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COLLABORATIVE EXTENSIVE READING FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN INDONESIA AND INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN JAPAN THROUGH ONLINE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Abstract— Reading is considered one of the most challenging skills for foreign language learners. Extensive Reading (ER) is recognized as an effective strategy for enhancing reading skills through autonomous and sustained silent reading of a large number of texts that match learners' proficiency levels. This study focuses on the perceptions of Indonesian Japanese language learners regarding the combination of extensive reading and collaborative learning activities between Indonesian Japanese language learners and Japanese Indonesian language learners, through online out-of-class activities. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing questionnaires and interviews as research instruments. The participants were 11 students from the University of Indonesia who were studying Japanese with Japanese language proficiency levels equivalent to A2B1-B1. The findings indicate that Indonesian learners of Japanese responded positively to the integration of extensive reading and collaborative discussion of reading results with Japanese learners of Indonesian. The activities were perceived to improve reading comprehension and Japanese language skills, particularly vocabulary, while also strengthening learners' understanding of cultural differences between Japan and Indonesia. Furthermore, the activities not only increased learners' motivation to read Japanese texts but also enhanced their motivation to speak the Japanese language.

Keywords: extensive reading, collaborative learning, reading skills, cross-cultural understanding

1. Introduction

Reading is widely recognized as a challenging skill for Indonesian learners of Japanese. This view is supported by (Wahidati & Rahmawati, 2020), who report that reading is perceived as the most challenging component of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) among Indonesian learners. Reading skill is considered difficult because it involves various thinking processes, including identifying vocabulary, understanding sentence structure, comprehending meaning, and drawing conclusions from the reading material (Grabe Wiliam, 2009).

For learners without a kanji background, reading in Japanese becomes even more demanding because they must not only understand word meanings but also accurately identify kanji characters. This difficulty may lead to increased anxiety when engaging with Japanese texts. Anxiety, as a crucial affective factor in second language acquisition, can negatively influence learning behavior by causing learners to avoid language learning activities (Motoda, 2000). For learners without a kanji background, anxiety may impede their ability to comprehend texts (Azizah Safira et al., 2023), which in turn can discourage them from engaging in reading activities.

Extensive reading (ER) is recognized as an effective strategy for enhancing reading skills (Sevy-Biloon, 2022) and has the potential to alleviate learners' anxiety in reading activities (Wahidati et al., 2025). Extensive reading is a reading activity that involves the independence of each reader by silently reading a large number of books at the learner's reading level (Nation I.S.P. & Rob Waring, 2020).

In addition to improving reading skills, extensive reading also offers benefits for vocabulary enrichment, enhancing language skills, developing critical thinking skills, fostering intercultural understanding, and promoting independent learning, and improving reading speed (Nhapulo et al., 2017; Timothy Bell, 1998).

Research on the benefits of extensive reading in Japanese language education has been developed and widely conducted. From the results of studies on Japanese language learners who participated in extensive reading activities, these learners experienced numerous benefits, including increased vocabulary, improved reading speed, enhanced motivation, refined reading strategies, and increased self-confidence (Hitosugi & Day, 2004; Sasaki, 2017; Wahidati et al., 2025).

Understanding of a text can be enhanced when extensive reading is conducted in groups (Liao & Wang, 2020; Macauley & Nevara, 2015). This is because group discussions allow participants to confirm their understanding of the language and the content of the text they have read. Additionally, collaborative extensive reading can enhance learners' motivation to read (Liao & Wang, 2020).

The extensive reading activity conducted in this study integrates extensive reading and collaborative learning activities carried out online with foreign language learners who have diverse native languages and cultural backgrounds. The combination of extensive reading and collaborative learning between the Indonesian learners of Japanese language and the Japanese learners of Indonesian language is expected to motivate them to read the texts, making reading an enjoyable activity, while also improving their reading skills. In addition, through discussions of the reading texts, it is also expected that learners will improve their intercultural skills.

This study focuses on the perceptions of Indonesian Japanese language learners regarding the combination of extensive reading, and collaborative learning activities between Indonesian Japanese language learners and Japanese Indonesian language learners.

2. Literature Review

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading (ER) is a reading activity that involves independent reading by each reader, where they silently read a large number of books that are appropriately matched to their language proficiency level. (Nation I.S.P. & Rob Waring, 2020). Nation I.S.P. & Rob Waring, (2020) detail the characteristics of extensive reading as follows:

1. Reading according to language proficiency level. Reading materials that are appropriate for the learner's level can make it easier for learners to understand the reading material.
2. Reading comprehensible materials. Reading comprehensible materials can motivate learners to engage in reading.
3. Reading a large amount. Reading a large amount can increase reading ability and speed.
4. Reading independently. Reading activities are carried out independently, tailored to each learner's interests and level, and at a time and place that suits each learner.
5. Reading silently. In extensive reading activities, reading is done silently. Reading silently affects reading speed.

In addition, according to (Day and Bamford 2002 as cited in Hitosugi & Day, 2004), the principles of extensive reading are as follows:

1. Learners read easy material.
2. A variety of reading materials on various topics are available.
3. Learners choose the reading materials they want to read.
4. Learners read as many materials as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is for enjoyment, information, and general understanding.
6. Reading is a reward in itself (personal satisfaction).
7. Reading speed is usually faster.
8. Reading is individual and done silently.
9. Teachers guide and direct students.
10. Teachers become role models as readers.

This study adopts the characteristics and principles of extensive reading above when designing and conducting activities.

3. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design utilizing a Likert-scale questionnaire and interviews as research instruments. The questionnaire consists of three components: perceptions of extensive activities, perceptions of collaborative discussions on Indonesian–Japanese reading materials, and perceptions of the impacts and benefits after participating in the activities.

The respondents in this study were 11 fourth- and fifth-semester students at a university in Indonesia with Japanese language proficiency levels equivalent to A2B1-B1. The questionnaires were completed, and interviews were conducted after the activities were finished.

Table 1. Respondent Data

Semester	Gender		Japanese Language Level	
	Women	Men	A2B1	B1
4-5	9	2	7	4

The research results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the data were then interpreted based on the mean and standard deviation (SD) of each statement, as indicated by the following scale.

Mean Scale:

1.00–1.75 : Very disagree

1.76–2.50 : Disagree

2.51–3.25 : Agree

3.26–4.00 : Very agree

Standard Deviation Scale (SD)

SD < 0.5 : Similar response (homogeneous)

SD 0.5–1.0 : Moderately varied response

SD > 1.0 : Very varied response

General Activity Procedures

This activity was conducted as part of an extracurricular reading club and did not impact students' academic grades. The implementation took place five times between June and December 2024.

The objectives of this activity are:

1. Increasing interest in reading
2. Building reading habits
3. Deepening cross-cultural understanding
4. Strengthening vocabulary mastery
5. Developing independent learning skills

The participants consisted of 11 Indonesian students studying Japanese at a university in Indonesia (with language proficiency level A2B1~B1) and 3 Japanese students studying Indonesian at a university in Japan (with language proficiency level A2).

This activity consists of two parts: an extensive reading activity conducted offline and a collaborative learning activity conducted online via Zoom. The collaborative learning activities implemented in this study consisted of participant presentations and group discussions focusing on the content of the texts they had read.

The first meeting consisted of introductions by each participant and an explanation of the extensive reading activity, including its benefits, as well as an explanation of the activities and overall schedule.

Extensive Reading Procedure

The procedure for extensive reading activities is as follows:

1. One week before the online discussion (collaborative learning activity), learners are required to read at least one book.
2. Learners complete a reading record that includes the title of the book, the number of books read, the time required to read, a summary of the book's content, and any points that are still unclear or questions related to the reading material.

The reading materials provided consisted of extensive reading books available on campus and online ER resources. Learners were given the autonomy to select texts based on their interests and proficiency levels, as well as to determine the time and place for reading according to their convenience.

Procedures for Collaborative Activities: Discussion of Reading Results Between Indonesian Japanese Language Learners and Japanese Indonesian Language Learners

The discussion of the reading results was conducted online for one hour via Zoom, with the following procedure:

1. Japanese student representatives read Indonesian reading materials, and Indonesian student representatives read Japanese reading materials. Then, a discussion is held on the content of the readings (20 minutes).
2. The instructor organizes the participants into groups and assigns them to Zoom breakout rooms.
3. Each participant presents the reading they have read, followed by a discussion (30 minutes).
4. The final session is a reflection and evaluation session that includes impressions and things learned from the discussion. (10 minutes)

The languages used in the presentation of reading results and discussions are Japanese and Indonesian, which may be mixed, depending on the participants' abilities and comfort levels.

Table 1. Schedule of Activities

Activity-	Date of Collaborative activity
1	12 June 2024
2	3 July 2024
3	17 July 2024
4	29 November 2024
5	20 December 2024

4. Findings and Discussion

Perceptions of Extensive Reading Activities

The results of the questionnaire regarding learners' perceptions of extensive reading activities show that most respondents answered 'very agree' (Mean = 3.47). This indicates that learners responded positively to extensive reading activities.

Furthermore, all learners very agreed that they could choose books according to their interests (P1). In addition, all respondents also very agreed with the statements that they could read comfortably at their preferred time and place (P3) and that the level of difficulty of the texts was appropriate for their abilities (P4).

Table 2 Perceptions of Extensive Reading Activities

No.	Question	N	Mean	SD
P1	The reading material I have chosen suits my interests.	11	3.55	.522
P2	I have read many books on various topics.	11	3.18	.603
P3	I can read comfortably at the time and place I like.	11	3.73	.467

P4	The text I read is at a level that matches my abilities.	11	3.64	.505
P5	I feel comfortable reading without having to open a dictionary	11	3.27	.647
P6	Extensive reading has made me enjoy reading in Japanese more.	11	3.45	.522
TOTAL			3.47	.544

However, respondents tended to agree with statement P2 (I have read many books on various topics) (Mean = 3.18). There was also variation in the responses (SD = .603). This shows that a small number of participants felt that the variety of themes and the number of readings were still limited. These findings are also supported by insights obtained from interviews with participants NY and RH. In data (1) and (2), it can be seen that NY and RH feel that the variety of reading materials is still lacking and that more types of reading materials are needed. NY, who has a B1 level of proficiency, feels the need to expand the types of books, such as short novels and manga. Similarly, RH feels the need for additional types or genres of books.

(1) NY: Tapi mungkin tidak hanya novel atau cerita, tapi juga manga.

Translation: But maybe it is not just novels or stories, but manga too.

(2) RH: Menambah jenis bahan bacaan.

Translation: Adding more types of reading materials.

According to (Takase, 2004), variety and quantity of books are very important in ER activities. With a large number of varied books available, learners will find it easy to choose books that match their level and interests, ensuring they enjoy reading. Regarding statement P5 (I feel comfortable reading without having to open a dictionary), although the responses to statement P5 tended to be very agree (Mean=3.27), there was still variation in the responses (SD=.647). This means that a small number of respondents still felt the need to use a dictionary. This may be because they chose books that were somewhat difficult compared to their language proficiency level. As stated in the interview, as seen in the QI statement. In data (3), QI feels that her vocabulary is still limited, so she needs to look up words in a dictionary and translate them. This indicates that QI selects reading material that is above her level, so the vocabulary they are familiar with in the reading material remains limited.

(3) QI: Kosakatanya masih sedikit, jadi pakai bahasa Indonesia, dan translate.

Translation: The vocabulary is still limited, so I use Indonesian, and translate.

Another factor that can be noted about the use of dictionaries is that dictionary use has become a habit for learners today, mainly due to the development of technology. There are many types of dictionaries, including digital and AI-powered dictionaries, that are quick and easily accessible. As a result, it is challenging to ask learners not to use dictionaries or

translate words in the text. As seen in Takahashi & Tae, (2016) many respondents did not follow the extensive reading rules and used dictionaries while reading.

However, all participants very agreed that extensive reading activities made them enjoy reading in Japanese more (P6, Mean = 3.45). This indicates that extensive reading activities are highly effective in enhancing reading motivation and interest among Japanese language learners. This finding aligns with the results of research by (Wahidati et al., 2025), which reveals that extensive reading activities increase learners' interest in reading Japanese books.

Perceptions of Reading Discussion Activities Between Indonesian Japanese Language Learners and Japanese Indonesian Language Learners

The results of the questionnaire regarding perceptions of reading discussion activities between Indonesian and Japanese learners also showed that most respondents strongly agreed (Mean = 3.68). This also illustrates the positive attitude of learners towards reading discussion activities.

As shown in Table 4 below, all statements in this section received a "very agree" response (P7, P8, P9, P10, P11). Based on the results of this questionnaire, this discussion activity not only deepened and enriched understanding of the reading from various perspectives, but also enriched cross-cultural understanding, motivated and increased confidence in expressing opinions.

The results of the questionnaire on understanding from various perspectives were supported by NY's statement in data (4) during the interview below.

- (4) NY : Ada buku yang sama, sehingga bisa tahu bagaimana sebuah cerita memiliki perspektif berbeda. pernah saya dan PR membaca cerita yang sama, namun ada perbedaan perspektif.

Translation: There are the same books, so you can see how a story can be told from different perspectives. Once, PR and I read the same story, but there were differences in perspective

In statement (4), it can be seen that NY has a different perspective from her friend PR, who happened to read the same text. This expands NY's understanding of the content that has been reading. Understanding the reading from various perspectives is also evident in data (5). Data (5) shows that IM believes they can exchange information and expand their understanding of the reading through discussion, from various points of view.

- (5) IM: Saling memberi informasi untuk apa yang kita pahami. Bisa menambah sudut pandang dan satu sama lain.

Translation: Sharing information about what we understand. It can broaden our perspectives and each other's.

The questionnaire results on increased intercultural understanding are reinforced by the results of the RH interview as shown in the following data (6).

- (6) RH: Terjadi pertukaran budaya

Translation: Cultural exchange occurs.

Data (6) illustrates the occurrence of intercultural understanding when discussing reading comprehension with native Japanese learners. This is also illustrated **in the statements** of NS **in data** (7) **and** VS **in data** (8).

(7) NS: Tidak jauh beda dengan teman-teman lain, misalnya ada kata-kata yang tidak diketahui, nanti akan dijelaskan oleh mahasiswa Jepang dan senseinya, rasanya terjadi pertukaran budaya.

Translation: Similar to other friends, if there are words that are not understood, Japanese students and their sensei will explain them later, making it feel like a cultural exchange.

(8) VS: Sependapat dengan NF, selain bisa membaca dan memahami budaya yang terselip dalam cerita, bisa juga belajar menyampaikan ke yang lain.

Translation: I agree with NF that, in addition to being able to read and understand the culture embedded in stories, one can also learn to deliver it to others.

Regarding motivation and increased confidence in expressing opinions in Japanese, this is reinforced by the QI statement in data (9) and IM in data (10) below.

(9) QI: Saya merasa walaupun dengan bahasa Jepang saya yang kurang, menjadi lebih berani.

Translation: I feel that even though my Japanese is poor, I have become more courageous.

(10) IM: Berinteraksi dengan orang Jepang dapat meningkatkan kemampuan Bahasa Jepang. Tidak perlu ragu-ragu untuk bicara, walau kata-kata di buku sulit, tapi kita bisa menyesuaikan kata-katanya agar teman-teman paham.

Translation: Interacting with Japanese people can improve our Japanese language skills. Do not hesitate to speak, even if the words in the book are difficult. We can adjust the words so that your friends understand.

In data (9), QI felt more confident speaking Japanese even though she felt her language skills were lacking. Meanwhile, in data (10), IM also felt confident speaking in her own words to share what she had read.

This discussion activity also increased motivation to read more, because participants were able to discuss directly with native Japanese speakers, as shown in DA's statement in the following data (11).

(11) DA: Ketika baca masih ada rasa males karena susah. **Membantu jadi lebih suka (baca).**

Translation: Especially when reading, there is laziness in reading because it is difficult.
Discussion makes it (reading) more likable.

Table 3 Perceptions of Reading Discussion Activities

No.	Question	N	Mean	SD
P7	Discussions with participants from Indonesia/Japan helped me understand the reading material better.	11	3.55	.688
P8	Cross-cultural discussions provided me with a new perspective on the reading content.	11	3.82	.603
P9	I am motivated to express my opinions in Japanese during discussions.	11	3.36	.674
P10	Discussions help me correct misunderstandings of the text content.	11	3.82	.405
P11	Interacting with people from different cultures expands my knowledge.	11	3.82	.405
TOTAL			3.68	.555

Perceptions of the Impact and Benefits of Extensive Reading and Reading Discussion Activities

The mean total score of the questionnaire regarding the impact and benefits of extensive reading and discussion of reading results also tended to be very agreed with (Mean=3.46). This indicates that respondents believed these activities had a positive impact and were beneficial to them.

Table 4 Perceptions of the Impact and Benefits of Activities

No.	Question	N	Mean	SD
P12	Extensive reading improves my vocabulary.	11	3.64	.505
P13	Extensive reading and discussing what I read made me more confident in using the Japanese language.	11	3.36	.505
P14	Cross-cultural discussions help me practice speaking Japanese.	11	3.64	.674
P15	This activity increased my awareness of cultural differences (between Indonesia and Japan).	11	3.45	.522
P16	Extensive reading helps me improve my reading speed.	11	3.18	.751
TOTAL			3.46	.591

Of all the statements that respondents tended to very agree with, only their responses to statement P16 (Extensive reading helps me improve my reading speed) tended to agree (Mean=3.18). They showed variation in responses (SD=.751). This means that some respondents still feel that their reading speed has not improved significantly. This could be because the number of books read is still small or because some learners choose books that are not suitable for their language proficiency level.

However, in general, learners feel that extensive reading and discussion of reading results can help increase vocabulary, deepen understanding of reading content, boost confidence, and expand cross-cultural insight and understanding.

The benefits felt by learners can be seen from the statements of NS in data (12) and NY in data (13). NS believes that participating in this activity can improve reading and speaking skills, as well as provide insight into the daily culture of the Japanese people through the reading material. Meanwhile, NY feels that this activity has improved their knowledge and vocabulary.

- (12) NS: Bermanfaat, apalagi diberikan kesempatan berbicara dengan orang Jepang. Mengasah kemampuan membaca, melatih berbicara. Meningkatkan kemampuan menjelaskan sesuatu. Bahkan dapat mengetahui sampai hal spesifik seperti keseharian orang Jepang dan konteks apa yang dibaca.

Translation: It is beneficial, especially when given the opportunity to speak with Japanese people. It sharpens reading skills and trains speaking skills. It improves the ability to explain things. You can even learn specific things, such as the daily lives of Japanese people and the context of what you are reading.

- (13) NY: Menambah wawasan, kosakata, dan insight. Sangat membantu memahami bahasa Jepang terutama kosakata. Walau ceritanya buat anak-anak banyak yang bisa dipelajari.

Translation: Expands your knowledge, vocabulary, and insight. Very helpful for understanding Japanese, especially vocabulary. Although the stories are intended for children, there is a great deal to learn.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that Indonesian learners of Japanese **responded positively to the integration of extensive reading and discussion of reading** results with Japanese learners of Indonesian.

Learners not only feel that they can improve their reading comprehension and Japanese language skills, especially vocabulary, but also gain much insight into cross-cultural understanding.

Discussions with Japanese Indonesian language learners can also increase motivation not only to speak Japanese, but also to read Japanese books. This may be due to the learners' perceived benefits from the discussions and their enjoyment in interacting with native Japanese speakers.

Based on the results of this study, the following steps need to be taken to make future activities more effective: 1) increase the number of reading materials and expand the variety of topics and genres so that learners can read more books that suit their interests; 2) teachers need to pay attention to the language proficiency level of learners and help them choose appropriate books; and 3) increase the amount of time allocated for activities so that learners have more opportunities to read.

One of the objectives of extensive reading is to educate learners to continue reading independently. To determine the success of this activity and identify strategies to achieve it, research needs to be conducted on the continuation of independent reading after the program ends.

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