains the three core dimensions of language planning: status planning; corpus planning; and acquisition planning, and subsequently demonstrates how language planning is a politically charged activity that promotes the ideologies of dominant groups in societies. Many of the issues raised in this chapter will be of interest to anyone following the growing debate in Japan concerning immigration and the Japanese language proficiency of foreigners.

Finally, Chapter 13 recaps the general theme of the book—that asymmetries characterize both social and grammatical relations between languages. The author reminds us not to underestimate the symbolic values that speakers place on languages, and urges us to remain cognizant of the fact that even if assigned formal status, languages are rarely equally valued. In this sense, Myers-Scotton's book presents language use and multilingualism as inherently political phenomena.

Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism is an impressive work for a number of reasons. Firstly, Myers-Scotton deserves credit for delivering precisely what she set out to write—an introductory text to bilingualism that is broad in scope, yet neither overly simplistic nor inaccessible to the lay reader. The expansive field of bilingualism is often approached from a range of disciplines, and this text will be of use to anybody wanting an entry level look into the social, cognitive, and grammatical aspects of languages in contact. Secondly, the structure and style of the text is very reader friendly. The chapters are logically organized into themed sections, and all key terminology is explained clearly 'in-text'. Thirdly, the book offers informative but balanced reviews of recent debates in bilingualism studies (such as discussions pertaining to the Critical Period Hypothesis and Universal Grammar), leaving the reader to decide for themselves where they stand on these questions. And finally, the author is to be commended for illustrating her content with examples from a plethora of linguistic, geographic, and cultural settings. In this sense, the book truly provides a 'global snapshot' of bilingualism.

I thoroughly endorse *Multiple Voices: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. As one of the most renowned scholars and prolific writers in the field of bilingualism studies, Myers-Scotton has provided an affordable and comprehensive text that qualifies as an essential addition to the library of anyone serious about the study of bilingualism—regardless of their level of expertise.

Reviewed by Lachlan Jackson, Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan

Language and Education in Japan: Unequal Access to Bilingualism

By Yasuko Kanno

Palgrave Macmillan (2008) 206 pages

In recent years, bilingual education has been receiving increasing interest in Japan, as it has around the world. Extending on her earlier research on bilingual individuals (Kanno, 2003), in this book Yasuko Kanno explores the notion of imagined communities and its relation to the disparity between various bilingual educational institutions. Through a critical ethnography, her study documents the broad array of bilingual schools in Japan and raises awareness that the notion of “normal” varies widely.

The book follows a reader-friendly format with nine chapters divided into three sections: the introduction (Chapters 1-2), specific case studies (Chapters 3-7) and the conclusions (Chapters 8-9). After a brief outline of the structure and significance of the study, Chapter 2 frames the study first by providing an overview of Japan’s cultural and linguistic diversity in its historical context, and then by noting the limitations of prior research, which has tended to lack a comparative perspective. Readers who presume Japan to be a monolingual, monocultural nation will soon have reason to challenge those assumptions as they track Kanno’s research into bilingual education, ethnic school education, international school education, and immersion education. In Chapter 2, she also maps out her analytical framework including the two key concepts of ‘imagined communities’ (Kanno and Norton, 2003), and ‘theory of cultural reproduction’, both of which locate her primary concerns with institutional visions as multiple and conflicting. Finally, Kanno recaps the process of how and why she chose the schools as the focus of her study.

The case study section consists of five chapters, each of which presents an in-depth portrait of a school in Japan. Based on multiple data collected from schools regarded by many as being at the forefront of bilingual education in Japan, the case studies cover a range of socio-economic institutions, from the highly privileged to the extremely underprivileged. As such, it is refreshing to see an author examine class and politics in Japanese education, especially when illustrating the role school practices play in the linguistic stratification of bilingual students. Kanno argues that “schools create unequal access to bilingualism by envisioning different imagined communities for bilingual students of different socioeconomic classes and socializing them into these stratified imagined communities” (p. 3). The extensive documentation in part two will be of particular interest to both parents raising bilingual children in Japan and ethnographic researchers as it details a wealth of data including fieldwork notes, interviews with

teachers, administrators, parents and students, and relevant documents.

Chapter 8, which I found most intriguing, addresses the central question of “why access to bilingualism is given freely to some children but not to others” (p. 145). Without this chapter, the previous five chapters are unthreaded pearls; rare, splendid, but ultimately unconnected. In this chapter, Kanno divides the five schools first into three categories in terms of the bilingual education they promote, and then examines them from three main angles: imagined communities and school instruction; teachers’ attitudes toward parents; and student identity and bilingualism. According to Kanno, two of the private schools, Hal School and Nichiei promote additive bilingualism in Japanese and English, whereas the two Japanese public schools Sugino and Midori, tend to develop subtractive forms of bilingualism in their support programs, which provide remedial assistance for language minority students. Readers who assume bilingual education equates to elite bilingualism will be startled to learn that both subtractive and additive forms of education are taking place in Japan. Public education offers an either/or option, requiring language minority students (immigrants) to replace their mother tongues with Japanese. In contrast upper-class Japanese language majority students are provided with a both/and option, demonstrating that “differential access to bilingualism is part of the social and cultural reproduction to which schools contribute” (p. 164).

Reading this, Kanno initially seems to have adopted a pessimistic perspective on bilingual education in Japan, in that minority language educators and students must acknowledge that the imagined community underlies the kind of education each school achieves. However, as the discussion moves on, the analysis of the education at the fifth institution, Zhonghua Chinese Ethnic School, presents an exception. Kanno argues the students can achieve a different destiny by offering an alternative imagined community, such “as becoming cultural and social bridges between Japan and China” (p. 164). Drawing heavily on prior research, Kanno suggests “educators are capable of challenging the unequal power structures in society by preparing their students for more equitable and empowering imagined communities” (p. 4). Fortunately, the discussion does not stop at suggestions but goes deeper to three questions: how additive and subtractive bilingualism help construct students’ identities; how students growing up as bilingual speakers; and how L1 is treated as an illegitimate language under the subtractive bilingual education found in Japanese public schools. This chapter urges us to reflect on the concept of “normal” by that realizing “normality” varies widely among these five schools. The ultimate value of the study perhaps lies in its potential to awaken educators, encouraging them to do something rather than simply remain as passive deliverers of political and social policy.

Finally, the conclusion sums up the analysis and discusses directions for future research on bilingualism, especially in Japan. Having demonstrated “what happens when members of a school exert their agency to challenge the existing power relations in society by imagining an alternative future for disadvantaged students”, Kanno raises the question of “why some schools fail to prevent their language minority students from sliding into subtractive bilingualism” (p. 180) and critically points out that the reason is related to the fact that “they do not question their own assumption that the kinds of students they serve have limited futures, and this way, they end up contributing to the self-fulfilling prophecy by socializing them into such futures” (p. 180). The book concludes by appealing for more research into such programs. Kanno is not the first scholar to apply critical ethnography to bilingualism; however, she provides an alternative perspective on applying it to institutional visions.

This welcome contribution offers a timely perspective on inequality of access to bilingualism in Japan. The book can be read as a guide to parents who are raising bilingual children because it provides a comprehensive investigation into the various forms of education available, or it can be read as a detailed study for social researchers interested in bilingual education in Japan. Since it carefully traces procedures for how to investigate new territory, it can also be read as an outstanding exemplar for novice researchers who are carrying out qualitative research. Finally and most importantly, it should be essential reading for bilingual educators, and administrators because it demonstrates bilingual learning is not an individual endeavor but has a deep connection with the institutional and imagined communities.

Reviewed by Yuan Yuan, Kobe University

References

- Kanno, Y. (2003). *Negotiating Bilingual and Bicultural Identities: Japanese Returnees Between Two Worlds*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kanno, Y., & Norton, B. (2003). "Imagined communities and educational possibilities: Introduction" in *Journal of Language, Identity and Education* 2(4), 241-249.

Case Study Research in Applied Linguistics

By Patricia A. Duff

New York: Lawrence Erlbaum & Associates (2008) 248 pages.

One need only peruse the back issues of this publication or others like it to appreciate the growing importance of case study methodology in research into multilingualism and multiculturalism. As such, it is essential that anyone either conducting or studying research in these areas develop knowledge of the methodological and philosophical foundations of case study research as well as its practical dimensions. Patricia Duff's book, *Case Study Research in Applied Linguistics*, is a book that provides the reader with just that knowledge. Drawing on her years of personal experience in conducting case study research, Duff lays out exactly what researchers need to consider and do at each stage of the case study. Moreover, she highlights her discussions with clear concrete examples taken from previously published research, examples that make it much easier for would-be-researchers to picture exactly what is expected of them at different stages of their research projects.

In the first chapter, as an introduction to case studies, Duff carefully walks the reader through a case study she did in the 1980s on the ESL development of a Cambodian man after he arrived in Canada. After completing her description of this man's language development, she enters into a discussion on how her analysis could have been different had the goals of the case study been different, the theory from which she approached the case study been different or the data she collected been different. In presenting the discussion, she touches on many of the issues that will be discussed in more depth throughout this book.

In the second chapter, Duff deals directly with the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research in general and case studies specifically. She begins by reviewing a number of definitions of case studies from which she identifies "boundedness or singularity, in-depth study, multiple perspectives or triangulation, particularity, contextualization, and interpretation" (p.23) as the principles that underlie this type of research. She then moves on to recount the history of case studies in a variety of fields, pointing out the importance that those studies have played in the development of those fields. From there, Duff moves on to outline the features of qualitative research in general and to point out the importance of those features. She then begins a discussion of the role that case studies have played in applied linguistics and finishes the chapter with a description of the advantages and disadvantages of case study methodology.

In the third chapter, Duff reviews some significant case studies that have been done within the field of applied linguistics. In doing this, she is able to highlight both the methodologies and issues that were prominent at different times in applied linguistics and how this type of research has influenced the development of the field of applied linguistics, broadening it to now include investigation into topics such as identity, discourse, and culture.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, Duff goes on to walk the reader through the different stages of case study research while discussing in detail exactly how to proceed through each stage. In the fourth chapter, she explains what is entailed in the foundations of case study research. She starts by going over the importance of the research objectives and questions, and continues by outlining different types of research designs that can be utilized in case studies and discussing issues of case selection and sampling. She then explains to the reader the different sources of evidence used in case studies, going in depth in her discussions about interviews and observations. Finally, she ends the chapter with a discussion about ethical concerns and the role of institutional review boards.

In the fifth chapter, Duff details the nuts and bolts of dealing with the data that has been collected. She starts by covering transcription, explaining to the reader different transcription conventions, what considerations influence the decision of how much detail to put into transcriptions, and the amount of time and effort that the researcher can expect to expend in transcribing the data. From there, Duff moves on to a discussion of data analysis, giving clear examples from previously published research that help the reader better understand how to go about analyzing data, what questions can help guide analysis, and how and why to develop codes to aid in analysis. Duff finishes this chapter with an important discussion on validity and reliability—what these two terms mean in qualitative research and the roles that they play in supporting the conclusions that are being drawn from the case study.

In her final chapter, Duff approaches the issue of how to write up case study research. After covering issues such as the intended audience and venue, Duff moves to a discussion on the organization and content of the report. In this section, she complements her discussion by outlining three of her own published cases, each following a different organizational structure. Finally, she talks about the importance of writing style, especially in presenting qualitative data, and gives advice on how to improve in this area.

Case Study Research in Applied Linguistics is a comprehensive explanation of both what case study research is and how to conduct it. Duff uses the examples she gives not only to clarify the points that she makes, but also to provide readers with guidance in

their own research. In doing so, she has given the areas of bilingualism and multilingualism/ multiculturalism an indispensable book. While many methodology books are often too vague or abstract to be of much practical use, this book is essential for anyone who is considering conducting case study research.

Reviewed by Peter Longcope, Nagoya University

Language Attrition and Retention in Japanese Returnee Students

By Hideyuki Taura

Tokyo: Akashi Shoten (2008) 495 pages

Like all good action research, this study began with an observation by a teacher. While Hideyuki Taura was working at a high school with a high percentage of “returnee” students (*kikoku shijo*), he noticed that the students had a very different impression of their own English skills than the teachers who taught them. While the returnees worried that they were losing the English they had learned while they were living abroad, their teachers felt that their English proficiency actually remained quite high and noted that their rising test scores even hinted at improvement. In fact, preliminary TOEFL scores of 21 returnees in one of the classes Taura taught were significantly higher in the areas of structure/writing, vocabulary/reading and overall score on the second test of the school year than they had been on the first test.

In trying to reconcile these contradictory evaluations, Taura hypothesized that the daily English classes in the high school were helping boost the returnees’ receptive language skills (which showed up in improved test scores), but that meanwhile, their productive skills may have been declining, leading to their frustration over their “loss” of English. He therefore decided to investigate which English skills were lost by the returnees in his school and when they were lost, as well as which skills were retained and which, if any, improved. This investigation became the core of Taura’s doctoral research, and the book under review is a revised version of his Ph.D. thesis.

In the course of Taura’s research, he conducted three different sets of tests on over 200 Japanese high school students between the ages of 12 and 18 who had lived at least three years in an English-speaking country before puberty and whose English had become proficient enough for them to be able to carry on their daily activities and study in an English-medium school without great difficulty before they returned to Japan. All of the participants were students at the high school in Osaka where he was teaching at the time the study was conceived. The school

follows the educational guidelines set out by the Japanese Ministry of Education, but is attached to an international high school and offers classes taught in English by native speakers in non-academic subjects such as art, music and gym.

Taura's book consists of six chapters of uneven length. In Chapter 1, he explains the rationale for his study, defines the most important terminology and provides a typology of language attrition as well as a brief overview of the history of language attrition studies.

Chapter 2 contains Taura's review of previous research, which builds up to his research questions. His presentation is very clear and detailed, as one would expect from a Ph.D. thesis, and covers research on L1 and foreign language attrition as well as L2 attrition. At times, the review seems extremely dense, hard to understand and rather repetitious. However, Taura carefully explains the results of previous studies from a number of different angles and analyzes variables that might have an impact on whether the returnees' L2 (English) is lost or retained and subsequently improved. Moreover, Taura was kind enough to provide a table summarizing the results and suggests that readers might want to just look at that rather than wading through his description. In this way, he satisfies both the reader who wants to know exactly how previous research was conducted and the more casual reader who just wants a quick outline of what has already been discovered.

I personally found section 2.4, which discusses Taura's theoretical framework, especially informative, as it gives a clear explanation of how methodology might affect outcomes. Taura's discussion of the various models of how the brain processes two languages was also of great interest to me, as it brought together a great deal of up-to-date information in a concise, easy-to-understand manner. I feel this section would be very helpful to other researchers in this field regardless of whether or not they are doing research on language attrition.

Taura also analyzed previous research to identify variables that have been shown to influence the timing and extent of attrition. These include age, literacy, pre-attrition proficiency, attitude and motivation. Since some of the studies he summarized did not consider all of these variables, Taura reanalyzed the data for two of the most important ones. This was obviously painstaking work—a clear sign of the thoroughness with which this study was conducted. Of the variables dealt with in previous research, Taura notes that L2 literacy education has been shown to be a key factor in attrition, and in particular, receiving the first four years of English literacy education (grades one to four), might well be crucial to long-term English retention.

Chapter 2 ends with a brief discussion of methodological issues that Taura needed to be careful of when conducting his own study. He then presents his research questions: Q1: "Does receiving an L2 literacy education for the first four years at elementary school in an English-speaking country influence eventual L2 retention after reaching high school age?" (p. 111). Q2: What is the linguistic nature of L2 retention/attrition of Japanese returnee high school

students?” (p. 113). This chapter also contains a number of predictions based on previous research.

In Chapter 3, Taura describes a pilot study he conducted in which different groups of returnees who had lived in an English-speaking country for more than 3 years were tested on three different skills to determine if there were significant differences according to the “incubation period”—the amount of time that had elapsed since they had left the English-speaking country. All of the tests were based on cross-sectional rather than longitudinal data (in other words, he looked at different groups of students who had been back in Japan for differing amounts of time rather than studying the same students for a long period of time). These tests included a timed writing test administered to 108 returnees, an oral story-telling task conducted with 24 returnees, and a test of the receptive Japanese and English lexicons of 80 returnees. Overall, the results of the pilot study suggest that returnees who are highly proficient in English do not experience attrition of their skills after they come back if they are receiving EFL instruction.

In Chapter 4, Taura discusses the methodology he used in the main study. Chapter 5, by far the longest in the book (171 pages), details the study results, with more than 70 tables, graphs and figures. On top of this, the volume contains 16 appendices packed with data from his study which run another 90 pages after the end of the main body of the book. The sheer amount of data is in itself impressive, and Taura’s explanations of what he did and the rationale for each step make it clear that everything was well-reasoned and painstakingly carried out. Nonetheless, this is not a work for the casual reader. Without a strong background in research methodology, the reader is likely to get bogged down in the details, losing track of what skill is being examined at any given point.

Chapter 6 moves on to discuss the results of the study in relation to the two research questions. In answering research question 1 about the impact of receiving the first four years of formal education in an English-speaking country, Taura considered the participants’ productive lexicon, receptive lexicon, writing skills, fluency, accuracy and complexity. Overall, the results showed that students who had received their first four years of education in an English-speaking country (referred to by Taura as the “EDU group”) experienced less English attrition than those who hadn’t. Taura also identified two cut-off ages: returnees who had begun their English education before the age of six retained some aspects of their English lexicon and their accuracy better than those who didn’t, while for some aspects of fluency and accuracy, the cut-off age appeared to be nine. For other variables, however, the duration of study in an English environment seemed to be more important than the age at which it started, with four years being the threshold for better retention.

In answer to his second research question on the linguistic nature of L2 retention /

attrition of Japanese returnee high school students, one of Taura's most interesting findings was that the receptive lexicon of *all* of the returnees showed *improvement* during their high school years, even though they only received one hour of EFL instruction a day, five days a week. He did find, however, that there was a difference between those who had received at least four years of education in an English-speaking country starting before the age of six (the "EDU" group) and those who arrived in an English-speaking country at a later time or studied there for a shorter time. In terms of productive lexicon, the EDU group had better rates of retention, although for both groups, their productive vocabulary became more sophisticated with each passing year back in Japan.

Taura also found that for the EDU group, writing skills improved after they returned to Japan. The results on the complexity of the returnees' language were inconclusive, while for syntax, the longer the students had studied abroad the better they retained their English grammar.

In analyzing the returnees' fluency, Taura found that their fluency in their written work actually increased during the first two years after they had returned to Japan, then stagnated for two years, after which it began to rise again in the EDU group but fall in the non-EDU group during their sixth year back in the country. In contrast, spoken fluency was retained for only the first year in both groups, after which it improved for the EDU group and dropped significantly for the non-EDU group. In fact, the fluency of the EDU group continued to improve until it reached near native speaker level. Thus, Taura concludes that the experience of receiving the first four years of education in an English-speaking country makes a significant difference in terms of whether the student's English fluency is retained or lost.

In analyzing the accuracy of the participants' spontaneous writing and speaking tasks, Taura employed two types of analysis. Using traditional categories of grammatical items, he found a great deal of variability in the degrees of retention and attrition. However, when he applied the 4-M analysis model proposed by Myers-Scotton (2002), the order in which morphemes were lost was found to be quite regular. Surprisingly, the order in which morpheme types were lost by his participants was the exact opposite of that predicted by Myers-Scotton. Taura offers a very convincing argument on why this should be so in the context of Japanese-English bilingualism, thus contributing to the refinement of Myers-Scotton's widely respected model.

The complexity of the English the participants used suffered very little attrition. Similarly, none of the participants who had received at least three years of formal education in English suffered attrition in their writing skills during their first year back in Japan, although after that, the students in the EDU group were found to retain their writing skills better than the non-EDU group. Both groups, however, showed linear improvement in their overall writing scores over their first five years back in Japan.

These findings are pulled together in Chapter 7. Overall, Taura's study highlights the

advantage of receiving the first four years of formal education in English in terms of retaining English competence after return to Japan. Moreover, in this “EDU” group, the participants’ English proficiency actually continued to improve in terms of their writing sophistication, lexicon, and certain aspects of fluency and accuracy. Taura suggests that the reasons for this include the high level of English proficiency they had acquired before returning to Japan, their high motivation to retain their English, and the educational environment of their high school, which was highly supportive of their English competencies.

Taura also uses these results to explain the observation that initially spurred his research: the apparent disconnect between the returnees’ personal feeling that their English skills were decaying and their teachers’ observations that attrition was not so severe. He suggests that the decline in fluency experienced by the returnees after their first year back in Japan made them feel uneasy. For those who had not experienced their first four years of education in an English-speaking country, this attrition was more severe, and eventually led to global deterioration in their English skills in their fifth year back in Japan. However, for the EDU group, overall English competencies were actually retained quite well, and even in the non-EDU group, improvement was seen in writing skills.

Taura concludes the book by pointing out a number of significant aspects of this study. First, it reveals that there appears to be a threshold level of L2 that can be achieved by receiving the first four years of formal education in that language, which makes the L2 “strongly resistant to attrition”. Second, it shows the importance of L2 literacy education for periods of four years or longer, regardless of the age at which it begins. Third, it demonstrates that improvement in the L2 is possible even after removal from an L2 dominant community. In addition, this study is the first to cover attrition during the teenage years—previous attrition research having focused on children and adults. Moreover, Taura’s findings shed light on the usefulness of Myers-Scotton’s 4-M model while also suggesting an area in which it needs to be refined.

Perhaps most important, this work provides very useful information concerning Japanese returnees. For EFL teachers, it suggests ways to tailor syllabuses and class assignments to the needs of returnees. Where possible, it would be advisable to separate the EDU group from those who did not have the benefit of this extensive early education in English, while it would also be beneficial to concentrate on providing opportunities for oral interaction during the first two years back in Japan to maintain fluency. For Japanese parents taking their children to English-speaking countries, Taura’s work suggests the benefits of certain timing and durations of stay. And for returnees themselves, it should offer hope that their English skills are not fated to continuous deterioration; in fact, they can be maintained and improved even after the students return to Japan.

For these reasons, this is a very important work in the field of bilingualism and English

education in Japan. However, it is not by any means an easy read. It is highly technical and very repetitious. Moreover, although the research itself was painstakingly reasoned and conducted, it was not as carefully written or edited. There are many errors in punctuation, formatting and presentation, including mistakes in names and dates of previous studies and in one case, which language was being studied. There are many abbreviations used and some are similar (e.g., OA for onset age of exposure to L2 and AOA for age of arrival in Japan), making it easy for the reader to become confused. In addition, some terms are used before they are defined, and there is no index provided so that the reader can look up their definitions.

Yet these are small quibbles. Taura is to be congratulated on producing such a fine contribution to the research on returnees in Japan as well as to the field of language attrition.

Reference

Myers-Scotton, C. (2002). *Contact linguistics: Bilingual encounters and grammatical outcomes*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Reviewed by Mary Goebel Noguchi, Kansai University