

Title:

Enhancing Learner Engagement and Implicit Acquisition through Voice Mirroring: A New Audio-Based Approach for Japanese Language Education

Abstract:**Objectives:**

This study introduces *Voice Mirroring*, a newly developed audio-based teaching material designed to support Japanese language learners in academic speaking contexts. The primary objective is to foster learner autonomy, increase engagement, and promote implicit acquisition of vocabulary and grammar through repeated listening and self-recording. The material aims to reduce the psychological burden often associated with output-focused practice by integrating enjoyment and well-being into the learning process.

Methodology:

Voice Mirroring consists of professionally narrated recordings accompanied by background music, presenting model presentations on academic topics. Learners are encouraged to listen repeatedly, internalize the content, and then record their own versions. Unlike traditional shadowing or extensive input methods, this approach emphasizes a transition from rich input to personalized output. The design incorporates elements of implicit learning theory (Ellis, 2005), allowing learners to encounter unfamiliar linguistic forms in context without explicit instruction. The material has been implemented in teacher training workshops in Hong Kong, Vancouver, and Sydney, and is currently used at the University of Calgary.

Results:

Preliminary feedback from instructors and learners indicates increased motivation, higher participation rates, and a sense of accomplishment among learners. Learners reported that the combination of music, professional narration, and the opportunity to record their own voices made the practice enjoyable and less intimidating. Instructors observed improvements in learners' fluency, confidence, and ability to express opinions in academic settings. The format also encouraged self-reflection and goal-setting, contributing to a more autonomous learning environment.

Discussion:

Voice Mirroring offers a promising alternative to conventional output training methods by integrating affective factors such as enjoyment and well-being. Its emphasis on repeated listening and self-recording aligns with principles of implicit learning, potentially leading to deeper retention of linguistic forms. The findings suggest that learners benefit not only linguistically but also emotionally, experiencing a sense of achievement and positive engagement. This approach may be particularly effective in contexts where learners face anxiety or lack confidence in speaking. Future research will explore its long-term impact on language development and its applicability to other languages and learning environments.