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Teaching Kanji at Swedish Universities

On Teaching Kanji, Learning Strategies, and How These Are Perceived by Teachers and Students of L2 Japanese in Sweden

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Abstract

This thesis explores four different strategies of kanji instruction: mnemonic devices; rote learning; air writing; and morphological analysis. It also explores how these strategies are used in Swedish universities today, what the instructors think about them, as well as student perception of the techniques. Four instructors of kanji teaching at two different Swedish universities have been interviewed regarding their teaching methods. A survey on students learning Japanese at one Swedish university has also been conducted. Even though the results are not generalisable in a greater context – mainly because of the small sample size – the results show that it is both important and preferable by researchers, instructors, and students to have a variety of methods when learning kanji.

Keywords: Japanese, Japanese as a foreign language, JFL, learning strategies, mnemonic devices, rote learning, air writing, morphological analysis, Sweden, kanji

Preface

This thesis would not have been possible to write without the support of many cups of tea; my four-legged assistants; my colleagues who have been very accepting of my conducting interviews in the office; the instructors who have accepted to be part of this research; the people answering my survey; my peer reviewers; and my mentor. I am eternally grateful to everyone. If I have forgotten to mention anyone, I am sorry, but grateful, nonetheless.

On the Romanisation of Japanese Words in This thesis

When romanising words, this thesis is going to use what is called the ワープロ ローマ字 (*waapuro roumaji*, or 'word processor romaji'). This can be described as a mix between the Hepburn and Kunrei romanisation (which are romanisation techniques taught to schoolchildren) and Nippon-shiki romanisation, as well as how Japanese is inputted when writing in a word processor. It resembles the manner to enter kanji and kana using a romanised form. The biggest difference between the Hepburn and Kunrei romanisation and word processor romaji is that long vowels are not marked with circumflexes or macrons (*ô* and *ō*) but written as '*ou*' instead. し and つ will be romanised as 'shi' and 'tsu' respectively. The disadvantage of this manner of romanisation is that it sometimes might be difficult to distinguish between the pronunciation of long vowels and words that simply end in 'u' (思う→おもう→omo-u). It is also more difficult to write out words in katakana that have long vowels and are indicated by *chouon*, or a long line after a katakana ('ー') as in the word ローマ字 (*romaji*). Another issue is the romanisation of the particles "へ" and "を" which, when used, are going to be written out as "he" and "wo" respectively, even though the actual pronunciations rather are "e" and "o", because of the word processor romaji style that has been chosen for this text.

The main reason for doing this is ease of input. It is easier and takes less time and effort to find the correct symbols with macrons. I am also more used to inputting kanji and kana into a computer. The issues presented above are not going to be present in this thesis.

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1 Introduction, Aim, and Research Questions

1.1 Introduction

Learning how to read and write in Japanese is a notoriously difficult task. Learners of Japanese need not only learn how to recognise and write thousands of Chinese characters, but also learn the often-multiple readings and how they change depending on the context and the combination of kanji. It is therefore of interest to not only see how kanji is formally taught, but also what aspects research has found to be important when learning the art of reading and writing Japanese. This thesis focuses on how kanji is taught in Japanese as foreign language classes in Swedish universities.

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is partly to highlight the complexities in learning kanji (which are Chinese characters adopted into the Japanese language) and partly to show the importance of instruction. The focus is specifically on how Swedish universities are teaching Sino-Japanese characters to Japanese as a foreign language learners (hereafter *L2 students*, or *learners of L2 Japanese*) at Swedish universities: what methods they are using, why, and how both instructors and learners perceive these methods.

The research questions are as follows:

- Of the methods presented in the present thesis, which are used in the education of kanji in courses of Japanese as a foreign language in Swedish universities?
- What are the reasons for teaching these methods and strategies?
- How are these methods and strategies perceived by instructors and learners? Is there a preference for one method over another?

Based on the previous research found, the focus of this study is mainly on four different strategies and methods: mnemonic strategies, which often are highlighted in the study material used in Japanese language learning courses; rote memorisation; air writing, which seldom is seen as a teaching method traditionally but is proven to have significance when learning kanji; and morphological analysis. When reading previous research, these four strategies seem to be the ones which are the mostly used when teaching kanji (as seen, for example, in de Sá (2015); Nguyen (2021) and Mori & Shimizu (2002)).

2 A Short Introduction to Kanji

By the 5th century, the Japanese started borrowing a writing system from China (Ivarsson, 2016). These characters are mainly logographic in nature, meaning that one character most often represents one word (Thomas, 2015; Ivarsson, 2016). The Japanese government has published two lists: one which focuses on what kanji are deemed important to teach to grade and middle school students, listing 1006 characters (MEXT, 1993) and a list of regular-use Chinese characters, with a total number of 2126 kanji (Agency for Cultural Affairs, n.y.). Chapter 2 focuses on different aspects of kanji. By presenting different areas of learning kanji and its readings, I hope to not only give a short introduction to the different aspects of kanji characters, but also to highlight some of the difficulties in learning them. There are two parts to this: orthographic components (radicals and phonetics); and pronunciation.

2.1 Radicals and Phonetics

One part of the kanji learning mission is to understand how different orthographic components, which represent mostly meaning and sound (*radicals*, representing meaning, and *phonetics*, representing sound), are connected. Knowing the positions of radicals is essential for assessing semantic information and for finding phonetics as well as retrieving the characters' phonological information (Toyoda, 2009). Below are two examples of radicals and how characters are connected. In Example (1), it is possible to see that the character for 'day' (日) is present in all three of the following characters (a. 'light', b. 'star', c. 'space between; gap'). The radical ('day') is present in three different positions: to the left, over the rest of the character, and inside the character. In Example (2), the semantic component (言, 'to say') is positioned to the left, with the phonetic component (吾, '*go*') to the right. The radical indicates that the kanji has something to do with language and speaking, and the entire kanji means 'word' or 'language'.

<div align="center">

(1) 日　a．明　b．星　c．間

</div>

<div align="center">

(2) 言　→　語　←　吾

</div>

The radical can also indicate the semantic category of the kanji – the broad meaning field.

This can sometimes be unclear, unless the generic meaning of the character and compounds are known (Flores d'Arcais, Saito, & Kawasaki, 1995, in Toyoda, 2009). Example (3) shows the same radical in the same position, with the previously shown (3a.) 'to say' to the left and the new kanji, meaning (3b.) 'who'. The semantic field here is quite difficult to relate to each other. Example (4), on the other hand, shows two kanji which are easier to connect. We still have 'word', which is connected to the kanji meaning (4a.) 'word' or 'language' and (4b) 'speech' (among other meanings excluded, but which also are connected to the same semantic field).

(3) a. 語　b. 誰

(4) a. 語　b. 話

This shows that the meaning of a character cannot be inferred only from its radical, but it could support categorisation and possibly give access to its meaning.

2.2 Pronunciation

Section 2.2 is divided into two parts: the first is focusing on the Chinese based and Japanese based readings (*on-* and *kun-yomi*) and the second on the many homophones that exist in Japanese. In the beginning of the borrowing of Chinese characters into Japanese, the Southern dialect of Chinese was used. As time went on, both the Central and the Northern dialects influenced what has become *on-yomi* (Ivarsson, 2016). This can be problematic when learning the language both for native and second language learners, since the same kanji can have various readings depending on the era and the part of China from where the pronunciation was borrowed.

2.2.1 On- and Kun-Yomi

This section focuses on the different readings of a character in Japanese, which are called *kun-* and *on-yomi*. Historically, kanji and their readings have been imported from China during different eras and were then merged with native Japanese words (Ivarsson, 2016). The pronunciations of these words were simplified from the tonal Chinese into something that the Japanese were able to pronounce and added to the readings of individual kanji. The Japanese did already have a spoken language, which was transferred into the newly acquired writing

system, adding more readings. This resulted in *on-yomi* (Chinese based pronunciation, 音読み, 'sound reading') and *kun-yomi* (the original Japanese pronunciation of a word, 訓読み, 'interpretation reading'). What this means is that the majority of kanji, about 60%, often has at least two, often more, different pronunciations (Hagiwara, 2016). Table 1 refers to a character used in Example (1b): 星 ('star') and introduces a, for this text, new kanji 木 ('tree; wood').

Kanji	Meaning	*Kun-yomi*	*On-yomi*
星	star	ほし、ぼし (hoshi, boshi)	セイ、ショウ、ジョウ (sei, shou, jou)
木	tree, wood	き、こ (ki, ko)	ボク、モク (boku, moku)

Table 1: Examples of Kanji with their *Kun-* and *On-yomi*.

2.2.2 Homophones
Since kanji have been incorporated into the Japanese language over time and from different regions in China, the majority of the characters have developed multiple readings, as is shown in Table 1 above. Since the Chinese pronunciations of kanji had to be changed into something that was pronounceable for the Japanese, many characters share the same pronunciation. A very small number of examples are shown below, in Table 2.

Kanji that are read as こう ('kou')	Kanji that are read as し ('shi')	Kanji that are read as ほう ('hou')
高, 'tall; high' 工, 'factory' 公, 'public; official' 項, 'clause; paragraph' 校, 'school'	市, 'city' 詩, 'poem; verse' 死, 'death; decease' 四, 'four' 史, 'history'	方, 'direction; side; way' 法, 'law; method' 報, 'information; news; reward' 砲, 'gun; cannon' 俸, 'salary'

Table 2: Examples of Homophonic Kanji

It is possible to see that not only are the kanji different in form, but also in meaning. This, of course, is another difficulty when learning Japanese, being native or a second language learner notwithstanding. This also makes conversation difficult sometimes, therefore it is important for the different parties participating in the conversation to be somewhat well-versed in kanji and their different readings.

2.3 The Kanji Learning Task for Japanese L2 Learners

There are many reasons why learning kanji is both daunting and difficult, not only for L2 learners of Japanese, but for native speakers as well (Thomas, 2015). There are many aspects to the mastery of kanji: the recognition and reproduction of the different shapes; their different meanings; the multiple readings and when to use them, as well as how readings differ in compound words as well as the many homophones, etc. To acquire this knowledge, learners need to give these aspects enough attention and repetition. The main issue with learning kanji is that it is absolutely essential – kanji knowledge and comprehension become increasingly important as the learner expands their vocabulary (Machida, 2013). Simply put: an increase of vocabulary knowledge means that learners need to remember more kanji.

According to Walton (1993, in Rose & Harbon, 2013), L2 Japanese students need as much as three times more time to acquire the same level of proficiency as learners of Spanish, French, and German. According to Everson (2011, in Rose & Harbon, 2013), it takes at least four times as much time. Dwyer (1997, in Rose & Harbon, ibid.) states that having insufficient knowledge of kanji prevents students from engaging in interpretative reading as often and as early as students of other, more commonly taught languages. Frankly, L2 students of Japanese struggle with learning kanji and need assistance to overcome this hurdle (Bourke, 1996; Dwyer, 1997; Everson, 2011; Usuki, 2000, all in Rose & Harbon, 2013).

Instructors teaching kanji to L2 learners say that it is "extremely difficult" to learn how to read and write kanji, but that students usually are unaware, even oblivious, of the complexity (Shimizu & Green, 2002, in Rose & Harbon). A part of the difficulty in learning kanji is that students often set unrealistic and outright unachievable goals for themselves, making self-regulation difficult (Rose & Harbon, 2013). Many students expect to be fluent after a couple of years of study at a university level and fail to see that learning kanji is a lifelong task. Native Japanese learners spend nine or more years of formal studies to achieve the level of functional literacy that is required for adult life. This breakdown is more noticeable in intermediate and advanced L2 learners, since the progress is less obvious than in the beginning stages of learning (ibid.). In fact, it can sometimes seem that progress is declining, since more advanced students need to recall old kanji as well as learn new ones. Nevertheless, there are some general principles for kanji and the relationship between shape, meaning, and sound, and learners learn to exploit these principles to lighten the load (Miller, 1986; Heisig, 2007; 2008; Mori, 2012, all in Thomas, 2015).

Even though studies have shown that learning kanji and Japanese vocabulary is difficult for both character-based (such as Chinese and Japanese) and non-character-based (for example English and Swedish) language learners, students often believe that they are able to learn kanji by themselves, without any instruction. About 60% of Asian students (both Chinese, Korean and learners from other nationalities) and 90% of non-character-based language learners believe this (Shimizu, 1994; Toyoda, 1995, all in Machida, 2013). Machida describes the three difficulties of kanji learning: firstly, they are easily forgettable; secondly, they have multiple readings; finally, there are many kanji which look very similar (ibid.). Toyoda (2009) furthers this by stating that it is important to cultivate different awarenesses for functional kanji acquisition. This includes the positions of radicals and their different combinations, the function of these radicals, the knowledge of *kun-* and *on-yomi*, and the awareness that the information found in radicals and phonetics often is unreliable.

3 Previous Research: Kanji Learning Techniques and Strategies

Chapter 3 focuses on making an introduction to different learning techniques and strategies for learning kanji. Based on previous research, four different strategies are highlighted in this thesis: mnemonic strategies in different forms; rote memorisation; air writing; and morphological analysis of kanji. Because of emerging technology, learning kanji using different kinds of apps (such as spaced repetition software) has become popular. This thesis does not include the use of apps, simply because the strategies used in them can be coded into the four methods presented in this chapter. First, there is a short introduction to what each technique entails before presenting the research itself.

3.1 Mnemonic Strategies

A study by Anderson (2005, in Rose, 2013) has shown that mnemonic strategies, which are different methods for encouraging remembrance of material by giving it something meaningful to adhere to, might be helpful. A number of textbooks have been promoting mnemonic strategies: Rowley's (2012) *Kanji Pict-o-Graphix*; Heisig's (2011) *Remembering the Kanji*; and Stout and Hakone's (2017) *Japanese Kanji for Beginners* are just a few examples of kanji textbooks that promote this learning strategy. Different learning materials use different strategies, of course, but those mentioned in this thesis use some form of pictorial strategy. Rowley relates the new kanji to pictures of what they represent, which is useful as long as the kanji in itself is not portraying ideas or less straightforward meanings (Rose, 2013).
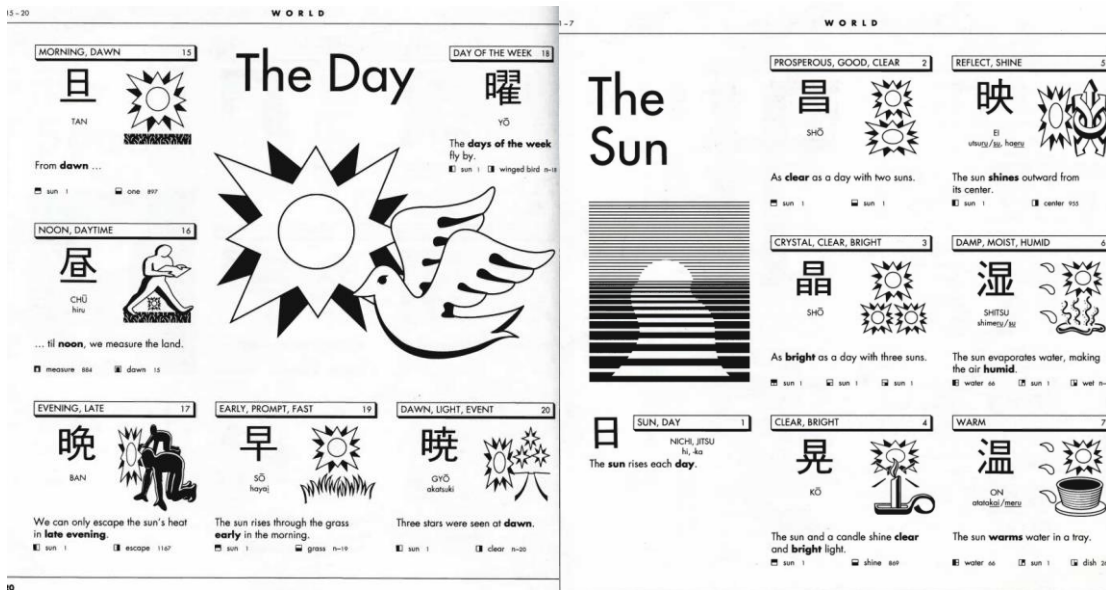
Figure 1: Mnemonic devices in Rowley's *Kanji Pict-o-graphix* (1992, p.18).

Heisig takes a more systematic approach and relates the different components of the kanji to their original, simpler form, but without referring to its actual reading (ibid.).
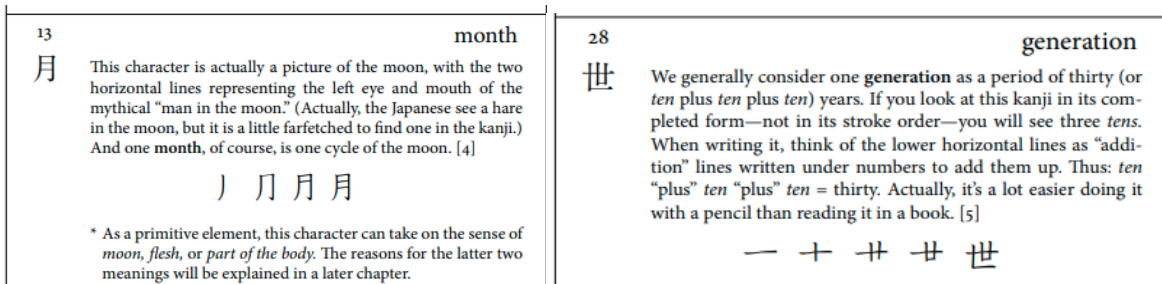

Figure 2: Mnemonic devices in Heisig's *Remembering the Kanji* (2011, p. 19; p. 24)

Finally, Stout and Hakone use complicated mnemonic strategies even for simple kanji and encourage learners to use both these and pictorial strategies to learn (ibid.).
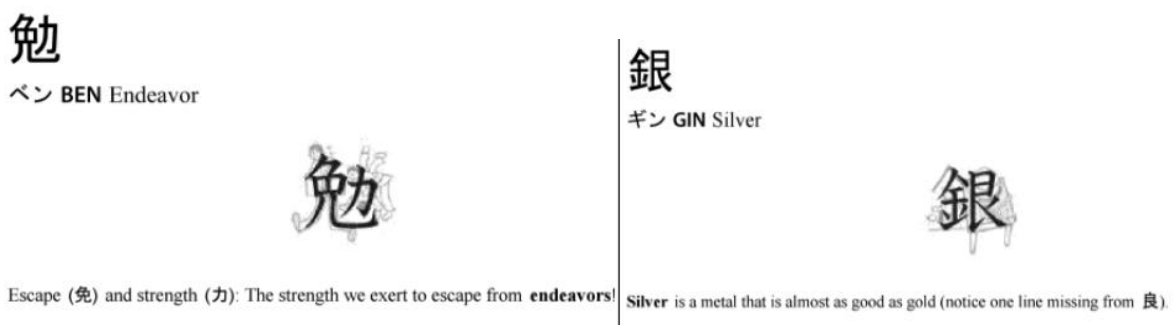

Figure 3: Mnemonic devices in Stout and Hakone's *Japanese Kanji for Beginners* (2017, p. 187)

Generally, more advanced levels of kanji learning encourage learners to use these strategies and component analysis, since more advanced kanji often are reconfigurations of earlier learnt kanji (ex. 語 – my mouth can speak five languages, 'language'). Heisig (2017, in Rose, 2013) says that students might feel that mnemonic devices are embarrassing because of their 'academic silliness'. An organised approach can support learners in their goal of becoming native-like in their kanji proficiency.

Interestingly, none of the learning materials mentioned in this thesis provide empirical evidence for the validity of the techniques. The study by Lu et al. (1999, in Rose, 2013) remark that mnemonic devices make students learn kanji better than when taught without memorisation techniques, but also mention that these results are difficult to generalise since learners use many strategies simultaneously, such as rote learning (which is presented in the next section). Toyoda (1998, in Rose, 2013) and Burke (1996, ibid.) agree that the use of mnemonic devices have a positive impact on kanji learning. Sakai (2004, ibid.) and Wang and Thomas (1992, ibid.) have found that this way of learning has little significant impact on kanji learning.

Finally, Rose (2013) proposes that mnemonic strategies indeed are useful, as long as they are applied in meaningful ways. They are less useful when the associations become more convoluted or complex. This might result in the inability to recall the meaning altogether. This technique might also be less effective for kanji that rarely are used on their own or are semantically abstract – which many advanced kanji are. Overuse of mnemonic strategies might cause limitations in kanji recall when there are multiple readings, so it is not a technique that is adapted for heavy use on its own.

3.2 Rote Memorisation

Learning kanji by repeating new and old characters multiple times is an important aspect of increasing vocabulary. Even though rote learning has received its criticism (sometimes fairly), it has been shown to be important when learning character-based languages. Thomas (2015, p. 632) says that "extensive brute-force memorisation is still essential to achieve literacy in Japanese". Rote learning is seen as the tried-and-true manner of acquiring writing (Kess & Miyamoto, 1999, in Thomas, 2015; Naka, 1998; Myles, et al., 1998, both in Mori, 2012). It is not uncommon that children have to copy a given kanji up to 50 times while systematically checking the printed model when learning new kanji. Memorising kanji by repeating them

combines kinaesthetic input from the hand, visual input about hand movements, and visual input from the model kanji. Repeated practice is indispensable when acquiring automatic and efficient lower-level processing skills, which is needed when learning how to write and recall kanji. It automates the hyper-aware processing which is needed when learning new characters (Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977; Anderson, 1985, both in Mori, 2012).

Rote memorisation at the beginning of instruction has shown to be helpful at the more advanced stages of learning kanji. Having a good base understanding of simple kanji, the stroke order, and their readings helps learning new, more advanced characters. Mori (1999a, in Mori, 2012) found that having enough knowledge of the components of a kanji can expand the knowledge about associated kanji. However, even if it can be helpful, this information is often not enough to infer the meaning of new kanji, which are – as previously mentioned – often compounds of simpler characters. Even so, research has shown that L2 learners are able to integrate morphological and contextual information in novel kanji compounds which are consisting of familiar characters (Mori & Nagy, 1999; Mori, et al., 2007, in Mori, 2012), even if this does not guarantee accurate understanding. This will be discussed in greater detail in section 3.4.

3.3 Air Writing

Air writing (空書 *kuusho*) is a strategy that is not prevalently taught to students after a certain age. This technique is seen as somewhat childish, and many native Japanese speakers do not remember it being taught, even though both L1 and L2 learners of Japanese use it widely (Thomas, 2015). The technique entails using either a finger, a pen, or the entire hand or arm to write in the air or on a surface, such as a table or the person's own thigh, without leaving any marks (ibid.). Some do this by just writing in the void, or into the palm of their hand, or by making very small and subtle gestures with their fingertips or heads. This is often done spontaneously and without any forethought, in quick and highly articulated movements to remember or recall kanji. Interestingly, this is not unique to learners of Japanese, but also for Chinese learners (both native and non-native), where it is called "finger writing" (Thomas, 2015; Itaguchi, et al., 2019).

A study on how air writing supports learners' kanji recall has shown that there is a small but significant advantage in the accuracy of recollection when using the technique compared to passive visual inspection and/or solely copying down new kanji (Thomas, 2015). In another

study, the results showed that native Japanese speakers were more successful at a kanji integration test (where the test takers were asked to use kanji components to form actual existing kanji) when they were using the strategy, as opposed to when they were unable to (Sasaki & Watanabe, 1985, in Thomas, 2015).

As previously mentioned, this technique is commonly taught to L1 learners of Japanese at a young age, where they "write in the air" in concert when taught kanji (Bouche, 1996, in Thomas, 2015). It seems like this later is forgotten by native Japanese speakers, since college-aged students deny that they have been taught air writing as kanji retrieval support (Thomas, 2015a). Air writing is so commonplace that it is seen as unremarkable, even though observing students of all ages tracing kanji during their commute to school in public transport is very commonplace (Thomas, 2015). This technique is also seldomly taught explicitly to L2 learners of Japanese. On the other hand, they often learn to do this either spontaneously or after having seen Japanese L1 speakers do it (Thomas, 2013, in Thomas, 2015). This is so integrated into the learners' praxis (whether they are L1 learners or not) that they were unconsciously using air writing when explicitly told not to, some going so far as using their heads and torsos when their hands were restrained (ibid.).

There are several different contexts in which air writing might be useful. One use is self-cueing, when a person needs to recall a kanji that they have previously learnt but has difficulty recalling in the moment (Thomas, 2013, in Thomas, 2015). Secondly, it is a good way to learn new kanji, since tracing and copying new characters is a widely used, and important, strategy for learning both for L1 and L2 learners (Naka & Naoi, 1995; Okita, 1995; both in Thomas, 2015).

3.4 Morphological Analysis of Kanji

In chapter 2, different aspects of kanji are presented. Among those, radicals and phonetics are mentioned as one aspect of learning to write and read kanji. The meaning of kanji components is often inferable since many are composed of already familiar characters used in everyday life (Mori, 2012; Toyoda, 2009). As mentioned in section 2.2, the information gathered from radicals is not always straightforward to the meaning of the entire word (Mori, 2003b, in Mori, 2012). Because of this, L2 learners of Japanese often misinterpret familiar unfamiliar words (so-called 'false friends') or fail to infer its meaning at all (Mori, 2012, Kondo Brown, 2006, in Mori, 2012). This means that kanji that look similar to previously learnt characters

might interfere with inferring meaning in new kanji which use the same components. An example of this is how the kanji 寺 (*tera, ji,* 'temple') is used in many kanji as shown below:

(5). 寺   (a) 時 (*toki, ji,* 'time, hour')

                   (b) 待 (*ma(tsu), tai,* 'wait')

                   (c) 持 (*mo(tsu), ji,* 'hold, have')

                   (d) 等 (*nado, tou,* 'etc.')

                   (e) 詩 (*uta, shi,* 'poem, poetry')

Learning how to find radicals and how simpler kanji often are incorporated into more complicated ones might help the learners to place new kanji semantically. The character 止 (*to,* 'stop') used to be a pictogram of a footprint, and is found in compound kanji such as 足 (*ashi,* 'foot'), 歩 (*ho, fu,* 'walking; pace; step'), 走 (*sou,* 'run; race'), and 歴 (*reki,* 'history of; experience of'), which are words that are related to a grouping of characters connected to 'foot' and 'fast movement' (Miyashita, 2004, in Mori, 2012, p. 146). Even though these kanji sometimes are difficult to relate to each other, knowing some of the history of the character might enable the student to recall the semantic group – supporting not only the retrieval of specific kanji, but also the inclusion of new ones using the same radical. This might seem closely related to mnemonic devices, but the difference is that morphological analysis focuses on grammatical and morphological aspects. Mnemonic devices, on the other hand, is more about making connections in the mind by creating stories (sometimes using radical analysis).

Even though it is reasonable to work with radicals and learn how to connect semantically related words to support the learning of kanji, it is unwise to rely entirely on this to read unfamiliar kanji. Many compounds and radicals have several different meanings and pronunciations and often change positions (see section 2.2), which makes it more difficult to decide which part of the compound kanji is the radical and which is the phonetic. Kanji can represent different meanings depending on the position in any given word (Mori, 2012). See, for example, 手話 (*shuwa,* 'sign language'), in which the first character means 'hand' and the second 'to speak'. The character for 'language' has been presented earlier in this thesis. Changing positions of the first kanji to another position, as in 運転手 (*untenshu,*'professional driver; chauffeur'), the character for 'hand' no longer means this, but rather 'worker'. Other

than this, high-frequency characters and radicals tend to have a broader range of semantic functions, since they are used in many contexts (ibid.).

As discussed in section 2.2, having knowledge about radicals and their placements is important. Even though the overreliance on radicals to understand the meaning or guessing the pronunciation of unfamiliar kanji is unwise, the semantic information gathered can support categorisation and access to its meaning once learnt (Toyoda, 2009). Phonetic components might also provide useful information for the reading of the character. For example, in kanji such as 工 (*kou*, '(factory) worker'), 功 (*kou*, 'merit; success; achievement'), 項 (*kou,* 'clause; paragraph'), 江 (*kou*, 'large river; bay'). Even if these kanji are semantically unrelated, the phonetic is the same, making the pronunciation inferable (Toyoda, 2009). The phonetic does not always indicate the reading, but the sound often rhymes (Jackson, Lu, & Ju, 1994, in Toyoda, 2009). Thus, learning about morphology could be a way of making the kanji learning task more manageable.

4 Methodology

The material used in this chapter of the paper has been gathered from interviews with university professors and lecturers (hereafter, the word *instructor* is used) who have taught or are currently teaching kanji in Japanese as a foreign language courses. These instructors have been asked to describe their methods and what materials they are using, as well as what materials they have used earlier in their careers. It is of interest to see the reasons for why they are using some books and not others, as well as if they have changed their material over time. Finally, it is of interest to see if the materials change depending on the level of acquisition that the students have achieved. There are seven universities and colleges in Sweden that have Japanese language courses, but only the four which offer bachelors courses of instruction are included in this study. Therefore, centres for higher education which only offer courses on an introductory level are excluded.

Not only have interviews been conducted with instructors of Japanese, but an online survey has been sent out to students of the instructors who have been interviewed. It is of interest, not only for this study but also for instructors, to become more informed about the students' preferences of the teaching methods and strategies used in their instruction. The survey is divided into three sections: the first handles some background information about the students (such as their alma mater; the length of Japanese instruction they have undergone; and if they have studied Japanese in spaces other than Swedish universities). The second part aims to learn more about the students' knowledge about the strategies, and finally what the students think about these strategies. Unfortunately, not all instructors are currently teaching kanji courses, so only a smaller number of learners have been asked to participate. Nonetheless, their answers are still informative, and the results will be included in this study, even if neither the results from the interviews or the survey are generalisable because of the small sample size.

In preparation for the interviews, a guide was created. This guide was meant to be used as a guideline to ensure that the participants were asked about similar topics. It was not meant to be something that was strictly followed, and some questions were omitted because the respondents already had answered them while speaking about something else or they were not relevant for the individual in question. The guide can be found in Appendix I. When asking instructors to participate, a cover letter detailing the study and its aims was sent out. Since the

aim is to overview the practices of kanji instructions in Swedish universities, the interviews are not minutely transcribed since that information can be gathered and sorted without close transcriptions.

The interviews and the survey have been conducted in Swedish. For the sake of sharing the results in this study, the questions material has been translated into English. The interview guide can be found in its original and translated form in Appendix I. The questionnaire has also been included, both in Swedish and in English in Appendix II.

4.1 Interviews with Instructors of Japanese

This section describes the different instructors' practices, as detailed in the interviews. During these conversations, the instructors described the materials they use or have used, the methods they teach and why, and how they believe that their learners perceive their instruction. The interviews have been conducted on four instructors at two Swedish universities. Three of them are native speakers, while one is a non-native speaker of Japanese. For the sake of the respondents' privacy, their identities are replaced by letters which are unrelated to their real names, and the gender-neutral *they* is used instead of the pronouns *he* or *she*. The universities in which they teach are also renamed to ensure their anonymity. Chapter 5 details the results of the interviews and focuses on the instructors' backgrounds, and then describes their answers regarding which textbooks they use and how they relate to the strategies presented in chapter 3.

4.2 Survey with Students of Japanese

Fifteen students from University B answered the survey. Before beginning with the interviews, the instructors from University A shared that they did not teach kanji at the present time, which would make them unable to share the study with their students. The online survey asked students what they thought of different kanji learning strategies, and the questionnaire is included in its entirety in Appendix II. Even though the sample size is small, the results (which will be presented in section 5.2) are interesting to include in the present study.

Out of the 15 respondents, there were seven women, seven men, and one non-binary. The students' ages ranged from between 19-36 years, and the majority of them had studied Japanese for about a year (*n*=12), one had studied for about two years, and two for three years. Seven of the respondents had studied Japanese outside of university education, with a

timespan ranging from two months up to ten years. One had studied Japanese as a foreign language in upper secondary school, and one had studied Chinese for two years at University B. The majority of the respondents have Swedish as their native language (n=14), and one is a Vietnamese native speaker.

5 Results

5.1 Interviews with Instructors of Japanese

Even though the sample size of the interviews is very small, and the instructors come from only two universities where Japanese as a foreign language is taught, there are still some interesting results to be gathered. This section shows similarities and differences between the practices of the instructors. Table 3 shows an overview of the instructors' answers which are presented in the following subsections.

		Instructor A	Instructor B	Instructor C	Instructor D
Native speaker		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country of Japanese education		On their own before going to Japan and later in Japan (since 1985) Doctorate degree in Sweden	Linguistics and their teaching licence in Japan Doctorate degree in Sweden	Japanese linguistics in Japan Master's degree in the UK Doctorate degree in Sweden (since 2008)	Double major in Japanese and English in Japan Master's degree in Japan
Teaching experience		2 years at a language school for foreigners studying Japanese in Japan ~ 17 years at university level	More than 20 years	About 21 years	About 23 years
Kanji teaching experience		16 years	More than 20 years	About 20 years, teaching both kanji specific and other courses of Japanese	About 6 years, but has not taught kanji specific courses
Place of employment when teaching kanji		Swedish university	In Japan, no specific place named Swedish university	Swedish university	Private lessons in Japan Swedish high schools Swedish folk high school Swedish university
		University A		University B	

Textbooks used	Beginners	*Basic Kanji Book* 1 & 2 *Genki* Vol I & II		Kanji compendium (in the 1990s) *Minna no Nihongo* (between 1998-2003) *Genki* vol I & II *Kanji Look and Learn* (since 2009)	*Marugoto Genki Kanji Look and Learn* Self-made handouts
	Intermediate	*Intermediate Kanji Book 1+2* (since the 1990s)		*Tobira*	*Tobira*
Mnemonic strategies		Important, and encourages students to use it and invent their own stories to remember characters	Used to work with sharing stories and anecdotes to help students remember characters Uses real life examples of kanji	Taught this strategy before including *Kanji Look and Learn*, since the textbook includes mnemonic devices	*Marugoto* has a web material which includes animations for the origins of kanji, and *Kanji Look and Learn* usually has images connected to the characters
Rote memorisation		There are no shortcuts to learning how to write, but naturally not the only part to focus on when learning kanji		Effective way to memorise kanji's basic structure, mandatory assignments with feedback. Good for learning how to write, but it is not very dynamic	Lets the students work with writing the kanji and gives constructive feedback
Air writing		Tries to stimulate the students to use it, but does not teach it.	Used to actively teach air writing, but stopped because of a lack of time	Thinks it is impractical to teach, since the students learn this on their own.	Actively teaches air writing
Morphological analysis		The most important thing to work with from the beginning	Used to teach radicals and stroke order, but stopped because of a lack of time – lets the students learn this on their own. Students worked in groups to analyse new characters	Often works with this, and uses different games Sometime shows all the kanji with the same radical	"Especially important in the beginning, since you can't just memorise 500 characters!" Presents that there is a logic to kanji by teaching about radicals and phonetics

How do you think the students perceive the strategies?	The use of these techniques is very individual. "It can be dangerous to say that one strategy is more successful than another"	Morphological analysis is often appreciated It is very individual	Students give positive feedback when using games, and they enjoy working together	Many like the support of the animations, and it can have a positive impact, especially at the beginning Some might feel like it is childish, and might prefer techniques such as rote learning

Table 3: *Overview of instructors' answers*

5.1.1 General Tendencies

During the interviews, it became clear that the different instructors focus on different aspects of kanji teaching, but they do have three things in common. Firstly, they all have discussed the importance of morphological analysis. It is important that the students learn how to differentiate between different radicals and phonemes, but also the stroke order. Secondly, they all agree that it is important to show the students different strategies, so that they have a plethora of input. As Instructor A says, it is unwise to focus on one strategy to the exclusion of others, since different methods have different uses. Finally, they all seem to agree that the use of strategies is something that is very individual. Not all students find it helpful to work with mnemonic devices, for example, and not all students choose to work with rote learning strategies.

5.1.2 The Textbooks Used

The books used have different designs, but they also have different learning goals. While some books (such as *Kanji Look and Learn*, *Tobira,* and *Basic Kanji Book*) focus on learning kanji and nothing else, others (for example *Genki I* and *II* as well as *Marugoto*) are constructed to include many different aspects of language learning. Both universities have chosen to supplement the kanji in *Genki I* and *II* with kanji-only focussed material.

   Marugoto includes 53 characters and seems to only introduce them briefly in the textbook. Instructor D said that there is supplementary information (such as animations and mnemonic devices) in the web material, but below is an excerpt from one of the kanji introduction pages. As you can see, the information about the kanji is quite scarce: the authors provide one of the possible readings and write it underneath the kanji using the alphabet.

Figure 4: Excerpt from *Marugoto*, p. 159

In the *Genki* series, the authors include 317 kanji, which are too few according to instructors from both universities. As seen in the example below, *Genki* shows both kun- and on-yomi, but both are written in hiragana. All the possible readings of the kanji are not included. They also show some examples of how the kanji is used and have marked vocabulary which is important to the chapter in which the kanji appears in grey. Finally, they show the stroke order, but not the directions of the strokes.

Figure 5: Example of kanji in *Genki I* (2012), p. 318.

In *Kanji Look and Learn*, the design is a little different than in *Genki*. The textbook includes the same information as *Genki*, but also a mnemonic device in the form of pictures. Otherwise, the kun- and on-yomi are still both written in hiragana, and the stroke order does not include the stroke direction. This book also includes 512 different kanji.
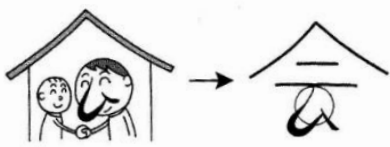
72 会 to meet

会 → (house with two people) → 会

The two (二) of us will **meet** in a house.

あなたと私、二人が家の中で会います。

▶かい　え
▷あ

会う（あう）to meet
会話（かいわ）conversation
会社（かいしゃ）company
会社員（かいしゃいん）office worker
会議（かいぎ）conference; meeting

会場（かいじょう）meeting place
国会（こっかい）the Diet
会釈（えしゃく）bow

<6> ノ 𠆢 ⿱ 合 会 会 　　ツ 二(2)　合(295)

Figure 6: Example of kanji from *Kanji Look and Learn* (2009), p. 28.

Basic Kanji Book volumes I and II introduce 500 kanji. As you can see in Figure 9, the material provides both kun- and on-yomi using both hiragana and katakana, the stroke order but not the directions of the strokes, and vocabulary connected to the character. There is no support from included mnemonic devices.

128 会 meeting association　あ-う　カイ　(6)

ノ 𠆢 ⿱ 合 会 会

会（あ）う　to meet
会社（かい・しゃ）a company
会話（かい・わ）conversation
教会（きょう・かい）a church

Figure 9:

Figure 7: Example from *Basic Kanji Book vol. 1* (2007), p. 110.

Tobira is constructed for more advanced learners of Japanese and is also a little differently designed than the previous examples. It includes 503 kanji and includes not only one printed way of writing the kanji, but also how it could look when written by hand. The kun-yomi is written in hiragana and the on-yomi in katakana, making it easier to separate the origin of the reading. Mnemonic devices are included, as well as one or more example sentences. What is

not shown in this example is how *Tobira* categorises the chapters' kanji into two: those which learners should be able to read and write; and those which learners only should be able to read. *Tobira* expects that students already know about 300 kanji when beginning with the book, which is the reason for showing another example of a character in the following excerpt.

Figure 8: Example of kanji from *Tobira* (2009), p. 198

University A has used *Basic Kanji Book* and *Intermediate Kanji Book* since 2006 and has supplemented it with the *Genki* series. They are now investigating more integrated course material for the intermediate courses, as well. It seems like the use of the material is mainly traditional: when constructing the courses, they found a book which they found well-made and have since kept using it.

University B has used both *Genki* and *Kanji Look and Learn* for a long time, as well, and chose to include the latter because of its focus on mnemonic devices. It seems like the students at University B agree with the teacher that the use of mnemonic devices is helpful when learning kanji. The learners are, on the other hand, also possibly only used to using material with mnemonic devices, so they might prefer and like *Kanji Look and Learn* out of habit.

5.1.3 Mnemonic Devices

All instructors agree that the use of mnemonic devices is important to the students' learning of kanji. The instructors have different ways of using mnemonic devices, such as encouraging their students to invent their own stories (instructor A) and sharing personal examples, such as setting the kanji into real-life contexts (instructor B). Even if the instructors find this strategy important and encourage their students to use it, University B highlights the use of the method which is reflected in the choice of study material. The instructors have chosen to use *Kanji Look and Learn* and *Marugoto*, since both the textbooks use images and/or animations to

support the acquisition of new kanji. As mentioned in the above section, this reflects the students' preferences (shown in section 5.2), but this might be because University B relies heavily on the use of mnemonic devices. This might therefore not be a preference, but it could be that students are familiar with the strategy, and thus, prefer to use it.

5.1.4 Rote Memorisation
Not all instructors spoke about rote memorisation. The three of them who did – namely Instructors A, C, and D – say that it supports learning kanji kinaesthetically. They do this in different ways: Instructors C and D mentioned the use of stencils in which the students receive feedback on their handwriting. Instructor C also says that the repetition of kanji makes it unlikely that the students forget the character even with time. Instructor A says that it is important for learning how to write and recognise kanji, but that it should not be used to the exclusion of other strategies. Rote learning is a strategy which is traditionally used when learning written languages all over the world, since it is effective and necessary to automate the word recognition process.

5.1.5 Air Writing
Both instructor B and D have actively taught air writing. They both say that it is a good way to learn the stroke order and enhances the recognition of a character. While instructor A does not teach air writing, they do say that it is important to incorporate as many senses as possible when learning how to write kanji. Finally, instructor C feels that it is unnecessary to teach this strategy. They think that the students will learn this on their own, and that writing kanji with a pen and paper is enough to activate motor skills.

5.1.6 Morphological Analysis
All instructors find that morphological analysis is important when learning Japanese. Instructor A says that it is the most important aspect for students at the beginning of their language studies. Instructor B says that they used to teach how to identify radicals, the stroke orders of kanji, as well as their different meanings. They also have let their students work with analysing kanji and present their findings to the rest of the class. This does, however, mean that students need to have some knowledge of kanji – which makes this unusable at the beginning stages. It also requires smallish groups of students and much time, even though it enhances the acquisition of the kanji. Instructor C spends quite some time teaching morphological analysis and includes different games to make it interesting for the students. I

believe that using these kinds of games are a good way to make the abstract knowledge of characters seem more real and useful, not only in an academic context, but also in real life. Finally, Instructor D says that morphological analysis is especially important at the beginning stages of learning Japanese, since it is impossible to just memorise a large number of kanji.

5.1.7 Differences

There are some differences between the teaching methods. Instructor C, for example, enjoys including different kinds of games. They say that it is not only a fun inclusion, but it also lets the students work with all the knowledge they have available: from recall and kinaesthetic knowledge to information about morphology. When asked about this, instructors A and B said that it would be nice to include games into their own teaching, but that the groups have been too big for it to be possible. Instructor B also said that playing games is good for the recollection of characters, but that they usually do not have the time to do so.

Instructor A includes authentic material in the curriculum from the fourth semester, such as short stories and newspaper articles. They say that it usually becomes a great hurdle for the students to conquer, but that it enables them to apply their kanji knowledge. None of the other instructors mention the use of authentic material, but it is possible to conclude that that would be too complicated for the group taught by Instructor D, whose focus is on basic communication skills.

Instructor B is the only one mentioning that they use a flipped classroom approach with students at an intermediate level. They let their students work in smaller groups with kanji which they then need to teach to the rest of the class. Instructor A said that they think it is a good idea, since it is necessary to level up from only discussing stroke order and different readings when the students become more knowledgeable.

5.2 Survey Results

When faced with the questions about their own education, the respondents of the survey as such:

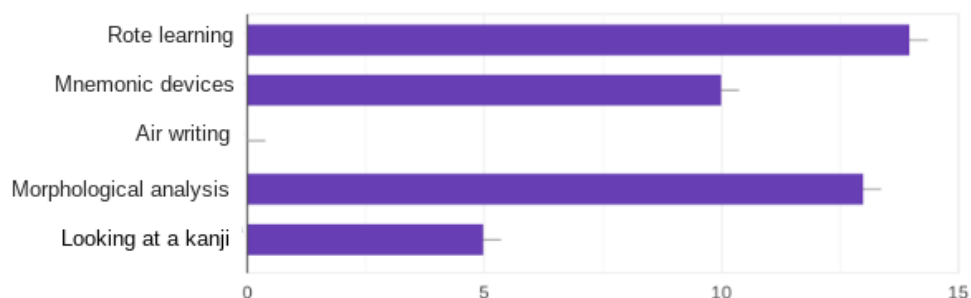Which of these strategies does your teacher use when teaching kanji?

15 answers

Figure 9: *Results of the question "What of these methods and strategies for kanji teaching does your teacher use when teaching?"*

Looking at the first question, most of the students say that their teacher uses rote learning (*n=* 14) and morphological analysis (*n=* 13). Mnemonic devices also seem to be used frequently (*n=* 10).

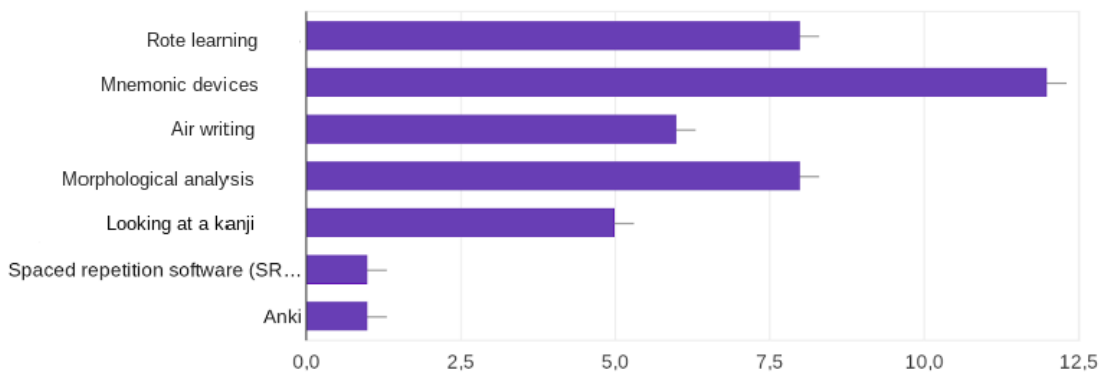What methods do you prefer when learning new kanji?

12 answers

Figure 10: *Results of the question "What methods do you prefer when learning new kanji?"*

The results of the second question shows that students have a clear preference for using mnemonic devices (*n=12*), as well as rote learning and morphological analysis (*n=8*, respectively). Some students think that air writing is a good strategy for learning kanji (*n=6*). Two students included "spaced repetition software" as a good method for learning kanji, which could be incorporated into "rote learning". One of them continued answering this

question by saying that "reading a lot" and "not isolating kanji but seeing it in the context of a word to understand the meaning and the kanji at an abstract level" also was helpful.

What do you think about rote learning?
15 answers

Figure 11: *Results of the question "What do you think about rote learning?"*

The majority of the respondents seem to think positively about rote learning, claiming that it is not only easy, but also a good way to learn kanji. Some find it difficult (*n=3*), and some think that it is a bad way to learn kanji (*n=2*). Even though there are clear positive aspects of rote learning, about half of the respondents find it to be boring (*n=7*).

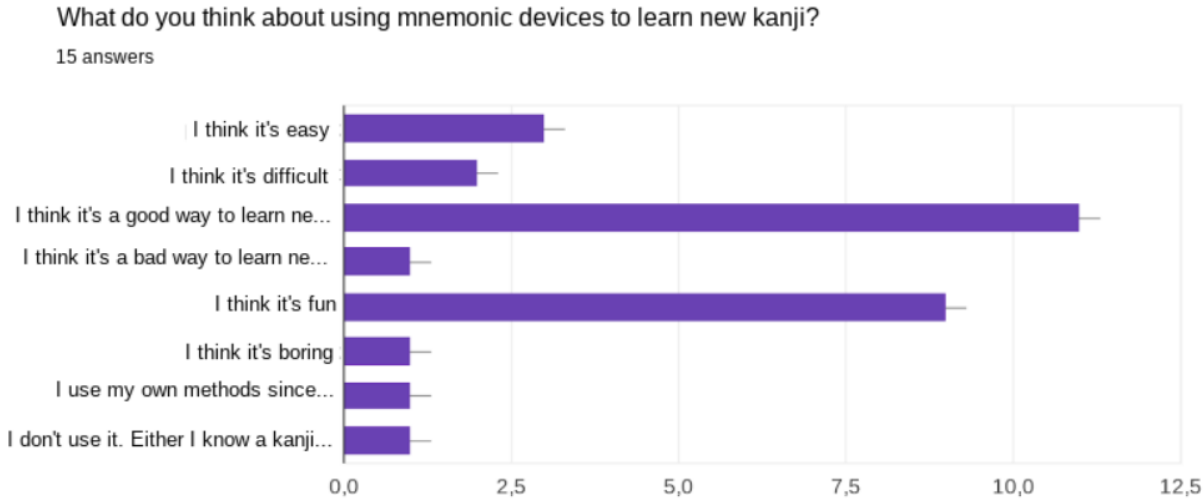**What do you think about using mnemonic devices to learn new kanji?**
15 answers

Figure 12: *Results of the question "What do you think about using mnemonic devices to learn new kanji?"*

A clear majority seem to find the use of mnemonic devices helpful (*"I think it's a good way to learn kanji"*, *n*=11; *"I think it's fun"*, *n*=9). One respondent answered that they do not use mnemonic devices (*"If I don't know it by heart, I don't know it at all."*).

What do you think about air writing?

14 answers

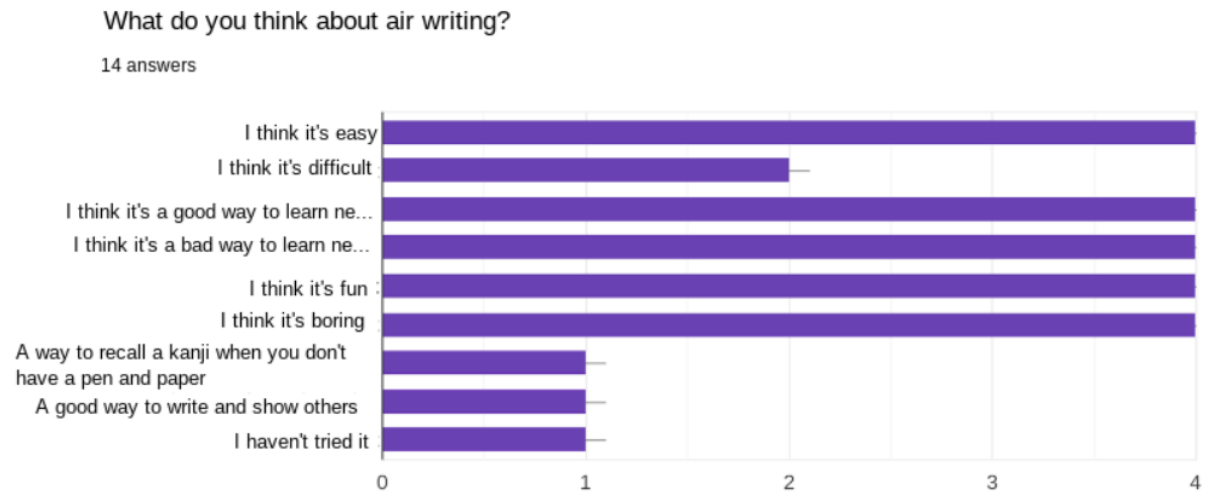|	
I think it's easy	4
I think it's difficult	2
I think it's a good way to learn ne...	4
I think it's a bad way to learn ne...	4
I think it's fun	4
I think it's boring	4
A way to recall a kanji when you don't have a pen and paper	1
A good way to write and show others	1
I haven't tried it	1

Figure 13: *Results of the question "What do you think about air writing?"*

There are no clear preferences about whether air writing is useful, according to the respondents. There are as many students who find it useful as not, as well as fun versus boring (*n*=4). Two students answered that it could be good to recall kanji when not having access to a pen and paper. One respondent said that they have not tried the method.
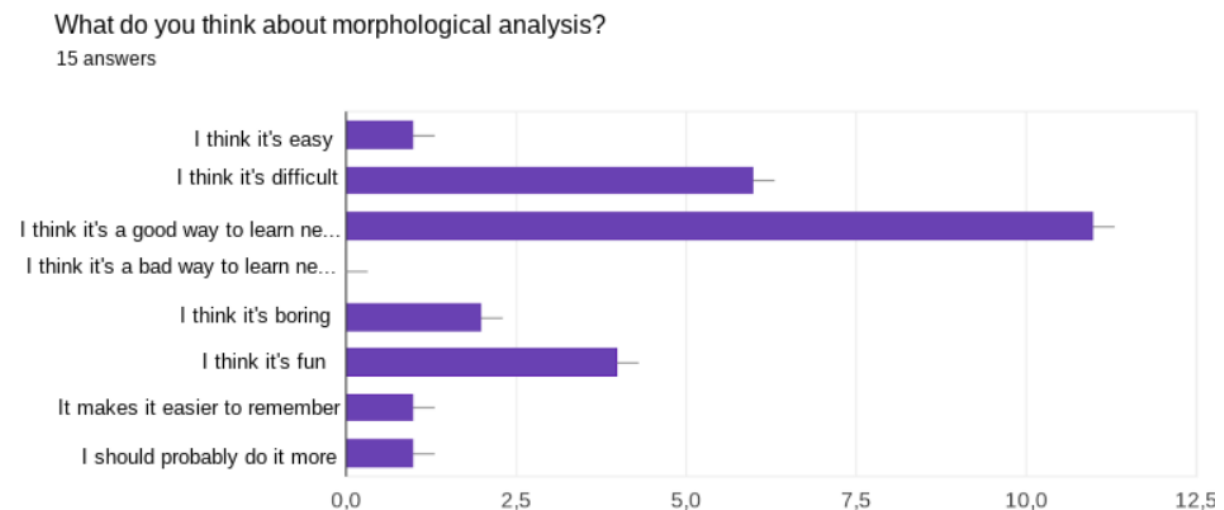
What do you think about morphological analysis?

15 answers

I think it's easy	1
I think it's difficult	6
I think it's a good way to learn ne...	11
I think it's a bad way to learn ne...	0
I think it's boring	2
I think it's fun	4
It makes it easier to remember	1
I should probably do it more	1

Figure 14: *Results of the question "What do you think about morphological analysis?"*

27

Most of the students find morphological analysis as a good strategy for learning kanji (*n*=11). Many of them also find it difficult (*n*=6). One responded that "they probably should do it more".

What do you think about only looking at a kanji and its readings?
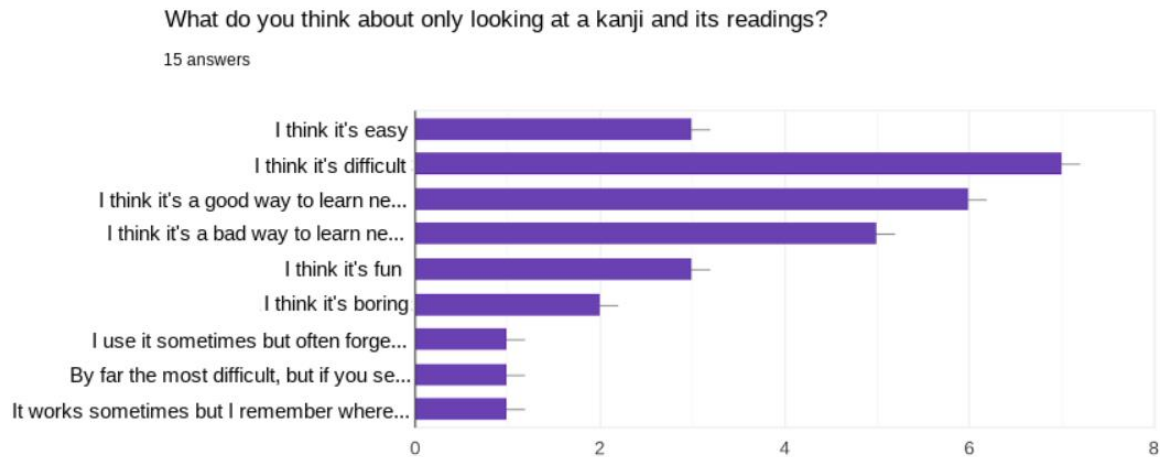15 answers

Figure 15: *Results of the question "What do you think about only looking at a kanji and its readings?"*

Most of the students think that this is the most difficult way to learn kanji (*n*=8), with one claiming that it is "by far the most difficult, but if you see a character enough times, you'll learn it". About as many respondents say that it is a good way to learn (*n*=6) as it is a bad way (*n*=5). Two say that they use it sometimes, but often forget it with time.

Finally, the respondents were asked what methods they use when studying on their own, whether that has been before or after formal education. Seven answered this question, and a majority of them say they use spaced repetition software (*n*=4); two mention using mnemonic devices; one specifically mentions rote learning; and two mention morphological (and grammatical) analysis.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The main goal of this thesis is to learn more about how kanji is taught at Swedish universities: which methods are used; why these are taught; and how instructors and students perceive them. Because of this, interviews have been conducted on instructors of Japanese at two universities to see which strategies they use and if one or more of them are preferred over the others. It has also been of interest to see what students think about these strategies.

After conducting both interviews and a survey, both instructors and students have varied opinions on the different strategies presented in this thesis. As all instructors have mentioned, the use of strategies for learning kanji is based on the needs and wants of individual students. There are, however, some similarities between the strategies preferred by both teachers and students. As previously mentioned, it is important to note that the data gathered from students is from a small sample size and from only one of the universities.

Both students and teachers seem to be in accordance with each other when it comes to finding rote learning, morphological analysis, and mnemonic devices useful when learning kanji. There are also different answers regarding the preferences, but as Instructor C says – students seem to find rote learning both useful *and* boring. Students also seem to think that using mnemonic devices is helpful and makes the learning process more enjoyable. Even if all instructors have emphasised the importance of using mnemonic devices, this preference in the students might be because of how Instructor C has chosen to use *Kanji Look and Learn* as the main textbook for kanji learning at the beginning levels. The instructors were divided in their opinions on air writing and its usefulness, and so were the students. Even though all instructors say that it is important to engage the learners' kinaesthetic memories, both instructors A and C believe that the students either learn the strategy on their own without being exposed to it explicitly, or that rote learning kanji is enough. Finally, the students find morphological analysis useful but also difficult. Instructors also agree that this strategy is important, not only to learn any given kanji, but also to facilitate the learning process for more complex characters as well as learning the logic behind them.

The instructors who have been interviewed in this thesis all agree that it is important to introduce a variety of strategies to the students. This way, they can pick and choose what best fits their style of learning. The instructors also mention that the strategies they choose to teach are meant to activate different parts of the brains of their students, so they can acquire the

material more easily. According to the survey, the students seem to agree that this is positively impacting their learning: there is generally no conclusive data showing a clear preference for one strategy over the other, but rather that the students have different needs and wants. By incorporating different strategies into their everyday learning, the instructors are able to give each student what they need to learn. There have been some answers focusing on the use of spaced repetition softwares which the instructors have not discussed during the interviews, which shows that as long as there is an interest, the students will find ways to support their own learning as well.

It gladdens me to see that what is taught in Swedish universities is mainly in accordance with the previous research about kanji acquisition. This study has shown that a variation of strategies and methods for teaching Chinese characters is imperative (Lu et al., 1999, in Rose, 2013; Thomas, 2015; Toyoda, 2009). Machida (2013) also states that specific kanji instruction is crucial for learners whose native languages are non-kanji based. Therefore, the way both University A and B teach kanji explicitly, especially at the beginning stages of learning Japanese, is well thought out and important for students to acquire the requisite knowledge for their future studies.

This study has shown that a variety of methods are important for the development of kanji knowledge. Both interviews of instructors of Japanese from two different Swedish universities and previous research have shown it is important to have a variety of methods and strategies when teaching kanji. Students should be able to pick whatever strategy works for them when learning something as complex as kanji. It is clear that learning how to read and write in Japanese is something which is highly individualised – which both interviews and previous literature have discussed.

This study could be the beginning of further research on the methods that are used in Swedish Universities when teaching Japanese as a foreign language. Because of the small sample size of both universities included in this study, the interviews, and the respondents of the survey, no generalisations can be made. Nevertheless, I do believe that the results of this study can be helpful when designing kanji courses.

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Appendices

Appendix I – Interview Guide

The Swedish original is presented first, and a version translated to English can be found further down.

- Bakgrundsinformation
    - Hur länge har du undervisat japanska?
    - Av den tiden, hur länge har du undervisat specifikt i kanji?
    - Var har du utbildat dig inom japanska/språkundervisning?
- Vilket material/vilken kursbok använder du i undervisningen av kanji?
    - Använder du olika material beroende på studenternas nivå?
    - Har det förändrats över tid, eller använder du samma material nu?
- Vilka tekniker använder du för att undervisa kanji? Minnestekniker, utantillinlärning, att skriva i luften, morfologisk analys…
    - Hur väl fungerar dessa tekniker, uppfattar du?
    - Har du någon uppfattning om vad eleverna/studenterna tycker?
- Har du en teknik som du föredrar? en som du väljer att inte använda?
- Hur ser du att eleverna har lärt sig nya kanji?
    - Veckoinlämningar där de visar att de har tränat?
    - "Glosförhör"?
    - Prov?
- Kan du tänka dig att be eleverna att svara på min enkät?

- Background info
    - For how long have you taught Japanese?
    - How long have you taught kanji during your years of Japanese language instruction?
    - Where have you studied Japanese/received the competencies for teaching languages?
- What material do you use in kanji instruction?
    - Does the chosen material differ depending on the students' level?
    - Has the chosen material changed with time, or are you still using the same material nowadays?
- What techniques are you using when teaching kanji? Mnemonic devices, rote learning, air writing, morphological analysis…
    - How well do you think these methods work?
    - Do you have any idea of how the students perceive these strategies?
- Do you have a technique you prefer to use? One which you prefer not using?
- How are you able to see that your students are learning what you expect them to learn?
    - Homework?
    - Quizzes?
    - Exams and/or tests?
- Would you ask your students to answer my questionnaire?

Appendix II – Survey Questionnaire

The Swedish original is presented first, and a version translated to English can be found further down.

- Bakgrundsfrågor
    - Vilken könstillhörighet har du?
        - Kvinna
        - Man
        - Ickebinär
        - Jag vill inte delge
    - Hur gammal är du?
    - Hur länge har du studerat japanska vid ett universitet eller en högskola?
        - Upp till 1 år (1-2 terminer)
        - Upp till 2 år (3-4 terminer)
        - Upp till 3 år (5-6 terminer)
        - Upp till 4 år (7-8 terminer)
        - Upp till 5 år (9-10 terminer)
    - Vilket lärosäte tillhör du?
        - Göteborgs Universitet
        - Stockholms Universitet
        - Högskolan Dalarna
        - Lunds Universitet
    - Om du har studerat japanska utanför ett lärosäte, ungefär hur länge har du gjort det?
    - Vad har du för modersmål?
- Vilka av dessa metoder och strategier för att lära sig kanji använder din lärare i undervisningen?
    - Att lära sig kanji genom att träna på att skriva samma tecken många gånger (rote learning)
    - Att använda sig av olika minnestekniker, såsom att komma ihåg delar (時計 = tiden säger tio) gärna med men även utan bilder
    - Att skriva i luften eller på andra ytor med handen eller med ett finger utan en penna; att skriva med gester med armen eller kroppen(air writing)
    - Att dela upp kanji i olika delar (morfologisk analys med radikaler; uttal)
    - Att lära sig kanji genom att bara titta på ett nytt tecken (inklusive dess mening och uttal) och memorera det utan att skriva
    - Annat
- Vilka metoder föredrar du för att lära dig nya kanji?
    - Se ovan för alternativ
- Vad tycker du om att lära dig kanji genom att repetera läsningen och hur man skriver det tills du kan det (rote learning)?
    - Jag tycker att det är lätt
    - Jag tycker att det är svårt
    - Jag tycker att det är ett bra sätt att lära mig kanji på
    - Jag tycker att det är ett dåligt sätt att lära mig kanji på
    - Jag tycker att det är roligt
    - Jag tycker att det är tråkigt
    - Annat

- Vad tycker du om att använda olika typer av minnestekniker för att lära dig nya kanji?
  - Se ovan för alternativ
- Vad tycker du om att skriva i luften?
  - Se ovan för alternativ
- Vad tycker du om att arbeta med morfologisk analys?
  - Se ovan för alternativ
- Vad tycker du om att lära dig kanji genom att bara titta på ett nytt tecken (och dess mening och uttal)
  - Se ovan för alternativ
- Om du har studerat japanska på egen hand, vilka metoder använde du då?
- Vad tyckte du om de metoderna du använde när du studerade på egen hand?
  - Jag tycker att det är lätt
  - Jag tycker att det är svårt
  - Jag tycker att det är ett bra sätt att lära mig kanji på
  - Jag tycker att det är ett dåligt sätt att lära mig kanji på
  - Jag tycker att det är roligt
  - Jag tycker att det är tråkigt
  - Det var till stor hjälp när jag började studera japanska vid ett lärosäte
  - Det har inte varit till hjälp när jag började studera japanska vid ett lärosäte
  - Annat

- Background questions
  - What gender are you?
    - Female
    - Male
    - Non-binary
    - I don't want to say
  - How old are you?
  - For how long have you studied Japanese at a university or a college?
    - Up to 1 year (1-2 semesters)
    - Up to 2 years (3-4 semesters)
    - Up to 3 years (5-6 semesters)
    - Up to 4 years (7-8 semesters)
    - Up to 5 years (9-10 semesters)
  - At which university or college do you study?
    - University of Gothenburg
    - University of Stockholm
    - Dalarna University College
    - University of Lund
  - If you have studied Japanese outside of a university, for how long?
  - What is your native language?
- Which of these strategies does your teacher use when teaching kanji?
  - Rote learning
  - Mnemonic devices
  - Air writing
  - Morphological analysis

- o Learning kanji by just looking at a new character (meaning and reading included), and memorising without writing it
  - o Other
- What methods do you prefer when learning new kanji?
  - o See above for alternatives
- What do you think about learning kanji by rote learning?
  - o I think it's easy
  - o I think it's difficult
  - o I think it's a good way to learn kanji
  - o I think it's a bad way to learn kanji
  - o I think it's fun
  - o I think it's boring
  - o Other
- What do you think about using mnemonic devices to learn new kanji?
  - o See above for alternatives
- What do you think about air writing?
  - o See above for alternatives
- What do you think about morphological analysis?
  - o See above for alternatives
- What do you think about learning kanji only by looking at its shape, meaning, and reading(s)?
  - o See above for alternatives
- What did you think about the methods you used when studying on your own?
  - o See above for alternatives