

Challenges in Learning Japanese Language in Riau: A Comprehensive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The Japanese high school curriculum is the same in Riau as in other regions; it is part of the specialty. Consequently, learning Japanese will take much less time. It is challenging for Japanese language teachers to meet learning objectives because of the required minimum hours of instruction. Therefore, this study aimed to outline the challenges Japanese high school teachers in Riau had when trying to learn Japanese. 36 Japanese instructors in Riau were polled for this study. Japanese language teachers and other issues like infrastructure and facilities present difficulties for students learning the language. According to this survey, high school students who struggled to read Hiragana faced the five most common forms of challenges learning Japanese: (1) Students who had difficulty reading Hiragana and Katakana, (2) Students who had a problem writing Hiragana and Katakana, (3) Students who had trouble pronouncing Japanese words correctly, (4) Some teachers still used traditional teaching methods, and (5) Students had little interest in speaking Japanese. The findings showed that the process of boosting students' motivation to talk to Japanese presented the most challenge. The majority of the 22 (61.1%) Japanese high school instructors in Riau concurred that the cause of the students was still low. Of course, this may be avoided by encouraging instructors to be more inventive when creating relevant teaching materials, engaging learning media, and putting the needs of the students first.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of globalization, job and business competition is getting more intense than ever before and Indonesia as a developing country that cannot be separated from the influence of globalization, must have ready-made human resources that are not only reliable but also competitive. The implication for the selection of reliable human resources in the era of globalization is mastery of the international language. Besides English, Japanese is Indonesia's most widely spoken foreign language (Jaohari, 2021). Indonesia is rated second after China, which has 18.4% of the 142 nations worldwide that organize Japanese language learning, according to the survey by The Japan Foundation published in 2020. The survey's findings also reveal that Indonesia has 2,879 formal and informal educational institutions

offering Japanese language instruction, second only to South Korea, and up 15.4 percent over the previous year with 709,479 students (The Japan Foundation, 2020). (Munqidzah, 2014) the amount of public interest in Japanese has become a problem great responsibility towards Japanese language learners at any level. The need for language mastery foreign as a second language shows a tendency to continue increase. This can be seen between other than the rise of language courses foreign and of increasing numbers prospective students who are enrolled in various foreign language majors College (Noviana, 2017).

Both formal and informal institutions in Indonesia still use conventional learning methods for teaching Japanese. such as teaching techniques that are less attractive make learning monotonous (Diner, 2020). Problems experienced by students related to learning Japanese language skills are still very dominant, followed by other problems faced by Japanese language teachers. This is the problem in this research. The 2013 Curriculum also contains regulations on introducing Japanese language education in Indonesia. Padmadewi & Mardani (2020) claim that the 2013 curriculum, which is now being used, promotes learning for the 21st century by including the 4Cs (Communication, Collaborative, Critical Thinking, and Creativity), enhancing character education, and boosting HOTS and literacy. To develop students' 21st-century skills, Japanese language teachers must necessarily implement learning methodologies (Dewi et al., 2021).

Education is a deliberate effort to create a learning environment and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have the qualities that themselves, society, the nation, and the state need, such as religious-spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, and noble character. (UU Sisdiknas, No. 20 for the year 2003). For pupils to fully realize their potential, all educational components must collaborate to fulfill national education goals. The application of the learning process, however, frequently faces challenges. The blocks may cause difficulties with learning. The school's existing buildings, teachers, students, and curriculum have their share of problems. The 2013 curriculum is used for high school Japanese instruction. The curriculum for learning Japanese contains four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Matsumoto, 2006). The curriculum has four language materials: speech, letters, vocabulary, and grammar. With this reference, students must be able to achieve the language skills mentioned to be said to be successful learners.

The ability of educators to process knowledge in a way that can foster an enjoyable environment for students to establish an effective learning process is crucial to the success of learning. Conversely, poor educational standards demonstrate how ineffective the learning process is. Numerous problems, including those brought on by students, teachers, and inadequate facilities and infrastructure, are to blame. Student motivation, interest, and language proficiency are among the factors that can be considered. The ability to be motivated is essential for learning achievement (Lee & Martin, 2017) since motivated people will engage in various activities to realize their objectives. Their passion for learning also influences the kids' achievement in school. Their love for learning also affects the kids' achievement in school. Interest in education is a critical element of the learning process, claim (Harahap et al., 2021). Interest significantly impacts behavior since it determines whether you do something or refrain from doing it. Students who can listen to short phrases spoken by the teacher, pronounce harsh words close to standard pronunciation, and read and write hiragana and katakana letters will have a more challenging time mastering language skills if motivation and enthusiasm are high (Matsumoto 2006).

Additionally, issues with instructional materials, learning strategies, methodologies, and learning approaches can be seen (Permendiknas No. 41 Tahun 2007). Teaching materials are written as points in creating competency success indicators and comprise pertinent facts, concepts, principles, and methods. To teach, materials must be presented using the proper learning approaches, techniques, and strategies to acquire learning skills on technique; this study highlights the difficulties teachers at Riau's high schools have studying Japanese. (Dedi & Rosi, 2018) Which method used by the teacher in teaching also determines attitudes students, so that students are less enthusiastic in participate in learning activities. Selection and use of appropriate methods in accordance with competency goals are indispensable. Because the method is the way used by the teacher to establish relationships with students during

teaching and learning activities going on. For this reason, the teacher acts as a guide and guide not only clever in choosing learning methods

Several studies on problems in high school Japanese language learning. However, this research is aimed at improving learning and increasing the creativity of Japanese high school teachers in Riau in teaching Japanese. The participation of Japanese high school teachers in Riau in competency improvement training is still low. More than 50% of Japanese high school teachers in Riau are alumni of the Japanese Language Education Study Program, FKIP, Riau University, so their competence is still limited by the material they received in their lectures. The focus of this research is how Japanese language learning is implemented by Japanese language teachers in Riau. Therefore, the research question is: what the problems are faced by Japanese language teachers in Riau?

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative technique with a descriptive research design. 36 Japanese high school teachers in Riau who filled out a closed questionnaire became the source of research data. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to obtain more comprehensive information regarding the questionnaire responses. On June 6, 2022, the questionnaire was made available online using the Google Forms program, and on June 7, 2022, WhatsApp interviews were conducted with five representatives of Japanese language teachers. The data collected was examined qualitatively, with percentage figures to support it, and then explained the problems in learning Japanese in Riau. Both in terms of teachers, students and facilities, and infrastructure.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Following are the results of a questionnaire given to 36 Japanese high school teachers in Riau giving their opinions on problems in learning Japanese. It can be seen in the following figure.

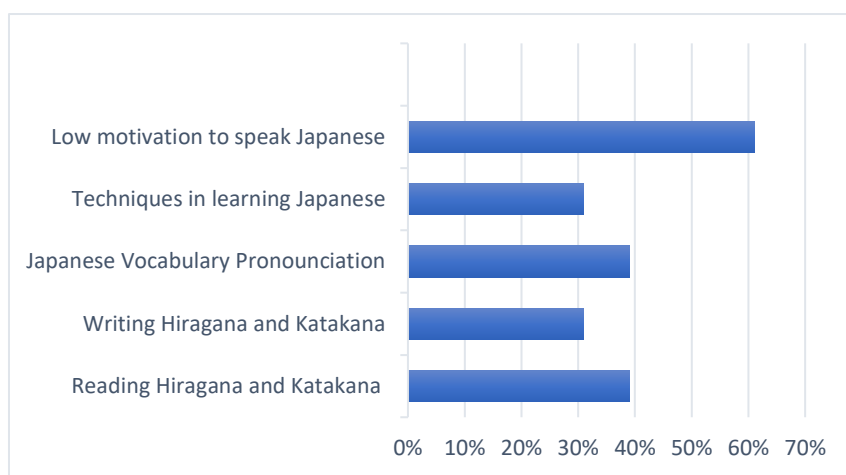


Figure 1. Difficulties in learning Japanese

3.1. Reading Hiragana and Katakana

Based on the results of a questionnaire given to high school Japanese teachers in Riau, 61.1% of respondents agreed, and 8.3% strongly agreed that students could read Hiragana. The remaining 30.6% of educators dissented from the notion that pupils could read Hiragana. The inability of students to read hiragana letters indicates that there are issues with learning Japanese, particularly with the hiragana alphabet. The aim of learning Japanese is for pupils to be able to read hiragana and katakana,

even if the textbooks used in high school Japanese learning do not include hiragana letters. This is since high school students learning Japanese come from highly varied backgrounds. Additionally, learning Japanese takes very little time and effort. Due to this, students have minimal opportunity to become accustomed to learning Japanese. This is consistent with (Tasmania Olivia Eka Mulyanan, 2020) whose research indicates that learning Japanese in high school is meant to help pupils enhance their skills, one of which is the ability to recognize hiragana. Hiragana, which consists of the four characters hiragana, katakana, kanji, and romaji, is difficult to remember and recall. According to thoughts (Abhi Pawestri & Ariani Saragih, 2021), most students find it challenging to read hiragana letters. Hence, a method for teaching the hiragana is required.

3.2. Writing Hiragana and Katakana

According to questionnaire findings, 55.6 percent of Riau's 20 Japanese language instructors believed their students could read Hiragana letters, and 5.6 percent strongly agreed. The remaining 38.9% of educators believe their pupils cannot write hiragana. As a result, learning a foreign language whose letters and reading system are different presents difficulties for him as a student who employs the alphabet to read and write. It implies that to instruct students, teachers must be creative. One illustration is seeing a video that demonstrates how to write the proper hiragana (Ayu & Juliani, 2022).

3.3. Japanese vocabulary pronunciation

According to a questionnaire finding, 33.3% of Riau's Japanese high school teachers concur that their students still struggle to speak Japanese words correctly. According to (Muslihah, 2018) to her research, Japanese phonemes can be classified as vowels, consonants, or semi-vowels. Allophones and phonemes both exist in the Japanese language's sound phonological systems. According to (Najooan 2019), learners with an Indonesian mother tongue background encounter difficulties learning Japanese sounds. Accent, intonation, lengthy sounds, geminated sounds, and other linguistic features might be difficult for language learners to pick up on. The fundamentals of Japanese phonology are not covered at the high school level.

3.4 Techniques in Learning Japanese

According to a questionnaire finding, 30.6% of the Japanese high school instructors in Riau said their students always learned Japanese through lectures. The utilization of diverse learning approaches will pique students' interest in education. Additionally, only 5–6 teachers out of the total number of Japanese language instructors in Riau who are registered as members of the Riau MGMP have taken Japanese language education and teaching courses domestically and internationally. As previously indicated (Setyo Widodo & Sita Rofiqoh, 2020), teachers need to be able to control learning activities so that students can study in a way that is comfortable for them. To keep up with the trends and impart knowledge to their students, teachers must keep learning.

3.5 Low motivation to speak Japanese

The survey's findings showed that up to 22 teachers (61.1%) agreed that students' interest in speaking Japanese was only moderate. This can be due to a lack of teaching strategies or free time to use Japanese daily. Students must be considered as study subjects in Japanese language instruction (Toliwongi, 2021). One method to increase students' motivation to communicate in Japanese is to use exciting teaching resources like movies or storytelling techniques. (Rosiah & Machawan, 2022) As part of his research, he provided practice materials for Japanese conversation in the form of instructional movies. According to a survey by the University of Tokyo, high school students found it challenging to speak Japanese (Putri, 2021). Lack of experience and confidence may contribute to these problems. So, one method of learning Japanese is by employing storytelling techniques and storytelling

techniques. The absence of infrastructure and support services, in addition to the challenges of learning Japanese, is an issue, according to Japanese high school instructors in Riau.

The issue falls into the 79.72 percent high category. It is common knowledge that having enough infrastructure and facilities considerably facilitates effective teaching and learning. 2020's Herawati, Arafat, and Puspita The equipment and supplies used directly during educational activities—such as tables, seats, instructional materials, etc.—are referred to as facilities and infrastructure. The absence of accessible learning media is the main issue. Letters, vocabulary, grammar, and listening skills are all part of learning Japanese (Firmansyah et al., 2021) Learning media are required to advance these abilities. The limitation of instructional resources can be overcome by fostering more incredible innovation among the Japanese high school instructors in Riau. They not only obsess over literature but can also make their educational materials. By using technology, teachers can produce educational materials like videos. An animated Japanese language study video for one material, family, was created by (Alwinda Fara Zeni Putri, 2020) When students evaluated the film, it was found to be highly successful for educational purposes.

Japanese high school instructors in Riau still have a lot they can do to hone their craft and spark pupils' interest in learning the language. Many methods effective for learning a language is student-centered learning (Eka Nur, 2013; Kusuma et al., 2019; Milenia et al., 2022; Pebriani et al., 2016; Pratama et al., 2022; Saragih, 2019) and strategies (Afdhol et al., 2022; Nandini et al., 2019; Yusuf, 2017). A learning approach called SCL puts students at the center of the curriculum. Giving students a questionnaire after using poster media to learn Japanese is one example of SCL in Japanese language instruction (Hasanah & Karnawati, 2022) Nearly all students reported feeling motivated and content, and their Japanese language abilities had improved. The outcomes of the efficacy tests demonstrated the poster media's suitability as a learning tool.

4 CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research highlights the challenges faced by Japanese high school teachers in Riau, including difficulties with Hiragana proficiency, reliance on traditional teaching methods, and low student motivation. While the study suggests enhancing teacher creativity, updating teaching materials, and employing student-centered strategies to improve outcomes, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, the research may not encompass all potential external factors affecting language acquisition, such as cultural influences or varying educational policies across schools. Future studies should consider these dimensions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers to effective Japanese language education. Additionally, further research could explore the impact of technological integration in classrooms and the role of continuous professional development for teachers in enhancing language teaching efficacy. These areas of investigation could offer valuable insights into more targeted and effective educational strategies.

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