News Web Easy as Japanese Learning Media

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Abstract. This study aims to describe the function of News Web Easy as Japanese learning media and students' perceptions of this media. This research used a descriptive method with a sample of 20 persons of UNIKOM Japanese Department students in the 2020/2021 academic year. The research instrument is a questionnaire and literature studies. The results show that the perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of this media are high, so the intention to use this media becomes high following the Technology Acceptance Model. News Web Easy can be used as an alternative for Japanese language learning which can not only improve Japanese language skills but also can help to know about the latest news about Japan in simple Japanese.

Keywords : News Web Easy, Japanese Learning, Media

1. Introduction

Teaching and learning activities in principle are the process of communication between teachers and students, namely the delivery of messages (learning material) from teachers to students [1]. In the era of globalization, teaching and learning activities is also a demand to utilize technology. Information technology (IT) acceptance or adoption has received considerable attention in the last decade. The remarkable development of IT has completely changed the environment for learning. The application of technology in the field of education, especially in the learning process is expected to provide a significant change in the quality of education. One example is language learning using media.

Pribadi explained that learning media is something that can bring messages and information from the sender or source of information to the recipient or learner. Learning media is a tool that serves to convey learning messages. The more learning objectives that can be achieved with the help of learning media, the more the media rises [2]. Furthermore, the main function of learning media is as a means to achieve learning goals. The more effective learning media used, the more effective the learning process will be. Thus, choosing the right media will greatly affect the success of the learning process [1]. Sudjana & Rivai (in Anwariningsih & Ernawati) suggests there are some benefits of learning media in the learning process, namely: (1) learning will be more interesting so it will cause the learning motivation to the students, (2) material study will be easily to understood and allows students to control and achieve the learning goals, and (3) teaching methods will be more variative through verbal communication from the teacher explanation. Student is more doing activities in learning not only listening to the teacher description but also doing other activities such as observing, performing, demonstrating, acting, and others [3].

Learning using media also can increase student motivation. According to Sardiman (in Puspitarini and Hanif), motivation can be interpreted as the driving force that arises in the students that lead to learning activities, ensuring the continuity of the learning process, and provide guidance in the

learning process so that the learning objectives can be achieved. Motivation to learn is one of the decisive factors in the achievement of learning objectives [4].

Nowadays, the students are interested in finding information from the internet compared to other media. Likewise, information relating to learning material. Limited learning media in lectures make learners more interested in using the internet as a learning resource. One of them is in learning Japanese. In Japanese learning, learners themselves can use various resources, contents, or applications on the internet, and various learning materials have been incorporated into their daily lives [5]. Therefore, learning media is not only used in the classroom by interacting with the teacher, but also can be used outside the classroom. The use of media such as news can support teachers and students in Japanese learning process. News can be used by the students to develop their skills and also used as the learning resources [6]. Moreover, Oroujlou explained that the importance of media in foreign language learning is can give learners to access authentic language utilized in real life [7].

News Web Easy is one of the media that can be used as a support for learning Japanese. This website is the one part of NHK (Nippon Housou Kyoukai) or Japan Broadcasting Corporation which is Japan's national broadcasting organization. News Web Easy was started in April 2012 as a news service rewritten in basic Japanese. Immediately after the start, it was positioned as an experimental attempt and provided one or two articles a day on weekdays, but since June 2013, it has provided five articles [8]. News Web Easy is a news service for elementary and junior high school students in Japan or foreigners who want to know about the latest news about Japan. Users can read, listen to audio, and watch videos of the most recent news about Japan in simple Japanese. The features contained in the News Web Easy are using basic Japanese vocabulary, color display of named entities, reading synthesized speech, furigana for kanji which can make it easier for users [9]. News Web Easy involves three basic tasks: (1) figuring out the proper level of language difficulty, especially to the comprehension level of foreign residents who speak Japanese as a second language, (2) providing web functions that further aid understanding of easy Japanese, and (3) developing a support system that translates ordinary Japanese into easy Japanese [10].

Several studies were conducted about web-based news. In a research conducted by Bahrani and Sim that focuses on the role of audiovisual mass media news in language learning, provides empirical evidence of the role of exposure to news from mass media on speaking fluency. [11] Moreover, research conducted by Brinton and Gaskill, argue that using news as teaching material has proved effective in improving listening comprehension of learners having difficulty in dealing with comprehending news utterances [12]. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis is widely applied and empirically tested. The Technology Acceptance Model proposes that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness predict the acceptance of information technology. [13] The Technology Acceptance Model is shows in Figure 1 below [14].
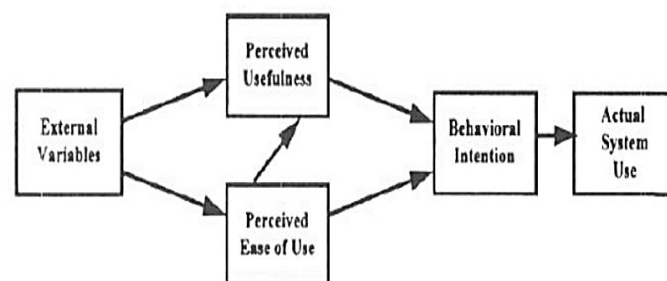

Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model uses three factors as variables in research to determine how the user receives the information system that will be implemented, there are:
a. Perceived Usefulness, which is a system-level where users believe that using it can improve personal or organizational performance.

b. Perceived Ease of Use, which is a level where users believe that using a system that has been built aims to facilitate work through the ease of use of the system.

c. Intention to Use, which is the tendency of user behavior to use the technology or system that has been built [14].

Furthermore, indicators perceived ease of use according to Jogiyanto which modify the instruments from Davis are: a) easy to learn; b) easy to understand; c) simple, and d) easy to operate. Meanwhile, indicators of perceived usefulness according to Chin and Todd are: a) makes the job easier; b) increase productivity; c) enhance effectiveness, d) improve job performance; and e) useful [15].

The purpose of this study is to describe features and function within News Web Easy as Japanese learning media and students' perceptions of this website using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

2. Method

This research used a descriptive method. The data collection used a survey method with the instrument of a questionnaire form to the students and literature studies. The respondents in this research are 20 persons of students of the Japanese Department of UNIKOM in the 2020/2021 academic year.

3. Results and Discussion

News Web Easy is a website to deliver the news in easily understandable language to elementary school students, middle school students, and foreigners. Users can read, listen to audio, and watch videos of the most recent news in simple Japanese. News Web Easy has several features and function, as follows [16].

3.1. Listen the audio with the simple Japanese and remove the kanji readings in the text

The button to listen the audio (1) and remove the kanji readings (2) is in Figure 2 as follows.

Figure 2. Listening the Audio and Remove the Kanji Readings Button

3.2. Watch the video

Beside listening the audio, we can also watch the video about the news article. The button to watch the video in Figure 3 as follows.

Figure 3. Video Watch Button

3.3. The news articles have color coding

People's names in green, place names in orange, and company or group names in blue (1). We can also remove color-coding (2). The color coding is in Figure 4 as follows.

Figure 4. Color Coding

3.4. Read the original news

News Web Easy is a news article with the simple Japanese. We can also read the original news by click the button. The button to read the original news is in Figure 5. as follows.

Figure 5. Read the original news button

3.5. Read the explanations of underlined words in simple Japanese

If there are words that are not understood, there is an explanation using simple Japanese. Examples contained in figure 6. as follows.
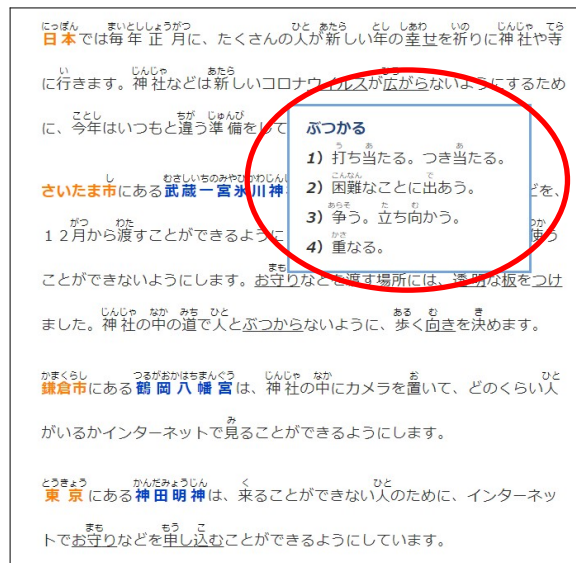
Figure 6. Explanations in Simple Japanese

3.6. Read the past article from up to a month ago

We also can read a month news article arranged by date as in Figure 7.

Figure 7. A Month News Article Arranged by Date

To know the students' perceptions of News Web Easy, the writer did a questionnaire with a *google form*. Thw results can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Ease of Use of Media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	12	60	60	60
	5	8	40	40	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 60% of the students agreed and 40% strongly agreed about the ease of use of News Web Easy (see Table 2).

Table 2. Usefulness of Media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	6	30	30	30
	5	14	70	70	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 30% of the students agreed and 70% strongly agreed about the usefulness of News Web Easy. Table 3 below is shows a percentage of students' interest in News Web Easy.

Table 3. Intention to Using Media

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	12	60	60	60
	5	8	40	40	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the Table 3 above, we can see that 60% of the students agreed and 40% strongly agreed about the intention to using News Web Easy.

Based on table 1 to table 3 above can be concluded that the ease of use and the usefulness of News Web Easy is very high, so the students' intention to using this media becomes high. The usefulness of the News Web Easy for students as can be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Improve Japanese Reading Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	8	40	40	40
	5	12	60	60	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 40% of the students agreed and 60% strongly agreed that News Web Easy helped them to improve their Japanese reading skills. See Table 5 below.

Table 5. Improve Japanese Listening Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1	5	5	5
	4	9	45	45	50
	5	10	50	50	100
	Total		100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 5% of the students disagreed, 45% agreed, and 50% strongly agreed that News Web Easy helped them to improve their Japanese listening skills. See Table 6 below.

Table 6. Improve Japanese Speaking Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	3	15	15	15
	4	9	45	45	60
	5	8	40	40	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 15% of the students disagreed, 45% agreed, and 40% strongly agreed that News Web Easy helped them to improve their Japanese speaking skills. See Table 7 below.

Table 7. Improve Japanese Grammar Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	2	10	10	10
	4	10	50	50	60
	5	8	40	40	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 10% of the students disagreed, 50% agreed, and 40% strongly agreed that News Web Easy helped them to improve their Japanese grammar skills. See Table 8 below.

Table 8. Improve Kanji Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	1	5	5	5
	4	9	45	45	50
	5	10	50	50	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 5% of the students disagreed, 45% agreed, and 50% strongly agreed that News Web Easy helped them to improve their kanji skills. See Table 9 below.

Table 9. Improve Vocabulary Skills

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	9	45	45	45
	5	11	55	55	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 45% of the students agreed, and 55% strongly agreed that News Web Easy helped them to improve their vocabulary skills. See Table 10 below.

Table 10. Improve Knowledge About Japan

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	6	30	30	30
	5	14	70	70	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the table above, we can see that 30% of the students agreed, and 70% strongly agreed that News Web Easy helped them to improve their knowledge about Japan. See Table 11 below.

Table 11. News Web Easy as Alternative Media for Japanese Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4	11	55	55	55
	5	9	45	45	100
	Total	20	100	100	

Based on the Table 11 above, we can see that 55% of the students agreed and 50% strongly agreed that News Web Easy can be altenatif media for Japanese learning. Based on the Tables 4 to 11, it can be concluded that there are various benefits of News Web Easy, such as improve various Japanese language skills and improve knowledge about Japan.

Student's perceptions of News Web Easy media are very good. Perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of this media are high, so the intention to use this media becomes high. This result is following the Technology Acceptance Model theory. [14] Also, there are various features in News Web Easy that can help students improve their Japanese language skills. Therefore, News Web Easy can be used as an alternative media for Japanese learning.

4. Conclusion

News Web Easy can be one of the media for learning Japanese. This media is easy to use and useful because can improve Japanese skills, such as reading skills, listening skills, speaking skills, vocabulary and kanji skills, and grammar skills. Also, can improve knowledge about the latest Japan. The effectiveness of this media needs to be investigated.

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