

Present Situation and Problems of Topic Selection for Graduation Thesis of Japanese Major in Colleges and Universities: Take Local Universities in Guangdong as an Example

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Abstract: From the perspective of high-frequency vocabulary, based on 589 data of Japanese major graduation thesis topics in an undergraduate university in eight years, this paper analyzes the current situation of topic selection and topic research of Japanese major graduation thesis from three aspects: quantity, field and academic writing terms. The results show that the fields of topic selection tend to be diversified, and society, culture and education are the main fields of topic selection for Japanese major graduation thesis, among which the proportion of animation field is increasing, while Japanese language and literature field are still favored. The type of graduation thesis is mainly academic thesis. However, it is necessary to broaden the writing text form of graduation thesis and strengthen the methodological study of empirical research.

Keywords: Colleges and Universities; Japanese Major; Graduation Thesis; Title Selection; Culture

1. Introduction

As of January, 2024, the number of Japanese majors registered with the Ministry of Education was 518 [1]. From the perspective of specialty setting, many colleges and universities have increased the compound majors in all directions on the basis of offering language and literature [2]. The Teaching Syllabus for Senior Japanese Majors in Colleges and Universities points out that the goal of graduation thesis writing for Japanese majors is to cultivate students' ability to use written language, master the writing methods of the thesis and improve their ability to think, analyze and solve problems through graduation thesis writing. It is not difficult to see that graduation thesis writing is a practical link to cultivate Japanese language comprehensive ability of Japanese majors and evaluate their

four-year Japanese learning effect, and it plays an extremely important role in the training scheme of Japanese professionals. Especially research methods and academic writing, usually during the period of writing graduation thesis, the instructor will give students corresponding guidance for thesis writing [3]. In order to understand the current situation and problems of Japanese major graduation thesis in colleges and universities, it is necessary to conduct in-depth investigation and analysis on the topic selection of Japanese major graduation thesis, and understand the development and changes of the research object and research content of Japanese major graduation thesis writing in colleges and universities through the analysis of the changes of the topic selection over the years. In addition, we can also understand the present situation and problems of graduation thesis writing for Japanese majors in colleges and universities that have entered the stage of popularization of higher education.

2. Research Object and Data Source

This paper takes the Japanese major of a university, one of the local universities in Guangdong (hereinafter referred to as "Japanese major of a university") as the research object and makes a case study. The research object in the case study is individual, but it is not completely isolated, but is associated with other individuals and is an individual in a whole. This study of individual objects will inevitably reflect some characteristics and laws of other individuals and the whole to a certain extent [4]. In this sense, the study of Japanese major in a university, one of the Japanese majors in undergraduate universities, can, to a certain extent, spy out the general characteristics and laws of Japanese majors in undergraduate universities across the country through the research results of individual objects.

In addition, this study also conducted a

longitudinal study. Longitudinal study is also called follow-up study. It refers to the method of conducting a comprehensive and systematic study of the same object or a group of objects for a long period of time, and recording its development and changes over time and studying it [5]. From the historical data in Table 1, from 2017 to 2024, the overall number of Japanese graduates has not changed much, and the scale is relatively stable, with a total of 589 in eight years. In this study, the topics of graduation thesis of Japanese majors in the past 8 years were statistically and classified. It is not difficult to see that taking all the topics of graduation thesis of the same Japanese major in

eight years as the research object can outline the development and changes of the research object and research content of graduation thesis of Japanese major as a whole. There are two stages in the statistics and classification of this study. First, statistics and classification are carried out on the topics of graduation thesis every year, and according to the high-frequency words of thesis topics, manual statistics and classification are arranged, which are included in the corresponding research fields. Secondly, according to the overall number of high-frequency words, their research fields and academic research terms, the thesis topics in the past eight years are analyzed and investigated.

Table 1. Distribution of Thesis Topics for Japanese Majors in a University (2017-2024)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	total	ranking
cartoon	9	8	8	7	11	11	17	15	86	1
literature	9	6	6	11	14	11	6	13	76	2
economy	8	20	8	5	7	6	6	6	66	3
education	4	2	9	3	7	3	8	4	40	4
language	0	2	5	4	4	10	5	9	39	5
cuisine	2	1	5	6	6	4	2	1	27	6
Few children/old age	3	5	5	3	4	0	3	1	24	7
Employment/Women	0	3	1	3	4	4	3	3	21	8
total	73	72	82	66	69	76	72	79	589	

Data source: The author made it according to relevant information.

Based on the topic of graduation thesis for Japanese majors, this paper sorts out the vocabulary with high frequency of 589 thesis topics in 8 years, and investigates the development of graduation thesis for Japanese majors based on this aspect. Although it seems that a topic and its key words will be repeatedly included and counted, or multiple words of a topic will be repeatedly included and counted, in fact, if a graduation thesis topic is repeatedly classified and counted, all classified columns may accumulate statistics, so there is not much difference on the whole, but it can reflect the changes in the topic selection and research field of graduation thesis.

In the process of cultivating high-quality talents, the curriculum system of Japanese major is the key to professional construction and subject development [6]. Graduation thesis writing is a part of cultivating Japanese writing ability and Japanese practical ability of Japanese major students, and it is also an important aspect of evaluating the quality of Japanese major students' talent training and teaching results. Therefore, the object of this paper is representative in both universities and majors.

3. From the Data Analysis to See the Current Situation of Japanese Major Graduation Thesis Topic Selection

3.1 From the Research Field to See the Topic of Japanese Major Graduation Thesis

The key words of graduation thesis topics from 2017 to 2024 are classified and sorted. The research fields of graduation thesis topics are wide, and the top six research fields with a high number are animation (86 articles), literature (76 articles), economy (66 articles), education (40 articles), Japanese language (39 articles) and cuisine (27 articles).

Animation is a field with the most topics in Japanese graduation thesis. There are many graduation papers in this field every year, so animation is listed as a field in this study. In the past eight years, there have been more than 10 papers in four years, especially in the last four years, the number of Japanese professional graduation papers choosing animation as the research field has increased year by year. It is expected that the number of topics in animation will continue to be high in the future. In terms of

the number of students, every year, one in seven students majoring in Japanese regards animation as the research object. Japanese professionals have outstanding advantages in Sino-Japanese cultural integration and cross-cultural awareness and ability, and can contact Japanese culture more directly, quickly and frequently [7]. In the modern society with the popularization of media technology, there are traditional media such as TV and radio, and more new media such as internet, mobile phone and tablet computer, and the speed of animation is not restricted by time and space. Teenagers in modern society have been exposed to mobile phones and the Internet since childhood, and they have more opportunities to get in touch with anime, and they can get Japanese anime anytime and anywhere. Especially after 2000, or after 2010, the opportunity for young people to understand Japan, Japanese and Japanese culture is no longer because they are interested in enterprise management, administrative methods and science and technology that support Japan's economic development, but instead turn to Japan's attention to popular culture such as TV dramas, animations, animations, music and video games, and this attention occupies a considerable proportion [8]. For example, the related animation films directed by Miyazaki Hayao are loved by teenagers all over the world. Many teenagers grew up watching cartoons. Especially for Japanese majors, because of the advantages of learning Japanese and understanding Japanese language, Japanese majors are more easily influenced by animation, so some students choose animation as their graduation thesis topics. In addition, we can see that animation is still an important way of cultural exchange between China and Japan.

Japanese literature is a traditional research field for Japanese majors. Although some studies have pointed out that Japanese teaching in many colleges and universities now focuses only on the actual communicative competence and ignores the basic theory of language and literature [9]. However, from the perspective of topic selection over the years, there are more topics for graduation thesis in this field every year, second only to the number of topics in the animation field. In 8 years, there were more than 10 articles in 4 years, and one seventh of the students majoring in Japanese chose Japanese literature. Kawabata Yasunari won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1968, which pushed

Japanese literature and its representative neo-sensualist literature to the world. In addition, Junichi Watanabe is a representative of Japanese "intermediate literature", and his works have a large number of readers in China. Haruki Murakami's literature is also popular in China. It is not difficult to see that Japanese writers and Japanese literature are still an important research field of Japanese major graduation thesis writing. As for the economic field, this study lists the related research objects such as economy and Japanese enterprises as one. As far as the construction of an economic power is concerned, foreign languages are an important tool for global economic and trade development [10]. On the whole, the economic field is the third largest field of Japanese major graduation thesis writing. From the past years, in addition to the particularity of as many as 20 articles in 2014, there are about 6 graduation thesis topics in the economic field on average every year. It shows that although Japan's economic development is in a period of low growth, Japan's advantageous industries such as automobiles and cosmetics are still the focus of Japanese graduation thesis.

The fourth major area of topic selection for graduation thesis of Japanese major is education. The first major topic in the field of education is the research object of all kinds of school education in Japan, including Japanese, public and private universities, short-term universities, specialized vocational colleges and subject education in primary and secondary schools. The second main topic is social education such as disaster prevention education, environmental protection education and garbage classification education, especially related to the theme education such as environmental protection, garbage classification, disaster prevention and training that our society has paid more and more attention to in recent years. Japan, which has accumulated rich practical experience in this field for many years, is naturally favored by Japanese majors when choosing topics. Investigating Japan's policies and practices in this field and providing enlightenment to relevant departments in China has become the reason for choosing more topics in the field of education. The third topic is Japanese education and Japanese teaching. In recent years, with the sudden increase in the number of Japanese students taking the college entrance examination, Japanese education in senior high schools has developed rapidly, which objectively requires a

large number of teachers engaged in Japanese teaching in senior high schools and broadens the employment scope of Japanese majors. In 2017, the Ministry of Education added the qualification examination for Japanese teachers in middle schools, which promoted the enthusiasm of Japanese majors to obtain the qualification of Japanese teachers in middle schools and join the education industry to engage in Japanese teaching. Therefore, many people choose the topics of Japanese education and Japanese teaching when writing their graduation thesis.

The fifth topic is the field of language. As students majoring in Japanese, many people choose Japanese vocabulary, proverbs, Japanese characters, and the comparison of Chinese and Japanese languages for their graduation thesis topics. And the sixth is the field of cooking. Influenced by anime, food videos and Japanese restaurants all over large, medium and small cities, many Japanese majors choose Chinese cuisine, Huaishi cuisine and other Japanese cuisine.

3.2 From the High-Frequency Words to See the Changes in the Topic Selection of Japanese Professional Graduation Thesis

3.2.1 From the overall perspective of high-frequency words

The graduation thesis requires students to use what they have learned comprehensively to complete a research paper [11]. From Table 2, first of all, the word that appears most frequently in the topic of graduation thesis for Japanese majors is the word culture. According to the statistics of 589 graduation thesis titles of Japanese majors in 8 years, 94 of them are graduation thesis titles with the word culture. Because Japanese majors require that the topic selection and research of graduation thesis should be related to Japan, all objects in Japanese society may become research objects except language, literature, education, economy and traditional Japanese culture, and the topic selection and writing requirements should have certain academic significance and practical value, which requires that the topic selection should be a specific object of Japanese society, and it should be raised from the individual research of the object belonging to the social field to the cultural level and height. At present, the curriculum still focuses on theoretical knowledge, lacking knowledge of cultural

customs, and the attraction of the curriculum is quite insufficient [12]. Therefore, many graduation thesis topics are selected through a certain Japanese society.

Table 2. Distribution of High-Frequency Words in Graduation Thesis Topics of Japanese majors

keyword	quantity	ranking	keyword	quantity	ranking
culture	94	1	Education exhibition	27	6
woman	48	2	beautiful	26	7
Japanese	44	3	Teba	24	8
awareness	29	4	society	23	9
cartoon	28	5	question	21	10

Data source: The author made it according to relevant information.

Secondly, from the perspective of gender, the research objects and perspectives about women are more easily adopted. One is that Japanese majors generally pay attention to literary works, Japanese female expressions and women in animation; The other is that social problems such as female employment, child-rearing and discrimination often attract the attention of college students in China. In addition, Japanese society and Japanese ideology are the areas that China students pay close attention to after learning Japanese. For example, Japan's aesthetic consciousness, religious thought, group consciousness and not causing trouble to others. With the enrollment expansion of Chinese universities, the development of information media and the arrival of information society, it is easier for Chinese college students to obtain and contact all aspects of information in various fields and levels of Japanese society through multimedia, which broadens the horizons of Japanese majors and updates their concepts. In particular, the writing scope of graduation thesis has changed greatly, from the original language and literature to social culture [13].

Therefore, there are many keywords in graduation thesis topics such as animation, education, development, characteristics and aesthetics, which shows that Japanese majors are actively concerned about the development and changes of Japanese society.

3.2.2 From the field of high-frequency words

From Table 3, the top six areas of high-frequency words in Japanese graduation thesis topics are culture, animation, education, society, aging and declining birthrate in turn. First, strictly speaking, animation is also a cultural field in a broad sense. High-frequency

words are listed separately because they are in the top ranks. It is not difficult to see that culture and animation are one of the fields that Japanese majors choose the most when choosing topics for their graduation thesis.

Table 3. Field Distribution of High-Frequency Words in Japanese Graduation Thesis Topics

keyword	quantity	ranking	keyword	quantity	ranking
culture	94	1	society	23	4
cartoon	28	2	Aging	11	5
education	27	3	sub replacement fertility	6	6

Data source: The author made it according to relevant information.

Secondly, the aging and declining birthrate, which are prominent social problems in modern Japan, are one of the focuses of Japanese majors. Strictly speaking, aging and declining birthrate are both social fields. In a broad sense, culture and animation belong to the field of Japanese culture, and 122 graduation thesis topics with the word "culture" account for 20.7% of the total number of Japanese majors. Society, aging and declining birthrate belong to Japanese social fields, with 40 graduation thesis topics accounting for 6.8% and 27 graduation thesis topics with the word "education" accounting for 4.6%. It is not difficult to see that from the number of high-frequency words, culture, society and education are the main areas of topic selection and writing for Japanese major graduation thesis. Of course, it is not difficult to see that the topics except for culture, literature, language, education and economy are strictly Japanese social fields, which to some extent reflects the diversity of research objects and topics of Japanese major graduation thesis.

3.2.3 From the high-frequency words in academic writing

From Table 4, in terms of high-frequency words in academic writing, the word "development" is the most commonly used in Japanese professional graduation thesis, followed by characteristics and problems, and the fourth to sixth are the changes, functions and reasons that affect the status quo. To some extent, this means that most of the topics of graduation thesis are to investigate the development and evolution of the research object, summarize its characteristics and discuss problems. In other words, the graduation thesis of Japanese major focuses on problem research and practical research. Through the investigation of development (change) and present situation, this paper

summarizes its characteristics and functions, discusses its effectiveness (influence), and provides enlightenment and reference for China to study Japan.

Table 4. Distribution of high-frequency words in academic writing of graduation thesis topics for Japanese majors

keyword	quantity	ranking	keyword	quantity	ranking
development	27	1	Affect status quo change	11	4
feature	24	2	function	8	5
question	21	3	cause	7	6

Data source: The author made it according to relevant information.

Through the distribution of high-frequency words used in the above academic writing, we can easily see that the graduation thesis of Japanese major basically lies in applied research and problem research around the development, present situation, characteristics and problems of the research object, but it is difficult to see empirical research and investigation research in topic selection and writing.

4. The Characteristics and Problems of the Topic Selection of Graduation Thesis for Japanese Majors

This paper analyzes the high-frequency words selected in the graduation thesis of Japanese major, and draws the following characteristics.

First, society, culture and education are the main research fields of Japanese major graduation thesis. From the field of view, the relevant statistics of this study show that although the subjects are diverse, Japanese majors tend to explore Japanese culture by sorting out their development history and describing the current situation. In addition, although the research fields of Japanese graduation thesis topics tend to be diversified, Japanese language and Japanese literature are still favored.

Second, animation is a field with the most topics. From the perspective of high-frequency words, animation is a field with the largest number and the fastest development among Japanese graduation thesis topics. It is not difficult to see that animation plays a vital role in modern society and exchanges between China and Japan. The influence on the topic selection and writing of Japanese graduation thesis is increasing day by day.

Thirdly, the research types of graduation thesis

for Japanese majors are mainly academic papers, and they are applied research and problem research. From the research type, the research type of graduation thesis of Japanese major is relatively simple, and there are few text forms other than academic papers. The research focus of academic papers mainly includes development, characteristics, problems, influences and functions, that is, sorting out the development process of research objects, summarizing their characteristics, discussing their problems, influences and functions. It is not difficult to see that the research period of this type of research is probably modern, and the object is Japanese social, cultural and educational humanities and social sciences.

Through the analysis of the topic and topic selection of graduation thesis for Japanese majors, it can be seen that there are the following problems in the topic selection of graduation thesis.

Firstly, the topic selection of graduation thesis lacks the theme and content of translation field. Through the analysis of the topic selection of graduation thesis for Japanese majors, it is found that the research type is very single, all in the form of academic papers. Although it is applied research and problem research, it lacks relevant topics and contents in the field of translation. It is reported that two translation courses, Chinese and Japanese translation theory and practice and Chinese and Japanese interpretation theory and practice, are generally offered in the senior stage of Japanese major. In the senior stage, I systematically accept the main translation theories, translation methods and practical exercises of Chinese and Japanese translation and interpretation. Translation is a cross-cultural communication activity. Understanding the "other" viewpoints of foreign scholars and foreign media is helpful for students to form an objective understanding of related topics and improve their intercultural communication ability. Unfortunately, compared with translation courses and translation teaching for Japanese majors, the topic selection and content of graduation thesis for students hardly involve related translation fields. Although it is only a case study of universities in this study, it also reflects the common problems of Japanese majors in universities to some extent.

The second is the lack of empirical research on the topic selection of graduation thesis. Graduation thesis writing courses or graduation

thesis writing courses of academic writing and research methods are generally offered in the senior stage of Japanese majors. However, according to the statistics of this study, the graduation thesis of Japanese major is all qualitative research. The main research methods are literature, history and comparison. Few papers adopt questionnaire survey and interview methods in some chapters. Quantitative methods of data collection, statistics and analysis have not been widely used in Japanese professional graduation thesis. It is not difficult to see that the graduation thesis of Japanese major basically does not use empirical research such as questionnaire survey, interview and statistical analysis. The lack of empirical research is manifested in the title and research content of graduation thesis.

5. Enlightenment and Conclusion

Based on the statistics and analysis of 589 graduation thesis topics of Japanese major in the same undergraduate university in eight years, we should strengthen the guidance and guidance of teaching and scientific research for students in two aspects: methodology study of empirical research and practical report of translation.

5.1 Broaden the Writing Text form of Graduation Thesis

Graduation thesis can be academic paper, translation work and translation practice report, investigation report and other forms. The statistical analysis of this study shows that the graduation thesis of Japanese major in case universities is only a single form of academic papers, lacking of translated works, translation practice reports, research reports and other text forms. Therefore, the graduation thesis in the translation direction needs the guidance of the tutor's topic selection and the research and writing process. In addition, from the perspective of the connection between undergraduate and postgraduate, in 2024, there will be 35 Japanese translation majors and 20 Japanese interpretation majors in China at the master's level. Therefore, it is an effective way for tutors to guide students to choose translation research and translation practice in their graduation thesis, as well as the contents of empirical research such as investigation and research for graduation thesis. From the point of view of connecting undergraduate with postgraduate and maintaining the consistency of teaching and

research, it is an effective way to prepare for high-level study for postgraduate entrance examination. Of course, most graduates enter the society and work in Japanese-related posts and fields, and translation is a part of their work. Therefore, choosing translation works and translation practices when choosing a topic and writing a graduation thesis can not only test students' Chinese-Japanese translation ability and comprehensive language application ability, but also sum up translation experiences and problems in the writing process of original translation, analysis, comparison, reflection and summary, and promote the improvement of Chinese-Japanese language translation ability.

5.2 Strengthen the Methodology Study of Empirical Research

Research method is one of the foundations of scientific research and writing graduation thesis. As far as this study is concerned, all the graduation theses in the past eight years belong to literature research and historical research, and there is almost no empirical research. There are many research methods in empirical research, such as in-depth interview, questionnaire survey and data statistics. Through the collected data and information, further qualitative analysis or quantitative analysis is made, and the research is more accurate and scientific. As far as Japanese majors are concerned, students mainly study Japanese professional courses from freshman to senior. The Japanese composition class is only about writing 200-300-word Japanese compositions. Therefore, if there is no Chinese thesis writing experience in general education courses in colleges and universities, Japanese majors have no decent thesis writing training before graduation from college. In fact, for Japanese majors who have no experience in thesis writing and scientific research, research and academic writing in Japanese as a foreign language is aimed at Japanese target countries that they don't know much about, and the difficulty coefficient of graduation thesis topic selection and writing increases geometrically. It is reported that Japanese majors generally offer thesis writing courses such as graduation thesis writing, academic writing and research methods in senior grades. First, this requires that this kind of courses should strengthen the teaching of research methods and teach students the empirical research methods, basic contents and related basic knowledge commonly used in

the humanities and social sciences. Second, Japanese majors should actively take general education courses in academic research, thesis writing or academic guidance, and have a preliminary understanding and learning experience in scientific research and thesis writing.

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