



The VASM Model in Learning Japanese Pronunciation

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ABSTRACT

This research was motivated by a lack of attention to teaching Japanese pronunciation in Indonesia, resulting in learners' soft Japanese pronunciation skills. This issue affected not only oral communication but also written communication. A concrete example is most visible when Japanese learners in Indonesia often ignore long sounds and double sounds in Japanese. This study will examine four VASM methods. Each is often applied to improve Japanese pronunciation. The four methods include Verbo Tonal, Audio Lingual, Shadowing, and Minimal Pair. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of using the VASM model in mastering Japanese pronunciation. The sample in this study was 17 students of the Department of Japanese Language Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta. This study used a quasi-experimental method in which the sample was given seven treatments. The data collection technique uses a discourse reading test in which there are Japanese pronunciation sounds that the researcher wants to examine. The tests helped to determine the change that occurred before and after treatment using the VASM model.

Keywords: Japanese pronunciation, Learning Model, VASM

INTRODUCTION

Currently, many Japanese learners still cannot pronounce Japanese vocabulary well. A study at the BLCI Foreign Language Institute revealed seven categories of challenging Japanese pronunciation sounds. These sounds include long vowels, double

consonants, semi-vowel sounds, consonant sounds TSU, and differentiating line sounds SA and SHA, JA, and ZA due to differences in sounds between Indonesian and Japanese, making it difficult for Indonesian learners to master them. In addition, the influence of regional languages is one of the factors that inhibit Japanese pronunciation skills for learners in Indonesia. It will result in productive abilities, including speaking and writing skills such as communication and correspondence with fellow Japanese language learners and native speakers (Wahyuni, 2010).

With these problems, many studies related to various learning methods to improve or improve the pronunciation of foreign languages, especially Japanese, (Hernawati, 2018; Najoran, 2019; pariadi et al., 2019; Pratiwi et al., 2016; Wahyuni & Indraswari, 2022). The oral drill method, audio-lingual, and shadowing are often used. From these studies, the oral drill method, audio-lingual, and shadowing have proven effective in improving speaking skills. Therefore, the researcher wants to try out four learning methods; each has proven effective in improving pronunciation skills. Some of them are Ummah (2016) with Audio Lingual Method research, Nurul Priska (2019) with Shadowing research, Nur and Rahman (2018) with Minimal Pair research, and Kimura (2020) with Verbo Tonal Method research. The four methods have the output of speaking and listening skills. Four methods used in this study include the VT method, audio-lingual, shadowing, and minimal pair. To facilitate the mention of the learning method, the researcher abbreviated it as VASM. The VASM model aims to improve Japanese pronunciation skills. This study is also to determine the level of effectiveness of the VASM model.

The scope presented in this study includes only seven materials from the pronunciation category, which are considered difficult for learners. The seven categories include long vowels, double consonants, semi-vowel sounds, TSU consonants, nasal sounds, differences in the sounds of the SA and SHA lines, and differences in the sounds of the ZA and JA lines.

BACKGROUND

Some previous studies regarding learning techniques in improving pronunciation skills also underlie researchers using the VASM model to learn Japanese pronunciation.

In pronunciation training for Japanese language learners using the Verbo Tonal method with research samples of postgraduate exchange students who experienced problems in differentiating the pronunciation of JA/ZA, TSU, and NA/RA, as well as children with cochlear implants, it was discovered that the human hearing system (brain) can understand and pronounce something from what he hears. In other words, when someone cannot hear well, they cannot speak well. Providing correct feedback affects the level of accuracy of what is heard. By utilizing the various human senses, understanding and mastery in learning will increase (木村政康, 2020).

Research on improving reading ability through the Audio Lingual Method in Indonesian language learning at SDN 02 Rimbo Pengadang shows that the Audio Lingual Method improves reading ability and enhances the learning process in the

classroom (Yulizah, 2020). MS Ummah also stated that the application of the Audio Lingual method in learning English speaking was considered appropriate because there was a lot of practice and repetition (MS, 2016).

In research regarding the use of the Shadowing technique on Japanese Speaking skills for 30 Middle School students at the UPI Bandung Pilot Laboratory, it can be seen that there is a significant difference in ability between before and after the use of the Shadowing Technique on the learning outcomes of Japanese speaking skills. In other words, this technique effectively improves your ability to speak Japanese. From the results of the questionnaire analysis, it is known that almost all students responded positively to the use of the Shadowing Technique in learning to speak (Nurulpriska, 2019). As research subjects, student surveys regarding shadowing training were also conducted on undergraduate and postgraduate students. In this study, the sample was given individual training using shadowing techniques to determine the changes that occurred and their results. The results of this research show positive changes from week to week after being given training using the shadowing technique (木村亮子, 2014).

In classroom action research on students of SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak class VIII F, as many as 35 students aimed to improve their English pronunciation skills using the minimum pair drill technique; it was found that the average score for students' abilities in the first cycle was 62.42 with information "good" but not yet satisfactory. The research was carried out in the second cycle with an average score of 81.86 with the description "excellent" and satisfactory. For this reason, this research concludes that giving minimum pair drills to students at SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak class VIII can improve their English pronunciation skills (Isnani et al., 2016).

The previous research mentioned above shows that the minimal pair technique is one of the learning techniques for improving speaking and pronunciation skills, especially in foreign language learning.

From the research described above, pronunciation errors can be corrected using Verbo Tonal, Audio Lingual, Shadowing, and Minimal Pair learning methods and techniques, especially for foreign language students. This is proven by research results, which state the effectiveness and positive results of applying these techniques and methods. However, there has yet to be research regarding developing a Japanese pronunciation teaching model for Indonesian students. In this study, researchers want to examine several methods and techniques for teaching foreign language pronunciation that are applied simultaneously. By combining these research methods and techniques, we can better understand Japanese pronunciation. For this reason, researchers developed the VASM model, namely the Verbo tonal method, Audio Lingual method, Shadowing, and minimal pair to provide more awareness of sound beats, hearing, and pronunciation and evaluations contained in visuals.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental research design by testing the VASM model through treatment. Before giving the treatment, a pre-test

was given. After the treatment, a post-test would determine the difference in abilities before and after the treatment. The treatments were given seven times, with each meeting given different treatment materials according to the scope of the study, such as long vowels, double consonants, semi-vowel sounds, TSU sounds, nasal sounds, the difference in the sound of the SA and SHA lines, as well as the difference in the sound of the ZA and JA lines.

The sample in this study was the Department of Japanese Language Education students who did not yet have N5 skills. The number of samples in this study was 17 students. The N5 capability in the JLPT (Japanese language proficiency test) is the earliest of all existing JLPT capabilities. At this level, students can understand Japanese in everyday life. They can also read and understand simple expressions related to everyday life written in basic Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji. The sampling technique used was purposive, taking research samples based on the considerations of the researcher with the intent or purpose justified scientifically (Sutedi, 2009). Choosing a sample without level N5 is because, at the early level, learning has not been much influenced by various Japanese vocabulary. In addition, if students get used to pronouncing correctly and adequately at the initial level, it is also believed to reduce the chances of making mistakes at the next level.

Test

The research uses a simple discourse reading test. The test vocabulary is selected according to the research's scope: long vowels, double consonants, semi-vowel sounds, TSU sounds, nasal sounds, differences between SA and SHA line sounds, and differences between ZA and JA line sounds.

The steps for giving, assessing, and analyzing test data in this study are as follows.

1. Recording vocabulary from the handbook used by the sample, equivalent to Japanese N5 ability.
2. Choosing a vocabulary that fits the scope of this research.
3. Creating a discourse that will be used for data collection and data analysis.
4. Asking for expert judgment to determine the feasibility of using the discourse.
5. Giving a test to the sample using the sample reading the discourse provided and then recording it through Microsoft Teams.
6. Collecting data in the form of a reading test.
7. Assessing the sample's ability in terms of Japanese pronunciation with the results of the discourse reading test. Two people conducted the assessment: one native speaker and one non-native speaker who knows Japanese pronunciation. The results of the two appraisers will be taken as the average value. Then the results will go into data processing. The scoring method on the test is by giving one point for each syllable that can be pronounced correctly and zero points for each syllable that is not pronounced correctly.
8. Performing effectiveness test data processing with statistical formulas.
9. Analyzing vocabulary as the findings of this study.

Table 1. Vocabulary assessed in Pre-test

No	カテゴリー	言葉				
1	長音	こうちゃ	りょこう	きょうと	いい	ぎゅうにゅう
2	促音	いっしょに	きっさてん	にじゅっぷん	あって	たのしかった
3	拗音	こうちゃ	りょこう	きょうと	さんびゃく	ぎゅうにゅう
4	サ行・シャ行	せんしゅう	いっしょに	きっさてん	でんしゃ	ショッピング
5	ザ行・ジャ行	かぞく	じんじゃ	しずか	にじゅっぷん	さんねん
6	ツ	なつ	しんせつ	あつかった	つめたい	つかれました
7	ン	のんだり	じんじゃ	てんき	さんびゃく	さんねん

Table 2. Vocabulary graded in Post-test

No	カテゴリー	言葉				
1	長音	りょこう	いい	ぎゅうにゅう	たのしい	もういちど
2	促音	いっしょに	きっさてん	かって	ショッピング	たのしかった
3	拗音	こうちゃ	りょこう	きょうと	さんびゃく	ぎゅうにゅう
4	サ行・シャ行	せんしゅう	いっしょに	きっさてん	でんしゃ	ショッピング
5	ザ行・ジャ行	かぞく	じんじゃ	しずか	にじゅっぷん	さんねん
6	ツ	なつ	しんせつ	あつかった	つめたい	つかれました
7	ン	じんじゃ	てんき	しゃしん	さんびゃく	ほんとう

せんしゅう かぞく いっしょ きっさてん い こうちゃ の
 先週、家族と一緒に喫茶店へ行きました。そこで、紅茶を飲んだり、

りょこう はなし
 旅行の話 をしたりしました。

ことし なつ きょうと い でんしゃ にじゅっぷん きょうと
 今年の夏、京都へ行きました。電車で二十分 ぐらいかかりました。京都

しず ふる じんじゃ しんせつ ひと てんき
 は静かで古い神社があって、親切な人がたくさんいました。いい天気でし

すこ あつ みせ つめ ぎゅうにゅう か の
 たが、少し暑かったですから、店で冷たい 牛乳 を買って、飲みました。

しゃしん と さんびゃくまい と
 それから、写真を撮りました。三百 枚撮りました。さんねんながら、ショ

りょこう つか たの
 ッピングはしませんでした。旅行は疲れましたが、とても楽しかったです。

きょうと りょこう おも だ はなし ほんとう たの
 京都の旅行を思い出したり、話 をしたりしたのは本当に楽しいことで

いちどきょうと りょこう い
 した。もう一度京都へ旅行に行きたいです。

Figure 1. Pre-test and Post-test discourse

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and learning is mainly conducted online, this research was conducted online through Microsoft Teams. Apart from that, giving a reading test was also done online through Microsoft Teams so that Microsoft Teams' recordings would become one of the sources for obtaining research data.

Treatment

The treatment activity in this study was to provide pronunciation exercises using the VASM model. The research was carried out online. The treatment was carried out seven times. Each treatment is filled with different materials. The first meeting was filled with learning long vowel sounds; the second meeting was filled with learning double consonant sounds; the third meeting was filled with learning semi-vowel sounds; the fourth meeting was filled with learning TSU consonants, the fifth meeting was filled with nasal consonants, the sixth meeting was filled with learning sound differences SA and SHA lines, the seventh meeting is filled with learning the differences in the sounds of JA and ZA lines. The treatment flow in this research begins with providing material about learning theory for each meeting theme, then continues with training with four methods, starting from the VT method, continuing with the Audio-Lingual method, then shadowing, and ending with Minimal Pair. In the VT method, the sample is trained to be sensitive to word sound beats; in the Audio Lingual and Shadowing Techniques, the sample practices pronunciation after listening to the audio; in Minimal Pair, the sample chooses one of two-word choices that match the audio.

In this study, the instruments used were a pre-test and a post-test. The instrument in this study, the data processing technique used was a discourse reading test. The data processing technique used a comparative statistical formula. Sutedi (2009, p. 228) stated that data processing using comparative statistics aims to determine whether there is a difference between two or more variables and the significance of the differences.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Test

After conducting the pre-test and post-test, the researchers obtained the following results. "X" is the post-test result, while "Y" is the pre-test result. The X standard deviation from data processing was 0.47, while the Y standard deviation was 0.64. After that, the standard error of the mean and variable X was calculated, and from variable Y, we obtained a standard error of X of 0.24, while the standard error of Y was 0.16.

Then, to find the standard error of the difference in the means of Variable X and Y, the standard error between X and Y is 0.28, and the calculated T is 6.1. The degree of freedom in this study was 21. Therefore t_{tab} at the 1% significance level was 2.83, and t_{tab} at the 5% significance level in the table was 2.08.

With the above value indicating that t_{count} is greater than t_{table} (at a significance level of 5% or 1%), HK is accepted. This result revealed a significant difference between variables X and Y. In other words, using the VASM model is effective in learning Japanese Pronunciation.

Pre-test

The pretest is given as a discourse, which the samples will then read. Thirty-five vocabularies will be assessed, consisting of five vocabularies on long vowel sounds, five vocabularies on double consonant sounds, five vocabularies on semi-vowel sounds, five vocabularies on TSU sounds, five vocabularies on nasal sounds, five vocabulary words on the differences between the sounds of lines SA and SHA, five vocabulary words on the differences between the sounds of lines ZA and JA.

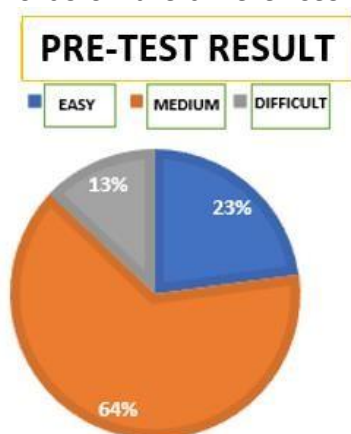


Figure 2. Diagram of the Result of Pre-test Vocabulary Analysis

After a pre-test and assessment by native and non-native evaluators, it was found that the samples could pronounce the vocabulary correctly without any difficulty in 23% of the vocabulary tested. Most of the samples could not pronounce the vocabulary correctly in as many as 13% of the vocabulary tested. Meanwhile, of the 64% of the vocabulary tested, some samples could pronounce it, but others could not. The vocabulary level at this percentage has a medium difficulty in correct pronunciation.

The following is a list of tested vocabulary that is considered easy to pronounce correctly by the sample in the pre-test.

Table 3. Vocabulary that is easy to pronounce without any difficulty by the sample in the pre-test.

Non-native Evaluator		Native Evaluator	
Words	Percentage	Words	Percentage
こうちゃ	100%	なつ	100%
きょうと	100%	のんだり	100%
さんびゃく	100%		

にじゅっぶん	100%
なつ	100%
しんせつ	100%
のんだり	100%

From the assessment results carried out by two native and non-native evaluators, they agree with the similarity of vocabulary, which is considered easy for the sample to pronounce correctly without any difficulties. The vocabulary is, なつ and のんだり . なつ is a pronunciation test question in the TSU consonant pronunciation category. At the same time, のんだり is a pronunciation test question in pronunciation of nasal sounds. This case could be because these two vocabularies are often used and encountered in learning Japanese and daily life.

While the vocabulary that is difficult to pronounce correctly by almost all samples can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. Vocabulary challenging to pronounce by the sample in Pre-test.

Non-native Evaluator		Native Evaluator	
Words	Percentage	Words	Percentage
りょこう	6%	りょこう	6%
ぎゅうにゅう	24%	きっさてん	29%
きっさてん	24%	ぎゅうにゅう	35%
つかれました	41%	つめたい	41%
いっしょ	47%	いっしょ	47%
ショッピング	47%	こうちゃ	53%
		きょうと	53%
		にじゅっぶん	53%
		ショッピング	53%

From the assessment results of two native and non-native evaluators, they agree with the similarity of vocabulary, which is considered very difficult to pronounce correctly by the sample. The vocabularies are りょこう and ぎゅうにゅう, which are pronunciation test questions in the category of pronouncing long vowels, きっさてん, and いっしょ which are pronunciation test questions in the category of pronouncing multiple consonants, and ショッピング which are pronunciation test questions in the category of pronouncing line difference sounds between SA and SHA. In the vocabulary of りょこう the whole sample, there is only one sample who can pronounce it correctly. Almost all of the samples pronounced the word りょこう to りょうこ in the ears of non-native evaluators. This case could be due to the influence of the vocabulary りょうり, which is often used by the samples in everyday life and learning situations, resulting in the generalization of the pronunciation of the long sound. Meanwhile, the native evaluator thinks that an inappropriate accent makes a sound りょこう not as good as it should be. In vocabulary ぎゅうにゅう, both native and non-native evaluators

judged the same thing, namely that the samples could not pronounce both places of long vowel sounds in the vocabulary of ギョウニョウ. Almost all samples pronounce ギョウニョ. For native evaluators, this is because the sample is less precise in sounding the vocabulary accent. This case is similar to the vocabulary リョウ case. The sample tends to pronounce long vowels at the beginning of a syllable. It tends to be challenging to pronounce long vowels at the end of a syllable. This case could be because many Japanese vocabularies known to the sample have long vowels at the beginning. Syllables. For example プール、ジュース、ぼうし、きのう、くうき etc. Meanwhile, when viewed from the Japanese accent, the long vowel at the beginning mostly has a high accent sound, and the long vowel sound at the end of the syllable has a low accent sound. This case indicates that high accent sounds are heard more clearly than soft accent sounds in the ear of the sample.

Another thing is the case with vocabulary キツてん. Most of the samples pronounce, namely, by pronouncing the long sound in the syllable section after the double consonant. According to native evaluators, this is due to the lack of precise accents spoken by the sample. Meanwhile, native evaluators argue that this happens because the sample is too focused or careful on weak pronunciation, in this case, the double consonant which causes the loss of the double sound and the birth of a long vowel sound can be a nearby word. double consonants and SHA line sounds make the level of difficulty faced by the sample multiplied. Therefore, the sample tends to be easy to eliminate double consonant sounds compared to the pronunciation of sounds on the SHA line.

In the vocabulary of ショッピング, almost all of the samples pronounce ソッピン グ. This case happens because, outside of learning Japanese, this vocabulary is often pronounced in everyday life. In Indonesian conversation, the pronunciation of SA and SHA does not have different meanings. In everyday life, people in Indonesia often consider the sounds of SA and SHA to be the same.

Post-test

Pre-test and post-test are given in the same form of discourse. However, there are several different vocabularies in the assessment. There are as many as 35 vocabularies that will be assessed consisting of five vocabularies on long vowels, five vocabularies on double consonant sounds, five vocabularies on semi-vowel sounds, five vocabularies on TSU sounds, five vocabularies on nasal sounds, five vocabularies on different SA line sounds and SHA, five vocabularies on and differences in the sounds of the ZA and JA lines.

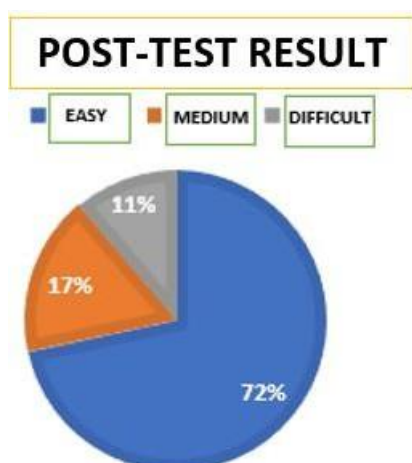


Figure 3. Diagram of the Results of the Post-test Vocabulary Analysis

After conducting the test and assessment by native and non-native evaluators, it was found that 72% of the vocabulary tested, the samples could pronounce the vocabulary correctly without any difficulties. Some samples could pronounce as many as 17% of the vocabulary tested, but others could not. Meanwhile, most of the samples could not pronounce the vocabulary tested correctly, as many as 11% of the vocabulary tested, even though they had gone through the treatment process. The vocabulary level at this percentage can be said to have a difficulty level that is very difficult to pronounce correctly and difficult to repair even though it has been through treatment activities.

However, even so, it can be seen from the diagram above that there is an evident change between the test results in the pre-test and post-test. The vocabulary level considered easy before treatment is at 23% in the pre-test, increasing to 72%. This case indicates pronunciation sounds that the samples can improve after going through the practice using the VASM model. Furthermore, there was a decrease in vocabulary that was considered problematic by the samples, which was 23% in the pre-test to 11% in the post-test. However, it can be seen that there are still types of pronunciation that are difficult to improve by the samples even though they have done pronunciation exercises with the VASM model.

The following is a list of tested vocabulary that is considered easy to pronounce correctly by the sample in the post-test.

Table 5. Vocabulary that is easy to pronounce without difficulty by the sample in Post-test.

Evaluator non-native		Evaluator native	
Words	Percentage	Words	Percentage
もういちど	100%	もういちど	100%
いっしょ	100%	いっしょ	100%
かって	100%	かって	100%
ショッピング	100%	ショッピング	100%
こうちゃ	100%	こうちゃ	100%

きょうと	100%
さんびゃく	100%
せんしゅう	100%

りょこう	100%
きょうと	100%
さんびゃく	100%
いっしょ	100%
きっさてん	100%
でんしゃ	100%
かぞく	100%

From the results of the evaluation above, it can be seen that both native and non-native evaluators almost have similarities in assessing the tests given. There were こうちゃ and もういちど are pronunciation test questions in the category of pronunciation of long vowels, いっしょ, かって and ショッピング which are pronunciation test questions in the category of pronunciation of double consonants, りょこう and きょうと which are pronunciation test questions in the category pronunciation of semi-vowel sounds, andさんびゃく which is a pronunciation test question in the category of pronunciation of Nasal sounds. The exciting thing from the results of this assessment is that there are three of the five vocabularies that are a matter of pronunciation test in the category of pronunciation of double consonants that can be pronounced correctly by the sample. This case indicates that with the VASM model, the difficulty of pronouncing double consonants can be overcome. In other words, samples tend to be easier to correct duplicate sounds compared to other pronunciation sounds.

Table 6. Vocabulary challenging to pronounce by the sample in Post-test.

Non-native Evaluator		Native Evaluator	
Words	Percentage	Words	Percentage
りょこう	20%	たのしい	60%
つめたい	40%	たのしかった	60%
つかれました	40%	つめたい	60%
たのしい	60%	つかれました	60%

From the assessment results of two native and non-native evaluators, they agree with the similarity of vocabulary, which is considered very difficult to pronounce correctly by the sample even though they have gone through pronunciation exercises. The vocabulary of たのしい is a pronunciation test question in the category of pronouncing long vowels, and the vocabulary of つめたい which is a pronunciation test question in the category of TSU consonant pronunciation. An interesting thing happened in the case of vocabulary りょこう. One of the evaluators stated that the sample could not correctly pronounce this vocabulary. Although other evaluators did not list the vocabulary りょこう as the most challenging vocabulary, some notes must be paid to this vocabulary. The note is that the accent sounded less precise to raise

doubts about the correct pronunciation of the vocabulary りょう. This case means that the assessments in the pre-test and post-test showed almost no changes in pronunciation that occurred. This case indicates the need for special training on the long sound at the end of the syllable. Because the sample may say the same thing with vocabulary with the same structure as the word りょう, this also happens to the vocabulary たのしい. This case proves that the long sound at the end of the word is complicated to pronounce and correct by the sample.

The results of this post-test also found that the vocabulary つめたい and つかれました was complex for the sample to pronounce. This case indicates that the TSU consonants at the beginning of the word are more difficult to pronounce than the TSU consonants in the middle or at the end. Almost all samples who pronounce the words つめたい and つかれました tend to pronounce すめたい and すかれました. This case is because there are no double consonant sounds in Indonesian vocabulary at the beginning of the word. Knock / Mora in Indonesian and Japanese also have differences. For example, in the vocabulary "NATSU", the Indonesian moras are "Nat" and "Su". In contrast, in Japanese, the moras are "Na" and "TSU". This case is why TSU sounds in the middle and at the end of words can be pronounced correctly. Meanwhile, the initial TSU consonant sound becomes challenging to pronounce because there is no previous help syllable. It takes unique practice so that the sample can pronounce the TSU consonants at the beginning of the word well.

CONCLUSION

From statistical calculations, the VASM model is effective in improving Japanese pronunciation, which includes seven categories, including long vowel sounds, double consonants, semi-vowel sounds, TSU sounds, nasal sounds, differences in SA and SHA line sounds, and differences between ZA and JA line sounds.

The test analysis results show that double consonant sounds are easy to repair. This case can be proven by the appearance of double consonants in the most challenging pronunciation category in the pre-test and the absence of double consonants in the most challenging pronunciation category in the post-test.

Semi-vowel sounds, nasal sounds, differences in sounds in the SA and SHA lines, and differences in sounds in the ZA and JA lines are pronunciation sounds that are easy to correct. The TSU consonant sound at the beginning of the syllable is more challenging to correct than the TSU consonant sound at the following syllable. りょう is the most challenging vocabulary to improve in this study. The strong influence of the mother tongue is the biggest obstacle in pronouncing Japanese correctly. Long sounds at the end of syllables are complicated to correct by the sample.

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AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

All authors contributed equally to the conceptualization, writing and final approval of the manuscript.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study

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