PERCEPTION OF INDONESIAN JAPANESE LEARNERS TOWARDS ONLINE PEER RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Arianty Visiaty[1,a]

Al Azhar Indonesia University, Indonesia[1]

ariantyvisiaty@uai.ac.id[a]

Abstract

Technological advances have led to developments in language learning techniques; one of the techniques is the online peer response. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of Japanese language learners of Indonesia towards online peer response activities. This research is survey research. The respondents of this study are 22 Indonesian intermediate level Japanese language learners. The result of this study is the students' perception of peer response activities that cannot be positive. However, learners still feel the benefits of this activity.

Keywords: Online Peer Response, Peer Response, ICT

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is developing rapidly in the era of the 0.4 industrial revolutions. The progress of ICTs, especially the internet, has influenced various fields, including teaching and learning languages in Indonesia. The condition also includes teaching and learning Japanese.

Along with the development of ICT, especially those related to the internet above, language learning media that can be used in language learning also develop, including the media used in teaching and learning Japanese. The example for that development is teaching/learning by using SNS (Social Network Sites, such as Facebook, Line, Instagram, etc.) on learning writing skills, Youtube on learning speaking and listening skills, and others. Many Japanese language teachers use ICTs, including the internet, inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, many learners also take advantage of the internet to learn or practice the language.

Peer response activities in learning Japanese writing have developed in the world, including in Indonesia. Peer response, according to Ikeda & Tateoka (2007), is the activity of correcting the results of essays conducted by fellow learners (peers) where learners exchange roles as readers and writers. Peer response is part of collaborative learning. Researches on cooperative learning in writing activities lead to good results, including those seen in (Hartati & Rasyid, 2017). Hartati & Rasyid (2017)'s research shows that collaborative learning writing techniques can improve students' academic writing skills.

Many benefits can be obtained from peer response activities. According to Revers (1984) in Reiko Ikeda (1999), the advantages of peer response activities are as follows:
1. We are improving our writing skills.
2. We are developing social skills.

The benefits of peer response were also expressed by Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) in R Ikeda & Tateoka (2007), namely:

1. Active learning.
2. Media Evaluation. Evaluation is conducted based on input from friends.
3. More relaxed, so it is expected to produce something that exceeds learners' abilities.
4. The writer receives a response directly from the reader.
5. The writer can receive feedback from various points of view.
6. The writer knows the part that is understood and not understood by readers.
7. Increase the critical power
8. Increase mutual trust by understanding each other's weaknesses and strengths.

The problem that is often faced by teachers when conducting peer response activities is insufficient time. This is because the activities carried out in class, not only writing, but the teacher also explains before learners start writing essays. With the development of ICT, peer response activities are not only conducted face-to-face but also indirectly by using social media such as Facebook, or online learning platforms that provide discussion forums such as edmodo, moodle, google classroom, and others. In other words, the activities can be conducted online.

Peer responses that are carried out online, in Japanese are *called hitaimen pia respons*e (非対面(ひたいめん)ピア・レスポンス). According to Asazu (2017), *hitaimen pia respons*e (非対面(ひたいめん)ピア・レスポンス) is a peer response activity carried out outside the classroom, without face to face with a partner using the writing media function available in the Learning Management System (LSM). LSM is software that is used on internet-based teaching and learning. In this study, researchers used the word online peer response.

Previous research related to Japanese learners' perceptions regarding online peer response included Ryuna (2007). Ryuna (2007) researched changes in learner perceptions after conducting a peer response activity. Respondents in this study were 150 Chinese Japanese language learners (JFL). This study's results are the visible changes in perceptions related to factors contributing to the essay of friends and efforts made to the essay topics.

Asazu, Tanaka, & Nakao (2012) compared student satisfaction levels between face to face and online peer response activities. The results of this research are that students feel satisfied both in face to face and online peer response activities. Besides, this research shows that the characteristic of online peer response is that it can encourage the development of independent learning.

In Nakao's research (2015), it is known that learners receive *face to face* and *online* peer response activities positively. *In face-to-face peer response* and *online peer response*, the use of communication strategies to establish and maintain social relations can be observed (Nakao, 2015).

In addition to research on Japanese language learners, Ertmer et al. (2010) conducted a study on perceptions of peer feedback activities through online discussions. The respondents of this survey research were 286 students of the Introduction of Education Technology class. In general, the results of this study are students who feel the benefits of online discussions; peer feedback groups feel more comfortable using online discussions and are more confident in giving ideas than groups that do not do peer feedback. However, there are still learners who do not feel the immediate benefits of online discussion activities.

From the results mentioned above, it appears that both the *offline peer response* (*face to face peer response*) and the *online peer response* get a positive response from the learner. Also, there are also benefits for learners, including independent learning, training in self-confidence, and forming social relationships. Most of the respondents of the research above were Chinese Japanese language learners studying in Japan. In contrast, research with JFL learners' respondents was only on Ryuna (2007). Learner backgrounds, both cultural context and technological literacy abilities, differ from one country to another country. Chinese learners who are from developed countries, of course, have the more advanced capability of technology literation compared to learners in Indonesia. Therefore,

as a result of the research above, Chinese language learners' perceptions of online peer response activities are positive. Thus, the online peer response activities may be developed for Chinese Japanese language learners who do not only those who study in Japan but also in China.

Based on the explanation above, it is known that there are many benefits of peer response activities. However, there is no time to carry out these activities in class. Online peer response plays a vital role in solving the problem of limited time to conduct peer response activities. To discover the possibility of developing online peer response activities in Indonesia, it is necessary to research the perceptions of Japanese language learners in Indonesia.

The novelty of this research distinguishing from other studies is that the respondents of this study were Indonesian Japanese language learners studying in Indonesia and using google classroom and google docs as peer response media.

This study aims to determine the perceptions of Indonesian Japanese language learners towards online peer response activities.

METHOD

This research applies the quantitative approach with the method of the research survey. The research instrument is an online questionnaire with four selection scale (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Agree, 4. Strongly agree).

The respondents of the research are 22 Japanese language learners of the third year (the 6th semester) in Universitas Al Azhar Indonesia. The respondents' language competency level is medium. The data is analyzed using the results of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire in the study consisted of 29 questions with the topic of questions; the benefits of the essay, activities of commenting and responding to comments, relationships with peers, reading online activities, the use of online media, writing repair, the use of language, and the role of teacher.

Instrument validation is completed by requesting an assessment from the experts. In this study, the instrument is rated by three researcher colleagues who are the language lecturer with expertise in applied linguistics. After being validated, the questionnaire was modified based on the expert input to see the instrument's reliability. Afterward, the trial was carried out, and the reliability test is applied to the result of the questionnaire by using Cronbach's alpha with SPSS.

Online peer response activities were conducted once in Sakubun 6 (writing 6) class. Sakubun 6 class is held once a week with a duration of 100 minutes. Online peer response is carried out by using google classroom and google docs asynchronously.

The theme of peer response online activities is 健康法 (How to Maintain Health). The procedure of online peer response activities are as follows:

1. Explanation of writing activities and online peer response activities.
2. Explanation of the theme
3. Essay writing activities
4. Explanation of how to make an online peer response
5. Explanations and examples of ways and points of correction
6. Peer response online activities with google docs, then upload the discussion results in google classroom.
7. They are improving essays based on peer response activities and uploading the effects of improvements in google classrooms.
8. Feedback from teachers
9. The second repair of the essay after received feedback from teachers.

The results of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the questionnaire results processed by descriptive statistical statistics, then the results obtained are as follows:

Perception of the Benefit of the Essay

Based on the questionnaire results, the respondents' answers to statements regarding the benefits of online peer responses activities tend to agree will but not all. Some respondents answered with disagreeing. It can be stated that the answer is not evenly distributed. However, viewing more detail shows that more than 50% of respondents agree with the questions no 1,2 and 3, and tend to agree. This result can be seen from the standard deviation for the statement no. 1 that is under 0.5. It shows that respondents felt they gain new insight, more qualified content of essays, and improved writing ability through *online peer response* activities.

Table 1. The answer to Question-Related to the Benefit for the essay

Statement	N	Mean	SD
1. I feel I got new knowledge when doing online peer response activities.	22	2.05	0.375
2. I feel the contents of my essays are more qualified when I do online response activities with my peers.	22	2.23	0.429
3. I feel that my writing skills have improved by doing *online peer response* activities.	22	2.36	0.492
4. I can learn to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of my peers' essays through *online peer response* activities.	22	1.95	0.575
5. I feel my knowledge about the essays' content, structure, and the Japanese language is broader after a discussion with my peers.	22	1.91	0.684
Average		**2.1**	**0.511**

Perceptions toward commenting and responding to peers' feedback

From the overall results of respondents 'answers to statements about the activities of commenting and responding to peers' responses, it is known that respondents tend to agree, hence it cannot be said that all respondents agree. The answers are varied. For the solution of question No. 7 and 10, most respondents approve to disagree. This means that most respondents felt uncomfortable with their peers' comments and did not feel happy discussing with peers through *online peer response* activities.

Table 2. Kegiatan Berkomentar dan Menanggapi Komentar Teman

Statement	N	Mean	SD
6. I feel that I get valuable feedback from my peers for my essays.	22	1.73	0.550
7. I feel comfortable with the comments from my peers through *online peer response* activities.	22	1.91	0.426
8. I always wait for the comments from my peers through *online peer response* activities.	22	2.14	0.560
9. I always want to respond to my peer's comments through *online peer response* activities immediately.	22	2.18	0.501
10. I feel content to discuss with my peers through *online peer response* activities.	22	1.95	0.486

	N	Mean	SD
11. I feel sad when my peers do not give comments on my essay.	22	2.55	0.596
12. I came to understand the part that was not recognized when my peer commented.	22	1.77	0.685
13. I feel motivated to write good and easy-to-understand essays because peers are reading the essay.	22	1.82	0.501
Average		**2.01**	**0.538**

Perception toward Relationships with Peers

The respondents' answers about the questions related to peers show the tendency to agree. However, it cannot be said that all the answers are agreed upon because there are still some respondents answering disagree.

Table 3. Relationship with Peers

Statement	N	Mean	SD
14. I feel closer to my peers after doing *online peer response* activities.	22	2.27	0.631
15. I feel I know my peers better through *online peer response* activities.	22	2.27	0.550
Average		**2.27**	**0.591**

Perception of Online Reading Activities

For the answers to questions about reading online media, it is known that the responses of most respondents approve to disagree. The answers to question No. 16 and 17 appear that respondents agreed to disagree. This shows that respondents found it difficult to understand and not relax when they read their peers' essays in online media.

Table 4. Online Reading Activities

Statement	N	Mean	SD
16. I find it easier to understand when I read my peers' essays on online media.	22	1.91	0.426
17. I feel more relaxed when I read my peers' essays on online media.	22	1.86	0.351
18. I always check whether there is a comment from my peers in the online media.	22	2.14	0.560
Average		**1.97**	**0.206**

Perception of the Use of Online Media

Regarding the use of online media, overall, answers tend to agree, not all respondents agree, there are still some respondents answer disagree. Further analysis shows that the respondents found it difficult to check their peers' comments through online media. The respondents also found it difficult to repair their essays through ICT media. It is shown in the answers to question No—20 and 25, where most respondents approved to disagree.

Table 5. The Use of Online Media

Statement	N	Mean	SD
19. I find it easy to type and upload my comments through online media.	22	1.68	0.568
20. I quickly check my peers' comments through online media.	22	1.77	0.429
21. I feel comfortable doing online activities through online	22	2.18	0.588

Statement	N	Mean	SD
media.			
22. I feel comfortable using online media used in online peer response activities.	22	1.91	0.526
23. I find it difficult to express what I mean when giving comments to my essay through online media.	22	2.50	0.740
24. I find it difficult to express what that I mean when I respond to my peers' comment through online media.	22	2.73	0.550
25. I find it easy to improve my essay through ICT (Communication Information Technology) media when conducting online peer response activities.	22	1.95	0.375
Average		2.10	0.540

Perception of Language Usage

Regarding the use of Indonesian as a medium of discussion in *online peer responses*, the respondents' answers tend to disagree, but not all. Some respondents agree. For the use of Japanese as a medium, the answers tend to agree, but not all. The answers are varied.

Table 6. Language Usage

Statement	N	Mean	SD
26. I feel more comfortable using the Indonesian in the *online peer response* activities.	22	1.95	0.722
27. I feel more comfortable using the Japanese language of Japan in online peer response activities.	22	2.18	0.588
Average		2.07	0.655

Perception of the Teacher's Role

If it is observed as a whole, the respondents, but not all, tend to disagree related to the questions about the teacher's role. In question No. 28, the respondents' answers approve to disagree. This result shows that students feel they do not need teachers to check their essays after *peer-response online* activities.

Table 7. Teacher's Role

Statement	N	Mean	SD
28. I want the teacher to check my essay after the online peer response activity.	22	1.36	0.492
29. I want the teachers to participate in giving comments to my peers.	22	1.41	0.590
Average		**1.39**	**0.541**

Although the response to the online peer response activities cannot be said positive, the respondents still feel the benefits of the event. It shows from the gained knowledge during the exercise, the quality of the contents, and the improvement of writing ability. This result is different from Azasu at.al (2012), Nakao (2015), Ertmer at.al (2010), (Asazu, 2017) showing positive responses from learners. The results of Asazu at.al (2012), (Nakao, 2015), (Asazu, 2017) show that both the offline and the online peer response received positive responses from students.

Commenting or discussing with peers through *asynchronous* online media is different from offline or *face to face peer response*. Communication with online media uses written language. The learners cannot see each other's body expressions and movements. It also does not involve intonation. However, the activity of commenting is a sensitive communication because pragmatically can threaten the *face* of the person who is mentioned. This situation causes the

discussion by using online media is more rigid and prone to communication errors. This factor can make learners feel uncomfortable with their peers' comments and views through online media. This result is different Ertmer at.al (2001), showing that learners feel more comfortable doing online discussions and more confidence in giving ideas. The respondents in Ertmer et al (2010) are Americans who have the culture of providing opinions more open and free. The culture is different from Asian culture. Therefore, it can be said that there is a possibility that the culture also influences the stream of online discussion or peer response activities.

The differences in writing in ICT media ICT and handwriting using the Japanese language is writing kanji. When one types with ICT media, he can write kanji easily without memorizing how to write the kanji. When a learner types the vocabulary in the hiragana letter automatically, it will appear the correct kanji for it. Therefore, the amount of kanji typed is more than in handwriting. However, many learners use kanji they have not learned in the class. This situation makes the readers challenging to read their peers' essays. This difficulty causes readers not to feel relaxed when they read articles through online media. When they read their peers' reading through online media, they cannot directly ask the writers about the purpose of writing, or the vocabularies that they cannot understand. The readers must try to find by themselves before commenting. Otherwise, they must wait for the authors' answer if he asks the author through his comments since this activity is carried out asynchronously.

As described previously, the online peer response activities in this research were conducted asynchronously. Therefore, when the learner commented, the other learners did not directly receive the answer, and they had to wait until their peer discussion read and replied to the comments. Not all learners downloaded the google classroom application or google docs on their handphones. Consequently, the learners could not directly answer their peers' feedback or give comments before they opened PC or laptops. The learners also had to check google docs often to know whether their peers had commented on their essays. The process requires time, and repeated routines can make the respondents challenging to monitor their peers' comments through online media and corrected their essays through ICT media. A process that requires time and habits is repeated; this can lead to respondents finding it challenging to check the comments friends through online media and improve his writing through the medium of ICT (Technology Information Communication).

This result shows that the students think they do not need teachers to check their essays after the online peer response activities. It shows a change in the way of thinking about the teacher's role and the increased level of respondents' trust in their discussion peers. Learners do not believe that the teacher is the only source for learning. The learning sources can be from the media and classmates. It is different from the results of Yu (2013), stating that the learners still expect the teachers to examine the essay. In other words, the learners are still dependent on the teacher.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the respondents' perception of the activities of online peer response cannot be stated to be positive because some respondents answered with disagreeing, although they still feel some advantages.

This study has limitations regarding the research results that cannot be wholly positive or negative. The constraints could be caused by the teacher's explanations about the benefits of online peer response, the type of media platforms of online learning that were used, and the number of online peer response activities that were conducted just once. Therefore, learners have not got the advantages of online activities. In Atobe (2011), in his research, it can be seen that when the learner understands the meaning of the peer response activity, the event will run smoothly. For this reason, learners need to be explained the purpose of the peer response activities before the activities are carried out so that the online peer response activities can run smoothly.

To perform online peer response activities, teachers need to explain the benefits of online activities, the rules so that the readers can understand the essays written. The teacher is also necessary to provide strategies to read online using online dictionaries that can detect how to read and understand kanji, as well as to choose the application that exact that is easy to use for all learners. The use of technology should be a habit, so they need to carry out online activities more than once, get the learners used to it and gain the benefits.

It needs to interview the respondent to know their reasons in choosing the answer to the questions to obtain the results accurately, which can be used as input for the development of the next *online peer response* activity.

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