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A Teaching Method for the Hidden Subject in Teaching Japanese as the First and a Foreign Language

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Abstract：This research note discusses the hidden subject in Japanese language education. A lot of research has been carried out on the use of "wa" and "ga" in field of Japanese linguistics. There are, however, only a few studies on how the research results can be applied to the language education. This research note discusses the hidden subject, which is often perceived to be challenging to understand for learners, in written and spoken Japanese. In language education at high school level, where Japanese is taught mainly to Japanese students as their first language, many of them seem to struggle with subject conversions in written Japanese. In language education where Japanese is taught as a foreign language, however, learners tend to have difficulties with the hidden subject in spoken Japanese. Consequently, it is necessary for teachers to purposefully employ methods to introduce learners to the hidden subject because textbooks often do not cover that aspect.

In this research, a way of teaching those learners how to understand endnote representations of predicates at the sentence level was proposed. In summary, emphasis was placed on the importance of predicting the relation of preceding and succeeding contexts, case components, and grammatical person. The argument was also made that one of the mainstream teaching methods in Classic Japanese lessons in higher education where focus is placed on conjunctive particles to understand the hidden subject, is not a valid or reliable approach.

Keywords：subject predicates context person conjunctives