



勝元主席語録

THE LITTLE RED
DAO OF AJATT

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by Chairman Khatzumoto



1. Process

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1.1 Equipment: Immersion Environment



Why You Should Keep Listening Even If You Don't Understand



- Native speakers have passively listened to their language for obscene amounts of time.
- This incubation period is essential to their linguistic awesomeness.
- If you replicate these conditions of environment and behavior, ...
- ...then you can replicate the results.
- So keep listening whether or not you understand. It'll all just start to make sense.

If Immersion Works So Well, Then Why Can People Live In a Country For Double-Digit Years And Never Learn The Language?



- Just because you're near the water, that doesn't mean you're taking a bath.
- "[A] linguistic microclimate is more important than a linguistic macroclimate"—Kató Lomb
- Don't try to use "discipline". Don't suppress "human nature": use it.
- Combine **fun** (attraction) with **inertia**.
- Fill your life with fun L2 things and remove any optional L1 from your life.

No Speak English



- "Native speakers" own a language because they have never thought of not owning it.
- Tell yourself that you don't speak any language other than Japanese.
- Believe it. Act like it.
- Look for the Japanese version of anything and everything.
- The more serious and important it is, the more you must read it in Japanese.

The Immersion Environment: Rome wasn't built in a day...But this isn't Rome, so a week should totally do...



- Get rid of your English-language stuff.
- Use what you have and add to it regularly.
- Think of your Japanese materials (books, movies, etc,) as a valuable investment in your education.

Japan Is Wherever You Are: 10 Ways to Turn Your Environment Japanese



- Media (music, movies, TV, radio, computer OS): Japanese
- Computer (OS, home page, bookmarks): Japanese
- Physical environment (walls, floor, furniture): Japanese
- Food: Japanese (eat with chopsticks!)
- Brain/Thoughts: Try to think in Japanese

Make Japanese the Center of Your Life: The Only Time You Have is the Time You Make



- You have to make Japanese the center of your life.
- You don't have time, you make it.
- Any situation can be Japanized. Ask yourself how.
- Show up and you win.
- The more you show up, the faster you will win.

But I Don't Have Time For Immersion!: How To Immerse Even When Your Time Is Controlled By Others



- Focus on the time you do control, rather than on what you don't.
- Limits are not always a disadvantage. Limits are your friend.
- Limits seem like plain friction but can actually provide traction.
- Think of Japanese less as something to "get through" and more as something to "be".
- One inch counts. One kanji counts. One minute counts.

Eat Your Dessert First: Why Doing the Fun Stuff is the Most Effective Way of Learning Japanese



- Doing the fun stuff first is the most effective way to learn Japanese.
- It makes you happy.
- You can do it for longer, and more times.
- It'll actually enable you to do the boring stuff.
- *Star Trek* Japanese is 90%+ the same as "normal" Japanese.

Shaping: What The Immersion Environment Does For You



- The environment *shapes* the way you learn the language.
- In any language, some words and phrases get more usage than others.
- Even if you don't know what they mean, you eventually *have* to find out...
- ...because you *keep* hearing them.
- As a result, your Japanese will become more native-like.

Compromise: Maintaining Your Immersion Environment Without Completely Alienating Your Fellows...or Yourself



- **Music videos:** People just get drawn in by music videos. So use them.
- **Watch L2 video with L1 subtitles** (when your friends are there).
- **Music:** Pick a style that everyone enjoys and play it up.
- **Food:** Make people a Japanese meal.
- **Find new friends, find new materials.** Always moving, searching.

Massive Turnover: How to Banish Boredom and Burnout from Immersion Even If You're Just a Sucky Beginner



- The solution to being "bored" or "burned out" with a language is: more.
- More stuff. More sampling. More deleting. More turnover. More. More. More.
- It'll keep you feeling busy and active, while...
- ...being immersed, and...
- you'll start to figure out what you like.

Taking A Break: The Third Way



- Let go of struggling and just *be* Japanese, and you will never need a break.
- If you still feel the need for a break, then take a break in...
- ...a language you know nothing of (or know less than Japanese).
- When you come back to Japanese, you'll feel like a champ.
- Avoid taking a break in English - too powerful.

You Don't Have A Foreign Language Problem, You Have An Adult Literacy Problem



- You are not a foreigner learning a foreign language.
- You are an illiterate adult learning your own language.
- Literacy is directly proportional to time spent with text.
- All literacy problems are due to insufficient time with text.
- Turnover is good. Stay in text but no need to stay with the same text.

1.2 Equipment: SRS (Spaced Repetition System)



What Is An SRS?



- It's a piece of electronic flashcard-like software that...
- ...helps you to long-term-memorize large quantities of information by...
- ...effectively working on only a small subset of that information each day.
- If used correctly, they promise retention in the range of 90-95%.
- The key is not *which* SRS you use, but *that* you actually use one, every day.

SRS and Kanji Study: What is an SRS? 2



- Writing out kanji hundreds of times will help you get nice-looking kanji...
- ...but it's l-o-u-s-y for memorization.
- The key to remembering is not concentrating repetitions but spacing them out.
- This spacing grows over time.
- The SRS does the spacing management and calculations for you.

How To Score Yourself on Repetitions



- 0: Total blank / Multiple major errors
- 1: Answered, but 1 major error/ multiple minor errors.
- 2: Just off.
- 3: Close enough. Buzzer beater. Right on the line.
- 4: Correct, solid.
- 5: Piece. Of. Cake.

2-3. Kanji & Kana



How to Learn and Review Kanji Using an SRS



- (1) Card: front = keyword + mnemonic story
- (2) Card: back = the kanji itself
- (3) Task: Given (1), produce (2).
- (4) Compare your answer in (3) to (2).
- (5) Score your performance accordingly.

4. Sentences



What It's Like In The Beginning When You Don't Know Jack. Or, How To Watch Japanese TV.



- It's scary.
- You only understand a little (which is precisely why you need more exposure).
- You're going to "fail". A lot. **Failure is the mother of success.**
- If you're stumped, skip it. Weeks later it will make perfect sense.

How to Watch the News in Japanese



- There is no magic to watching the news. You just have to get *used* to it.
- The way you do that is by watching a lot of it. A. LOT.
- If you want, you can replay the same broadcast for days at a time.
- Pretty soon, you'll start to pick up the set phrases and keywords and such.
- Eventually, you'll understand the entire broadcast.

On Grammar



- Grammar is an *ex post facto* analytical tool.
- Get fluent at real Japanese first. Learn the hows.
- Focus on sentences, sentences, sentences.
- Afterwards, read all about Japanese grammar *in Japanese* and learn the whys.

Grammar Does Not Exist



- Grammar doesn't exist. It is an abstraction.
- Abstractions are supposed to reduce confusion and detail.
- Grammar study tends to only increase confusion and detail.
- You're better off just taking the parts of a language as they come.
- Accept how things are said in a language *as-is, just because*.

Grammar Does Not Exist 2



- Look at a grammar book if you want, but don't worry about the rules.
- Just focus on the example sentences.
- Avoid learning about what you *can't* do...this will only confuse you.

The "Flat" Approach To Languages With Tons of Inflection



- Don't think of the depth of variation of a single word.
- Pretend everything is flat.
- Treat everything as its own, independent word, even inflected verb forms.
- Focus on the difference in *meaning*, since that's what actually counts.
- Do as much as you need to "get it", and no more.

On Input



- Textbooks tend to focus on the parts of Japanese that are easily explained.
- Real Japanese is not "hard", it's just different.
- In order to use Japanese properly, just imitate real Japanese people.

10,000 Sentences: Input Before Output



- Input (reading, listening) matters more than output (writing, speaking).
- Input of high quality and quantity naturally leads to high quality output.
- When you learn sentences in Japanese, do not force yourself to use them.
- Don't try to remember them in order to say them.
- When the time comes for you to use those sentences, they'll just come to you.

10,000 Sentences: Why



- A sentence is a set of words arranged according to grammar rules...
- ...with the added benefit of showing the "sense" in which to use the words.
- A lot of words in Japanese mean similar things but are not the same.
- Knowing when to use what is the difference between sounding native-like and sounding just a little bit "off".
- Learning thousands of real Japanese sentences will eventually give you a "feel" for what is and is not correct Japanese.

10,000 Sentences: How



- You will need: computing device(s), an SRS, one or more sentence sources.
- Read each sentence in full, aloud, with kanji, no furigana.
- Know the meaning of every word in the sentence.
- Understand the meaning of the entire sentence.
- Write (copy) out the sentence by hand.

Just Because It's Not Painful, That Doesn't Mean You're Not Learning



- To acquire a language, all you need do is **show yourself** the data.
- Your brain will do the rest. Trust it.
- Stuff learned in "easier" contexts transfers itself to less obvious contexts.
- Let go of your addiction to struggling, and...
- ...focus on acquiring rather than learning.

About SRS/Sentence Writing Practice



- Writing out the sentence each time you miss it is enough.
- There is a strong correlation between ability to write out the sentence...
- ...and ability to read it correctly.
- Writing out the parts you get wrong will impress them upon your memory.

10,000 Sentences: Where



- Look anywhere and everywhere that native Japanese is spoken and written.
- Pick short sentences/phrases.
- Pick sentences/phrases that stretch your knowledge only very slightly.
- If bored, take a break and do something else in Japanese.
- Watching TV/playing games in Japanese is more important than "doing your sentences".

10,000 Sentences: What



- Learn pronouns ("this", "that", "here", "somewhere", "who").
- Learn prepositions/postpositions ("in", "on", "to" and "from").
- Learn conjunctions ("and", "with", "but").
- Learn Native Japanese Words (NJs), especially action verbs.
- Learn to use the conditional mood from early on (would, could).

How To Banish Boredom from Sentence-Mining (Sentence-Picking)



- Only pick sentences that are interesting to you at that moment.
- Not something you *think* you "should" learn.
- As far as possible, enter directly into your SRS.
- Use online or software dictionaries to reduce typing load.
- Don't try to "do it all". 10% of what you want is fine. Let the other 90% go.

Popping Bubblewrap: Tips for Better SRS Sentence Items



- **KISS:** Keep It Short and Sweet.
- An item that's sucky is a weed. Delete it.
- Doing sentences should be like popping bubblewrap:
- Requiring conscious effort while also being relatively easy and *super* satisfying.

Secrets to Smoother SRSing, Part 1: The SRS Is a Servant, Not a Master



- SRS were developed to **serve *you***.
- Many people put themselves in the position of slave to their SRS.
- If it is not fun, then it is not of AJATT ☺
- Adults act according to their identity rather than their ability.
- Choose the identity of a Japanese child, who is expected to achieve fluency.

Secrets to Smoother SRSing, Part 2: Fun



- The so-called AJATT method is centered around fun, not sentences.
- No fun = No good.
- If it is not fun, stop now.
- Stop entering items. Stop doing reps. Stop reading that book or watching that movie.
- Stay in the language, just do something else, like switching TV channels.

Secrets to Smoother SRSing, Part 3: Don't Go Looking for Items, Let Them Come Find You



- Do not look for sentences, let them find you instead.
- You don't have to let items in because they're "good for you".
- SRS = your home. Let in the items/people you like, the rest can stay out.
- More fun items → more desire to SRS → more fluency sooner.

Secrets to Smoother SRSing, Part 4: Collect 'Em To Throw Away



- Expect to have to delete many of the items you enter.
- If in doubt, throw it out.
- If borin', don't put it in.
- It's not about the numbers.
- Deleting dud items will make you *want* to do reps more.

Secrets to Smoother SRSing, Part 5: Timeboxing



- Timeboxing = limiting an activity to a preset time of your choosing.
- It helps you quit while you're ahead.
- It helps you make efficient use of energy.
- It can help prevent evasion, procrastination and indecision.
- It can motivate you with "racing" games.

Secrets to Smoother SRSing, Part 6: Maintain Only the Baseline/SRS Holidays



- Take an SRS holiday.
- But not a total holiday. Just stop adding items.
- Just do reps.
- Not necessarily all reps - just timebox a few minutes a day.
- The key is to avoid doing nothing at all.

Secrets to Smoother SRSing, Part 7: The Place of Pre-Mined SRSing and Other Ramblings



- Pre-prepared sentences may reduce some gruntwork.
- But, they do not remove your responsibility to be selective.
- In fact, they only increase it.
- Selectivity = "delete" + "do not insert in the first place".
- Respect your own preferences. Only keep stuff you like.

How To Use a Japanese Textbook



- Don't use one at all, or...
- ...use it efficiently.
- Go straight for the dialogues and example sentences.
- Copy those into your SRS. Not all of them. Just the fun ones.
- Rather than buying it, borrow it from a local library, or buy-and-sell.

Why Monolingual Dictionaries Are Worth Your Time



- The monolingual dictionary is not like other books: it's self-referential.
- It contains many (most?) of the secrets of the language you want to learn.

How To Really Make the Transition to Monolingual Dictionaries



- Look up definitions of words you already know.
- Super, duper, uber, simple, remedial words like:
- 此处(here), 食べる(eat), 飲む(drink), 男(man), 女(woman), etc.

How to Pronounce Japanese



- Talk like a robot. Flat, monotone, one-beat-per-kana.
- Keep your mouth tight. There are only 5 vowel sounds. Stick to them.
- Record yourself, and play it back. Once a week is more than enough.
- Pick up intonation piece by piece. Listen, listen, listen.
- Adopt a Parent. Pick someone and copy them.

How To Speak Like A Native (in any language)



- **Imitation:** ACT. Pretend you ARE from that country.
- **Input:** Listen to a lot of examples of COMBINATIONS or strings of words.
- Use the same pauses and bridges as native speakers.
- Pick an accent.
- Often, standard accents are easier because there's more content that uses them.

Chill.
It's all a game.



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