

MODIFIED JAPANESE BY KOIZUMI SETSU AS OBSERVED IN “HEARN SAN KOTOBA” – Setsu’s foreigner writing (FW) in her letters and foreigner talk (FT) in “Omoide no ki”

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Koizumi Yakumo, Lafcadio Hearn’s verbal expressions in Japanese language, was formed in a variety of pidginized Japanese without verb conjugation except for the “masu form” and the “dictionary form”, which Hearn referred to as “Hearn san Kotoba”.

His wife Setsu used modified Japanese expressions, now recognized as foreigner writing (FW) and foreigner talk (FT), when communicating and assisting Hearn with his writing. These FW and FT, however, are different in their nature from useful FW and FT as referred to by second language acquisition study.

Setsu’s FW and FT are not grammatical at all. Despite the highly marked omission of particles and the simplicity of sentence styles, they can express a high level of content both in details and complexity with rich onomatopoeia and degrees of politeness. In this aspect, the substance of Setsu’s FW and FT is in conformity with Snow’s thought (1981). Setsu’s FT supported not only daily communication with Hearn but also the production of numerous works by Hearn. Setsu’s home area and the language era influencing her language can be also recognized.

Setsu’s FT has particularity as origin of pidginization of a language which according to Ferguson (1977, 1981), was communicatively used as a means of verbal interaction between native speakers and foreigners. It fossilized and pidginized Hearn’s interlingua. “Hearn san kotoba” was developed as a result of those.