

Investigation of Students' Japanese Language Communication Competence Through Narrative Monologue Videos

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Abstract

The task of making a narrative monologue video is one of the strategies to improve students' performance and communication competence. Students present a monologue containing a narrative of topics that have been studied in the Marugoto A2B1 book through video recordings. This study uses a qualitative participatory methodology, with participants being fourth semester students of the 2024/2025 academic year of the Japanese Language Education study program, Riau University. The assessment of the monologue video includes the components of pronunciation, expression, fluency, grammar, and content. The methodology used is Classroom Action Research (CAR). The learning stages using Marugoto A2B1 can prepare linguistic competence and knowledge of the topic well. Writing a monologue script makes students understand grammar and concepts better. Narrative monologue can help students to arrange the ideas about a certain activity or thing. The task of making those narrative videos can support students in reducing nervousness, and displaying more confident performance. In other words, narrative monologue videos can comprehensively improve students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in Japanese language communication.

Keywords: *video, monologue, narrative, Japanese language*

1. Introduction

The Japanese Language Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Riau, uses the *Marugoto* textbook as its primary resource for developing Japanese language competency. The *Marugoto* textbook aims to provide students with a variety of activities to improve their oral and written communication skills in an active and dynamic manner for use in everyday life. Students learn vocabulary, sentence structures, and examples of sentence usage in various communicative situations, then practice them orally through question-and-answer sessions and role-play conversations. The learning materials and activities presented in the *Marugoto* textbook are comprehensive, covering listening, speaking, reading, writing, and knowledge of Japanese culture. Although the textbook's materials and activities are both comprehensive and concise, instructors can certainly develop additional materials and activities to further support the learning objective of improving Japanese language communication competency.

Speaking is the process of constructing and sharing meaning through both verbal and nonverbal symbols in various contexts. Spoken language is primarily received through hearing and the perception of facial expressions—especially those of the mouth—which help listeners understand speech (Omata & Mogi, 2005). In other words, speaking involves conveying understanding to others. When conducted in a foreign language, greater attention must be paid to critical components such as vocabulary and syntax to ensure the message is conveyed

accurately and clearly. Success in learning a foreign language is often measured by a person’s fluency in communicating in that language.

In particular, various challenges often arise in speaking practice, such as large class sizes and students’ lack of readiness to speak Japanese due to grammatical limitations and low self-confidence. Therefore, efforts are needed to ensure effective speaking practice. However, oral communication practice in the classroom is still considered insufficient. One strategy that can be implemented is assigning students to practice oral narratives in the form of recorded monologues. Brown (2004) presents five categories of speaking performance assessment tasks, ranging from the easiest to the most difficult. These categories include imitative, intensive, responsive, interactive, and extensive activities. The final category can include speeches, oral presentations, and storytelling or monologues.

Monologues are considered an appropriate exercise to support speaking skill development. In a monologue, the speaker uses their own spoken language without interruption, and the speech may last for a set period of time (Brown & Lee, 2015). The purpose of assigning monologues is to give students the opportunity to prepare their scripts in advance, both in terms of content and grammar. Furthermore, students can rehearse their performances to deliver effective monologues. Improved speaking performance can potentially be achieved after students engage in multiple speaking activities. Teachers must facilitate students’ active participation in these activities to improve the quality of their performance (Syuryanto, 2023).

Teachers play several roles in helping students develop their speaking skills. Their roles as facilitators, participants, motivators, and feedback providers are essential (Wael et al., 2018). Without the aid of media, teachers must work harder to capture students’ attention. Learners tend to be passive, so teachers must create more interaction to motivate and engage them during lessons (Yuniar, 2023). Teachers must also consider students’ psychological conditions. Some students may dislike speaking practice. As Brown (2004) notes, shyness and nervousness are the most common reasons for students’ reluctance to speak. Students can improve their monologue skills independently through assignments completed outside of class hours, where they have greater control over their psychological state.

Lecturers can implement several strategies to reduce student anxiety, such as giving students sufficient time to prepare, motivating them to think positively and be disciplined, and providing support through consultations. From the students’ perspective, they can reduce both anxiety and errors by managing their time effectively, practicing relaxation techniques so that assignments are not seen as burdensome, and approaching tasks with positive motivation. Self-confidence is a crucial factor in language learning.

Several psychological factors influence learners’ speaking skills, including anxiety, shyness, lack of self-confidence, and low motivation. Therefore, learners need to understand and manage their psychological state effectively (Sari, 2022).

Based on the above, it can be concluded that speaking is an important skill to develop. Monologues are a form of verbal practice that should be cultivated among students. Assigning monologue video recordings provides opportunities for meaningful preparation, practice, and reflection. Therefore, this study focuses on a strategy for learning speaking skills using the grammar and themes taught in the *Marugoto* textbook. The strategy involves students creating narrative monologue video recordings.

2. Method

This study was conducted in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Riau during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The subjects of the study were 32 fourth-semester students enrolled

in the *Sougou Nihongo Chuukyuu 1* course. The study also utilized the online platform Google Classroom as a medium for collecting students' monologue video submissions.

This research is a Classroom Action Research (CAR) project using a participatory qualitative approach. CAR was chosen because it allows the researcher—in this case, the course lecturer—to identify instructional problems in the classroom, implement improvements, and systematically evaluate the outcomes. The objective of this study is to enhance students' oral communication competence in Japanese through the use of narrative monologue video assignments.

The action model employed in this research follows the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The research was conducted in two cycles. In each cycle, students were assigned to create a narrative monologue video based on a given topic. The videos were then analyzed using a speaking assessment rubric. The researcher conducted observation and reflection at the end of each cycle to develop plans for the next cycle. The following outlines the stages of each cycle:

- a. **Planning:** The researcher provided several themes from which students could choose for their monologue video. After selecting a theme, students were required to write a monologue script and submit it for the lecturer's review. Once the script was deemed appropriate, students could proceed to the next stage.
- b. **Action Implementation:** Students were instructed to record and upload a narrative monologue video based on the chosen topic and submit it via Google Classroom.
- c. **Observation:** Observations focused on student participation during the process, the quality of the submitted videos, and student responses to the activity.
- d. **Reflection:** The researcher evaluated both the video outputs and student engagement, and used the findings to formulate improvement plans for the next cycle.

Data were collected through video documentation, observation, and reflective notes. Research instruments included observation sheets and a speaking assessment rubric. The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

3. Result

In general, the learning procedure implemented in this study followed the steps illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 1. Steps in Monologue Video-Based Learning

In accordance with the stages of Classroom Action Research (CAR), both the lecturer

and the students were involved in specific activities at each stage: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. These activities are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Activities Conducted by Teacher and Students

Teacher	Student
(1) Planning. Identifying the topics. Reviewing narrative text. Correcting the monologue text.	(1) Planning . Choosing one of the topic. Reviewing narrative text. Developing the structure of monologue text. Submitting the monologue text.
(2) Implementing. Giving consultation to student.	(2) Implementing. Recording the video of monologue. Submitting the video of monologue.
(3) Observing. Evaluating the video.	(3) Observing.
(4) Reflecting. Giving feedback (strengths and weaknesses).	(4) Reflecting. Reflecting the feedback for improvement

The visual representation below shows how students submitted their monologue scripts and videos through Google Classroom. All submissions were collected online via the platform, while the evaluation process was conducted both online and offline. The activities remained consistent across both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2.

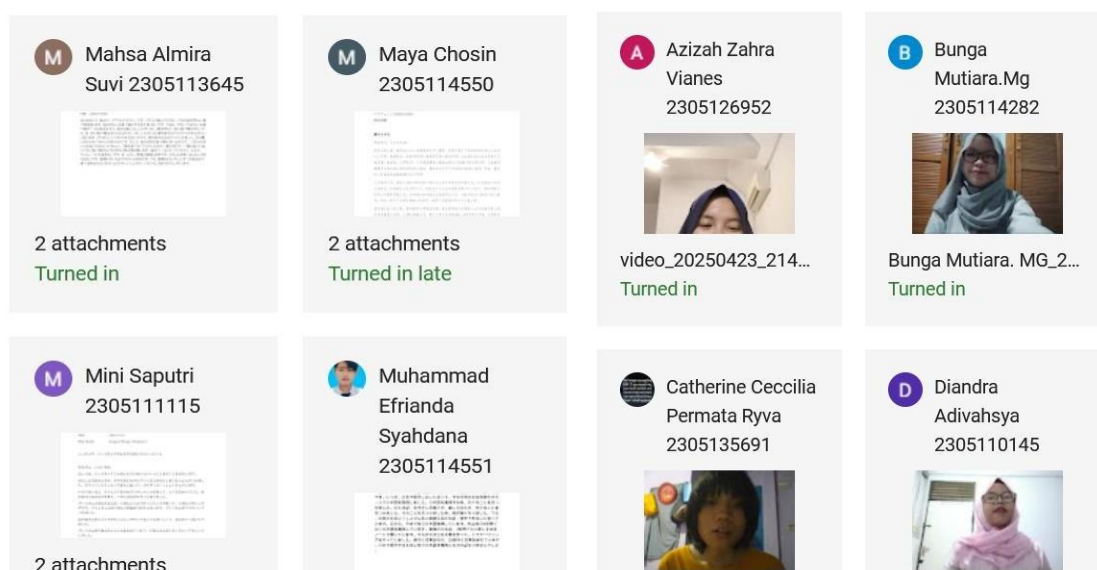


Figure 2. Examples of Monologue Scripts and Videos Submitted via Google Classroom

The *Marugoto A2-B1* textbook was used during the course. Students learned sentence structures and communication patterns from the textbook and were instructed to apply the material by creating narrative scripts, which were then presented as spoken monologues. The following are sample topics assigned to students, along with the instructions for each:

Topic 1 : スポーツの試合

Task : Students make a monologue about the situations that made her/him have to cancel the appointment to watch the sport competition together.

Topic 3 : ほっとする食べ物

Task : Students make a monologue about their routine of preparing daily food and how they feel about it.

Topic 5 : ことばを学ぶ楽しみ

Task : Students make monologue about their experience in learning foreign language.

The implementation of learning activities in each cycle is described in the following sections. This study was conducted over two cycles, with the following results:

a) Cycle 1

In Cycle 1, students still demonstrated shyness and a lack of confidence in completing the video assignment. Several students also experienced difficulties with pronunciation and sentence structure. The average scores for the video assignments in Cycle 1 are shown below:

Table 2. Average Student Scores per Assessment Aspect – Cycle 1

Project 1				
Fluency	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Average
79,9	73,2	73,2	77,5	76

It can be seen that the lowest average scores were in the areas of grammar and word choice, while pronunciation was also a major challenge. As part of the reflection stage, the lecturer provided detailed feedback on students’ performance, highlighting common pronunciation and grammatical errors that needed improvement. Students also shared their experiences and feedback regarding the assignment. While many felt shy speaking in Japanese, they appreciated the flexibility to re-record their videos until satisfied. They expressed enthusiasm about continuing to Cycle 2 after receiving constructive feedback.

b) Cycle 2

In Cycle 2, students demonstrated noticeable improvements in both pronunciation and grammar. They appeared more confident, and their articulation was clearer and easier to understand. The average scores also increased significantly, as shown below:

Table 3. Average Student Scores per Assessment Aspect – Cycle 2

Project 2				
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Fluency	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation	Average
82,6	76,4	75,8	83,3	79,5

As shown in the table, all aspects improved compared to Cycle 1. Notably, grammar — previously the lowest-scoring aspect—showed a significant increase. Overall, the average score also improved in Cycle 2. Although there is still room for further development, the final reflection stage in Cycle 2 was used by the lecturer to provide students with further feedback on both strengths and areas for continued improvement.

4. Discussion

Following the completion of Cycles 1 and 2, assessments were conducted on students’ video performance. The average score improvements per aspect are shown below:

Table 4. Improvement in Average Scores per Assessment Aspect

	Fluency	Grammar	Vocabulary	Pronunciation
Cycle 1	79,9	73,2	73,2	77,5
Cycle 2	82,6	76,4	75,8	83,3
Score Increase	+2,6	+3,2	+2,6	+5,8

Pronunciation showed the most significant improvement, with an average increase of 5.8 points, followed by grammar with an average increase of 3.2 points. These results indicate that the use of narrative monologue videos provides a meaningful space for speaking practice. This strategy supports a communicative approach to Japanese language instruction and encourages students to be active and independent in practicing speaking. Moreover, students felt less nervous and self-conscious speaking Japanese because the task was not performed in front of others.

5. Conclusion

Practicing narrative monologues has been shown to effectively activate students’ discourse competence, which refers to the ability to use a range of linguistic, grammatical, and pragmatic strategies to interpret and express meaning. This study demonstrates that instructional strategies aimed at addressing students’ weaknesses play a critical role in improving their speaking proficiency. The practice of delivering narrative monologues, especially through video recordings, provided students with meaningful opportunities to rehearse and refine their oral communication. The results indicate measurable improvement in students’ speaking performance between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, particularly in grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. Students also reported feeling more confident and motivated when allowed to practice independently through video assignments. Overall, the narrative monologue video project proved to be an effective tool for enhancing students’ verbal presentation skills and supporting the development of communicative competence in Japanese language learning.

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