



Australian
National
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Upcoming Seminar

ANU Language Teaching Forum

Monday 24 April 2017, 4.15 – 5.15 pm
Room W3.03, Level 3, Baldessin Precinct Building #110, ANU

Speaker Dr Yuko Kinoshita, SLLL, CASS, ANU

“Developing an educational toy for Japanese language: Fostering analytical skills through grammar acquisition”



This paper reports on a unique cross-disciplinary collaboration project between researchers in Japanese language education and in Industrial Design. The project developed an educational assembly toy set, to assist children learning Japanese.

Taking advantage of the highly regular nature of verb conjugation in Japanese, the toy parts represent Japanese verbal phrase structures, and the learners can physically assemble and dismantle

meaningful linguistic structures. The toy has commonly used verbal roots for both type 1 and 2 verbs and associated conjugational suffixes, selected to integrate with typical Australian primary school curricula.

We tested a prototype in Japanese language classrooms of various age groups (years 5–8; ages 10 to 13). Our observations and interviews showed that the toy successfully engaged students and drew their attention to the structural nature of the language. The results led us to further refinement of the toy, by adjusting some design features, such as color-coding system, and connectors.

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This forum is jointly coordinated by the College of Arts & Social Sciences (the School of Literature, Languages & Linguistics and the Centre for Arab & Islamic Studies) and the College of Asia & the Pacific (the School of Culture, History & Language).

For more information, contact:

Ms France Meyer (CAIS, CASS)
E france.meyer@anu.edu.au

Dr Duck-Young Lee (CHL, CAP)
E duck.lee@anu.edu.au

Dr Manuel Delicado (SLLL, CASS)
E manuel.delicado@anu.edu.au

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