

## THE RELATION OF CONCENTRATION TOWARDS THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE LISTENING SKILLS ON STUDENTS OF RIAU UNIVERSITY

**Merri Silvia Basri<sup>\*1</sup>, Zainal Rafli<sup>2</sup>, Fathiaty Murtadho<sup>3</sup>**  
<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Negeri Jakarta

### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to find out the relationship between concentration and Japanese listening skills. This research is conducted on Japanese language students at Riau University. The research method used in this study was quantitative approach, survey methods with measurement and test techniques, while the analysis technique used was path analysis approach. The population of the target population was all fourth semester Japanese language students at Riau University, which are 52 students. The sampling was done with total sampling techniques. The relationship between concentration and Japanese listening skills is 0.309. It is concluded that: There is a positive relation between concentration and listening skills in Japanese language of Riau University students.

**Keywords:** Concentration, Japanese Language Listening Skills

### **INTRODUCTION**

Japanese language learning aims to have learners who have good and correct in Japanese language skills, and able to access information. Not a few learners say that Japanese language is difficult language to learn because there are differences between the mother tongue and the language of the learners, which has differences in the utterance, sentence structure, and use of Japanese letters (hiragana, katakana, and kanji).

The listening skill (choukai) becomes a difficult skill because listening is not only just listening, but also a process of interpreting and understanding the meaning contained orally. Listening skill (choukai) requires special attention in a good and calm situation during the listening activities. Learners have to listen 1-3 times in understanding choukai material. The importance of listening in communicative interactions is very real indeed. To be able to engage in communication, people have to be able to understand and react to what they have to be said. Consequently, besides engaging in interactional activities, the learners need to practice the listening skills. (Henry Guntur Tarigan, 2011)

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\*correspondence Address  
E-mail: merrisilviabasri@gmail.com

With listening skill usually requiring a considerably long period of time to acquire, normally involving the student experiencing a variety of emotions ranging from depression and frustration through to exhilaration and pride, teaching listening skills is one of the most difficult tasks that a teacher faces. (Natasha Walker, 2014)

Natasha said that listening skill usually requires a fairly long period of time to master, usually by involving the students so they can experience varieties of emotion from depression and frustration through excitement and pride in learning it. Teaching listening skill is one of the most difficult tasks faced by a teacher in the learning process.

Ebubekir (2017) suggests that, especially for long listening passage, students need to keep motivated to concentrate. Students need to use highlight some parts of a tape-script to get information relevant to their answers. This kind of practice enables students to maximize their concentration, yet it is suitable for long listening passage and the difficult one. Therefore, the lecturer needs to assign this task only when students need to do so.

Listening is the most basic thing in relation to some abilities that have to be mastered. Since a new born baby, human begins their activities by listening first to the words they have heard. Likewise with foreign language learning, first of all learners will listen immediately and listen to what is said with their interlocutors. Then listen to understand the meaning of what has been conveyed then try to imitate what they have obtained. This concept is essential, because naturally, listening comprehension is the language skill that must be prioritized before other language skills. It can be indication for the lecturer to provide enough authentic listening materials and listening practices. Unlike in real native speaker communication, the lecturer in the classroom has to pay attention to some language learning difficulties for teaching purposes. The problems that students face can be related to accent, pronunciation, speed, vocabulary, concentration, anxiety, and even bad quality of recording

The results of the study showed that accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, insufficient vocabulary, different accent of speakers, lack of concentration, anxiety, and bad quality of recording were the major listening comprehension problems encountered by EFL Saudi learners. Understanding students' learning difficulties may enable EFL teachers to help students develop effective learning strategies and ultimately improve their English listening abilities. Suggestions are made for addressing problems regarding how teachers can help their students overcome listening comprehension problems. ( Arafat Hamouda, 2013)

This statement is in line with EIDaoua and El-Shamieh's findings (2015), which say that students need sufficient vocabulary in order to comprehend what they listen to in Japanese language classroom. However, they can make their vocabulary more effective in listening

comprehension when they have good motivation and know which ones in the listening practices are given more focus. This enables them to pay more attention, and focus on relevant stimuli and ignore the irrelevant ones, which makes their listening comprehension better. Furthermore, by having enough vocabulary, students can grasp the main points in the listening comprehension, even when the accent or the speed is too fast for them. It suggests how important students need to use relevant stimuli combined with vocabulary mastery to recognize difficult messages and to solve the problems in listening comprehension.

Arafat Hamouda said that accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, inadequate vocabulary, different speaker accents, lack of concentration, anxiety, and poor recording quality were the main listening comprehension problems faced by Saudi EFL participants. Understanding students learning difficulties might enable EFL teachers to help students in developing effective learning strategies and ultimately improve their English listening skills. Suggestions are made to overcome problems to how teachers can help their students overcome the problem of listening comprehension.

Through field observations to the third semester students at the Japanese Language Education Study Program of Riau University shows that students have a tendency of low concentration. This matter can be seen when answering questions from lecturers. As one example, after lecturers explain a material, they are less responsive or maybe cannot answer the questions raised by the lecturers. Students also do not really understand conversations or discourse on the recording, even though they have listened to it several times.

Listening skills in understanding Japanese texts require concentration in managing mind to stay focused by ignoring other things which are not important, so that the mind is only focused on the goals and information to be achieved in Japanese language learning. When the listening process is going, sometimes the learners have to deal with conditions that demand to concentrate and ignore the factors that are disturbing so they can obtain maximum information from the reading.

In concentration of Japanese listening skills, the students still cannot pay full attention or make mistakes because of carelessness in doing the given task. They have difficulties in constantly focusing while studying. Not paying attention when learning to listen and not respecting others who are talking. Not being able to follow the instructions or directions given to them in doing the task given not due to his inability to understand, however it is by cannot paying attention to the learning and is reluctant to finish the task. Students are easily distracted by noise, moving objects or other stimuli and even forgetful during the learning process.

Yuichi (2017), indicates that the lecturer needs to allocate students enough time to self regulate themselves. To improve their skills in listening comprehension, they must be sure that by focusing on what they are doing and eliminating distraction can make them good listeners. This self regulation system can work properly when the lecturer is able to keep their motivation high.

Motivation is a prerequisite in language learning, especially in listening comprehension skills, because it determines students' attitudes in classroom activities. Students' motivation can be the basis for the lecturer to predict students' language performance after a certain period of time. It can help students to concentrate better (Sumiyoshi and Svetanant, 2017).

In other words, concentration plays very important roles in language learning. It suggests that to concentrate well, students need to be motivated in various listening comprehension activities. That is why the lecturer needs to monitor whether her students concentrate or not, which indicates how learning process is happening in the classroom. The lecturer is not allowed to underestimate students' concentration as she can predict student's listening comprehension achievement by looking at how students concentrate in the classroom.

The ability to concentrate is a strong predictor of listening comprehension. Using structural equation modeling, concentration was found to be a strong predictor of listening comprehension in a sample of 345 sixth graders in Switzerland. In contrast, the ability to concentrate did not predict successful reading comprehension. The most important predictor of both listening and reading comprehension was vocabulary. (Christine Wolfgramm, Nicole Suter, and Eva Göksel, 2016)

Christine Wolfgramm said that the ability to concentrate is a strong predictor for listening comprehension. By using structural equation modeling, concentration is found to be a strong predictor for listening comprehension in samples of 345 sixth grade students in Switzerland. Conversely, the ability to concentrate does not predict successful reading comprehension. The most important predictor of listening and reading comprehension is vocabulary so students will concentrate in comprehending the listening.

It is important to note that the listening practices must be able to stimulate students with meaningful questions. It can make students comfortably explore the language to understand the messages than to memorize unnecessary phrases (Salem, 2017).

This problem is also found in the low concentration in listening to the conversation and the lack of conversation practice to be able to understand the meaning of the conversation quickly, and long texts, as well as high or low intonation in speech that is less understood.

In order to make students more active to participate in listening practices, students need non-threatening learning environment. This can motivate students to learn the language properly without too much hesitation (Tanrikulu, 2020).

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

The subjects of this study were all 52 semester III Japanese Language study program students. This research used path analysis research. Data collection conducted in this study was using one instrument and one Japanese listening skill test, which were: concentration test instruments and measurement test of Japanese listening skills. The test sheets were conducted to measure the extent of Japanese language listening skills of the students. To collect research data, research instruments were used. The research instrument was pursued in a number of ways, which were (a) compiling indicators of the research variables, (b) compiling the instrument lattices, (c) testing the instrument, (d) testing the validity and reliability of the instrument.

In line with the variable types involved in the study, to get the processed data in this study, the instruments used were (1) Japanese listening skills test (Y) Japanese listening skills sheets, (2) concentration ( $X_2$ ) by using instrument sheet with a questionnaire, the questionnaire tests were arranged based on Likert scale. A journal published by Ms. Sonika Lamba (2014) Result shows that 44% students had good attention and concentration, 46% students had an average attention and concentration and 10% of students had poor attention and concentration score during the teaching - learning activities. From the finding of this study, it can be concluded that most of the students lose attention and concentration during lengthy teaching learning activities and there was no significant association between sample characteristics with attention and concentration score of the students.

A finding from a journal published Shima M. Hwaider. (2017) The results showed that the teaching of the listening skill in the context of the study suffers a set of problems; linguistic and non-linguistic. These non-linguistic problems are represented in the unavailability of the facilities, the learners, the classroom environment, lack of training and practice, the teachers, as well as the time devoted to English language teaching. In addition, there were also the linguistic problems which included pronunciation represented in stress, intonation and the sound system, vocabulary as well as syntactic structure.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The data description from the results of the study aims to provide a general description of data distribution, in the form of location measurements of frequency distribution. The data which presented after processed from raw data using descriptive statistical methods are the maximum value, minimum value, range, average, standard deviation and variance. The summary of statistic calculation can be seen as follows:

**Table 1.** Summary of research result

Statistics	Variables	
	X <sub>1</sub>	Y
Total	52	52
Samples(n)		
Maximum Value	90	100
Minimum Value	45	30
Range	45	70
The Average (X)	71.98	79.23
Standard Deviation (s)	9.803	17.360
Variants (s <sup>2</sup> )	96.098	301.357

Description:

X : Concentration

Y : Japanese Language Listening Skills (Y)

#### Japanese Language Listening Skills (Y)

According to the research data on Japanese language listening skills (Y) the lowest score is 30, the highest score is 100, so that the range is 70. From the statistic calculation, the average value is 79.23, standard deviation (s) is 17,360 and variance is 301,357.

From 52 research samples, if the results of each respondent are compared with the average, it turns out that those who gained Japanese language listening skills (Y) above the average group are 21 people (82.69%), below the average group are 4 people (7.69%), and 5 people (9.62%) are in the average group.

#### Concentration (X)

According to research data about concentration (X) the lowest score is 45, the highest score is 90, so the range is 45. From the statistic calculation, the average value is 71.98, the standard deviation (s) is 9.803 and the variance is 96.098.

From the 52 research samples, if the results of each respondent are compared with the average, it turns out that those who get concentration (X) above the average group are 31

people (59.62%), below the average group are 14 people (26.92%), and 7 people (13.46%) are in the average group.

### **Testing Requirement Analysis**

To see whether the data obtained from each of the research variables is normal or not, a normality test is conducted by Liliefors test. If the results of the highest  $L_{count}$  score ( $L_0$ ) of the group of variables examined are smaller than the  $L_{table}$  ( $L_i$ ) in the list, then the data is considered as normally distributed.

The meaning of  $L_{count}$  ( $L_0$ ) is the difference between the largest absolute score between the opportunity of raw data and the proportion of raw data. For more details, the normality calculation results of the variables examined will be presented using the liliefors test at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$

### **Normality Test**

#### **Normality X Test**

According to the calculation results of liliefors normality test, the  $L_0$  score is 0.1002. Where the critical score of  $L_0$  in the Liliefors table for sample size ( $n$ ) = 52 with  $\alpha = 0.05$  obtained score of 0, 122. When compared to the calculated  $L_0$  score it turns out to be smaller than the  $L_0$  table, so it can be concluded that the normality X test is considered as normally distributed.

#### **Normality Y Test**

According to the calculation results of the liliefors normality test, the  $L_0$  score is 0.1171. Where the critical score of  $L_0$  in the Liliefors table for sample size ( $n$ ) = 52 with  $\alpha = 0.05$  obtained score of 0.122. When compared to the calculated  $L_0$  score it turns out to be smaller than the  $L_0$  table, so it can be concluded that the normality Y test is considered as normally distributed.

### **Regression linearity and significance test**

For linearity requirements if  $F_{count} < F_{table}$ . While to fulfill the significance of regression if  $F_{count} > F_{table}$ . Correlation coefficient score is a calculation number which states the level of relationship strength. The strength of correlation has an accepted significance level if  $t_{count} > t_{table}$

### **Testing (X) to (Y)**

According to the results of the calculation of the regression linearity test which is obtained by the price F (regression linearity test), it gets the score of -13,158. The  $F_{table}$  is obtained the score of 2.8024. When compared to the value of  $F_{count}$ , it turns out to be smaller than  $F_{table}$ , so it can be concluded that the linear regression X to Y test is considered as normally distributed. The regression significance test is obtained the F score of 5.2668. The  $F_{table}$  is obtained the score of 4.03. When compared to the  $F_{count}$  score, it turns out to be greater than

$F_{table}$ , so it can be concluded that the regression significance X to Y test is considered as normally distributed.

### Hypothesis Test

1. Linear regression equation:

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	39.881	17.301		2.305	.025
	X	.547	.238	.309	2.295	.026

a. Dependent Variable: Y

From the SPSS output above, the constants and coefficients of the linear regression equation are obtained from column B, so the regression equation:  $\hat{Y} = 39.881 + 0.547X$ . From the analysis results obtained  $t_{count} = 2.295$  and  $p\text{-value} = 0.026 / 2 = 0.013 < 0.05$  or  $H_0$  is rejected. Thus, "concentration has a positive effect on Japanese listening skills."

2. Regression equation linearity and significance test:

**ANOVA Table**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Y	Between Groups (Combined)	7565.897	23	328.952	1.180	.335
	* Linearity	1464.661	1	1464.661	5.256	.030
X	Deviation from Linearity	6101.236	22	277.329	<b>.995</b>	<b>.498</b>
	Within Groups	7803.333	28	278.690		
	Total	15369.231	51			

Statistic Hypothesis:

$H_0: Y = \alpha + \beta x$  (linear regression)

$H_1: Y \neq \alpha + \beta x$  (non-linear regression)

Linearity test of the regression line equation is obtained from the line of *Deviation from Linearity*, namely  $F_{count} (T_c) = 0.995$ , with  $p\text{-value} = 0.498 > 0.05$ . This means that  $H_0$  is accepted or the regression equation Y for X is linear.

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1464.661	1	1464.661	5.267	.026
	Residual	13904.569	50	278.091		
	Total	15369.231	51			

a. Predictors: (Constant), X

b. Dependent Variable: Y



Statistic Hypothesis:

$H_0: \beta = 0$  (non-significance regression),  $H_1: \beta \neq 0$  (significance regression)

The significance test of the regression line equation obtained from the 5th column *Regression* row, which is  $F_{cal} (b / a) = 5,267$ , and  $p\text{-value} = 0.026 < 0.05$  or  $H_0$  is rejected. Thus, the regression of Y for X is significant or concentration influences Japanese language listening skills.

### 3. Correlation coefficient significance test of X and Y

Statistic Hypothesis:

$H_0: \rho = 0$

$H_1: \rho \neq 0$

Model Summary

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.309 <sup>a</sup>	.095	16.676	.095	5.267	1	50	.026

a. Predictors: (Constant), X

The significance test of the correlation coefficient is obtained from the *Summary Model* table. It can be seen in the first line the correlation coefficient ( $r_{xt}$ ) = 0.309 and  $F_{count} (F_{change}) = 5.267$ , with  $p\text{-value} = 0.026 < 0.05$ . This means that  $H_0$  was rejected. Thus, the correlation coefficients X and Y are significant. While the coefficient of determination from the table above is seen in the second row, which are  $R\text{ Square} = 0.095$ , which implies that 9.5% of the variation of the concentration variable can be influenced by the Japanese language listening skill variable.

### Discussion

According to the results of test of all hypotheses that have been conducted in the hypothesis test section, it can be stated that: the hypothesis can significantly influence of concentration on listening skills in Japanese language. Structural equation from the path analysis results of concentration on Japanese language listening skills  $Y = 0.309 \epsilon_1$ .

The ability to concentrate is a strong predictor of listening comprehension. Using structural equation modeling, concentration was found to be a strong predictor of listening comprehension in a sample of 345 sixth graders in Switzerland. In contrast, the ability to concentrate did not predict successful reading comprehension. The most important predictor

of both listening and reading comprehension was vocabulary. (Christine Wolfgramm, Nicole Suter, and Eva Göksel, 2016)

These findings indicate that it needs to improve concentration of Japanese language listening skills after testing the significant hypothesis. According to the results of hypothesis test, the concentration has a significant influence in Japanese language listening skills, other variables that can influence Japanese language listening skills include factors that influence the listening process effectively and efficiently based on: physjapaical, psychological, experience, attitude, and environmental factors.

Listening is not merely to process selections of important information to comprehend what students heard. They need metacognitive competence, which urges them understand cultural contexts. This competence can be enhanced through awareness, planning, and checking the listening passages in some practices until their listening comprehension culturally makes sense. (Arezoo, et al, 2016).

It means that students need more practices in order to expose them with enough experience in learning. It indicates that the classroom should provide learning environment which gives some information about Japanese culture. The lecturer can play some Japanese songs or movies, or she can put posters related to topic in Japanese listening comprehension practices. This conducive environment suggests comfortable feelings and can boost students' concentration.

Concentration is one of the supporting factors in language listening skills because concentration is the ability of people to focus on something they are learning. Therefore concentration plays an important role in realizing these learning purposes. Concentrated is closely related to both comprehension and memory or how to remember facts.

Students can remember well when they are not nervous, so that the lecturer has to motivate her students, but she should never make them too tense (Avei and Doghonadze, 2017). One kind of training that can help students to feel relaxed and can concentrate more is through meditation. Sometimes a lecturer does not realize that instruction and discipline in the classroom makes students afraid of making mistakes. For this reason, the lecturer should not be too formal. She may need to introduce relaxing learning technique, such as meditation, even when neither the curriculum nor the text book recommends the lecturer to make students meditate.

Meditation helps concentration and mindfulness and; concentration and mindfulness help better learning. Concentration and mindfulness are essential for better learning. These are purely the mental process. One needs to control someone mind on to an object or reality.

When you concentrate on any object, avoid tension anywhere in the body or mind. Think gently of the object in a continuous manner. Do not allow the mind to wander away. Concentration can be done only if you are free from all distractions. Meditation is the best method to help concentrate and mindfulness. You have select form of yoga according to your choice. (Dr.Dalvinder Singh Grewal, 2014)

It indicates that learning is not always about assigning a textbook according to the syllabus, but more crucial is to develop students' mental process. It takes long process to accomplish this, but through intensive training, students will be able to independently increase their motivation through meditation. However, since it requires long process, the lecturer must allocate enough time and pay more attention so that students' ability to concentrate though meditation can significant help their listening comprehension.

The contribution of the concentration variable (X) had a direct contribution of  $0.309^2 \times 100\% = 9.55\%$ . This finding indicates that to improve Japanese language listening skills students have to reach concentration score of 9.55% to improve their Japanese language listening skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

According to the research findings with exogenous variables of concentration (X), endogenous variables of Japanese listening skills (Y), the relations between concentration and Japanese listening skills is 0,309. So, there is a positive influence between concentrations (X) on Japanese language listening skills (Y) on Japanese language students at Riau University.

Thus, Japanese language listening skills can be improved through the improvement of concentration. As concentration is essential in listening comprehension for Japanese classroom, the lecturer needs to prepare her listening activities with some helpful techniques to enhance students' concentration. However, further investigation about the influence of concentration in Japanese listening comprehension class needs to be conducted in some language researches in the near future.

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