

Research on Factors Regarding Technology Affecting the Learning of Japanese Courses of First-Year Students Studying at the University

Nguyen Thi Ha Chau

Faculty of the Japanese language, FPT University, Vietnam

Abstract

Understanding the complexities of the Japanese language learning process among first-year students at FPT University is paramount for optimizing educational strategies. This study aims to explore the factors influencing this process and their implications for language education. Employing a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods, demographic data, prior language learning experiences, motivation levels, and learning strategies of FPT University's first-year students studying Japanese were analyzed. The findings elucidate a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping students' language acquisition journey, facilitating the design of tailored teaching methods and support systems. The study highlights the benefits of personalized educational interventions in enhancing language proficiency and academic success. However, challenges such as varying motivation levels and learning preferences among students were identified, underscoring the need for targeted interventions. By shedding light on the dynamics of Japanese language learning among first-year students at FPT University, this research contributes to the ongoing efforts to optimize language education and support the diverse needs of students in their linguistic development and academic endeavors.

Keywords: Development, factors ,first-year students, Japanese, learning

1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language is a multifaceted endeavor influenced by a myriad of factors, ranging from individual characteristics to external support systems. Among the diverse languages offered in academic institutions worldwide, Japanese stands out as a language of increasing importance due to its rich cultural heritage, economic significance, and global relevance. Understanding the factors that influence the language learning process of first-year students studying Japanese at FPT University is paramount for designing effective educational strategies tailored to their needs. This study aims to delve into the intricate dynamics that shape the journey of first-year students embarking on the acquisition of the Japanese language at FPT University. By examining various factors such as student demographics, prior language learning experiences, motivation levels, and learning strategies, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into optimizing the Japanese language education offered to these students.

First-year students represent a unique cohort in the academic landscape, transitioning from the familiar confines of secondary education to the diverse and often challenging environment of higher education. Their experiences, motivations, and learning preferences significantly impact their ability to absorb new knowledge, particularly in the context of learning a foreign language like Japanese. Understanding the demographic characteristics of these students, including their age, gender, and academic backgrounds, provides a foundational understanding of the cohort under study.

Furthermore, prior language learning experiences play a pivotal role in shaping students' attitudes and approaches towards learning Japanese. Whether students have previous exposure to Japanese or other foreign languages can influence their proficiency levels, confidence, and receptiveness to new linguistic concepts. Similarly, motivation

emerges as a crucial determinant of language learning success, encompassing intrinsic factors such as personal interest in Japanese culture and extrinsic factors like career aspirations and academic requirements.

Additionally, exploring the learning strategies employed by first-year students in their Japanese language acquisition journey offers valuable insights into their adaptive capabilities and preferred modes of learning. By identifying the strategies that resonate most with these students, educators can tailor teaching methods and support systems to enhance their learning outcomes effectively. Through a comprehensive examination of these factors, this study endeavors to contribute to the ongoing efforts to optimize Japanese language education for first-year students at FPT University. By identifying the strengths and addressing the challenges inherent in the language learning process, educators can foster an environment conducive to students' linguistic development and academic success.

2. Literature Reviews

Language acquisition, particularly the learning of a foreign language like Japanese, is a complex process influenced by various internal and external factors. Extensive research has explored the dynamics of language learning among different student populations, shedding light on the nuanced interplay of individual characteristics, motivational factors, and pedagogical approaches.

Demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational background have been identified as significant predictors of language learning success (Bialystok, 1997). Younger learners often demonstrate greater language learning aptitude due to their cognitive flexibility and adaptability (Ellis, 1994). However, older learners may leverage their existing linguistic knowledge and life experiences to facilitate language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Understanding the demographic composition of language learners provides valuable insights into their learning needs and preferences.

Motivation emerges as a key determinant of language learning outcomes, encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Dörnyei, 2005). Intrinsic motivation, driven by personal interest and enjoyment in the language, has been found to correlate positively with language proficiency and persistence in learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Extrinsic motivators such as academic requirements and career aspirations also play a significant role in shaping learners' engagement and commitment to language study (Gardner, 1985).

Furthermore, prior language learning experiences significantly influence learners' approaches and attitudes towards acquiring a new language (Ellis, 1994). Learners with previous exposure to Japanese or other foreign languages may exhibit enhanced language learning strategies and greater confidence in navigating linguistic challenges (Ellis, 2008). Understanding the diverse experiences and backgrounds of language learners provides valuable insights into designing effective instructional strategies tailored to their needs.

Pedagogical approaches and learning strategies also play a crucial role in facilitating language learning among students (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Effective language instruction involves a balance of communicative activities, vocabulary acquisition, and grammar instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Additionally, promoting learner autonomy and providing opportunities for authentic language use are essential for fostering language proficiency (Benson, 2001).

By synthesizing insights from existing literature, this study aims to build upon the current understanding of language acquisition dynamics and provide empirical evidence regarding the factors influencing Japanese language learning among first-year students at FPT University.

3. Methodology of research

This research employs a mixed-method approach to comprehensively investigate the factors influencing Japanese language learning among first-year students at FPT University. Quantitative data collection involves administering surveys to gather demographic information, measure motivation levels, and identify learning strategies employed by students. Qualitative data is obtained through semi-structured interviews, allowing for in-depth exploration of students' prior language learning experiences and perceptions of the Japanese language learning process. The sample consists of first-year students enrolled in Japanese language courses at FPT University, selected through

purposive sampling. Data analysis includes quantitative techniques such as descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, as well as qualitative methods like thematic analysis. This mixed-method design enables a holistic understanding of the factors shaping students' language learning journey, providing valuable insights for educational practitioners and policymakers.

4. Content of the research

4.1 Demographic Factors

Demographic factors play a significant role in shaping the learning experiences of first-year students studying Japanese courses at FPT University. These factors encompass a range of characteristics such as age, gender, and academic background, which collectively contribute to the diversity within the student population. Understanding the demographic profile of students is essential for educators and policymakers to tailor language education programs effectively.

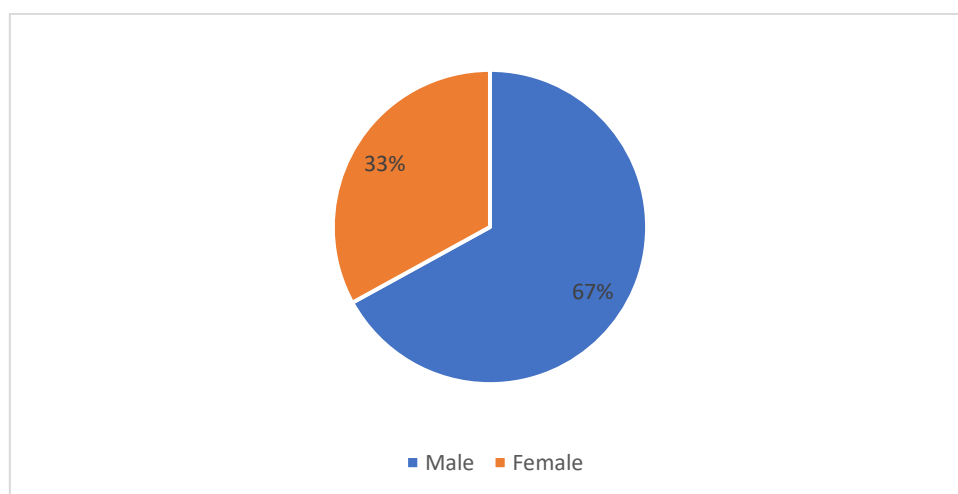


Figure 1. Gender of first-year students of FPT University

First-year students at FPT University represent a diverse cohort, each with unique backgrounds and learning needs.

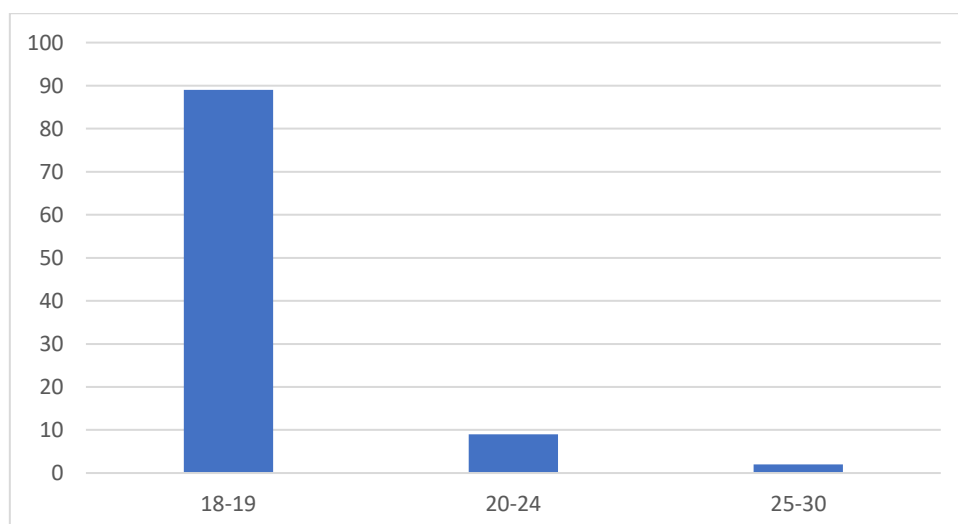


Figure 2. Ages of first-year students of FPT University

Age can influence students' cognitive abilities and learning preferences, with younger learners often demonstrating greater adaptability to new languages. Similarly, gender may play a role in shaping students' confidence levels and participation in language learning activities. Moreover, students' academic backgrounds, including their

previous exposure to Japanese or other foreign languages, can significantly impact their language proficiency and learning trajectories.

By examining demographic factors, educators can gain insights into the diverse needs and preferences of students, allowing for the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms. Addressing the unique challenges and opportunities presented by different demographic groups can help create inclusive and effective language education environments conducive to students' success in learning Japanese at FPT University.

4.2 Motivation

Motivation plays a pivotal role in the learning journey. Intrinsic motivation, stemming from a genuine interest in Japanese culture, language, and traditions, serves as a powerful driving force for many learners. Students who are intrinsically motivated often demonstrate higher levels of engagement and enthusiasm in their language studies, as they derive personal satisfaction and fulfillment from the learning process.

Conversely, extrinsic motivation, driven by external factors such as academic requirements or career prospects, also significantly influences students' learning experiences. Many first-year students may be motivated to learn Japanese due to academic obligations or the perceived benefits it may offer in terms of career advancement or international opportunities. While extrinsic motivation can initially propel students to engage in language learning activities, its sustainability over time may vary depending on the perceived relevance and value of mastering the language in achieving their academic or professional goals.

The interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation shapes students' engagement and persistence in learning Japanese. Those with a strong intrinsic motivation tend to exhibit greater resilience and perseverance in overcoming challenges, while extrinsically motivated students may require ongoing reinforcement and support to maintain their momentum. Understanding the diverse motivations of students is essential for educators to tailor instructional strategies and provide meaningful learning experiences that foster both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, ultimately promoting sustained engagement and achievement in Japanese language learning.

4.3 Common challenges faced by first-year students in learning Japanese

First-year students embarking on Japanese language courses often encounter a myriad of challenges that impede their learning progress. These challenges span from language-specific difficulties to external constraints, collectively shaping the complexity of their learning journey. Language-specific hurdles encompass mastering the intricacies of Japanese pronunciation, which often involves mastering distinct sounds and intonations unique to the language. Additionally, grappling with the Japanese writing system, particularly the complex characters of Kanji, poses a significant challenge requiring dedicated practice and memorization.

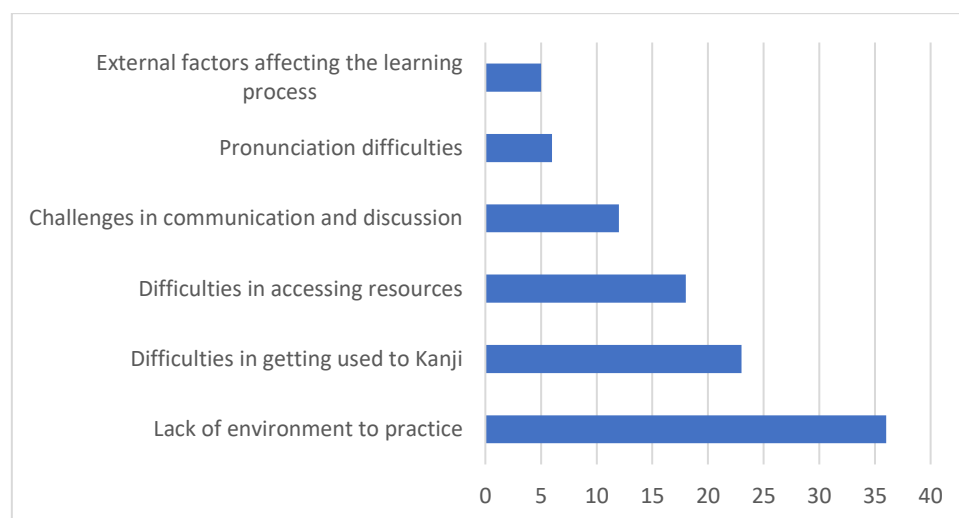


Figure 3. The main difficulties of first-year students when they first start learning the Japanese language

Beyond language-specific challenges, students also face external factors that impact their learning experience. Time constraints emerge as a common obstacle, with students balancing academic commitments, extracurricular activities, and personal responsibilities. The limited availability of time for focused language study can hinder students' progress and proficiency development. Moreover, a lack of resources, including access to qualified language tutors, textbooks, and supplementary materials, further compounds the challenges faced by first-year Japanese language learners.

Navigating through these obstacles necessitates the implementation of tailored support mechanisms and instructional strategies. Providing ample opportunities for practice, feedback, and remedial instruction can help students overcome language-specific difficulties. Additionally, creating a conducive learning environment that accommodates students' diverse schedules and resource constraints is crucial. By addressing both language-specific hurdles and external constraints, educators can empower first-year students to navigate their Japanese language learning journey effectively and achieve success in their academic endeavors.

4.4 Learning Strategies and Teaching Methods in Japanese Language Courses at FPT University

First-year students embarking on Japanese language courses at FPT University employ a variety of learning strategies to navigate the complexities of language acquisition. These strategies encompass a range of approaches, including communicative activities, vocabulary acquisition techniques, and grammar instruction methods. While some students may prefer interactive activities that promote real-life language use and cultural immersion, others may benefit more from structured vocabulary drills and systematic grammar exercises. Moreover, there exists a spectrum of preferences among students regarding self-directed learning versus structured instruction. Some students thrive in autonomous learning environments where they have the freedom to explore materials at their own pace, while others prefer the guidance and structure provided by traditional classroom settings.

To accommodate the diverse needs and learning styles of students, educators at FPT University employ a variety of teaching methods and instructional strategies in Japanese language courses. These pedagogical approaches encompass a blend of traditional and innovative techniques tailored to optimize student engagement and learning outcomes. Instructors adapt their teaching methods to suit the diverse needs of students, incorporating interactive activities, collaborative projects, and multimedia resources into their lessons. Additionally, technology plays a pivotal role in language instruction, with educators leveraging digital tools and online platforms to enhance the learning experience. By integrating technology and multimedia resources, instructors create dynamic and interactive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of students studying Japanese at FPT University.

4.5 Impact on Academic Success

The impact of Japanese language proficiency extends beyond linguistic competence to significantly influence the academic success and career trajectories. A strong correlation exists between Japanese language proficiency and academic performance, with students demonstrating higher proficiency levels often achieving better academic outcomes in Japanese language courses. Mastery of the language equips students with the ability to comprehend complex course materials, participate actively in class discussions, and excel in assessments, thereby bolstering their overall academic achievements. Furthermore, proficiency in Japanese opens doors to a myriad of academic and career opportunities, both domestically and internationally. In an increasingly interconnected world, proficiency in Japanese enhances students' competitiveness in the global job market, particularly in fields such as business, technology, and diplomacy. Many multinational corporations and organizations value employees proficient in Japanese, offering lucrative career prospects and opportunities for professional advancement.

Moreover, the benefits of language learning transcend academic and professional domains, encompassing personal growth and cultural enrichment. Acquiring proficiency in Japanese fosters cross-cultural understanding and communication skills, enabling students to navigate diverse cultural contexts with ease and sensitivity. Additionally, language learning nurtures cognitive flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, attributes that are highly valued in today's dynamic and interconnected world. In essence, the acquisition of Japanese language proficiency not only enhances students' academic success and career prospects but also enriches their

lives on a holistic level. By investing in language learning, students at FPT University position themselves for long-term success and fulfillment, equipped with the skills and competencies to thrive in an increasingly globalized and multicultural society.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on several key factors influencing the learning process of first-year students enrolled in Japanese language courses at FPT University. The examination of demographic factors revealed insights into the diverse characteristics of the student population, including age, gender, and academic background. Understanding these demographic profiles enables educators to tailor language education programs to meet the varied needs and preferences of students. Moreover, the study delved into the motivation levels of first-year students, uncovering both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators driving their engagement with Japanese language learning. Identifying the sources of motivation among students provides valuable guidance for educators in fostering a supportive and stimulating learning environment.

Analysis of learning strategies employed by students highlighted the importance of incorporating diverse instructional approaches to cater to individual learning styles. While some students may thrive in self-directed learning environments, others may benefit from structured instruction methods. Educators must adapt their teaching strategies to accommodate these preferences and optimize student engagement and learning outcomes.

Additionally, the study explored the effectiveness of various learning approaches, including communicative activities, vocabulary acquisition techniques, and grammar instruction methods. By evaluating the efficacy of these approaches, educators can refine their teaching methods and enhance the overall quality of Japanese language instruction at FPT University.

Furthermore, the discussion addressed the pedagogical approaches used in Japanese language courses at FPT University, emphasizing the importance of integrating technology and multimedia resources to create dynamic and interactive learning environments. By leveraging digital tools and online platforms, educators can enrich the learning experience and facilitate language acquisition. Overall, this research contributes valuable insights into the factors influencing Japanese language learning among first-year students at FPT University, providing a foundation for the development of effective educational strategies and support mechanisms tailored to the needs of students.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the factors influencing the learning process of first-year students enrolled in Japanese language courses at FPT University. By examining demographic characteristics, motivation levels, learning strategies, and pedagogical approaches, this study has contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of Japanese language education. The findings underscore the importance of tailoring language education programs to accommodate the diverse needs and preferences of students. Educators must consider individual learning styles and motivations when designing instructional strategies, incorporating a variety of approaches to optimize student engagement and learning outcomes. Furthermore, the study highlights the significance of integrating technology and multimedia resources into Japanese language instruction to create dynamic and interactive learning environments. By leveraging digital tools and online platforms, educators can enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of language learning resources. Moving forward, it is essential to continue exploring innovative approaches and interventions to further enhance Japanese language education at FPT University. Future research could delve deeper into specific aspects of language learning, such as the role of cultural immersion and experiential learning opportunities, to enrich the learning experience for students. Ultimately, by addressing the factors identified in this research, FPT University can further enhance its Japanese language education programs, empowering students to succeed in their language learning journey and fostering intercultural understanding and competence.

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