
LEARNING THE SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGES FROM STUDENTS AT TRADE UNION UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, knowing more than one language is becoming the youth's new trend, especially students from universities. This research is carried out to look into the students' various attitudes towards learning second foreign language. It is suggested that lecturers of other foreign languages should consider learning programs and try to make lectures more useful to help students learn second foreign language better.

Key Words: Second Foreign Language, Learning, Students, University.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current trend, expanding trade as well as cross-culture among countries is playing an important role in activating global development. In this situation, Vietnam expends many efforts on establishing friendly relationships with other countries as the prompt action to support the social tendency. However, it is believed that language related problems are an invisible barrier that retards this procedure, because foreign language is an effective method for understanding between nations [1, p.24]. As a result, improving multilingual ability is one of the important strategies in having a high- qualified education in Vietnam. Therefore, they can satisfy the global requisition as well as the typical demands of particular, culturally and linguistically distinct communities.” [1, p.16].

In Vietnam, the more other countries invest capital in infrastructure, education, and the more language centers are built up to meet learners' growing demands. To follow this trend as well as to extend the relation among many universities, Trade Union University regards training multilingual students as a significant target. Hence, educating second foreign pattern has been applied for the students for a long time. During the studying procedure, students have also been realizing the necessity of specializing in another language because of many different reasons. However, leaning second foreign language at Trade Union University still has many obstacles preventing the students from studying well. Therefore, this research has carried out to help students learns second foreign language more effectively. To reach the aims of the study, the following research questions will be attempted to answer: (i) What are the student attitudes toward learning second foreign language? (ii) What are the solutions, which help improve teaching and learning second foreign language?

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

To collect the data for this study, a questionnaire was developed. This questionnaire was delivered to English studying students; therefore, an English questionnaire is reasonable. The

questionnaire consisted of close-ended, open-ended and scaled items. It was designed to find out the students’ best language choice, the benefits and difficulties they had learn when learning the second foreign language as well as some solutions they regarded as the suitable method to improve their language level.

The subjects of the research were students from Trade Union University. They could offer exact answers or precise evaluation to support this research. Three thousands students were selected on voluntary basis from two hundreds classes.

The survey was administered with the lecturers’ supervision at Trade Union University in June, 2020. All the participants were given a questionnaire and allowed to read them first. Queries about points of difficulty were responded and the subjects then progressed to completing the questionnaires in Vietnamese. All handouts were collected for later processing after 30 minutes. All the data were input into the computer and then were analyzed by the software used for descriptive analysis.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part is a discussion of an overview of learning the second foreign language. It comprises choosing trend, advantages and difficulties which students are facing. 1) Students’ attitudes towards learning the second foreign language

Tendency of choosing the second foreign language			
Chinese	Korean	Japanese	Others
46%	31%	15%	8%

It is clear from figure 1 that a large number of students choose foreign languages like Chinese and Korean as the second foreign language to learn (77%), which means that Asian countries have had certain effects on Vietnam. Thus, cultural exchanges as day by day wider, and economic cooperation is more and more stable. Recently, these countries have invested money, infrastructure, and technology, in many fields in Vietnam, which helps open up new chances for students who know those languages beside English to get better positions with high salary. Moreover, learning regional languages has become the trend of students.

Reasons for choosing the second foreign language				
Good job opportunities	Favorite language	Popular language	Easy language	Others
50%	18%	21%	10%	1%

As is illustrated by the above figure, a half students liked to learn the second foreign language by hoping to have good jobs in the future (50%). Based on the result of the survey, it is expected that multilingual ability will support students in finding out sterling occupations. In addition to, asked informants also wished that foreign language skills can give them more opportunities for job improvement. This finding seems to go in line with Weatherford, the graduates' foreign language skills often enhance their flexibility and improve their chances for promotion [2]. On the other hand, only a minority of students (10%) stated that the main reason for their choice is getting high marks. The reason is that the second foreign language taking 300 lessons is a compulsory subject; hence, it could enable learners to enhance their final study result, if they easily gain good marks. Remaining 39% of students regarded the popularity and favor as the primary reason for their choice. Actually, indulgence is vital to the success of any jobs as 'if without love and feeling addiction is real then neither work is fluent' [3].

Difficulties in learning the second foreign language	
Boring lessons	83%
Limited time	46%
Difficults major	30%
Learners' laziness	15%
Others	2%

This figure reflects the responses to question 6 (What things prevent you from learning the second language?) in discovering what actually discouraged students to overcome their obstacles. Surprisingly, 83% students complained that most lessons were not enjoyable enough to attract them. This possibly results from that the applied textbooks focusing on dialogues and grammar are quite boring. There is no textbook specializing in vocabularies or pronunciation only, meanwhile, 30% students said that the second foreign language was difficult to learn, especially vocabulary. Moreover, the professors have not given suitable and interesting lectures yet. Apart from the biggest demanding, one disappointing thing is indeed that minority of students (15%) informed that the biggest problem is their laziness. However, Laziness is Vietnamese students' "inherent disease" and this can only be conquered "genius was 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration". Nearly 46% remaining informants revealed that they cannot arrange time properly. Already so "few other languages on Earth are as complex as English" [4], thus, students consumed much time to be good at English skills, such as listening, writing, translating skill and so on.

In the question "In your opinion, studying the second foreign language can be important, because..." the students expected the second foreign languages would bring about many advantages. Of the seven choices provided, students are looking forward to obtaining most of the benefits, which were enhancing confidence, communication skills and accessing the native

culture and people. The greatest number of subjects (90%) hoped to find good jobs in the future. Furthermore, the questionnaire indicated that 73% surveyed students believed that second foreign languages they chose would maximize positive effects on their future career. In those cases where the knowledge of second languages do not help students get a first job, their foreign language skills can bring about more chances for job improvement. It is the fact that “as you rise up your career ladder, it might be wise to learn another language or two” [5]. More specifically, 76% students have awaited the second foreign language could enrich their major language skills. Nearly 100% students did not expect to get opportunity to study abroad. If subjects wanted to get scholarship result from knowing the second language, they need a certain level in using it. Actually, it is quite difficult, because they were not confident with quality of language skills through lessons in class.

2) Suggestions

This second part will discuss methods to find out best solution to help learners get over troubles they are facing with.

Suggestions for difficulties in learning the second foreign language			
Creating favorable learning environment	Increasing studying hours	Applying high-tech equipment	Other opinion
80%	50%	43%	10%

It is immediately apparent from the figure 4 that 80% informants supported creating favorable environment for practicing those languages. They would like to join in language clubs as well as develop skills classes with direct instruction of foreign teachers like major language ones. This surely signals a professional environment in terms of teaching and learning. However, infrequently had students have opportunities to interact with foreigners. As the matter of fact, learners are rarely encouraged to make use of their language skills in the real world, the only practice they have in class [6]. Therefore, if Trade Union University can apply many more interesting lessons, provide with effective activities to practice speaking, etc., students can successfully study the second foreign languages. Thus, being contacted with native professors can help informants understand meanings, particular usages of words, grammar and culture of this country much better.

Furthermore, the chart shows that the increasing a number of studying hours at university is also necessary, at 50%. In fact, students only learn the second language at university 4 hours per week, which leads to the fact that students quickly forget much knowledge after the lesson; consequently, raising studying hours is an appreciate solution. Additionally, hi-tech equipment in training and learning such as computers, overhead projectors should be utilized more popularly. This conclusion stems from the fact that, this multimedia presentation, which can deliver exciting lessons enables the speaker to include charts, graphs, maps, video clips and sound in the

same talk [7]. Interestingly, 10% students shared ideas to improve learning the second language they are both changing content of books and changing studying frame work.

4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this small survey showed different attitudes of the students towards learning the second foreign language. Generally, each language can bring positive benefits. Even though, informants at Trade Union University are coping with a lot of remaining problems such as the demand of English is getting higher and more difficult, time arrangement is unsuitable; students are too lazy and the lessons are monotonous. The research revealed that most of the lessons at school are not enjoyable, which make them tired and dejected. Thus, it is recommended that lectures should deliberate learning programs, and try to make lectures more exciting to help students learn better.

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