Institute for Japanese Studies Lecture Series

Content-based Language Instruction for Engineers

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Human Centered Design and Engineering
University of Washington

Wednesday, October 26, 2016
4:00-5:30 pm
Journalism Building 371
242 W 18th Ave

Abstract: Content-based language instruction has long been recognized as an effective approach to language teaching in general, and this approach is currently practiced widely. In addition to CBI's effectiveness, during the current trend of declining enrollments in language courses, CBI can also be considered a way for enhancing a language curriculum and, thereby, attracting larger numbers of students. To this end, my presentation aims to provide insights for teachers interested in offering CBI courses, in this case, CBI courses for engineers. First, I will review the concept of CBI and compare it with Language for Specific Purposes, a notion closely related to CBI, thus presenting common ground for the discussion to follow. Next, I will speak about key issues to be considered when offering CBI courses for engineers. This includes the selection of topics, identification of focal language skills, and the technical level of content, with general suggestions and specific examples. Finally, we will examine criticisms of CBI and consider "Critical CBI" (CBI that fosters critical thinking) as an alternative approach. Although the materials and information I provide here are from CBI courses in Japanese, the concepts, ideas, and suggestions presented are not language specific.

Bio: Michio Tsutsui is professor emeritus in Human Centered Design and Engineering and the former Director of the Technical Japanese Program at the University of Washington. Currently he is an adjunct professor in East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, where he teaches Japanese linguistics to graduate students in Columbia's Summer M.A. Program in Japanese Pedagogy. Professor Tsutsui received a B.S. in Naval Engineering from Osaka University, and worked several years for IBM Japan as a systems engineer. He earned a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1984. The following year he moved to MIT to set up their Japanese language program, which he directed until 1990 when he moved to the University of Washington. At UW, he launched the Technical Japanese Program in the College of Engineering. He directed and taught in the program until he retired from UW in 2016. Professor Tsutsui has written a number of books on Japanese language, including the three-volume series, *A Dictionary of Japanese Grammar*, and the four-volume series, *Tobira*, an intermediate Japanese textbook, as well as numerous papers and articles on Japanese linguistics, teaching Japanese as a Second Language, and Computer-Assisted Language Learning. Professor Tsutsui's research interests include Japanese linguistics, Japanese for specific purposes, second language acquisition, and technology-enhanced language learning.

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