A STUDY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHING JAPANESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (JFL) BETWEEN THAI TEACHERS AND JAPANESE TEACHERS OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THAILAND

Mika Shaura (Tanasarnsanee)
Graduate School of Education
Assumption University of Thailand

Abstract This is a concept paper which aims to explore the importance of transformational leadership between non-native speaking teachers (NNST) and native speaking teachers (NST) teaching Japanese language as a Foreign Language (JFL) in Thai universities. Currently, Japanese language is one of the major foreign languages, which are learned by Thai people nation-wide. According to the survey by the Japan Foundation in 2006, Thailand has the seventh largest number of learners of Japanese language in the world. Nearly 40 percent of teachers are Japanese. In this context, teacher collaboration between Thai NNSTs and Japanese NSTs is vital. JFL teachers and researchers have begun to explore the significance of teacher collaboration, yet, the interactions between NNSTs and NSTs has been seldom analyzed from an aspect of leadership. Regarding teacher collaboration as a process of transformational leadership, the researcher reviews research in leadership and teacher collaboration in JFL and arises needs for new research in roles of NST in Thailand, gaps between expectations and practices in NNST-NST collaboration, factors which affect NNST-NST collaboration positively, and development of teacher education program in terms of NNST-NST collaboration.

Key words: Transformational leadership, Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL), Native and non-native speaking teacher (NST-NNST), Teacher collaboration

Introduction

 In this era of globalization, foreign language learning is vital to gain and share new knowledge especially for university students. On the one hand, English competence is regarded as essential for both academic and business activities. On the other hand, the current of cultural diversity emphasizes the importance of learning other foreign languages besides English. Reflecting the needs of society, the number of Thai universities, which offers new BA programs for students who are majoring in Japanese, is increasing. According to the Japan Foundation Bangkok (2008), 14 national universities out of 24, 15 Rajabhat Universities out of 40, 4 private universities out of 64, and 2 Rajamangala Universities out of 9 provide annually approximately 1,000 students bachelor degrees in Japanese.

In such a context, collaboration between Thai teachers and Japanese teachers in practices of teaching language is essential to provide students language programs with quality. In Thai-JFL, there is a small amount of research that focuses on NNST-NST collaboration. Recently, several JFL researchers attempt to define the quality of Japanese JFL teachers who are native speakers of Japanese (NST) abroad. Differentiating from JFL in domestic, NSTs abroad need to be more competent in different cultural awareness and interacting with administrative superiors, colleague teachers as well as with students. (Hirahata, 2008) NNST-NST interactions in collaboration may exist not only in teaching classes but do also in administrative levels including setting policy, material and curriculum development, and in conducting outside curriculum activities. In this sense, NNST-NST collaboration is regarded as an implementation of leadership theories.

Bringing the theories of transformational leadership into NNST-NST teacher collaboration and studying how people are empowered in setting goals, commitments, and decision making by interacting with each other, the roles of NSTs abroad become more clear. In this study, the researcher reviews the theories of transformational leadership and attempts to clarify the significance of these theories to understand the nature of teacher collaboration between NNST-NST of JFL abroad.

Transformational Leadership

The principal concept of transformational leadership is, as seen in its name, the power of transforming people through interaction. It may be regarded as the power pushing people beyond their self-interests and toward the shared goal of the whole organization (Bush, 2008; Treslan, 2006). The traits of transformational leadership are understood, for example by Yukl (1989) as a power, which increases followers' motivation by:
    1) Activating higher needs of followers
    2) Appealing to moral ideas;
    3) Empowering followers (Yukl, 1989, p. 230)

Its effects are observed, according to Bennis and Nanus (1985) cited in Yukl (1989), in 1) developing vision, 2) commitment, and 3) learning. In a School context, such effects of transformational leadership are confirmed in similar areas. For instance, Leithwood (2003) studied transformational leadership effects on teachers in three categories 1) setting directions, 2) developing people, and 3) redesigning the organization. Both Bennis and Nanus' model and Leithwood's model refer that transformational leadership affects a individual or team in setting goals, making a decision on action to be taken, and learning for development.

As Bush (2008) claims, leadership is associated with management. In other words, leadership provides values, which are implemented in practice. Treslan (2006) sees teachers' effective classroom management in "leadership in identifying organizational vision; foresting acceptance of group goals; conveying high performance expectations; being an appropriate role model; providing intellectual stimulation; and dedication to developing a strong school culture" (Treslan, 2006, p. 59). These six values share the same nature with Sergiovanni's (2007) perception. Sergiovanni reviews his research, which was done in the late 1980s to 1990s, and explains the values underlying transformational leadership with the six keys that are purpose, empowerment, power to accomplish, quality control, outrage, and moral action (Sergiovanni, 2007, pp. 74-80).

According to Bush, transformational leadership is understood better by associating with the collegial style of management (Bush, 2008). Transformational leadership exists not only in superior-to-follower relationship but also in the relationship of follower-to-superior and among followers. In a school context, transformational leadership can be observed between administrators and teachers, among teachers, between teachers and students, and among students. Although leadership is viewed as a matter between school administrators and teachers in school context traditionally, empowerment, which is an outcome of transformational leadership, is also observed among teachers, between teachers and students, and even among students.

Usually in other contexts than administrator-teacher, setting, transformational leadership is called by different names. For example, transformational leadership among teachers is called 'teacher collaboration', in teacher-student relationship; it may be called 'teaching', and 'peer-learning' among students. Thus, transformational leadership appears in different contexts differently. However, the nature of transformational leadership, which is defined by Bass (1985) as "leadership that provides followers with autonomy and challenging work more important to the job satisfaction of the followers" (p. 163), is shared in any relationship. Studying the interactions with teachers and students from a view of transformational leadership may be rewarding since it may provide new perceptions, which can lead new solutions on present problems. At the same time, studying how transformational leadership works in other types of relationship than the superior-follower relationship is a new discipline of transformational leadership study, and it is significant for all educational institutes to develop their quality.

In summary, transformational leadership can be defined as a process, which moves people beyond their self-concern and leads them to the higher level of self-actualization by influencing each other through interactions. In an educational context, it may appear not only in the superior-follower relationship but also among colleagues, among students, and between teachers and students, and effect on goal setting, decision making, and individual and organizational learning. In this study, the researcher attempts to review current situations and problems of Teaching Japanese Language as a Foreign Language (JFL) in Thailand in terms of teacher collaboration, and to explore new perceptions from a view of transformational leadership.

JFL in Thailand

A survey conducted in 2006 by the Japan Foundation, the number of the learners of Japanese language in the whole world is 2,979,280 and the number is increasing. There are 44,321 teachers working in 13,639 institutions. Compared to the survey in 2003, the number of the teachers increased most of the number of learners, teachers, and institutions, by 33.8% (The Japan Foundation, 2006). Hirahata (2008) points that more than half of Japanese language teachers are working abroad. In terms of Native speaking teachers of Japanese (NST), including volunteers, at least 30 percent of NSTs are teaching in overseas institutions.

Thailand has the seventh largest number of learners in the world. There are 71,083 learners, 1,153 teachers, and 451 institutions. Considering the national population, this number is significantly large. The ratio of NST is also high. In higher education, 44 percent of the teachers are NSTs (The Japan Foundation, 2006). The roles of NSTs in Thailand is different from assisting a main teacher in class to setting up a course curriculum for university. What required of an NST is dependent what the status the NST is. NSTs are divided into three categories: 1) NSTs from government organizations, 2) NSTs employed by Thai institutions directly, and 3) NSTs sent from private organizations or NGOs. The roles of NSTs sent from government organizations such as The Japan Foundation are relatively clear, since they are sent based on the requests from Thai institutions. Their primary roles are facilitating a new program and providing supports for local teachers by mentoring and coaching. NSTs that belong to this category are provided pre-service education adequately. In higher education, majority of NSTs are belonging to the group 2 and group 3. Their educational and teaching backgrounds are various.

Shimada, Suzuki, and Tokofuka (2002) have reported difficulties that NSTs in Thailand face. They feel that difficulties are in dealing with a large number of students in classroom, a short of varieties in teaching

methodologies, students' being late or absent, and relationship with Thai teachers. These findings imply that NSTs are taking independent responsibilities in teaching. They have to manage classroom by themselves, and eventually they face these problems. Hanai (2001) attempts to identify how NSTs of secondary schools in Northeast Thailand are evaluated by Thai teachers and students: The findings indicate that Thai teachers need NSTs as their teaching partners. However, they tend not to prefer to teach one lesson together with Japanese. They rather appreciate to have individual responsibilities even when they teach one subject in team, for instance grammar is always taught by Thais and listening comprehension parts are taught by Japanese. Interestingly, students do not see in the same way. The findings imply that they appreciate to have both NSTs and NNSTs in the same class. Reviewing studies done so far, though teachers and students views teacher collaboration between NNST and NST in teaching as important, how teachers are collaborating each others has not been clarified.

With wider aspects, Hirahata (2008) attempts to define teacher competences of NSTs abroad: Summarizing her study, management skills in human relation and sensitivity of cultural awareness are as important as knowledge and skills of teaching. This is reasonable since NSTs overseas are usually working for educational institutions. An overseas context emphasizes competences of accepting different cultural aspects to deal with people in different cultural behaviors. Honna (2004) proposed a conceptual model of Japanese Language Teaching (JLT). According to the model, Japanese language teachers have to teach 1) learning Japanese culture and 2) expressing learner's culture as well as 3) Japanese language. NNST-NST collaboration provides the best context to develop cultural awareness of both groups of teachers. In this sense, JFL teachers need to search a better way to collaborate with each counterpart. However, in JFL, the underlying concept of collaboration has not been adequately debated at the teacher's practice level: research appears only in teaching and learning.

Teacher Collaboration and Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is considered as a process that transforms people to commit in taking actions for better outcomes. Likewise, collaboration is regarded a sharing process with peers to create a new product (Tateoka, 2006), and is different from a total sum of individual partial work, which is observed most frequently in Thai NNST-NST collaboration (Hanai, 2001). Ikeda (2007) regards the later as a division of work. However, looking from a view at an organizational level, a division of work may also be claimed as a style of collaboration.

Tateoka (2006) sees, in a process of collaboration, sharing purpose through dialogues among peers plays a vital role and this perception is accepted in various fields such as education, business, and politics in Japan. This implies that people regard collaboration as a key for coexisting with people who have different values to live in today's world of globalization and of cutting-edge technology. An individual expert could hardly do anything alone (Tateoka, 2006, p.2).

Since 1990s, the term 'collaboration' has been used in peer learning in JFL classrooms especially in teaching reading and writing skills. In a theory of peer learning, three key factors: 1) self (the learner him/herself), 2) others (the learner's peers), and 3) target (skills or knowledge to be learned) are concerned. The underlying perception of peer learning is that the learner learns the target better by interacting with others and deepens understanding (Tateoka, 2006, p.6).

Positive effects of collaboration are also seen in teacher education for both NSTs and NNSTs (Ikeda, 2007; Hatta & Sangthongsuk. 2008). Ikeda (2007) studied peer learning in teacher development courses and concluded that collaboration among teachers in a process of self-reflection resulted deeper and more critical self-understanding. Hatta & Sangthongsuk (2008) conducted an experimental teacher development program with peer learning for Thai NNSTs in Bangkok and reported that interactions with teachers helped identify current problem and influenced decision-making. These findings are significant in terms of transformational leadership. As discussed previously, research in transformational leadership has claimed its effects on setting goals, commitment, and learning. Ikeda's findings confirm that peer-learning has a positive affect on learning, and Hatta and Sangthongsuk's finings imply that a collaborative learning process promotes analyzing individual's current problems carefully so that individual teacher may set a goal better and making decisions on what to do. These can be incidents to claim that peer learning is a process of empowerment among learners.

However, JFL research in collaboration is limited only in a classroom-learning context. Furthermore, the effects on collaboration are usually confirmed only by the learners or observed in learners' self-reflections in classroom. It could be concluded how teachers are collaborating (or not collaborating) in practice is hardly studied yet in JFL.

Need for New Research of Teacher Collaboration in Thai-JFL through a Transformational Leadership Perception

Although teacher collaboration between Japanese and Thai seems theoretically vital in Thai-JFL, in practice, few evidences are seen in research. What does this imply? Are Thais and Japanese collaborating in teaching Japanese? If

so, at what level? If not, why do they not do this? Concluding this study, the researcher would like to propose needs for more research in following areas;

1) Roles of NSTs in Thailand
2) Gaps between expected roles and actual practice of NSTs
3) Factors which promote NNST-NST collaboration and which prevent NSST and NST from collaborating with each other

Exploring answers of these questions may lead us to create a model of development program for JFL teachers. Regarding collaboration between NNST-NST as a process of transformational leadership, which is observed in a collegial management context, observing how collaboration empowers in setting goals, making decision to take an action, and developing people will provide new views toward research in teacher collaboration in JFL to develop its quality.

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