

Situation of Japanese Language Education at Selected High Schools in Vietnam

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要旨：近年、ベトナムでは日本語学習者数は急増している。日本語教育はすでに高校、中学校、さらには小学校レベルでも導入されている。本調査では、2018年にベトナムで日本語教育を実施している7つの高校を対象として、日本語教育の現状を調査した。結果、日本語を第一外国語として学習していた学生でも、高校卒業時には JLPT の N3 レベルであった。さらに、数学や物理などの科目では日本語での授業がないため、日本語能力が日本の大学に入るには不十分であることが明らかになった。高校生を対象とした渡日前許可制度を実施するためには、高校や学生が制度を理解すると共に、高校生の更なる日本語能力の向上が必要であると考えた。

キーワード：日本語教育、渡日前許可制度、高校、ベトナム

1. Introduction and Objectives

There is increasing need for studying in Japan at the undergraduate level. In Vietnam, every year, almost a million students graduate from high school, among which 700,000 students sit for exam to enter university. However, only over 300,000 students can be accepted to the total 235 universities of Vietnam. Despite efforts from the Vietnam's government for introducing Japanese education into the national education system, the language proficiency of the high school graduates is still not sufficient for entering a Japanese university.

On the other hand, for implementing the "300,000 international students plan", although Japan as a whole is mostly achieving this goal, the breakdown figure has shown that number of undergraduate students, especially at public universities is still low. Tokushima university, like the other universities that located faraway from metropolitan areas, needs to put more effort on attracting international students. Since 2017, the Tokushima University is already implemented the "Pre-arrival admission system". This system is already successfully

applied for students who studied at a Japanese School, who have finished high school education and 1-2 years of specialized training for studying in Japan, and have passed the EJU (Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students).

This survey is being conducted for exploring (1) situation of Japanese education in selected high schools in Vietnam, where Japanese is being tough as 1st foreign language; (2) language proficiency of students at the time graduation; and (3) possibilities for applying the "Pre-arrival admission system" at high school level or other possible cooperation.

2. Background of Japanese language education in Vietnam high schools

In Vietnam, Japanese education has begun at university level since 1961. In 2003, Japanese as a first foreign language subject is being piloted in junior high school and high school level. From 2016, Japanese as the first foreign language is being introduced for the 3rd grade elementary school students at five schools in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh

experimentally.

Currently, Japanese language education is being conducted at elementary, secondary and higher education institutions, educational institutions other than school education (cram schools, preparatory course for pre-departure trainees, internal education of local employees etc.). According to a survey conducted by Japan Foundation in 2015, in the whole Vietnam there are 219 institutions delivering Japanese education over the country, employing 1,795 teachers, with total number of learners exceeding 60,000 people. Despite a big and drastically increasing number of learners, the level of proficiency generally remains low.

In Vietnam, high school education consists of three grades from the 10th to the 12th grade (15 to 17-year old). At this moment, Japanese as the first foreign language (or as the second foreign language) is being tough only at several top high schools located in major urban areas. Since 1966, a specialized high school system consisting of classes are specialized in math, physics, language etc. has been established.

3. Method

This survey was conducted qualitatively by conducting in-depth interviews. Each interview was conducted face to face on site, with open-ended questions. The survey subjects were principals or vice-principal of the targeted high schools. The selected sites for survey were also the top high schools of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and Da Nang – the major three urban areas in Vietnam.

The questions are focusing on the number of students and classes, level of Japanese proficiency after graduation, academic path after graduation etc.

The interviews were successfully conducted at 7 sites as below: (1) Le Quy Don High School; (2) Tran Dai Nghia

High School; (3) Marie Curie High School; (4) Phan Chau Trinh High School; (5) National University Foreign Language High School; (6) Viet Duc High School; (7) Chu Van An High School.

4. Findings from interviews

Le Quy Don High School is a full-day high school as there are 4 class hours in the morning and 4 hours in the afternoon. At this school, Japanese language is being tough as the first foreign language for one Japanese-specialized class of 40 students of each grade. Students are enjoying 8/40 class hours of Japanese per week. It is probably possible to implement “Pre-arrival admission system”, if certain issues could be resolved. In case of the 11th grade students, although showing some proficiency in general Japanese, the 11th grade is not being trained to take EJU. As for the 12th grade students, some excellent students may have adequate Japanese proficiency (N2 or even N1) at the time of graduation. However, they have to take the National High School Graduation Examination on May, then they could take 1st EJU on June, 2nd EJU on December and apply for “Pre-arrival admission system”. If admitted, they can go to Japan for preparatory course on September next year. In this case, although the students are no longer school students, the school could act as guarantor and recruiter for the successful students to go to Japan if agreement is being signed between the school and Tokushima university.

Tran Dai Nghia High School is a specialized high school of Ho Chi Minh city. There are classes specialized in math, physics and natural science, as well as classes specialized in English as the 1st foreign language. Although there is no Japanese-specialized class, there is Japanese speaking club, consisting of about 30 students who regularly hold exchange events with Japanese universities (ex. Hokkaido

university). So far, some students may go to Japan for undergraduate study by English program at private universities such as APU (Asia Pacific University), TIU (Tokyo International University). Although joint program with foreign school is not permitted, it is possible to sign an agreement for cultural exchange with foreign universities. However, since Japanese proficiency of the students is uncertain (N3 at the best), it is not feasible for “Pre-arrival admission system” to be implemented.

Trung Vuong High School is a half-day high school in Ho Chi Minh. It has a Japanese-specialized class of about 40 students per grade. Students are taking 4/20 class hours of Japanese per week. Japanese proficiency of 3rd grade students is about N3, or N2 at the best. Probably it is not possible for “Pre-arrival admission system” to be implemented.

Marie Curie High School is a half-day high school in Ho Chi Minh. It has a Japanese-specialized class of about 30 students per grade. Besides that, some other classes also teach Japanese as 2nd language. The 3rd grade students could pass N3, or N2 at best. Students are taking 4/20 class hours of Japanese per week. “Pre-arrival admission system” sounds very attractive, however it may need a lot of effort from the school and students to put on it.

Phan Chau Trinh High School is a top-ranking half-day high school in Da Nang. It has a Japanese-specialized class of up to 40 students per grade, and two classes teach Japanese as 2nd foreign language. The 3rd grade students could pass N3, or N2 at best. Students are taking 8/40 class hours of Japanese per week. Collaboration with a Japanese university could be implemented in two directions: (1) focus on recruiting private students, similar to the way it works with APU. This option can attract a large number of students, without the need to provide full scholarship. It is suggested that the Japanese university to

open a representative office in Vietnam, instead of coming on business trip. After agreement is reached, the school will support for propaganda and in organizing fair and presentation sessions. (ex. APU covered the cost for propaganda, and for principals of major high school to visit academic event in Japan). (2) “Pre-arrival admission system” could be feasible, however it attracts less students and need scholarship to be provided, as well as high Japanese proficiency.

National University Foreign Language-specialized High School has been established under the Foreign Language Faculty of the Hanoi National University. This school is of “national level” and can recruit students from the whole country, however in reality 80% of students are from Hanoi. Since it is “specialized”, it can develop its own curriculum or make adaptation from the general curriculum of the Ministry of Education. For every grade, there are about 100 Japanese-specialized students (8/40 Japanese class hours per week), and about 50 students studying Japanese as 2nd foreign language. Among 3rd grade students, 50% has N2, among whom 5 students has N1 proficiency. Last year, 5 students have received MEXT scholarship for study in Japan. It has an agreement with Osaka university and other 7 Japanese universities (incl. APU, TIU etc.). “Pre-arrival admission system” is already implemented with Osaka university (2 students per year), alone with student exchange and promotion activities. Besides, every year, about 10 students of this school go to APU for undergraduate study, mainly enter English program.

Viet Duc High School is a top-ranked half-day high school in Hanoi. It has a Japanese-specialized class of up to 40 students per grade. The 3rd grade students could pass N4, or N3 at best. Students are taking 4/20 class hours of Japanese per week. It is not feasible for “Pre-arrival

admission system” to be carried out, however exchange activities could be welcomed.

Chu Van An specialized High School is a leading specialized high school in Hanoi from old days, where students are majoring in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, literature, language etc. Japanese-specialized class has about 40 students per grade, majority of the students have intention to study in Japan. The 3rd grade students could pass N3, N2 or in some rare case N1. Every year there is a study abroad fair organized by the school, with more than 20 booths represented by foreign universities and agencies. It has exchange activities with Osaka University since several years. It has some collaboration with APU etc. “Pre-arrival admission system” as well as exchange activities seems to be feasible.

5. Summary of findings

Situation of Japanese education. All of the schools visited are top-ranked high school of Vietnam, with long history and have high rate of graduates to enter top local universities or study abroad. Japanese education is organized in a similar way. Each school has a Japanese-specialized class, which studies Japanese as 1st foreign language. Teachers are mainly local, but there are volunteer native teachers come on regular basis.

Level of Japanese proficiency. Japanese proficiency of the 3rd grade students is usually N3, rarely N2, except the National University’s high school.

Possibility of “Pre-arrival admission system”. There are no Japanese language class hours for specialized subjects such as math, physics etc., as well as lacking of EJU preparation system, makes it difficult to carry out the

“Pre-arrival admission system”. It could be potentially successful at National University’s high school, Chu Van An high school, or Le Quy Don high school, where the leadership has shown high interest and commitment.

Other possibilities for cooperation. The schools have shown interest on exchange activities with Japan universities. Organizing study fair, event, presentation sessions to attract private students could be an alternative based on APU model.

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