Learner-learner Interactive Distance Education through a TV Conference System: Attempt to Connect Two Classrooms of Different Universities

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Abstract

Universities with smaller numbers of international students have difficulty creating a learning environment where these students can deepen their learning through interactive activities in the classroom. In order to overcome this hurdle, the Center for Japanese Language and Culture (CJLC), Osaka University, is developing a distance teaching system for Japanese language learners at different universities. Our goal is to connect two classrooms so that students at different universities can experience class activities as if they were in the classroom at CJLC, Osaka University. So far, we have streamed seventeen lectures on Japanese culture and language to other universities through Skype, Zoom, or a TV conference system. However, until now, none of these lectures included learner-learner interaction, which is one of the three types of interaction Moore and Kearsley (1996) state distance educators should provide: learner-content, learner-instructor, and learner-learner interaction.

This paper discusses our latest attempt to connect with Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), where we focused on learner-learner interaction and on making the class learner-centered. Twenty students at TUFS and eight at CJLC, Osaka University participated in this class. Based on the results of questionnaires and follow-up interviews, this paper will shed light on the benefits and difficulties of distance education aimed at learner-learner interaction.

Keywords: *Distance education, TV conference system, learner-learner interaction, learner-centered education*
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