

Does Japanese Language Learning Software Work?

With the global economy coming to our door step through technological advancements in communication tools, there are numerous free and costly consumer software products on the market promising Japanese language learning.

Massing multi-million dollar marketing campaigns for some of these products have resulted in it becoming common place for monolingual executives to believe that buying a \$300 software program will teach employees enough Japanese to conduct business in Japanese. After the money is spent and the time is invested they realize facts.

Even the most famous programs only teach basic conversational Japanese and common business introductions. The vocabulary “taught” on the software is usually related to daily living and the course is equal to the content taught in most collegiate, first year level Japanese programs. Therefore, it is important to be realistic about the purchase and use of language learning software by relating learning a new language to the learning of our own native English language.

Logically, it takes most Americans approximately twelve years of compulsory education to learn enough English to be considered to have adult “fluency” in English. Now add to this logic, the typical four years of university education it the adult to master the lingo and social finesse of a professional specialty to be ready to be employed. Therefore, it stands to analytical reason that a software program may not be able to accomplish teaching fully functioning business Japanese.

Software programs are typically geared toward conversation and “literacy”. Usually this “reading” is of Japanese words in Romanized alphabet, which is not real Japanese characters. The programs offer repetition of dialog, so software can help teach the disciplined student, meaning one who actually makes time to regularly use the software, the ability to travel successfully in Japan--to find food, shelter and souvenirs. Therefore, language learning software is best used for practicing for social moments with the Japanese. Experientially, \$100 Japanese software programs can offer a student supplemental aural and oral practice and aid vocabulary development.



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