Students' Ability in Producing Japanese Sentences at Japanese Literature Department, University of Sumatera Utara

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the ability to make sentences in Japanese in Japanese Literature study program students at the University of North Sumatra, with a focus on VI semester students. This study aims to identify the level of students' ability to produce proper sentences, by analyzing the mistakes made when making sentences in Japanese in terms of linguistic aspects. The research method used is descriptive qualitative method, by collecting data through questionnaires that involve making sentences in Japanese. The research sample consisted of 15 sixth semester students of the Japanese Literature study program at the University of North Sumatra. The data collected were analyzed using a qualitative approach, considering the quality and correctness of the sentences produced. The results showed that most of the students had sufficient ability in making Japanese sentences, although there were variations in the level of fluency and fluency. Factors affecting students' ability include their level of understanding of Japanese grammar, vocabulary ability, and the habit of practicing making sentences. The findings provide valuable insights in the improvement of Japanese language learning in the Japanese Literature program, by highlighting areas that need more attention in the development of sentence-making ability.

Keywords: Japanese language; students' ability; sentences produced; mistakes

1. Introduction

According to Mislikhah (2018:6), there are two types of language acquisition in general, namely first language acquisition and second language acquisition. The environment, including the family and playground, has a significant influence on language acquisition in children, especially at preschool age. Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the ability to understand and use words for communication purposes. This process involves skills in syntax, phonetics, and a wide vocabulary. The language acquired can be spoken language involving vocals or sign language.

Japanese, as a foreign language in Indonesia, is one of the languages that is difficult for Indonesian students to master. Japanese has different grammar from Indonesian, starting from differences in sentence structure, word order, and the use of particles in making sentences. Japanese uses a subject-object-predicate sentence structure, while Indonesian uses a subject-predicate-object sentence structure. Japanese uses particles that play an important role in providing function and meaning in sentences. The use of particles such as "*wa*, *ga*, *ni*, *de*, and *no*" requires proper understanding to indicate the relationship between words in a sentence. Indonesian students need to study and understand the use of particles carefully in order to communicate the desired meaning correctly. However, it needs to be acknowledged that students' ability to create Japanese sentences is not always consistent. Some students may have high fluency and fluency in using the Japanese language, while others may face difficulties in producing grammatically correct sentences. Arfianty, R & Hasibuan, A (2018) stated that when composing the sentences the error occurred as result of the overgeneralization by the students and made literal translation from Indonesian into Japanese. They prompted to search for the words which have close meaning with targeting words due to the lack of understanding the proper Japanese grammar.

Understanding and the ability to use Japanese effectively is an important aspect in studying the Japanese Literature study program at the University of North Sumatra. As a student of the Japanese Literature program, the ability to make appropriate and grammatical sentences in Japanese is a very important foundation in communicating effectively in academic contexts and everyday life. The students study Japanese with the aim of gaining a deep understanding of Japanese culture, language and literature. However, the process of learning Japanese for Indonesian students is often characterized by difficulties in mastering the language fluently, especially when students have to make sentences in Japanese.

2. Problem Statement

The lack of studies regarding the ability to make sentences in Japanese among Japanese literature students makes the author, as a Japanese Literature student, interested in conducting more in-depth research on this linguistic phenomenon. Not to mention the fact that the environment around the author supports the conduct of this research because many research subjects in the form

of bilingual Indonesian and Japanese can be found at the University of North Sumatra. For this reason, the author became interested in formulating the problem as: (i). How grammatical errors and lexical errors in Japanese are made by sixth semester students of Japanese Literature at the University of North Sumatra; (ii). What are the forms of Japanese sentence errors produced by sixth semester students of Japanese Literature at the University of North Sumatra.

3. Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative approach based on methods that investigate social phenomena and human problems. In this research, a complex picture was created, examining words, detailed reports from the respondents' views and conducting studies in natural situations (Iskandar, 2009). This method is very suitable for understanding the perspectives of research participants and is flexible enough to anticipate the emergence of phenomena that were not previously anticipated. Then, a constructivist approach was taken, and focused on scientific phenomena.

The data collection technique in this research is a note-taking technique, namely by recording all the data that has been collected according to the findings in the target learner's sentence-making skills and then analyzing them descriptively. According to Sudaryanto (1993: 133 - 135), recording techniques are a method used to collect data by recording findings found when researchers observe research objects.

The target group of learners referred to in this research is the sixth semester students of the 2020 class of the Japanese Literature study program at the University of North Sumatra. Sixth semester students were chosen because in that semester they had studied Translation I and II courses and completed the books Minna no Nihongo I and Minna no Nihongo II. The research procedure was carried out by distributing a questionnaire containing 5 words in Indonesian, and students were asked to make sentences in Japanese using the words provided. The questionnaire was created using the Google Forms site to make data collection easier, considering that sixth semester students were entering the semester break at the time of data collection, so it was not possible to meet respondents directly.

After that, identify and record grammar and word usage in the questionnaire that does not comply with Japanese language rules by referring to the theories previously explained. Then, the author analyzes the data findings that have been found and draws conclusions from the findings and discussions carried out.

4. Discussions and findings

4.1. Errors in past tense verb markers

*Kinou chanto benkyou **suru** kara, kyou wa shiken ga umaku dekita.*

(I was able to pass the test because I studied properly.)

The correct sentence should be '*Kinou chanto benkyou shita kara, kyou dake yurushite*'. Students use '*kinou*' as a marker for events that occurred in the past, so the verb used in sentences that use past tense adverbs, '*benkyou*' (study) must be changed to a past tense verb.

4.2. Errors in using grammatical forms of verbs

*Sotsugyou shita kara nani wo **suru**.*

(What will you do after graduating?)

The correct sentence should be '*Sotsugyou shita kara nani wo **shimasuka?**'. Students intend to make interrogative sentences, but use dictionary verb forms because they are used to hearing interrogative sentence forms without interrogative verb forms */-ka/* due to media consumption through anime, especially in conversations between friends where sentences can be clearly classified into interrogative sentences with intonation. in pronunciation, it is different from making sentences in written form which causes student sentences not to comply with Japanese grammatical rules.

4.3. Errors in particle usage

*Yatto daigaku **kara** sotsugyou shimashita*

(Finally graduated from college.)

The correct sentence should be '*Yatto daigaku **wo** sotsugyou shimashita*'. The use of the particle */kara/* is incorrect. Students use the particle */kara/* because they have the perception that the verb 'graduate' means 'leave school', so they use the particle */kara/*. The correct particle is */wo/*.

4.4. Errors in particle removal

JLPT goukaku shimashitaka

(Will study diligently to be able to pass JLPT.)

The correct sentence should be *'JLPT goukaku* **wo** *shimashitaka'*. The loss of the use of particles between the words 'goukaku' and 'shimashitaka' is not in accordance with the rules of Japanese grammar. The correct particle is to add */wo/*.

4.5. Errors in wrong use of words

Watashi no ai ga kiremasu

(I lose hope in love)

The correct sentence should be '*ai ga sameta'*. Students use *kuremasu* because of 'putus cinta' in Indonesian, so they make sentences following the literal Indonesian.

4.6. Errors in the use of ambiguous words

Kanojo wa tabun koi ni ochita kamo shiremasen

(Maybe she falls in love)

The correct sentence should be *kanojo wa koi ni ochita kamo* shiremasen. The use of the word *'tabun'* and *'kamo shiremasen'* have the same meaning, namely 'perhaps', causing repeated use to make the sentence confusing.

5. Conclusion and future studies

In this research, an analysis has been carried out on the ability to make sentences among Japanese Literature students at the University of North Sumatra. The aim of this research is to identify the level of students' ability to form Japanese sentences and the factors that influence it.

Based on the research results, it was found that some students had good abilities in forming Japanese sentences, while others still faced some difficulties. Common errors that occur are errors in using wrong particles, errors in using past tense verb markers, errors in using grammatical forms of verbs, errors in using wrong words and using ambiguous words.

The researcher hope that the results of this research can contribute to the development of curriculum and methods for learning Japanese at the University of North Sumatra, as well as providing guidance for students in improving their ability to form Japanese sentences. This research can also be a basis for further, more in-depth research on Japanese language skills at a more complex level and involving other linguistic aspects.

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