Enhancing Students Motivation in Japanese Conversation (Online Course): through CM

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the study and teaching strategy of Japanese conversation. The objective of the paper is to analyze the motivation of students on learning through CM as the primary media of the study, which can help students to improve their level of proficiency. The study used a qualitative method: a case study on a Japanese conversation lecture. Memorizing text or role-playing from existing dialogues is one of many activities used in conversation lectures. The idea of this study is similar to a role-play activity, but using CM students can also learn pronunciation, articulation, and intonation from the native actor directly. This study represents the initial stage of a research project aimed at building students’ confidence and improving Japanese fluency. The major finding was that a clear majority of students reported a considerably high motivation according to the use of terms ‘tanoshikatta’ and ‘omoshiri’ on their feedback. It says that students were interested to do the assessment.

Keywords: second language acquisition; learning strategies; online course; learning motivation; Japanese study.

1. Introduction

Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia was spreading rapidly with unexpectedly severe effects on people’s routines. Furthermore, education sector was also affected. All campus activities, both academic and non-academic, were stopped to reduce the risk of this particular virus transmission.

Nevertheless, the education sector must certainly continue to run in line with the obligations of educators, as well as to fulfill the students’ rights, that students are entitled to education according to their level.

In connection with the appeal of the Ministry of Education and Culture on this matter, in the field of education, it is proposed that the KBM (Kegiatan Belajar Mengajar/teaching activity) is still conducted online. Started from the middle of March 2020, our university was also one of the universities that transfer face-to-face lecture activities in class into long-distance learning lectures or online course using various platforms.

However, it is undeniable that these changes occurred so suddenly that some academics were not ready to face these changes. It applied for both parties, lecturers as material providers and students as recipients and the one who is active in learning activities.

Specifically at the beginning of the change period, it can be said that these parties experienced some technical difficulties for example; teaching materials left on campus, poor internet connection in certain regions, insufficient internet quota, yet could not afford to go to the internet cafe, etc. Hence, it takes time to adapt and find solutions to minimize these constraints, considering the end of this COVID-19 outbreak is not yet visible.

During such condition, as humans we should remain productive, despite all the limitations that exist. In respond to this need our university, faculties, study programs, and even individuals had proposed solution to maintain the long-distance learning system.

Even though this research was carried out in limited conditions, the authors felt...
the need for this research to be presented
given the importance of teaching and
learning activities, and the authors hope
that it can fill a little gap for fellow
instructors to utilize the media and its
effectiveness according to their needs.

The method used was a case study of
students who took the 中 級 会 話
chukyuukaiwa 'intermediate level
conversation' course. This course is one of
the Japanese language proficiency
courses. In normal conditions, this lecture
requires students to play an active role in
speaking, listening, and conducting other
conversation activities, as well as making
presentations in Japanese on a topic related
to Japan.

One of the challenges that
existed among Indonesians Japanese
language learners was the lack of
confidence on having a conversation in
Japanese. In fact, when the students take
writing test, they can achieve high enough
points or scores. This seems to be one of
the problems that occur in many
universities that have Japanese study
programs.

Problems related to self-confidence
can be solved by adding more experience
to learners in speaking and producing
sounds in Japanese. This can be trained
both in and outside the classroom.
Instructors are required to motivate
learners so that they can actively carry out
independent learning outside the classroom
since class meetings are very limited.

"Helping students to enhance
articulateness and forthcomingness - by focusing on known
vocabulary employment, sentence
construction and clear output - is
not only the single most important
Oral Communication activity in
its own right (one that should be
prioritized over grammar and
beyond a certain point
pronunciation in most instances
but helps students become more
confident which, in turn, there

after helps them - by way of
virtuous reinforcement cycle – to
become yet more articulate and
forthcoming." (William, 2018)

However, with the change in teaching
method from face-to-face to online
lectures, there are several new obstacles
that writer faced as a lecturer in the
conversation 会話 kaiwa course, namely a
lack of time to interact with students, so
there were difficulties in providing
teaching material.

As one of the alternatives, we can take
references from other research. Research
on second language acquisition (SLA) has
been widely carried out for English
language learning (English as a second
language studies); (Huckin, 1999);
(William, 2018); (Housen, 2009);
(Kukimoto, 2019); (Nagakura, 2019);
(Egawa, Yoshiyuki, & Murai, 2020), and
also study on the topic of English teaching
materials or teaching methods; (Levy,
2009); (Fukuda, 2019); (Oumi, Fukuda, &
Karasawa, 2020).

However, there is only a limited
number of research that addresses Japanese
language acquisition, especially those in
Indonesia.

There is a discussion of language
acquisition strategies that are associated
with Japanese language teaching strategies.
It was a research conducted by Ibnatul,
Krimah, Fahriany, & Habibi (2018) which
focuses on the case study of a Japanese
language learner. Therefore, this study
intends to focus on teaching Japanese
conversation strategies to improve student
motivation, so it can lead students to
improve their level of proficiency.

A discussion of developing teaching
materials in the Japanese Language was
conducted by Miyako (2018). Miyako
(2018) explores the usage of newspaper
articles as teaching material to improve the
reading and writing skills of Japanese
language foreigner students. However, it
did not address the materials for speaking
either oral conversation. Therefore, this study intends to address this issue.

According to Stephen Krashen’s, most widely known in acquisition-learning study, there are five hypotheses (1) The acquisition-learning hypothesis; (2) The monitor hypothesis; (3) The natural order hypothesis (4) The input hypothesis (5) The affective filter hypothesis (Hong, 2008; Schütz, 2019).

On this occasion, this conducted study suggests one of the learning methods that has been applied and receiving a very good response from students. It is hoped that this can become one of the reference materials for fellow lecturers; both working in the same or different fields.

2. Methods

The method on this research was a case study with a descriptive qualitative method to describe the results obtained in the form of feedback from students. "Qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective, most often from the standpoint of the participant. These data are usually not amenable to counting or measuring." (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & de Lacey, 2016).

This case study was conducted on the chukyuukaiai course, 4th semester. Fourth-semester students can be said to be equivalent to learners who have abilities more or less equivalent to N3. The object of research was the results of feedback from the questionnaire given to students after attending lectures. "This type of research is based on data expressed mostly in the form of words – descriptions, accounts, opinions, feelings, etc. – rather than on numbers. This type of data is common whenever people are the focus of the study, particularly in social groups or as individuals." (Willam, 2011:130)

Assessment was given on April 6, 2020. Students were asked to demonstrate on April 16, 2020, as a midterm exam.
3. Results and Discussion

This lecture utilized YouTube as teaching material. CM Santarou 『三太郎』 was chosen because the video consists of 76 episodes of which one video is only 30-60 seconds long, so it does not burden students on internet quota. YouTube as a source of a teaching media helps students who have difficulty with signals or poor internet connection because nowadays YouTube can be accessed easily from various providers, and is free to access, so students can access it anytime, adjusting to the time when the network is good. While CM Santarou’s content is adapted from Japanese folklore which is very well known in Japan, some folklore were adapted and combined into a series of stories.

The video use characters names based on their original story but with a touch of a comedy so that it is easily accepted by the audience. Three main stories namely 『桃太郎』、『浦太郎』、『金太郎』 as well as additional characters such as Kaguyahime also play an active role in this video. The learning achievement target is the improvement in the ability to express the Japanese language and provide a stimulus to students to be motivated and encouraged to learn Japanese actively.

Following is the flow of learning by utilizing CM Santarou;

① CM Santarou’s youtube link was shared to students. (April 6, 2020)
② Students were allowed to freely choose the video of CM Santarou, then instructed to learn the conversations that exist in the CM.
③ Students then demonstrated it at a specified time. (April 16, 2020)

It was suggested to the students that the conversations in the video or script were not to be recorded because the original Japanese subtitles along with its translation have already been provided, so students can focus more on learning the hatsuon (pronunciation) of native (the characters) that appear on CM Santarou.

④ The additional task was to write the storyline (arasuji) of the selected video. The goal is to assess students' understanding of the storyline and conversations in the video they have chosen.

⑤ Students then wrote feedback about this learning activity.

As a result, students could smoothly demonstrate selected conversations; almost all could memorize the script with good pronunciation. Furthermore, some of them changed their voices when showing different characters to imitate the characters.

Table 1 Feedback From Students

| Initial | Feedback |
|---------|----------|
| NZ      | 今回の課題はとても楽しかったと思います。次の課題ではもっと頑張ります。<br>Konkai no kadai wa totemo tanoshikatta to omoimasu. tsugi no kadaiwa motto ganbarimasu.<br>(I think this assessment was a lot of fun. I will do my best in the next task.) |
| VR      | 複数の人の会話が独り言になるのはやはり難しいと思いますが、個人的にとても面白かったです。表情が変わらなければならながいのが一番面白かった。<br>Fukusuu no hito no kaiwa ga hitorigoto ni naru nova yahari muzukashii to omoimasuga, kijinteki ni totemo omoshirokatta desu. Hyoujou ga atto iu ma o kawaranakerebanaranaigoma ichiban omoshirokatta.<br>(It was difficult to have several dialogues alone, but I found it very interesting. The most interesting thing was when I have to quickly shift my facial expression.) |
Table 1 (Continued)

| Initial | Feedback |
|---------|----------|
| PA      | ドキドキしてしまいましたが楽しかったです。<br>Dokidoki shite shimaimashitaga, tanoshkattadesu.<br>(I was thrilled, yet it was fun.) |
| BN      | とても面白くて課題が終わったとしてもその三太郎 CMを何度も見ています。<br>Totemo omoshirokute kadai ga owatta toshitemo sono Santarou CM o nandomo mite imasu.<br>(It was super fun even after I finished the assessment; I keep on watching the SantarouCM.) |
| AN      | 今日は面白いと思います。そして CMのことは色々なビデオが日本語の発音を勉強しやすいでした。ありがとうございます。<br>Kyou wa omoshiroi da to omoimashita. Soshite CM no koto wa iroirona bideo ga nihongo no hatsuon o benkyoushiyasui deshita. Arigatou gozaimashita.<br>(Today was interesting. Furthermore with regard to commercials, various videos made it was easy to learn Japanese pronunciation. Thank you very much.) |
| FI      | 私（に）とって、今回の課題は面白いと思いました。声優みたいでした。最初は男性俳優の声を調整するのは難しかったのですが、準備時間は長かったですから、十分な練習ができますように私に教えても困らないのです。ありがとうございました。<br>Watashi (ni) totte, konkai no kadai wa omoshiroi to omoimashita. Seiyuu mitai deshita. Saisho wa dansei haiyuu no koe o chousei suru nowa muzukashikatta no desuga, junbi jikan ga nagakatta desukara, jushigakatta renshuu, joshitsu no okage de, Santarou ni tsuite no omoshiroi koukoku o shirimashita. Tanoshikatta desu. Arigatou gozaimashita.<br>(For me, this assessment was interesting. It was like a voice actor. At first, it was rather difficult to produce the voice of a male actor, but since I had a long time to prepare, I thought that I could practice. Besides, thanks to the teacher for introducing me to CM Santarou. It was fun. Thank you very much.) |
| LP      | 声優になったような課題だと思います。CMには3人の男優がいるから、一人でどんな声のトーンネーションがいいのかの練習があるのです。そのために、オンラインで話した時に少し緊張が有些細かい気がするのに、今回の課題は面白かったですね。ありがとうございました。<br>Seiyuu ni natta youna kadai da to omoimashita. CM ni wa san nin no danyuu ga iuruka, hitori de donna koe no intooneeshion ga ii to renshu no kekkou muzukashii desuga, tanoshikatta desu. Onrain de hanashita toki ni sukoshi kinchou de hazukashii ki ga suru noni, konkai no kadai wa omoshiroikakuta desu. Arigatou gozaimashita.<br>(I think it's a challenge to become a voice actor. There are 3 actors in the CM, so it's quite difficult to contrast voice and intonation alone. Regardless it was fun. Though I felt a little nervous and embarrassed when I spoke online, but this assessment was interesting. Thank you very much.) |
| LA      | 実はCMは面白いです。それから最初の中間テストは大丈夫でした。今日はありがとうございました。<br>Jitsuwa CM wa omoshiroikatta desu. Sorekara saisho chuukan tesuto wa tameratta desuga daijyoubu desu. Kyou wa arigatou gozaimashita.<br>(Actually, the CM is interesting. At first, I was hesitant during the test, but it was okay. Thank you for today.) |
| BA      | よろしいだと思います。あの CMのことを教えてくれて、ありがとうございました。あの色々なドキュメンタリーから日本語の表現を学べますのですごく有用です。<br>Yoroshii da to omoimashita. Ano CM no koto o tsutaete kurete, arigatou gozaimashita. Ano iro-irona bideo kara nihongo no hyougen o manabaremashu node sugoku yuusou desu.<br>(I think it was fine. Thank you for telling me about that CM. It was very useful because I can learn Japanese expressions from those various videos). |
Table 1 …(Continued)

| Initial | Feedback |
|---------|----------|
| MR      | Watashinitotte, konkai no chuukan shiken wa omoshiroi to omoimashita. Ano CM no kotowa iro-irona bideo ga nihon no hatsuon o benkyoushiyasui deshita. (I think, I found this midterm exam interesting. From that CM, various videos help us to study Japanese pronunciation.) |
| TS      | Kono kadai wa omoshiroi da to omoimasu. Konkai no kadai wa seiyuu ni natte muzukashikute omoshikokatta desu. Soshite CM no bideo wa yorosikute omoshiri da to omoimasu. (I think this task is interesting. This time it was difficult and interesting to become a voice actor. I also think the CM is nice and interesting.) |
| NS      | Watashi ni totte, konkai no kadai wa omoshiroi to omoimashita. CM wa 5nin hajyyu ga irukara, hajyyu o koe o maneru koto wa totemo muzukashikatta. Demo, tanoshikatta. Ano CM o tsuataete, arigatou gozaimashita. Watashi wa ano CM ga suki desu. Soshite, senbu no ano Santarou no CM o mimashita. Hontou ni omoshiri to omoimashita. (For me, this assessment was interesting. Since there are 5 actors in the CM, it was very difficult to imitate the actor's voice. But I had a good time. Thank you for telling me that CM. I like that CM and I watched all the CM of Santarou. I thought it was really interesting.) |
| FN      | Kono mondai wa omoshiroi da to omoimasu. Bideo no naka de kyarakutaa wa totemo hayaku hanashimasu. Kono mondai de wa, seiyuu ni naru koto wa totemo muzukashii desu. Shikashi, CM bideo wa totemo omoshiroi to omoimasu. Arigatou gozaimashita. (I think this assessment is interesting. The characters speak rather fast in the video. In this task, being a voice actor is very difficult. However, I think the CM video is very interesting. Thank you very much.) |
| MA      | Hitori de kaiwa o suru no wa shuuru dado desuga, koinmeki ni wa totemo zanshin de tanoshikatta desu. (It was odd to have a conversation alone, but personally it was a brand new experience for me and I enjoyed it.) |
| SL      | Saishowa, hitori de kaiwa suru no ga hen da to omoimashita. Shiken no toki, watashi wa totemo kinchou shimasu. Demo watashi ni totte, kono aidea ga totemo omoshirokkatta desu. (At first, I thought it was weird to talk alone. At the time of the exam, I was very nervous. But for me, this idea is interesting.) |
| MF      | Totemo binyou no kanji desu. Hitori goto mitai de, omoshiroidesu. Demo sutoori ga mijika sugite, nan no monogatari ga chotto wakarimasen. Kore wa saisho kara miru beki kanoshiremasen. (It feels a little bit strange. It's like a soliloquy and it's interesting. But the story is too short and I don't know what the story is about. This may be something that you should watch from the beginning to the end.) |

(Data are partially taken, without edits)
From table 1 above, it can be seen how students were interested attending the lecture. Most stated that they felt attracted to the topic or idea presented, namely the use of CM as content or teaching material. This can be seen from the expression面白いい /面白かった omoshiroi / omoshirokatta expressed by students. Besides, it can also be seen that the students feel happy, or it can be said that the assessment given feels pleasant. This was shown by the expression 楽しかった tanoshikatta.

From the use of these two verbs, it can also be concluded that these learning methods can increase students’ motivation to learn more. This is in line with the presentation of the motivational subtype by Vallerand in Bukledee (2008) which identified three sub-types of intrinsic motivation; motivation to learn (engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction of understanding something new); motivation towards achievement (engaging in an activity for the satisfaction of surpassing oneself, coping with challenges and accomplishing or creating something); motivation to experience stimulation (engaging in an activity to experience pleasant sensations). There would appear to be enough in those three categories to keep an individual focused on the learning task (Bukledee, 2008).

Moreover, there are also definitely some uses of verbal expressions that can be explicitly understood as students learning motivation has increased. Here is an example of a declarative sentence expressed by NZ: 「次の課題ではもっと頑張ります」 Tsugi no kadaidewa motto ganbarimasu. She stated that she would try harder to carry out the next assessment. There seems to be a declaration on this expression.

BN: 「課題が終わったとしてもその三太郎 CM を何度も見ています」 kadai ga owatta toshitemo sono Santarou CM o nandomo mite imasu. (It was super fun even after I finished the assessment; I keep on watching the Santarou CM.). This statement can be interpreted that there is a motivation to watch CM videos, which arises from a sense of interest as a result of the experience during taking the assessment.

NS: 「全部のあの三太郎の CM を見ました」 zenbu no ano Santarou no CM o mimashita (And I watched all the commercials of Santarou). The assessment or assignment on this lecture is for students to simply choose one CM video, so there is no obligation or demand for them to watch videos other than those they have chosen. However, with the stimulus of one video, there is an interest in watching other videos. This can also be concluded as a result of increased motivation due to a sense of interest in the selected CM video.

As mentioned before about Stephen Krashen's Hypotheses, one of them says that motivation is one of the factors that can affect language acquisition. The affective filter hypothesis assimilates Stephen Krashen’s view that a number of affective variables play as facilitative, but non-casual role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, and personality traits.

Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, a low level of anxiety, and extraversion are better equipped for success in second acquisition (Schütz, 2019).

4. Conclusions

The students were very enthusiastic in carrying out the activity as can be seen from the comments given after completing the lecture. It was mentioned that this kind of activity is not only fun but also a stimulus for them to see other videos. Furthermore, students gained new knowledge about the figures that emerge in Japanese folklore. Additionally students can learn from native conversations or
their dialogues when conducting conversations, even though through a video.

This can be obtained because all this time lectures have been done mostly by memorizing conversational texts without any direction or guidance from native. Meanwhile in this new learning method, students can listen to the audio directly from the characters, so they have a reference on how to say the words, how the intonation, and how to express it.

In this study, some deficiencies are expected to be fulfilled in subsequent studies. This research can be said to be preliminary research. Henceforth future research, various approaches are expected to be added in the research.

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