

# **THE STUDENT'S ATTITUDES TOWARD TEACHING THROUGH MIND MAPPING METHOD TO LEARNING KANJI IN JAPANESE CLASS AT SUANSUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY**

**Thianchai Limjaroen**

*Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Suansunandha Rajabhat University, Dusit, Bangkok*

*E-Mail: stcanst@gmail.com, thianchai.li@ssru.ac.th*

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study aim to investigate students' attitudes towards teaching through Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class at Suansunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), a survey of seventy male and female the first year undergraduate students from faculty of humanities and social sciences japanese major, were selected to participate in the study.

This study was in the context of exploring effective teaching and learning in Japanese class using Mind Mapping method from a student's perspective. The instrument for the study was Mind Mapping method with 15 activities and questionnaire concerning attitude toward learning through Mind Mapping method on knowledge, feeling and trend of behavior expression. Data were analyzed and presented by mean, average and standard deviation.

The results of the study shows a positive attitude toward use of Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI and students gained attitude toward learning through Mind Mapping method on knowledge, feeling, and trend of behavior expression, their attitude as a whole was at a good level after learning KANJI in Japanese class.

Keywords- kanji, Japanese class, students' attitudes, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Students

## **INTRODUCTION**

Suansunandha Rajabhat University has a variety of teaching and learning. Especially teaching and learning Japanese language. Japanese language was popularity for students. From a pedagogical point of view, the number of students learning Japanese as a foreign language (hereafter JFL learners) has increased considerably during the past few years (Japan Foundation 2000). In this years have 70 people who studies in Japanese major at Suansunandha Rajabhat University and studies about basic Japanese language, grammar, vocabulary of Japanese language and Japanese Kanji class. Japanese alphabets was 4 types, have Romanji, Hirakana, Katakana, and Kanji. Romanji was Roman alphabets, Hirakana and Katakana was traditional Japanese alphabets and Kanji was Chinese characters, Chinese alphabet was applied by japan and used in name Kanji. Students studied hard if they can't memory 4 types Japanese alphabet. Especially students must learn Japanese Kanji because. Japanese Kanji can help students to memory Japanese vocabulary easy and reading and writing Japanese language of students will be effective well. so this is important point for learning Japanese language especially learning Japanese Kanji in Japanese Kanji class.

The learning of kanji or Chinese characters is considered to be one of the most challenging problems faced by learners of Japanese as a second/foreign language (hereafter JFL/JSL learners). The typological differences between kanji and alphabets are assumed to be responsible for this difficulty (Bourke, 1996; Flaherty, 1993; Toyoda, 1998; Watanabe & Toyoda, 1994). Thai students can't memories Japanese Kanji, because it's difficulty for memory and writing Japanese Kanji or Chinese characters. These are the challenge for teachers to find kanji learning method or learning strategies. Haththotuwa Gamage (2003) has opinion about learning Japanese

Kanji. Psycholinguistic studies on word recognition on both alphabets and Chinese characters have given rise to conflicting theories on how Chinese characters are processed in the mental lexicon, language learning strategies are specific behavior or techniques that students use to improve their language learning (Oxford 1990, 1993; O'Malley and Chamot 1990; Rubin 1981). Learning styles on the hand, are defined as more general behavior in language learning (Oxford 1994). All language learners, whether they are skilled learners or not, tend to use some kind of language learning strategy in order to enhance language skills. At the early stages in learner-strategy research, strategies used by 'good learners' were identified in order to enhance the learner capabilities of 'poor learners' (Chamot and Kupper 1989; Naiman et al. 1978; Rubin 1981; Stern 1975; Wenden and Rubin 1987; Haththotuwa Gamage 2003).

The traditional education delivery system has been a classroom setting with a teacher giving a vocabulary, Japanese Kanji, how to write Kanji alphabets and students listening and writing in notes. Interaction between the teacher and student has been viewed as an essential learning element within this arrangement. However, innovations in education have a variety of learning method or learning strategies. In this study was in the context of exploring effective teaching and learning in Japanese Kanji class used Mind Mapping method for teaching Japanese kanji. Mind mapping was firstly developed by Tony Buzan, a mathematician, psychologist and brain researcher, as a special technique for taking notes as briefly as possible whilst being interesting to the eye as possible. Since then, mind mapping turned out to be usable in many different ways other than just simple note taking. Mind maps have, among other things, been used in education, the advantages of Mind maps has unique appearance and a strong visual appeal. Thus information may be memorized and recalled faster, the learning process is speeded up and information becomes long living. (Brinkmann, 2003).

In this study, educator used Mind Mapping method taught Japanese Kanji with The first year students undergraduate students in Japanese Kanji class. The purpose of this study aim to investigate students' attitudes towards teaching through Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class at Suansunanta Rajabhat University (SSRU), a survey of seventy male and female the first year undergraduate students from faculty of humanities and social sciences japanese major. The focus of this study is on students' attitudes towards was taught Japanese Kanji by used Mind Mapping.

## LITERATURE & THEORY

Many researches have been done on about effective teaching methods, effective learning, Students Attitude toward Teaching, educator has focused on and studied through many researches for investigated students' attitudes.

Toyoda (1998) indicates that it is during the intermediate stages that most learners from alphabetic backgrounds lose their interest and motivation for studying kanji, although they were interested during the initial stages. This may be due to several reasons. Firstly, the gradual increase of new kanji to be learnt and retaining the already learnt kanji seem to be an endless memory-load on the part of the learner at this stage. Secondly, it is at the intermediate stages that the learners are exposed to authentic material other than kanji textbooks, and frustration builds up when learners realize they are still unable to read an authentic text such as a newspaper. Haththotuwa Gamage (2003). The strategies used most often are the most helpful. Repeated writing was reported as the most used strategy type although alphabetic background learners reported using repeated writing strategies significantly more often than character background learners. The importance of strategy training and explicit instruction of fundamental differences between character and alphabetic background learners of Japanese is discussed in relation to teaching strategies. Once of teaching methods was Mind Map can improved student's ability, knowledge, Memory in Japanese Kanji class. The method of mind mapping takes into account that the two halves of the human brain are performing different tasks. While the left side is mainly responsible for logic, words, arithmetic, linearity, sequences, analysis, lists, the right side of the brain mainly performs tasks like multidimensionality, imagination, emotion, colour, rhythm, shapes, geometry,

synthesis. Mind mapping uses both sides of the brain (Buzan, 1976), letting them work together and thus increases productivity and memory retention. This is accomplished by representing logical structures using an artistic spatial image that the individual creates. Thus mind mapping connects imagination with structure and pictures with logic (Svantesson, 1992; Beyer, 1996; Brinkmann, 2003). Akinoglu and Orhan (2007) studied the effects of note taking during their science courses through the technique of mind mapping by primary education students, on their attitudes, academic achievement and concept learning. It was determined that there was a significant positive difference in students' concept learning, overcoming misconceptions, academic achievement and attitudes towards science courses by taking notes through the mind-mapping method. It can be summarized that Mind Mapping improves their Japanese Kanji learning and memory.

## RELATED WORKS

Alobiedat (2010) investigated students' attitudes towards use of platform as learning resources at University of Granada (UGr), a survey of two hundred fifty-eight male and female undergraduate students from faculty of education, were randomly selected to participate in the study. The results of the study show a positive attitude toward use of platform as learning resources and there was a significant difference, due to the gender, owning a personal computer (PC), and having access to the internet, and it was in favor of male students, and student who own a pc, and student whom do have access to the internet respectively.

Haththotuwa Gamage (2003) studied and investigates three important issues in kanji learning strategies; namely, strategy use, effectiveness of strategy and orthographic background. A questionnaire on kanji learning strategy use and perceived effectiveness was administered to 116 beginner level, undergraduate students of Japanese from alphabetic and character backgrounds in Australia. Both descriptive and statistical analyses of the questionnaire responses revealed that the strategies used most often are the most helpful. Repeated writing was reported as the most used strategy type although alphabetic background learners reported using repeated writing strategies significantly more often than character background learners. The importance of strategy training and explicit instruction of fundamental differences between character and alphabetic background learners of Japanese is discussed in relation to teaching strategies.

Brinkmann (2003) used mind maps and concept maps, are presented. Both are means to show ideas and concepts connected with a topic. Their suitability as a pedagogical tool for mathematics education is considered and the possible applications of mind mapping and concept mapping in mathematics education together with their advantages and limits are discussed. It turns out that both, mind mapping and concept mapping, may be efficient tools to improve mathematics achievement.

## METHODS

### 1. Sample of Study

The study was conducted at faculty of humanities and social sciences Japanese major at Suansunandha Rajabhat University. A random sample of undergraduate male and female students (N=70), the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which included items to measure students' attitude toward teaching through Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class.

### 2. Development of Instrument

A 5-point Likert type scale with strongly agree; agree; undecided; disagree; and strongly disagree for the items of the questionnaire, was developed to measure students' attitude toward teaching through Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class. The questionnaire consisted of two parts the first part consist of the demographic information, the second part consist fifty items. To verify the reliability of the questionnaire the researchers distributed questionnaire on sample of forty students out of the original sample.

The reliability of the scale was 0.83, and to verify the validity of the questionnaire in terms of objectivity, language, and the number of items.

### **3. DATA ANALYSIS**

Each response was assigned a score according to the 5-point Likert scale, where 5 indicates "I use this approach very often" or "This is very helpful" and 1 indicates "I never use this approach" or "This is not a helpful approach". A response of 3 was regarded as a neutral response. The results were recorded for each statement by taking the mean response. Response patterns were noted down for possible relationships. A statistical analysis was employed for significant differences within character and alphabetic background learners. (Haththotuwa Gamage ,2003)

## **RESULTS**

To answer the question, what is the attitude of Suansunandha Rajabhat University students' towards use Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class? To answer the question, the means, and standard deviations, for the respondents of the study samples was computed, the mean was 4.04 and std. deviation was 0.44, which this means a positive attitude from the students toward use of Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class. From above, the result indicate that use of Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI, will alleviate students learning in all of its form aspects, like help student to clarify the understanding, memorized Japanese Kanji, also help student enhanced their interaction between student each other and teacher, the use Mind Mapping also might help student organize their study time about the subject content, encouraged students to know more about the subject. Balim has found out that all groups' understanding of concepts was equivalent. Significantly, students in the experimental group 2 reported positive opinions, stating that learning through concept maps was useful and engaging. (Balim,2013) and Alobiedat studied "The Student's Attitude toward Use Platform as Learning Resources at University of Granada" has shown a positive attitude toward use of platform as learning resources and there was a significance difference, due to the gender, owning a personal computer (PC), and having access to the internet, and it was in favor of male students, and student who own a pc, and student whom do have access to the internet respectively. In study for Haththotuwa Gamage (2003) studied investigates three important issues in kanji learning strategies; namely, strategy use, effectiveness of strategy and orthographic background, found the most used strategy type although alphabetic background learners reported using repeated writing strategies significantly more often than character background learners. The importance of strategy training and explicit instruction of fundamental differences between character and alphabetic background learners of Japanese is discussed in relation to teaching strategies. so in the study can shows the attitude of Suansunandha Rajabhat University students' towards use Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class have a positive attitude and students gained attitude toward learning through Mind Mapping method on knowledge, feeling, and trend of behavior expression, their attitude as a whole was at a good level after learning KANJI in Japanese class.

## **CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK**

In conclusion, from the result analysis of the data gained from samples, the attitude of Suansunandha Rajabhat University students' towards use Mind Mapping method to learning KANJI in Japanese class have a positive attitude and student's memory of Japanese vocabulary, Japanese KANJI, knowledge has increased. Because, in classroom, use of Mind Mapping method to learning Japanese KANJI, students can be imagine or draw Mind Mapping, memorized Japanese KANJI by drawing Mind Map and imagination. Students have a positive attitude, feeling happy and fun towards use method to learning. From observation, all of students have fun in learning Japanese KANJI, want to learning more than example, want to learning Japanese grammar by use of another method. From interview some students. They sad "this method is wonderful, same drawing games, very funny and happy for learning Japanese KANJI" and from the result analysis of the data from

students can concluded use of Mind Mapping method in Japanese KANJI class can increase Japanese KANJI learning, Japanese KANJI memory and knowledge about Japanese.

The results can be explained that this Mind Mapping not only gave students a good attitude towards learning. This Mind Mapping may also be able to help develop the students memorize kanji. Seen from the end of the lesson, students did exercises. Next time in the future work. This technique will be developed and conducted research in the classroom.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the financial support of the Suansunandha Rajabhat University. I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this and other related projects. Nobody has been more important to me in the pursuit of this project than the members of my family. I would like to thank my parents, whose love and guidance are with me in whatever I pursue. They are the ultimate role models.

### REFERENCES

- Ahmad Alobiedat. (2010). The Student's Attitude toward Use Platform as Learning Resources at University of Granada. *Review of European Studies* Vol. 2, No. 2; December. Faculty of Education, Tafila Technical University.
- Ausubel David P.; Joseph Novak; Helen Hanesian. (1980). *Psychologie des Unterrichts*. Weinheim und Basel: Beltz Verlag.
- Bourke, B. (1996). Maximising efficiency in the kanji learning task. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Queensland.
- Brinkmann. (2003). Graphical Knowledge Display – Mind Mapping and Concept Mapping as Efficient Tools in Mathematics Education. *Mathematics Education Review*, No 16, April.
- Buzan, Tony. (1976). *Use Both Sides of Your Brain*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.
- Haththotuwa Gamage, G. (2003), Perceptions of kanji learning strategies: Do they differ among Chinese character and alphabetic background learners. Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts. The University of Queensland.
- Flaherty, M. (1993). Are Japanese kanji processed like pictures? *Psychologia*, 36 (3), 144-150.
- Japan Foundation (2000). Present condition of overseas Japaneselanguage education: Survey report on Japanese-language education abroad 1998: A summary. Urawa, Tokyo: Japanese Language Institute: The Japan Foundation.
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House Publishers.
- Oxford, R. L. (1993). Research on second language learning strategies. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 13, 175-187.
- Premvadee Na Nakornpanom. (2016). Students' Attitudes towards Katakana Loanwords and their Learning Strategies, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.
- Svantesson, Ingemar. 1992). *Mind Mapping und Gedächtnistraining*. Bremen: GABAL.
- Toyoda, E. (1995). Kanji gakushuu ni taisuru gakushuusha no ishiki [Learners' feeling toward kanji study]. *Nihongo Kyooiku [Journal of Japanese Language Teaching]*, 85, 101-113.
- Toyoda, E. (1998). Teaching kanji by focusing on learners' development of graphemic awareness. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21(15), 155-168.

Watanabe, H., & Toyoda, E. (1993). Kanji no jikei chikaku, ninchi, tanki kioku ni kansuru jisshooteki kenkyuu  
1

[An emperical 20 study on perception, recognition and short term memory of kanji]. Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku Ryugakusei Nihongo Kyoouiku Sentaa Ronshuu [Bulletin of Japanese Language: Centre for International Students, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies], 20, 63-75.