

# Analysis on the Reform of Business Japanese Curriculum Based on JSP Theory

**Wang Jiadong\***

Department of Foreign Language, Shandong Jiaotong University, Jinan, China

## Abstract

As the economic exchanges between China and Japan are becoming more and more frequent and deepened, the market no longer favours graduates who have mastered Japanese language only. The demand for qualified talents who are proficient in Business Japanese knowledge is increasing. The concept of Business Japanese has also come into being. Up to now, there are still many colleges and universities which trade Business Japanese just as a practice course. In this course, students learn business knowledge after learning Japanese knowledge. The university in which the author works, is the member from the beginning of the establishment of China Association of International Trade-International Business Japanese Research Committee in 2007. After years of exploration and practice, a distinctive Business Japanese major has been formed in author's university, not just a course. The market is always changing. The existing curriculum system and teaching methods can not be applied all the time. In the past, people always explored the improvement in the traditional Japanese teaching method. The introduction of JSP theory (Japanese for Specific Purposes) can help us to solve this problem from a more professional perspective. JSP theory originated in the 80s of last century, and its development is short. It has been introduced into China for a short time, and has not even been popularized in the field of Japanese education in China. At present, the study of JSP theory in Japanese education is mostly about the analysis of professional terms and discourses, or the discussion of teaching materials and teaching methods from the perspective of learners and instructors. There are relatively few papers on JSP courses from the perspective of social needs. After entering the twenty-first Century, education of Japanese major in Colleges and universities is facing unprecedented competition pressure and survival pressure. How to cultivate Japanese talents who meet the needs of the society and how to improve the advantages of graduates become important issues that must be considered. The author is to use JSP theory to guide the reform of business Japanese curriculum system and teaching methods, and then achieve the goal of training business Japanese talents that meet the needs of society.

## Keywords

JSP, Business Japanese, Teaching Practice, Business Writing

Received: June 18, 2018 / Accepted: July 27, 2018 / Published online: August 31, 2018

@ 2018 The Authors. Published by American Institute of Science. This Open Access article is under the CC BY license.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

---

## 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to understand the current

demand for business Japanese talents through surveys of graduates and employment companies, use JSP theory to guide the reform of business Japanese curriculum and

---

\* Corresponding author  
E-mail address: [hancangyi140@126.com](mailto:hancangyi140@126.com)

teaching methods to achieve the goal of training business Japanese talents that meet the needs of the society. China and Japan have a long-term trade and cooperation relationship. Economic data from China's Commerce Ministry show that: In 2016, Japan's exports to China amounted to \$113.89 billion, increased by 4.3% accounting for 17.7% of Japan's total export; Japan's imports from China amounted to \$156.61 billion, fell by 2.5% accounting for 25.8% of Japan's total import. In 2017, Japan's exports to China amounted to \$132.86 billion, increased by 16.7% accounting for 19.0% of its total export; Japan's imports from China amounted to \$164.42 billion, increased by 5.0% accounting for 24.5% of its total import. Thus, under the stable political environment, the total volume of imports and exports of both countries has been growing steadily. The development of economic and trade between the two countries will give Business Japanese talents the chance to work. However, the reality is that many graduates of Business Japanese major are always encountering difficulties when they are applying for jobs. They find that their knowledge can not be well suited to their job needs and can not win in competition. Employers also feel that the current graduates are like pipelined products, and lack of real professional competencies. In the final analysis, this is the mismatch between social needs and personnel training in Colleges and universities.

JSP theory (Japanese for Specific Purposes) came into being under the influence of ESP theory (English for specific Purpose). ESP refers to English for specific Purpose or English for Special Purpose, it is not simply to complete the teaching of foreign language vocabulary and grammar, but puts more emphasis on market, professional and practical foreign language teaching tasks. Although ESP is a theoretical achievement in English discipline, it has also been used in other foreign languages and promoted the development of other foreign languages. Similarly, JSP theory also attaches great importance to market and social needs. Under the guidance of JSP theory, the reform of the Business Japanese curriculum system and teaching methods will surely meet the needs of the society and cultivate students' competitiveness.

In order to grasp the social needs in the field of Business Japanese, author has conducted an investigation into the employer's companies and the first three graduates of Business Japanese in Shandong province. The survey of graduates is a questionnaire issued by the teachers of the school where they

were born. 150 questionnaires were issued, and 97 copies were effectively recovered. Through the investigation we found that there are great differences in the development of Business Japanese courses in universities, there are still universities following the traditional direction of pure Japanese teaching. Even in the universities carrying out the teaching of Business Japanese, the gap between students in training is huge due to the gap between ideas and experience. Generally speaking, there are not many Business Japanese courses and teaching that can meet the needs of society and market well, it needs to be further improved.

## **2. JSP and Business Japanese**

### **2.1. JSP (Japanese for Specific Purposes)**

The first international Language for Special Purposes conference was held in 1969. It opened the door to the study of Language for Special Purposes. About ten years later, the word ESP (English for General Purposes) came into being. With regard to the concept of "ESP", some scholars believe that it is a concept opposed to EGP (English for General Purposes). EGP only teaches English as an independent language course, while ESP should have clear teaching content and meet practical communication needs JSP (Japanese for Specific Purposes) originated in 1980s. It is a young domain with a history of only 30 years. Many related researches, including definitions, are deeply influenced by ESP research. The representative scholar of Japan, Sano Hiromi (2009), referred to the definition of ESP, and defined JSP education as "Japanese education based on definite and specific needs". Sano suggested that JSP can be further divided into academic Japanese (JAP) and professional Japanese (JOP) used in business, tourism and law domains. There is quite a number of research on JSP applications in China and Japan. Most of them are about professional terms or discourse analysis. And there are many researches on the teaching materials and teaching methods of JSP from the perspective of learners and instructors. Papers on JSP curriculum from the perspective of social needs are not so many. After entering the 21st Century, Japanese majors in higher education entered an unusual period: the scale of education was unprecedented, and the number of students increased sharply. Although the job market is relatively good, the competition for employment is becoming increasingly

fierce. Japanese professional education in universities is facing unprecedented competitive pressure and survival pressure. How to develop Japanese talents who meet the needs of the society and how to improve the advantages of graduates become important issues that must be considered.

Needs analysis is an important feature of JSP theory. Needs analysis in foreign language teaching can be divided into Necessary needs, Learners' needs and Missing skills. Necessary needs are the knowledge that a learner must acquire in order to successfully complete his future work; Learners' needs are the gap between the current knowledge level and the target needs; Missing skills are the skills that learners feel missing when facing specific situations, the needs they want to learn. Among them, the Necessary needs can be regarded as social needs, and Learners' needs and Missing skills are based on social needs, can be determined by learners in comparison with social needs analysis. It can be seen that the basic position and importance of social needs analysis in the theory of needs analysis. JSP is a method system of language teaching in Japanese. This system involves learning, teaching materials and teaching methods. Among them, learners are most important. This method system is learner centered curriculum and teaching system. Whether guidance targets or guidance projects, guidance methods and teaching plans should focus on the specific needs of learners.

## 2.2. Business Japanese

Business Japanese is not just a course, it should be a major or major field formed with the continuous development of international trade. Its purpose is not simply to raise the level of spoken and written language, but to enable students to master the main links that may be involved in real foreign trade and business activities, taking language as a carrier. For example, import and export trade practices, business documents, reading and writing, etc. Social demand for business Japanese talents is rising, but business Japanese teaching is relatively backward. The author analyzed the present situation of Business Japanese teaching, discussed the application of JSP theory in Business Japanese curriculum reform from requirements analysis, syllabus design and textbook selection and so on. In 2007, China Association of International Trade-International Business Japanese Research Committee was set up. In 2010, the Japanese Education Society established Business Japanese Group. Business Japanese research has received great attention. The positioning of business Japanese course is generally considered to be an important branch of JSP curriculum and an

important component of JOP. At present, there are two different understandings of Business Japanese teaching. The first one is that student can use Japanese for commercial activities, to be proficient in business etiquette, have enough personal business attainment, not be limited to a specific professional domain or business Japanese vocabulary. The second viewpoint is that students' knowledge structure should have basic Japanese knowledge and foreign trade knowledge. The author agrees with the first point of view, which means Business Japanese is not only basic Japanese knowledge and foreign trade knowledge. Non-language knowledge, even the understanding of Japanese culture should also be taken in the Business Japanese course.

## 3. Needs Analysis

Needs analysis is the basis of curriculum reform, and social requirement is the foundation of demand analysis. To formulate the teaching requirements, determining teaching contents and teaching methods of College Japanese according to the needs of Japanese talents in Chinese Society especially the requirement for the use of Japanese ability in different domains has far-reaching significance. Some scholars have also pointed out that Japanese majors in universities are inclined to research type from the curriculum to the teaching mode and the training mode. Teaching is seriously out of line with practical application, and contradicts with the needs of companies and social needs. Based on the important role of social needs analysis, and considering the disconnection between teaching practice and social needs, this teaching situation remains to be solved. The author takes the course of Business Japanese as the research object, investigates and analyses from the perspective of social requirement, and focuses on the teaching objectives and content of the course according to the results of the survey. The research results are mainly applied to the reform of business Japanese curriculum, and the author hopes that this research results can provide some references for the establishment and reform of Business Japanese courses in other institutions.

The author conducted a survey on the first three graduates of Business Japanese and their inaugural companies. The survey data were collected mainly in the form of "website information" and "questionnaire survey", and 30 companies were obtained from two ways. Questionnaires are directly sent to graduates, 150 copies were issued, and 97 copies were effectively recovered.

**Table 1.** Questionnaire for the company.

Whether Sino-Japanese trade will be good	Yes:26	No:6
Whether satisfied with the ability of graduates	Yes:17	No:13
Whether Business Japanese major should be set up	Yes:25	No:5
Whether it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation between universities and companies	Yes:22	No:8
Whether it is necessary to strengthen the students' practice in school	Yes:24	No:6
Whether willing to accept fresh graduates	Yse:7	No:23
Whether intend to sign a cooperative agreement with a university	Yes:4	No:26
	Good listening and speaking ability in Japanese: 25	
	Business knowledge: 23	
	Good communicative competence in Japanese: 20	
What ability is the most important for graduates	Good learning ability: 20	
	Writing ability of Japanese documents: 16	
	Goodteamworkability:14	
	Certificates of foreign trade ability:12	
	Participate in the company project as much as possible during the period of school;	
Other suggestions	Have the ability to work in Japan;	
	Have good ability to communicate with customers	

This table shows that the development of Sino Japanese trade is good, and the company has a very high demand for graduates' practical work ability. The needs of the companies--More than 83% of companies hope that applicants will have strong Japanese speaking and listening abilities. More than 53% of companies believe that graduates have poor writing skills in business documents. Nearly half of the companies specifically suggest that graduates need to

strengthen their daily-report, weekly-report and e-mail writing skills. 47% of companies believe that university graduates' teamwork ability needs to be improved. In addition to JLPT's certificate, 38% of the companies suggested that graduates should have certificates of foreign trade ability. 78% of the companies indicate that they are unwilling to accept fresh graduates, preferring experienced practitioners.

**Table 2.** Questionnaire for the graduates.

Whether satisfied with the setting of Business Japanese major	Yes:84	No:13
Whether Business Japanese courses can increase employability and competitiveness	Yes:66	No:31
Whether the curriculum of this major is reasonable	Yes:58	No:39
Whether satisfied with your business knowledge	Yes:50	No:47
Whether students should strengthen the ability of listening and speaking in Japanese	Yes:68	No:29
Whether students should strengthen the ability of writing documents	Yes:81	No:16
Whether it is necessary to strengthen the students' practice in school	Yes:20	No:77
Whether it is necessary to get certificate of foreign trade	Yes:58	No:39
	Know foreign trade process: 73	
	Foreign trade negotiation skills: 36	
What ability do you want to improve most	Social communication with Japanese: 34	
	Japanese corporate culture: 20	
	Improve textbooks;	
Other suggestions	Set up an E-business course;	
	Use task-based approach	

87% of the students think that the establishment of Business Japanese major is necessary. More than 60% of students think that the curriculum of this major is basically reasonable. And 48% of the students think that the explanation of business professional knowledge is not thorough enough. More than 60% of students hope to get the corresponding certificate of foreign trade in school, such as Certificate of international trade documents, Certificate of employment of foreign salesman and so on. 68% of students show that learning Business Japanese courses can increase employability and

competitiveness. In the content of the course, 83% of the students hope to improve the writing of foreign trade documents and the production capacity of foreign trade documents. 75% of the students want to know more about the foreign trade process. 37% of students want to master foreign trade negotiation skills and foreign trade communication skills. 35% of students hope to have the ability of social communication with Japanese. In teaching materials, 72% of the students believe that the existing textbooks are too theoretical and lack of practicability. 52% of the students want

the teacher to introduce extracurricular content. 79% of students think that there is not enough practice during school. The contents of the work are numerous and diverse, including face-to-face (negotiation, on-site interpretation, reception, etc.) and non face-to-face (send and receive e-mail, communication by telephone) exchanges with the Japanese. Japanese is used as a means of communication in most of the work. So we can see that the awareness of Japanese as a language major has begun to weaken, and more is the requirement for qualified personnel to work independently or to carry out a project independently. In addition, many companies have asked for requirements which are not in the questionnaire. For example, 5 companies have asked graduates to have the ability to engage in E-commerce. E-commerce, as a rapidly advancing industry in recent years, has not been fully reflected in the curriculum design of Business Japanese. Some companies emphasize that graduates should have the ability to develop and maintain the market, such as find customer resources, correspond with customers, master customers dynamically and so on. All these are related to foreign trade and business activities. This is vastly different from what students understand about the simple business of "sending and receiving mail" and "answering phones".

#### 4. Educational Objectives and Syllabus

**Educational objectives**—The purpose of investigation and analysis of social needs is to find out the difference between the teaching effect and the knowledge of social needs, so as to find and solve problems. In the past, Business Japanese courses mostly let students "contact" and "understand" business knowledge and "master" business vocabulary. The results of this survey show that the society needs "versatile and practical" talents who can understand and adapt Japanese corporate culture. Therefore, the traditional business Japanese curriculum is unable to meet the requirements of the society. The author believes that the objective of the Business Japanese course is to cultivate students' ability to engage in international business in Japanese communication, and to help them achieve the role transformation from students to Japanese business practitioners. Facts have proved that JSP curriculum is not an independent curriculum system. The teaching of Business Japanese can be divided into several

stages, each stage is related to each other and has its own teaching objectives. The focus and objective of the primary and intermediate stages is to cultivate students' professional ability and professional language ability. The most important intermediate stage requires the integration of subject knowledge and language teaching, that is, to cultivate students' basic Japanese skills, and to teach the learners' professional knowledge of business. Teachers should take business articles, documents and so on as the carrier to let learners fully understand the discipline characteristics of Business Japanese, master the common language in the business domain, to have the basic skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating in Business Japanese. On the premise of knowing professional vocabulary and syntactic structure, the students will gradually understand, master and use different types and different occasions to express Business Japanese. In order to achieve the teaching objective of "cultivating the communicative competence of Japanese in under the professional background" in the course of Business Japanese, it is necessary to consider the teaching content of Business Japanese course from three aspects which are the professional needs of the companies, the communication problem between different cultures and the employment background of the employment, in order to cultivate the learners' comprehensive business Japanese ability. The author thinks that professional language ability is the most important and central ability, Japanese corporate culture and inaugural foundation are the necessary conditions for smooth communication, so they should also be listed as the elements of comprehensive business Japanese ability.

Therefore, the comprehensive business Japanese ability includes: 1 the language skills that can carry out business activities smoothly in the international business scene; 2 understanding of the Japanese workplace culture and etiquette; 3 as the ability of the social people to have the interview skills, work attitude and so on.

**Syllabus**—The Business Japanese course under the guidance of JSP theory is different from the general Japanese curriculum, a lot of knowledge will be involved. The purpose of business Japanese course is to flexibly use Japanese to carry out effective business communication, to use language to operate various business skillfully, to solve the practical problems encountered in international business. Therefore, the syllabus for Business Japanese should be comprehensive and



gradual, the teaching goal should be combined with the existing business Japanese test and combined with reality. By doing this, while completing the teaching of business Japanese, students also completed the training of business Japanese test.

## 5. Textbooks and Other Teaching Materials

Most of the current business Japanese textbooks are just based on the business environment, vocabulary and grammar are the main explanations, supplemented by conversational practice, not related to actual business work and lack of operability. The practical operations in international business are essential, the most needed and needed by the students. The compilation of new textbooks needs to reflect the requirements of JSP theory, with clear direction and practical operation.

The teaching materials for Business Japanese do not only include textbooks. Appropriate video and conversation materials should be added according to the teaching objectives and contents. In order to make up for the lack of teaching time in class, teachers and students should realize the importance of network teaching platform. Teachers need to update the teaching content on the platform in time and release homework and tests on time. Students should complete homework and tests on time as required.

## 6. Improve the Related Teaching Methods

### 6.1. Teaching Practice

JSP theory lays emphasis on market and attaches importance to practicality. Business Japanese is a practical course, so the teaching practice of business Japanese must follow the JSP theory.

*Create a good classroom atmosphere and practise.*

Teachers and students should not be simply teaching and learning, but should be a relationship of teaching benefits teachers as well as students. Teachers should make a comprehensive examination of the students' Japanese level, create training projects that make students feel slightly difficult but powerful enough. So students can imitate in learning and to learn in simulation. In the course of business, teachers should use the way of curriculum design and training class reasonably. In this way, students' enthusiasm can be fully

mobilized, and students can get good practice during school.

*Attaching importance to the role of discussion*

In the classroom teaching, attention should be paid to explaining typical cases to students. Teachers guide students to analyze cases from different angles and perspectives. Combine the knowledge with typical cases to cultivate students' practical application ability and thinking expansion ability. The discussion should be central and purposeful. Students can speak freely, but teachers must master the process and direction.

*Pay attention to business writing*

In practice, attention should be paid to business writing. Teachers first explain the norms of business writing, and let students imitate the roles of practice. Train students' business writing ability by comparing what they write with what others wrote. Let students imitate various roles to write, not only can improve writing level, but also enable students to fully understand the business process and mental state of all parties in the business process.

*Promote the learning and development of Teachers*

Business Japanese is a complex major after all. Japanese teachers need to strengthen their own teaching and learning, explore the teaching methods adapted to this major, enhance their own foreign trade knowledge and go into software companies to study if necessary. Teachers should further improve their language proficiency in practice, strive to become a Double-qualified Teacher who know theory and have practical experience.

### 6.2. Reform Assessment Method

The examination method is not only the examination of teaching achievements, but also the emphasis of teaching. Discard the traditional closed examination form and form a multiple structural credit system examination. Practice, daily writing, discussion and speaking will be combined with assessment. This is not only conducive to further mobilizing the enthusiasm of students, but also conducive to the comprehensive assessment of teachers.

## 7. Conclusions

To sum up, based on the good economic and trade development between China and Japan, many universities in China have established and developed Business Japanese

majors. However, due to the constraints of ideas and conditions, there are great differences in Business Japanese talents cultivated by universities. Employing companies also generally reflect that graduates are lack of practicing ability, can not meet their needs. In essence, this is because the school's training targets and training methods have deviations from the needs of the society. The important characteristic of JSP theory, which is influenced by ESP theory, is to attach great importance to social needs. To guide students' learning through social needs, guide the education of universities, and serve the society better. From the perspective of JSP, the author reflected on the problems existing in his university, and put forward reform opinions in curriculum system, teaching methods and teachers. Of course, there are still many deficiencies that need to be corrected in future practice.

## References

- [1] Shu Ding fang (2004), *The problems and Countermeasures of foreign language teaching reform*, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [2] Sano Hiromi (2009), *Japanese education based on special purpose*, Study of special Japanese Education
- [3] Zhang Suwen (2011), *A probe into the instruction of ESP theory to the teaching of specific Japanese*, Journal of Mudanjiang Normal University.
- [4] Liu Wei (2013), *The development and Enlightenment of Japanese Education Research*, Japanese learning and research.
- [5] Zhou Yan (2016), *Study on the cultivation of pragmatic competence in the teaching of Business Japanese*, The Science Education Article Collects.
- [6] Qu Di (2016), *Analysis of the course setting of Business Japanese*, Guide to Business.
- [7] Jiang Wei (2017), *Research on the teaching model of basic Business Japanese course*, Journal of Japanese Language Study and Research.
- [8] Ma Bo (2017), *The penetration and integration of Japanese corporate culture in Business Japanese Teaching*, Japanese education and Japanese Studies.
- [9] Guo Siyan (2017), *Business Japanese and Japanese corporate culture*, Journal of Jiamusi Vocational Institute.
- [10] Wang Yanhong (2018), *The reform of Business Japanese Teaching under the model of school corporate cooperation*, Journal of Shaoguan University.
- [11] Tong Ling (2018), *Research on the development and present situation of Japanese Business Japanese Education*, Journal of Japanese Language Study and Research.