



Research on the Learning Situation and Teaching Countermeasures for Public Japanese Language Courses in Chinese Universities

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Abstract. Recently, driven by the increasing appeal of Japanese in the National College Entrance Examination, the number of students in public Japanese courses in Chinese universities has increased significantly. In this context, Japanese language education in Chinese universities faces new challenges. For this reason, this paper aims to investigate the current situation of the College Japanese course in local universities in Guangdong Province, especially the detailed analysis of students' learning situation, with a special focus on analyzing students' learning situation and identifying appropriate teaching countermeasures. The results indicate that students' Japanese learning as a whole exposes certain defects, such as prominent differences in foundation, insufficient interest in learning, inadequate engagement, and overly ambitious learning objectives. In response, this paper proposes certain targeted recommendations on teaching strategies, including the application of network information technology to realize the linkage between online teaching and offline classrooms, and the formulation of differentiated teaching schemes, to enhance students' learning interest and fulfill their learning demands more efficiently.

Keywords: College Japanese Course, Teaching Countermeasures, Analysis of Students' Learning Situation

1 Introduction

The number of high school students studying Japanese in China is increasing at an alarming rate. Relevant data indicates that the number of candidates selecting Japanese as their foreign language for the National College Entrance Examination increased from 9,600 in 2016 to 550,000 by 2024, presenting a 57-fold expansion within less than a decade. Notably, Guangdong Province demonstrated exceptional growth, with candidate numbers increasing from 4,437 in 2018 to over 90,000 in 2024, achieving an over 20-fold increase.

The rapid growth in the number of candidates selecting Japanese as their foreign language for the National College Entrance Examination demonstrates new challenges

for the reform of public Japanese language education in universities across Guangdong Province. Taking the College Japanese course at Jiaying University in Guangdong Province as an example, the enrollment increased from 68 students in 2019 to 528 students in 2024. This increase in course sections has intensified teaching workloads. Also, teachers are encountering a series of new challenges during their teaching practices.

To cope with the problems during actual teaching, this research conducted a questionnaire survey among students who took public Japanese courses at Jiaying University. Through analyzing and summarizing the survey results, this research further discusses the corresponding teaching countermeasures to improve teaching effects.

2 Investigation and Analysis of Learning Situation

This research selects students enrolled in the 2023 cohort of the College Japanese course at Jiaying University, with a focus on investigating such pivotal factors as their Japanese language learning foundational skills, motivation, learning situation, objectives, and learning demands. The questionnaire was distributed in June 2024 through the Chaoxing Xuexitong Platform. A total of 76 questionnaires were distributed, 74 of which were valid.

2.1 Learning Basis

The questionnaire survey of students shows that the students who take the College Japanese course at Jiaying University generally have a short time to study Japanese until high school, with the proportion of students who start to convert English into Japanese in high school as high as 97%. Specifically, most students study Japanese for 1 to 3 years. Besides, 30.3% of these students studied Japanese for less than 1 year, and even some students studied Japanese for less than 6 months, as shown in Figure 1.

Furthermore, the statistics of students' Japanese scores from the National College Entrance Examination reveal their weak Japanese learning foundation. In the case that the total score of Japanese in the National College Entrance Examination is 150, none of the respondents reached the excellent level (above 135), while only 21.1% of the students obtained the good level (between 105 and 134). In comparison, the proportion of students reaching the pass level (90 to 104) is the highest, accounting for 43.4% of the total number. Students who failed (below 90) accounted for 35.5%.

Most Japanese candidates temporarily switched from English learning to Japanese learning in senior high school. As a result, students failed to learn Japanese systematically before entering the university, which led to their weak Japanese foundation and uneven Japanese proficiency.

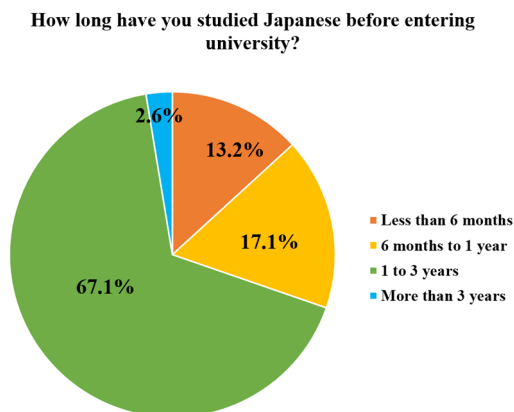


Fig. 1. Statistics of Cumulative Japanese Learning Time of Students Taking the College Japanese Course

2.2 Learning Interest and State

Regarding Japanese learning interest, only six students reported being “very interested,” less than 10% of the total, whereas 17 students stated they were “somewhat interested,” accounting for 22.4%. Nearly 60% of students described their interest as “neutral”. When asked about their level of enjoyment in the College Japanese course, the majority (43 students, 56.6%) responded with “neutral”. On the other hand, in terms of their current state of Japanese learning, only 13 students rated it as “good” or “very good,” less than 20% in total, while the majority (53 students, 69.8%) rated it as “neutral,” as depicted in Figure 2. When asked whether the College Japanese course had stimulated their learning interest, the largest proportion answered “neutral,” up to 57.9%.

Judging from the results of the questionnaire survey, the current College Japanese course has failed to effectively stimulate students’ interest in learning. Students’ learning situation failed to reach an excellent level. Too many classes make it difficult for teachers to effectively control the classroom. Correspondingly, the opportunities for students to participate in practice and speak are greatly reduced, eventually leading to poor overall teaching effect. This problem directly affects students’ learning interests and state.

2.3 Learning Objectives and Demands

The questionnaire survey shows that students with weak Japanese foundations usually set overly ambitious learning objectives. Specifically, 50% of students hope to reach the “upper-intermediate” Japanese level through the College Japanese course, as shown in Figure 3. Currently, students’ main purposes in learning Japanese are “obtaining credits or certificates,” “improving language ability,” and “improving employ-ability.”

Besides, during the questionnaire survey, it was found that students present urgent learning demands, which is in sharp contrast with students' negative learning interests and state.

Moreover, when asked about students' most desired Japanese ability, the top three answers were "basic knowledge of the Japanese language," "practical Japanese communication ability," and "Japanese cultural understanding ability." In particular, students not only set overly ambitious learning objectives but also demonstrate a variety of specific learning demands to improve Japanese ability.

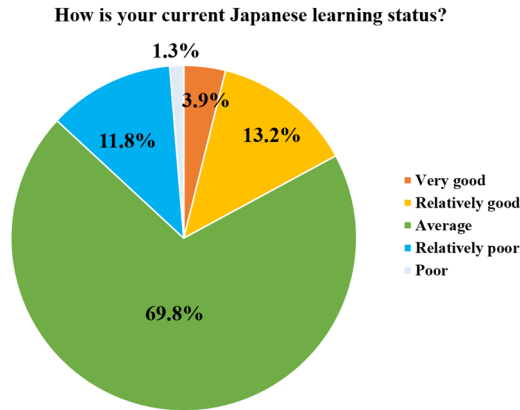


Fig. 2. Statistics of Learning State of Students Taking the College Japanese Course

In summary, this questionnaire survey identifies several relatively prominent problems, including students' weak Japanese foundation, uneven Japanese proficiency, negative interest in learning, poor learning state, and overly ambitious Japanese learning demands and objectives.

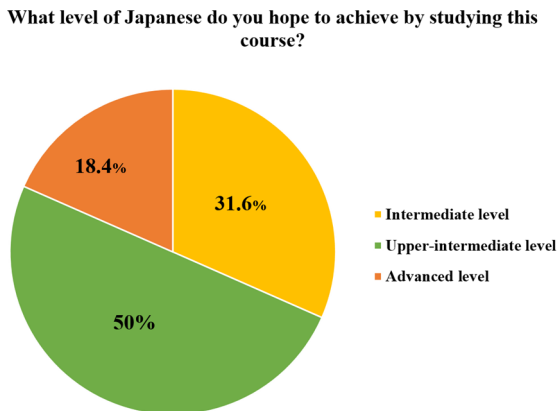


Fig. 3. Statistics of Learning Objectives of Students Taking the College Japanese Course

3 Corresponding Teaching Countermeasures

To solve the practical challenges faced by public Japanese courses in Chinese universities, it is urgent to further optimize the course implementation, improve the course quality, and explore brand-new teaching models. At this point, based on the actual learning situation of students, this research puts forward several targeted teaching countermeasures according to the results of this survey.

3.1 Stimulating Students' Learning Interests from Outside to Inside

Based on the analysis of this survey, it is evident that students lack interest in Japanese learning and the College Japanese course. As learning interest is an extremely important factor in improving the learning effect. Within the field of educational psychology, foreign language learning motivation is divided into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation [1-3]. Learning interest, as one of the internal motivations of learners, presents a relatively long duration [4].

As emphasized by the exchange principle of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, the College Japanese course should not only provide students with extrinsic motivation but also guide them to gradually turn to intrinsic motivation after obtaining extrinsic motivation. Under the condition that students lack interest in learning and lose intrinsic motivation, it is particularly important for teachers to play an active guiding role during the teaching process. Specifically, teachers should provide "interesting" stimuli in the classroom to stimulate students' interest. In contrast, traditional rote memorization-based teaching methods make it challenging to attract students' attention, let alone stimulate their interest. Additionally, public foreign language courses taught in large-sized classes in universities generally fail to effectively offer sufficient extrinsic stimulation, further affecting students' learning motivation.

To stimulate students' interest in learning and ensure long-term intrinsic motivation, it is necessary to initially solve such problems as outdated teaching methods and low teaching efficiency. Dörnyei's three-layer theory of foreign language learning motivation not only covers language level and learner level but also emphasizes the role of learning situation level in stimulating learning motivation [5-6]. Related research indicates that learning in a virtual reality environment can effectively stimulate students' interest, thus enhancing their learning motivation [7]. With the popularization of Internet technology, teachers can combine traditional offline classes with online resources. Meanwhile, rich teaching materials such as texts, pictures, audio, and video from the Internet can be integrated to expand the classroom teaching space. This practice makes the teaching resources more engaging, timely, and practical. Moreover, the integration of online and offline teaching activities is more strategic and innovative, which aids in creating a good learning atmosphere. Under effective extrinsic stimulation at the learning situation level, students' learning interests and participation will be significantly improved. Furthermore, not only will students' foreign language learning motivation be stimulated, but the transformation from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation will be realized, with this intrinsic motivation remaining continuously stimulated.

3.2 Fulfilling Students' Differentiated Learning Demands

As mentioned earlier, the current College Japanese course exposes the problems of too many students and insufficient class hours. In addition, students' learning foundation is uneven, with their learning objectives and demands varying. Furthermore, the existing offline classroom teaching makes it difficult to achieve effective teacher-student interaction and meet the diverse learning demands of students. During the actual teaching practice, it is difficult for teachers to provide targeted guidance for each student based on their respective learning levels and demands under the large-sized class teaching mode. Thus, in order to improve the effect of students' Japanese learning, it is urgent to formulate a feasible differentiated teaching scheme.

To fulfill students' individualized learning demands, teachers can build "student portraits" through the learning platform and accurately understand students' learning needs by analyzing students' data, thereby providing customized learning paths and resources [8-10]. In the meantime, teachers can make full use of modern information technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence to analyze students' learning data, to realize accurate teaching and personalized counseling. When assigning online homework before and after class, teachers can flexibly allocate targeted learning tasks and provide differentiated teaching resources in view of students' different Japanese basics, learning interests, and learning goals. In addition, teachers can comprehensively evaluate students' classroom performance, homework completion, and examination results, so as to comprehensively evaluate students' learning progress. Based on the evaluation results, teachers can adjust content and methods, providing timely feedback. These strategies effectively address students' diverse learning needs, ultimately improving learning efficiency.

4 Conclusions

In recent years, the phenomenon featuring the increasing appeal of Japanese in the Chinese National College Entrance Examination has caused a large number of high school students with weak Japanese foundations to enter public Japanese classes in universities. Facing this situation, Japanese teachers in universities are actively exploring innovative teaching schemes to improve teaching efficiency and address the current teaching dilemma. To deeply understand the actual situation of the College Japanese course, this research first conducts a detailed analysis of the students' learning situation. Based on the survey results of students, the students of public Japanese courses in universities show such characteristics as uneven Japanese learning foundation, low interest in learning, neutral learning state, and overly ambitious learning objectives.

According to the results of the analysis of students' learning situation, this research formulates corresponding teaching countermeasures for students' actual learning problems. Specifically, to enhance students' interest in Japanese learning and the College Japanese course, and enable them to obtain effective learning motivation, this research proposes a teaching scheme that combines online teaching with offline classroom by using network technology. Meanwhile, effective external stimuli at the learning situa-

tion level can be used to enhance students' interest in learning, thus stimulating students' foreign language learning motivation. Besides, to better meet the diverse learning demands of students, this research puts forward a differentiated teaching scheme, which is characterized by the application of modern information technology to realize personalized teaching. For example, a series of teaching methods, including analyzing students' data, arranging differentiated online homework, and continuously evaluating students' learning progress, can be applied to teaching practices. Notably, the feasibility and practical effects of these teaching strategies need to be further verified during teaching practices.

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