Introduction

Prior to studying abroad at Kansai Gaidai, I had completed three and a half years of college level Japanese language courses, including 8 intensive weeks at Beloit’s Center for Language Studies (CLS). However, when I arrived in Japan I was shocked to discover that I couldn't follow even the most basic conversations. I was baffled. Why was I so inept after spending 12+ hours a day at CLS speaking only Japanese prior to my departure for Japan? Surely I should have been able to comprehend simple conversations! After a few days with my host family, it dawned on me that I simply was not speaking the right type of Japanese.

In the Kansai region, the use of local dialect permeates everyday conversation. Collectively, these dialects are known as “Kansai-ben” (関西弁). Kansai-ben varies greatly from Tokyo’s standard Hyoujungo (標準語), which is the basis of all Japanese language curriculum taught in and outside of Japan – including everything you’ve ever learned in a Japanese classroom or textbook.

A crucial component in creating a strong foundation for a successful study abroad experience at Kansai Gaidai is having the ability to understand Kansai-ben. This is why I decided to write this manual. I want to expose you to the Kansai-ben vocabulary and grammar patterns that are essential to successfully navigate daily life once you arrive at Kansai Gaidai. Be prepared to forget a lot of the Japanese you’ve studied up until this point – the Japanese you will be hearing around you is not the same Japanese you’ve been learning and speaking in the classroom. However, don’t be intimidated – Kansai-ben is fun! Many people, myself included, find it to be much more friendly, lively, and
expressive than standard Japanese. I am hoping this manual will ease your adjustment to
student life in the Kansai region.

How to Use This Manual

• This manual is written for people with at least two years of Japanese study at the
college level.

• I arranged the chapters in order of importance based on my experience studying
abroad at Kansai Gaidai.

• All Kansai-ben words and grammar are shaded 15%.

• All words or expressions that appear in a footnote at the bottom of the text,
regardless of whether or not they are Kansai-ben, are shaded 25%.

• Some words or grammar that aren't necessarily Kansai-ben, but are used differently
in the Kansai area, are also shaded 15% (for example, the particle と when it is
used by a female).

• All Kanji from Genki II and Kanji not introduced during the first two years of
Japanese class have furigana (the phonetic readings in Hiragana) above the Kanji,
however all Kanji from Genki I were not given furigana.

• At the end there is a glossary with all vocabulary words not introduced in Genki I &
II arranged by chapter.