My success learning Japanese in Hokkaido University

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It is quite difficult to learn second languages. However, in case of learning Japanese, it is little easier than learning other languages because its structure of the sentences is similar with Korean. For me, I learned just basic grammar and conversation of Japanese before I go Hokkaido University as an exchange student. So I had to learn Japanese more in Japan. My Japanese teacher used many teaching methods like Direct Method (DM), Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and Total Physical Response (TPR) in my class and she also noticed students’ background and level of Japanese. I think most of students in my class are high beginners and they are foreign students. Therefore, they have to learn basic conversations that they can apply to use in normal life. It is really good chance to learn Japanese that I can use in my real life in Japan.

First, I’m a visual learner so I memorized a lot of Japanese vocabulary to use vocabulary cards. In my Japanese class, teacher showed the pictures that demonstrate the meaning of the vocabulary and then I guessed and answered the vocabulary. At that time, I had to learn many vocabularies in very short times. It is helpful to use vocabulary cards to memorize vocabulary. Also, I wrote down many vocabularies and dialogues to practice Japanese kanji and Grammar. I memorize the structure of sentences and vocabularies when I wrote them down many times. I did a lot of activities in my Japanese class. When I learned new words in class, I did many activities to memorize them like ‘word guessing game’ and ‘speed game’ using vocabulary cards and demonstrating vocabulary by actions. This method is Total Physical Response (TPR) whose goal is learning should be fun. I think do some activities help me to enjoy learning Japanese.

Next, I watched many Japanese television programs to learn Japanese. When I watched television programs in Japanese, I noticed nuance and knew native’s accent when they speak. It is important to know nuance because it is easy to communicate when I know the nuance. When I watched Japanese television programs, I not only practiced Japanese language but also learned Japanese culture. I think it is helpful that I understand Japanese culture to learn Japanese language faster. As I have got interests in Japanese Culture, I started enjoying learning Japanese. I also try to watch various Japanese television programs like News, Drama, Comedy and Traveling programs. Watching Japanese media is good way to learn Japanese for me as a visual learner.

Lastly, I repeated and memorized the sentences and dialogues. I used Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) to learn Japanese in short time. I repeated the sentences and dialogues until I memorized them. It is helpful to be familiar with using Japanese and easy to apply memorized sentences in real life conversations. Also, I heard and repeated sentences and dialogues many times in my Japanese class. After I repeated and memorized them, I can use them naturally in real life. Sometimes I can use one form of the sentences in various ways to change one part of the form.

In conclusion, there are many ways to learn Japanese and there are many different kinds of media that I can use to learn Japanese. I used vocabulary cards to memorize many Japanese vocabularies and I wrote down vocabularies, sentences and dialogues to memorize them. Also, I watched many Japanese programs to learn nuance and pronunciation of Japanese and Japanese culture. Moreover, I used repetition skills to be familiar with using Japanese. I think that repetition is really important to learn second languages for beginners. Steadily learning is the most important ways to learn languages so I try to study languages everyday even if it is difficult to do.