

A project for cultural exchange of Japanese

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Abstract: The number of foreign workers in Japan has been increasing over recent years. One of the biggest reasons for the increase in foreign workers is that the Japanese technical intern training program (TITP) has started. Technical intern trainees are expected to improve industry in their country. I wanted to know how they studied Japanese before they came to Japan. I got an opportunity to observe some Japanese classes in Cambodia, where Cambodian people hoping to work in Japan are studying. Additionally, I taught Japanese language, Japanese culture and business manners. The number of people who want to learn Japanese has been increasing. In recent years, the Japanese teacher shortage has become a problem. It will be needed that people who can speak Japanese work as a Japanese teacher to make up for the native Japanese teacher shortage. I hope that technical intern trainees contribute not only to business but also to the field of education.

Keywords: Cultural exchange, Studying Japanese, Japanese teacher shortage, Foreign workers in Japan

INTRODUCTION

According to a survey by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare in Japan (2017), the number of foreign workers in Japan has been increasing over recent years. The total number of them is 1,278,670, which is 18 percent higher than last year. The number of Chinese workers is 372,263, which accounts for 29 percent of foreign workers, followed by the Vietnamese, which accounts for 11.5 percent.

One of the biggest reasons for the increase of foreign workers is that the Japanese technical intern training program (TITP) was introduced in 1993. TITP is a program under which young workers from different countries acquire industrial and vocational skills as technical intern trainees at companies in Japan. They improve their acquired skills through technical intern training for two years. After they return to home countries, they can utilize those skills for economic and industrial development. In other words, TITP aims to develop human resources who can contribute to the industrial development of foreign countries through transferring of Japanese technology. These trainees account for 21% of the foreign workers in Japan.

I wondered how foreign workers studied Japanese language and business manner. One of my friends introduced KAKEHASHI INTERNATIONAL & BUSINESS to me. It is a company which send Cambodian people to Japan as technical intern trainees. I observed some Japanese classes in Cambodia. Fortunately, I got an opportunity to teach Japanese, Japanese culture and business manner to

Cambodian students. In this paper, I am going to report how they studied Japanese language and business manner before they came to Japan and what I taught to them.

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS

I visited KAKEHASHI INTERNATIONAL & BUSINESS in Cambodia from January 8th to January 12th, 2018. Cambodian people who will work as technical intern trainees at companies in Japan are studying Japanese language and Japanese business manner.

Student

The number of students is over 100. The school has seven classes in total. Each class has 15 students. They are between 18 and 30 years old. The reason why they want to go to Japan is that they need to make money for their family

How they study

They are learning Japanese in various ways. Teachers use textbooks written in Japanese to teach Japanese. Seven teachers work there for teaching Japanese. Three of them are from Japan, the others are from Cambodia. Students study not just through remembering Japanese words, but through using Japanese in daily life and business situations, which was based on communication. They were using role-plays frequently. In addition to that, they were watching videos on YouTube when they studied Japanese business manners.

How I taught

I taught Japanese, Japanese culture and business manners to Cambodian students who are going to work in Japan after two months later. In this chapter, I am going to report how I taught to them.

Japanese language

When I taught KANJI (Japanese character), I drew some pictures for them to help their understanding since most of KANJI are originated from images of entities. For instance, when I taught 山(mountain)to them, I showed a picture of a mountain since 山 came from the shape of a mountain. Figure A shows the whiteboard in my class. I hope that these knowledges can help them remember KANJI.



Figure 1. Whiteboard in my class.

Japanese culture

I taught Japanese culture since I wanted them to know how interesting it is. There are two things which I taught.

First, I taught traditional culture such as four seasons and annual events. I made a picture book to show what we are doing in each month. Figure B shows the picture book explaining May and Jun in Japan. Second, I taught origami (folding paper). For example, after I demonstrated how to fold a paper crane, students made it following my step by step instruction.

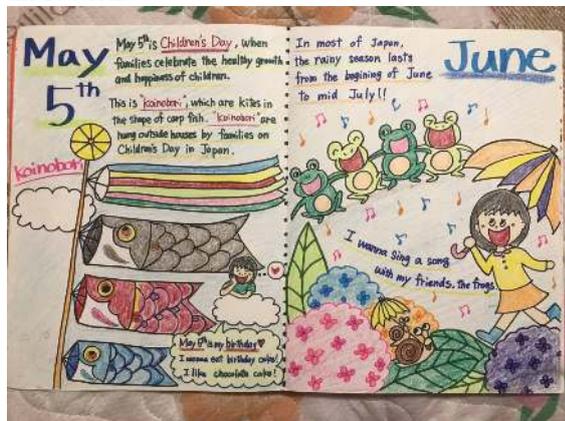


Figure 2. The picture book made by the author (i.e. Rina Ichikawa)

Business manners

When they were learning Japanese business, basically I helped their role-plays. To take 'name cards exchange' as an example, students watched a video about it on YouTube in order to let them imagine an office in Japan. After that I played a boss in the role-play.

DISCUSSION

It is expected that the number of foreign workers will go on increasing. On the other hand, Japanese teacher shortages are a large problem. According to a survey by the Japan foundation (2017), the number of people who are learning Japanese has increased by 28 times for the recent 36 years. However, the number of Japanese teacher has increased by just 15 times. One reason could be that the salary of a Japanese teacher is low. Even if we got great salary in foreign countries as a Japanese teacher, we cannot live in Japan. Because price in Japan is very high. Therefore, I think that people who can speak Japanese need to teach Japanese for Japanese teacher shortage. I hope that technical intern trainees contribute not only to business but also to the field of education.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I reported how technical intern trainees studied Japanese language and business manners before they came to Japan and what I taught to them. It is thought that the number of foreign workers in Japan will further increase in the future. I want them to contribute to many fields such as the industrial development, economic and education. I hope they can have a meaningful time in Japan.

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