

Learning Kanji with Card Games in Enhancing Reading Ability

Alo Karyati & Yelni Rachmawati
Pakuan University Bogor
kaorichiichai@yahoo.com

Abstract

The aim of this study was to find out whether the use of Card Game could increase Japanese language learners achievement in learning Kanji. The approach of this study was quantitative. The method of this study is a quasi-experiment, which focuses on one class studied. A pre-test and post-test, questionnaires, and interviews were used as the instruments of eliciting data. The subjects of this study were 15 students of Pakuan University who majored in Japanese Literature. The problems in this study are: (1) How does student's Kanji reading ability is before using Card Game? (2) How does student's Kanji reading ability is after using Card Game? (3) Are there differences in student's Kanji reading ability before and after using Card Game? (4) Could Card Game can improve student's Kanji reading ability? (5) What is student response of learning Kanji using Card Game? This study aims is to: (1) student's Kanji reading ability is before using Card Game. (2) Determine student's Kanji reading ability is after using Card Game. (3) Know the difference of student's Kanji reading ability before and after teaching Kanji using Card Game. (4) Determine whether Kanji Card Game can improve student's Kanji reading ability. (5) Knowing the response of students toward learning Kanji using Card Game. The results showed that there was an increase of student's Kanji test score between the pre-test and post-test. This indicates that using Card Game in teaching Kanji increase student's Kanji achievement. Prior to the teaching students using Card Game method, the smallest score that student has in pre-test was (33) and the highest score was (90), and in the post-test the scores was significantly increased, where the lowest score was (74) and the highest score was (99). This suggests that Card Game can be used as an alternative method in teaching Kanji.

Keywords: Learning, Kanji, Card Games, Reading

A. Background

In order to learn Japanese, we studied four letters, which are: *hiragana*, *katakana*, *kanji*, and *romaji*. *Hiragana* is the Japanese original letter, *katakana* letters used to write foreign vocabulary. *Romaji* is the same as the Latin alphabet with the letter that we use. While *kanji* is the letter that came from China and used to replace the word that reads *hiragana*.

Among those these letters, *kanji* is the most difficult to learn. Because in learning *kanji*, we should be able to memorize the way to write it and how it's read. The order of *kanji* study very complicated, not as easy as study *hiragana* and *katakana*. In *kanji*, we know *kunyomi* and *onyomi*. *Kunyomi* is the Japanese reading of *kanji* and *onyomi* is the Chinese way. With that said way to read *kanji* differently causes difficulties in learn *kanji* comparing to *hiragana* and *katakana*. Besides *kunyomi* and *onyomi*, there are some terms like *bushu*, *ninben*, *tsukuri*, *kanmuri*, *tare*, *jukugo*, and others that need to be considered as well in learning *kanji*. This is what makes the learners think that *kanji* is a difficult subject.

According to Sudjianto and Dahidi (2004: 56) *kanji* is one aspect that is difficult for students who are studying Japanese, especially by students who have no background in "kanji culture". As learners, Indonesian people whose background using Roman letters makes *kanji* is a frightening specter. Students think that *kanji* subjects is a scary subject.

The way of writes *kanji* also differs from other letters, the sequence of strokes ranging from 2 to more than 20 strokes, makes it is very difficult for the learners. Especially for students who are lazy to learn, students need a lot of practice to write. In order to learn *kanji* students require good concentration

on how to read and how to write. Many students feel bored when learning *kanji*, as a result, it might affect the score that they get.

Mastery in *kanji* is very important for Japanese language learners, as proposed Sudjianto and Dahidi (2007: 8) in (Sally 2014) Teaching *kanji* is absolutely necessary for the Japanese language learners who want to learn Japanese language. *Kanji* has a pivotal role in the Japanese vocabulary. From some of the above opinion can be concluded that any Japanese language learners must master the *kanji* in order to communicate with the people of Japan, especially in the written form.

Many models of learning that have researchers use when teaching *kanji*, such as flashcards, play snakes and ladders board game, bingo games and others. However, the model has yet to increase students reading skills, students often have difficulty when reading Japanese discourse. Therefore, researchers began to read some *kanji* learning journals and *kanji* teaching books. From the reading of several journals and books about teaching, the researchers are interested in one of the journals of Semarang State University lecturer on the effectiveness of using a cardin learning *kanji*.

Based on the above matters behind why researchers write about "**Learning Kanji with Card Games in Enhancing Reading Ability**"

B. Literature Review

a. Understanding Learning

According to the National Education System Law No. 20, year 2003, Zacky (2018) stated that learning is "the process of the interaction of learners with educators and learning resources in a learning environment". Learning as a learning process developed by teachers to develop creative thinking that can enhance students' thinking skills, and to improve the ability to construct new knowledge in an effort to improve a good mastery of the subject matter".

Meanwhile, according to Komalasari (2013) in (<https://www.zonareferensi.com>) learning is a system or process of planned learner teaching, implemented and evaluated systematically so that the learner can achieve learning goals effectively and efficiently.

b. Kanji Learning

Kanji is the letter that came from China, *kanji* introduced by the Chinese who enter Japan. *Kanji* were brought into Japan in *Kan* dynasty around the 4th century by Japanese people who came back from migrating to China. At that time Japan does not have a letter, and after *kanji* brought in, the Japanese invented *hiragana*.

According to Kokugo Jiten (1999: 298) in Prasetiani & Diner (2014). 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 *hyoo'i moji* originally made in China. The letter then replicated and used Japanese characters. Meanwhile, according to Okada(2007: 10) in Lensun (2014), *kanji* (漢字) historically originated from China and brought into Japan roughly in the 4th century when the Chinese were in *Kan* dynasty era.

In *kanji* learning, there is some writing systems. As stated by Takebe in Renariah (2004: 63) the classification of the writing system in the world are grouped into two groups, namely: *hyoo on moji* (表音文字) letters only symbolizes sound and *hyoo i moji* (表意文字) letter the stated meanings. The language which spoken used Latin alphabet such as European or Indonesian classified as *hyoo on moji*, while the Japanese are classified as *hyoo on moji* and *hyoo i moji*.

Still according to Sudjianto and Dahidi (2007: 56-70) *kanji* letter has the following characteristics:

- 1) Has *bushu*, ie parts of the *kanji* radicals that can be the basis for the classification of *kanji*. There are seven kinds of *bushu* which are : *ie*, *hen*, *tsukuri*, *kanmuri*, *ashi*, *tare*, *nyo*, and *kamae*.
- 2) Have *kakusuu*, ie the number of lines or streaks that make up a *kanji*. Simple *kanji* has a few *kakusuu* simple, yet complicated *kanji* has many *kakusuu*.

- 3) Have *hitsujun*, ie order of stroke of *kanji* to be written correctly.
- 4) Have *yomikata*, i.e. way of reading. There are two ways of reading *kanji* that *onyomi* and *kunyomi*. *Onyomi* is a way of reading *kanji* by following the Chinese pronunciation but does not exactly match the original sound as tailored to the Japanese pronunciation. Whereas for the same meaning where the Japanese already have the equivalent word in Japanese, is read by the original Japanese reading (*kunyomi*).

c. Game Definition

According to Arsyad (2010: 112) in (Prasetyani and Diner: 2014) card props letter is practical and attractive to children, especially children who have reading trouble need reading stimulation to trigger learning abilities, especially the ability to read as a beginner.

According to Indonesian Dictionary (1990: 392) in (Prasetyani and Diner: 2014) definition of "Card is a rectangular shaped heavy paper (for a variety of purposes, almost equal to the ticket)". Meanwhile, according to Prasetyani and Diner (2014), in learning *kanji*, letter cards developed into a card on one surface bearing a *kanji*. This card can be used as a medium to memorize, read and write *kanji*. It can also be used to form a vocabulary game (*jukugo*). The advantages of the card media letter are practical, easy to use and fun to memorize (facilitate students to learn easier).

C. Methods

The research is quasi-experimental. In this study, researchers did not create a control class. Researchers only research in one class. This is done in order to have better treatment and focusing on one research class. This research performed for 8 times. To alleviate data researcher use a group pretest and posttest. In this design, the observation is made that is before the experiment and after the experiment. Pretest conducted at the beginning of this experiment, and posttest done after the experiment. The shape of the test are *kanji* writing and reading test.

This research was conducted as many as eight times. The details are as follows: 1-time pre-test, 6 times treatment, and 1-time post-test. The subject of the research are students of the fourth semester. The purpose of this study was to see whether learning *kanji* using card games can improve students' reading ability or not? The results of this study are expected to be reused by other teachers who teach *kanji* subjects, whether in Japanese Literature of Pakuan University or in other universities.

D. Stages of Research

In this study, the researchers conducted several processes, from observation, pretest, and posttest treatment. Here are the stages of research:

1. Observation, see how the situation and the condition of the class and students that will become the subject of the research.
2. Provide pretest, which about the same level of JLPT N3 *kanji* test.
3. Do the treatment 6 times using the cards as a medium of learning *kanji*.
4. Provide posttest questions in a written form.
5. Prepare *kanji* card.
5. Distribute a questionnaire to the research subjects students.
6. Conducting interviews with some students about how to use *kanji* learning with *kanji* card game.
7. Process the data from the results of questionnaires and interviews.

After the observation, researchers perform treatment using *kanji* game card media. Here are the stages of treatment that have been implemented:

1. First treatment, ask the students to open www.kakijun.com website and shows the writing sequence. Then the researchers showed *kunyomi* and *onyomi* sequence that are already available on the website.

Then, researchers set up cards of the *kanji* learning from lesson 35 and from previous lessons. Then appoint three students to play that card. In the game, students are supposed to find *jukugo* of *kanji* that has been studied in lesson 35. Students tasked with finding and pairing *kanji*'s *jukugo*, so that it becomes a word. Another student assigned to write those *kanji* on the whiteboard. As the feedback, researchers set up practice in the form of reading *kanji* that had been prepared in powerpoint.

2. Second treatment, the researchers prepared kanji card for lesson 36, the process is the same as the first treatment.
3. Third treatment, the researchers prepared kanji card for lesson 37, the process is the same as the first treatment.
4. Fourth treatment, the researchers prepared kanji card for lesson 38, the process is the same as the first treatment.
5. Fifth treatment, the researchers prepared kanji card for lesson 39, the process is the same as the first treatment. Then the researchers divided the students into five groups, and assign tasks to each group to make *kanji* cards of lessons 35,36,37,38, and 39. The card must be written by hand not using a computer.
6. Sixth treatment, students playing those *kanji* cards. Researcher told students in group to make a word from those *kanji* cards. Each group was given 15 minutes to prepare a card and write it on the whiteboard. 1 person wrote, and two other find and organize the *kanji* card. Each group was given the task to write 50 vocabularies within 15 minutes. They compete with other group to found and wrote *kanji* the most.

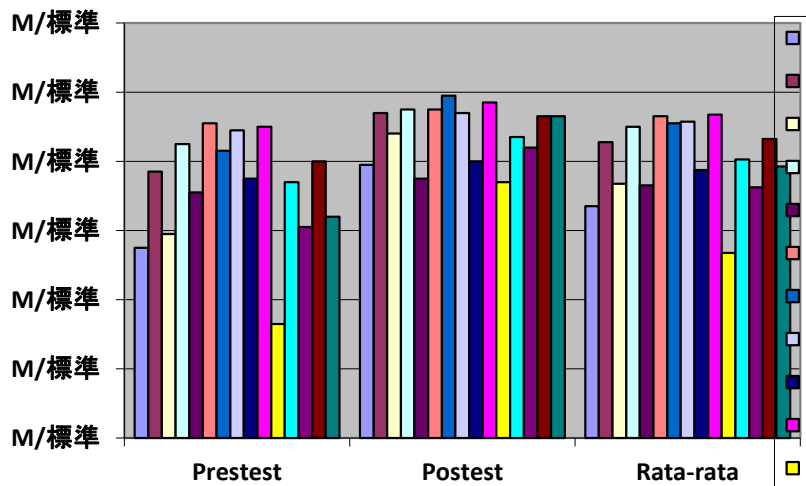
E. Results and Discussion

After doing treatment for 6 times, the score of the students are as follows:

Student Name	Pretest	Posttest	Average
1	55	79	67
2	77	94	85.5
3	59	88	73.5
4	85	95	90
5	71	75	73
6	91	95	93
7	83	99	91
8	89	94	91.5
9	75	80	77.5
10	90	97	93.5
11	33	74	53.5
12	74	87	80.5
13	61	84	72.5
14	80	93	86.5
15	64	93	78.5

Figure I. Pretest and Posttest Score

Figure II. Pretest and Posttest Score Graphic



From the results of pretest and posttest, the increase of students' scores before using the card game and after using the card game are obvious. Students' reading ability is increased. The ability of students to be increased, wherein pretest the lowest score is 33 and the highest score is 91, and after the treatment, the lowest score becomes 74 and 99 for the highest.

Based on that results, learning *kanji* using the card games are effective in improving student reading skills, especially the ability to read *kanji* contained in *dokkai* lessons, as well as *kanji* contained in JLPT *dokkai* section.

A research questionnaire was distributed to 15 students. The following is the questionnaire:

No.	Question	SA	A	DA	D	SDA
1	I think learning <i>kanji</i> using <i>kanji</i> card game method can improve the ability to read Japanese discourse.					
2	At the time of learning <i>kanji</i> using <i>kanji</i> card games, students shall prepare the <i>kanji</i> cards.					
3	At the time of learning <i>kanji</i> using <i>kanji</i> card games, teachers shall prepare the <i>kanji</i> cards.					
4	I think the <i>kanji</i> card game method is more effective in enhancing the ability to read Japanese discourse than the previous method of flashcards and powerpoint.					
5	I think over the <i>kanji</i> game learning method is equally effective in improving reading skills by using flashcards.					
6	<i>Kanji</i> learning difficulties using <i>kanji</i> card game is to arrange cards into a vocabulary.					
7	Learning <i>kanji</i> using <i>kanji</i> card game makes students become excited and motivated to learn <i>kanji</i> .					

8	Teacher shall give examples of how to use <i>kanji</i> card game.					
9	I think learning <i>kanji</i> using <i>kanji</i> card game very fun and relaxing so that students do not get bored during the learning process.					
10	Learning <i>kanji</i> using <i>kanji</i> card game, not only can improve the ability to read Japanese discourse, but it may improve the ability to write <i>kanji</i> .					

Information:

SA:Strongly Agree	A: Agreed	DA: Disagree	D: Doubtful	SDA: Strongly Disagree
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From the results of the questionnaire obtained the following reply:

1. From the questionnaire number 1's, 2 students answered strongly agreed, 12 students answered agree, and one student answered not hesitate. ,
2. From question number 2 is obtained the following reply, who answered strongly agree 6 students, 7 students answered agree, and 2 answered doubt.
3. From question number 3 is obtained the following reply, who answered strongly agree 6 students, 7 students answered agree, and 2 answered doubt.
4. From question number 4 is obtained answers to the following, who answered strongly agree 2 students, 10 students answered agree, one student answered do not agree, and 2 student replied doubtfully.
5. From question number 5 is obtained the following reply: 7 students answered agree, 2 answered disagree and 6 answered doubt.
6. From question number 6 is obtained the following reply: 2 students answered strongly agree, 10 people answered agree, and 3 answered doubt.
7. From question number 7 is obtained the following reply: 2 students answered strongly agree, 10 people answered disagree and 3 answered doubt.
8. From question number 8 was obtained the following reply: 2 students answered strongly agree, 11 people answered agree, one person answered doubt - doubt, and one person answered strongly disagree.
9. From question number 9 is obtained answers as follows: 1 student answered strongly agreed, 11 students answered agree, one student answered disagree and 1 answered disagree.
10. From question number 10 is obtained the following reply, two students answered strongly agree, 9 people answered disagree and 4 answered doubt.

Based on the answers to the questionnaire above, it can be concluded that the *kanji* card games can improve student reading skills. This learning model also makes students relax and excited, because most students think that the subject is a subject that *kanji* is difficult and tedious. Through this method not only makes the student's motivation to learn *kanji* increase but can make working with her friends. When put through their *kanji* game should be mutual cooperation in finding a suitable *kanji* and give to a friend who wrote the word on the whiteboard.

For some question which answered hesitantly, researchers can conclude, because of previous media use *flashcard*, There are some students who think that the model that was equally able to enhance reading ability. While the goal of researchers using *kanji* cards allow students to think how to combine *kanji* cards as much as possible into a word. However, in a *flashcard* model, the word example

is already available on the card. As a result, it makes students less creative to find a combination of *kanji* that can formed a word.

E. Conclusions

Based on the foregoing discussion, this section can be concluded as follows:

1. Student's ability to read *kanji* prior to use *kanji* card game model is very low, it can be seen from the score obtained on pretest, where the lowest score is 33 and the highest score is 91.
2. Student's ability to read *kanji* after using *kanji* card game model is increase, it can be seen from the score obtained on posttest, where the lowest score is 74 and the highest score is 99. ,
3. There is a difference before using *kanji* card game and after using *kanji* card game, students become more knowledgeable in assembling *kanji* cards into a word.
4. The response of students who learn *kanji* using *kanji* card games are as follows:
 - a. The card game suitable to be applied in the course of *kanji*. Because the *kanji* card game model can improve reading skills and increase student learning motivation.
 - b. When learning *kanji* course very relax and eager student, learning *kanji* to be fun and not boring. In addition, the card game can occur through cooperation with other students when preparing *kanji* and perform card game.

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