

**THE EFFORT OF IMPROVING JAPANESE LITERATURE ABILITY
OF JAPANESE LITERATURE STUDENTS OF FACULTY OF CULTURAL
STUDY UB IN REACHING *MONBUKAGAKUSHO* SCHOLARSHIP**

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Abstract

For Japanese language learners in Indonesia get *Monbukagakusho* Japanese Studies program is something that is very coveted. Moreover *Monbukagakusho* Japanese Studies program through G to G that must be faced through a very strict selection. In 2012 Japanese students of Faculty of Cultural Study UB who pass the selection were 7 students, in 2013 were 4 students, and in 2014 were 8 students graduated from 21 students in Indonesia. To reach the achievement, it is necessary efforts to improve Japanese ability especially *Kanji* (writing) *Bunpou* (grammar), and *Dokkai* (reading comprehension). The development of students' cognitive ability does not walk alone but it required the ability to organize and control its cognitive abilities. The approach used in this study is metacognitive. From the description above, the research problems are formulated as follows: (1) How to increase Japanese students' ability who participate *monbukagakusho* selection, (2) What factors which support the learning systems to improve students' ability to deal with the selection. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This study used a questionnaire with 30 respondents of Japanese literature student of Faculty of Cultural Study UB who have joined *benkyoukai monbukagakusho* test preparation. The results showed that to increase the students' Japanese language proficiency, it is required *benkyoukai* with strict selection. The students who do not achieve a score above 60% with correct answers 3 (three) times in a row will fall The factors that support learning systems are: The role of the study program, student of *benkyoukai* participants, materials and evaluation, and facilities and infrastructure.

Keywords: *benkyoukai (study group), monbukagakusho (scholarship of Ministry of Education and Culture Japan)*

A. INTRODUCTION

Monbukagakusho Scholarship (MEXT) is the scholarship of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. Scholarship programs offered to the Indonesian students are the Student Research Program for college graduates, Undergraduate, College of Technology and Professional Training College for high school graduates and Japanese Studies for the students of Japanese and also Teacher Training for the teachers.

In the website of the Japanese Embassy in Jakarta described that Japanese Studies Program is a scholarship program which is designed specifically for students who are studying/study Japanese and aims to improve Japanese language ability as well as deepen the understanding of Japanese culture. Students who graduated in the selection of this program will have the opportunity to learn the language and culture of Japan for 1 year in Japan. The scholarships received by the students who graduate in the selection of this program are the cost of study and living expenses for 117,000 yen or about Rp.13 million/month.

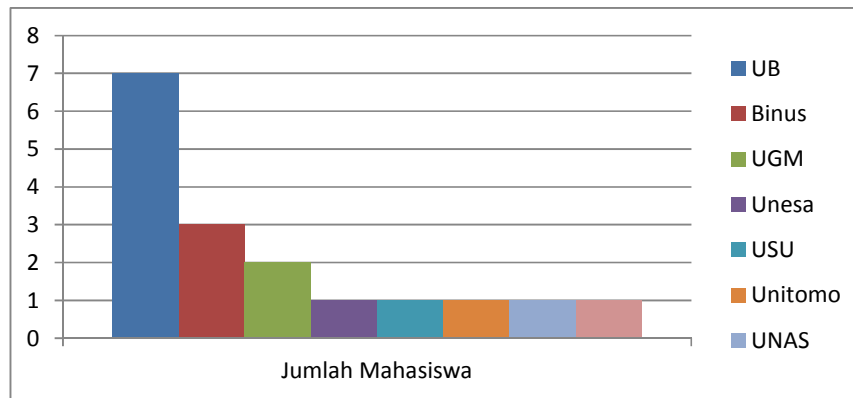
There are two ways to get a *Monbukagakusho* scholarship of Japanese Studies program. They are G to G (Government to Government) and U to U (University to University). G to G way must be passed by the student of Japanese who studies at various universities in Indonesia through a very strict selection start from file selection, written tests, interviews, until the decision of the receiving university in Japan. Meanwhile the U to U is a way of cooperation between universities in Indonesia with the universities in Japan and also need to get a recommendation from universities' Professor in Japanese.

The participation of Japanese students of Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya in the selection of *Monbukagakusho* Scholarship Japanese studies program was started in 2006. In 2006, Universitas Brawijaya still had Diploma III of Japanese Program. In 2006 for the first time, there are 2 (two) students of Japanese UB successfully passed selection in *Monbukagakusho* program of Japanese studies. In the following year in 2007, Diploma III of Japanese program turned back to pass 2 (two) students in *Monbukagakusho* selection. In 2008 UB's students who graduated from *Monbukagakusho* scholarship selection is only 1 person. In the next year 2009 none of UB's students passed the Japanese in this *Monbukagakusho* scholarship selection. Every year the number of the Indonesian students who graduated from *Monbukagakusho* Scholarship in Japanese Studies program is not the same. In 2006, the number of Japanese students accepted in this program was 9 people. The following year 2007, the students accepted were 14 people, and in 2008 the number of students accepted in this *Monbukagakusho* scholarship selection was 7 people.

Japanese Literature Study Program of Faculty of Cultural Study UB evaluated the implementation of *benkyoukai* (study group) activities of *Monbukagakusho* because in 2009 none of the students passed the selection. In 2009 there are 3 (three) students who passed written test but failed in interview selection and the final result from the Embassy of Japan. The factors that cause the students did not pass the final stage of selection may occur because of the wrong in choosing the universities in Japan since it has high grade/level, such as that universities in Japan required *ryuugakusei* (foreign students) which must have a qualification of JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) for level N1 or N2.

In the last 3 years, Japanese Literature students of Faculty of Cultural Study Universitas Brawijaya always pass the selection of *Monbukagakusho* scholarship program of Japanese Studies through G to G. The following graph shows the results of the *Monbukagakusho* selection. The results of *Monbukagakusho* scholarship program selection of Japanese Studies in 2012 17 of Indonesia's Japanese language/literature students are graduated.

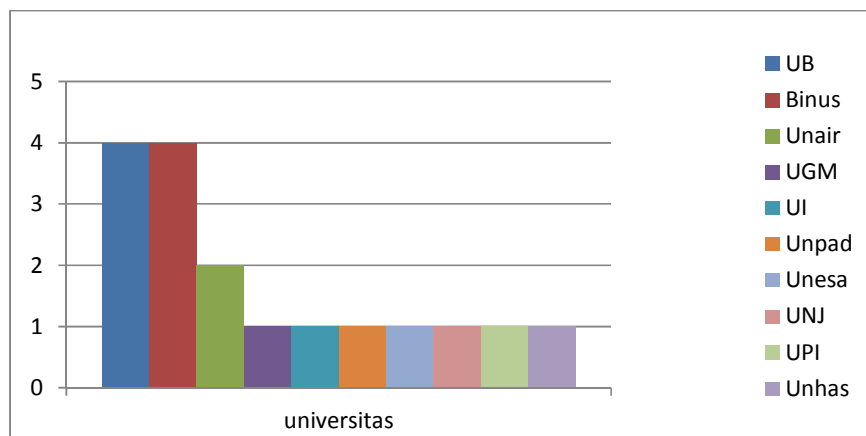
Graph of the result of *monbukagakusho* selection program of Japanese Studies 2012



Source: Embassy of Japan

The results of *Monbukagakusho* scholarship program selection of Japanese Studies in 2013 19 of Indonesia's Japanese language/literature students are graduated.

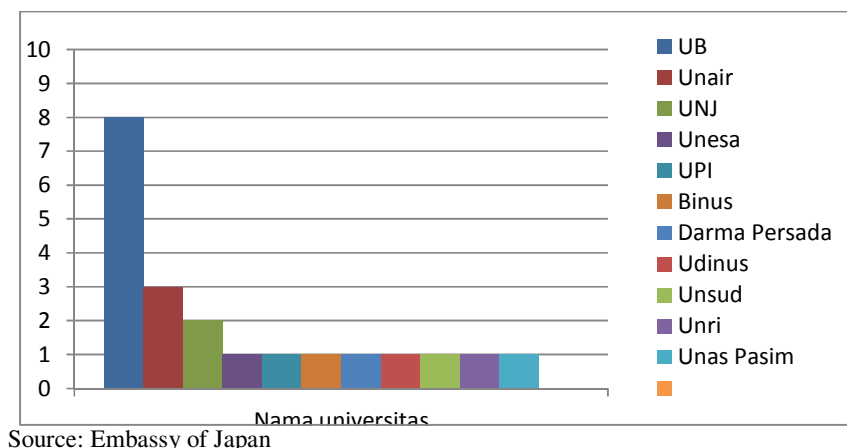
Graph of the result of *monbukagakusho* selection program of Japanese Studies 2013



Source: Embassy of Japan

The results of *Monbukagakusho* scholarship program selection of Japanese Studies in 2014 21 of Indonesia's Japanese language/literature students are graduated.

Graph of the result of *monbukagakusho* selection program of Japanese Studies 2014



Source: Embassy of Japan

From the data above, within three years from 2012 up to 2014, the number of Japanese students of Faculty of Cultural Study UB who successfully passed in *Monbukagakusho* scholarship selection were 19 students from total 57 of Indonesian students who get the opportunity to learn the language and culture of Japan for a year in Japan with the full cost from Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan.

The increasing ability of Japanese students is continued to be pursued especially in 2007 at UB has established S1 Japanese Literature Program. This stratum I level of education will provide the opportunity for Japanese Literature students to deepen their understanding in the lectures of *Kanji* (writing), *Goi* (vocabulary), *Bunpoo* (grammar), and *Dokkai* (reading comprehension). When the Japanese language education at the Universitas Brawijaya had Diploma III only, the opportunity for Japanese students to participate in the selection of the *Monbukagakusho* scholarship was only once based on the rules of Japanese Embassy although there were exceptions for second-year students who had good Japanese language skills and recommended by the colleges concerned.

B. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In improving Japanese language skills of the students who will be participated in the selection of *Monbukagakusho* scholarship of Japanese Studies program, it is necessary to give training for students which is called *benkyoukai*. Literally, the word *benkyou* means lessons or learn, and the word *kai* means gathering, a group. So the word *benkyoukai* can be interpreted as study groups. The participants who can attend this *benkyoukai* classes are the students who meet the requirements that have been defined by Japanese Literature Study Program. The requirements of the students who can attend *benkyoukai* classes are as follow: (1) have a GPA > 3.00 (2) pass JLPT (Japanese Language Proviency Test) level 3/N3 or Level 2/N2, and (3) pass the Placement Test.

There are 4 (four) types of Japanese language material which are more focused to be discussed in *benkyoukai* of *Monbukagakusho*. Those materials are *Kanji* (writing), *Goi* (vocabulary), *Bunpo* (grammar), and *Dokkai* (reading comprehension). *Kanji* is one of difficult material for Japanese learners because the numbers are so many. In *Daikanwa jiten* (Japanese dictionary) explained that there are approximately 50,000 *kanji* in Japan (Ishida, 1991: 76). But *kanji* which is often used in everyday life about 2000 letters. The numbers of *kanji* that need to be mastered by the student for *Monbukagakusho* test are approximately 2,000 letters (equivalent to JLPT Level N1). It will be difficult to achieve because the department/Japanese language and literature study program in Indonesia only target 1000 *kanji* to be mastered in the Japanese language learning curriculum.

The next matter that needs to be enriched for the student is *goi* (vocabulary). Sudjianto and Dahidi (2004: 97) cited the opinion of Yuriko Asano, Kasuga Shoozoo and Machi Hiromitsu to describe *goi*. *Kanji/語彙* on word/*goi/語彙* has the meaning *atsumaru koto* 'compilation' or 'set'. So the word *goi* can be interpreted as *collection of words*. According to the informant (one of *benkyoukai* teacher) *goi* material that often appeared in the selection of *Monbukagakusho* test is quite different from the existing *goi* material in the questions of JLPT International of Japanese language ability exam. *Goi* materials in *Monbukagakusho* exam often tend to bring up relevant terms of history, culture, literature, famous figure in Japan and so forth.

Sudjianto and Dahidi (2004: 133) argue that Japanese grammar can be divided based on differences of students who learn it, they are *Nihongo bunpou* and *Kokugo bunpou*. *Kokugo bunpou* is Japanese grammar within the scope of the *kokugo kyouiku* that is Japanese language education for Japanese people as his mother tongue, meanwhile *nihongo bunpou* is grammar taught outside of Japan as a second language and so on. *Bunpo* material (grammar) in *Monbukagakusho* exam questions many come from the *kokugo bunpou*. This is different

from the grammar material that appears on the questions in JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test) which is a Japanese grammar for the learners outside Japan.

Dokkai material (reading comprehension) is a material that has a larger percentage than the material of grammar, *kanji* and *goi*. Either *dokkai*, *bunpoo*, *kanji*, and *goi* are interrelated in learning Japanese. If you can not read *kanji* certainly you also can not understand the sentence, paragraph, or discourse as a whole. It is similar to *bunpoo* (grammar).

C. METACOGNITION

In *Monbukagakusho* scholarship selection, the most difficult material according to the respondents and *benkyoukai* teachers is *dokkai* (reading comprehension). This material has a grade integrity *bunpoo* material (grammar), *goi* (vocabulary) with grade integrity of about 30%, and *kanji* (writing) with grade integrity of 15%. These materials are related to each other. In the effort to increase understanding of readings which are included in one of the language skills certainly can not be separated from the role of language teaching psychology. Baker and Brown (Thierney, 1990: 302 via Muisman 2002) outlines that the reader actually has the metacognition ability which is not often recognized or known by the readers' themselves. The metacognition ability has a big role in the effort to understand the reading material. Knowledge about metacognition can lead the reader to know all the aspects that can expedite the process of reading, those are from the phase before reading up to what will be done after the reading process is complete. The metacognition term is introduced by Flavel is defined as a person's ability to control a variety of cognitive activities (Muisman, 2002: 24-26). Metacognition consists of metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experiences or regulation. Livingstone (1997 via Muisman 2002) defines metacognition as thinking about thinking or thinks about thinking. Metacognition, according to him is the ability to think where the thing becomes the object of thinking is a thinking process that is going on in the person himself.

D. METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This study uses primary data source. Sugiyono (2010: 193) explains that primary data source is data source that directly provide the data to the data collector. The data collection technique used is using a questionnaire given to 30 respondents. The respondents are the students of Japanese literature and Japanese language education students of Faculty of Cultural Study UB that have followed *benkyoukai monbukagakusho* exam preparation. In addition to use the questionnaire, data collection techniques are also used through unstructured interviews to one of *benkyoukai monbukagakusho* teacher who is also a native Japanese speaker in Faculty of Cultural Study UB. Interviews are conducted face to face and use a sound recording device (voice recorder).

E. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaires given to the students who had attended *Monbukagakusho benkyoukai* classes are done in two ways. First, the students fill out the questionnaire directly on the spot. Then the second, the students sent through email and social media that is through Facebook. The following are the questions contained in the questionnaire and the results of the discussion.

Question 1:

How many period you join *benkyoukai monbukagakusho*?

Respondents who answered one period were 21 respondents (80.7%), answered two periods were 5 respondents (19.2%), and none of them answer three periods.

Question 2:

Is there any statement letter/agreement that you sign contains commitment that you will join *benkyoukai* well and should show the results of the daily quiz grades above 60%?

Respondents who answered yes were 8 respondents (30.7%), and answered no were 18 respondents (69.2%).

Question 3:

Is there any oral agreement if the daily quiz score does not reach 60% of 3 times in a row within a period would be considered to fail in *benkyoukai*?

Respondents who answered yes were 25 respondents (96.1%) and respondents replied no was 1 respondent (3.8%).

Question 4:

When join *benkyoukai* class, what level you pass the JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test)?

Respondents who answered JLPT Level 2/N2 were 8 respondents (30.7%) and answered JLPT Level 3/N3 were 16 respondents (61.5%) and 2 respondents did not answer (7.6%).

The students who may join *monbukagakusho preparation* classes must pass at least JLPT N3 level. The materials provided in the class are the practice materials of JLPT N2 and N1 which have the higher difficulty levels.

Question 5:

How long the time you take within 1 (one) day to learn to prepare *benkyoukai* daily quiz?

Respondents who answered 1-2 hours were 13 respondents (50%), respondents who answered 3-4 hours were 11 respondents (42.3%), and the one who answered 5-6 hours were 2 respondents (7.6%), none of them answered more than 7 hours.

Question 6:

What materials do you find the most difficult in the *monbukagakusho* test?

Respondents who answered kanji and goi material were 6 respondents (23%), respondent who answered bunpoo was 1 respondent (3.8%), and those who answered dokkai were 19 respondents (73%)

Question 7:

When joining *benkyoukai*, do you also active in non-academic activities/student affairs?

Respondents who answered not active were 19 respondents (73%), and respondents who answered active were 7 respondents (26.9%).

Question 8:

Is there any effect after joining *monbukagakusho benkyoukai* toward JLPT result score?

Respondents who answered pass N1 level were 2 respondents (7.6%), respondents who answered the pass N2 level were 15 respondents (57.9%), and respondents who answered pass N3 level were 6 respondents (23%), respondents did not answer were 3 respondent (11, 5%).

Question 9:

Do you think the study program supports *benkyoukai* activities?

Respondents who answered strongly supports were 8 respondents (30.7%), respondents who answered adequately support were 14 respondents (53.8%), respondents who answered less support were 4 respondents (15.3%), and respondents who answered not support was 0 respondent.

Question 10:

Are *benkyoukai* materials and daily quizzes given by the teacher in accordance with the selection material of *monbukagakusho* written test?

Respondents who answered very appropriate were 4 respondents (15.3%), respondents who answered quite appropriate were 21 respondents (80.7%), respondents who answered less appropriate was 1 respondent (3.8%), and respondents who answered do not appropriate was 0 respondent.

Question 11:

Do the teachers often motivate you to repeat the materials at home?

Respondents who answered very often were 14 respondents (53.8%), respondents who answered often were 12 respondents (46.1%), and respondents who answered rarely and very rarely, each was 0 respondent.

Question 12:

Do the motivations given by the teachers make you study harder to deal with daily quizzes and *monbukagakusho* test?

Respondents who answered more enterprising were 12 respondents (46.1%), Respondents who answered enterprising enough were 14 respondents (53.8%), and none of them answered less enterprising and do not enterprising.

Question 13:

Do the existing facilities at Faculty of Cultural Study support *benkyoukai* activities?

Respondents who answered strongly supports was 1 respondent (3.8%), respondents who answered supports were 16 respondents (61.5%), respondents who answered less support were 7 respondents (27%) and respondents answered does not support was 1 respondent (3.8%).

Question 14:

Do you pass *monbukagakusho* selection?

Respondents who answered graduated were 15 respondents (57.6%) and respondents who answered do not pass were 11 respondents (42.3%)

Question 15:

It is a question that is answered by 11 respondents who did not pass *monbukagakusho* scholarship selection starts from the *benkyoukai* selection in Faculty of Cultural Study UB: At what stage of selection you do not pass?

Respondents who answered selection in Faculty of Cultural Study UB were 4 respondents (15.3%), respondents who answered selection of written test in East Java were 4 respondents (15.3%), respondent who answered an interview at the Embassy of Japan was 1 respondent (3.8%), and respondents who answered the last announcement from the Embassy of Japan were 2 respondents (42%).

Question 16:

Do you think the hard work and sacrifices you have done to *join monbukagakusho benkyoukai* is appropriate with the results achieved?

Respondents who answered appropriate were 23 respondents (88.4%), respondents who answered do not appropriate were 2 respondents (7.6%) and did not answer was one respondent (3.8%).

Question 17:

Do you think this *monbukagakusho benkyoukai* activities need to be continued in the future?

Respondents who answered yes were 26 respondents (100%) and (%), and respondents who answered no was 0%.

The students who participate in *monbukagakusho* scholarship selection are three-level upward as announced through the Embassy of Japan's website http://www.id.emb-japan.go.jp/sch_js.html, but there are exceptions for students who considered able to participate in *monbukagakusho* selection with the requirement that the students get recommendation of the concerned colleges and have learned more than one year in that university. A second-year Japanese student of UB ever passed this scholarship selection in 2007 and he took *benkyoukai* for two periods. For students who want to get the opportunity to study in Japan through *monbukagakusho* scholarships, when pass the test, it will have an impact on the completion of the study period for one year late, because they have take a terminal (on leave) college.

At the start of *monbukagakusho benkyoukai* activities begun at the end of 2005, the study program issued a policy that students who follow these *benkyoukai* must have a commitment or strong desire to be prepared in this selection. Until the implementation of *benkyoukai* in 2008, the students who joined *benkyoukai* should make a statement and signed the stamped agreement. The purpose is that students who join *benkyoukai* must achieve a minimum target score for daily quiz and placement test and cannot take a break in a semester because the activities are also conducted during semester breaks. The numbers of *benkyoukai* meetings are 70 times.

For students who want to have the opportunity to learn Japanese language and culture in Japan, things that need to be prepared according to the informant from the interviews are: the student must have a strong desire, have an ideal to go to Japan, should study hard, repeating materials described in *benkyoukai* and doing *shukudai* (homework) which are given.

F. CLOSING

In an effort to increase Japanese language ability of Japanese department/study program students, it is required treatment facilities such as *benkyoukai* (study group) to face *monbukagakusho* scholarship selection. Japanese regular lectures in all Japanese departments/study program in Indonesia has not been able to reach a level of Japanese understanding for *joukyuu* level (advanced level) which are tested in *monbukagakusho* selection. The differences of the material which is tested in the *monbukagakusho* selection from Japanese International capabilities test (JLPT) requires the teachers to give many exercises that the materials are taken from *kokugo bunpo* (Japanese grammar) for Japanese people. It certainly has a purpose of keep the students who graduated in *monbukagakusho* selection can join the lectures in university in Japan using the Japanese language as an instruction language and for the purposes of making a final report.

The factors that support the learning systems in order to *monbukagakusho* scholarship selection are: The role of study program, teachers, student of *benkyoukai* participants, materials and evaluation, and facilities and infrastructure. This research is expected to bring benefits to the department/other Japanese language study program to improve their Japanese language skills to compete to get *monbukagakusho* scholarship and have an impact to reach a higher level of Japanese language learners in Indonesia.

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