

LEARNING THE KANJI VOCABULARY BASED ON COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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多くの外国語学習のために、漢字には画数・部首・筆順、読み方などのユニークな特性を持っているので、学び、記憶することは難しい。スマラン国立大学の学生に観察とインタビューの結果に基づき、漢字を読み書き方や意味を記憶するのが難しいである。その理由は授業で勉強した漢字が多すぎる。今まで漢字の授業では面白いメディアを使用しているが、漢字の読む練習に中心した。授業時間が足りないので書く練習は自分で自宅ですせる。一方、日本語文に漢字を応用するのはあまりしない。

上記の事実に基づき、著者は協同学習方法で漢字学習に関する研究を行った。本研究では代替の教育漢字を提供し、その結果、学生協同の能力を向上させることができ、漢字語彙（熟語）を習得する能力を向上させることができ、積極的に学習グループに関与していることが期待されている。テストの結果はそのメソッドが熟語習得を向上させることができ、日本語文に漢字を適用する学生の能力を向上させることができることを表す。

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INTRODUCTION

For many foreign learners, learning *Kanji* is difficult. This is due to the unique characteristics of those letters, that have the *bushu* (radical), *kakusuu* (number of strokes), *hitsujun* (order of writing), as well as *yomikata* (how to read). Therefore in *kanji* learning, interesting learning methods and techniques are required, so that the

material can be delivered well and learning goals will be achieved. The educators need to prepare everything in order to design a good, active, innovative, creative, effective, and fun learning.

Preparation is including the selection of the teaching method, techniques, materials, media, and the syllabus. The course method and approach must be adjusted with the

learning objectives and content. In fact, it is possible that one subject matter use more than one method. By using variety of method will create the achievement of the objectives of learning more meaningful.

Problems discovered in the *kanji* course in sophomore student in Japanese department of Semarang State University revealed that students are having difficulty in writing, reading, and memorizing the *kanji*. *Kanji* learning done up to this point is using Basic *Kanji* Book and flashcard media. It already interested the students, but only focused in improving student's ability in reading *kanji*. While the ability to write and applied *kanji* vocabulary in sentences involving students are less in practice because of time limitations.

Based on the above facts, the author tried to do the study analysis on *kanji* learning that employed cooperative learning method. Students are expected to be actively involved to learn *kanji* in groups, improve collaboration among them, can increase the capability of mastering *kanji* vocabulary and apply it in sentences, can increase learning motivation through groupwork because they

learn from peers. At the end it will resolve student's difficulty in learning *kanji*.

The Need of Cooperative Learning in Learning *Kanji*

Kokugo Jiten mentioned 漢字は中国で作られた表意文字。また、それをまねて日本で作った文字(1999: 298). *Kanji* is *hyoomoji* which was originally made in China. The letters are then copied and made in Japan. Therefore there are two kinds of ways of reading *kanji* which are *onyomi* (Chinese reading) and *kunyomi* (Japanese reading). Almost all *kanji* have two ways of *onyomi* and *kunyomi*. One character of *kanji* presented one meaning. All of the objects that exist in the world can be written with *Kanji*, especially *wago* (words of Japan) and *kango* (loan words from Chinese). Therefore, the number of *kanji* are large. The uniqueness of the *kanji* as mentioned above is often troublesome students when studying it. So, it should be taught in stages according to the level of teaching and learning. Kato in Sudjianto and Dahidi (2007: 58) suggested that *kanji* for foreigners are teach in the following composition:

Table 1. Targets of Teaching *Kanji* to Foreigners.

Teaching Level	The number of <i>Kanji</i>	Allocation Time
Basic	400-500	13 weeks
intermediate	700-800	18 weeks
Advanced	300-400	9 weeks
Sum	1400-1700	40 weeks

The course of *Kanji* in Japanese department of Semarang State University

also follows the composition above. The *Kanji* is given to six semester students.

Semester I and II are basic level, semester III and IV are intermediate level, and V and VI semester are advanced level. Each of the semester students has to learn about 150 basic *kanji* taken from the Basic *Kanji* Book. If is combined with examples of *jukugo* vocabulary contained in the textbook, each of the students has to study about 600-700 vocabulary of *kanji*.

With regard to the large number of *kanji* that have to be memorized by the students, it is appropriate if the learner and lecturers seek the best ways to study *kanji*. "Every technique has a preeminence and weakness of each and is still characterized by personal learning. Macromedia flashcard used by teacher in the class are able to attract students who are interested in learning *kanji* but focus their attention on improving student literacy of *kanji* vocabulary. Meanwhile, students lack practicing making sentences because of time limitation.

Such kind of practice activities would probably be felt hard by the students if they are done individually. Because they cannot find out the right away whether the sentences they write are true or false. It is better if it is done in a group. The students can get feedback and learn from peers. Therefore, cooperative learning needs to be employed as a method of learning.

Previous research was on the model cooperative learning conducted by Dr. Lisa Cline (2007) in primary schools in Florida, US. She studied the "Impacts of Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures on Fifth-Graders' Mathematical Achievement". According to her, Rally Coach, Round Table, and Timed Pair Share techniques applied in mathematics learning in the fifth grade at Elementary School could increase their learning achievements. The students

learn math in a more relaxed, can increase the their creativity and initiative, they have the ability and courage to express ideas. Those models made students become more excited and do not get bored while studying mathematics in the classroom.

Based on the above facts, the author tried to share a study of learning *kanji* with cooperative learning methods. This study is expected to provide alternative teaching learning model so that students can be actively involved in learning *kanji* in a group, can improve cooperative skill, and can enhance the capabilities of mastering vocabulary *kanji*.

Concept of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is a term for a set of instructional strategies that are designed to educate the cooperation in small groups to achieve common goals. According to Johnson (1998:26), "in cooperative learning, students work with their peers to accomplish a shared or common goal. The goal is reached through interdependence among all group members rather than working alone. Each member is responsible for the outcome of the shared goal".

In cooperative learning, students make several small groups; each of its members has an academic ability, race or ethnic heterogeneous. Each person in the group should actively cooperate to achieve common goals. This strategy could be an alternative to teach interpersonal skills and helps groups of heterogeneous ethnic races and to learn together. Cooperative learning can help students in academic learning. Techniques contained in the cooperative learning are superior in improving learning outcomes when compared to the study of individual or competitive.

Some experts suggested that cooperative learning is not only superior in helping students grasp difficult concepts but also very helpful in communicating scientifically through discussion, critical thinking, teamwork, build a sense of responsibility, a willingness to help friends groups, problem solving, interacting with friends or professors, social relations, improve self-confidence, as well as develop trust between friends both individually and group.

But not all learning in group is called cooperative learning. There are five important elements of effective cooperative learning (Johnson, 1998:29):

- a. Positive interdependence. Each member of the group interdependent in order to accomplish the task. If each member does not help each other then the groups are unable to reach the destination. Teacher creates an atmosphere that encourages students to feel mutual need or commonly referred to as the positive interdependence. The positive interdependence can be achieved through: interdependence in accomplish goal, interdependence in completed the task, also interdependence towards resource, material, role, and prize.
- b. The Face-to-face interaction. To help the success of group work, interaction is necessary by means of mutual support and help group members. Students face to face each other so they will make a dialogue. Dialogue is not only done with the lecturer but also with peers. Usually the students would be more flexible and easier if they learn with peers.
- c. Individual accountability. Each group member must have accountability towards his work. This is required so as not to interfere with the work of other

groups. The bottom line is that individual accountability is a group assessment based on average mastery of all members individually.

- d. Social skills. Social skills needed to build a strong cooperation between group members. Leadership, decision-making, trust-building, and communication are the skills that could be developed in cooperative learning. Social skills in establishing relationships between students should be taught. Students who are not able to establish interpersonal relationships will earn a rebuke from other students as well as teacher.
- e. Group processing. An assessment of how the activities of the working group. By reviewing behaviour of group, students and teacher have the opportunity to discuss any special needs or problems within the group.

Cooperative Learning Objectives

Among the objectives of cooperative learning activities are as follows.

1. Improving academic learning outcomes. Even though the cooperative learning includes a wide range of social objectives, it also aims to improve the performance of students in academic tasks. Some experts argue that this model excels in helping students understand the difficult concepts.
2. Acceptance of the diversity. The cooperative learning gave opportunities to students who have different background and condition to work mutually dependent upon one another on tasks together.
3. The developing social skills. Student's skills of cooperation and collaboration to

interact with other friends can be developed by applying cooperative learning.

Table 2. Objectives of Syntax in Kanji Learning

Syntax	Teacher Role
1. present goals and set.	To explain the purpose of learning and prepare students ready to learn.
2. present information	Presented information to the student all at verbal.
3. organize students into learning teams	Givean explanation to the students about the formation of team learning and help the group perform an efficient transition.
4. assist team work and study	Help team learn as long as students work on the task.
5. test on the materials	Test the student's knowledge on a variety of learning materials or groups presented the results of his work.
6. provide recognition	Prepare a way to acknowledge the efforts and achievements of individuals and groups.

Cooperative Learning Syntax in Kanji Learning

In cooperative learning, students divide into several groups, working in group, and learn from each other. It can be says that this model done by student, so spirit of working together in group can be built. Learning activity undertaken in the group not only discussed the matter, but also solved the problem, brainstorming, explore or discover new ideas. Group heterogeneity allows them indirectly learning about cultures and issues of group dynamics.

The implementation of Cooperative Learning can be modified according to the opinion of Knight (2009)“Teachers can utilize a variety of learning structures while providing cooperative learning”.

For the needs of learning *kanji*, the author modified Cooperative Learning syntax as follows:

Material explanation

Explanation stage is defined as the process of delivery points of the subject matter

before the students study in groups. The main goal in this stage is the student's understanding towards the subject matter. At this stage the teacher gives a general overview of the subject matter that should be learn by the student. Then, students will deepen such material in group learning. At this stage the lecturer use various methods, brainstorming, question answer, and even the demonstration. In addition, lecturers can also use various media to make learning process more interesting to the student.

Group Learning

After the lecturer explains a general overview about the issues of the subject matter, students divide into several groups according to the amount. The lecturer needs to develop an idea that students will learn more meaningful by working in groups. Within the group, students will try to find and construct new knowledge together with peers. Here, the students required to teach each other.

Furthermore, heterogeneous group that is formed based on the differences of each members, whether gender differences, religious background, socio-economic and ethnic diversity, and academic ability is important. In academic ability, it will be good if the member of the group consists of one person whom has high capability in academic, two people with academic-capable medium and one with academic-capable less.

Heterogeneity in the group preferred because (1) heterogeneous groups provide an opportunity for peer tutoring and support each other. (2) This group will enhance the relationship and interaction between religion, ethnicity, and gender. (3) Group of heterogeneous eases the management of classes because by having one person capable of high academic, lecturer gets one assistant for every three people. Through learning in teams, students are encouraged to share the information and opinions, discuss the problem together, comparing their answers, and correcting things that are less precise.

Then, a lecturer should give tasks and explanation to students. During group working, lecturer should become a facilitator and develop student's nature curious by encourage them to ask peers.

Evaluation

Students need to write down the work. It contribute lecturer in evaluating student's

ability by means of students presentation of the results of their work. Other ways to evaluate student achievement are giving a test or quiz. Tests or quizzes can be done either individually or in groups. Individual test will provide information on the ability of each student, and the test group will provide information on the ability of each group. At the end of the meeting a lecturer and students do a reflection.

Team Recognition

Team recognition is giving reward to the most prominent team assignments. Recognition and rewards are expected to be able to motivate the team to continue the good work and also evoked the other team motivation to be more able to improve their achievement. Lecturer need to reward individual and group learning results.

FINDINGS

The findings of the implementation of the cooperative learning model on *shokyukanji* has been generating findings as follows:

The ability of students in mastering *kanji* vocabulary and apply it in the sentence increased. The average value obtained from students in classroom experiments was 82.095 while the average value obtained from students in classroom control is 66.217. For details on these values can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Result posttest score of experimental class

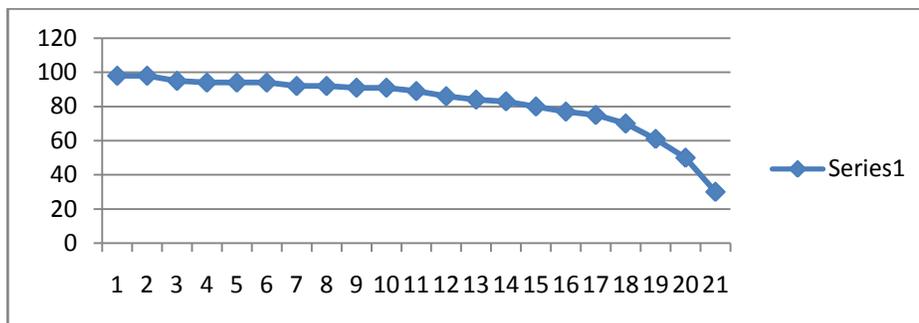
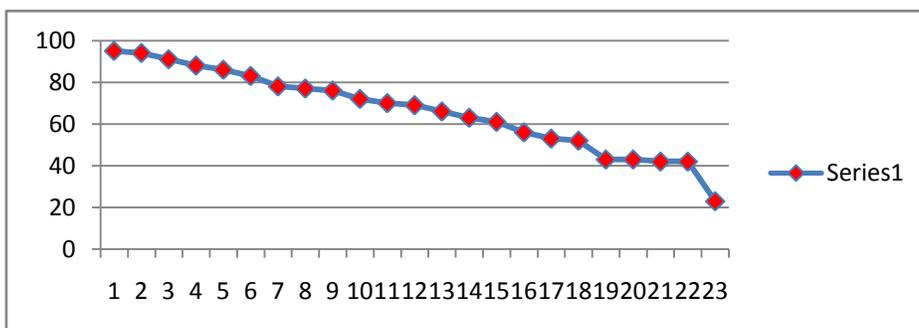


Table 4. Result posttest score of control class



The above table shows that student in experiment class got better score than the control class. The increase is obviously can be seen during the learning process. Students in the classroom experiment looks more anthusias while attendingthe *kanji* class than the students in control class.

Advantages and disadvantages of Cooperative Learning

Advantages

- (1) By employing cooperative learning, each member of the small groups can complement each other and assist in resolving any material received so that each student will not feel burdened

themselves when not able to work on a specific task.

- (2) Due to the heterogeneous, group members have different thoughts so that they can exchange knowledge to complete the answers.
- (3) Cooperative Learning suitable to solve problems that require thinking together.
- (4) Students may happy to learn because working with peer
- (5) Not always depends on the teacher
- (6) Can develop the ability of expressing ideas/knowledge of students
- (7) Empowers students to be more responsible in learning

Disadvantages

In the cooperative learning model, if member of the group cannot cooperate well and be compact, there will be: disagreements due to various differences that can cause not harmonious.

- (1) Sometimes there are more members that dominate the group and some were just silent, so that the delegation of the tasks is not evenly distributed. Lecturers must respond swiftly toward this.
- (2) It takes quite a long time because the member of the group have to do mutual discussion with in order to unite opinions and views that are considered true.
- (3) Since most knowledge obtained from friends, then sometimes it is a little difficult to understand, because their knowledge is limited. Sometimes an error cannot be corrected by peer.
- (5) Takes a long time to achieve success
- (6) Assessment based on groups

CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that cooperative learning should be prioritized in resolving the problem. The

purpose of this learning process is not just an academic purpose or knowledge of the competencies, but also the elements of cooperation in an effort to control the competence, acceptance of diversity and the development of social skills.

This model can be one alternative learning method in the class. By engaging students in active, students are expected to be more responsible for the increased traffic of their learning on their own. The learning process will be more interesting and not boring and so achievement increases.

Cooperative learning teaches how to cooperate in resolving an issue/task in groups through discussion with peers who have different academic ability and different thinking. Through it, then each member of the group will be sharing their knowledge and skills. The weakness of heterogeneity of the group can result the dominance among the group member, so it is possible if there is a very active student and non active student. Advices can be given for those who want to implement such a model of learning. Lecturers should pay attention to all students and encourage students to ask actively during the group work so that the learning objectives are achieved.

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