# Research the Benefits of Modern Learning Methods to Improve Japanese Language Learning Results for University Students: A Case of Digital Games and Movies

**Huynh Tan Hoi**

Faculty of Japanese, FPT University

*Abstract* - The article analyzes the influence of video games and movies on young people and on foreign language education in order to partially remove the negative stereotypes of society about these two types of entertainment. The article uses quantitative and qualitative methods through surveying and analyzing the current situation of students in the process of learning Japanese with the aim of pointing out the inadequacies and limitations in their Japanese language learning. The results show that video games and movies are not only entertainment, but can also be applied to foreign language learning. After orienting the reader to have a different view of them, the next step is to analyze the role of these two forms of entertainment in improving different foreign language skills such as listening, speaking, reading comprehension skills and vocabulary, taking Japanese as a typical example. From there, a number of suggestions on methods of effective application of video games and movies to Japanese language learning are proposed, in order to partially improve students' Japanese learning process. These methods also contribute to arouse and maintain students' interest in long-term foreign language learning.

*Keywords* - Digital games, Japanese, Learning, Students.

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of Vietnam's dynamic integration with many countries around the world, the demand for foreign languages is increasing, especially among young people. Along with the great development of science and technology, in order to meet different learners, foreign language learning is no longer limited to traditional learning methods that have been developed into other methods (Kubrak, 2020).

The actual situation shows that learning Japanese in Vietnam is currently on the trend of popularity no less than English. Besides those who choose to learn the Japanese language because they have realized the great demand from the job market, there are also many people who choose to learn this language due to the influence of Japanese culture (Alemi & Tavakoli, 2016). Besides, movies and video games play an important role in the spiritual life of young people. The extremely rapid spread of these two types of entertainment has attracted the attention of many researchers around the world. In the past few years, there have been a number of studies that have hypothesized the application of video games and movies in foreign language learning (Mart, 2013). These studies have shown that the benefits of movies and video games are not limited to entertainment but can also be applied to foreign language learning, however very little empirical research has been done on this topic. That is, many documents only show that many people feel that their language ability is improved in the process of using these two types of entertainment through the survey (Shi & Chen, 2015). However, very few documents can explain how video games or movies can affect the language ability of users (Prasad, 2013).

Therefore, this article was made with the question of how to bring other benefits and applications of video games and movies, in order to promote students' participation in learning foreign languages in general, spoken Japanese in a more positive way.

## RESEARCH HISTORY

In the article "Computer Games and Language Learning", in addition to providing an overview of the potential of game technology for educational purposes, Miyashita et al., (2018) also raises the theory and practical challenges in language learning bsed on video games in particular and computer games in general. Also in 2008, Anderson et al identified various elements of video games that could contribute to the success of lessons using video games as instructional materials (Albiladi et al., 2018). Most of all, however, Anderson et al. published the article as the result of an experimental study. Through the experiment on English listening ability of foreign language learners in Taiwan, the article came to the conclusion that the participants felt that they had completely improved their English listening ability and that they felt able to listen to English through a course using video games (Kubrak, 2020).

Besides, also through empirical research, Miyashita et al., (2018).have proved that it is not only possible to learn a foreign language through movies in that language, but also by watching movies in the language they are learning. It also helps to motivate learners. Not only that, the application of Japanese cartoons and films in teaching Japanese in college-university environments is also effective as follows: attracting students' attention, improving students' understanding about foreign culture (Dong, 2017).

In an article titled "Principles of Language learning and the Role of Teacher", TESOL International Association (2017) summarized the four foreign language learning criteria contained in the theory of "Language perception" of a famous linguist. Noam Chomsky. These are the criteria that are said to be that if a foreign language learner understands them well, they can achieve the highest efficiency in their foreign language learning. This is also the basis for forming the Communicative-Language Teaching (CLT) method of foreign language learning, which is now considered the future of foreign language education. In the process of research and control, it has been found that video games and movies can fully meet these four criteria. Here is the scientific research that we use to prove that video games and movies have an effect on students' foreign language skills when using them (Goctu, (2017).

The studies mentioned above have basically provided content about the role, audience, direction of impact, etc. from video games and movies to foreign language education in general, and Japanese language education in particular. However, these studies have not specifically explained the methods of learning and teaching foreign languages by video games and movies, the current state of students' thoughts on this issue, etc. Therefore, in this essay, we will summarize the views of current students about learning Japanese and about the role of video games and movies in educational activities (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). At the same time, some suggestions are made for the application of video games in learning and teaching Japanese. We do not think that the content in this essay is complete, but we hope that in the future, those interested in this research will continue to develop it more fully and completely (Shi & Chen, 2015).

## RESEARCH SCOPE

The scope of this study is Japanese video games and movies in Japanese Language Education for students, especially students who wish to experience different forms of learning. Because students of high school age and below can hardly be autonomous in the use of recreational facilities, in accordance with the research objectives, the article takes the main object of the research as students who are currently studying Japanese. Although using Japanese as the focus of the research, the article also wants to spread the influence, that is, it is not limited to Japanese but any language can apply the learning method. In addition, this essay includes a desire to popularize the positive side of video games. The essay will be completed in 14 weeks.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In parallel with the research and analysis of information related to this topic of previous works such as books, scientific journals, educational journals, the research method is also carrying out sociological investigation. , and then use quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the information and data collected. The survey collected data from 92 students studying Japanese. In addition to the survey, supporting tools such as Gmail, Facebook, Zalo, etc. have also been used to obtain the most appropriate and accurate survey results. The information after analysis will be reviewed and added to the essay.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Noels et al (2019), for some people, language learning is both an exciting adventure into a fascinating field and a vehicle for discovering new cultures. But for some others, it is quite tasteless and boring, but everyone will persevere with the learning process because it will help them achieve their desired goals. However, the question is how to make learners feel that the nature of language learning is interesting, so that learners will feel more active and more willing to learn voluntarily. Therefore, with the aim of proposing learning methods through video games and movies to create excitement and motivation for language learners, the article surveyed 92 students who are learning Japanese, through the method of learning Japanese, quantitative and qualitative research methods are used to demonstrate the feasibility and interest of current students for this method.

TABLE 1

STUDENTS' VIEWS ON LEARNING JAPANESE

| Opinion content | Level of consent | | | | | Total replies | Total score | Average score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| 1. Always feel excited when listening to lectures at school | 3 | 11 | 29 | 38 | 11 | 92 | 319 | 0.16 |
| 2. I find learning Japanese through books interesting | 2 | 24 | 36 | 24 | 6 | 92 | 284 | 0.14 |
| 3. Feeling motivated while studying Japanese at home | 6 | 12 | 37 | 29 | 8 | 92 | 297 | 0.15 |
| 4. Feel like remembering most of the knowledge learned in school | 1 | 16 | 33 | 33 | 9 | 92 | 309 | 0.15 |
| 5. I want to improve my Japanese ability | 1 | 0 | 16 | 30 | 45 | 92 | 394 | 0.20 |
| 6. Desire to experience different interesting learning methods | 2 | 0 | 8 | 37 | 44 | 92 | 394 | 0.20 |
| Total | | | | | | | 1997 | 1.00 |

Applying a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1 point), "disagree" (2 points), "strongly" (3 points), "agree" (4 points) to "strongly agree" ideas" (5 points), students were asked to express their views on current Japanese language learning (Table 1). For the opinion "Always feel excited when listening to lectures in school", more than 50% of people "agree" and "strongly agree". In fact, most teachers no longer teach in a stereotypical and boring way, but often combine with modern teaching methods to make the class more exciting, so that they can attract students to learn in a more positive way. However, the number of people expressing the attitude of "strongly disagree" and "disagree" accounted for 15%. Moreover, up to 30% of people expressed a neutral attitude when choosing "normal", thereby showing that there are still many students who are not really excited when participating in the class. So why did that happen?

This is even more evident in the survey item No. 1 with the opinion "I find learning through books interesting". With this opinion, about 20% of students chose "strongly disagree" and "disagree", and nearly 40% of students did not express their opinion on this issue. This shows that learning through books has not satisfied many students although this is still the most popular way of learning today. It is undeniable that the textbook is the place where the most basic knowledge is stored. However, with only books, it will be difficult for learners to visualize specific situations when applying the learned vocabulary and grammar into practice. In addition, textbooks cannot show learners the correct pronunciation and intonation when communicating with native speakers. Therefore, if only learning through textbooks, learners are not only stereotyped and inflexible when communicating, but can also apply the wrong cases, thereby making learners become less confident when communicating. . On the other hand, learning languages on textbooks also makes learners feel bored because they almost contain too many words. Some books can be improved by inserting more attractive illustrations and presentations. However, in general, it is just a static image, which can only improve the excitement temporarily, not have a long-term effect. Thereby, the survey also shows that most of the students (more than 90%) are "desire to experience different interesting learning methods". Therefore, the article has proposed a method of learning Japanese through movies and video games to improve the above problem.

Through the above survey, it can also be seen that almost the majority of students studying Japanese are "Wishing to improve their Japanese language ability" (about 80%). And to be able to quickly improve the level, studying in school is not enough, any subject requires learners to practice at home, especially with foreign languages, which requires a long time and perseverance. Although the desire is yes, according to the survey, about 20% of students "strongly disagree" and "disagree", along with 40% of students expressed neutral with the idea "Feel motivated to learn Japanese at home", proving that there are still quite a few people who are not very interested in self-study. But according to the survey shown in the figure below about the time students study at home, the time students spend on self-study is quite a lot (Figure 1).
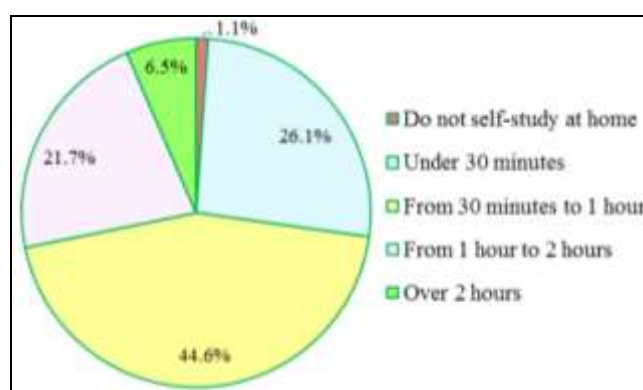


FIGURE 1

TIME SPENT BY STUDENTS STUDYING JAPANESE AT HOME

Although the majority of students focus on self-study because they are aware of the importance of this, this is reflected in the percentage of students who do not spend time studying at home at all, which is less than 2%. However, the total amount of time that students spend on self-study is very little. More than 40% of all students spend only about 30 minutes to an hour of free time at home for self-study. Meanwhile, foreign language education organizations around the world recommend that students spend at least one to two hours a day to review or practice their foreign language skills. And this number accounts for less than 30% of the total number of students (21.7% and 6.5 percent respectively). There are many causes for this problem (Mart, 2013). For example, they feel that it is enough to study in school and complete the assigned homework.

To make learners more interested in learning, one of the main solutions is to incorporate their interests outside of school into learning. And it is easy to see that movies and video games are two of the hobbies that young people are most interested in today. If these two types of entertainment can be turned into learning tools, it will attract students' attention and create a happy learning atmosphere. The article has raised a number of survey questions to determine students' interest in these two types of entertainment.
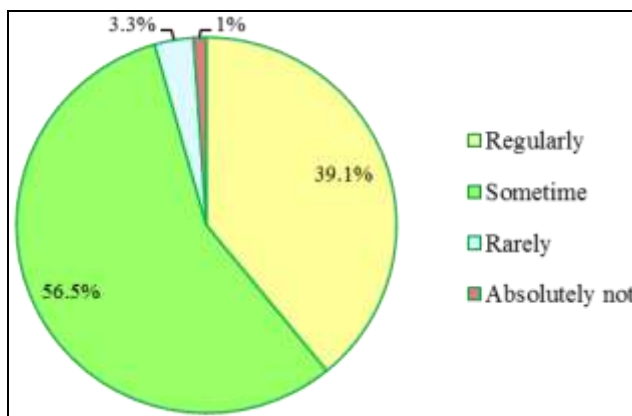


FIGURE 2

FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS WATCHING MOVIES IN JAPANESE

Figure 2 shows that about 39.1% of students regularly interact with Japanese movies, and up to 56.5% sometimes watch them. The above figure shows that the number of Japanese learners who watch Japanese movies is very large. For Japanese learners, a lot of people are initially exposed to the language because of their interest in anime and Japanese culture. On the other hand, after deciding to learn a foreign language, learners will also have a desire to access many things related to that foreign language. And the best approach is to regularly learn about that country's popular culture through entertainment media such as movies, stories, music, etc. According to a 2018 Japan Foundation survey, the reason that people Japanese language learners around the world enrolling in Japanese classes are the most popular "interested in anime, manga, Jpop, fashion, etc.", accounting for 66% of the total answers. In addition, the article also surveyed students about their purpose when choosing to learn Japanese language.
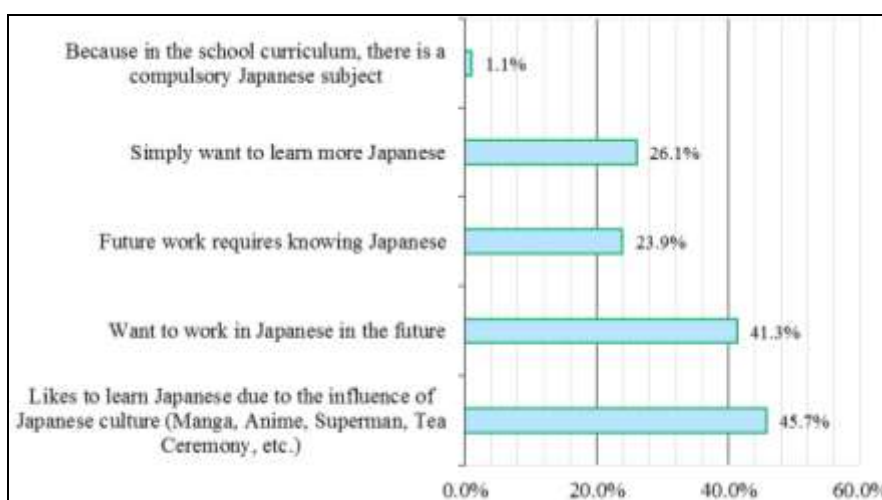


FIGURE 3

STUDENTS' PURPOSE OF LEARNING JAPANESE

According to figure 3, up to 42 students (about 45%) choose to study Japanese due to the influence of Japanese culture. Other factors such as "Want to work in Japanese in the future" or "Future job requires Japanese language" all received less votes. Thereby it can also be seen that, although many people learn Japanese because they are interested in their career future, the number of people learning Japanese is even larger. Therefore, if well exploited in terms of interests in learning, it can increase the learners' feeling of wanting to acquire a new language.

Not only movies, but also video games are also very interested by young people. When asked "Do you often play video games in a foreign language?" 28.3% of students answered "often", and 34.8% "sometimes" played. Thereby, it shows that the percentage of students using video games is also very high.

In order to better confirm the students' views if applying this method to learning, the article also surveyed the students about their feelings when using these two types of entertainment (Table 2).

TABLE 2

STUDENTS' FEELINGS WHEN PLAYING VIDEO GAMES OR WATCHING MOVIES IN JAPANESE

| Opinion content | Level of consent | | | | | Total replies | Total score | Average score |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | |
| 1. Get excited when watching movies or playing video games | 1 | 2 | 13 | 41 | 35 | 92 | 383 | 0.19 |
| 2. Can improve pronunciation, listening comprehension and vocabulary skills while watching movies | 1 | 1 | 14 | 47 | 29 | 92 | 378 | 0.19 |
| 3. Reading comprehension skills and vocabulary can be improved somewhat when playing video games | 1 | 7 | 19 | 44 | 21 | 92 | 353 | 0.18 |
| 4. Can use in real life what has been encountered when playing video games and when watching movies | 2 | 13 | 24 | 34 | 19 | 92 | 331 | 0.17 |
| 5. Have a desire to experience video games as a method of self-study at home | 6 | 12 | 23 | 26 | 25 | 92 | 328 | 0.16 |
| 6. Think that learning Japanese through video games or movies can completely replace learning by books | 34 | 24 | 14 | 14 | 6 | 92 | 210 | 0.11 |
| Total | | | | | | | 1983 | 1.00 |

As we have seen, a majority of students are having difficulty in learning Japanese at school. There are many different reasons, but the main reason is maintaining motivation to study. Since learning a foreign language is a long process, moreover Japanese is one of the most difficult languages in the world. Therefore, for students who are bored with learning Japanese, but still have the desire to stick with it, these students can try to combine the two elements of learning and entertainment through Steps to apply video games and movies in learning Japanese as the article mentioned above. They can rekindle the desire to learn the language, but they can also learn a lot of new things that textbooks can't provide (Alemi & Tavakoli, 2016).

Although the application of video games to business, marketing, etc. is increasingly popular, its use for educational purposes is still an emerging trend and is still scarce (Nguyen et al., 2020). Although there is great potential for improving students' language proficiency, this method has not been widely applied in the classroom because it takes a lot of time and money to design appropriate video games with the subject to be taught. In addition, teachers' access to science, technology and advanced knowledge is limited due to the age and generation gap (Ngo, 2019). Therefore, at present, video games have not been fully applied for education in schools, but should only be considered as a method of self-study at home (Bottomley, 2018).

The games that young people are interested in today often converge on many factors such as: beautiful images, attractive content, ability to communicate and coordinate teammates, etc. Attitudes of today's youth towards electronic games death is the opposite of the attitude most of them have towards school, yet it is what every teacher wants his students to have: interest, competition, cooperation, active seeking of information and solution (Prensky, 2003). In addition, one striking feature that seems to be

significantly related to education is that players often invest a significant amount of time and effort in completing tasks that are often very difficult and time-consuming (Arnseth, 2006). Therefore, for students majoring in the Japanese language and passionate about video games, let's take advantage of them not only for entertainment purposes but also to practice your foreign language skills after school (Albiladi et al., 2018).

Currently, there are hundreds of thousands of video games in many different genres, and finding the right game for the process of playing and learning is also a thing to keep in mind. The most important thing is that you have to feel happy when using them, so that students can choose any game that they like and of course they must be in Japanese language format. Currently, there are many video games that support many different languages such as English, Japanese, Chinese, etc. and even some games also support Vietnamese (Figure 15). Users can freely switch between the languages they want and this will greatly assist in checking the words and sentences in the game to see if we have understood it correctly or not (Kubrak, 2020).

In addition, teachers will also guide students on how to use and pronounce those words or expressions. However, that alone is not enough to help learners visualize the correct pronunciation of the native language or the context in which the sentence is used. Even just a learner saying the wrong intonation can make that sentence have a different meaning than what the learner wants to express (Yamashita, 2020). Therefore, movies can help learners better visualize pronunciation as well as state and intonation when characters use in specific expressions.

Cùng với sự phát triển của khoa học công nghệ, việc ứng dụng các phương tiện nghe nhìn vào Along with the development of science and technology, the application of audio-visual media in teaching is becoming more and more popular, and teaching through movies is also gradually becoming a method chosen by many teachers. With rich and vivid content, movies not only arouse students' interest in learning but also improve learning efficiency, making the classroom atmosphere lively (Li et al., 2015). Usually, classroom learning focuses on theory, but for sociologists, the exact acquisition of each language element is not important, it is more important than communication skills in society (Ang et al., 2008). If the limitation of the traditional learning method is that the dialogues and words are often used unnaturally and not close to reality, then movies are one of the methods that can overcome that limitation. From television and video, students can grasp how a language is actually used in real-life situations and gain valuable cultural awareness of the language spoken.

The application of movies in language teaching is a very common thing, but not all footage can be selected for teaching. Because the choice of teaching materials determines the quality of teaching effectiveness, for teachers and lecturers who want to use movies in their teaching, Li et al (2015) have proposed some issues to keep in mind when choosing movies

The first is that there should be a lot of dialogue in the movie. Nowadays, there are many movies that focus only on action, and the setting leads to less dialogue. However, what teachers need is a movie with clear pronunciation, good content that can help students learn pronunciation, words, intonation and expressions. Therefore, a suitable movie is one that is more dialogue-oriented, slow-paced with simple content but still interesting enough to attract students (Albiladi et al., 2018).

The second thing is to choose movies with healthy content. Selected films should have positive content, reflecting friendship, intimacy, optimism, courage, etc., but not horror and violent films because they will adversely affect students' psychology (Mart, 2013).

Third, equally important thing in choosing film as a teaching material is the length and difficulty of the film. Because each class period in school is limited, the length of the film needs to be taken into account. Teaching effectiveness will be affected if the movie speed is too fast or the movie is too long leading to boredom. At the same time, the difficulty of the conversation will also affect the speaking process. Therefore, it is necessary to consider choosing films with appropriate difficulty for each student of different levels (Goctu, (2017)). For example, for those who are just starting to learn Japanese, they can choose from simple cartoons like Doraemon, or animated Japanese folktales. Later, when the students' level is improved, the instructor can choose movies with fast-paced content and more complex plots. And when choosing movies, you should not choose movies that are too easy, but should come with a certain challenge so that students can maintain their interest in discovering new knowledge (Miyashita et al., 2018).

After watching the movie, the teacher should have some reinforcement exercises, because watching the movie is not the end goal. Exercises can be to fill in the blanks, answer questions related to the movie, or summarize the plot of the movie. This makes learners more focused on learning purposes during the movie, avoiding the case of inattention. Listening activity is often done in schools today, where learners are asked to listen to a problem and ask a simple question about the content of that problem (Zarzycki, 2015). This often makes learners feel depressed and pressured, but in contrast to it, movies with entertainment elements will make learners feel more comfortable when interacting with teachers.

Teachers can create "information searches". Before watching the movie, the teacher will assign a small exercise, such as synthesizing information about any character in the movie, what students will do is try to hear the name, age, occupation, etc. of the movie that character and answered after watching the movie. This will make it easier for students to identify the purpose and focus on listening to the plot of the movie. It will also be more beneficial than the teacher just showing a movie without any hint, because the information contained throughout the movie is so large that it will make the students feel overwhelmed (Shi & Chen, 2015).

Not only watching movies, teachers can organize a number of small competitions related to movies, such as a character dubbing contest. Students are free to choose a favorite Japanese movie, then they will dub a part of the movie themselves. Through the contest, students can check their own pronunciation, as well as know how to use more appropriate intonation when communicating (Albiladi et al., 2018).

In short, using movies for learning Japanese in school or class is an interesting and effective method. Teachers should alternate traditional lessons with movie classes to increase students' interest, thereby making learning more active and easier.

## CONCLUSION

Video games and movies are not limited to words, numbers and illustrations like books, but a whole system consisting of actual letters, numbers, images and sounds. Scientific evidences in the essay have proved that these two types of entertainment can help users improve different foreign language skills such as increasing vocabulary, improving         listening-comprehension, reading-comprehension and listening and speaking reflexes. Despite its immense potential, students should also realize that this method cannot be used as a complete substitute for learning through books. Unlike textbooks, the information contained in video games and movies does not provide language knowledge along a path from basic to advanced level. Therefore, if only learning by this method, students cannot build a solid foundation of language knowledge. Students and teachers need to develop a suitable roadmap to be able to effectively use this learning method. For teachers to use movies as teaching materials, it is necessary to prepare carefully in terms of the content of movies: both suitable for social standards and suitable for students' level. Besides, teachers also need to consider whether students are interested in the film they give. If the film is not interesting or too boring, students may attend the class with a reluctant attitude, not in the spirit of absorbing the content of knowledge.

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