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Author

KOBAYASHI, Yoko

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Abstract

The era of Asia has been felt in foreign language education in Japan, with more and more youth reportedly opting to study Chinese and Korean as the second foreign language. The shift in popularity, from European to Asian languages, not only reflects the societal demand for the institutional rearrangement of academic staff but also stirs teachers of European languages to appeal for the continued study of their language. The present discussion paper, drawing from secondary statistics and scholarly knowledge, first reviews a series of Japan's foreign language education policies from the 1990s to 2012 that have been affecting the organizational structure of foreign language education in Japanese higher education. The study then addresses an array of issues that emerge with the changing needs of the times: the waning popularity of European languages, the Japanese government's policy shift to English and Chinese, English language professionals' detached attitudes toward other language education, and the dominance of university language teachers with little to no language teaching training. By addressing these pending yet gravely overlooked issues that

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merit due attention from language teaching professionals beyond Japan, the present study hopes to provide insight into the traditionally one-sided, English-centric discussion on foreign language education in Japanese higher education in a matter that is informative for international scholarship.
(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kobayashi, Yoko, E-Mail: yokobaya@iwate-u.ac.jp