

Impact of Group Discussion on Japanese Listening Skills for Oral Comprehension Subject Through Zoom

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of implementing group discussions on improving Japanese listening skills in oral comprehension courses. This research is experimental research with Quasy Experimental method with Posttest only control group design. The sampling technique used was the non-probability sampling technique. So, the research sample consisted of 2 classes of 60 students. The data collection techniques used were observation and listening tests. Data analysis used a t-test to determine listening skills before and after using group discussions. The results showed that the value of $t\text{-Stat} < t\text{-Table}$ ($-13,863 < 2,0009$), meaning that group discussions conducted through zoom positively impacted listening skills. Meanwhile, the level of oral understanding found from the listening test components shows a weakness in the evaluation component of the statements given from the information discussed. The ability to understand the questions in dialogue that are practised in group discussions becomes a very good component of oral comprehension. So, the results of this study have implications for the teacher's understanding that discussions improve students' speaking skills and can also affect the level of listening skills.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The listening course aims to improve oral comprehension for students in the Japanese language study program at Darma Persada University. In semester 3, students should have good oral comprehension skills and be able to apply text knowledge orally from the information that has been listened to. However, this goal has not been achieved during the online learning period during the Covid-19 pandemic. Japanese listening learning activities so far use audio that is played and listened to by students in the language laboratory, and they have to fill out various questions related to the audio they listen to. However, in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, listening activities in the

laboratory cannot be carried out due to the policy of providing education which must be carried out online.

The results of the evaluation of the listening learning report document for the 2020-2021 academic year found various problems related to listening learning outcomes. Some of these problems include; 1) limited use of zoom and audio problems that are often unclear, 2) internet network problems that cause voice not to be clear, 3) students' verbal understanding of information from audio is still low, 4) students often feel bored during online learning activities and tend to wait for lecturer's instructions for spelling questions, 5) students prefer to listen to videos and work on questions, but when discussing the results of the exercise, it shows that the scores obtained are still low. 6) Group discussion activities are not carried out so that the value of the cooperation that has been built so far is reduced, and students have difficulty sharing the information they have been listening to. 7) Group discussion activities as part of increasing student motivation to learn so far have not been carried out optimally because of the limited facilities for ownership of a zoom account from the teacher. So far, universities have not facilitated this need, so teachers must have a personal zoom account so that learning time is longer and all group discussion activities can still be carried out. Thus, student listening activities are not only carried out through audio-video, but the information conveyed by fellow students is a form of interaction that can help students understand the concept of oral understanding. Problems from listeners that are often found, for example: understanding difficult words/phrases, recognizing phonetic symbols and intonation patterns, distinguishing sentence patterns and discourse markers, and not being able to follow the speed of native speakers (Putra, 2019).

Although so far, the listening process has only been done through audio. The listening process should be carried out through the involvement of three important elements, namely, listening while doing, the feeling that mediates, and the time involved in listening (Bennett, Cochrane, Mohan, & Neal, 2015). Thus it can be understood that group discussion can be one of the activities of listening while doing. The discussion process can provide additional information as material that can improve students' oral understanding. This means that the adoption of additional teaching materials can improve students' listening comprehension (Yousofi, Sa'eedian, & Khaledi, 2014). The results of the research conducted by Gowhary et al.; showed different results because the provision of texts could help in overcoming some of their listening comprehension difficulties (Gowhary, Pourhalashi, Jamalinesari, & Azizifar, 2015). So, the teacher must be able to understand the conditions of listening learning as well as from the provision of learning resources that can be adopted from various sources, and discussions can also be included as learning input. Listening behaviour refers to tasks such as when and how students interact in discussion forums (Durairaj & Umar, 2015; Wut & Lee, 2021).

From several previous studies, the gap in this study is the impact of group discussions through zoom on listening skills. However, the focus of the study presented is different from the concept of discussion in face-to-face learning. So far, discussions are considered to be able to improve speaking skills (Hidayati & Niati, 2019; Dael et al., 2019), but in this study, it is to improve oral understanding of the information that has been learned through audio or video. It means that this research was conducted to improve students' oral understanding during the listening process through group discussion activities. However, student involvement during the group discussion process is facilitated first by listening to audio or video so that the information that has been received is discussed and students can respond to the information they hear.

Therefore, this research was conducted because online learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic were carried out suddenly via zoom, which was a forced condition. Students, teachers or

parents must adjust to the conditions quickly. So this situation faces various challenges. Moreover, students are also faced with learning motivation disorders. The listening process which is only done through audio or video from YouTube so far, has caused them to take advantage of the text display menu on YouTube. This causes the essence of their oral understanding. So, group discussions via zoom should be able to facilitate this need because the learning process must be carried out through direct practice by students so that they can gain a comprehensive understanding.

So, this study aimed to determine the impact of group discussions on improving Japanese listening skills in oral comprehension courses via zoom. The results of this study are expected to increase the understanding of lecturers that online learning does not always have to be done independently. However, learning using zoom can provide an opportunity for teachers to more closely monitor the condition of student development.

2. METHODS

This research is experimental research with the Quasy Experimental method with Posttest only control group design (Creswell, 2012). So, this study examines the application of group discussions to improve listening skills in oral comprehension courses. In this case, the study examines the differences in student abilities before and after conducting group discussions in online classes. Because online classes have different challenges from offline classes. The population in this study were third-semester students in the 2021-2022 academic year. The sampling technique used was the non-probability sampling technique. So, the research sample consisted of 2 classes of 60 students. It was conducted at one of the private universities in Jakarta.

The data collection technique used is direct observation to see student learning activities during the online learning process using zoom. Student discussion activities are recorded on the observation sheet by the lesson plan. In addition, data were also taken from test results before and after using group discussions in online classes. The listening test assessment uses the assessment model used in the standardized listening test that is used in the International test (Brown, 2004). The components of the listening assessment include 1) statement evaluation, 2) response evaluation, 3) comprehensive questions on dialogue, and 4) comprehension questions on mini tasks. The research procedure is as follows a) at the preparation stage, observations are made by observing the implementation of group discussions conducted in online classes, preparing learning tools and teaching materials, and preparing test instruments. b) the implementation stage consists of giving treatment to the experimental class by implementing group discussion activities by the learning steps that have been designed in the lesson plan. During the treatment process, the researcher and teacher made observations to see student learning activities using sheets of observation. Students were given a post-test. Then, the final stage is analyzing the data obtained (Post-test) with statistical tests and making conclusions. Data analysis using t-test.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the listening test that have been carried out conclude that group discussions have an impact on Japanese listening skills so that their level of oral comprehension is also of higher quality. The increase in listening ability can be seen from the results of the increased average scores which are presented in table 1.

Table 1. The Result of Post-Test

Group	Standard deviation	Marginal Average
Experimental group	15,67	83,38
Control group	35,05	60,43

Based on table 1 above, it is known that the marginal average of student learning outcomes using group discussions is quite good compared to listening to audio or video. It can be seen from the results of the standard deviation of the control group of 35.05 and the experimental group of 15.67. To determine the level of effectiveness of the group discussion, a t-test was carried out. Before performing the t-test, a prerequisite test must be carried out using the normality test using Liliefors and the homogeneity test using the F test.

The results of the normality test using the experimental group's Post-test value obtained = 0.12 while the control group obtained = 0.15 with both groups 0, 17. Thus, the decisions taken are accepted by each group. So it can be concluded that each sample comes from a normally distributed population. Homogeneity test results obtained $X^2_{obs} = 1.1$ and $X^2_{tab} = 1.67$. Because $F_{obs} = 1.1 < F_{0.05; 60} = 1.67$ then H_0 is accepted. This means that the two groups come from a homogeneous population.

Based on the post-test score data, the experimental class and control class students were normally distributed and homogeneous. Therefore, hypothesis testing will be carried out using a t-test. After statistical tests were carried out for the experimental and control groups, the t-Stat $< t_{Table} (-13.863 < 2,0009)$ was obtained, so H_0 was accepted with a significance level of 5% and H_a was rejected. This means that group discussions in online classes have a positive influence on listening skills.

The results of each component of the listening test assessment also showed good results.

Table 2. Average and Percentage of Listening Components

	Components	Average	%
1	Statement evaluation	16	20
2	Response evaluation	22	26
3	Comprehensive questions on dialogue	25	30
4	Comprehension questions on mini tasks	20	24

Table 2 shows that the weakness found in the listening test is the evaluation component of the statement given from the information discussed. Meanwhile, the level of ability to understand questions in dialogue that is practised in group discussions is a very good component of oral understanding. This means that the oral understanding of the conversation that is practised provides a direct understanding of the content of the dialogue. Students who practice directly and actively during discussions have proven that they retain information memory in the long term. In short, listening to others during small group discussions is beneficial for short-term memory. So, there is an elaboration context finding. Moreover, the results show that providing an effective explanation for long-term information retention, regardless of the group process in which one participates (van Blankenstein, Dolmans, van der Vleuten, & Schmidt, 2011).

Observation sheets are used to determine student activities during the group discussion process. Observations are made by the learning activities that have been designed in the lesson plan. The observation results show that in the core activity, students have a fun situation which leads to peer learning and peer monitoring. In addition, students also work together to build the concept of understanding the information that has been heard.

So, listening learning involves a process of interaction between students and the information conveyed. However, interactions during online learning do not necessarily have to be related to the content. Interaction in discussions is an element that can help students understand information. Therefore, discussion activities must be carried out by teachers even though the learning process is currently online (Kabat, 2014). While the presence of the teacher does affect the dynamic systems that

shape the online discussion, the effect is more subtle than traditionally assumed. In many ways, the role that teachers take is similar to that of students acting as co-participants in discussions, perhaps because students imitate their teacher's discourse movements in this innovative classroom activity (Park et al., 2015). Thus, the teacher must design the right strategy for discussion activities (Darabi & Jin, 2013; Avery, 2016). Online classroom instructors need to initiate dialogue in the design of study spaces to facilitate and organize student learning (Wang & Chen, 2011). The process of listening during the discussion can also bring back the memories of students when listening to information from the audio. Students who are active during discussions can affect long-term memory (van Blankenstein et al., 2011). In addition, skilled listeners are relatively better able to create and/or revise their schematics than less-skilled listeners. (Sarandi, 2010)

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis, it is concluded that group discussions through zoom have had a positive impact on improving Japanese listening skills. This certainly affects the level of their oral understanding. The best increase in oral understanding is seen in the level of ability to understand questions in dialogue that is practised in group discussions, while oral comprehension is still weak in the statement evaluation component. Thus, the teacher should pay attention to each student's abilities during the discussion and design specific strategies to improve the information understanding of the statements. The results of the t-test also show that the value of $t\text{-Stat} < t\text{-Table}$ ($-13,863 < 2,0009$), so it can be interpreted that group discussions in online classes can also be carried out well and can improve listening skills. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that teachers have the right strategy according to the context of online learning and the needs of students for listening learning.

So, the results of this study have implications for the teacher's understanding that discussions not only improve students' speaking skills but can also affect the level of listening skills. However, the results of this study are still limited to the application of group discussions conducted through audio and video playback, and then students discuss the information obtained to answer various questions that have been prepared by the teacher. Therefore, this research can still be developed by subsequent researchers related to teaching strategies that can be applied in the concept of group discussion through zoom for listening learning. In addition, the concept of listening learning can also be combined with other language skills so that the implementation of group discussions provides a more pleasant situation for students

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