

Research Article

Readiness of the 4th Semester Japanese Grammar Syllabus in Accomplishing the Learning Targets on MBKM Curriculum at Jakarta State University

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Abstract.

This study aims to find out how the suitability between the Bunpo IV syllabus is currently used with the language learning target in the Japanese Language Education Study Program at Jakarta State University which is based on the MBKM curriculum also known as Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. The curriculum is following the MBKM Curriculum listed in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020. The regulation said that students have the right to study outside of the campus after completing 4 semesters. Therefore, students can choose internship programs abroad or in the country, as well as participate in student exchange programs. The offers for internships are numerous, so it raises the interest of students to join it. But behind the enthusiasm of students for this Merdeka Belajar program, there is a concern that the learning targets of students who take part in the internship program, especially language courses, will decrease and not meet the target of learning study program itself. The main goal of the graduation requires students to pass the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level N3, before taking the thesis exam. Bunpo IV is a course that contains grammar level IV or equivalent intermediate level, this course is quite related and has become the foundation of other language courses. The material provided up to Bunpo IV is equivalent to the Japanese language skills in JLPT N3 which is the requirement for graduating from the study program. This study is part of research and development (R&D) with a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach. Especially for the first year of research, the approach used is a qualitative approach through document analysis currently used in the Bunpo IV course. The technique used in collecting data is records and archival review of syllabus, teaching materials, and JLPT N3 simulation results. From the JLPT simulation results, it was found that student readiness to pass JLPT N3 had only reached 23.5%. Of the respondents who did not pass, it was found that 9.8% did not pass the Moji Goi section (letters and vocabulary), 47.06% did not pass the Bunpo Dokkai section (grammar and reading comprehension), and 23.53% did not pass the Choukai section (listening comprehension). From this result, we know that it is necessary to re-evaluate and conduct the development study of syllabus of the Bunpo IV course based on the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, FBS UNJ.

Keywords: MBKM curriculum, Bunpo IV, JLPT N3

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Published 15 March 2024

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the I-CALLED Conference Committee.

 **OPEN ACCESS**

How to cite this article: Frida Philiyanti*, Cut Erra Rismorlita, Tia Ristiawati, Viana Meilani Prasetyo, Eva Jeniar Noverisa

1. Introduction

In the Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, it is stated that “Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state” [1]. From this definition, education can only be successful if students are proven to have developed their potential so that they can exist actively and positively in society. The society in question is a society in a broad sense, not only in its immediate environment but globally as part of the world community. In order to realize this, a quality synergy is needed from each learning component. This research departs from the renewal of one of the learning components, namely the curriculum. In Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020, it is stated that the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, learning materials, and methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve Higher Education goals. As one of the breakthroughs in education, the government, through Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020, issued a curriculum policy for Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka or MBKM.

Responding to the policy, Japanese Language Education Study Program, FBS UNJ, continues to improve in evaluating and revising the curriculum so that the Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) are achieved and can produce graduates according to the expected profile. As an embodiment of the learning plan, the next thing to do after establishing the curriculum is to design the syllabus. Syllabus is often defined as “plan that states exactly what students at a school or college should learn in a particular subject” [2]. Concerning the MBKM curriculum policy, following the provisions listed in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 that students have the right to study outside the Study Program after completing at least four semesters in the Study Program, this can only be done when students step on the fifth semester, or to be precise starting from the Class of 2020 and so on, in Japanese Language Education Study Program, FBS UNJ.

From the observation, it is known that students who take part in internship programs outside the Study Program get excellent insights into the field of Japanese. However, as a consequence, these students need more opportunities to deepen their Japanese at an advanced level, namely the fifth-semester language course. Meanwhile, one of the requirements to take the thesis examination in the study program is that students must have passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level N3. This is the urgency of this study because the syllabus of language courses, especially Bunpou or

grammar courses, has been designed to meet the N3 level language standards until the sixth semester. Nevertheless, in practice, after students join the MBKM program outside the study program, the risk of students not having N3-level Japanese language skills becomes bigger. Bunpou courses are prioritized because grammar courses are the basis for developing other language courses. Nihongo Kyouiku Gakkai or community of Japanese Language Education (2005) in [3] defines Bunpou or Grammar as follows「言葉を交わすときに、話し手と聞き手のあいだで共通の規則が共有されていなければ言葉は通じないし、規則に外された表現をすれば了解不能となる。文法とは、言葉にかかわるこうした規則のうち、文をつくるための規則の総体を指す。」(When exchanging words, unless common rules are shared between the speaker and listener, the words will not be understood, and if expressions that deviate from the rules are made, it will become incomprehensible. Grammar refers to the total set of rules for creating sentences among these rules related to language.)

Based on the above background, evaluating the Bunpou IV course syllabus in our study program is necessary. In developing a syllabus, according to experts, there are several syllabus design models, namely a) Munby Syllabus Design Model, b) Bell Syllabus Design Model, and c) Bell Syllabus Design Model [4]. This study was conducted using the Bell syllabus design model which consists of the following stages:

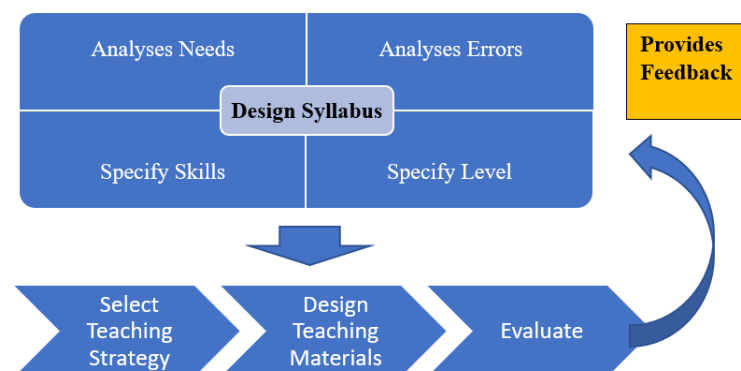


Figure 1: Bell's Syllabus Design Model.

As a first-year study, this research is on syllabus needs analysis in Japanese Language Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Jakarta. Richard (2005) says that the objectives of a needs analysis include [5]:

1. to find out what language skills are needed by students to perform specific roles, such as marketing manager, tour guide, etc.,
2. to determine which students need special training in a language skill,
3. to identify changes in direction perceived by people in a group,
4. to identify gaps in what students can do and what they need to master,

5. to gather information about problems that students are experiencing.
6. and others.

It appears from Richards' objectives that the purpose of the needs analysis in this study is to identify the gap between students' abilities and the demands of the curriculum set by the study program. The study results in this article discuss the condition of students' learning outcomes who have passed the Bunpou IV course, specifically concerning readiness to take the JLPT N3 test as one of the graduation requirements in the Japanese Language Education Study Program at UNJ. As a further step, the results of this study can be used as material for evaluating whether the syllabus of the Bunpou IV course based on the MBKM curriculum needs to be revised.

2. Material and Methods

This research is descriptive qualitative research. The technique used in collecting data are records and archival review of syllabus, teaching materials, and JLPT N3 simulation results. Below are the materials used as object of the study.

2.1. Bunpo IV Course Syllabus in Japanese Language Education Department of Universitas Negeri Jakarta

The syllabus of the currently used Bunpo IV course is analyzed to determine whether Bunpo IV learning has been designed according to the target of graduates, one of which is to pass JLPT N3. The syllabus is analyzed based on nine components: identity, competency standards, essential competencies, subject matter, learning activities, indicators, assessment, time allocation, and sources or learning materials or tools [6].

2.2. Bunpo IV Teaching Materials

Teaching materials used at this time is "New Approach Japanese Intermediate Course" [7]. It is analyzed to determine whether there is conformity with the material in JLPT N3.

2.3. JLPT N3 Simulation Results

JLPT N3 test simulation uses N3 simulation material from the question collection book JLPT N3 『日本語のうりよく試験JLPT公式問題集N3』 [8].

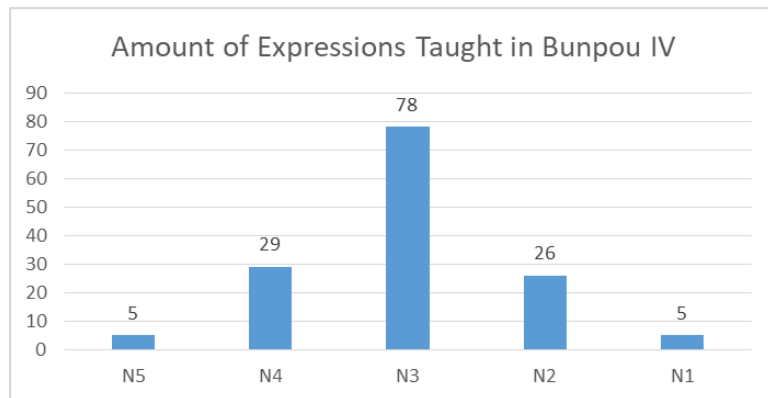


Figure 2: Relations between Learning Materials and JLPT N3 Materials.

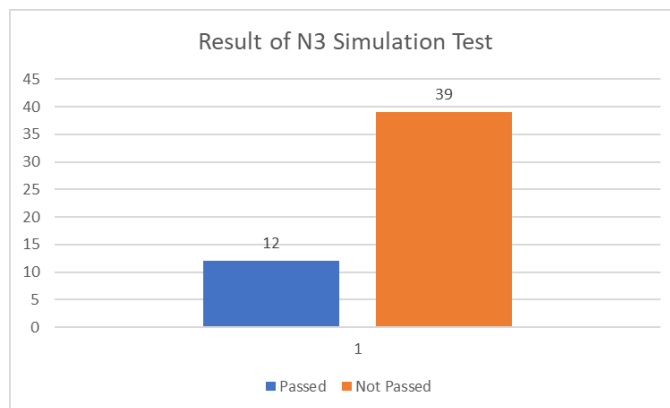


Figure 3: Result of N3 Simulation Test.

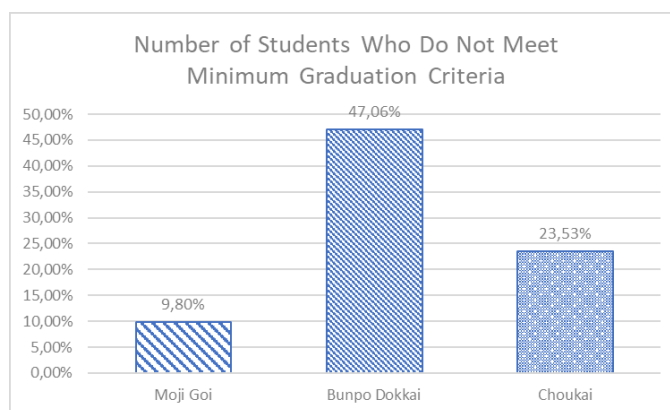


Figure 4: Number of Students Who Do Not Meet Minimum Graduation Criteria.

3. Results and Discussion

This section will present the results of the document analysis of the syllabus and teaching materials used in current Bunpo IV courses.

3.1. Bunpo IV Course Syllabus in Japanese Language Education Department of Universitas Negeri Jakarta

The Bunpou IV syllabus generally contains the components required by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. Bunpou IV is a grammar course equivalent to 3 credits and is a course that can be taken by students who have completed Bunpou III. Specifically, the competency standards in the syllabus are contained in the course description: “This course is a continuation of Bunpou III which studies Japanese grammar at intermediate level 2 with the goal of language proficiency equivalent to A 2.2/B 1.1 JF Standard. This course focuses on grammar in complex sentences to communicate both in daily life and the world of work. In addition to the grammar translation method and structural approach, learning also uses various student-centered methods and approaches such as small group discussion, cooperative learning, self-directed learning and the like. This course is held to support the achievement of graduate profiles as beginner Japanese language teachers, beginner translators, and managers of Japanese language education programs”. In the Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) section, it is written that this course aims for students to understand the sentence patterns listed in the textbook. The subject matter taught is Japanese expressions chapters 7 to 20. Learning activities are in the form of a flipped classroom with cooperative learning methods. The syllabus also includes learning indicators and their relation to each CLO. Assessment is done comprehensively ranging from attitude, knowledge, general, and special skills. Time allocation and learning resources have also been determined.

3.2. Bunpo IV Teaching Materials

From the results of the analysis of teaching materials, it is known that the main book consists of 143 expressions which are taught 55% are expressions that appear in JLPT N3 questions. The following is the correlation between the teaching materials listed in the book “New Approach Intermediate Japanese” chapter 7 to chapter 20 and the JLPT question materials.

3.3. JLPT N3 Simulation Results

The Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level N3 simulation test was conducted to determine the readiness of the Bunpo 4 course to meet the demands of the MBKM curriculum. The trial was conducted openly for students who had completed or passed

the Bunpo 4 course. From the registration distribution, there were 62 applicants, but only 51 people took the whole series of tests.

The test consisted of three sessions, namely Moji Goi (letters and vocabulary), Bunpo Dokkai (grammar and reading comprehension), and Choukai (listening). Implementation through the e-exam application so that the exam work can be supervised directly by the lecturer, and all participants must turn on the ka-mera and cannot open other website windows during the test. The simulation was conducted on Saturday, August 4, 2023.

Here are the results of the JLPT N3 exam simulation. It is known that out of 51 participants who took the exam, only 12 people passed. If a graph is made, it looks as follows:

As an evaluation of the syllabus, an analysis of the test results based on parts of the JLPT questions was also carried out, and it was found that the following were the number of students who did not meet the minimum completion criteria:

From the data collected above, in terms of teaching material, the textbook used is in accordance with the JLPT N3 test material. This means that the Bunpou IV course is sufficient to equip students choosing to study off-campus in the framework of MBKM in semester five and beyond. This is evidenced by the textbook material, in which 55% or 78 expressions are equivalent to the N3 test material. Meanwhile, from the test simulation results, 47.06% of students still needed to meet the minimum completeness criteria in the Bunpou Dokkai section (grammar and reading comprehension). This proves that there are parts that need to be addressed in Bunpou IV courses other than teaching materials. Furthermore, to find out whether the Bunpou IV course is compatible with JLPT, it is necessary to look at the syllabus as an overview of the entire course. As Matejka and Kurke (1994) defined, A well-designed course syllabus can serve a variety of purposes: as an agreement between teacher and student, as a device for communicating seriousness and expectations, as an overall plan of action for the course, and as a cognitive map of the course to share with students [2].

In order to see the suitability of courses with JLPT, it is necessary to first know what the purpose of JLPT itself is. According to the official website for organizing the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) <https://www.jlpt.jp> 2023, the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) has been offered by the Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services (JEES) since 1984 as a reliable means to evaluate and certify Japanese language proficiency for non-native speakers [8]. At first, there were about 7,000 examinees worldwide. In 2011, there were 610,000 test takers worldwide, making the JLPT the largest scale Japanese language test in the world. Over time, test applicants have become more diverse,

and the use of JLPT results has expanded from measuring skills to include job screening and evaluation for promotion and use in life in Japan as a foreign resident.

In response to these changes, the JLPT has been reviewed and revised starting in 2010. The four important points of the new version of the JLPT are as follows [9]:

1. Revised to measure communicative competence required to perform tasks,
2. Revised to increase the number of levels from 4 to 5,
3. Revised to achieve score equating,
4. Revised to provide a Japanese-Language Proficiency Test Can-do List (tentative).

Important point number 1 is to increase focus on communicative competence. Japanese language proficiency measured in this new test consists of 1) knowledge of Japanese and 2) competence. This proficiency is measured through three test sections, namely, language knowledge, reading and listening. Language knowledge measures Japanese language knowledge, while reading and listening measure competency. Bachman & Palmer further added that the competence required to perform communicative tasks, as measured by the JLPT, is defined as the Japanese language learner's ability to perform tasks in the domain of target language use [10]. Meanwhile, points 2 to 4 are not directly related to the MBKM-based curriculum in our study program, so they are not included in the scope of discussion in this study. What needs to be underlined is the competency required in the N3 target and the course learning outcomes (CLO) which written as competency standards in the Bunpou IV syllabus. There is no compatibility between Bunpou IV CLO which more emphasis on understanding grammar and expression and seems not enough to meet the JLPT N3 target which more emphasis on communicative skills using intermediate level Japanese grammar and expressions. This will also give impacts on learning approaches, methods and techniques in the classroom. Methods with grammar translation methods and structural approaches are not in accordance with the communicative competency targets which are more reliable for students in the MBKM curriculum. The student-centered approach that has been used so far is more about student-centered activities to solve grammatical problems only, rather than activities aimed specifically at their communicative abilities. Therefore, a syllabus with a communicative approach is needed to align the competency standards of the Bunpou IV course with the objectives of the JLPT. The following is a summary of communicative approaches with traditional approaches [11].

TABLE 1: Summary of Contrast Between Communicative Approach and Traditional Approaches.

Communicative Approach	Traditional Approaches
Performance of Behavioural Objectives	Academic/Linguistic Objectives
Utterances/Messages/Meanings	Sentences
Discourse (as semantic units)	Text (as formal structures)
Use	Usage
Spontaneity/Fluency	Accuracy/'valued' language
Function/Notions	Grammar
Goal : to teach how to satisfy communicative needs	Goal : to teach a language
Appropriacy of lexis	Often, restricted registers/lexis
Communicative Competence	Linguistic Competence

The nine points above will be the focus of research in developing the syllabus for language courses, especially Bunpou IV in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, because in practice the current condition of Japanese language teaching, especially Bunpou courses, still mostly uses a traditional approach.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of document and data analysis, there are several points discussed in the research findings. The structure of the Bunpou IV syllabus is generally in accordance with the components required by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. Apart from that, the teaching material in the main book used is sufficient to meet the expressions that appear in the JLPT N3 questions, but in the results of the JLPT N3 test simulation it is known that there are still many students who have not successfully passed and do not meet the minimum completion criteria score in the Bunpou Dokkai section. In contrast to previous research, this paper finds that there is a discrepancy between the learning outcomes of the Bunpou IV course which places more emphasis on understanding grammar and expressions and the JLPT N3 target which places more emphasis on communicative skills using intermediate level Japanese grammar and expressions. This will of course influence the choice of approaches, methods and learning techniques that will be used in the classroom. The approach and methods applied are more focused on activities that aim specifically at communicative abilities through student-centered activities, which is one of the characteristics of the MBKM curriculum.

Acknowledgment

This paper and the research behind it would not have been possible without the exceptional support of LPPM Universitas Negeri Jakarta.

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