KanjiKreativ (KK) 2.0: An e-learning programme for the 1945 “Jōyō kanmoji (kanji letters)”

- The incremental and systematic development of Kanji recognition -

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1. The rationale for KanjiKreativ (KK) 2.0; the process and the philosophy behind its development.

Since the completion of KK version 1.0 on the 25th of August 2004, the author has presented papers and lectured on “Teaching Japanese using KK” at numerous institutions in Germany and Europe. The question most frequently asked at the Q&A session is “From where did you get the concept of teaching the 1945 kanji for recognition only, without touching on the reading and writing aspects? Surely in Japanese school you must have been taught the kanji by writing letter by letter.”

The author usually replies along the following three lines:

(1) Motivation: In her 34 years of living outside of Japan (4 years in the USA, 30 years in Germany), the author has frequently heard, from both learners and teachers, that the difficulty of the kanji was a cause for students dropping out of Japanese classes, and how much they regretted this.

(2) Theoretical references:

1. Isao Ishii (1983) states in “Kanjikyōiku 5 Kan”
   a. Hiragana are harder than kanji (Vol. II, pp.62-64)
   b. Of the three kanji ‘鳩’, ‘鴉’ and ‘亀’, children in the first and second years of primary school, as well as children with special educational needs, find the character ‘亀’ hardest and the character ‘鳩’, easiest (Vol. II, p.176)
   c. Full texts, written correctly in a mix of kanji and kana, should be shown right from the early stages of learning (Vol. I,
pp.148-162)

d. The ability to read (ie recognise the shape of) kanji should be
separated from the ability to write kanji (Book II, pp.
pp.282-283) 3

e. “Criticism of kanji education in Japanese language education
delivered to mother tongue learners in Japanese schools” (Vol.
II, pp. 265-283)

systemisation of various kinds of symbols develops in the human brain.

(3) Philosophical and language teaching perspectives: Since KK is an educational
method which develops the ability to deal with kanji in a non-context bound way,
it can release Japanese language education from dependence on grammar, and
thus has the potential to bring about a paradigm shift in Japanese language
education.

1.1 The history of KK development: Version 1 with the support of the National
Institute for Japanese Language; Version 2 with the support of the Freie Universität
Berlin.

The first version of KanjiKreativ (KK) was completed in 2003 / 2004 by a team of
three members: Yoriko Yamada who was responsible for the framework and
production, Rainer Weihs who was responsible for the computer programming and
Natsumi Komatsu who drew the graphics. It was an e-learning (eL) kanji programme
and received the support from The National Institute for Japanese Language as part of
the e-Japan Japanese Language Education IT project. During the period 2004-2006,
research into the application of KK was carried out. Yamada incorporated KK into
JaFIX 5 Japanese language lessons as blended learning(BL), an amalgamated teaching
method which blends e-learning and face to face lessons (Yamada, 2004). This phase
of the project received support from the research team headed by Jōji Miwa, C.I.S.,
Faculty of Engineering, Iwate University which was awarded a grant in aid for
Scientific Research (16320063) by the Japanese government (2007). KK Version 2.0
was completed on the 25th of April 2007 with the support of the Centre for Digital
Systems (CeDiS), Freie Universität Berlin 6. The most distinctive feature of this
revised version is the incremental and systematic way of learning kanji. (See section 3). The Freie Universität Berlin gave approval for the KK project to continue and to produce multi-lingual (Japanese, English, French) versions. Translation of the KK2.0 is underway at the time of writing this article.

1.2 KK “Brain Training to Tune into Kanji” – the concept of recognising the 1945 kanmoji (meanings and forms) through the mother tongue.

The author coined the new word kanmoji referring to the kanji letters, as used in the title of this article. There are two reasons for this. One is to mark the paradigm shift caused by KK from the traditional understanding of teaching kanji. The other is to highlight the educational process, in which learners progress from the recognition of letters to vocabulary learning. The learners first learn to recognize all of the 1945 kanmoji as “signs” (rather like traffic signs) by e-learning self study. The speed at which learners from a Chinese background acquire Japanese is well known in Japanese language education (Yamauchi 1996). KK is designed to mirror this process by causing the non-kanji brain of European learners to tune into kanji. Traffic signs and other signs such as logos for the various Olympic sports only require the people to understand their meaning when people see them. There is no need for the learner to be able to write the word or to decode the phonemes to pronounce it. The same applies to KK in that only the shape of the kanji letter together with its associated meaning are learnt. Ideally, this training of the brain to tune into kanji should happen before the learners start their language course. However, it can be carried out during the initial period of the course; while the learners are still full of enthusiasm to learn – during the first 70 or so hours’ learning, or the first 2-3 months’ of Japanese learning (Yamada 2002). Once the learners have learnt to recognise all the kanji letters – or as they are getting to know the shapes of the kanji letters – they learn how these kanji are used, ie they learn vocabulary in context. The basic framework of JaFIX teaching is as follows. The recognition is principally done by e-learning self study and the contextual meaning is dealt with in face to face lessons. The JaFIX with KK blended learning has been applied to the Japanese courses in the Berlin area since 2004 and the results indicate support for the following hypotheses:

(1) KK can tune a non-kanji brain (a European or Western brain which does not use kanji in its native writing system) into a kanji brain (like that of a native speaker of Chinese)

(2) Tuning the brain into kanji accelerates the learner’s ability to process information, negotiate meaning and structure sentences, and thus leads to faster acquisition of
the Japanese language.

In the following sections, we will discuss why KK is needed, the logic and characteristics of the KK programme with examples of lessons and a case study of accelerated language acquisition and the effect of the paradigm shift that the application of KK will bring about.

1. Why KK? Understanding the problems of the current, non-systematic way of teaching kanji.

Japanese language pedagogy is continues to develop, yet the teaching and learning of kanji is still considered “difficult” by both learners and teachers. The most obvious reason for this, which almost goes without saying, is the large number of kanji letters that have to be learnt. We believe that the second reason is the non-systematic way in which learners are taught kanji. What it meant by ‘the non-systematic way’ should be thoroughly discussed from the theoretical points of cognitive semiotics. However due to the limitation of the space, in this article only the following 3 points will be discussed, at the risk of over simplification.

1. “Gakunenbetu Kanji Haitōhyō” The kanji lists for each year of compulsory education in Japan (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), 1989/98). These lists, which form the basis of Japanese language teaching both as a native language and as a foreign language, is the source of all current problems in the teaching of kanji. The lists are published in the guidelines for teaching in primary education (Shogakkō Shidō Yōryō). The guidelines neither show what criteria are used to decide the order in which the kanji are to be taught, nor mention any regularities about the form and structure which are inherit in kanji letters. In the primary grade 3 and grade 4 section, the guidelines briefly mention that pupils should “acquire knowledge about the structure of kanji eg knowledge about the radicals”, (the second point under the heading “linguistic items”). No details are given as to what this knowledge is, nor any indication of how this knowledge may be taught systematically and continuously. Thus this knowledge remains as an unsystematic notion. When these native Japanese speakers grow up and become Japanese language teachers, they do not know how these symbols are systemised. Thus they are unable to teach kanji.
systematically, and thus, this lack of knowledge is passed on from the native speaker teacher to the non-native speaker learner (who is, of course, themselves a potential teacher). Both learner and teacher inherit the “MEXT kanji list syndrome”: a feature semi-permanently present in the structure of Japanese language education.

(2) The influence of Kokugo Kyōiku (Japanese taught to Japanese mother tongue children). In most Japanese language education delivered to mother tongue learners in Japanese schools, at least 10 items (the form, the on pronunciation(s), the kun pronunciation(s), the number of strokes, the stroke order, how to write the character, okurigana, furigana, compounds in which the kanji is used and the vocabulary with which it collocates) are taught at the same time. The native speaker primary and secondary pupils obviously have a knowledge of the spoken form of the language in their mother tongue lexicon\(^1\), and they also have the advantage of this learning being spread over the 9 years of compulsory education. When this method of “teaching everything about the kanji simultaneously” adopted into the teaching of Japanese as a foreign language, where the learners are often adults and have a much shorter time in which to learn the language, it leads to the following problems;

(1) learners fail to recognize the patterns present in the forms of kanji letters

(2) learners are unable to reproduce the shape of letters correctly

(3) disregard for any knowledge (linguistic background, physical knowledge, hidden knowledge) the learner already has (eg No consideration is given to “re-train” fingers which are used to writing alphabetical letters from left to right into writing kanji)

(4) underestimation of the learning load on the learner (a typical example is seen in the standards set by the Japanese Language Proficiency Tests – a negative and erroneous evaluation of the knowledge of the learner according to the number of kanji known)

(5) Lack of recognition of the Gestalt like aspects of Japanese when written in kanji-kana majiribun, a mixture of kana and kanji, (the mutual interdependence of sentence structure and the writing system). This leads to an allergy like aversion to kanji where learners write everything in hiragana (see section 5). It also results in the spread of the so called ‘non-first language interference theory’ which claims that
if a learner comes from a non-kanji background, they cannot learn kanji.

(3) **Not separating the learning of letters and learning vocabulary.** In a traditional syllabus, new kanji are presented through the “target text”. This contextualised teaching of kanji has the following pitfalls:

(1) Although it claimed to be “teaching kanji”, what is actually being taught is vocabulary. Thus what should be the learning of about 2000 kanji letters, actually increases to the need to learn about 15,000 items of vocabulary. This 15,000 is estimated from 33% of the average modern adult vocabulary of 45,000 – 50,000 words, 33% being the proportion of kanji compound words in the Japanese lexicon. When kanji (in reality vocabulary) is taught in this way, the learner feels that the number of kanji they have to learn seems to be limitless. They cannot monitor their own progress and are in a continuous state of panic as to when they will emerge from the fog of unknowing.

(2) Learners have no way of accessing the meaning of kanji which have not yet been taught. They complain “It’s like not being able to even read the alphabet however many years I’ve been learning”

(3) Ishii (1998;2005) argues that since the learners have not learnt ‘Kanji Grammar’, (the processing of kanji information according to the elements which make up kanji letters), when they come across a kanji, or a kanji compound, that they have not learnt previously, they cannot process or infer the meaning by themselves.

2. **The logic and systematic nature of the KK programme:** the 280 elements presented with animation, followed by all 1945 jōyō kanji presented in an incremental and systematic way

The KK programme as a whole has the following four sections ;

- introduction ; outlining the principles of kanji formation and a short explanation of the software
- *genshi* elements; 280 elements to be engraved into the brain using animation
- the 1945 jōyō kanji: taught in an incremental and systematic way to foster the learner's ability to process the meaning of kanji through knowledge of the kanji

- a dictionary function; currently under construction

The major sections are the 280 genshi (=element) and the 1945 jōyō kanji. Each section has the 3 stages of presentation, revision and test to ensure total mastery by self-study. The main aim of KK is to engrave into the brain “one meaning” for “one form”, in other words it is the formation of a prototype.

Diagram 1 shows a screen from section 2 (study of the 280 genshi), showing the systemization of meaning. The “genshi elements” are 280 minimal semantic units which build up the kanji. The 280 genshi are extracted by Yamada from the 1945 jōyō kanji. They are presented in 12 categories according to the meanings they represent in the physical and social worlds. The first category, which is placed in the innermost circle, is the most concrete, dealing with facial features (mouth, eyes, nose etc) – surely what humans encounter first after being born into this world. The second category is the body, followed by: 3 animals, 4 plants, 5 nature, 6 housing, 7 tools, 8 kanji symbols, 9 language and directions, 10 businesses, 11 emotions and 12 culture/society. The content of the categories widens as learning progresses, with the final category, category 12, being the most abstract and including concepts like the distinction of self from others, ethics and social structures. The elements are presented within a green frame, as both a graphic suggestive of the origin of the kanji, and a graphic of the final form of the kanji. Learners who have used KK cite the advantages and features of learning the genshi as follows: the graphics are beautifully drawn, they can learn at their own pace, and they enjoy studying as they gain confidence and a feeling of safety that one can always understand what is being presented.

Diagram 1: Screen shot of the 12 categories of genshi

Diagram 2: A page from the teaching section for the 1945 jōyō kanji

After learning the 280 genshi, learners progress to the 42 lessons covering the 1945 jōyō kanji. In each lesson, the meaning of the various kanji are learnt through fusing the meanings of the genshi present in that kanji, and the learners learn how to process
the information present within kanji. Learners learn how the 280 genshi learnt in the previous section are put together to form a kanji letter and how to derive the meaning based on the genshi. The 1945 jōyō kanji are divided into two groups: the first group Type 1 consists of 1219 high frequency kanji (including the kyōiku kanji) and the second group Type 2 consists of the remaining 726 kanji. The learner can choose whether to learn both these groups sequentially or separately. Diagram 2 shows a screen shot of lesson 1 showing the kanji ‘bundle’. On the left of the screen is navigational information. In the middle of the screen is the kanji with its form, meaning and genshi which make up this kanji in green; combination of genshi in yellow, and the phrase which helps learners to remember the kanji (= catch phrase). On the right of the screen the 48 characters in this lesson are shown in a grid in black (type 1) and grey (type 2). This kanji, ‘束’, is made up of the elements ‘木 tree’ and ‘口 mouth’, and is indicated in yellow. Those indicated in yellow are called bunshi (=semi-element) and would be useful to acquire in its own right. The catch phrase is like the answer to a riddle. Taking this kanji as an example, the riddle should lead the learner to derive the meaning of the kanji ‘束’ from the meaning of two genshi which they already know.

“What do a mouth and a tree make?”

“He took the bundle of notes in his mouth and climbed up the tree to escape”.

The programme teaches learners to recognise each part of the kanji, and put these together to guess the meaning of the kanji. In addition, the catch phrases are witty, roll off the tongue, are immediately memorable or slightly silly, to enable the learner to remember them poetically, creatively or playfully. Incidentally, the name of this e-learning programme ‘kreativ’ derived from this desire to foster and exploit creativity.

Diagram 3 The incremental and systematic introduction of genshi.

Diagram 3 explains the most distinctive feature of the KK, “incremental” nature of the KK learning system. Let’s take us the example of ‘口 mouth’. This genshi appears most frequently (212 times) in the 1945 jōyō kanji, ie its power to build other kanji is the greatest among the genshi. Let’s see how this incremental system builds up. Of the 1945 jōyō kanji, only 2, namely the kanji ‘口’ itself and the kanji ‘晶’ are be made purely from the genshi ‘口’. So these two kanji are presented on the bottom branch of the tree in the Diagram 3. When the kanji that are made from just this one genshi are exhausted, another high frequency genshi ‘日’ is introduced. Now two
kanji ‘日’, ‘晶’ are made just of the genshi ‘日’; ‘唱’ can be made with the two genshi ‘口’ and ‘日’.

These three kanji are presented on the second branch from the bottom of the tree. This exhausts the possibilities using just these two genshi, so a new genshi ‘木’ is added. Then we get the kanji ‘木’ ‘林’ and ‘森’ which use only the genshi ‘木’, followed by the kanji ‘東’, ‘東’, and ‘栃’ which are made of the genshi ‘木’ in combination with the other genshi already learnt i.e. ‘口’ and ‘日’,

This is the principle of the incremental presentation of kanji. As illustrated above, when the kanji made of the genshi so far presented are exhausted, a new genshi is introduced. Thus kanji are presented systematically according to the similarity of their form. Take a look at diagram 3 again. 6 genshi are added one by one, deriving new kanji by using the new genshi on the branches below. By the end of the 42 lessons, when all the 280 genshi have been used, all the jōyō kanji have been presented. Brief examination of the order of kanji in diagram 2 will show the systematic nature of the KK clearly. In KK version 2.0, the learners will experience the systematization of meaning in the genshi section, and the systematization of form in the jōyō kanji section.

4. The features of KK: context free kanji acquisition in a short time whilst acquiring kanji grammar.

The three major features of KK will be discussed next. These are (1) the acquisition of kanji grammar (2) the short period of time taken for acquisition and (3) the context free nature of the learning.

The acquisition of kanji grammar = acquiring the ability to process information. Generally “grammatical ability” refers to the ability to segment natural language into its parts according to their form, and to re-unite these parts to discover meaning. In other words, it is the facility to use symbols. The same mechanism is at work in kanji. The genshi are the elements of the kanji. The ‘KK kanji brain’ which has been trained through comprehensive knowledge of all these elements, will be able to analyse these elements and put them together to deduce the meaning of a kanji, even when this kanji has not yet been presented. Furthermore, since the meanings of the individual kanji are known, this same ability to “put together and deduce meaning” also applies to kanji compounds. We can say that the learner has acquired ‘kanji grammar’.
The short period of time taken for learning kanji. The KK team estimated that the time taken for learning KK would be a total of 45 hours (@30 seconds per *genshi* x 280 = 2.5 hours plus 1 hour per lesson (maximum of 48 kanji per lesson) for 42 lessons). The actual time taken for learners to complete KK is being measured, both with native speaker children of Japanese (2 pupils in a special class who have Asperger’s spectrum symptoms) and with non-native learners of Japanese. Whilst the data is still being collated, the interim report indicates that the time frame estimated above is realistic. Furthermore, the participants in the study really appreciated the KK’s visualised presentation of the total amount of learning required and the clear indication of the time required until mastery is reached.

Context free learning. In contrast to the traditional way of learning, where each new kanji is introduced randomly within the context of the lesson, KK introduces all the kanji at the start of learning. Thus after the hiragana and katakana have been mastered, authentic texts such as newspaper headings and articles, Japanese literature, poetry and prose, proverbs, karaoke songs etc. can be introduced to the learners even at the beginners’ stage of learning.

5. Using *kanmoji* in contexts: the design, implementation and evaluation of JaFIX Japanese lessons with KK.

In the JaFIX Japanese language lessons with KK, the first piece of authentic Japanese literature that the learners encounter is “君が住む星Kimi ga sumu Hoshi” by Natsuki Ikezawa (1992). The details of the lesson is outside the scope of this paper and not discussed here. The basic principle in the lessons which use authentic texts is ‘reading aloud’. Tasks which encourage the active use of the ears, eyes and body of the learners are employed, so that through the experience learners will acquire the colour, sound and feel of the language (Yamada 2007). To understand the meaning of the text, in the initial stages a German translation may be handed out, or the instructors may give a word for word German translation of each clause, aimed at developing learners’ ability to recognize segments of language. Any grammatical points are dealt with very briefly, and then only if requested by the learners. The learners “love” the Ikesawa text which is their first piece of reading. In JaFIX, the learners are required to recite a poem from memory as part of their end of year examination. There has always been at least one student who chooses this piece by Ikezawa and memorises all 3 pages. When the class and teachers all express how impressed they are at the volume memorised and the quality of the recitation given, the learners answer “Well,
I liked it”. JaFIX selects authentic materials that are written by professional writers and poets whose quality of work is such that it will make the learners want to memorise the passage. The non-contextual method of learning kanji through KK makes it possible to introduce classroom activities which are more akin to language lessons for native speakers in the foreign language classroom.

Learners who have received a comprehensive input such as this will demonstrate that they have acquired the ability to express themselves and to structure sentences equally well. Diagram 4 on the left shows a piece of writing by a learner on the JaFIX with KK course. The piece was produced as an assignment during the Christmas holidays. The learners of this group studied for 8 weeks starting on the 22nd of October 2005 followed by 3 weeks Christmas break. This is the first writing assignment in the second term entitled “冬休みに私は My winter holiday”. It is shown here in its original form. The learner writes using a mixture of kana and kanji, although there are grammatical errors present. Contrast this with learners of the similar learning level at other institutions who have not been exposed to KK; those learners write everything in hiragana at this stage of their learning16. This example indicates that whether learners will become “allergic” to kanji or not depends very much on how the course has been planned and delivered. Learners who have acquired prosody through the JaFIX method and have tuned their brains into kanji using KK acquire the ability to interact with authentic materials well, excel at listening skills, and are never “allergic” to kanji.

6. The impact of the paradigm shift on Japanese Language Education brought about by the incremental and systematic learning of KK

As described above, the learners will acquire information processing abilities by studying using the incremental and systematic KK system, through the lessons designed and delivered by the blended learning of JaFIX with KK accelerated Japanese language acquisition. This is due to the fact that learners can have the opportunity of engaging in meaning negotiation with authentic materials right from the start of their learning. Hitherto, learners from non-kanji backgrounds had to postpone the pleasure of interacting with authentic materials for at least 2 or 3 years, until the “beginner” stage had been completed, as the very existence of the words “authentic materials” eloquently attests. To put it another way, the syllabus itself was structured to deny the learners this “pleasure of reading”. However, in blended learning with KK, there is no need to wait for the acquisition of “grammar” before authentic materials are used as reading texts. Hosokawa (2002) argues that the
acquisition of grammar is an illusion of foreign language education. With KK, the exploration and acquisition of Japanese expressions, whilst internalising these and comparing these with those of the mother tongue, becomes possible from the earliest stages of learning. It is also becomes possible to read large amounts of material from the initial stages of learning, as does cross cultural interaction with others through texts. The paradigm shift brought about by the use of KK, is in this acquisition of the ability to communicate at an early stage of learning.

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The term ‘kanmoji’ coined by the author in order to make the distinction from the word ‘kanji’ which is usually translated as characters and implies all three aspects of kanji ie shape, sound and meaning. The ‘kanmoji’ refers to kanji letters focusing on the shape of the letter.

KK version 1.0 was tested in 4 high schools in the city of Berlin, 3 middle schools in Germany, 6 universities in Germany, 2 adult education institutions in Berlin and 10 other universities and research institutions outside of Germany. KK Version 2.0 was tested in 5 institutions.


JaFIX stands for “Japanisch als Fremdsprache mit Integrativ-Kommunikativen Schritten”, and is a physical approach to the teaching of Japanese developed by Y. Yamada (Yamada, 2007).

KK 2.0 can be accessed through the Berlin Free University’s VLE system free of charge by students and staff in Japanese departments at universities. A general release for online purchase to others is planned for January 2008.

The only class time taken is an hours’ introduction on the first day. E-Learning is in principle a self-study system. However, if the class requests it, one test, taking 10 minutes, of 100 questions, is carried out. The test consists of writing, in German, the meaning of the elements and kanji.

It has been introduced in the Japanisch Deutsch Zentrum Berlin (JDZB), the Japanese department at the Berlin Free University, the Kanedius College High School, the Berlin VHS Citizens’ university etc. Other requests have come from Germany, other European countries, Japanese institutions and individuals.

At the Japanese language course at JDZB, the JaFIX has been used since October 2001. Learners normally pass level 4 if not level 3 of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test one year later (on 2 classes of 2 hours’ each a week for 40 weeks, ie a total of 160 hours of learning). They are particularly proficient at listening. In the Japanese Oral Proficiency Interviews administered by ACTFL, they are usually assessed at somewhere between upper beginner and middle intermediate. This is a proof that their accelerated and efficient learning has been attested in publicly recognised assessments of Japanese language. (Yamada 2005)

There has hitherto been a lot of criticism of the non-systematic nature of the kanji lists produced by MEXT. See Alprin (2002).
Miyajima et al (1982, 183) approx 25,000 words at age 12, 40,000 words at age 15, 45,000 – 50,000 words at age 18-20. Cf Akimoto (2002, 35): the vocabulary an adult recognises is approximately 40,000 words, with active use being about third of that.

Size of vocabulary: See note 11 as well as the “Vocabulary size estimation test” developed by the NTT Communication Science Laboratories http://www.kecl.ntt.co.jp/mtg/goitokusei/goi-test.html (10th November 2007). According to Yamazaki (2006), in research carried out by the National Institute for Japanese Language on 70 magazines, of all the vocabulary used in these magazines (native Japanese words, kanji compounds, foreign words, mixed words) 33.5 % of all words were kanji compound words. Tokuhiro (2006, p.9) selects approximately 15,000 kanji compounds as useful for intermediate and advanced learners. See also the 30,000 words given by Tokuhiro (2007). Tokuhiro (2006) suggests a very revolutionary policy for acquiring kanji vocabulary. However she left the “Separating a single kanji into its components” as a future research topic (p.194). She sees the component parts of kanji are essentially as the same as radicals and argues that “introducing the radicals at beginners’ level as a first step towards future ability to recognise and deal with kanji is effective” (p.136). Whilst this is close to the KK approach, the issue of the systemisation of the component parts of kanji is not addressed. Thus, leaving aside some limited thematic areas (nature, trade, verbs) (pp.128-186), learning the totality of the vocabulary indeed represents the learning of 30,000 words. It is a typical example of the fatality of not separating the learning of kanji from the learning of vocabulary. The question arising from this is: can the systematisation introduced by KK be applied to the Tokuhiro style vocabulary acquisition?

The differences between KK and Heisig (1977), Heisig & Rauther (2005). (1) KK uses 280 systematically arranged elements ie genshi. Heisig uses “primitives” which are equivalent to the genshi, but the system behind these is not stated. (2) Method of learning: KK is an incremental and systematic method of learning. Heisig introduces each kanji individually; thus, as in the context bound teaching method, learners have no way of accessing kanji that they have not been taught. Compare this with the view expressed in Ishii (1998; 2005) on the development of information processing abilities.

Some of these are identical to the traditional “radical”, but the KK genshi are characterised by the fact that they cover 100% of the jōyō kanji.

The opening section of the Ikezawa text: “[first part cut due to lack of space].” (The text continues for 3 pages)

The example has been shortened due to lack of space. Compare with the usual text produced by a learner in the normal beginners’ class.

Some research has been carried out on extensive reading in Japanese language Education. See for example http://www.nihongo-yomu.jp, for the proceedings of the Japanese Extensive Reading Research Conference 日本語多読研究会 which took place on the 10th of November 2007. However, the pre-requisite of learning kanji has not been addressed, and the only
method used seems to be to gloss all kanji in hiragana.