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Teacher Observation Report 1

Lesson Description

The class I had chosen to observe was Japanese 102 at the University of Arizona. This class meets five days a week for fifty minute intervals with the teacher teaching four class sessions back to back everyday. The class is conducted as if it were a Japanese classroom, that means no electronics should be out unless it is an ipad for notes and if asked students will stand up to answer. The book used for this class is Nakama, a renowned Japanese language textbook that has been used at The University of Arizona for over six years. The classroom itself is set up in a seating arrangement created by the teacher, which changes after each chapter test. The tables in the classroom are separated so that the teacher has a walking room in the middle, with the last and odd set of tables left empty.

To start the class the teacher will greet the students in Japanese with the students responding appropriately in Japanese. Instead of moving on, the teacher then asks questions about their day in Japanese with some students responding and others staying silent. After the brief greeting and conversation, the teacher introduces the day's activities in Japanese. The first thing students did was a vocab quiz followed by a one minute individual reading of a Japanese paragraph where they were required to record how far they were able to read (this was a daily thing, with their number being recorded each day). Afterwards they were introduced to two new Kanji and new grammar points which they would learn through readings and group activities. To end the class period, the students' chapter tests were handed back to them.

The classroom heavily focused on speaking Japanese as much as possible and connecting new grammar points and vocabulary through Japanese. The teacher managed the classroom through multiple ways. The first was the teacher's position in the classroom, the teacher stood at the front at all times, very rarely walking down the middle (only done a few times during group activities). The teacher also utilized the seating chart as a way to call on students who were not participating as much in class as their fellow peers. For example, during group activities they were split into groups of two, some groups spoke more and other groups either spoke very little or not at all. Instead of addressing these groups and encouraging them to speak during the group activity, the teacher would then call on them during the next activity to give them a chance to

practice and speak in Japanese. Another interesting factor I had noticed within the class, is the way the teacher controlled and promoted speaking in Japanese over speaking in English. The teacher themselves only spoke in Japanese once the class started even when giving directions or answering students questions it was all done in Japanese. The only moment English was encouraged to be spoken was when the teacher called on a student to read the explanation for the new grammar point. If students asked questions, it was usually done in Japanese, but in the cases where they couldn't ask in Japanese they were encouraged to ask the question in the Japanese they did know and use English for the words they did not know.

Reflection

There were a few techniques I found myself wanting to try when it came to my own teaching. The first was the way the teacher only used Japanese in the classroom and how they maneuvered around moments where it would have been easier for them to revert to English. Those skills that I observed showcased to me how important it can be for students to have this solid period of time dedicated to just listening and comprehending the language they are trying to learn and how it can be done in a way for students to comprehend what it is being taught. The second thing I found myself personally seeing within my own teaching is how much the teacher focused on communication. My personal teaching philosophy focuses on emphasizing and getting students to speak in the designated language as soon as possible and I found that this class did just that. The students were expected to respond when questions were asked or read aloud as a class, but in times when that wasn't happening, they were also asked to work in pairs on activities that involved and focused on speaking Japanese. Outside of these moments, being individually called on to speak Japanese and the expectation that they greet and say goodbye to the teacher in Japanese only further provided the students communication time in Japanese.

This observation impacted my thoughts on teaching by giving me insight on how to implement certain communicative teaching moments into the classroom. At the same time there were certain smaller things the teacher did that I found myself not wanting to adopt (compared to an observation from another class I had observed). For example, I found that the teacher stayed at the front of the class almost the entirety of the class period and did not personally stop to listen to students during group activities. Comparing this to another observation I had done, I found myself preferring the method where the teacher moved from group to group during group

activities, answering questions or clarifying things for the students while also just listening in on what the students are doing. I feel like this creates a more personal connection with the students and gives them more of a connection with the teacher making it easier for them to ask questions if need be. That being said, I also want to try and implement only speaking the target language in the classroom like this teacher did. There has always been this fear that if I am not fluent in the language of the country I want to teach in, then I can't teach there, but if these teachers are using techniques and methods to teach without having to speak the country's language, then perhaps I can too. That being said, only speaking the target language can also be a good communicative approach to help my students learn the language.

Through these observations I had hoped to learn the overall teaching styles and different methods that go into teaching a language class. I have not yet taught in an academic setting and this leaves me a little scared and nervous on what that is going to be like. I often wonder if what I do would be good enough for the students or what happens if they ask a question I don't fully understand? But, after observing this class (and others) it helped me gain confidence while also seeing how teachers maneuver around the academic space and their relationships with the students. It made teaching seem more tangible for me.