

Problems in Learning Japanese of the Business Administration (Japanese) Program Students, Faculty of Business Administration, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology

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Abstract— Faculty of Business Administration, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology, has developed the Business Administration (Japanese) Program in 2007. The content of the program mix up between Japanese Language courses and Business Administration courses. The students in this program are required to take 8 courses or 24 credits of the required basic Japanese courses, starting from their first semester. The students who fail on any of these courses are unable to go on or to continue their studies in the program. Since passing or failing in Japanese courses in this program is a very important thing to the students, TNI is trying very hard to organize a very well excellent curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials as well as providing the appropriate teaching-learning techniques and activities to the students. After one year of managing the program, the evaluation of the program is in need, in terms of a research on learning problems of the students. The main purpose of this research was to find out learning problem of the students in 3 main areas: curriculum, teaching-learning process and personal problem. 135 first year students were used as the samples of the study. Research results showed that learning problems of the students in all aspects were at low level.

Keywords— Problem in Learning Japanese, Business Administration (Japanese) Program

I. INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Japanese language has been started in Thailand over 60 years ago. Recently, Japanese language has been integrated as part of the teaching learning programs in many educational institutions at high school level and university level in the country.

Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology has the main aim to produce the high skilled technological experts who also possess high levels of ability the Japanese language to the Thai market. Thus, Japanese language had been inserted in TNI undergraduate program, as the required subjects and elective subject.

The so-called Business Administration (Japanese) Program (BJ) was developed at TNI in the 2007 academic year with the strong intention to create the scholars who are knowledgeable in the Japanese styled business, and possess skills in Japanese language.

In 2007 academic year, the BJ students were required to take 4 courses in Japanese language, which were hard and time consuming. From the pilot questionnaire that the researcher had sent to the BJ students, asking about their learning problems in the program, at the end of their first semester, it was shown that the students had some kinds of problem, especially in adapting themselves with the

learning. Thus, in 2008 academic year, the researcher did this research in order to find out the whole problems that the BJ students were facing.

The purposes of this research were as follows:

1. To find out the learning problems of the BJ students in 3 aspects: curriculum, teaching-learning process, and personal problems.
2. To compile opinions and suggestions of the students concerning the teaching-learning in the program.

II. METHOD

A. Population and Samples

One hundred and thirty-five first year BJ students, studying in 2008 academic year, were used as the samples of this study. There were 36 male students and 99 female students.

A. B. Research Instruments

To collect the data, a set of questionnaire was developed.

The questions were divided into 3 main sections:

Section 1: Personal Information and data of the samples.

The check list form was used for this section for the samples to check for their own personal information.

Section 2: Learning Problems

- a. Curriculum
- b. Teaching - learning Process
- c. Personal Problems

There were 35 questions altogether in this section. The 5 rating scale checking was used for the samples to check the levels of the problems.

Section 3: Opinions and Suggestions

The open-ended form was used for the samples to write down their opinions and suggestions concerning the teaching-learning in the program.

In order to make the questionnaire more acceptable, the researcher did a try-out with small group of students and measured the reliability. At the final stage, we had the questionnaire with acceptable level of reliability ($\alpha = .784$ as a whole)

C. Data Collection

The samples of this study were asked to complete the questionnaire. Data collection was made twice at the end of the 2nd semester, 2008 academic year.

D. Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis was made by using various kinds of statistic as follows:

Section 1, using frequency and percentage

Section 2, using \bar{X} , S.D, and t-test for variable comparison.

Section 3, using frequency to show the opinions and suggestions.

In terms of statistical, the weighting of the levels of the learning problem, the following measurements were used.

4.51-5.00	highest level
3.51-4.50	high level
2.51-3.50	average
1.51-2.50	low level
1.00-1.50	lowest level

III. RESULTS

Research results revealed as follows:

1. Personal information and data of the samples

- The majority of the group were female = 73.33%
- The average age were 19 years old = 59.20%
- Having language background = 51.85%
- No experiences in living in Japan = 94.81%
- Did not take the Japanese Proficiency Test = 73.33%
- Living with their own families = 65.93%
- Do not receive the scholarship from TNI = 83.70%

2. Learning Problems

	\bar{X}	S.D
- Curriculum	2.38	0.43
- Teaching-learning process	2.67	0.67
- Personal Problems	2.28	0.74
- Overall	2.49	0.58

The above data showed that the students had low levels of learning in the program in all and in each aspect, except in teaching-learning process whereby the problems were in average level.

3. Comparing the learning problems according to sex, having Japanese language background and experiences in living in Japan. It was shown that the male students from the analysis had higher level of personal problems than the female group. Also, the students with no background and experiences in Japanese language and Japanese culture showed higher level of learning problems.

4. Data from Opinions and Suggestions.

The students gave opinions and suggestions concerning teaching-learning in the program for example:

No.	Opinions and Suggestions in terms of curriculum	Frequency
1.	Curriculum and content are good, teaching-learning hours are good. The content is very applicable.	32
2.	The content of learning in each lesson is too long, time consuming and no time to practice.	18
3.	Need more learning hours in a week to cope with the content	14
4.	Need more practices in reading and writing Japanese.	11
5.	Need the textbook in Thai language	8
6.	Need step by step teaching technique	7
7.	Teaching in the tutorial session is too fast and hard to follow.	2

No.	Opinions and Suggestions in terms of teaching learning method	Frequency
1.	Good techniques were used. Rotation technique was good.	48
2.	Need more activities in learning and extra curricula activity.	11
3.	Need Thai teachers to teach grammar to the students.	6
4.	Want to learn more with the Japanese teachers	11
5.	Need some more teaching materials in Thai language	5
6.	Need some more tutorial sessions	3

No.	Opinions and Suggestions in terms of instructors	Frequency
1.	Good teachers. Teachers have high skills in teaching, very kind and understanding.	88
2.	Need more numbers of Japanese teachers to teach the classes.	4
3.	Some teachers speak too fast, not be able to understand.	3

IV. DISCUSSION

A. As a whole, it was found from this research that the BJ students had lower level of learning problem in the program ($\bar{X}=2.46$). This may happen because the BJ program was a new program. The numbers of the students in the program were still in small numbers. In addition to this, the program was well prepared with large numbers of textbook, supplementary teaching learning book and also teaching method. The numbers of teachers in BJ program are enough to handle the program. Most of all, teachers and students are eager to teach and learn in this program.

B. In terms of curriculum, low level of problem was found. This may happen because the curriculum of the program was well designed. In addition, the Japanese courses for the BJ students run by steps from fundamental level to advance level. The content in learning is divided into theory and practice equally. The students have chance to learn in class, doing self study and practicing speaking Japanese regularly with the Japanese teachers. All of these reasons lead to the success of the program.

- C. *As for teaching-learning process*, the BJ students indicated that they had the average level of problem. This may happen because the study might be hard to the students, since they had started learning the Japanese language. Some of them had no background in Japanese language at all. In addition to this, since the teachers introduced the “Rotation Technique” of teaching to be used in classes, whereby the teachers switched to teach each group very quickly. This may cause problems to the slow learner group who could not catch up with the teachers.
- D. *As for the personal problems* in which the students reported that they had low level towards this kind of problem. This may happen because most of the students had strong intention to study in this program and they have tried very hard to work for their studies in the program.
- E. *In terms of opinions and suggestions*, the students indicated their needs for more numbers of teachers, supplementary books, teaching materials and tutorial sessions, etc, although the majority of BJ students showed their satisfaction to the teaching-learning in the program. This may happen because there are still a few numbers of the BJ students who are the slow learners, so they requested some kind of help and advice than the other groups of students.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Business Administration (Japanese) Program or the “BJ” at TNI is a new program in Thailand. The hardest point to work for this program is to teach the Japanese language to the students in a short period of time. It is expected that the students under this program should master the Japanese language within 2 years. They should also be able to get a very high score in the Japanese Proficiency Test after two years of their studies in the program. In addition to this, after their graduation from TNI, the students are expected to be able to work in any of the Japanese organizations in Thailand with full skills both in their career and in the Japanese language.

All of the above mentioned points would be one of our questions concerning the feasibility to arrange this kind of program. In Thailand where the speaking language of people in the nation is only one language, Thai language. Furthermore, Japanese language is not familiar to Thai people. In the country, there are still very few numbers of Thai people who understand Japanese.

The author of this article who is also the instructor of the BJ program felt relief after this research work has been done and the results of this study were shown.

According to the results of this study, we may conclude that we can teach the students the hard things. In addition, any program of teaching will be successful if it is well prepared in terms of curriculum, teaching method and techniques. Most of all, motivations of teachers and students in terms of teaching and learning endeavour should be in full scale like we have for this program.

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