

Portfolio Assessment: Improvement of Japanese Language Learners' Ability

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Abstract: This study focuses on how the progress and improvement of learning Japanese language among Japanese language students through portfolio assessment techniques. All the works produced by the students, activities in the learning process are monitored and commented on for improvement. Through the method of classroom action research, also, qualitative and quantitative methods, this study aims to identify the process of development and progress of learning the Japanese language on Japanese language students. The results of this study indicate an increase in the ability of students in learning Japanese language with a decrease in the number of mistakes they make from the first test to the second test. Then, it is also known that students tend to have difficulty choosing the right words, choosing particles as well, the tendency to do language transfer when forming a Japanese sentence. When not knowing a word meaning in Japanese, students tend only to find matching words that are considered in accordance with Indonesian language and use them in Japanese sentences. Nevertheless, the use of portfolios in Japanese language learning has helped students to improve their Japanese language skills. The portfolio has helped students to know the points of their weaknesses in Japanese language learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

This research is a continuation from a previous research that was done before, which is about learning Japanese conjunction among Indonesian students (Arfianty: 2015), which mentions that the student is tend to think the Japanese word is the same as the conjunction in the Indonesian language because of the similarity of meaning when the word is translated into the mother tongue. While in the research on the misuse and translation of Japanese passive sentences, (Arfianty: 2017), it was found that Indonesian students tend to think Japanese passive sentences are the same as passive '-di' prefixes in Indonesian. This indicates that errors in the use of Japanese language occur because students tend to translate Japanese words or phrases by looking for a words that are considered appropriate or similar in the Indonesian language but ignore the appropriate rules of use. Here are examples of Japanese language use errors taken from Arfianty and Hasibuan (2017), sentence (1) and Arfianty (2015), sentence (2):

(1). My diary was taken by a friend
Watashi -no nikki -o tomodachi- o tomarasemasu. (?)
I-particle-diary-particles-friend-particles-tell me to stay
(Arfianty&Hasibuan: 2017)

(2). After drinking a lot of Sake, head aches
Takusan osake -o nondekara, atama- ga itaidesu. (?)
Many-Sake-particles-drink, head-particles-pain
(Arfianty: 2015)

Sample sentence (1) above shows sentence translation in Japanese produced by student when asked to translate passive sentence of Indonesian, 'my diary is taken by a friend' to *Watashi no nikki o tomodachi o tomarasemasu*. The student's translation sentence, in addition to failing to form a passive Japanese sentence, there is also a mistake in the selection of particles and conjugation of a Japanese passive verb while the example of sentence (2) shows an example of an erroneous use of a conjunctive Japanese word done by a student when asked to complete a sentence with a conjunction

'tekara' (after). The sentence that is used by students '*atama ga itai*' (headaches) showing results as a result of 'drinking a lot of Sake'. This sentence is correct and commonly used in the Indonesian language, but, it is not appropriate for proper use of '~ tekara' rules.

Based on the findings of these studies, Japanese language students are known to face many difficulties in learning Japanese. Development of appropriate Japanese language teaching techniques, making innovative teaching materials to improve teaching competence is necessary. Handling these learning problems also requires special and optimal attention to identify the types of difficulties, monitoring the processes and learning outcomes of students. Finally, the extent to which the competence of Japanese language proficiency of the student develops and the extent to which the difficulties facing the student can be handled will be known. According to Sanjaya (2008), a teacher needs to follow the development and ability of students in mastering the competence of learning to methods and teaching processes can be improved and developed in a continuous manner. The development and progress of students in the second language learning requires evaluation as feedback in the process of enhancing language teaching techniques. One type of evaluation that monitors the continuous development of student learning that can be done is portfolio assessment. Through portfolio assessment, it hopes that learning processes and learning outcomes and student abilities can be observed in full from time to time.

This study discusses the progress and improvement of the Japanese language learning process and outcomes among Japanese language learners by using portfolio assessment. According to Yusuf (2015), portfolio assessment is much more complex than other conventional learning evaluation tests. The portfolio assessment collects the students' work and samples at a certain time-limit in the course of the learning material activity. Student works can be a picture of student academic progress, skills and attitudes of students. Portfolio assessment is a written report describing the process and learning outcomes of the learner. Portfolio assessment does not merely carry out an evaluation test to determine the success of student learning as defined in the curriculum.

Basically, portfolio assessment requires time and attention of the teachers to the development of students more. The portfolio requires extra work from the teacher to keep up with the changes and progress of each student's learning progress. This is

due to the portfolio assessment focusing on the progress and efforts of the students in the mastery of learning, as well as an assessment of the intellectual attitudes and skills of learners. Therefore, portfolio assessment is deemed necessary to monitor and define the development and mastery of students on continuous and intact Japanese language learning. Research using the portfolio assessment of the progress and development of Japanese language learning among Japanese language learners needs to be done. Therefore, the problems for this research is as follows:

1. What is the competence of Japanese language learners before using the Portfolio?
2. How to improve the competence of Japanese language learners through portfolio assessment?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the evaluation of learning that examines the study of learning evaluation theory has been conducted by Nuriyah (2014). The results of this study mentioned that as teachers, teachers should be a good evaluator. It aims to determine whether the formulated objectives have been achieved or not. Also, through the assessment of a teacher, they can know the mastery of students to the lessons, as well as the accuracy of the effectiveness of teaching methods.

Portfolio assessment is the learning process carried out by students from beginning to the end, from stage to the level of learning. Students learn to assess themselves and set their main achievement targets. Sanjaya (2008) mentions portfolio assessment is to monitor the development and ability of students through a collection of student work systematically arranged as evidence of student learning outcomes. Based on the collection of student works this learning process and student progress can be judged both in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills.

Research on the use of portfolios in English writing works among Iranian students is done by Ghoorchaei, Tavakoli & Ansari (2010). The researcher states that the purpose of this investigation is to find out the impact of the use of portfolio assessment on student papers. The results show that the use of portfolio assessment has improved the students' writing ability significantly. Also, the portfolio has increased the learning activity of learners within the group.

The other research related to this portfolio assessment is also done by Rukmini & Saputri (2017) to above high school students in Indonesia to measure the students' level of English proficiency. The results showed that teachers in the secondary school had difficulty implementing the original portfolio assessment and in scoring. This is due to the difficulty of ensuring students to complete their portfolios. However, even though the teachers have made some improvisations to overcome the problems that arise.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research used classroom action as stated by Muslich (2010) with describing what is the issues of the research as the first step, identified the problems, then explained what goals are expected. Mixed method that is quantitative and qualitative are also used as the results of this research. The results of data collection which are students' essays writing with predetermined themes from the test provided were analyzed using quantitative methods adapted by Brown, J. D and Rodgers, T.S (2002). This quantitative method is important for analyzing quantitative errors and providing descriptive statistics for later analysis with qualitative research methods after interview session has done (Brown, J. D and Rodgers, T.S, 2002). Tracy (2012) suggests that qualitative methods are a research method that aims to test and make small note cues to determine acceptable attitudes and contexts and foster greater knowledge of the culture.

Faculty of Cultural Sciences University Sumatra Utara, Medan was chosen as a research location which is where researchers teach Japanese language. Japanese Literary Study Program students who was in semester 4 was chosen as the subject of this research.

Subject for this research are students from students of Japanese Literature Study Program, FIB, USU who are sitting in semester 4. This is done because the students have been studying Japanese for 3 semesters and are expected to have made a simple essay in Japanese.

Research instruments are used is students writing essays with predetermined themes and interview will be done after assessing the essays. Respondents were asked to write essays in Japanese with predetermined themes. Then, the interviews of respondents were conducted to find out the difficulties and increase the learning achievement of

Japanese language learners through portfolio assessment.

Writing essays made by the respondents are used for the achievement of the purpose of this study which is focused on students of Japanese Literature Prodi, FIB, USU semester 4th. Collection of students' essays will be done as pre-test and post-test with a predetermined schedule and interviews done afterwards.

4 FINDINGS

Table 1: Result numbers of Pre-Test and Post-Test

No	S t u d e n t s ' I n i t i a l N a m e	Japanese Language Learners' Facing Problem																
		Word Chosen		Partic le Chosen		Mixe d Code		Wor d Writ en		Patter n		Lang uage Tran sfer						
		T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2	T 1	T 2					
1	AND	1	2	7	1	2	1	4	8	3	6	2	7	4	1	1	3	0
2	M TU	1	0	6	1	4	8	6	2	5	3	5	3	8	6			
3	JH S	1	4	8	2	2	1	6	8	5	9	4	1	0	6	1	8	
4	RZ M	7	3	5	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	5	3			
5	M WD	8	4	0	1	4	4	2	5	2	2	2	1	7	4			
6	M ZD	8	5	8	5	5	2	4	1	3	1	7	5					
7	SL B	1	1	7	7	4	6	2	6	2	5	2	1	1	7			
8	MI Q	1	6	2	1	2	1	0	3	0	5	8	5	1	7	3	9	
9	A GB	1	0	5	1	3	7	9	4	6	2	7	3	0	5			
10	SH A	1	2	7	9	5	7	3	8	3	9	5	0	1	6			
11	JS S	6	4	7	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	2				
12	DF B	7	4	8	4	1	0	1	0	2	1	5	3					
13	KR N	9	4	0	1	4	4	1	0	0	4	2	9	5				
14	RT L	1	8	1	1	2	7	9	5	9	6	1	8	8	3			
15	JS C	6	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	2				
16	R WD	8	5	5	3	2	0	1	0	2	1	7	4					
17	BR Z	1	5	1	0	1	7	6	4	5	3	9	5	3	9			
18	ST R	1	6	1	1	8	2	0	6	8	3	0	6	4	9			
19	M RZ	1	5	9	0	6	8	3	9	4	0	4	4	9				
20	ST V	7	4	8	3	6	2	2	0	3	1	7	4					
21	M PA	8	5	0	1	6	3	1	1	1	4	1	9	5				
22	N	9	5	1	4	3	0	2	0	4	0	8	4					

2	D				0															
2	ER	1	1	1	2	8	8	4	8	3	1	0	6	1	6	1				
3	V	5	0	2																
2	M	1																		
4	RF	0	6	8	3	8	3	9	4	7	4	8	6							
2	H	1																		
5	DZ	0	5	8	4	6	2	8	3	9	5	0	6							
2	M																			
6	RQ	8	5	0	5	5	2	4	1	5	2	7	4							
2	L	1																		
7	WC	1	6	8	4	1	0	4	7	3	9	4	1	0	4					
2	ST	1	1																	
8	C	3	0	7	5	9	6	6	5	9	6	3	0							
	Total	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		9	2	6	0	4	1	8	0	9	9	2	3							

To achieve the objectives of the study, data retrieval research was conducted 2 times. The first test, that is pre-test done as an initial benchmark of how the level of student ability. Next, students were given Japanese language grammar materials, afterwards, discussion group were formed and interviews to find out more difficulties faced by students in learning Japanese language. Finally, the second test, that is post test was conducted as an attempt to see whether there is progress and improvement of students' ability in learning Japanese language after the debriefing of Japanese learning materials and interviews on the students.

Table 1 below shows the number of student error numbers in word selection, particle selection, word change, letter / word writing, sentence pattern and language transfer when asked to create one essay with a predefined theme. T1 denotes the number of Japanese language use errors in the first Test. While T2 shows the number of mistakes in Japanese used in the second test.

Based on the results of the first test (T1) and the second test (T2), it can be known the level of ability and mastery of Japanese language and difficulties faced by students, such as the following table:

Based on the observations and data analysis in Table 1 above, it can be seen that there are differences in the number of numbers in each test result from each student on the first test (T1) and the second test (T2). When looking at the total number of all numbers on T1 and T2, there is a decrease in the number of Japanese language use errors made by students. The number of error numbers in the selection of words on T1 is 299 and has decreased at T2 to 182. The decrease in the number of error numbers in language transfer is also almost equal to the number of error numbers in word selection, is 272 on T1 and 173 on T2. While the number of error numbers in the selection of particles that had amounted to 296 in T1, changed to 170 on T2. Next, the number of numbers on T1 in the code mixed section, where the number of numbers originally 164 has decreased the number of sufficiently large

numbers to 71 in T2. Likewise, in the letter / word writing section, the number of numbers decreases to half, as 138 on T1 turns to 60 on T2. This also occurs in the part of the sentence pattern where the decrease in the number of mistakes is almost 50%, that is, from the number of 169 in T1 to 89 on T2.

Here are some examples of incorrect sentences produced by students when asked to complete essays in Japanese with predefined themes.

1. Sentences with mistakes in choosing words, particles and language transfer.

(1). *Watashi wa kazoku ni gaikoku e sanposhitai.*

I – particle – family – particle – go aboard – particle – want to take a walk

Sentence (1) above is a sentence made by the student, describing the subject intending to take his or her family a walking tour abroad. However, when viewed grammatically, sentences made by this student there are some errors, namely mistakes in the selection of particles 'ni' and mistakes in the choice of the word 'sanposhitai' (want to take a walk). To produce a grammatically correct sentence in Japanese, the 'ni' particles should be replaced 'o' which indicates the object. Next, the word 'sanposhitai' is replaced with the phrase 'ryokou ni tsurete ikitai' (want to invite for touring).

Based on the translation of the word 'sanposhitai' literally into the Indonesian language is want to take a walk, causing the students to use the word 'sanposhitai' as the expression of the tour of the streets. While the word 'sanposhitai' in Japanese shows the meaning of walking around a single location just like the park. The similar meaning of the word 'sanposhitai' which, when translated into Indonesian becomes 'roads', makes students think that 'sanposhitai' is the same as the word 'roads' in general in the Indonesian language. This resulted in the sentence produced by the student in sentence (1) classified into sentences that are not in accordance with the rules of using proper Japanese grammar. Allegedly, students do the language transfer from mother tongue to Japanese language until the error occurs. Therefore, the sentence produced by the student should be:

(1.a) *Watashi wa kazoku o gaikoku e ryokou ni tsurete ikitai desu.*

I-partikel-family-partikel-go aboard-partikel-wisata-partikel-mengajak

2. Sentences with mistakes in writing words/letters, mix codes and errors in sentence patterns.

(2). *Watashi to kazoku ishouni nozomi ni Mekkah o doujini ni ikimasu.*

I-particle-family-?-wish-particle-?-particle-
in the same time-particle-go

When viewed from the rules of Japanese grammar, the sentence produced by student (2) above is not appropriate. There are several error points in the sentence: error in word selection (*nozomi*: wish; *doujini*: in the same time), particle selection errors (*to* and *ni*), mistake of letter / word (*ishouni*), mix code (*Meccaa*), and sentence pattern errors. However, when looking at the meaning per word of the sentence (2), it is known that the thing the student wants to mention is 'I want to go to mecca with my family'. Students tend to search for matching words per word in the appropriate Indonesian language and are considered appropriate with the words available in Japanese. Sentence (2) above should:

(2.a) *Watashi wa kazoku to isshouni Mekkaa e ikitai desu.*

I-particle-family-particle-together-Mekka-
particle-want to go

An interview towards students has been done after getting the data of the analysis. In this session it is explained to each student about how their true Japanese language mastery and ability. Each student also has been explained about the forms of error in their Japanese essays. Thus, students are expected to be more careful and focus on the parts they still have to learn better. Many students say they face difficulties in applying Japanese language particles correctly and making changes to verbs and adjectives. Then, students tend to translate directly from Indonesian into Indonesia, which in the end causes the use of language errors.

5 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study it can be seen that there is a difference in the total number of the total number of numbers from the first test result (T1) and the second test (T2). The decrease in the number of error numbers of T1 and T2 is seen in word selection, particle selection, code mix, letter / word writing, sentence pattern and language transfer. However, the number of error numbers in word selection, particle selection and language transfers look higher than in word modification, letter / word formation and sentence pattern. This shows that students tend to have difficulty in

choosing the right words, choosing the right particles in making one essay in Japanese. In addition, the high number of mistaken numbers in the language transfer also explains that students tend to make direct translation by searching for matching words that are deemed appropriate or similar to the mother tongue (Indonesian) into Japanese.

Next, based on errors in the code mix, it is known that students are also inclined to use English or Indonesian directly in Japanese sentences when they find it difficult to find the appropriate equivalent words as mentioned in Japanese. This shows the lack of students' knowledge of vocabulary in Japanese causing code intermingling in Japanese sentence writing.

Nevertheless, the overall results of research data can be seen a decrease in the number of mistakes made by each student in each category of errors in writing sentences of Japanese. The application of a portfolio assessment system in improving students' ability to apply Japanese language shows good results. This can be seen from the decrease in the number of errors in using Japanese by students from pre-test to post-test. Interviews and further discussions carried out on each student also produced a good response, where they became more relaxed and convinced to apply the Japanese they mastered. This also supports the statement from Sanjaya (2008), which stated portfolio assessment as one way for monitoring the development and ability of students learning outcomes. It helps to find out of students' knowledge, attitude and skills in language learning process. The portfolio has helped students to identify details about their shortcomings and weaknesses in Japanese language learning.

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