

THE CURRENT STATUS OF LEARNING JAPANESE ONLINE OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

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Abstract: In this paper, the impact of modern science and technology on online learning and the merits and demerits are analysed. By comparing traditional teaching methods and online learning to improve Japanese learning and education, some merits and demerits are also mentioned. The data used for this article have been collected from 100 learners and 20 teachers in Vietnam. The paper also aims to analyse various advantages and disadvantages of learning Japanese online in order to find the best method.

Index Terms: Japanese, online learning, student, teacher, technology

1 INTRODUCTION

As science and technology continue to develop, online learning has become very popular. Thanks to this development, knowledge can be easily shared and can always be studied anywhere. On the other hand, in a globalized society, countries interact and trade with each other. As a result, there is an increasing need for hiring employees who can speak foreign languages, and Japanese is no exception. Japanese online learning has emerged from practical needs and application of information technology. That is why learning Japanese online in Vietnam needs to be studied and discussed. Through this theme, we should learn and apply new things rather than passively use old knowledge since societies are gradually developing, and it is also good to combine and apply the old and new learning ways.

2 RESEARCH CONTENT

2.1 Definition of online learning

Online learning means studying through an electronic machine such as a personal computer or smartphone connected to the Internet. Teachers can send voices or texts to learners over the Internet. In the same way as traditional learning methods, teachers can not only teach knowledge, get tuition fees and conduct tests, but learners can also receive free shared courses and study materials. It combines advanced science and technology and teacher knowledge and exists in many forms. Compared to previous learning methods, teachers and students can easily achieve their educational and learning objectives. Currently, it is used from schools to companies, educational centers and teachers.

2.2 History of online learning

Online learning first appeared in an international conference called Computer-Based Training (CBT) in October 1999. Since then, "E-learning", "Online learning" or "Virtual learning" has emerged one after another. Even before the Internet was born, Isaac Pitman, an English teacher working at a private school in the UK, gave a

correspondence course since the 1840s (Fig 1).

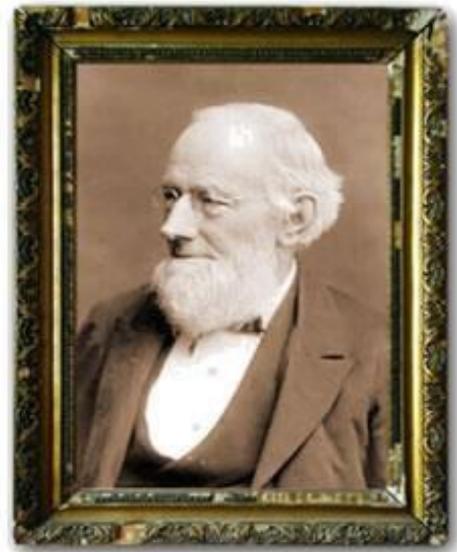


Figure 1. Sir Isaac Pitman (1813-1897)

In the 2000s, companies began using online learning to train employees. New employees are getting closer to corporate business processes and information systems. As a result, they gained the necessary knowledge and skills and were able to do their job well. For individuals, except for knowledge and skills, online learning enhances people's lives [1]. Since around 2010, sudden advances in science and technology applied to smartphones and social networks such as Google Plus, Facebook, and Skype have made it easier for users to interact with others. And, online tools have also changed significantly to better suit users. As a result, users can now study online anytime, anywhere with internet-connected apps.

2.3 Current status of online learning of Japanese in Vietnam

Japanese tends to be chosen as the second language in Vietnam. With many people who can speak English, the need to study other languages increases. Among them, Japanese is popular as the first choice. In 1990, there were only two universities in Vietnam that could learn Japanese.

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However, up to 2009, the number of universities with Japanese language departments has increased to 39. According to Japan Foundation statistics, the number of Vietnamese studying Japanese in 2015 was 64,864, ranking third in the world [2]. There are several reasons why the demand for learning Japanese has increased rapidly. First, Japanese companies and the Japanese government have recruited foreigners because they were short of workers due to problems such as aging and declining birthrate. In addition, social welfare and pension costs will become increasingly heavy. Faced with this situation, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe aims to recruit 500,000 foreign workers in 2025. In other words, every year, Japan accepts an average of 71,430 workers [3]. Furthermore, Japan is currently the largest sponsor of ODA funds for Vietnam [4]. Until now, Japan has collaborated with Vietnamese investors on projects such as the construction of Hai Van Tunnel and Phu My Thermal Power Plant, and the recent Metro construction project. As a result, the demand for recruitment of Japanese-speaking employees is increasing, and the number of people who want to study Japanese and Japanese culture will gradually increase.

2.4 Differences from online learning and traditional learning

Traditional learning is a method that emphasizes the direct and accurate transfer of knowledge to the learners, with a focus on teacher activities. While teachers are speakers, students are listeners who write down notes while listening. The learning materials are mostly texts issued by the Ministry of Education and Training, and the references are highly logical. Evaluating students' attitudes and studying processes while conveying knowledge is a feature of this method. Online learning, on the other hand, requires not only teachers, students, and books, but also electronic tools that connect teachers and students. Other than that, electronic books are also used for study purposes. In contrast to traditional learning, which can only keep the contents of lectures with books and notebooks, online learning saves fresh images and audio files on the Internet, so that materials do not get wet or break, that is, learners can study anytime and anywhere [5].

2.5 Research methods and results

The paper was completed by gathering and analyzing information from Internet materials, magazines, etc. The survey method is to send questionnaires and collect answers from teachers teaching Japanese on the Internet and learners studying Japanese. After that, the subjects' responses are aggregated, analyzed, and summarized in an easy-to-understand manner with graphs.

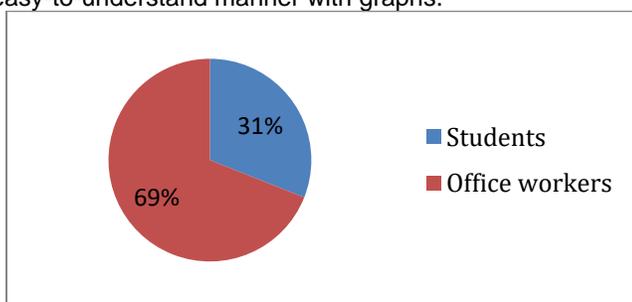


Figure 2. Students' work

By examining the work of Japanese learners, 31% were university students and 69% were office workers. From this graph, most people answered that they were working people. In addition, learners are generally between the ages of 18 and 25, and few are over 25 (Fig 2).

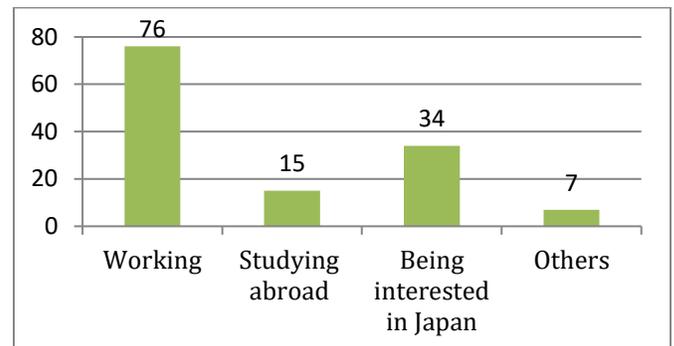


Figure 3. Reasons for studying Japanese

When being asked why the respondents started studying Japanese, the most common reason is for work. The second answer was that they were interested in Japan. Fifteen people answered that they were studying abroad. Above all, the reason for work was conspicuous (Fig 3). In addition, the need for learning Japanese has increased, and online learning has emerged as the background of the Industry 4.0 era. According to Class Central (a web for searching online courses with unlimited participants), there were more than 35 million people who signed up for at least one online course in 2015, one more than expected last year. It has increased by 16 to 18 million [6].

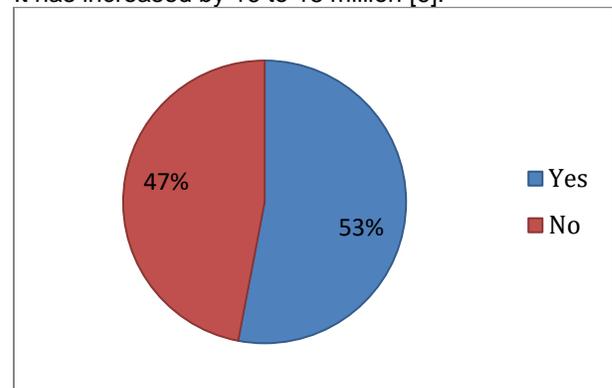


Figure 4. The status of online learning

When being asked: "Have you ever studied Japanese online?" 47 people answered that they had done it. Some said that online learning of Japanese is more popular than before. Because physical distance, weather, time, and personal economic conditions are issues, that is, e-learning is for all subjects, not only for Japanese, has become more popular than traditional learning. As needs grow, online courses in Japanese have been born one after another. There are several reasons for those who think online learning is better than traditional learning. This is because the various online courses aimed at JLPT (Japanese Proficiency Test) exams, making conversations with Japanese people, and practicing business manners in Japan in order to meet the needs of all Vietnamese learners (Fig 4).

Furthermore, teachers' opinions on online learning were collected in a questionnaire. The result was collected from

20 teachers (15 teaching Japanese online). The result shows that teachers can improve their work by using products from science and technology. Also, when asking why they teach Japanese online, they summarized it as shown in the graph below.

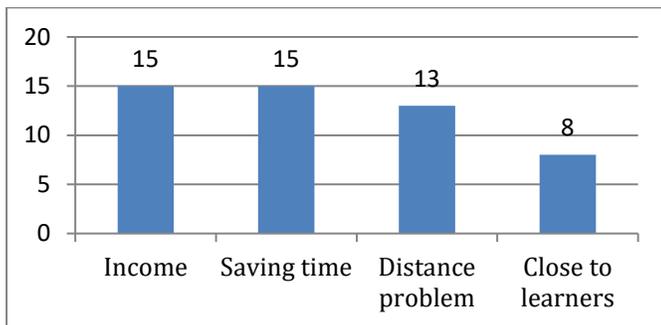


Figure 5. The reasons why teachers chose online education

As we can see from the graph above, the reason for choosing online education is not only “for income” but also “because it saves time”. Other than that, some people are troubled by distance problems. And because there were many users on the Internet, it became easier to reach the target learners, and online education was decided. Depending on the teacher, the online education format is different. However, many teachers find it difficult to apply new technologies (Fig 5). There were 100 students who also share opinions about online learning. As a result, many students have less time to study Japanese than 2 hours. In fact, 53 have learned Japanese online. When asked why they chose e-learning, the most common answer is “save time” and then “good income”. Other reasons include that there are “a lot of flexibility, learning materials and videos”. However, online learning still has some shortcomings. The students' opinions on the indirect learning format were summarized in a graph as follows.

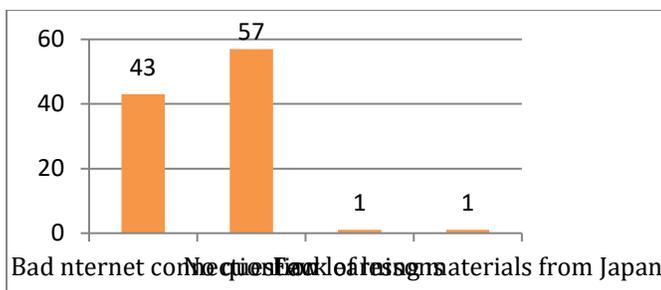


Figure 6. Learner opinions on indirect learning formats

As shown in the figure 6, there is no one who will answer immediately if they have a question, that is, the benefits of saving costs for indirect learning styles are what they are concerned about. And internet connection is one of the problems because of online learning. Japanese is difficult, and self-study without a teacher is not easy, especially few lessons and materials are what they suffer from learning (Fig 6).

3. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Common issues

Currently, Japanese has become popular in Vietnam because of the increasing needs of people who can speak Japanese and the deep relationship between Vietnam and Japan. Therefore, there are many people who choose online study other than the traditional study form of studying at universities and Japanese language centres. This is because online learning formats can overcome the weaknesses of previous formats. Among them, there are two forms of e-learning including indirect learning form and direct learning form. Students and teachers must understand these two formats before deciding which one suits them. It is also recommended to study together with conventional methods. The next issue is user motivation which is the most important part of online learning. Online learning can overcome the disadvantages of traditional learning styles, and lessons are more interesting than before, making it easier for users to rely on them. The remaining problem is that online learning of Japanese was born several years ago and is not a new field, but there are few references on the current state of online learning of Japanese in Vietnam. In addition, information technology continues to develop and many forms are born every day. So it's hard to stat all types of online learning. As for the future direction of this theme, it is necessary to study the most effective method for those who use Japanese online learning methods while studying Japanese now. As society grows more and more, online learning will change in the future, and we believe that we may continually innovate our constant knowledge.

3.2 Some ways to improve teachers

As with traditional education, teachers must prepare a curriculum for what to teach. Select an appropriate educational method according to the target and ability. Teachers listen to each learner's demands and opinions before taking classes that require time and studying the most effective teaching methods because of differences in age, gender, work, and learning goals. For example, students who are aiming for everyday conversation should have a solid plan for what kind of lectures they will have today and what they will have tomorrow [7]. Especially in the indirect learning form, the teacher must devise the contents and teaching method. This format has much lower interaction than the direct learning format, so attractive content and high quality video and audio are key to success. Other than that, teachers must upload to websites, YouTube, and social networks, so a high-quality video camera is essential. In addition, teachers can only record after having prepared the adaptation. This is the same as teachers having to prepare a lecture. If recorded without permission, there is a high possibility that knowledge will not be transmitted well or that the learner will misunderstand what he wants to convey. It is also important to have a list of frequently asked questions. This is because answering questions correctly and quickly is highly appreciated for educational experience, knowledge, and enthusiasm. In this way, teachers do not respond passively to questions from students. For example, teachers can classify grammar, vocabulary, and kanji from N5 to N1, and list frequently asked questions to quickly answer questions from students [8]. In both traditional and online learning, teachers must practice physical language, pronunciation, and communication. Especially, when teaching pronunciation and conversation, voice is rather essential. This is because body language such as facial

expressions and gestures draws out the appeal of the lecture and voice or accent makes the lesson more interesting. On the other hand, one of the important steps is to select an appropriate website platform for the course to run smoothly. Teachers often ask website designers, often make videos themselves and post them on Facebook, Youtube, and more. In Vietnam, many entertainment apps such as Tiktok are popular among young people. Such apps can post videos with lively video and crisp sound. Taking the video "words that can be used in part-time jobs" as an example, the way of telling people sharing their experiences makes the audience think "I want to hear more". That is another way of self-promotion [9]. Teachers should not use the content of lectures for all courses. This is because learners enrolled in several courses may find it boring about the same content and the same way of communicating. In addition, teachers sometimes criticize the lack of innovation. Then, in order to accompany the students to the end, the teacher must spend time and make various ingenuity in teaching and teaching methods [10].

3.3 Some ways to improve students

Before we start online learning, we must establish our purpose. For study abroad, N5 or N4 level (basic level) is required before going to Japan. For work, at least N3 level is required. Alternatively, many people aim to improve their conversation, reading and listening skills. Depending on the purpose, the study route and study method can be determined. For example, Japanese at work requires conversation, translation and interpretation skills [11]. The second recommendation is to make a decision after carefully researching a reliable online Japanese language centre or teacher. With the spread of the Internet, knowledge and information become easier to obtain. Numerous search results come out with just one click. Not all the information is available, but most of our necessary information is on the Internet.

3.4 Application of science and technology to Japanese language education and learning

The science and information technology that forms the basis of this learning method can be immediately conceived [12]. However, many teachers cannot understand the knowledge of word operation, power point, etc. now. First, check from the machine we are using. The quality is not required to be very high, but basic operation is possible at the minimum. The rest is the responsibility of the user who protects it. When we use it, we often have to clean the trash and remove the virus. It is better to wipe off the outside so that dust does not collect. Then, we can use the electronic equipment for a long time, move fast, and do not disturb the class. Second, there are very many teachers and students who search for learning materials for lectures on the Internet. However, not only is there an abundance of bad books in a network that is very rich in information, but there are many learning materials that can send viruses at the same time. Therefore, it is important to select good materials calmly when examining. Next, the method of studying while playing should be mentioned. Learning Japanese online requires not only self-study. Certainly, some people may not like to study, but have the desire to play. Using apps such as Hello Talk and Duolingo which have been created and allow users to study while playing without being bored. Another app is Quizlet which

allows users to create their own test content and take other people's tests [13]. Students are required to have basic knowledge of electronic learning tools. Acquiring these skills should be useful for the Japanese learning process. It is good to interact with Japanese people who use social work, improve their reaction in Japanese, and investigate cultural differences. Opportunities to practice Japanese language studied this way will increase. For teachers, apart from the essential skills, opening an online class means that the teacher has to do marketing activities to attract learners who are customers to their courses.

4 CONCLUSION

In short, an excellent online learning method does not necessarily have all the disadvantages. Users should take advantages while paying attention to the disadvantages. In addition, the Internet, which is full of information, has a positive impact on users as well, therefore, the consciousness of teachers and learners is above all.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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