

## **The Evaluation of Using E-Learning as a Media of Japanese Language Listening Material for Beginner Learners**

**Vera Yulianti**

Faculty of Letters, University Al Azhar Indonesia

### **Abstract**

This study is aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of using E-learning as a media of basic Japanese language listening material. The respondents are Basic Learners A2 level based on CEFR and JFS. News from NHK Radio and video clips from NHK TV were designed as the listening materials to exercise the ability of predicting listening material contents. The respondents were asked to do the tasks inside university e-learning website. The result shows that using E-learning as a media of listening material for basic language learners is effective in condition of audio-visual task instead of audio task.

**Keywords:** listening material, e-learning, basic Japanese language learners

### **A. BACKGROUND**

Based on the survey held by The Japan Foundation in 2013, Indonesia ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world as a country with highest number of Japanese learners, just below South Korea. Although it ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup>, there is a lack of the Japanese language learning materials compared to other countries. The target of foreign language learning, which is mastering the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, requires extra efforts to attain the target due to some problems in learning, especially related to obtaining self-learning materials which are not limited by time and place.

Related to the Japanese language listening materials, it is more difficult to access it because of the lack of chances to interact with the Japanese native speakers directly and the lack of radio or TV programs broadcasted in Indonesia that employ Japanese language. Moreover, online audio-visual materials are difficult to understand, especially for the beginners since they still have limited vocabularies and grammatical knowledge.

On the other hand, since 1980, *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* has been developed and improved and it gives wide influence toward foreign language learning, especially interactive learning process. Nowadays, ICT does not only play a role as the learning resources, even more, it has a role as an online communication tool in the foreign language learning process (Regine Hampel, 2010 in Michael Thomas & Hayo Reinders, 2010: 131).

In Indonesia, ICT has experienced massive development recently. In the past years, it was difficult to get online access, but along with the development in mobile phone as one of ICT media, now people find it easier to access information through online. Furthermore, the price of a mobile phone is getting more reachable with multiple technologies and applications provided. It benefits them as users since it does not take time to go online. Therefore, the number of mobile phone users is increasing continuously. In addition, the technology available in the mobile phone does not only allow the users to have a conversation through phone call or make written communication through short message service (SMS), but also to upload and download audio-visual files which then widen the chance to communicate in different ways.

By analysing the explanation above, the background of the problem is actually related to the lack of listening materials for Japanese learners in Indonesia, while on the other side, there is sharp increase in the development of mobile phone as an ICT medium which eases the users to have information and learning materials online. Thus, the research questions formulated in this research are :

- 1) How effective is using E-learning as a media of Japanese language learning materials for basic learners?
- 2) What kind of listening ability can be achieved through employing E-learning as a media of Japanese language learning materials for basic learners?

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. The Standard of Beginners in Foreign Language Learning Based on CEFR**

According to CEFR (2011: 24) in *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment*, the targets of learning that should be attained by foreign language learners in the basic level are as follows. In Basic User A1, learners are supposed to comprehend and use some general expressions and phrases in daily conversation. Furthermore, they should be able to introduce themselves and others, and answer some questions related to their personal information such as address, the people whom they know, and the things belonging to them. Moreover, they must be able to interact with easy and simple vocabularies as well as to understand others' statements in a slow utterance. While

in the Basic User A2, the abilities that need to be acquired are improved and the level of difficulty is increased. Learners have to understand sentences and expressions commonly used in daily conversation related to them and their family. In addition, they have to be able to express it in public areas such as shopping centres and public services. Moreover, they need to communicate with simple sentences and are able to give and take order in daily life. They also have to explain their background and the information of people surrounding them.

## **2. The Standard of Beginners in Learning Japanese Language According to JFS**

国際交流基金 /Kokusai KouryuuKikin or called as The Japan Foundation (2010:10) in *Japan Foundation Standard ( JFS ) for Japanese Language Education* 2010 states that beginners in Japanese language learning can be divided into two categories, A1 and A2 levels. Beginners in A1 and A2 levels have to meet competency standards as follows. For beginners in A1 level, they have to comprehend simple expressions, introduce themselves and the people surrounding them, and understand information from others. Meanwhile, for beginners A2 level, they must be able to explain and state about the things in their surrounding and understand other's explanations when they are introducing themselves.

## **5. Foreign Language Listening Strategy**

Matsumoto (2008:22-45) in 聞くことを教える( *Kiku Koto wo Oshieru* ) said that there are six strategies for foreign language listening, which the learners must

be mastered. On this research strategies will be focused on one strategy, that is prediction strategy. To improve the ability of predicting the content of listening material, the following ways can be drilled to the learners.

- 1) Shows visual tools such as drawings, photos, tables, charts and others that have relation to listening materials.
- 2) Shows keywords that related to the situation of listening materials
- 3) Provide articles or writings that related to listening materials.
- 4) Provide initial questions that can stimulate learners knowledge

## **C. METHOD OF RESEARCH**

### **1. The Collection of Data**

The research method used in this study is the action research. The collection of data was conducted by giving pre questionnaire, preliminary tests, structured tasks, post tests, and post questionnaire. For the purposes of preliminary tests and structured tasks of listening, the radio broadcast, advertising on internet, NHK TV (Nihon Housoukyoukai) and DVD produced by The Japan Foundation were adapted into listening teaching materials that suitable for beginner level learners. The standards of ability for beginner level learners are adjusted to the standard of CEFR (*The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*) and the standard of Japanese language proficiency, JFS (*Japan Foundation Standard*). Then the materials were uploaded to e-learning system of Al Azhar Indonesia University.

Before the listening assignment, there were prequestionnaire to measure the

readiness of using e-learning material and preliminary test for each assignment. Then, listening materials already uploaded on the e-learning were assigned to respondents structurally. Each structured assignments was included of listening the adopted material and doing the assignment for evaluating the understanding of material content. At the end of the whole assignments, there was post-questionnaire to evaluate the using of e-learning as a media of listening material .

## **2. The Content of Listening Materials**

This research is focused on content prediction strategy. The stimulants provided to the materials were visual tools, keywords, related articles, and questions at the beginning. The themes of the materials are : The first is audio-visual material about "DVD Rental Places in Japan," taken from the DVD 1 broadcast TV NHK "Erin's Challenge! I can speak Japanese "NHK Japan 2007. The stimulant is questions. The second is audio-visual material titled "Smart Pet" (ads on Youtube), multi function gadget that is connected to the *Iphone*; Stimulant for this materialis questions. The third is audio material about “ watching a movie on the internet” of NHK radio e-na Nihongo; Stimulant for this material is anarticle related to the theme. The fourth is audio material about “ computer mouse for people” with disabilities from NHK radio e-na Nihongo; Stimulant for this material is an article. The fifth is audio-visual material about "Japanese house", taken from the DVD 2 broadcast TV NHK "Erin's Challenge! I can speak Japanese "NHK Japan 2007; keywords (hint) and questions are the stimulants of this material. The sixth is audio-visual material about the "the meaning of transportation in Japan" DVD 2 broadcast

TV NHK "Erin's Challenge! I can speak Japanese "; the stimulants are keywords (hint) and questions.

### 3. The Background of Respondents

This research was conducted to 20 students of Japanese Language Listening 3 class. Their background can be seen on the chart 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 below.

**Japanese Language Learning Experience**

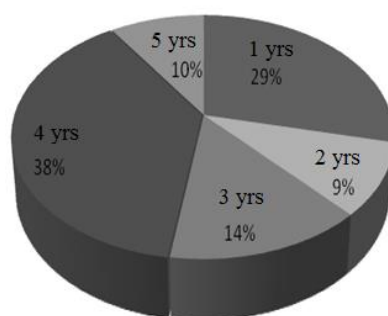


Chart. 3.2. Japanese Language Learning Experience

From the chart above it can be said that 50% of the learners have already learned Japanese language quite long time (9 people have already learned for about 4 years). However, this does not guarantee that the ability of the Japanese language learners is high. They studied at the high school or the course before, so it can be predicted that curriculum is only as the introduction Japanese language and Japanese language listening practicing time is very shorts.

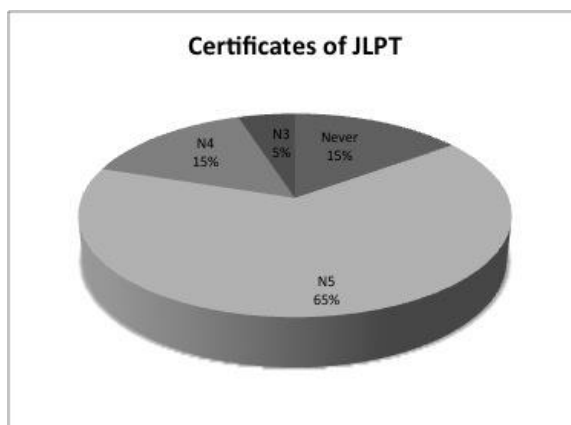


Chart 3.3. JLPT Qualification

The chart above shows that although 50% of the respondents have already been learning Japanese language for 4 years, but their JLPT qualification are still categorized as JLPT for beginner level. Most of them are in N5 level (67 %). In second language acquisition, it is often said that the experience of living in the country that uses its language, more and less will affect the ability of speaking and listening of that language. However, based on the results of the questionnaire there is none of the respondents who have living experience in Japan for long time, except only for traveling. Thus, it can be said that all respondents (100%) have no experience living in Japan.

#### **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results are contained of pre-questionnaire result, structured assignment results and post-questionnaire result. It will be explained and discussed below.



Pre-questionnaire result shows significant result that enable to give feedback for beginner-Japanese listening materials development. Here are the results.

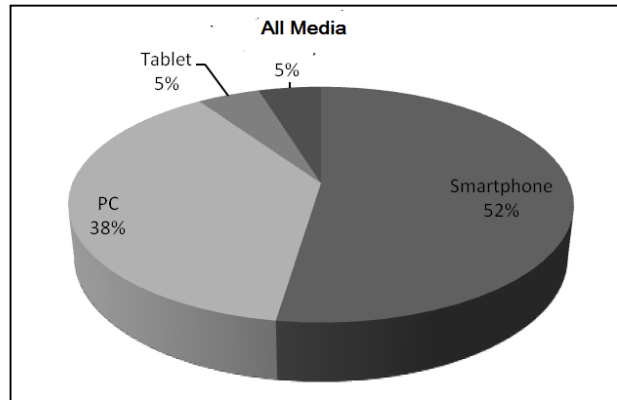


Chart 4.1 Internet Access Media

First, Chart 4.1 explains about internet-media access that frequently used by the respondents in detail. Chart 4.1 shows that half of a respondents access internet through their smartphone (52 %). Consequently, it should be considered to utilize listening materials with any various kinds of file's type that could be accessed easily by smartphone.

Second, is about repondent's Japanese language listening frequency in daily which shown by chart 4.2 below.

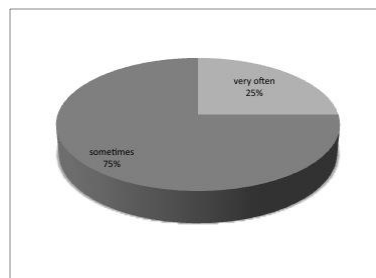


Chart 4.2 Frequencies to Listen Japanese Language

75 % of the respondents say that they sometimes listen to Japanese audio-video materials and 25 % of them almost frequently listen it. Furthermore, audio-visual program that usually viewed by the respondents are listed below.

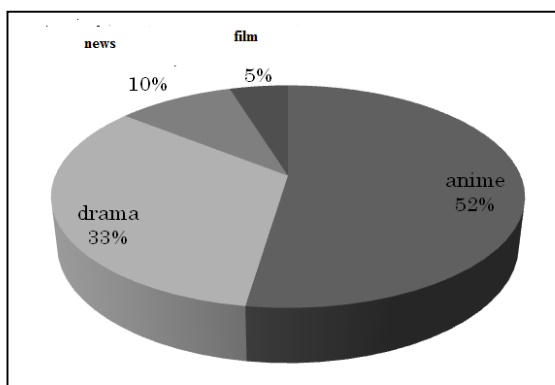


Chart 4.3 frequently viewed audio-visual programs

Chart 4.3 shows various audio-visual programs that frequently viewed by the respondents. It shows that 52 % of the respondents used to watch animation drama program.

The pre-questionnaire results above significantly give feedback for listening material development. The first result expresses that either inside the campus or outside the campus the respondents enable to access Internet without any serious difficulties. Additionally, this result displays that the most frequently used media is *smartphone*. The second and the third results demonstrate that actually the respondents used to listen the Japanese audio-visual listening materials, yet the frequency of listening the materials are different each other. Most of the respondents sometimes listen it. Related to their student ages, most of them frequently watch Japanese animation and drama programs. From the pre-questionnaire results above,

it can be said that using Internet media through e-learning for the purpose of Japanese language learning is highly considerable. Nevertheless, considering the frequently used media are smartphones, it should put the attention to the types of file that compatible to *smartphones*.

The next are about structured assignment results. The collected data are analysed by using SPSS 13 software. In detailed, the structured assignment results are categorized into two groups: “ effective” and “ ineffective” groups. The “effective“ group consists the respondents who got score 70 above, while the rest is part of “ ineffective “ group.

Table 4.4 T Assignment 1 Result

	Result Category	Frequency	Presentage
Valid	effective	20	100

Table 4.4 displays the assignment 1 result. Assignment 1 was listening assignment with “ Rental DVD Service” theme“ ( DVD レンタル). This material was taken from part of NHK TV Broadcasting “ Erin’s Challenge! I Can speak Japanese” NHK Jepang 2007 DVD 1.

To acquire the ability of predicting listening material content, on this first assignment the respondents were given some stimulans which are related questions. These questions were displayed before the listening material itself. It shown on table 4.4 that 100% of the respondents got score 70 or above.

Table 4.5 Structured Assignment 2 Result

	Result Category	Frequency	Presentage
Valid	ineffective	2	10
	effective	17	85
Missing		1	5
Total		20	100

Table 4.5 expresses the structured assignment 2 result. This assignment theme was Smart Pet Advertising uploaded to Youtube. It talks about multi function gadget that connected to Iphone. Same as to Assignment 1 threatment, to improve the respondent's ability of predicting listening material content, they were given pre-questions displayed before the main content.

It was shown on the table 4.5 that 17 respondents who got score 70 or above and only 2 respondents who got score 70 below. Yet, 1 of the respondent could not get the score due to the absence of doing the assignment.

Table 4.6 Structured Assignment 3 Result

	Result Category	Frequency	Presentage
Valid	inefective	13	65
	effective	6	30
Missing		1	5
Total		20	100

Table 4.6 displays the structured assignment 3 result. Assignment 3 was the audio material which taken from NHK e-na Nihongo Radio. The title was “Watching Movie on the Internet “. Different with assignment 1 and 2, on the assignment 3, the respondents were given the stimulan which is a short article in Indonesian Language that related to the main theme. As the result of the assignment 3, table 4.6 expresses that 65 % (13 students) of the respondents got the score was less than 70. Only 30% (6 students) of the respondents who got the score more than 70.

Table 4.7 : Assignment 4 Result

	Result Category	Frequency	Presentage
Valid	ineffective	11	55
	effective	9	45
	Total	20	100

Table 4.7 is the result of assignment 4. This assignment was an audio material which taken from NHK e-na Nihongo radio program. The theme of this assignment was “Computer Mouse for Dissable People”. The stimulant which given to this assignment was a related short article in Indonesian language. It is shown on table 4.7 that using an article to stimulate respondents ability of material content predicting strategy is ineffective. 55 % (11 respondents) got low scores (less than 70) . Only 45 % (11 espondents) who got scores more than 70.

Table 4.8 Structured Assignment 5 Result

	Result Category	Frequency	Presentage
Valid	ineffective	3	15
	effective	16	80
Missing		1	5
	Total	20	100

Table 4.8 expresses the result of assignment 5. This assignment was an audio visual material which talked about “Japanese People House “. This material was taken from NHK TV program “Erin’s Challenge! I Can speak Japanese”. To support respondents ability of predicting material content, pre-questions were given in the beginning of tasking, followed by some hint words. The result shows that pre-questions and hint words stimulants are effective to improved the ability of predicting listening material content. 80 % (16 respondents) respondents got scores more than 70.

Table 4.9 Structured Assignment 6 Result

	Result Category	Frequency	Presentage
Valid	ineffective	3	15
	effective	17	85
	Total	20	100

Table 4.9 shows the result of assignment 6. This assignment was an audio visual material which talked about tentang “Transportation in Japan”. It was from NHK TV Program “Erin’s Challenge! I Can speak Japanese”. As the stimulant of this assignment were prequestions and hint words in the beginning of tasking. Result displays that the stimulants are effective to improve the respondents ability of predicting listening material strategy. 85 % of the respondets got scores more than 70.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The effectiveness of using E-learning as listening material content has been shown on results and discussion above. The conclusion of this study is explained below. First, using E-learning in listening practice for beginner Japanese learners is relatively effective. Yet, considering the level of the learners as basic Japanese learners who have limitation in grammar and vocabularies, it is more effective using audio-visual material instead of audio material. Picture, movie and other visual materials help learners to understand the situation of the conversation. Second, through using E-learning as a media of Japanese language listening material, the ability in predicting learning material content could be achieved. The result of this study recommends to use various kinds of stimulants, especially using a related article written in student’s native language.

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