

# A Study on the Efficiency of TNI Japanese Language Ability Test

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**Abstract**— The main purpose of this research was to study the efficiency of the 2009 TNI Japanese Ability Test. In the study, 200 students or 80% of the 250 population were drawn for the study, using simple random technique. Research instrument was the 2009 Japanese Language Ability Test which was divided into 3 sections: Reading and Grammar, Kanji and Vocabulary and Listening. Data analysis was made by many statistical methods: difficulty, discrimination, reliability and validity. It was found in the study that the validity of the test was usable. In addition, it was found that the difficulty, discrimination, reliability and validity were acceptable and usable. It was shown that the 2009 TNI Japanese Ability Test was a well qualified and efficiency Test.

**Keywords**— TNI Japanese Language Ability Test, Efficiency, Difficulty, Discrimination, Reliability, Validity

## I. INTRODUCTION

College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology has the main responsibility in arranging Japanese Language teaching-learning for the students in three faculties: Engineering, Information Technology and Business Administration. TNI students start to learn Japanese Language from their first year in school. It is required that the students learn at least 30 units of two languages which are Japanese and English, by taking three required courses (9 units) in Japanese and also three required courses (9 units) in English. After completing 18 units of the required courses in languages, the students are able to take a lot more of elective subjects in English and Japanese (TNI Student Handbook, 2009).

TNI puts Japanese language as the main language in which the students should be able to speak, read and write at an acceptable level. It is expected that after completing their required and elective subjects in Japanese, the students should be able to master their capabilities of Japanese language by passing level 3 (N4) of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) or in the other qualified test which is similar to JLPT.

TNI students study Japanese because it is a requirement of the Institute. In addition, Japanese language is also

required for the ones who want to join the Exchange Program with the Japanese universities in Japan and also in working in the Japanese organizations later on.

Along with the students' endeavour in learning Japanese language, TNI has made various ways to encourage the students to learn more Japanese language. Many activities have been developed for the students such as Japanese Club, Speech Contest in Japanese and a Study Visit Program to Japan, Home-Stay Program and Meeting with the Volunteer Program. It is expected that these kinds of activity will help support the students' abilities in learning Japanese.

In addition to setting varieties of activities for the students, many kinds of new teaching methods and techniques have been applied in teaching such as the "Goal-directed Technique" in which the goal of learning activity in each level of study is set before the learning has been started. At the end of the study, the learning outcome will be measured. In case the unsatisfied outcome was found, then the learning program will be started again. Another kinds of teaching technique such as "Self-Study" and "Skill-Practice" are also arranged to the students. According to the above mentioned activities and teaching techniques, TNI needs to have the well qualified tests to measure the students' learning abilities in Japanese. The tests should measure the students' 4 skills in Japanese: listening, speaking, reading and writing and be able to use as the tool for the evaluation of the Japanese teaching learning as well (College of General Education and Languages, 2008).

After arranging the Japanese classes by using varieties of teaching learning methods and techniques, it was found that the qualified tests are in need to help the teachers in their teaching the classes. In addition, developing the well qualified test to evaluate the students' abilities is Japanese language is one technique to support the students' language learning. Then, College of General Education and Languages has developed the TNI Japanese Ability Test in the year 2009 which was also used for the measuring of the students' Japanese Language Abilities in the year 2009.

A study on the efficiency of TNI Japanese Ability Test was conducted in the year 2009. The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the efficiency of the 2009 TNI Japanese Ability Test so that it would be able to develop a more well qualified test later on.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The samples were 509 third year students from 3 faculties: Engineering, Information Technology and Business Administration or 80% of 520 students who took TNI Japanese Ability Test in the year 2009, by using simple random technique. Instrument used for the study was the 2009 TNI Japanese Ability Test divided into 3 sections which were Reading and Grammar; Kanji and Vocabulary; and Listening. Data collection was made at TNI from 509 students on the second semester of the year 2009. The sample groups were asked to do the test for the study. Data analysis was made by various types of statistical methods: difficulty, discrimination, reliability and validity.

## III. RESEARCH RESULT

Research results were found as follows:

1. It was shown that face validity of the test in terms of 53 reading and grammar item, 56 kanji and vocabulary items and 36 reading items was around 0.80-1.00.
2. It was shown that either one of the 53 reading and grammar items with the difficulty around 0.30-0.80 and the discrimination around 0.26-0.61, was usable.
3. It was shown either one the 56 kanji and vocabulary with the difficulty around 0.28-0.75 and the discrimination around 0.21-0.58, was usable.
4. It was shown that 36 reading items with the difficulty of 0.29-0.75 and the discrimination around 0.21-0.55, was usable.
5. The reliability of the test as for reading and grammar, kanji and vocabulary, and listening was 0.775, 0.782, and 0.769 respectively. The reliability of kanji and vocabulary were the highest one whereby that of listening was the lowest. In addition, it was find out that the 3 sections of the test had nearly the same level of standard deviation. It was also indicated that the developed 2009 TNI Japanese Language Ability Test had high level of reliability, with low level of standard deviation.
6. It was shown that the 2009 TNI Japanese Ability Test was a well qualified test which could be developed to be a more well qualified test later on.

## IV. DISCUSSION

Since it was shown that the 2009 TNI Japanese Language Ability Test is a well qualified test which could be used as the tool for developing the students' skills and also be used as the background for a more qualified test later on, College of General Education and Languages is on the process of developing the new TNI Japanese Ability Test to be used in the year 2012. The main reason that has made this Test be acceptable and well qualified should come from the students themselves. The students did well on the test because they are always prepared for the test. In addition, the College of General Education and Languages has applied the so-called "Goad-directed Technique" in teaching Japanese to the students. This technique help motivate the students to learn all the time. Moreover, it encourages the students to do

one's own self study and prepare themselves for the test and evaluation. In addition, the TNI 2009 Japanese Ability Test was developed by TNI Japanese teachers who understand the students' nature and their Japanese language ability very well. That is the reason why the most appropriate test was made. Most of all, TNI 2009 Japanese Ability Test can be a well qualified because TNI students have strong motivation to learn Japanese language. This reason made the students have high skills with positive attitude towards the Japanese language.

For this point, the findings of this study were supported by many research studies for example:

1. In Thailand, it was found in many studies that Thai students who study Japanese language at secondary school level and university level have positive attitudes and strong motivation in learning Japanese because of the teaching techniques the teachers used in their teaching such as learning by practicing, learning by using varieties of teaching methods and activities. In addition, the teachers themselves showed positive attitude in teaching-learning Japanese language (Supornphan Jitbanthow, 2008; Utsagi Takatoshi, 2008).

2. It was found out in many studies at TNI that TNI students have high satisfaction in learning Japanese and they also have low levels of problem in learning Japanese language (Supatsorn Jindathai, 2008; Shuichi Sano, 2008).

This research results also indicated the effectiveness of the teaching learning strategies of College of General Education and Languages in order to teach Japanese language to the students as follows:

1. Teachers should be trained and well prepared for teaching at any language classes.

2. Appropriate and sufficient teaching materials should be provided and used.

3. Pair teaching technique is set in all languages classes. The Thai teachers and foreign teachers teach together to help provide four skills of language ability to the students.

4. Many teaching philosophies such as "Student-Centered", "Learning by Practicing", "Self-Study", "Outside Classroom Activities Learning" are introduced and use in teaching language to the students.

5. Goal-oriented Teaching Technique has been used in teaching language, whereby the students will be measured their language abilities oftenly and the learning program will be repeated for the students if their abilities are inadequate.

6. Along with their language studies, the students are motivated to have positive attitude towards the languages. They are asked to participate in many kinds of activities such as field trip, study visit, speech contest and in many cultural activities which will encourage them to learn English and Japanese languages (College of General Education and Languages, 2008).

## V. CONCLUSION

Although the research results have indicated that the 2009 TNI Japanese Language Ability Test is a well qualified test

and this may occur because the test can measure the real abilities of the students. In addition, since the students have high abilities in Japanese language so they can do the test well. Anyway, for further discussion the main results of this study has shown that the test has high efficiency in measuring the students' main abilities in Japanese language such as Reading and Grammar, Kanji and Vocabulary and Listening. This positive findings can be concluded by 3 reasons as followed:

1. This may happen because the students have been trained and practiced by using the test and evaluation oftenly in their learning Japanese, inside and outside the classroom at TNI, so they get used to the teaching techniques of the "Goal-directed Technique" in which the tests and evaluations will be measured their Japanese abilities oftenly. This technique will motivate the students to learn and to prepare themselves to the test. This is the reason why most of the students can do well in this test.
2. Another reason is that TNI is using various kinds of teaching methods and techniques in teaching Japanese to the students, such as doing inside and outside classroom activities, field trip, home stay, self study and language clubs including speech contest. This may be the reasons why the students motivate themselves to learn Japanese.
3. This positive result may occur because TNI has developed the teaching learning philosophy and strategy focusing on "Monotzukuri", "Self Study" and "Student-centred Learning" which are very helpful in language learning.

However, in the future, we need other work to do such as:

1. We need to do some more studies to give us more details concerning the construction of a more well qualified Japanese language for TNI. Another thing is that we need to set the standard for TNI Test in order to be able to compare TNI Japanese Language Ability Test to other we qualified test, such as JLPT or J-Test.
2. A more complicated and qualified tests should be developed at TNI, so that a lot more of the tools to measure the students' Japanese Language Ability could be made.
3. In the future, TNI should use the tests as the main tools for Japanese teaching not only for evaluation. Then, more efficient teaching methods can be explored and used.

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