

# **JOB NEEDS AND TASK ANALYSIS OF JAPANESE-SPEAKING THAI TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

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## **Abstract**

In order to provide a foundation for discussion on translation and interpreting (TI) education, this article aims to introduce useful data to identify the Thai job market's needs of Japanese-speaking Thai Translators and Interpreters (JTTIs) and distinguish the relevant competencies of JTTIs, including knowledge, skills, and attributes (KSAs). An online-based needs survey of JTTIs in the Thai marketplace was carried out and the expected KSAs of JTTIs were identified through a job task analysis. There were 395 data samples selected for inclusion in the database analysis. The study reveals that JTTIs are in highest demand in the Thai market. As for KSAs, Japanese language skills were emphasized over other specialized competencies for TI. The Japanese proficiency level required was upper intermediate or N2-level based on Japanese language proficiency test. The overall findings have practical implications for TI course design such as the issues of setting learning outcomes, teaching approaches, and the language proficiency level of students enrolled in those courses. Furthermore, to respond to the Thai market's needs, it is important to not only focus on development of Japanese language proficiency but to also cultivate students' TI literacy in order to ensure professional-level TI services.

**Keywords:** Translation and interpreting education; Japanese language education; needs analysis; competency; Japanese-speaking Thai translators and interpreters

## Introduction

Although translation and interpreting (TI) education remains neglected in the field of Japanese language education studies, the importance of TI education has begun to be seen in terms of the employability of students in outcome-based education: an educational approach with an emphasis on learning outcomes. Focusing on the current employment situation of students who major in Japanese language in the Thai Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), 79% of Japanese major graduates surveyed from the fiscal years 2007 to 2009 at Chulalongkorn University reported successfully obtaining jobs, and the proportion of positions requiring translator or interpreter was highest, at 30.5% (Katagiri, 2016). Similarly, for Japanese major graduates from Thammasat University, which established the second Japanese major in Thailand in 1982 (Japan Foundation, 2015), as well as graduates of Chiang Mai University in northern Thailand (Kongjit, 2013), TI positions were the preferred choice. As a result, the increasing employment and job prospects for this profession have now attracted the attention of education specialists and academics to the Japanese language education field, and TI specifically.

A number of HEIs in Thailand provide TI courses for advanced students of Japanese, but to what extent do Japanese language teachers regard these courses as Japanese language education? What is the goal of these TI courses? What knowledge and skills should graduates be equipped with? And what are the learning outcomes based on? Unfortunately, there is a little academic discussion on these questions in the Thai context.

The main reason for this limited research on TI relevant to the Japanese language may be down to faculty members and their graduates being more involved in English-centered translation programs at a graduate level rather than Japanese (Yamamoto, 2018b). In the case of TI education for Japanese as a language pair for practice, Japanese language major courses are usually offered only at an undergraduate level. The relationship between Japanese language education and research on TI is still weak compared to programs at the graduate level. In fact, most of the master's theses on TI studied cases of translation between English and Thai, and only a few master's theses focused on cases of translation between Japanese and Thai (Yamamoto, 2018a). From a Japanese

language education studies perspective, there is indeed research on the needs of Japanese-speaking graduates and employers (Harada, 2004; Maeno et al., 2013, 2015; Tsubosaka, 2012), but it does not focus on the needs of Japanese-speaking Thai translators and interpreters (JTTIs). If the needs are not clear, it will be difficult to design appropriate learning outcomes for TI courses.

This article aims to identify the needs in the Thai job market for JTTIs and distinguish the relevant knowledge, skills, and attributes (KSAs) of JTTIs demanded by the market in order to plot the future direction of TI education. The outcomes of this study are expected to help generate research hypotheses related to TI education and review the content of existing TI courses in Thailand. This article will also contribute new ideas and opinions to the academic conversation surrounding TI education as part of Japanese language education in Thailand.

## **Background and Rationale**

### **Positioning TI education as Japanese language education in the Thai higher education context**

HEIs in Thailand are governed by the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), and the programs offered by the HEIs must, in principle, be based on the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF: HEd), which requires programs offered to be revised every five years (OHEC, 2009; 2015). The process of curricula revision includes a needs survey of stakeholders. In recent years, Thailand like other ASEAN countries has paid great attention to the framework of quality assurance at a regional level, ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), and promotes it alongside Thailand's TQF: HEd. In particular, efforts have been made to reform programs to focus on collecting and analyzing stakeholder feedback and their needs (AUN, 2015). A needs survey is utilized as a key part of the process of reforming programs toward an outcome-based education.

The principle behind the above-mentioned TQF: HEd, has also been adapted for Japanese language programs in Thailand. To explore this, Boonserm (2016) conducted a questionnaire survey of students and graduates

of Business Japanese majors, and also interviewed faculty members. Findings from this survey highlighted issues with the existing curriculum and led to suggestions for countermeasures. Earlier, Ek-Ariyasiri (2008) clarified that, with regard to the abilities of students majoring in Japanese, the main requirement of Japanese-affiliated companies in Thailand was interpreting skills. Ek-Ariyasiri's study suggested that there would be an insufficient supply of qualified interpreters to meet stakeholder demands if Japanese-language programs aimed merely at acquiring Japanese language proficiency.

One approach which embodies this business-like approach to Japanese language education is the use of needs analysis to design curricula specifically tailored to Japanese for Specific Purposes. According to Sano (2009), Japanese for Specific Purposes is a concept derived from English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which is designed to meet the specific needs of the student. Japanese for Specific Purposes is composed of two sub-areas: Japanese for Academic Purposes and Japanese for Occupational Purposes. Research on Japanese for Specific Purposes has been reported in a specialized journal, *Journal of Technical Japanese Education*, published by The Society for Technical Japanese Education. For example, Liao (2016) discussed Japanese education for those who are interested in becoming guides, and Akagi (2016) investigated Japanese education for hospitality services. Japanese education for nursing care is also a specialization that has attracted keen interest (Nunoo, 2013; Wada, 2006), and such research highlight the needs of stakeholders such as students and employers, and signal possible future employment trends.

As for the relationship between TI education and Japanese for Specific Purposes in Thailand, it is a fact that translators or interpreters are popular career choices for graduates majoring in Japanese. It is, therefore, essential to equip students with the relevant skills and abilities required for these careers, but in so doing, how do we position TI courses under the Japanese language education framework? Also, if we position TI courses as an addition to Japanese for Occupational Purposes, how do we do this? In Europe, a competency-based education model for professional translator/interpreter training was proposed and has been implemented

through a European Master's in Translation (EMT) (EMT, 2017), which provides a reference for quality translation programs at master's level. Students enrolled in approved EMT courses are expected to acquire advanced second and/or third language skills. On the other hand, TI education in the Japanese major curriculum in Thailand is mainly offered as an elective, and students are not always equipped with advanced Japanese language proficiency by the end of the course. Given the limited learning hours and uncertain Japanese proficiency, TI education aimed at cultivating professional skills for TI as part of Japanese language education programs in Thailand may not be achievable.

In its efforts to propose goals for TI education in Japanese language education, this article considers the concept of "Translation and Interpreting literacy" (TI literacy) advocated by Takeda et al. (2014). Takeda (2017) defines TI literacy as the basic ability to understand and deal with various aspects of translation and interpreting, and the goal of TI literacy education is to acquire the minimum knowledge and skills necessary for translation and interpreting. This article resets the goal of TI education in Japanese language education as: "to acquire the minimum knowledge and skills required for Japanese translation and interpreting", achieved by reformulating the concept of "TI literacy". It suggests cultivating TI literacy as the main purpose of TI education as this concept can be helpful in bridging the gap between professional education/training at graduate level and foreign languages education at undergraduate level (Takeda et al., 2014) and as such, refers to TI education in Japanese language education based on the above suggestion as "Japanese for Translation and Interpreting (JTI)".

To include relevant JTI in classroom activities as a part of the curricula, it is crucial to set learning outcomes in line with the "minimum knowledge and skills". However, neither AUN-QA nor TQF describe the detailed procedures, objectives, or learning outcomes at the course level, because they represent program-level quality assurance only. Despite this gap between the different levels, there has been little consideration given to the desired course outcomes, so relevant needs surveys to determine such have

often been overlooked in curriculum development. This article thus aims to identify the job market needs of JTTIs in Thailand in order to obtain the fundamental data required for establishing ideal learning outcomes of JTI courses.

### **Needs analysis on TI education for curriculum development**

The economic scale of the language industry, which includes translation and interpreting as one of the language services, is on the rise due to the globalization of the economy (European Commission's Directorate-General for Translation, 2018; Nimdzi, 2018). In addition, demand for translation and interpreting services exceeds supply and there is a lack of skilled talent to serve the diverse range of language needs in recent years (Government of Canada's Translation Bureau, 2012). To respond to the market expansion and diversification, by 2008, HEIs in the UK offered 135 MA programs (Munday, 2008). Accordingly, the TI programs also stepped up efforts to ensure the quality of education, leading to EMT being established as a quality initiative in 2009.

Needs surveys specific to TI regarded as an important step in quality assurance have been conducted in several countries: Canada (Bowker, 2004), ASEAN countries (Chan and Liu, 2013), Hongkong (Li, 2005), and Korea (Choi and Lim, 2000; Jeong, 2005). In Thailand specifically, Uehara (2008) identified the TI programs being offered at that time and clarified the characteristics of students enrolled in those TI programs. Poonlarp and Leenakitti (2016) focused on the needs of employers for translators and interpreters, and revealed the languages commonly used, remuneration, skills, and competencies expected. However, the market needs for specific TI language pairs such as Japanese/Thai were still not clarified.

As for Japanese language education and needs surveys referring to JTTI, a common theme in the discussion seems to revolve around appropriate levels judged by the Japanese language proficiency test (JLPT). For example, Katagiri (2016) asserts that students who majored in Japanese should aim at advanced level Japanese proficiency (N1-level of JLPT), when engaging in TI

related work. Harada (2004) and Tanasarnsanee et al. (2005) emphasize that the Japanese language proficiency required for TI depends on job type and industry, and a suitable range of levels includes N1-(advanced) level to N3-(intermediate) level. For example, a secretary or a coordinator who is required to also translate and interpret, may be fully competent for the job with an N3-level of proficiency that is adapted to the job (Ek-Ariyasiri, 2008).

Whereas language competency is just one requirement of professional interpreters and translators (Albir, 2007; Chodkiewicz, 2012), much of the discussion in the previous studies on Japanese language education has remained focused on that issue alone. In setting learning outcomes for TI courses or JTI, it is important to consider both language and non-language competencies such as research and thematic abilities as proposed by EMT. However, research on JTTIs is underexplored so far. This article sheds light on the undetermined job needs and unspecified competencies required for JTTIs in the Thai marketplace through a needs and jobs analysis.

## **Method**

To meet the aims of the study, an on-line based job survey was employed and the data derived from survey was analyzed based on the job task and qualification. Required KSAs for JTTIs were also analyzed through comparison with the framework drafted by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NATTI) by descriptive analysis.

### **Survey**

There are various job-search avenues available in Thailand including commercial, public, and referral means. However, regardless of the variety, job seekers mostly utilized a single channel, namely, an online-based job site as it is considered the most effective way to find employment (Sakurai and Okubo, 2017). In the case of Thailand, staffing services and company websites were the most popular means of connecting with prospective employers (Hagiwara et al., 2014). For this reason, in this study, a needs survey was conducted based on an online-based job portal, including information posted by both staffing agencies and companies.

### **Source data**

Source data was extracted from the largest job portal websites in Thailand: JobThai and JobDB. JobThai is the largest on-line portal offering over 80,000 recruitment posts at the time of the survey. JobDB is the second largest portal website with about 18,000 items of recruitment data as of the survey date. In this survey, in order to avoid duplication of data, the above two job portal sites were chosen as source data. If more portal websites were selected, there would be a risk that the same job information may have been posted on several portal sites, making it difficult to compare and check for duplicated data.

### **Data collection**

Key words were used for searching the two portal websites, including the words “translation”, “translator”, “interpreting”, and “interpreter” in both Thai and English. The corresponding job information was collected as data. The data collection was conducted between December 1, 2016, and December 30, 2016. The collected data included 239 samples from JobsDB and 211 samples from JobThai, a total of 450 samples. After checking for duplication, 55 duplicated data samples were found and deleted from the database. As a result, a total of 395 samples were selected for analysis.

### **Data processing**

A database was created according to listed information that was common to both portal websites (Table 1), a method proposed by Bowker (2004, p. 961). Information that did not meet the aims of the study, such as professional associations and the names of the companies, was not stored in the database, but relevant information such as salaries was. Regarding data-entry criteria, work experience was defined as a minimum of one year and Japanese language level was based on the minimum requirement of the level. For example, where Japanese language proficiency was described as "Japanese level N-1 to N-3", the data would be entered as "N-3" in the database. The criteria for data entry to the database were based on the minimum requirements apart from salary, where the minimum and maximum values suggested in the job information were considered.

**Table 1:** Indexing Criteria Used in the Database

| Indexing criteria                |
|----------------------------------|
| Source                           |
| Date                             |
| General information              |
| Types of job position            |
| Location of job                  |
| Permanent (Yes/No)               |
| Full-time (Yes/No)               |
| Language(s) used for the job     |
| Qualifications                   |
| Work experience (Yes/No)         |
| Minimum years of work experience |
| Minimum degree level             |
| Field of degree                  |
| Required competency              |
| Knowledge                        |
| Skills                           |
| Attributes                       |

### Data analysis

The data was analysed using descriptive analysis. For the analysis of the competencies identified by job task and qualification, the framework drafted by National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) (NAATI 2015, 2016) was employed and analyzed by classifying them into translator and interpreter KSAs. The NAATI framework comprehensively considers various proposed competencies and KSAs expected by professional associations of translators and interpreters and international standard organizations. Therefore, this framework was the most suitable for analyzing data in the database.

Scope and limitations

As Bowker (2004) and Poonlarp and Leenakitti (2016) point out, in recruitment, the title of the advertised job is not always consistent with the job description and/or tasks. For example, despite the label “interpreters” being used in recruitment advertising, in at least one case, the task of translation was included in the job description. In order to overcome ambiguity in job descriptions and titles, for job analysis and validity purpose, each job position type that specified Japanese was classified based on the job description, as shown in Table 2. The classification method used was based on Poonlarp and Leenakitti (ibid.). As a result, position types with interpreting and translating tasks mentioned in the actual job description accounted for 61.0% ( $n = 166$ ) despite these tasks being mentioned in only 5.5 % ( $n = 15$ ) of job titles for the same position types. Identifying employers was difficult due to the data information provided by staffing agencies and confidentiality agreements.

**Table 2:** Comparison of Types of Job Positions for JTTIs as Suggested by Job Titles and Identified by Job Descriptions (N= 272)

| Types of job positions            | By employers |       | By job descriptions |       |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
|                                   | n            | %     | n                   | %     |
| Interpreter                       | 209          | 76.8% | 7                   | 2.6%  |
| Interpreter-others                | 37           | 13.6% | 23                  | 8.5%  |
| Interpreter and Translator        | 15           | 5.5%  | 36                  | 13.2% |
| Translator                        | 9            | 3.3%  | 11                  | 4.0%  |
| Translator-others                 | 2            | 0.7%  | 28                  | 10.3% |
| Interpreter and Translator-others | 0            | 0%    | 130                 | 47.8% |
| Others                            | 0            | 0%    | 7                   | 2.6%  |
| Unidentified                      | -            |       | 30                  | 11.0% |

Results and Discussion

Language needs

Table 3 depicts the specific languages in combination with Thai, needed by businesses in the Thai job market. Japanese was needed the most, accounting for 68.9% of available jobs, followed by Chinese (18.7%) and English (6.3%). Of the ASEAN languages, Burmese represented 1.8% and Vietnamese 0.8%.

**Table 3:** Foreign Languages, apart from Thai (N = 395) Needed by Businesses in Thailand

| Languages  | n   | %     |
|------------|-----|-------|
| Japanese   | 272 | 68.9% |
| Chinese    | 74  | 18.7% |
| English    | 25  | 6.3%  |
| Korean     | 10  | 2.5%  |
| Burmese    | 7   | 1.8%  |
| Vietnamese | 3   | 0.8%  |
| Taiwanese  | 1   | 0.3%  |
| Indonesian | 1   | 0.3%  |
| German     | 1   | 0.3%  |
| Russian    | 1   | 0.3%  |

It is notable from the findings that there is a particularly strong need for Japanese, and there are possible reasons for this. There has been a rapid increase in the number of Japanese companies operating in Thailand. Japanese Chamber of Commerce (JJC) membership increased from 1,278 companies to 1,747 companies in the decade from 2007 to 2017 (JCC, Bangkok, 2018) and total foreign direct investment in Thailand from Japan accounted for 47% of the total for the 2017 fiscal year, making Japan “the largest foreign investor in Thailand for more than five decades” (Board of Investment of Thailand, 2018). As a result, demand for Japanese-speaking human resources has grown exponentially, and although Japanese language education is offered at more than 90 of public and private universities in Thailand (Japan Foundation, 2017), it is difficult to expand Japanese language education further because of the limited number of HEIs in Thailand. For this reason, graduates who are proficient enough in Japanese to be engaged as a translator and/or interpreter are also limited (Ek-Ariyasiri, 2008). That is, the quantitative supply from HEIs is insufficient to meet the requirements of the job market.

A remarkable finding was that just two languages, Japanese and Chinese, accounted for 87.9% of the total TI need. This result underscores the importance of TI education at the undergraduate level, and although the need

for TI in ASEAN languages was just 3%, with the inauguration of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), this need is expected to increase in the future, especially for medical tourism and public service interpreting, and translation for unskilled and skilled migrant workers from within ASEAN. Thus, ASEAN languages should also be given special attention with respect to TI education.

Qualifications

Table 4 shows the average, median, and standard deviation (SD) of the minimum and the maximum salaries according to JLPT level. The targeted samples were 119 jobs which specified the salaries. As can be seen from Table 4, salary levels by JLPT level varied little.

Table 4: Minimum and Maximum Salary by Levels of JLPT in Thai Bath (N = 119)

| Levels of JLPT | n  | Minimum |        |        | Maximum |        |        |
|----------------|----|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
|                |    | Average | Median | SD     | Average | Median | SD     |
| N-1 Level      | 4  | 33,300  | 30,000 | 4,700  | 49,100  | 52,500 | 11,700 |
| N-2 Level      | 44 | 36,500  | 35,000 | 10,100 | 49,400  | 50,000 | 14,200 |
| N-3 Level      | 47 | 32,600  | 30,000 | 10,100 | 47,800  | 45,000 | 11,700 |
| Not specified  | 22 | 32,900  | 30,000 | 13,400 | 44,600  | 45,000 | 15,700 |

Looking at the results, there are two reasons why greater Japanese language proficiency is not reflected in the salary. In the case of a job that is not described as being a TI position, such as a secretary or coordinator, the salary is usually determined according to that job description rather than TI for which the requisite JLPT levels are specified. In such cases, Japanese proficiency is merely an advantage, warranting perhaps a skill bonus to the base salary. However, looking at the maximum median of the salary required at N-1 level, it is the highest, meaning the Thai market has required an emphasis on Japanese language proficiency. Another reason, from the findings: 90.8% (n = 247) of permanent jobs offered, 41.5% (n = 113) required little or no experience. Employers may not consider translator and/or interpreter as professions, when recruiting JTIs.

Table 5 shows that a bachelor's degree is almost essential when applying for JTTIs positions in the Thai job market. It is also worth noting that those with bachelor's degrees in fields other than Japanese, also had a chance to secure TI jobs. If the applicant met the basic qualification criterion, the major seemed not to matter for many positions. Not absolutely requiring a Japanese major may be a recruitment strategy to maximize their target audience and increase the number of potential candidates to choose from. However, what is of concern here is that there is a possibility that the market does not recognize the true expertise of those who have completed a Japanese major or their abilities beyond Japanese language proficiency. Indeed, there is evidence to back this up, and it seems appropriate for Japanese language teachers to review the expertise they impart and the desired learning outcomes of their courses in order to preserve the preeminence and the value of the qualifications their students earn.

**Table 5:** Expected Qualifications of Employers

| Items of qualifications        | n   | %     |
|--------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Work experience (n = 272)      |     |       |
| Not required                   | 31  | 11.4% |
| Required                       | 156 | 57.4% |
| (One year)                     | 82  | 30.1% |
| (Two years)                    | 40  | 14.7% |
| (Three years)                  | 25  | 9.2%  |
| (Four years)                   | 3   | 1.1%  |
| (Five years)                   | 6   | 2.2%  |
| Not specified                  | 85  | 31.3% |
| Minimum degree level (n = 272) |     |       |
| Bachelor's degree              | 248 | 91.2% |
| Vocational diploma or higher   | 10  | 3.7%  |
| Not specified                  | 14  | 5.1%  |

Table 5: Continued

| Items of qualifications       | n   | %     |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Field of the degree (n = 248) |     |       |
| Related fields                | 128 | 51.6% |
| Field of Japanese             | 47  | 19.0% |
| Any fields                    | 45  | 18.1% |
| Others                        | 9   | 3.6%  |
| Not specified                 | 19  | 7.7%  |

In addition, it should be noted that there were no jobs specifically requiring a master’s degree with a major in TI despite such TI programs being available. The reason why the Thai job market does not consider this essential for recruitment is either its lack of awareness of the importance of TI education, or that is simply does not regard TI qualifications as being necessary for their activities and the positions available. This article does not pretend to be able to answer this question as it lies beyond the objectives of the study, but this is, nevertheless, an essential issue to be addressed at all levels of TI education in Thailand. Incorporating market needs into the curricula would be a suitable starting point for reform of TI education for the near future.

Expected competencies

When analyzing the KSAs of JTTIs professionals investigated, two knowledge items, nine skills, and 12 attitudes were identified (see Table 6).

Table 6: Identified KSAs of JTTIs by Job Task Analysis

| KSAs Category               | n  | %     |
|-----------------------------|----|-------|
| Knowledge                   |    |       |
| Industry-specific knowledge | 28 | 10.3% |
| Cultural knowledge          | 3  | 1.1%  |
| Skills                      |    |       |
| Language skills             |    |       |

**Table 6:** Continued

| KSAs Category                | n   | %     |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Japanese                     | 250 | 91.9% |
| English                      | 89  | 32.7% |
| Computer skill for MS Office | 103 | 37.9% |
| Interpersonal skill          | 41  | 15.1% |
| Meaning transfer skill       | 23  | 8.5%  |
| Communication skill          | 11  | 4.0%  |
| Coordinate skill             | 9   | 3.3%  |
| Multi-tasking skill          | 6   | 2.2%  |
| Negotiation skill            | 3   | 1.1%  |
| Attributes                   |     |       |
| Willingness-to-learn         | 24  | 8.8%  |
| Reliability                  | 18  | 6.6%  |
| Service-mindedness           | 16  | 5.9%  |
| Collaboration                | 15  | 5.5%  |
| Leadership                   | 5   | 1.8%  |
| Self-reflection              | 4   | 1.5%  |
| Problem-solving              | 4   | 1.5%  |
| Desire-to-excel              | 4   | 1.5%  |
| Patience                     | 4   | 1.5%  |
| Attention-to-detail          | 3   | 1.1%  |
| Honesty                      | 3   | 1.1%  |
| Respectfulness               | 2   | 0.7%  |

First, subject-matter knowledge was ranked the highest form of knowledge and most of the expertise was in line with industry fields of the companies, such as knowledge related to production-manufacturing procedures, and quality control in the case of the manufacturing industry. For other knowledge, understanding of Japanese culture, that is, cultural background knowledge relevant to Japan received low recognition and just 1.1% of employers required such background knowledge in spite of its importance for professional TI service provision.

As for skills, Japanese language proficiency was the highest, at 91.9%, with 39.0% of those requiring at least N-2 level, 36.0% requiring N-3 level, and 4.4% requiring N-1 level. English proficiency and technology skills, notably the ability to use Microsoft Office software were also ranked highly. For specific skills related to translation, 8.5% of employers required JTTIs transfer skills, whereas specific skills related to interpreting were not mentioned, although interpreters were expected to support intercultural communication as a job task at all lines. These expectations of employers may lead to inconsistencies between the advertised job titles and the actual job tasks identified by job descriptions. Employers themselves are likely confused as to what to call such multi-tasking job positions, as multi-tasking skills (2.2%) and coordinating skills (3.3%) were also required. According to translation standards, translators are called language service providers because translators' jobs are not just about translating a source language to a target language. When jobs of interpreters are accurately reflected by their real job tasks, it may be more appropriate to refer to them as communication facilitators, intercultural communication specialists, or language supporters.

Finally, regarding identified attributes, willingness-to-learn, reliability, service-mindedness, and collaborative attribute were ranked highly. From the survey, most of the positions for JTTIs were permanent of an organization, and their key task is to work as part of a team in a division or section and respond to various in-house demands. For this reason, service-mindedness and collaborative attributes were valued. Other attributes such as willingness-to-learn were also important because JTTIs need to continually develop and improve their KSAs to provide a professional level of TI service based on the latest translation standards and current language usage trends and adapt to rapid developments in translation technology. Reliability is not a specific but general attribute for business.

Interestingly, the KSAs identified as being expected by employers in the survey were at variance with the NAATI KSAs, except for the category of language competency and thematic competency; there was no mention of skills or knowledge specific to TI such as "terminology and information research skills", "research tools and methods knowledge", "computer skills: computer-

Assisted Translation”, “translation standards knowledge”, “translation business skills”, “knowledge of the business of translation”, and “professional ethics”.

Why are the identified employer-needed KSAs different from NAATI KSAs, especially with regard to knowledge and skills specific to TI? This may be down to an insufficient understanding of the roles of translators and interpreters, and low recognition of the profession in the Thai market. In fact, there are many advertised job titles and position names which do not reflect their real job tasks, as described in Section 3. From the market perspective, it is likely that employers do not consider NAATI KSAs as key determinants when recruiting, so what Japanese language teachers need to recognize from this situation is that the KSAs demanded by the market have not been properly considered when developing Japanese-related TI courses. If the HEIs offering Japanese language education as a major tackle the issue of training JTTIs by adapting and introducing NAATI KSAs into courses, and further cultivate students’ TI literacy to respond to Thai market needs, the market’s awareness of and attitude toward TI will change.

### **Implications for JTI Course Design**

When incorporating JTI into course design, what lessons can we learn from the findings on KSAs? In terms of language competency, the course should set the required Japanese proficiency at N-3 level or higher for students. The market regards English proficiency as one of the key skills and many Japanese companies require it for TI because they expect JTTIs to translate and interpret between the three languages. Since previous studies have confirmed the importance of English for Thai workers with high Japanese language proficiency (Harada 2004; Tsubosaka 2012), course contents should include practice in the three languages combination based on the TQF principle that the expected learning outcomes should meet the needs of the market and employers. In actual classes, for example, when teaching management terminology, it is assumed that students will build a glossary of terms in all three languages.

For non-language competencies, from the viewpoint of cultivating TI literacy, topics beyond the scope of texts, such as translation technology, professional ethics, and data mining for research can be incorporated into the course as part of the design to develop well-balanced language and non-

language competencies. Topics need to be relevant to TI even if they are not directly related to the acts of translating and interpreting, so it is not enough to simply deepen the understanding of Japanese culture and Japanese literature. As for thematic competency, acquiring data mining and research skills will help to enhance students' adaptability to various work domains rather more than focusing on thematic knowledge itself.

Finally, it is worth outlining some effective teaching approaches that serve to enhance the identified attributes. Firstly, simulated learning is a valuable approach to learning in situations that mirror reality. For example, students must complete the translation within a designated deadline or students can also play a role in a simulated business situation, as described by González and Enríquez (2016). Through such activities, students can expect to learn authentic translation workflows and enhance their service-mindedness and their reliability in business. In addition, teamwork skills practiced through project-based group activities (Li et al., 2015; Talaván and Rodríguez 2014) are also useful to enhance collaboration efforts and problem-solving skills as well as the self-reflective attributes of the students. Although the teaching approaches mentioned here have been practiced mainly in English and European language contexts, they can be productively applied to teaching in the Japanese language education context and JTI classes specifically.

## **Conclusion**

This article has attempted to provide a foundation for discussion on TI education by producing valid data for that and positioning TI education as JTI based on a Japanese for Vocational Purposes framework to raise awareness of educational issues and the unclear status of TI courses as Japanese language education. This article went further by conducting a survey on the needs and KSAs needed for JTTIs in the Thai job market and identified outstanding characteristics of that market because of the paucity of evidence supporting learning outcomes of the courses. The survey revealed strong needs of Japanese-related TI positions and the specific KSAs demanded by employers by means of a job task analysis. The KSAs in highest demand were Japanese language proficiency at N-2 level, as well as N-3 level proficiency for TI positions. In addition, this study implies weak recognition and understanding of the market

in the TI profession. Findings from this study will help Japanese language teachers who teach TI, when they consider how to ensure their TI course equips graduates with the professional KSAs they need to meet employers' requirements.

Although this article contributes to TI course design and curricula development for Japanese language education by providing useful data, it is insufficient to generalize about the KSAs of JTTIs and specify the overall outcomes of JTI. This is because the survey in this article was over a short-time period and the targeted information was limited to information accessed through online-based recruitment sites. As for future challenges, in order to deepen research into the KSAs and competencies for JTTIs, needs surveys need to be expanded to other stakeholders: students, faculty members, and relevant job holders.

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