

# Investigation on Japanese Listening Training Strategies and Exploration of Guidance Methods

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**Abstract:** In the study of foreign language, we need to master four kinds of skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among them, “reading” and “listening” belong to the skills of receiving language information, and “speaking” and “writing” belong to the skills of producing language information. Since Japanese also uses Chinese characters, it is more difficult for Japanese learners whose native language is Chinese to master listening and speaking skills than reading and writing skills. Especially in the process of listening, due to the lack of knowledge of the target language and the need to “grasp” and understand the content of language information at the moment of hearing, it is particularly difficult to develop listening skills. In this paper, the strategies adopted by Japanese majors in listening training are investigated, classified and analyzed, and the guiding methods of listening skills training are explored.

**Keywords:** Language comprehension; Listening skills; Instruction model

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In language activities, no matter in mother tongue or foreign language, as long as one cannot understand and understand the content of the other party, the language activities cannot be established. Since Japanese also uses Chinese characters, it is more difficult for Japanese learners whose native language is Chinese to master listening skills than reading skills. There are two reasons for this: first, the lack of language knowledge and cultural knowledge related to the target language; Second, learners cannot “grab” the fleeting sound and understand the content of the sound information at the moment they hear it (Yin 2002) <sup>[1]</sup>. Although listening is the basis of language activities, the development of guidance methods for listening skills among the four skills is relatively late (Yokoyama 2004) <sup>[2]</sup>. According to the data of the average listening score of Japanese Language proficiency test from 2010 to 2020 by the Japan Foundation for International Exchange, the scores of Japanese test takers were higher than those of overseas test takers <sup>[3]</sup>. It can be seen that there is insufficient guidance for Japanese listening skills in Japanese teaching in China.

## 1. Listening Strategy and definition of Listening

### 1.1 Listening strategy

There are many definitions of listening strategies. Sugiyama (2005) <sup>[4]</sup> defined listening strategies as “active learning methods used by learners to effectively understand sound information”. In this paper, listening strategies are defined as “learning methods consciously adopted to understand incomplete or new language information when understanding language information”.

Studies on learning strategies are also divided into different categories. This paper takes the learning strategies of O ‘Malley et al.(1989) <sup>[5]</sup> as the theoretical basis of the study. O ‘Malley et al. divided learning strategies into three types: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, social strategies and emotional strategies.

Metacognitive strategies are used to develop language learning plans and conduct self-supervision.

Cognitive strategies carry out language analysis, speculation, translation, summary, repetition and other activities. Among them, “top-down” and “bottom-up” are more commonly used in listening teaching. “Top-down” mode is to guide students to recall and think about the experience related to the content they are going to listen to, and to prompt and explain key words and expressions before doing exercises, namely “deductive” training; The “bottom-up” mode guides students to understand sentences, paragraphs and full text from smaller language units such as sound and vocabulary, which is called “inductive” training.

Social and emotional strategies are activities that reduce anxiety and tension through self-reflection and cooperation with others.

## 2. Investigation of listening strategies

### 2.1 Investigation summary and investigation content

The survey was conducted among 102 second-year Japanese majors (49 male and 53 female) at Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College. First-year students are in the introductory stage of Japanese learning and are still exploring Japanese learning methods, while most of the third-grade and fourth-grade students have formed relatively fixed learning habits with personal characteristics through a long time of learning, while the second-grade students are in the process from “exploring” to “forming”, which has a certain value and significance of investigation and research. The project of this survey refers to the project of Yin (2001), Wang (2015) and Hamamoto (2013). A total of 28 questions of metacognitive strategy, cognitive strategy, social and affective strategy are set. The five options are: 1) Not at all, 2) not very often, 3) occasionally, and 4. Often, 5. Always. The specific problems are as follows.

#### 2.1.1 Metacognitive strategies

Q5 pay special attention to numbers, Q9 pay attention to the time system (past, present, future), Q10 pay attention to question words or continuations, Q16 consciously understand the speaker’s intention and goal, Q18 look at the options first, Q23 pay attention to the speaker’s tone (inflections), and Q25, Q27 Listen carefully for the words that come up again and again.

#### 2.1.2 Cognitive strategies – prediction and speculation

Q1 predicted the listening content while answering in the presence of charts; Q8 chose the answer based on the content of the part he understood; Q19 speculated the meaning of the Japanese he did not understand according to the context; Q26 speculated based on the known background knowledge when he did not understand the test; Q28 speculated the listening content only according to the words he understood.

#### 2.1.3 Cognitive strategies – top-down and bottom-up models

The “top-down” mode is from the overall meaning to vocabulary and grammar, including Q3 trying to understand the topic of a conversation or long article, Q14 listening to the structure of a sentence or article, and Q15 listening to the pauses in words or sentences.

The “bottom-up” model is from vocabulary, grammar to overall meaning, including Q2. Listen to key words and try to understand their meaning. Q12 Try to listen to every word.

## 2.2 Survey results

In the analysis of the survey results, the 28 questions were classified into five categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies - predictive speculation, cognitive strategies - “top-down” and “bottom-up” models, cognitive strategies - other, social and affective strategies. The students’ overall tendency to use listening strategies was analyzed by frequency analysis. The following are the analysis results of each item.

#### 2.2.1 Metacognitive strategies

N		Response		Observed%
			%	
\$ Metacognitive strategies <sup>a</sup>	Never	8	1.0%	7.8%
	Hardly	80	9.8%	78.4%
	Sometimes	130	15.9%	127.5%
	<b>Usually</b>	377	<b>46.2%</b>	369.6%
	Always	221	27.1%	216.7%
Total		816	100.0%	800.0%

Among the non-cognitive strategies, they include “Q5 pay special attention to the numbers that appear, Q9 pay attention to the time system in the sentence (past, present, future), Q10 pay attention to the question word or its successor, Q16 consciously understand the speaker’s intention and goal, and Q18. First look at the options, Q23 pay attention to the speaker’s tone (intonation of the cadence), Q25 test and the content of the question where to listen carefully, Q27 pay attention to the repeated word “eight questions. According to the results of frequency analysis, 46.2% of students “Usually” use various metacognitive strategies when doing listening problems, 27.1% of students “Always” use them, and 15.9% of students “Sometimes”.

#### 2.2.2 Cognitive strategies – prediction and speculation

In the “predictive speculation” project on cognitive strategies, The questions include “Q1 predicts the listening content while answering when there are charts, Q8 chooses the answer according to the content of the part you understand, Q19 speculates the meaning of the Japanese you don’t understand according to the context, Q26 speculates based on the known background knowledge

when you don't understand, and Q28 speculates the listening content only according to the words you understand". 45.3% of the students "Usually" use predictive and speculative methods in cognitive strategies when doing listening problems; 24.1% of the students "Sometimes" use them; 21.9% of the students "Always" use them.

N	Response		Observed%	
		%		
\$ Cognitive strategies -- prediction and speculation <sup>a</sup>	Never	10	2.0%	9.8%
	Hardly	36	7.1%	35.3%
	Sometimes	123	24.1%	120.6%
	<b>Usually</b>	231	<b>45.3%</b>	226.5%
	Always	110	21.6%	107.8%
Total		510	100.0%	500.0%

### 3. Exploration of Japanese Listening training methods

There are four reasons why students can't understand Japanese: a. lack of grammar knowledge; b. not used to Japanese pronunciation; c. not used to the speed of Japanese. d. Not used to Japanese sentence order. Although relying on "more listening" can improve the ability to understand, but it is not the most effective way. In addition to the "bottom-up" and "top-down" modes, there are also "complementary" modes that combine the two modes. In addition to the above three modes, the following two training modes can be applied in Japanese listening teaching.

Dicto-gloss is a listening skill-based method of learning English original sentences proposed by Wajnryb(1989) . The specific training process can be summarized as follows:

- a. Read the passage with grammar at a normal speed. (including learned and unlearned content)
- b. During the reading, students will make notes of the words and sentences they understand.
- c. In two people or in a study group, reconstruct the original passage according to the notes and memories of the different parts that each person heard.
- d. It is not necessary to be exactly consistent with the original text, but to pay attention to the correctness of grammar and the logic of content.
- e. Analyze and compare the recovered sentences. (If necessary, the teacher will explain relevant grammar items)

Although there is no process of thinking and output language in dictation training, Dicto-gloss can be used as a supplement and development of dictation training, and not only applied to listening skills training. In the training process with dictation as the core activity, it can train the ability to grasp the key points and understand the key words quickly, and also exercise the grammar ability needed to recover the original text according to the notes. Moreover, through the study of a group of two or more people, students can find their shortcomings and mistakes in the communication and discussion with others and correct them, so as to effectively improve the learning effect. Because Dicto-gloss needs to be restored after dictation, it is better suited for students at the beginning and later stages of their studies and higher levels.

This paper only investigates and analyzes the application of students' listening strategies. How to apply the teaching method based on listening skills training to the teaching of other skills and how to effectively cultivate students' sociolinguistic ability will be topics that teachers need to explore more deeply.

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