

\* For citation:

Batten, Paul (2011) Case study of a Thai language learners group in provincial Japan. In: Reinelt, R. (ed.) (2011) The OLE at JALT 2011 Compendium compiled for OLE by Rudolf Reinelt Research Laboratory, Ehime University, Matsuyama, Japan, p. 21 – 23.

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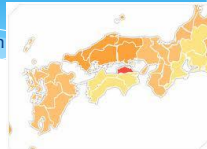
## Learning Thai in provincial Japan – a case study

日本の地方でタイ語を勉強しているグループの紹介

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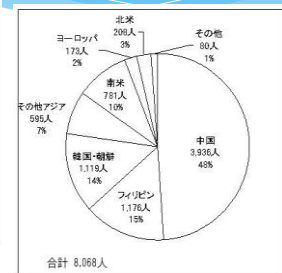
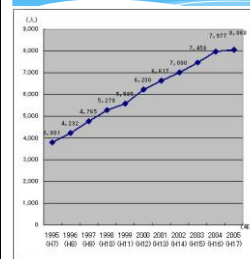
## Introducing Kagawa-ken

- \* Kagawa-ken, the smallest in Japan
- \* not Kanagawa-ken!
- \* relatively 'isolated'
- \* population: 995,000
- \* 'gaikokujin': 1% of total
- \* languages taught at universities in Kagawa: Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Korean, Latin, Spanish, Swahili
- \* in language schools: Cantonese, Portuguese, Russian
- \* iPal summer courses: Cambodian, Indonesian, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai, Vietnamese



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## trends in 'gaikokujin' living in Kagawa



## history of the class

- \* started in 1995
- \* first teachers were students from the Faculty of Agriculture, Kagawa University, linked with CMU
- \* two levels – beginners (can't read the script) and mid-level (able to read the Thai script)
- \* age structure, 20s (?) – 70s (?)
- \* gender balance 60% m – 40% f

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## difficulties in studying Thai in Kagawa

- \* paucity of Thai speakers in the prefecture
- \* busy university students available to teach
- \* no Thai people working in Thai restaurants etc
- \* nowhere to go and practice like in bigger cities (i. e., restaurants with Thai staff or owners etc)

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## description of classes

- \* two ninety-minute classes on Sunday mornings
- \* two terms a year: April–July and Oct-Dec
- \* beginners – assumed to be unable to read Thai
- \* mid-level – assumed to be able to read Thai
- \* about 7 people in each class
- \* end of term/end of year parties

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## class methodology

- \* students read from a hand out or text
- \* some spoken language drills, one by one
- \* texts – travel guides, home-made dialogues
- \* mostly teacher Q / student A
- \* no negotiation of meaning in TL
- \* no focus on tones
- \* no interaction in TL, 95% in Japanese

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## students' preferred learning styles

- \* teacher-centred
- \* point-by-point grammar-based, written homework
- \* mechanical student production of language, e. g., response drills
- \* no focus on tones, creative production
- \* no pairwork, role plays, no checking together
- \* dislike of language production in class

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## student case studies

- \* T-san
- \* English teacher, lived in the US, Vanuatu
- \* likes travel – India, Thailand, Nepal, Australia
- \* Travelled to Phuket for 20 years for New Years
- \* Runs the juku where the classes are held, a hobby
- \* Focus on reading skills

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## A-san

- \* first went to Thailand twenty years ago
- \* came back keen to study Thai cooking
- \* tracked down a Thai student at Agricultural Faculty
- \* has studied Thai cooking in Lamphun and Chiang Mai
- \* now runs a Thai restaurant in Takamatsu
- \* very good vocab for her field and conversational skills

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## K-san

- \* class member for about seven years
- \* a senior
- \* travels to Thailand and enrolls in Thai language classes
- \* has been to Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen to study Thai

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## N-san

- \* in his early 30s
- \* bank employee
- \* visited Thailand, using English, wanted to use Thai
- \* now lives in Thailand on bank work

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## T-san

- \* a teacher
- \* worked in Bangkok for J government for 3 years
- \* quite fluent in conversational Thai already
- \* aiming at language maintenance

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## Summer Classes at iPal

- The International Centre in Takamatsu runs 'other language' classes in the summer
- Thai classes usually get about 15 students
- Some of these people move on to the regular Sunday morning classes

外国人語習得特別編  
タイ語・インドネシア語・中国語

タイ語: 7月27日、24日、21日 (土)  
7月15日(日)、22日、29日 (日)

中国語: 7月15日(日)、22日、29日 (日)

授業名	時間	講師
タイ語	10:00-12:00	川口 洋子
インドネシア語	13:00-15:00	川口 洋子
中国語	13:00-15:00	川口 洋子

費用: 2000円

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## what I get from classes

- \* importance of language maintenance
- \* importance of recycling basics, reviewing reading
- \* importance of tones, pronunciation, 'trying' in L2
- \* importance of cultural knowledge
- \* importance of using target language to check
- \* importance of pairwork
- \* importance of 'rivals'

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## outcomes

- \* introduction to OLE, Thai in Takamatsu
- \* language maintenance
- \* contact with target culture
- \* friendships developed, exchange encouraged
- \* 'expanding circle' of languages and contacts
- \* Interaction with local Japanese people

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## がんばりましょう！



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