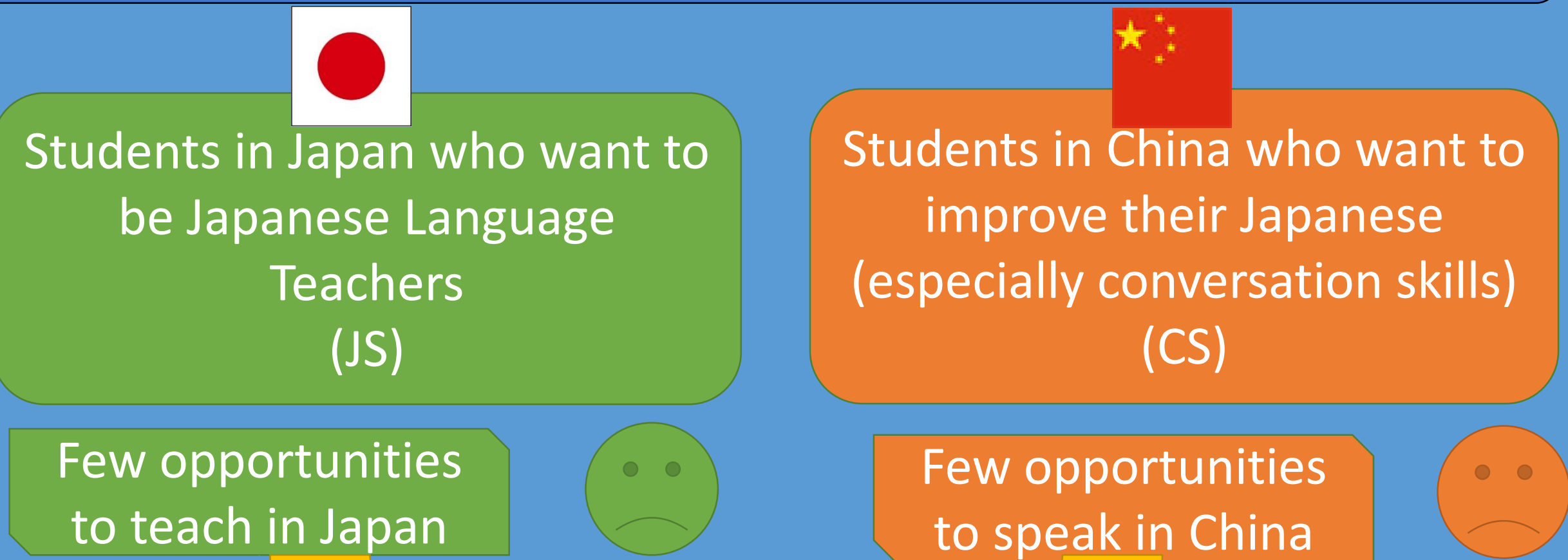


Skype-Assisted Conversation Activity to Foster Japanese Language Teacher

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1. Background



This activity provides...

- An authentic chance to teach / learn Japanese language communicatively
- Self-efficacy (Bandura 1977)
- Conceptual skills and human skills (Soyoda & Okahigashi 2004) for JS
- Reflection on the identity of "teacher" for JS

2. Practice

2.1 Participants

12 students from Jissen Women's University in Tokyo, Japan
15 students from Hunan University in Zhangsha, China

2.2 Period

April – July 2012 (Extended by a request from CS)

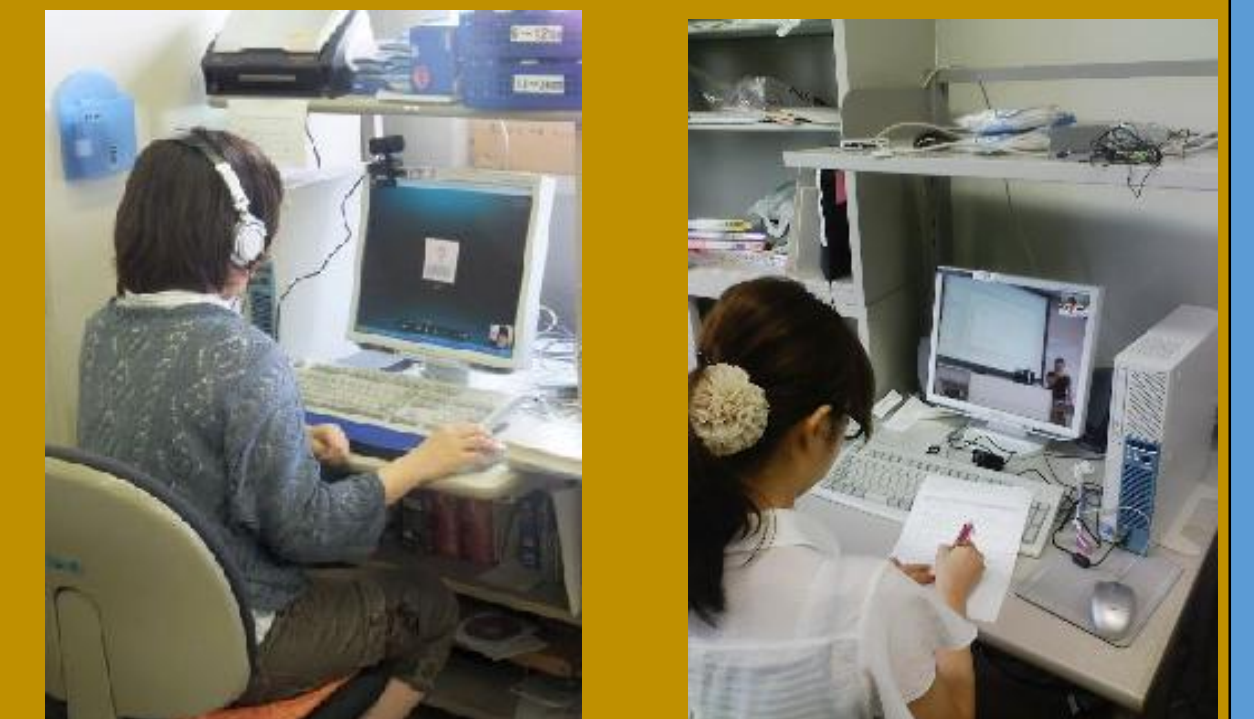
2.3 Activity

One-on-one conversations

1 session per week (max 90 min.)

JS were not instructed to TEACH, just to "Enjoy."

The themes were predetermined. A discussion of Japanese grammar was included in the latter sessions.



2.4 Themes

1. Self-introduction	2. Campus life	3. Pop culture	4. Foods	5. Home, family
6. Hometown	7. Honorifics	8. Festivals and traditions	9. Vacation	

2.5 Feedback

Comments on the Facebook group page



3. Effects & Evaluation

Q. What was your reason for participating in this activity?

- To gain experience teaching Japanese (3)
- To improve my Japanese teaching skills (3)
- To talk to people in other countries (3)
- To learn about other countries' cultures (3)

Q. Have you achieved this purpose?

Yes, very well (3), Yes (8)

Q. Did you enjoy this activity?

Yes, very much (6), Yes (4), No (1)

Q. When did you feel so?

- When I could explain things successfully (6)
- When my partner said my explanation was useful after the session (2)
- When I noticed the gap between the two cultures (2)
- When my partner did not appear without notification (1)

Q. Was it helpful to have the themes decided previously?

Yes, very much (7), Yes (3), No (1)

Q. What is the most impressive theme?

- Campus life (2), Honorifics (2), Pop culture (3), Festivals and traditions (1), Hometown (1), Foods (2)

Q. Was Facebook helpful for reflection?

Yes, very well (5), Yes (5)

Q. Why?

- Because I could reflect on MY session (7)
- Because I could follow other students' activities (4)

Q. How have the LEARNERS changed?

They have become more enthusiastic and ask more questions. (4)

They have become able to understand fast speech. (2)

Special effects on students who are not very active in a classroom

Q. How have YOU changed?

I reflected on my Japanese to make myself understood.

I tried to speak clearly.

I tried more to create rapport with my partner than to speak well. I thought we could teach only after we built a good relationship.

I enjoyed being TAUGHT.

Identity as a teacher has changed

I want to become a Japanese language teacher even more than before!

Q. What is important to do when you talk with foreigners?

Listen his/her words well (3)

Know and respect each other's culture (3)

Enjoy the conversation (2)

Not think my common sense is the same as others' (2)

Human Skills

A problem to be solved

Q. What is the problem with this activity?

Poor quality of call or video (8)

It is hard to explain culture (2)

Q. What problems did you encounter?

Explanation of synonyms

Timing of correction

Varied answers

Q. Did you read others' comments?

Sometimes (8), Always (3)

Q. What did you think at that time?

When our conversation stopped, I continued it with "I heard in China..."

At first, I was not sure how to maintain the conversation, so others' comments helped us. Some students analyzed the questions from the learner quite well.

My conversation preceded other pairs, so I used the comments for my reflection.

120 comments on Facebook.



Some JS uploaded their original worksheets or materials spontaneously. CS sent JS an index of grammatical items for which they wanted to hear an explanation.

→This activity facilitated spontaneous learning.

4. Final Remarks

The Skype-Assisted Conversation Activity helped develop conceptual & human skills of the JS.

A future task is to conduct the same activity for students who want to be Japanese teachers for Japanese students or elementary school teachers. Also, a corpus based on this activity is being built.