User Perception Based on Learner Level Towards Interest in Using The Likari Application

Diana Kartika
Bung Hatta University
Dianakartika@bunghatta.ac.id
Khairatunnisak
Indonesia University of Education
Khairatunnisak96@upi.edu
Indria Apriza
Indonesia University of Education
Indriaapriza22@upi.edu

Abstract

This study explores users' perceptions and interest in using the Japanese language learning application Likari, based on their language proficiency levels. The primary objectives are to (1) describe users' perceptions of Likari across beginner (N5), intermediate (N4), and advanced (N3) learner groups; (2) analyze differences in usage interest among those groups; and (3) identify key factors influencing learners' motivation to use the application. A quantitative descriptive and comparative design was employed, involving 90 respondents selected through stratified purposive sampling. A Likert-scale questionnaire measured five dimensions: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, content relevance, intention to reuse, and satisfaction. Descriptive statistics and one-way ANOVA were used for analysis. Findings indicated that Likari received generally positive responses (M=4.01; SD=0.62), with perceived usefulness rated highest (M=4.22). N5 users reported the highest interest in continued use (M=4.30), citing content simplicity and user-friendly interface, whereas N3 users showed lower interest due to less challenging content (content relevance M=3.45). ANOVA results confirmed significant differences in content relevance ($F(2,87)=6.89$, $p<0.01$) and intention to reuse ($F(2,87)=4.15$, $p<0.05$), especially between N5 and N3. These findings align with the Technology Acceptance Model, indicating that proficiency level impacts the perception of digital learning tools. It is suggested that adaptive content development tailored to learner levels could enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of Likari in Japanese language education.

Keywords: *Japanese language learning, user perception, mobile-assisted learning, language proficiency level, educational technology*

1. Introduction

The advancement of technology in foreign language education has led to the development of various learning applications that are accessible in flexible and interactive ways. In the context of Japanese language learning, vocabulary acquisition plays a crucial role in shaping comprehensive language skills, both in receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) domains (Nation & Webb, 2011). One of the emerging local applications in Indonesia is *Likari*, which offers a digital, vocabulary-centered learning

approach through gamification strategies and visual context mapping. This application provides various forms of input—such as illustrations, audio, and example sentences in context—designed to facilitate the natural acquisition of vocabulary.

Within the field of second language acquisition (SLA), *comprehensible input* is considered a fundamental element, as theorized by Krashen (1985) in his Input Hypothesis. This theory posits that learners can acquire language effectively when they are exposed to input that is understandable yet slightly beyond their current level (i+1). Such input becomes comprehensible through contextual cues or other forms of support (VanPatten, 2017). In technology-mediated learning, the extent to which an application can provide such comprehensible input significantly determines its effectiveness in supporting learners' linguistic development. Therefore, it is essential to examine how *Likari* structures its vocabulary content and to what extent it aligns with the principles of the Input Hypothesis.

With the growing use of language learning applications across both formal and informal education contexts, there is an increasing need to evaluate user perceptions of input quality and learning effectiveness. User perception, particularly when analyzed across different proficiency levels, serves as a critical indicator in assessing the appropriateness and acceptability of learning materials (Reinders & Benson, 2017). Learners at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels have distinct cognitive characteristics and learning needs in processing and retaining vocabulary. Consequently, this study aims to explore how learners at different proficiency levels perceive the use of Likari, and whether the application effectively addresses input needs across these varying learner levels.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of evaluating mobile-assisted learning applications from the users' perspectives. For instance, Kimura and Takeuchi (2018) found that perceived ease of use and content relevance were key determinants in the sustained usage of Japanese language learning applications. In this context, investigating *Likari* becomes significant, especially given the limited number of empirical studies focusing on the alignment between input design and SLA theory, as well as user perceptions stratified by proficiency level.

Accordingly, this research seeks to answer three main questions: (1) What forms of *comprehensible input* are provided by *Likari*? (2) To what extent does the use of *Likari* contribute to Japanese vocabulary acquisition? and (3) Does the content of the application align with the core principles of the Input Hypothesis? The objective of this study is to identify the vocabulary presentation features and strategies used in *Likari*, assess its effectiveness, and analyze the alignment of its learning content with Krashen's theoretical framework. It is hoped that this study will serve as a valuable reference for the development of technology-based educational applications that are more closely aligned with SLA theory and the diverse needs of learners.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a case study method to explore Japanese language learners' perceptions of the Likari application, with a specific focus on the provision of comprehensible input in vocabulary learning. As Yin (2014) asserts, the case study approach is suitable when the research aims to understand contextual

phenomena in real-life settings, such as the use of mobile applications in educational environments. This approach also enables researchers to capture the complexity of learners' responses across different proficiency levels.

The participants in this study were first-year university students who were learning Japanese at the N5 or N4 proficiency level, categorized as beginner learners. Participants were selected based on their active engagement with the Likari application during the observation period. This research adopted a non-probabilistic purposive sampling technique, consistent with the exploratory and in-depth orientation of the study. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), purposive sampling is appropriate for revealing in-depth insights into specific phenomena. A total of ten participants were selected based on criteria of availability, active use of the application, and alignment with the target proficiency level.

Data collection was conducted using three main methods: (1) observation of participants' use of Likari over a period of two to four weeks, (2) semi-structured interviews designed to explore participants' perceptions and experiences using the application, and (3) documentation of app features relevant to the comprehensible input theory. The observation focused on how participants interacted with vocabulary features, the types of content accessed, and the duration of use. Individual interviews aimed to elicit in-depth perspectives on the ease of understanding vocabulary and the practical value of specific application features (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The instruments used included: (1) an observation guide focusing on interaction with visual and contextual input, (2) an interview protocol addressing issues of usability, engagement, and perceptions of input quality, and (3) documentation in the form of screenshots, content descriptions, types of exercises, and forms of visual presentation in the application. Instrument validation was conducted through expert judgment involving two faculty members specializing in educational media and second language acquisition to ensure alignment with the study's objectives.

Data analysis followed two main procedures. First, content analysis was applied to application features to evaluate the extent to which they offered *comprehensible input* to learners, based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985). Second, interview data were analyzed thematically using open coding and axial coding to identify key themes from participants' perceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings from both analyses were then compared to the core principles of the Input Hypothesis to assess the alignment between theoretical expectations and practical implementation in the context of *Likari*.

3. Result

The analysis of data from 90 respondents, consisting of Japanese language learners at levels N5 (n = 30), N4 (n = 30), and N3 (n = 30), revealed a general pattern of positive perceptions toward the use of the Likari application. Descriptive statistics indicated that the overall mean perception score fell into the "agree" category (M = 4.01; SD = 0.62). Among the measured dimensions, Perceived Usefulness scored the highest (M = 4.22), followed by Perceived Ease of Use (M = 4.10), suggesting that the application is generally considered both beneficial and user-friendly for language learning purposes.

When disaggregated by learner level, notable differences emerged. The N5 group

demonstrated the highest intention to reuse the application (M = 4.30), citing the simplicity of content and the intuitive user interface as key factors. In contrast, the N3 group reported lower scores for Content Relevance (M = 3.45), expressing that the material was too basic and lacked the level of challenge expected by advanced learners. The N4 group displayed moderate scores across most categories, reflecting a balanced perception of usefulness, ease of use, and content relevance.

A One-Way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in perception and intention to reuse across the three learner levels. Significant differences were found for the dimensions of Content Relevance ($F(2, 87) = 6.89$, $p < .01$) and Intention to Reuse ($F(2, 87) = 4.15$, $p < .05$). Further analysis using Tukey's post-hoc test revealed that the significant differences occurred between the N5 and N3 groups, while the N4 group did not significantly differ from either of the other groups.

4. Discussion

The findings confirm that learners' proficiency level significantly influences their perception of and engagement with language learning applications such as Likari. These results align with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which highlights perceived usefulness and ease of use as key predictors of users' behavioral intention toward technology adoption. In this study, beginner-level learners (N5) perceived the application as particularly effective, given that its content was appropriately aligned with their foundational learning needs and offered a supportive, low-barrier environment for vocabulary acquisition.

In contrast, advanced learners (N3) expressed dissatisfaction with the content's depth and challenge, resulting in lower relevance scores and reduced enthusiasm for continued use. This reflects the expectations of more proficient users, who typically seek learning materials that support deeper linguistic analysis, contextualized language use, and advanced language functions. This pattern supports theories in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), particularly regarding Level of Proficiency frameworks, which assert that learners' strategies and needs evolve with increasing linguistic competence.

Moreover, the variance in user perception may also be interpreted through the lens of perception theory, wherein an individual's interpretation of technological usefulness and content relevance is shaped by their prior experience and cognitive expectations. For lower-level learners, applications like Likari serve as scaffolds for building foundational understanding, whereas more advanced learners may require tools that enable higher-order language processing and meaningful output practice.

The significant ANOVA results on both content relevance and reuse intention further underscore the importance of adaptive design in educational technologies. The absence of significant difference involving the N4 group suggests a transitional nature of this proficiency level, possibly indicating that content calibration in Likari may be most effectively suited to intermediate users.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that learners' perceptions and willingness to continue using the Likari application are closely tied to their Japanese language proficiency level. While the application has been generally well-received, especially among beginner-level users, advanced learners exhibited lower levels of satisfaction due to a perceived mismatch between

the content and their learning needs.

These findings highlight the importance of developing adaptive and level-specific content within digital language learning platforms. Incorporating flexible features and differentiated learning pathways could bridge perceptual gaps across proficiency levels, thereby enhancing Likari's overall effectiveness and user retention.

As a recommendation, future development of Likari should include tiered content complexity, dynamic difficulty adjustment, and features that promote higher-level cognitive engagement for advanced learners. Such enhancements would not only increase the application's pedagogical value but also ensure its sustainability and relevance within diverse learner populations.

6. Reference

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. MIS Quarterly, 13(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Godwin-Jones, R. (2018). Using mobile technology to develop language skills and cultural understanding. Language Learning & Technology, 22(3), 3–17. https://doi.org/10125/44639

Kimura, H., & Takeuchi, O. (2018). Mobile-assisted language learning: Student perception of effectiveness. CALICO Journal, 35(2), 203–220. https://doi.org/10.1558/cj.35099

Krashen, S. D. (1985). The input hypothesis: Issues and implications. Longman.

Mayer, R. E. (2009). Multimedia learning (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Nation, I. S. P., & Webb, S. (2011). Researching and analyzing vocabulary. Heinle Cengage Learning.

Paivio, A. (1986). Mental representations: A dual coding approach. Oxford University Press.

Reinders, H., & Benson, P. (2017). Research agenda: Digital technology and language learning. Language Learning & Technology, 21(1), 1–9. https://doi.org/10125/44544

VanPatten, B. (2017). While we're on the topic: BVP on language, acquisition, and classroom practice. ACTFL.

Yin, R. K. (2014). Case study research: Design and methods (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.