

Wacom Media as an Alternative in Kanji Beginner Learning for College Students in the Pandemic Period

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the education system into distance learning that requires media to deliver materials. Media are needed to help the implementation of a kanji learning is no exception. Kanji skills courses must be mastered by students. Wacom can be used to practice how to write kanji. This study aims to determine the extent of understanding kanji for novice students in recognizing kanji, knowing how to write kanji, understanding how to read both *On* and *Kun* readings, and comprehending *bushu* to understand the meaning of the whole kanji. Descriptive qualitative analysis was used in this study and the form of oral and written tests were used as the research instrument. Respondents, who were involved in online learning, were Unesa Japanese Language Education Study Program students. The results indicated that the process of learning kanji for beginners with the Wacom media were not disappointed. They are proven that students are fluent in reading kanji, explaining *On* and *Kun*, knowing *bushu* to understand the meaning of whole kanji letters. Furthermore, the results of both written and oral tests showed positive responses from the respondents that Wacom media helped them in mastering kanji and provided many benefits for students.

Keywords: Learning, Kanji beginner, College students, Pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning media is needed in Kanji course. Practical skill of Kanji course is very necessarily needed because Kanji is a skill that must be mastered. If there is no skill practice done then the expected skill cannot be achieved or it will be far from what has been expected. During the pandemic, the learning implementation, the long-distance learning, is not the same as learning in the classroom. It is obliged to the Japanese learners to master kanji characters. Mastering kanji requires excellent accuracy. Writing kanji has a patent writing rule. Kanji is different from Latin letters. Therefore, media is very necessary to help practicing writing, to demonstrate the order of how to write Kanji, and to practice reading on how to differentiate to read *on* (*onyomi*) and *kun* (*kunyomi*).

Wacom media is considered appropriate to be used in Kanji learning. By using Wacom media, the learners can write the same as they write on a whiteboard. It can also be used to introduce characters to the students by giving direct examples when it gets eye contact. This learning method is expected to resemble offline learning because by using Wacom media, the teachers can give examples on how to write Kanji, how to write Kanji in the correct

strokes, can explain on how Kanji is read based on the *on* and *kun*, can also explain by demonstrating how *bushu* can make it easier to recognize Kanji.

1.1. Kanji

Sudjianto [1] argues that kanji literally means characters from Han, namely letters from China, then used by the Japanese. It was further explained that kanji is one of the letters used by the Japanese in a variety of written languages other than hiragana, katakana, and romaji. Iwabuchi [1, pp. 55] suggests that kanji are *hyooi moji* or letters that symbolize the sound of the pronunciation as well as symbolize the meaning. In contrast to other types of letters, kanji can stand alone or combine with another several kanji and have the meaning of each kanji. An example of a stand-alone kanji is as follows: 中なか is read as *naka* which means inside, then kanji 国くに is read as *kuni* which means country, if these two kanji are combined, it will be as follows; 中なか + 国くに = 中国 = ちゅうごく is read as *chuugoku*.

1.1.1. History of Kanji

Until the 3rd century Japan was directly in contact with China and exchanged during the 漢“ Han era. Kanji letters Kanji letters not only provide written language procedures for illiterate Japanese. It also seeks to exchange the use of the Japanese language against the kanji characters that are commonly used in Chinese [2].

Kanji are letters to write the Chinese language, which has an ancient history. The letters were partly made in China for the writing of the Chinese language, the letters were called Kanji letters because they entered Japan during the Kan era.

Kanji (漢字) literally means “Letters of Han”, is a Cinayang letter that is used in Japanese modern writing besides Kana (katakana, hiragana) and Romaji [3].

1.1.2. Way to Write Kanji

In Japanese, the writing of letters is taught very carefully, how to write, how to scribble, how to read. Kanji is one aspect that is considered difficult for those who are learning Japanese. Knowledge of kanji is very necessary; therefore, mastery of kanji is very important. Proper kanji writing helps master kanji. According to Fujiwara in Vishnu Unikom that the thing to be considered in writing Kanji is that it must be in accordance with Hitsjun. In addition, it is also recommended to write naturally and not forced or rigid. Then pay attention to the size and balance of each letter written. One letter can sometimes represent one meaning or one word, or it can also represent another vocabulary with various meanings. Most of the vocabularies in Japanese is the result of a combination of 2000 Kanji letters and 46 Hiragana letters. This is the reason why Japanese is difficult for foreigners to learn, including Indonesians [1]. For example, Kanji letter 「上/ above」 can form several vocabularies with different reading ways, such as the following:

- (1) 上 うえ ue (above)
- (2) 上着うわぎ uwagi (Jacket)
- (3) 上げる ageru (improve)
- (4) 上る noboru (hiking)
- (5) 上手 じょうず jouzu (smart)
- (6) 上がす agasu (lift up)

[1].

This proves that to learn one kanji is quite time-consuming, to memorize how to read it. In addition, many letters are almost similar in shape, so that students are often fooled. Even though „仮名“ kana has appears, Kanji characters are still the main characters in Japan. 字 ji and 学 manabu. Until now, the Japanese themselves

still think that kanji are indeed the correct character characters [1].

1.1.3. Kanji Strokes

In writing kanji, every stroke of line and point should not be written arbitrarily. There is a rule of ordering in the author of each kanji. The order of writing is called hitsujun, Sudjanto in Wisnu Unikom [8]. All kanji can be written with some combination of 10 basic strokes:

- (1) Horizontal lines
- (2) Vertical lines
- (3) Diagonal lines
- (4) Dots
- (5) Strokes that include diagonal lines and hooks or changes
- (6) Curved strokes with hooks formed like the last stroke in the kanji 手, pronounced て、 means "hand" direction
- (7) Stroke with an angle
- (8) The name of this stroke means "duck," but it's not clear what the reason is
- (9) Hiragana character
- (10) Fish hook

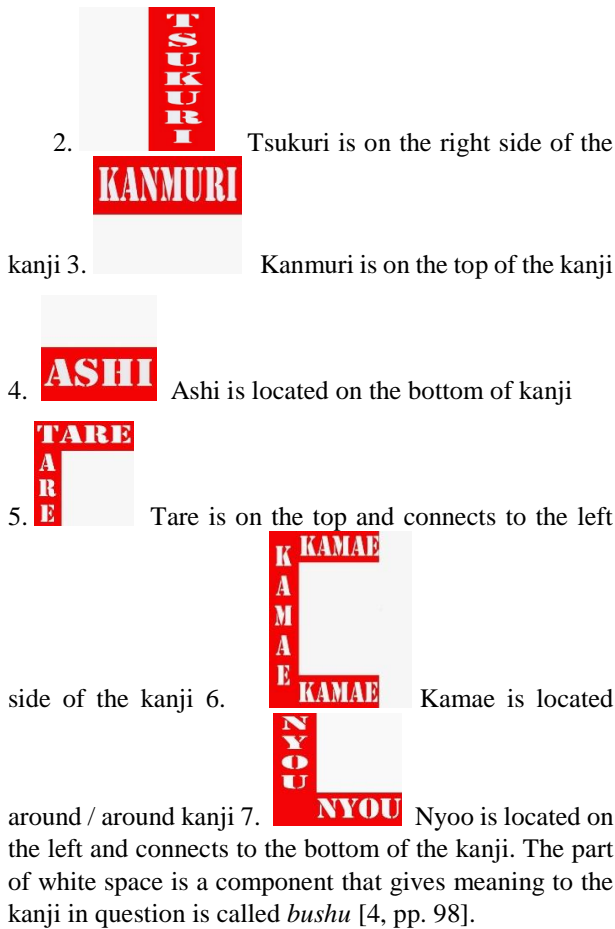
1.1.4. Way to Read Kanji

According to Sudjianto [1, pp. 69] learning Japanese cannot be separated from the letters that must be learned. There are two ways to read kanji, namely: (1) How to read ON (*Onyomi*) is a way of reading that comes from the original Chinese pronunciation, usually written in Katakana letters. Way to read ON if the letter is combined with other letters and does not stand alone. 国くに this letter will be read as Kuni if it stands alone like now, but it will be read ON if it is combined with other kanji like 中国ちゅうごく read as chuugoku. (2) Way to read KUN (*Kunyomi*) is a way of reading Japanese pronunciation usually written in Hiragana letters, for example 学ぶ manabu learning.

1.1.5. Bushu Kanji

Most kanji consist of more than two kanji components. The following shows how the components

are combined, 1.  Hen is located on the left



The 7 groups of *bushu* that are described in the Kanji dictionary (*Kanwa Jiten*) they are arranged into 236 kinds of *bushu* which are written based on the number of strokes from the fewest strokes, namely 1 stroke to the most strokes, which is 17 strokes in Renariah [5]. Still, according to [5], *bushu* is the part of kanji that states the basic meaning of a kanji, in other words, that *bushu* is the "key" to know and understand the basic meaning of a kanji. The term *bushu*, in the kanji dictionary translated into Indonesian, is termed the term "character"

1.2. Wacom Media

Pen Tablets, also known as Graphic Tablets, are used as input devices to a computer as a companion or a substitute for a mouse and are generally used to draw comics or graphic designs. For graphic designers, a pen tablet is a very important tool for their work because it will be easier to draw designs. Because a pen tablet is used instead of a mouse and is used like a pencil to draw, it should be comfortable and natural in your hand.

Wacom is a pen tablet that does not require a battery, so it is light and thin. The size of the pen tablet affects the movement of the cursor on monitor, since it functions as substitute for a mouse [6]. Wacom tablets use electromagnetic resonance technology. The tablet provides power to the pen. Underneath the surface of tablet is a printed circuit board equipped with a network

consisting of multiple sender/receiver coils and a magnetic reflector [6].

2. METHODS

Kanji is one of the Japanese characters learned by students to equip reading and writing skills to support other subjects. The letters that must be learned are pretty much around 1000 kanji. With a large number of kanji letters, media is needed to help in learning during a pandemic that is carried out online. It is a burden that must be learned. There are two ways to read kanji, namely how to read ON (*Onyomi*) and how to read KUN (*Kunyomi*) in Renariah [7]. In writing kanji, it is necessary to write the correct way based on a standard order. This is a burden for students who become obstacles in terms of Japanese language skills, especially aspects of reading and writing skills.

During the pandemic, the use of information technology can be used as an alternative to continuing to carry out kanji learning which is expected to improve writing and reading abilities and skills. On this occasion, an idea will be shown on how to learn kanji during a pandemic using information technology with the help of Wacom. By using or utilizing the Wacom media, it is hoped that learning will take place and be maximally useful because it can provide a learning experience that is almost the same as when learning offline.

The following will show how the innovative thinking of kanji learning through information technology utilizes zoom assisted by Wacom, who will learn how to write kanji, how to read both kun-yomi and on-yomi, then introduce (*bushu*) from kanji letters, to make it easier to distinguish kanji. Kanji material is given at the 8th meeting or approximately 2 months after the lecture runs. For kanji material, first, students learn the letters of hiragana and katakana to support kanji learning.

First scheduling, send zoom link. Learning begins by explaining what kanji are. Share screen a student's handbooks from online using Wacom media as a whiteboard media to explain. Through Wacom, teachers are being able to show and explain a brief history of kanji then demonstrate the flow of writing and also explain how to read kanji *on* and *kun*, we can present and practice so that students can see first-hand. Kanji can be written in any combination of the 10 basic strokes:

- (1) Horizontal line 一 子 犬
- (2) Vertical line 山 小 中 木
- (3) Diagonal line 人 右 友 冷
- (4) Point 雨 火 代 列
- (5) Strokes that include diagonal lines and hooks or changes 子 水 字

- (6) Curved stroke with hooks formed like the last stroke in kanji 手, pronounced as て、means "hand" direction, 子 手 家 代
- (7) Stroke with angle 月 四 山 断
- (8) The name of this stroke means "duck," but it is not clear why this is so. 九 気 風
- (9) Hiragana character 女 每 組
- (10) Fish hook 花 見 礼

Explaining the order of writing, how to read the kanji *on* and *kun* requires patience. After demonstrating how to write students were given the task of practicing it and given time to practice. Furthermore, given a lag time to practice writing in the correct order of strokes to memorize.

Second, at the next meeting, students were given the task of reading with a share screen from the zoom media to practice reading the kanji material that had been learned in the previous meeting.

Students are given time to take turns reading. In this way, it will be seen whether students study or not. By practicing reading with a high frequency, it is hoped that students' reading skills will improve. Increased reading skills will also improve writing skills because these two skills support each other. At the end of the lecture, they are given the task of learning or memorizing the kanji in the next unit.

Third, at the next meeting, students were given the task of presenting new kanji material, explaining how to read *on* and *kun* along with the meaning of the kanji. With continuous practice, students will be motivated to study harder. Students will be ashamed of their friends if they don't memorize them. At the end of the meeting, they were given the task of rewriting the existing discourse by removing furigana from the kanji that had been studied in the previous unit. In this way, the reading skill will show whether the student is learning or not.

Fourth, at this meeting, the students' task was to read the task of rewriting the discourse given at the previous meeting. You have to be patient in escorting students to read because they are far away in the area so the internet signal is often disturbing. Furthermore, *bushu* material is given to make it easier to write a kanji letter.

There are 7 types of *bushu*, the maximum exposure of *bushu* is expected to be by providing an explanation of the function of each type of *bushu* by providing its use. With the introduction of *bushu* knowledge of kanji will be further increased. *Bushu* is the "key" to knowing and understanding the meaning of kanji in general, as well as one of the 3 ways used by Japanese people, students and Japanese language learners in finding a kanji in *kanwa jiten*, either to know how to read it, its meaning or jukugo- in Renariah [5]. Example: 「休」 "yasumi" kanji

means rest, consisting of *ninben* which means human, and kanji *ki* which means tree can be analogized that the person who is near the tree is a person who is resting.

Fifth, in the next meeting, students were given the task of writing by practicing the use of *bushu* that they had learned online to see the progress of their skills. By learning online assisted by Wacom media, it helps the implementation of learning.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the written test scores obtained by students shows good scores although there were some who got less scores. Here are the results:

Table 1. Test scores

Name	Written Test Result	Spoken Test Result (reading)
A	46	58
B	66	55
C	70	82
D	84	90
E	73	78
F	84	87

The research result shows that Wacom media can help students to master Kanji for beginners by observing the written and spoken test result presented above.

The implementation of learning is going well. However, there are still obstacles, the obstacles faced are students often leave the zoom, the next obstacle is the lack of ownership of Wacom by students so that learning falters or is not smooth when they are practicing writing together.

4. CONCLUSION

Learning kanji for beginners carried out online with the help of communication technology assisted by the use of Wacom produced results that did not disappoint. By utilizing wacom learning runs almost the same as offline learning. It is proven that students are fluent in reading kanji, skilled in explaining On and Kun, the average grades are almost even.

The learning constraints students will faced are: (1) Internet network is not stable, and (2) Wacom media is not owned by all students.

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