

from these selected poems, but whereas the poet in the 1970s explored dreams in long exploratory verse, in the next decade we see him economizing and honing his art with sensory impressions often in more compact forms. So very concise pieces like “Life Story” powerfully convey silence; “Children’s Song” manages to recall the memory of something aurally scary; the delightful “Crab Talk” captures the conversational tone of humans sadly—and respectfully—discussing the good old days, as it were, of ecological predation. All in all, Beichman’s translations of Ōoka’s poetry skillfully demonstrate how multi-faceted the poet was in his ability to weave together in his verses so many threads of humanity—our dreams, our subconscious, the visual beauty of our world, effervescent aural, or our verbal play.

Kakawaru kotoba: Sankashi taiwa-suru kyōiku · kenkyū e no izanai (Engaging Language: An Invitation to Dialogic Education and Research)

Edited by **Shinji Satō** and **Yutaka Saeki**. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 2017. viii, 217 pp. ¥2,500.

Reviewed by
Yoshiki Chikuma

Kakawaru Kotoba (KK) explores the ways people interact with one another through language from a wide range of perspectives. It consists of a preface and an introduction, written by one of the editors, and seven chapters. The contributors’ backgrounds range from early child education to educational anthropology to Japanese language pedagogy. Though there is a brief description of each contributor’s academic background at the end of the book, what stands out is the way Sato chronicles how he became acquainted with each contributor in the introduction, since such personal tidbits are rarely included in academic publications. The reader will encounter similar up-close-and-personal approaches throughout *KK*, which coincide with its central theme that language educators and researchers should view language as a vehicle through which the learner’s identity is negotiated in interaction. This contrasts with the type of language often observed in the traditional

language classroom, to which changes within the learner as an individual are not paid much attention.

In chapter 1, which is based on his keynote speech presented at the Princeton Japanese Pedagogy Forum in 2014, Saeki reviews studies in early child education. One of the studies demonstrated that a baby was able to recognize the presence of an object that the researcher was looking at even though the baby could not see the object directly. This baby's ability was not evident to the researcher until the researcher participated in the activity with the baby, unlike in a typical experimental setting in which a researcher remains an observer as a third person. This idea that a human being intrinsically possesses a desire to be engaged with another human being sets the tone for the rest of *KK*.

While chapter 1 stands by itself as a stand-alone section in *KK*, the following three chapters are grouped together under the question, "what does (the use of) language entail?" and the remaining three chapters are placed together under the theme, "Education of Language." It is important to note that the original Japanese word for "language" used in this context is *kotoba* (in hiragana) as it is defined as different from the words *kotoba* (in kanji) and *genko*. The former is chosen to be associated with the idea of "engagement" within oneself, in interpersonal situations and in society at large, while the latter two are viewed as unengaging or detached language.

Chapter 2, by Ikuko Gyōbu, who specializes in early child education and developmental psychology, starts with her reflection on how enthusiastically the audience reacted to the aforementioned keynote speech by Saeki. She goes on to mention that the empathy shared by the participants at the forum helped her realize she too, despite her not being a language education specialist, could be engaged in language education. As a result, she expands the idea of *kotoba* (in hiragana) to communication through drawings. She reports an episode of a child who was usually quiet in class. Her teacher noticed and reacted to characteristics of the pictures drawn by the child, and this noticing led to their mutual communication, which affected what the child would draw in the following days. This in turn resulted in the child's classmates' paying attention to her. Gyōbu concludes the chapter with a suggestion that noticing ("listening") may be the foundation for *kakawaru kotoba*, language that is engaging.

Kaoru Okuizumi in chapter 3 focuses on the role of the written script in the era of smartphones and social media. Reviewing the past studies,

she argues that the ways we write letters and characters might have made a circle back to the days prior to the invention of printing that restricted our modes of written expressions. Today we can freely mix the size of fonts, colors, and the direction of writing (vertical vs. horizontal) in a single text. One can convey ideas through more engaging texts as opposed to traditional publications that are black and white in a uniform font written in a single direction.

In chapter 4, the reader is introduced to the dilemma that researchers in the field of educational anthropology face. Yuki Imoto and Tomoko Tokunaga discuss their struggle with utilizing ethnography as a research method of their choice and how they felt conflicted about the distance that ethnographers are supposed to maintain from those they are studying in the field. To what extent are researchers allowed to let their subjectivity permeate their study? What is the role of researchers' own identities in such a study? Based on these concerns, the two authors discuss the role of autoethnography and dialogical autoethnography, presented, fittingly, in a dialogue format.

Chapter 5, the first installment of section 3 that sheds light on language education, critically examines the traditional approaches to language teaching by likening them to an aspect of theater in which actors always know what they are supposed to say and do in advance. The author of the chapter, Kiyoshi Naka, calls this "un-engaging" since a playwright has prepared all the actors' lines in advance, which is not that much different than what learners experience in the traditional language classroom. Of course, this is a narrow way of looking at theatrical productions. Towards the end of the chapter, Naka recognizes the fact that there is a creative dimension of theater ("performance"), which works as an analogy to a language classroom that is engaging.

If *KK* were a novel, one might call chapters 6 and 7 its climax. In chapter 6, the reader learns that the pedagogical goals of language teaching are to give language learners the opportunities to critically examine the rules and norms of the community whose language they are studying and to encourage them to accept or change those rules and norms as members of a community or society at large. Sato and Yuri Kumagai present a classroom experience in which individual learners learned to write in Japanese about the experience of minority members in Japan. The writing was to be read by mainstream Japanese people. They also share how a student who was an introvert found ways to interact with others and how a student was reacquainted with a Japanese friend

whose friendship she had neglected. These examples show learning Japanese as engaging language.

In chapter 7, the final chapter, Hideo Hosokawa depicts a student who had to grapple with stereotypes she had had about Japanese women when she had to interact with an actual Japanese woman who did not conform to such stereotypes. Learning a language involves negotiating with one's identity through reassessing one's values.

Reading *KK*, I was reminded of some of the principles that Carl Rogers advocated in the fields of client-centered counseling and learner-centered education in the 1950s. I myself was exposed to humanistic techniques in EFL in a graduate program during the early 90s. Naka, one of the authors of the book, also mentions a publication from the 1970s on a similar topic for English language educators that had an impact on his teaching in his chapter. It can be inferred that while the philosophy behind the idea of engaging language might not have been mainstream in the field of foreign language education, it might have been an undercurrent for decades. Equipped with such new perspectives as learners' active participation in the community and the dynamic nature of relationships among multiple cultures and languages that may reside within an individual, as presented in *KK*, the undercurrent might now have come closer to the surface of language teaching and research. As Japan is now set to increase the number of non-Japanese workers, *KK* is a timely publication for those who seek to ponder what language learning and teaching are all about under the surface of classroom interaction.

A Shameful Life (Ningen shikkaku)

By **Dazai Osamu**. Translated by **Mark Gibeau**. Berkeley, Calif.: Stone Bridge Press, 2018. 141 pp. \$14.95.

Reviewed by **Ji Shouse**

According to biographers and scholars of Dazai Osamu, Dazai was one of the most popular postwar Japanese novelists, second only to Tanizaki Jun'ichirō by some accounts. Dazai's popularity seems not to have