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A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HYFLEX LEARNING IN AN INTERMEDIATE JAPANESE LANGUAGE COURSE

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ABSTRACT

Abstract—This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of HyFlex Learning in an intermediate Japanese language course. The sample consisted of 88 undergraduate students enrolled in the intermediate Japanese course during the semester in which the study was conducted. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. The research employed a quasi-experimental design, specifically a one-group pretest-posttest design. The research instruments included pretest and posttest achievement tests administered before and after the implementation of HyFlex Learning. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired-samples t-test. The results indicated that after the implementation of HyFlex Learning, students' learning achievement was significantly higher than before instruction at the .05 level of significance. The mean pretest score was 18.58, while the mean posttest score was 22.19. These findings suggest that HyFlex Learning is an effective instructional approach and is well suited to intermediate Japanese language courses with large numbers of students. Moreover, it can effectively address limitations related to time and opportunities for practicing language skills.

Keywords—Effectiveness of HyFlex Learning, flexible learning, Japanese language

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. To compare students' learning achievement before and after the implementation of HyFlex Learning.
2. To examine the effectiveness of HyFlex Learning in a Japanese language course.

INTRODUCTION

In the present era, higher education faces numerous challenges, including increasing student enrollment, diverse learner backgrounds, and limitations related to time and place. As a result, flexible learning has become an important approach to addressing learners' diverse needs. This trend has been particularly evident in the post-COVID-19 context, which has accelerated educational institutions' transition toward learning models that integrate online and on-site instruction.

One instructional model that has gained considerable attention is HyFlex Learning,

developed by Beatty (2019). This model allows learners to choose their mode of participation according to their convenience, whether by attending face-to-face classes, joining live online sessions, or studying asynchronously through digital media. A key principle of HyFlex Learning is the maintenance of equivalency, ensuring that all learning modes provide comparable learning experiences.

International studies have shown that HyFlex Learning can effectively enhance student access and engagement. Learners report higher levels of satisfaction, and their learning achievement is comparable to that of students in traditional instructional formats (Miller et al., 2013; Raes et al., 2020). Moreover, HyFlex Learning promotes greater learner responsibility by enabling students to select learning methods that best fit their schedules, readiness, and personal contexts.

Research conducted in Thailand, such as the study by Plailek, T., Kitjarak, T., and Plailek, W. (2023), found that students who participated in HyFlex Learning combined with project-based learning demonstrated high levels of creative problem-solving ability. They were also able to produce innovative work of high quality, achieving high average scores. In addition, students expressed clearly positive attitudes and perceptions toward this learning model. These findings indicate that integrating HyFlex Learning with project-based learning effectively supports student learning and represents a promising approach for developing essential 21st-century skills.

Similarly, Autthapon Intasena (2024) reported that HyFlex Learning significantly improved students' learning achievement and attitudes. This evidence suggests that HyFlex Learning is well suited to modern educational systems that emphasize flexibility and responsiveness to individual learner needs.

The researcher previously implemented the HyFlex Learning instructional approach in a general education Basic Japanese course at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and conducted a survey to examine students' opinions toward HyFlex Learning. The survey results are presented as follows.

Table 1 Number and Percentage of Students' Perceptions of the Important Roles of HyFlex Learning

Important Roles	Percentage (%)	Number (n)
1. Learners can flexibly manage their learning according to their own learning styles.	66.7	200
2. Learners have choices in learning with instructors and experts (on-site, online, or on-demand).	67.0	201

Important Roles	Percentage (%)	Number (n)
3. Promotes self-directed learning by allowing learners to study at their own pace.	63.0	189
4. Promotes collaborative learning through online discussions, group projects, and virtual language exchange programs.	33.3	100

Table 1 presents the frequencies and percentages related to aspects of HyFlex Learning that play an important role for students. The findings indicate that students perceived multiple benefits of HyFlex Learning. The aspect receiving the highest level of agreement was that learners have options to study with instructors and experts through on-site, online, or on-demand modes, with 201 students (67.0%) agreeing. This result demonstrates that students value having diverse learning options within the learning process. The second most agreed-upon aspect was that learners can flexibly manage their learning according to their own learning styles, with 200 students (66.7%) expressing agreement. In addition, 189 students (63.0%) agreed that the HyFlex Learning model promotes personalized learning and allows learners to study at their own pace, reflecting the importance of self-directed learning within the HyFlex Learning system. The aspect with the lowest percentage of agreement was the promotion of collaborative learning through online discussions, group projects, and virtual language exchange programs, with 100 students (33.3%) indicating agreement.

The data in this table indicate that students perceive HyFlex Learning as playing an important role in their learning, particularly in terms of flexibility, the availability of multiple learning options, and the ability to learn according to their own capacity. In contrast, the role of online collaborative learning is perceived to a lesser extent compared with the other aspects.

In the context of Japanese language instruction, which requires students to practice multiple skills—such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing—continuous and sustained practice is essential. However, at present, the number of students enrolled in Japanese language programs is relatively large, making it difficult for instructors to provide sufficient speaking practice or interactive activities for all students within the limited class time. As a result, traditional teaching methods are insufficient for the comprehensive development of students' language skills. The researcher therefore views HyFlex Learning as a potential approach to addressing this issue.

HyFlex Learning provides opportunities for students who are unable to attend on-site classes or who require additional time to practice their skills to learn through online platforms, review lessons asynchronously, or participate in flexible skill-based activities according to their individual needs. This approach also helps reduce classroom congestion, enabling instructors to organize learners into smaller groups for skill practice more effectively.

Due to the large number of students enrolled in Japanese language courses, together with time constraints, instructors have adapted their instructional approach from traditional methods to HyFlex Learning. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of HyFlex Learning in enhancing language

skills and improving students' learning efficiency requires further investigation. This need forms the rationale for the present study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study on the effectiveness of HyFlex Learning in an intermediate Japanese language course was conducted using the following research methodology.

1. Population and Sample

1.1 The sample was selected using purposive sampling. It consisted of two class of undergraduate students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, totaling 88 students.

1.2 The duration of the study was from late January to March 2025. Instruction was conducted for 3 hours per week over a period of 6 weeks, excluding the pretest and posttest periods.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 The HyFlex Learning instructional model.

2.2 A Japanese language proficiency test focusing on comprehension, administered before and after instruction.

3. Data Collection Procedures

3.1 A pretest was administered to assess students' prior knowledge.

3.2 Instruction was conducted using the HyFlex Learning model.

3.3 A posttest was administered to assess students' learning achievement.

3.4 The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including the mean, were calculated, and the mean scores between the pretest and posttest were compared using an independent-samples t-test.

3.5 The results of the data analysis were presented in the form of tables and descriptive explanations.

RESULTS

The results of the pretest and posttest are as follows.

Table 2 shows the mean scores of the experimental group before and after the intervention.

	N	Pretest		Posttest		T	P
		\bar{X}	S.D	\bar{X}	S.D		
Sample group	88	18.58	6.079	22.19	7.506	11.15	.001

As shown in Table 2, the experimental group consisted of 88 students. The mean pretest score was 18.58 with a standard deviation of 6.079, while the mean posttest score increased to 22.19 with a standard deviation of 7.506. The results of the paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($t = 11.15$, $p = .001$), indicating that students' learning achievement after the implementation of HyFlex Learning was significantly higher than before instruction at the .05 level of significance.

The research findings indicate that HyFlex Learning is an effective instructional approach for Japanese language courses, as students' learning achievement increased significantly at the statistical level.

CONCLUSION

Most students had prior experience with and were familiar with courses delivered through the HyFlex Learning system. They also made use of a variety of learning resources, such as live-streamed classes, recorded lecture videos, and supplementary instructional clips provided by the instructor. This indicates that learners were able to select learning modalities that best matched their levels of understanding and readiness, thereby enabling more comprehensive and effective access to course content. In addition, the ability to review learning materials at any time contributed to continuous learning and helped reduce misunderstandings that may occur in traditional face-to-face classrooms.

Furthermore, HyFlex Learning supported essential learning skills that directly influence academic achievement, including self-regulated learning, the ability to learn at one's own pace, opportunities for repeated review, and increased convenience and time efficiency, which helped reduce stress and time-related pressure. These factors play a crucial role in enhancing learners' comprehension. Although some challenges were identified, such as reduced interaction, decreased motivation, and technological issues, overall, students expressed positive to very positive attitudes toward HyFlex Learning across multiple dimensions. In particular, convenience, flexibility, time management, and access to learning materials were highly rated, all of which significantly contributed to improved learning achievement. These findings are consistent with the study by Chen, L.-L. (2022), which emphasized that online

instructors must carefully select appropriate digital learning tools and design effective instructional media to promote interaction and foster dynamic and engaging learning experiences.

In terms of the learning achievement of students majoring in Japanese, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Autthapon Intasena (2024), who reported that HyFlex Learning can support learners' learning processes through self-directed learning, content review, and learning at one's own pace. These factors contribute to the improvement of students' academic achievement in higher education. Therefore, the results of the present study confirm that HyFlex Learning not only enhances learning convenience but also has a positive impact on the quality of learning in the context of Thai universities.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study on HyFlex Learning, the following recommendations are proposed for further development and improvement.

1. Recommendations for Instructional Management

Learning activities should be designed to promote student engagement across all learning modes. Particular emphasis should be placed on enhancing interaction between in-class and online students to ensure alignment and effectiveness. In addition, self-regulated learning support systems—such as assignment notification systems, progress-tracking tools, and academic advising—should be implemented to help students manage their time more effectively and increase their level of participation in learning activities.

2. Recommendations for Technology

The technological infrastructure should be improved to ensure system stability, including live-streaming systems, video recording equipment, and learning platforms, in order to provide students with smooth and reliable access to learning resources. Training sessions or user manuals should also be provided for both instructors and students to ensure readiness and effective use of HyFlex Learning systems. Furthermore, student motivation should be enhanced through the integration of Active Learning approaches and gamification strategies.

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