

Approaching the Japanese Language Education for Technical Intern Trainees - Multiple Case Studies towards Building a Multicultural Coexistence Society -

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ABSTRACT

The environment for small- and medium-sized businesses in Japan has changed significantly due to a declining birth rate and an aging population. Many industries that rely on simple or manual labor depend on foreign workers to survive. As the government has been forced to review the system, the technical intern trainees are not Japan's way of allowing them to learn skills; instead, they provide a labor force vital to Japan's industry and economy. The training and technical internship system for foreigners is a system under which Japanese companies accept trainees from overseas countries through organizations, etc., and send them back to their home countries after on-the-job training (OJT) in the workplace. However, the government has been reluctant to implement immigration policies. Instead, it emphasizes the importance of multicultural coexistence. Recently, more attention has been paid to foreign workplace workers' Japanese language communication skills. This study examines Japanese language training in the Tohoku region of Japan, using case studies from two companies. It analyzes interactions in the field and identifies language and communication problems. The author collected data from the questionnaires, interviews, natural conversation recordings, and follow-up interviews. Based on this analysis, the study recommends that host companies conduct Japanese language communication, intercultural communication awareness, and team-building training. These are not only good for technical intern trainees but would also be helpful for small- and medium-sized enterprises to stimulate Japanese employees to improve their skills, create a comfortable workplace, and serve as an opportunity for further development.

Keywords: Technical Intern Trainees, Japanese Language Training, Intercultural Communication Awareness Training, Team Building Training, Multicultural Coexistence Society

1) INTRODUCTION

In Japan, labor migration for employment in low-skill jobs has yet to be an option. However, several essential channels for labor supply to employers for low-skilled jobs have been and are in place. The Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) was established as a formal program in 1993, based on the high evaluations of training programs conducted by foreign local companies and others in employee training since the late 1960s. However, until recently, while the Japanese government has created programs that open pathways to permanent residence for the "gifted and talented," it has not opened such pathways to long-term residence for less-skilled migrant workers [1]. For several decades, most foreign migrants have only been admitted through the back door as temporary workers under the guise of "trainees" or "interns" in the TITP[2].

In this regard, in March 2006, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) released its "Report of the Working Group on the Promotion of Multicultural Coexistence," hereafter referred to as the "MIC Report," in response to the needs of the growing population of foreign residents, especially newcomers, who need access to public services. It is, therefore, timely to review how the various levels of the Japanese government are attempting to integrate resident foreigners into Japanese society, considering the emerging discourse of 'multicultural coexistence'.

On the other hand, Japanese language training for Technical Intern Trainees (TITs) by sending institutions

varies and is not guaranteed. Soon after TITs arrive in Japan, they receive off-the-job training, such as primary Japanese language and culture classes, and are then sent to their respective companies. Once TITs arrive at the host company, they are managed by their employers and supported by supervisory organizations that handle immigration paperwork, connect workers with employers/farms, and oversee training. The host company is responsible for the workers' housing, round-trip airfare, and off-the-job training fees [3]. Regardless of whether supervising organizations and host companies voluntarily support Japanese language training, some do, and some do not.

Therefore, it is rare to find a study that examines this system from the perspective of the host company and suggests what issues the host company side should recognize and how they should respond thoughtfully. Although there have been references to the involvement of both TITs and host companies in Japanese language training, it cannot be said that sufficient consideration has been given to how support and guidance are provided as proactive social actors in the context of TITs' lives. Considering the above, it seems essential to think of TITs as Japanese language learners beyond the classroom and to evaluate study support at the host companies. However, concrete measures must be taken and formulated immediately [4].

'Multicultural coexistence' is the national government's long-standing policy for dealing with the growing number of foreign residents living in local communities. The term has been widely used since the 1990s, mainly spurred by efforts to support foreign residents following the Great Hanshin Awaji earthquake in January 1995 [5]. The policy represents the Japanese contextualization of multiculturalism, recognizing the possibility of permanent residence for a growing number of foreign workers and their presence in Japanese communities. In particular, the latest iteration of this policy, released in September 2020, emphasizes that new immigrants are contributing members of Japanese society who should share in building multicultural communities (Immigration Services Agency of Japan, 2019). Diversity and inclusion are the key terms used in the government's recognition of the need to build communities that facilitate connections and collaboration among community members who face common challenges, including the post-coronavirus society. The plan also recommends incorporating the viewpoint of foreign residents in efforts to revitalize and globalize local communities (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan, 2020). In summary, foreign residents are key actors in implementing multicultural coexistence policies. For this reason, an essential part of the current study is to examine how the perspectives of these foreign residents, represented here by technical interns, have been explored and described.

2) BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Various quarters have pointed out the low level of Japanese proficiency among TITs in the past. In most cases, the continuation of Japanese language study during the training period is left to the individual judgment of the TITs, and some of them attend Local Japanese language classes on their days off if they wish to continue their studies. Of course, some TITs do not continue their studies.

According to the government's report, as of November 2021, 877 of Japan's 1,896 municipalities are so-called Japanese education blank zones, meaning they have not been able to establish enough language schools or programs excluding university and similar programs aimed at international students to meet the needs of foreign workers. The number of foreigners living in those underserved municipalities totals 178,000, which accounts for 6% of the 2.82 million living in the country as of June 2021. Therefore, many foreigners who come to Japan face mainly "language barriers," "institutional barriers," and "cultural barriers" and encounter a variety of problems in their daily lives [6]. The various everyday issues are becoming more diverse as the foreign population increases.

While interviewing those concerned about the actual situation of TITs who continue to study Japanese at local Japanese language classes, the author found that the conventional discussion on the state of "Japanese language education for technical trainees" has remained extremely limited, focusing on group training before and after their arrival in Japan. In addition, there have been numerous studies on the technical internship system and TITs regarding the system, laws, labor systems, etc. However, this study will focus on the guidance and support of host companies.

First, let us look at studies that view the host companies as a place of mutual learning. Yamada (2002) points out the need for two different types of Japanese language training for those who host foreign workers [7]. One is language acquisition as compensatory education, which should provide opportunities to acquire a certain level of Japanese proficiency. The other is mutual learning as social education, in which Japanese and foreigners learn together rather than foreigners learning alone. Second, consider a study that examines the relationship between TITs and Japanese employees, which affects Japanese language learning. Feng's survey of companies that hosted TITs showed that the lack of relationships with Japanese people in the company led to the neglect of the TITs' Japanese language learning, which in turn led to a decrease in motivation to learn Japanese and an exacerbation of the lack of Japanese language proficiency [8]. Takamoto (2021) suggests that the impact of cultural differences on communication needs to be carefully assessed, and support should be provided for both

foreign and Japanese staff [9].

Finally, let us look at studies on the presence of Japanese language trainers and consultants in host companies. Nakagawa and Kamiya (2018) focus on the learning environment and attitudes toward learning. Interviews with TITs indicate the importance of building close personal relationships with people in the host company who are most comparable to the TITs and the importance of facilitators who connect TITs with the local community and play an essential role in their Japanese language learning [10]. As another indication of the importance of support for Japanese language training at host companies, Akahane et al. (2013) found that the pass rate on the national exam was higher at facilities where EPA caregiver candidates worked if they were actively preparing for the Japanese language and national exams. Akahane et al.(2013) state that it is sufficient for the host company to have developed communication skills, regardless of the score on the written test [11].

TITs have become valuable because they strengthen and develop Japan's economy by contributing their physical and cognitive resources. Several studies have focused on analyzing the positive effects of work on these special workers. However, part of this phenomenon has yet to be fully explored. There is also a growing body of literature dealing with the difficulties associated with the discrepancy between one's employment aspirations and the challenges posed by employment and training barriers.

The present study aims to describe and investigate the training phenomenon for TITs, focusing on the specific difficulties and promoting a positive communicative climate through a training program. Through interviews and focus groups with privileged participants, this study aims to determine whether and how a training intervention contributes to improved well-being and smooth communication for TITs, better social adaptation and general inclusion, and the building of a Multicultural coexistence society in Japan.

3) THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Jupp and Hodlin (1975) published Industrial English, establishing a national industrial language training (ILT) program [12]. During this period, several approaches to communication training for multiracial workplaces developed. Arnold and Hilary (1985) examined three approaches to industrial training. These are language training for speakers of English as a second language, intercultural communication courses for native and non-native speakers of English, and team-building projects [13]. This paper describes the concept of industrial language training and outlines the employment situation of TITs in Japan. The aim is to critically evaluate each of these approaches, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of each. The reason for using this framework is that the following ideas are consistent with this research. The program's work is based on the view that improved communication can increase opportunities and participation for individuals and contribute to overall workplace efficiency.

The Department of Labor described the benefits of the industrial language training program as follows:

Where language training has already been introduced, it has improved communication and safety standards and increased productivity. Relations between immigrants and native workers have also enhanced. Language training could also have a significant social impact by enabling immigrants to participate more fully in the community [14]. The decision to establish a national scheme was taken against a background of government concern about issues of racial disadvantage. These were examined and reported during the early 1970s in studies carried out by Political & Economic Planning (PEP). The 1940s, 50s, and early '60s were primarily concerned with procedures for selecting the linguistic content of language courses [15]. Investigations of language needs in industry and commerce have employed participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, content analysis of job descriptions and job advertisements, tests, role play, and analysis of communication breakdowns [16]. Therefore, the initial language training focused only on language. However, in the 1980s, communication and cultural elements began to be incorporated. The main difference between the 1975 and 1981 aims is that the term 'language training' has been replaced by 'communication skills,' and attention is now focused on everyone in the workplace rather than the ethnic minority worker. So field-work needs to be done to find out:(a) a description of the language needs in real situations, (b) a description of the types of tasks or activities people need to engage in in order to function in particular situations, and (c) a description of the groups and individuals who need or want to work in these situations and what their language learning ability, motivation etc[17].

Concern with the essential two-way process of communication is reflected in the fact that ILT aims at improving communication skills on both sides by (a) improving the English language skills of workers from overseas in ways relevant to their work and (b) by providing management, trade union officials and others with information and skills relevant to effective communication between people in different cultural groups. Policies like those in immigrant countries can be applied in Japan, where the number of foreign workers continues to increase. Therefore, in this study, we use ILT as a theoretical framework to observe how Japanese companies conduct language training, intercultural communication, and team building for TITs.

4) METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The case study approach for a specific geographic region is a standard research method for studying small and medium enterprises [18]. Yin (2003) stated that case study research is appropriate when the researcher is interested in contemporary events and cannot control or manipulate behavioral events [19]. A critical sample represents an exceptional case from which the researcher can study the phenomenon. It falls under the purposive sampling technique, where the researcher intentionally selects individuals and locations to help the researcher learn or better understand the phenomenon [20].

The basic information of the case is below in Table 1.

Table 1. two cases

	A Inc.	B Inc.
Industry	Industry A Company that does everything in-house, from catching and raising seafood to producing and selling seafood products.	B Construction company with two divisions: the Track Division, which builds and maintains railroad tracks, and the Civil Engineering Division, which works on railroads, roads, and rivers.
TITs	9 Vietnamese women	5 Vietnamese men
Language training	Invite a teacher from a local Japanese language class once a week on Friday mornings from September to February and hold a study session at the company.	Utilize a local Japanese language class and hold a study session at the company once a week.
Main job TITs do	Process sea urchin, abalone, sea cucumber, and oyster.	Builds and maintains railway tracks.
Characteristics of the job	Simple manual work, so TITs learn quickly and get used to the job.	Takes 3 years to get used to the job because of the large number of tools and the need to work quickly.
Working Issue	With senior staff, newcomers feel it is not a problem even if they do not speak Japanese.	Communication in the field through the above study is not a problem, but how to continue it is an issue.
Living Issue	The manager was worried about the TITs living in rented apartments.	No problem because we have our own dormitory, and every time we have a problem, we solve it.
Language Training	From September to February, once a week on Friday mornings for an hour and a half.	Once a week on Wednesday afternoon before the night shift starts. Attend the local volunteer Japanese class twice a month.
Teachers	Four teachers from a local NPO Japanese class	Manager
Materials	The company bought books for everyone.	The company bought a book, and everyone copied it.

In this study, the author conducted interview-based research using the semi-structured interview method. The interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder, and verbatim transcripts of each informant in the study were prepared as voice data. The informants in the study were anonymized, and personal information was made unidentifiable. The interviews lasted approximately one hour per person. The main questions were: (1) what kind of Japanese language training supports TITs at the workplace? (2) What is the reason for the host company to support TITs with Japanese language training at all? (3) What are the differences before and after the training at the workplace? (4) What was the impetus for you to incorporate cross-cultural communication rather than just language training, and how did this lead to team building? As for the interview with TITs, it was set up in such a way that they would mainly talk about their daily lives and feelings about working in Japanese companies. In addition to interviews with managers, I visited Japanese language classes three times and participated in in-house study sessions five times.

The research methodology includes four sections below: (1) the participants, (2) the research design, (3) data collection, and (4) data analysis.

(1) The participants

The participants of this study were one Japanese manager and 9 Vietnamese TITs working at company A, then one Japanese manager and 5 Vietnamese TITs working at company B. The participants would have had

substantial time to establish relationships and communicate inter-culturally in the organization. They met the predetermined criteria of using Japanese to communicate with Japanese speakers at their workplaces. Some reached a certain level, indicating they had high Japanese proficiency, while others did not.

(2) The research designs

This study used a qualitative research approach. Also, it allows participants to share their experiences and answers across the research process. For qualitative data, the self-assessment questionnaire assessed employees' perceptions of intercultural communication based on Byram's ICC model and found the intercultural communication challenges. This model includes knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural awareness. It promotes a communicative approach, which should be considered in a language teaching context to provide learners with linguistic and intercultural competence. The questionnaire was developed in Japanese. Data from the semi-structured interview was also used as it provides standardized information and observation of nonverbal reactions could be utilized as supplementary information. Questions could also be explained if necessary, and questions for the semi-structured interview, which asked about how they think about Japanese language training at the workplace and how they handle challenges that occur in intercultural communication, were provided in Japanese.

(3) Data collection

The data were collected from April to December 2023. For qualitative data, the semi-structured interview was recorded for the confidentiality and convenience of the participants. Data was collected after sending an official letter to ask permission and cooperation to collect data, and the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the target subjects in two companies. The observations were conducted on the site to capture the real-time conversations between TITs and managers and language teachers, and the local community.

(4) Data analysis

For the semi-structured interviews, the information from the interviewees was collected to verify and support the findings. Conceptual content analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data based on participants' experiences and words. The word categories were coded based on their occurrence from an open question and the semi-structured interview. The results were carefully interpreted from the words' presence and categories to draw generalizations and conclusions from this study. Data analysis was carried out descriptively and interpretively. Quantitative data derived from questionnaire responses were analyzed by simple non-parametric statistics. The data from the observations were analyzed qualitatively based on real-world communication situations focused on the Japanese language skills of TITs when interacting with Japanese employees. The results of this qualitative analysis are triangulated with quantitative analysis to arrive at conclusions about the profile of productive and receptive skills that are urgently needed.

5) DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The training approaches described in this study are three different solutions to the same problem. Each aims to help TITs learn Japanese language skills and develop the confidence to communicate more effectively in the workforce through language training, awareness training, and courses in team building. A close examination of the case study of these three approaches highlights certain factors that must be considered when organizing any language or communication training TITs on-site. This research combines triangulation to obtain more valid results. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods is appropriate to gain a deeper insight and a more general view of the object of research [21]. Triangulation by integrating different material/evidence and quantitative and qualitative steps of analysis helps researchers be more confident in their findings. It can also lead to the synthesis or integration of theories [22].

A. Japanese Language Training

The type of language training described in ILT is an oral English course for industrial workers with elementary language problems. The course usually lasts twelve weeks; learners receive one hour of instruction daily. The training takes place during working hours but at a time when the main production processes are finished. The content of the course is developed jointly by the company and the employees, who spend time observing the various processes, learning specific vocabulary, talking to supervisors about typical factory communication, and gaining an understanding of the industry. While the course is designed to provide English language training, it also offers a valuable opportunity to impart simple information on topics such as health and safety and industrial relations, thus complementing any induction course the trainees may have had. The other side is related to culture. Analyze the correlation between language and cultural learning from a comparative pedagogical perspective, viewing language education and language learning as the process of acquiring intercultural relations, with the view to contributing to the cultivation of intercultural communication skills and citizenship through language education [23].

In this study, the ILT course at Japanese companies has three distinctive features, which may be its strengths and weaknesses. First, the training occurs in the workplace during working hours at A Inc. and off-duty at B Inc.

Second, all language training is preceded by a study of the language needs of the workplace, and third, all involve the participation of native Japanese speakers in the workplace. At A Inc., "Everything in the workplace is going well. The TITs are all young and intelligent, so they can learn quickly after we teach them. Also, senior employees would come in between and interpret for us". Gradually, however, we started Japanese language training. The reasons are that "first, although there is no problem at work, problems are still likely to arise when they need help understanding Japanese daily. Especially since we are renting an apartment, they need to understand the lifestyle and culture here. Besides, September to February is not a busy time, and we can afford to hold study sessions during working hours. Since they are still young, we want them to study hard because it will help their future even after they leave this company".

At B Inc., "In our case, we built a dormitory right next to the company to give TITs good guidance in their daily lives. It is not a problem, but there are many tools on the construction site, and safety work is why we started Japanese language training. Regarding accepting TITs, "the Japanese employee was refusing it, or they couldn't accept it in the beginning," but now they are saying, "It's necessary for us, and it's okay." The manager said, "I think they (Japanese employees) have completely changed. It's true that no one is complaining now, and they are asking us to accept more. Therefore, "the decision was made to add three (TITs) at the coming year," of course because they wanted the current employees to be Vietnamese, so we accept more TITs. In addition, "after language training within the company to help TITs to learn Japanese, and we used time outside of work once a week to study for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test. "I taught Japanese once a week, and the Japanese employees also started studying." Our employee skills training began with the acceptance of TITs. Eventually, learning activities for Japanese employees were started, with "the company buying textbooks specializing in railroads and everyone copying them," which improved employees' job skills.

B. Intercultural Communication Awareness Training

Language training is not just a matter for the educational system but is deeply influenced by various social, political, cultural, and economic factors [24]. While language training for immigrant employees was seen as a solution to interethnic communication difficulties, another training program was developed in the late 1970s. This training is called Cross-Cultural Communication Awareness Training and is designed to create an individual's understanding of how people communicate and awareness of potential problems in cross-cultural communication. The training is given to native English speakers and speakers of English as a second language. The work of J. Gumperz and F. Erickson has had a dramatic influence. Gumperz highlighted the differences between English spoken by people of Asian origin and native speakers [25].

Another one is Hall's (1976) theory of high and low context culture, which explains the basic types of communication that speakers from collectivist and individualist cultures typically prefer. According to this theory, a high context (HC) culture, such as Japan, is characterized by nonverbal communication and meanings implicitly shared by the speaker/listener that is highly context dependent. A high-context culture is one in which information is communicated consistently by all members of the same group. This communication preference allows data to be continuously constructed and modified, thereby maintaining a high contextual level so that literal utterances are unnecessary. The emphasis of the utterance is on how and by whom because there is already meaning associated with the context in which it is spoken. Failure to accept such differences in communicative style leads to misunderstandings and misinterpretations, which can build up into stereotypes about others.

Myron W. and Koester (1993) define intercultural communication in their book *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures* as "a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process" that involves the engagement of culturally diverse people. On the other hand, they define cross-cultural communication as "the study of a particular idea or concept within many cultures...to compare one culture with another.... While intercultural communication involves interactions between people from different cultures, cross-cultural communication involves comparing interactions between people from the same culture and those from another" [26]. Then Byram's position can be summarized as an "interactionist perspective": foreign language teaching should not attempt to provide representations of other cultures but should concentrate on equipping learners with "the means of accessing and analyzing any cultural practices and meanings they encounter, whatever their status in a society" [27]. In this study, intercultural communication is appropriate. At Company A, "We were initially surprised that they always said yes, even though they did not understand. The rest is hygiene and cleaning. We were surprised when we went to their home and saw everything left on the table. Some people are conspicuous and robust in their requests. That may be a cultural difference. That is why we let them participate in various local events and plan events at the company. We want them to learn Japanese culture and customs through these activities. "

"On the other hand, we also teach Japanese employees about Vietnamese culture. It is a win-win situation. This training teaches us that we cannot judge a new culture based only on what we see when we first enter it. We must take the time to get to know and interact with people from that culture. Only then can we uncover the

values and beliefs that underlie the behavior of that society. "At Company B, "We conduct several study sessions on intercultural communication. We often have Japanese cultural events at the company. The rest of the time, we also let TIs participate in community events to share their culture. Recently, we invited a teacher from the Center for Persons with Disabilities to lecture all employees on what to pay attention to when talking with TIs and people with disabilities. There are some similarities between communicating with different people. We also plan to let Japanese employees gradually understand Vietnamese culture and social environment."

C. Team Building Training

One of the drawbacks of previous training was that participants were often drawn from different workplace areas and only established a relationship with their peers in the training room. Once back in the workplace, finding opportunities to practice what was taught in the classroom was often tricky. Although supervisors and chargehands were invited to attend the training and encouraged to provide opportunities for practice, reinforcement, and extension, the motivation to do so often waned after the language courses ended. Improvements were often short-term rather than long-term. Supervisors always maintained their status and position in the company hierarchy, so communication with TIs remained a downward process. Immigrant workers and supervisors were never allowed to communicate at the same level. To bridge the gap between the classroom and the shop floor, Pathway Industrial Unit developed a new approach to communication training, which they call Team Building.

The overall goal of the training is to achieve long-term improvements in the overall performance of each line. Byram argues that "the basis of intercultural competence is in the attitudes of the person interacting with people of another culture" [28]. The leader's involvement is essential because the leader has the trust and confidence of the team, and leadership is based on mutual respect. Team building training is an approach to overcoming problems and difficulties encountered in the previous two courses and supporting the two trainings as they go well.

In this study, at Company A, "It is obvious to us that whether these workers are called 'interns' or 'trainees' or 'specified skilled workers,' they are considered children and treated as family members in a hierarchical relationship at the bottom of the ranking system. The age of the foreign workers - mostly in their 20s and 30s - lack of language skills, cultural knowledge of how to live in Japan, and lack of understanding of their rights as workers undoubtedly put them at a disadvantage. Therefore, we are willing to help them. " For the team-building training, "we teach them (TITs) the standard rules in Japanese companies and how to work together. Because they are still young, it will work no matter where they work in the future. " At Company B, "There is no such thing as team building by doing one or two things. It is always necessary to continue to create a workplace that respects each other. Creating a workplace that is easy to work in with ordinary daily life is our team-building training.

5) CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Max Frisch's famous 1965 quote, "We wanted workers, but we got people instead," exposed Switzerland's attitude concerning its 1948 recruitment agreement with Italy. In contrast to other labor-importing countries, Japan's foreign population is still a tiny proportion of the total population, just over low percent. However, foreign workers are not evenly distributed across industries, occupations, and regions, but some sectors and professions have a minimum intensity well above the national average. They have become structurally integrated into a segment of the Japanese labor market. As a result, TITs contribute not only to the host companies but also to the revitalization and development of the region.

After collecting, dispersing, and understanding the initial data regarding the impact of language training on TITs' performance and discovering the deficiencies, the author has reserved the following recommendations for these companies that accept TITs.

- According to the research and the findings, the two companies provide the TITs with regular and updated training from time to time. Therefore, the author recommends that companies conduct frequent training programs for the TITs of their organization, which can stimulate Japanese employees to improve their skills and lead to the transformation of the workforce.
- The satisfaction of TITs plays a prominent role in the host company where they work, as it is more intriguing with their ability to perform their duties with all the excellent interest for the organization. Therefore, the author recommends that host companies should conduct training programs for TITs to satisfy all employees.
- The research result stresses the need to make TITs feel part of the local community and encourages host companies to organize events where TITs can get involved. However, these "rituals of belonging" [29] can also act as rituals of identification, segregating foreign residents based on ethnicity through othering.
- Finally, the researcher recommends that, according to the interview responses, the two companies in Japan

may be required to devote more precise attention to the excellence of the language training development programs.

This case study explains how two companies operating in a rural region of Japan implement language training to address TITs. It examines how the process followed reflects the talent development architecture that typically defines how the two companies manage talent development in their organization. It is impossible to generalize this case study to other companies; it only provides a deeper understanding. It adds to the literature on how language training activities for TITs can develop as small and medium-sized enterprises in Japan. Further research must compare multiple cases of other field companies in different regions to identify the similarities and differences as language training activities evolve from unstructured to more structured.

6) LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

According to Titscher et al. (2000), content analysis is used when communicative content is most important, when operational category schemes can be formulated in advance, or when the analysis concerns only the lexicon of a text [30]. Qualitative content analysis procedures seem less suitable when the research question is very open, explorative, and variable. The work with categories is a limitation, or when a more holistic, not step-by-step progress of the analysis is planned [31], recommends qualitative content analysis in the case of theory-driven text analysis but not in the case of merely explorative interpretive interpretation of the material. Qualitative content analysis first extracts relevant parts of the text material and then analyzes them; it can only be used when the text is not the object of investigation [32]. While these are valuable findings, three notable limitations affected this study. The first issue was concerning bias. Employees and managers may be biased because this is an internal qualitative study. For example, workers may give general answers that their colleagues agree with rather than true opinions. This could negatively impact the results of the study. Another limitation was that it was difficult to know whether it was quality because all of the researcher's questions were subjective. The researcher should ask how the individual feels to receive the most accurate answer. Third, results obtained through qualitative research reflect characteristics that distinguish them from results obtained through quantitative research. The results obtained through qualitative research will reflect the case-specific characteristics. It is necessary to reflect on whether they contribute to finding universal things common to other cases.

7) ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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