

The Assessment of English and Japanese Foundation Courses' Instructional Effectiveness, College of General Education and Language, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology

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Abstract

The purposes of this research were 1) to study opinions in learning English and Japanese foundation courses of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in three aspects: Curriculum, Teaching – Learning Process, and the others (Teaching Materials and Instructors) 2) to compare students' opinions on the three aspects according to students' gender, age, academic program, academic major, and experiences in learning languages, and 3) to gather supplemental suggestions. Research samples were 451 students, who registered in English and Japanese foundation course of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010, derived through simple random sampling technique. The Instrument used for gathering the data were the rating-scale and open-ended questionnaire. The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis. The research findings were as follows: 1. Opinions in learning English and Japanese foundation courses of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students as a whole was in high level. When considered in each aspect, it was found that their opinions were at high level on Curriculum, Teaching-Learning Process, and the others (Teaching Materials and Instructors). 2. Male and female students had no differences on their opinions on overall and each aspect of educational management. 3. Students with different age showed no differences on overall and each aspect of educational management 4. Students with different academic program showed no differences on overall and each aspect of educational management. 5. Students with different academic major showed no differences on overall. While considered in each aspect, it found that some significant differences on the curriculum. 6. Students with different experiences in learning languages showed no differences on overall and each aspect of educational management. 7. Students who registered in English and Japanese foundation courses of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010 had supplemental suggestions as: to have test for each unit of English class and to enhance hours of practicing listening and speaking with foreign instructors for English foundation course. For Japanese foundation course, it should provide native Japanese instructors in

Japanese class, practice the students more in Kanji alphabet writing, and enhance Japanese class hours.

Keywords -Instructional Effectiveness, Teaching-Learning Assessment, English and Japanese foundation courses, TNI

1. Introduction

In the recent time, Instructional curriculum of foreign language is based on National Education Act of B.E.2542 section 22 as it stipulated that Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development, and are regarded as being most important. The teaching-learning process shall aim at enabling the learners to develop themselves at their own pace and to the best of their potentiality. Moreover, section 24 in organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies concerned shall provide substance and arrange activities in line with the learners' interests and aptitudes, bearing in mind individual differences, provide training in thinking process, management, how to face various situations and application of knowledge for obviating and solving problems, organize activities for learners to draw from authentic experience; drill in practical work for complete mastery; enable learners to think critically and acquire the reading habit and continuous thirst for knowledge, achieve, in all subjects, a balanced integration of subject matter, integrity, values, and desirable attributes, enable instructors to create the ambiance, environment, instructional media, and facilities for learners to learn and be all-round persons, able to benefit from research as part of the learning process. In so doing, both learners and teachers may learn together from different types of teaching-learning media and other sources of knowledge, enable individuals to learn at all times and in all places. Co-operation with parents, guardians, and all parties concerned in the community shall be sought to develop jointly the learners in accord with their potentiality [1].

Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology has been operated under the philosophy of "disseminating knowledge and building economic base". One of the TNI objectives is to generate human resources who have abilities in technological advancement and industrial management. Moreover, TNI concept of program administration is to focus on the students' language

skills- the students will be able to communicate in Japanese and English. In order to achieve in the TNI objectives, TNI has provided English and Japanese foundation courses for TNI students who will start their education in the first year from all faculties [2].

Languages are necessary for daily life especially speaking and writing skills. Moreover, communication is used to be a tool to communicate around the world. If communicative language users lack of language competence, they will not be able to communicate correctly. The use of accurate and appropriate language communication focuses on the ability in communicating through four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing [1]. This related to the statement of Littlewood [3] and Finocchiaro [4] who advocated that the real objectives of foreign language teaching-learning approach are to develop the students' communicative ability and to use target language effectively.

College of General Education and Languages has operated teaching-learning in English and Japanese languages for those who passed TNI entrance examination since 2009. There were six classes for English foundation course and eleven classes for Japanese foundation course (five classes for general Japanese language and six classes for Business Japanese). Moreover, College of General Education and Languages has set a standard system for instruction by using quality teaching materials created by English and Japanese instructors. At the end of courses, it found out that the students' results were not satisfaction as the students were not able to reach the standard. Further, it was reported that many students skipped the class and were absent in final examination. According to the questionnaire to evaluate English and Japanese foundation course by asking instructors, it indicated the problems of instruction and also suggested how to improve instruction [5].

Consequently, College of General Education and Languages has proposed to study systematically about the instructional effectiveness of English and Japanese foundation courses by asking opinions of the students in order to get information in details and apply the information to amend teaching and learning to be more effective.

Objectives of the research were 1) to study opinions in learning English and Japanese foundation courses of Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology students in three aspects: Curriculum, Teaching – Learning Process, and the others (Teaching Materials and Instructors) 2) to compare students' opinions on the three aspects according to students' gender, age, academic program, academic major, and experiences in learning languages, and 3) to gather supplemental suggestions.

Significances of the research were 1) the results from the research presented the instructional effectiveness of English and Japanese foundation courses in order to develop teaching-learning process techniques

applied for the next academic year. 2) the gender, age, academic program, academic major, and experiences in learning languages of TNI students had no significant differences, and 3) the suggestions from the research are used as a plan to improve the method of teaching and learning in English and Japanese foundation courses of TNI students to be more effective and efficient.

2. Research Method

A. Population and Sampling

This research was survey method in the assessment of English and Japanese foundation courses' instructional effectiveness for College of General Education and Languages in academic year 2010 which consisted of population and sampling as follows:

Populations of this research were 600 students who registered in English and Japanese foundation courses of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010.

Samplings of this research were 451 students who registered in English and Japanese foundation courses of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010 derived through simple random sampling technique.

B. Research Instrument

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section consisted of personal data, such as students' gender, age, academic program, academic major, and experiences in learning languages. The second section consisted of 32 questions in 3 aspects namely: in Curriculum, in Teaching-learning process, and in others (Teaching materials and Instructors). Respondents used 5 point scale to answer this section, which are 1= "Strongly disagree," 2= "Disagree," 3= "Neither agree nor disagree," 4= "Agree," 5= "Strongly agree." The third section was open-ended questionnaire which consisted of 3 aspects namely: in curriculum, in Teaching-learning process, in others (Teaching materials and instructors).

C. Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS/PC (Statistical Package for Social Sciences/Personal computer). The statistics used for analyzing the data were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, F-test, and content analysis.

3. Results

The result of this research divided into 6 phases.

1. The result of personal data analysis of students who registered in English foundation course of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010 in table 1.

TABLE 1

The result of personal data analysis of students who registered in English foundation course.

Sampling data	No.	%
1. Gender		
1.1 Male	142	60.4
1.2 Female	93	39.6
Total	235	100
2. Age		
2.1 17 years	22	9.4
2.2 18 years	193	82.1
2.3 19 years	17	7.2
2.4 20 years	2	0.9
2.5 others	1	0.4
Total	235	100
3. Academic program		
3.1 4 years program	233	99.1
3.2 Continuing program	2	0.9
3.3 Others	-	-
Total	235	100
4. Majors		
4.1 Automotive Engineering	38	16.2
4.2 Productive Engineering	19	8.1
4.3 Computer Engineering	19	8.1
4.4 Information Technology	33	14.0
4.5 Multimedia Technology	17	7.2
4.6 Business Information	24	10.2
4.7 Industrial Management	22	9.4
4.8 Business Japanese	63	26.8
Total	235	100
5. Experiences in learning languages		
5.1 Ever	232	98.7
5.2 Never	3	1.3
Total	235	100
6. Grades from former studying		
6.1 grade 4	26	10.1
6.2 grade 3	92	40.2
6.3 grade 2	102	44.5
6.4 grade 1	12	5.2
Total	235	100

2. The result of the opinion analysis of the students who registered in English foundation course in table 2.

TABLE 2

Descriptive statistics of opinion scores of the students who registered in English foundation course in aspects and in total.

Opinions of the students who registered in English foundation course	N	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
1. Curriculum	235	4.05	0.51	high
2. Teaching-learning process	235	4.03	0.53	high
3. Others (Teaching materials and Instructors)	235	4.30	0.51	high
Total	235	4.12	0.51	high

3. Content analysis of opinions and suggestions of the students who registered in English foundation course in table 3.

TABLE 3

Frequency and percentage of opinion and suggestion scores of the students who registered in English foundation course.

Opinions and suggestions of the students who registered in English foundation course	No	Fre	%
Curriculum	127		
Opinions in learning English	109		85.82
1. Contents in the textbook are suitable and cover all skills in English		38	29.92
2. Contents in curriculum and the textbook can be used in daily life		30	23.62
3. Contents are sequenced from easy to difficult		26	20.47
4. Contents include grammar rule and reading comprehension		15	11.81
Suggestions	18		14.17
1. The class hour should be longer		11	8.66
2. Contents of lessons should be more effective		5	3.93
3. The textbook should be emphasized on sentence structure and grammar		2	1.57
Learning-teaching process	137		
Opinions in learning English	97		70.80
1. Teaching –learning approach is interesting because of using various methods		41	29.92
2. Pedagogical method is good and completes in all aspects		33	24.08
3. Activities using in class is various and suitable		15	10.94
4. Pedagogical method is suitable; the new vocabulary is added and the extra practices are used as homework		8	5.83
Suggestions	40		29.20
1. There should be the test every chapter so learners will be able to test their knowledge		23	16.78
2. Learners should have more hours to speak with foreign instructors in order to practice their listening skill		8	5.83
3. Extra activities to support the language development skill such as movie translation should be enhanced		5	3.70
4. Foreign instructors should assign less homework because learners feel depress		4	2.92
Others (Instructors and teaching materials)	140		
Opinions in learning English	122		87.14
1. Instructors have good technique to teach learners		47	33.57
2. Instructors are able to make the lessons easier		35	25
3. Thai and foreign teachers have a good preparation on teaching materials by using Internet and computer to support teaching-learning		21	15
4. Instructors give an opportunity for learners to practice their language both listening and speaking skills		10	7.14
5. Instructors concern on the significance of English teaching and enable to generate learners' motivation to study English language		9	6.43

Suggestions	18		12.86
1. There should be more various teaching materials		7	5
2. Foreign instructors should speak slower and clearer		5	3.57
3. Learners should be encouraged more self-access		4	2.86
4. Thai and foreign instructors should plan the lesson together in order to avoid repeated exercises		2	1.43

4. The result of personal data analysis of students who registered in Japanese foundation course of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010 in table 4.

TABLE 4

The result of personal data analysis of students who registered in Japanese foundation course.

Sampling data	No.	%
1. Gender		
1.1 Male	147	68.1
1.2 Female	69	31.9
Total	216	100
2. Age		
2.1 17 years	18	8.3
2.2 18 years	162	75.0
2.3 19 years	32	14.8
2.4 20 years	2	0.9
2.5 others	2	0.9
Total	216	100
3. Academic program		
3.1 4 years program	212	98.1
3.2 Continuing program	4	1.9
3.3 Others	-	-
Total	216	100
4. Majors		
4.1 Automotive Engineering	39	18.1
4.2 Productive Engineering	22	10.2
4.3 Computer Engineering	29	13.4
4.4 Information Technology	41	19.0
4.5 Multimedia Technology	35	16.2
4.6 Business Information	19	8.8
4.7 Industrial Management	31	14.3
4.8 Business Japanese	-	-
Total	216	100
5. Experiences in learning languages		
5.1 Ever	25	11.6
5.2 Never	191	88.4
Total	216	100
6. Grades from former studying		
6.1 grade 4	4	16.0
6.2 grade 3	11	44.0
6.3 grade 2	7	28.0
6.4 grade 1	-	-
Total	25	100

5. The result of the opinion analysis of the students who registered in Japanese foundation course in table 5.

TABLE 5

Descriptive statistics of opinion scores of the students who registered in Japanese foundation course in aspects and in total

Opinions of the students who registered in Japanese foundation course	N	\bar{X}	S.D.	Level
1. Curriculum	216	4.20	0.49	high
2. Teaching-learning process	216	4.03	0.55	high
3. Others (Teaching materials and Instructors)	216	4.39	0.47	high
Total	216	4.20	0.50	high

6. Content analysis of opinions and suggestions of the students who registered in Japanese foundation course in table 3.

TABLE 6

Frequency and percentage of opinion and suggestion scores of the students who registered in Japanese foundation course.

Opinions and suggestions of the students who registered in Japanese foundation course	No.	Fre	%
Curriculum	95		
Opinions in learning Japanese	62		65.26
1. Contents in the textbook are suitable and can be used in daily life		26	27.36
2. Contents are sequenced from easy to difficult		17	17.89
3. Pictures are used in order to make the contents easier		9	9.47
4. Textbooks are suitable for those who never learn Japanese before		6	6.31
5. Extra exercises are used to practice the writing skill in Japanese		4	4.21
Suggestions	33		34.73
1. The class hour should be longer		10	10.52
2. Contents of lessons should be more effective		8	8.42
3. Teaching should be more focused on vocabulary using in daily and Japanese culture		6	6.31
4. Kanji writing should be more concerned		4	4.21
5. Learners should have more homework to practice at home		3	3.15
6. Colorful photo should be added in vocabulary teaching		2	2.10
Learning-teaching process	106		
Opinions in learning Japanese	76		71.69
1. Activities are held in a pleasure environment to enhance those who never study Japanese before		32	30.18
2. Learners are motivated to show their opinions and enable to practice reading and writing skill		27	25.47
3. Teaching method is interesting because of using various materials to motivate learners		14	13.20
4. Pedagogical method is suitable as learners are able to learn new vocabularies, revise the chapter and do assignments		3	2.83
Suggestions	30		28.31
1. Teaching-learning should be managed as a pair teaching in order to help learners for listening and speaking.		21	19.81

2. Teaching materials should be more various.		5	4.71
3. There should be more listening examination		4	3.77
Others (Instructors and teaching materials)	123		
Opinions in learning Japanese	81		65.85
1. Instructors provided a good technique with various teaching materials		39	31.70
2. Instructors use teaching materials which are suitable with learner level		27	21.95
3. Instructors have prepared effective and modern teaching materials		12	9.75
4. Instructors give a chance for learner to ask for the problem anytime		3	2.43
Suggestions	42		34.15
1. There should be foreign instructor to teach every week		38	30.89
2. Cartoon and animation should be included in teaching materials to attract learners		4	3.25

4. Discussion

The results of this research can be divided into 3 parts: curriculum; teaching-learning process; and others (Teaching materials and Instructors).

Curriculum, firstly, learners who enrolled for the English and Japanese Foundation courses of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology showed a high level in English ($\bar{x}=4.05$) and Japanese ($\bar{x}=4.20$). This might be because contents in English and Japanese provided all levels of communication skills as well as supported students' grammar, sociolinguistics, syntax, and communicative strategies. The learners have expressed their language by interaction with instructors and friends in the class through contents and language selection [6]. Moreover, language teaching for communication focuses on the learners' ability to learn and understand about meaning and how to use the languages to suit with different situations as well as practices the languages through updated contents which can be used in daily life [7]. The curriculum, however, was emphasized on structure, situations and meaning [8]. The English classroom was classified as 30 students which was not difficult in teaching-learning process. Johnson and Morrow [9] stated that students prefer practicing language in a small class in order to highly focus on practicing.

The highest mean scores on teaching-learning process in English is ($\bar{x}=4.03$), and ($\bar{x}=4.03$) in Japanese. This might be because learners learned English in primary and secondary levels. Some learners who learned Japanese in secondary level understand the teaching-learning system. Thus, the results were shown as the highest level because teaching-learning process focused on grammar, readings, exercises and passages that the learners were able to learn language focus, especially grammar and vocabularies. Moreover, the learners got used to practicing their English naturally in a form daily life speaking. This strategy supported the

learners to learn English by coincidence because they emphasized on speaking for communication rather than rules of English language. Thus, the learners did not feel that they were learning English subject. However, the learners were able to be aware of the wrong use of English [10].

Other aspects (teaching materials and instructors), lastly, learners who enrolled for the English and Japanese Foundation courses of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology showed a high level in English ($\bar{x}=4.30$) and Japanese ($\bar{x}=4.39$). This might be because teaching materials were prepared by instructors which focused on practicing listening and speaking with foreign instructors. Moreover, instructors were aware of language learning, environment in learning languages, and also motivate the learners to love in learning. The interesting activities such as transferring and filling information in the chart and tables were applied in teaching [11]. The learners like this style of teaching because they feel happy when learning. Instructors created teaching-learning approach that supported the learners in a form of whole task practice as well as total skills. These emphasized on communicative activities and self directed tasks which suited to the learners' level and also increase the learners' motivation [3].

5. Conclusion

Opinion in learning English and Japanese of students who enrolled in English and Japanese foundation course of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010 as a whole was in high level. When considered in each aspect, it was found that their opinion was at high level on Curriculum, Teaching-learning process, and others (Teaching materials and Instructors). However, there were no differences between male and female students had on their opinions on overall and each aspect of educational management. Students with different age showed no differences on overall and each aspect of educational management. Students with different academic program showed no differences on overall and each aspect of educational management. Students with different academic major showed no differences on overall. While considered in each aspect, it found that some significant differences on the curriculum. Students with different experiences in learning languages showed no differences on overall and each aspect of educational management. Furthermore, students who enrolled in English and Japanese foundation courses of College of General Education and Languages, Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology in academic year 2010 had supplemental suggestions as: to have test for each unit of English class and to enhance hours of practicing listening and speaking with foreign instructors for English foundation course. For Japanese foundation course, it should provide native Japanese

instructors in Japanese class, practice the students more in Kanji alphabet writing, and enhance Japanese class hours.

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