

Impact of Japanese Popular Culture as Learning Resources on Students' Japanese Learning Achievement

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Japanese;
Learning Achievement
Popular Culture
Speaking;
Writing

Article history:

Received 2023-11-16

Revised 2023-12-03

Accepted 2023-12-23

ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the influence of Japanese popular culture as a learning resource on students' Japanese language learning achievement. A quasi-experiment with a pretest and posttest one-group experimental design was used as the research method. Two classes were used to conduct this research, namely the Japanese writing and speaking classes at Japanese Education, Darma Persada University, Jakarta. Each class consists of 30 students. Data is taken from test results, observations and documents. The data analysis technique uses a two-sample paired t-test for the mean. The results of the t-test data analysis show that Japanese popular culture can be used as an authentic learning source in the classroom, and student learning outcomes in Japanese writing and speaking classes have increased from the previous semester. The result of data analysis using a t-test can be seen from the Japanese writing class showing that $t_{Stat} < t_{table}$ ($-30.0667 < 2.0452$) and the Japanese speaking class showing that $t_{Stat} < t_{table}$ ($-20.5542 < 2.0452$). So, the results of this research have implications for understanding the use of learning resources that are familiar to students and appropriate to the context of students' lives.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language, such as Japanese, is inextricably linked to people's interest in Japanese language culture. In fact, from the results of observations in the Japanese language study program at a private university in Jakarta, it was found that one of the factors in students' interest in majoring in Japanese was because of cultural factors that are popular in Japan, and from the results of analysis of interview data conducted on 70 students, it showed that there were more than 70% of students majoring in Japanese who are interested in Japanese language culture aside from. However, from the results of discussions with colleagues for the 2022-2023 even semester learning, it was concluded that it was necessary to test the effectiveness of Japanese popular culture as a learning resource as an interesting aspect to improve students' Japanese language learning outcomes. The reason for the urgency of this research is that popular Japanese culture is an interesting topic for students, and they like various Japanese cultures. Furthermore, when learning a foreign language, introducing the language's culture can help students become aware of the differences between the languages they are

studying. Through the introduction of cultural information, second-language learners will focus on and practice the contrast between their mother tongue and second language, so that second-language cultural knowledge will become recessive knowledge for second-language learners, such as Japanese. (Adelante-Ahead & Barrios, 2018; Sèna et al., 2020; Sun, 2013; Zhan, 2016).

Previous research shows that their culture is the biggest challenge for students in communicating successfully in Japanese (Kumayama, 2010). From this research, it can be understood that the introduction of culture in Japanese should be able to support students' mastery of Japanese. Moreover, language and culture cannot be separated and are a unity. Researchers often point out that foreign language teaching should be linked to the social and cultural context in which the foreign language is used (Li & Umemoto, 2010). Anime is one of the factors that spread the influence of Japanese popular culture among students (Yusof et al., 2023). Even the culture displayed in anime influences Indonesian society, as evidenced by community participation in celebrating traditional Japanese festivals (Yuliani et al., 2021). In Indonesia, anime culture is quite popular among teenagers, and they learn it to know the Japanese language (Venus, 2017).

Other research has found that the majority of Indonesian students studying Japanese first learned about the language through anime/manga. For them, anime can help students learn Japanese by enriching their vocabulary, practicing listening skills, and understanding the context of using Japanese words or expressions. Most students' perceptions of Japanese language and culture change after studying Japanese at university (Wahidati & Kharismawati, 2018). Indonesia, with 1,400 ethnic groups, has a diverse cultural landscape, but the younger generation prefers foreign culture, specifically Japanese popular culture. The famous Japanese culture club, President of the University Nippon Community (PUNICO) in Cikarang, has been in respondents' lives for long enough to change their habits and lifestyles (Putra Bangsa et al., 2022). Fans of Japanese popular culture who take Japanese language courses at university are much more likely to be exposed to Japanese outside of the classroom. Fans' most popular activities include watching anime, listening to J-pop music, and playing video games (Imura, 2018). Furthermore, street dance culture has evolved within the context of popular Japanese culture (Huang, 2021).

These previous studies provide an apparent understanding that Japanese popular culture is one of the methods used by students or Japanese speakers to learn Japanese. This context shows that Japanese popular culture is quite an exciting language-learning source. Anyone who discovers a new language without knowing its culture becomes deficient or weak in mastering the new language. In learning a language, culture plays an important role. Understanding the relationship that exists between language and culture is fundamental in the process of learning a foreign language (Gaeini & Basirizadeh, 2013; Halbach, 2022; Hinkel, 2012; Hossain, 2024).

In reality, language alone does not convey complete meaning. Language spoken in its cultural context has more meaning. Thus, culture should be a simple learning resource that students understand in order to improve their learning outcomes in class. Furthermore, there has been little research into the use of Japanese popular culture as a learning resource. This urgency is considered a gap in this research, and it differs from previous research. So, the novelty that this research wants to present is the effectiveness of the existence of Japanese popular culture on learning outcomes in Japanese language classes. This is also related to testing the researchers' conclusions from analyzing problem phenomena faced in class and previous research on popular Japanese culture, which can be used as a learning resource.

This research aims to determine the impact of Japanese popular culture as a learning resource on students' Japanese language learning achievement. It is hoped that this research can contribute to the development of Japanese language learning resources based on student aspects or students' experiences of knowing Japanese. Thus, the learning and teaching materials provided to Japanese language students are authentic and come from contexts that the students are familiar with.

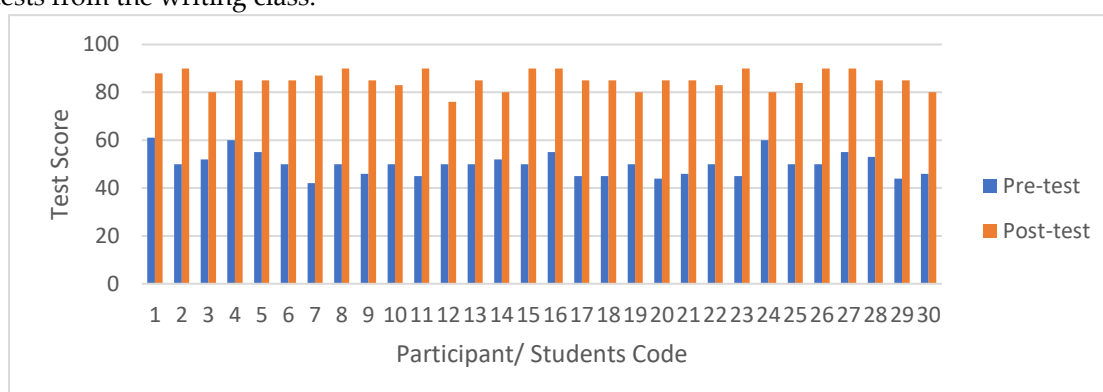
2. METHODS

The research method involved a quasi-experiment with a one-group pretest and posttest experimental design. The consideration for using this type of research is to determine the impact of learning sources, namely Japanese popular culture, on Japanese language learning outcomes in speaking and writing skills classes. So, researchers want to provide treatment by using Japanese popular culture learning resources in Japanese writing and speaking classes. Quasi-experimental research focuses on one group, the experimental group, without a comparison or control group (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Based on the method used, the research was carried out as normal lecture activities in accordance with the university's schedule, which included 12 meetings and two meetings for a pretest and posttest. In this study, students were given a pretest before being treated with Japanese popular culture learning resources in Japanese writing and speaking classes, as well as a posttest after the treatment.

Two classes were used to conduct this research, namely the Japanese writing and speaking courses at Japanese Education, Darma Persada University, Jakarta. Each class consists of 30 students. The research was carried out from August - November 2023. Data was taken from test results, observations and documents. Observations were used at the beginning of the study to analyze learning resource problems in Japanese writing and speaking classes. The documents used are learning resources and student learning outcomes in the previous semester. The test was designed to assess the effectiveness of Japanese popular culture learning resources in Japanese writing and speaking classes. As a result, each class receives two distinct test designs. In Japanese writing class, an essay test is given. The test assessed five aspects: (1) organization (introduction, content, and conclusion), (2) logical development of ideas, (3) grammar, (4) punctuation, spelling, and mechanics, and (5) style and quality of expression (Brown, 2004; Weigle, 2016). Meanwhile, the tests given in speaking classes use oral tests, and the assessment tests have five aspects, which are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and task (Brown, 2004; Tsankare et al., 2016). The mean is determined using a two-sample paired t-test.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The test results are presented in graphs and tables related to the pretest and posttest results from the two classes where the research was conducted. The following compares students' pretests and posttests from the writing class.



Graph 1. Score for Pretest and Posttest That Shows Students' Learning Achievement in Writing Japanese Class

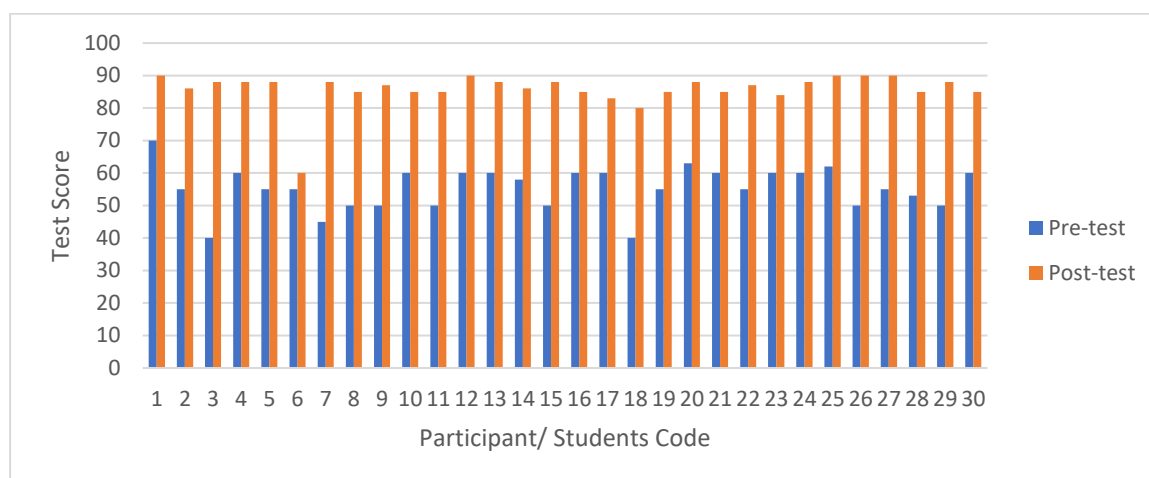
Graph 1 shows the pretest and posttest scores taken from a Japanese writing class that was given training using learning resources about Japanese popular culture. From the overall data displayed in the graph, each student experienced quite good improvement before and after being given

treatment. When compared with the study results documents in the previous semester, it also shows that there has been a change in student grades. Of the 30 students, it showed that six students or 20%, had a score between 71-80, and 24 students or 80%, got a score in the 81-90 range.

Table 1. The Descriptive Statistics of Test Results in Japanese Writing Test Using Japanese Popular Culture

Component of Statistic Descriptive	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	50.0333	85.2
Standard Error	0.895	0.7004
Median	50	85
Mode	50	85
Standard Deviation	4.9023	3.8363
Sample Variance	24.033	14.717
Range	19	14
Minimum	42	76
Maximum	61	90

The results of descriptive statistical data analysis show that the increase in student learning outcomes after being given treatment using learning resources about Japanese popular culture in Japanese writing classes has increased significantly. The highest score achieved after being given excellent treatment was 90, and the class average score also reached 85. The same results were also shown in the Japanese-speaking class experiment, which is shown in Graph 2 and Table 2.



Graph 2. The score for the Pretest and posttest That Shows Students' Learning Achievement in Speaking Japanese Class

The Japanese-speaking class also showed that student learning outcomes experienced significant changes, as in the Japanese writing class. Of the 30 students, it showed that there was still one student who had a score of 60 or grade C, and only one student got a score of 80, while 28 students had scores between the 81-90 range. So, 93% of student learning outcomes have shown significant development after being given treatment using learning resources about Japanese popular culture in speaking classes.

Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of Test Results in Japanese Speaking Test Using Japanese Popular Culture

Component of Statistic Descriptive	Pretest	Posttest
Mean	55.366	85.8333
Standard Error	1.2209	0.9885
Median	55	87
Mode	60	88
Standard Deviation	6.6875	5.4144
Sample Variance	44.7229	29.31609
Kurtosis	0.5632	18.7904
Skewness	-0.5471	-3.9605
Range	30	30
Minimum	40	60
Maximum	70	90

The results of descriptive statistical tests in the Japanese-speaking class after being treated using learning resources about Japanese popular culture also showed the same changes as in the Japanese writing class. The class average score after treatment showed a quite significant increase from before treatment, which was 30.5. The results of descriptive statistical tests in the Japanese-speaking class after being treated using learning resources about Japanese popular culture also showed the same changes as in the Japanese writing class. The class average score after treatment showed a quite significant increase from before treatment, and the increase was 30.5. The t-test produces the conclusion that $t_{Stat} < t_{table}$ ($-30.0667 < 2.0452$) and the Japanese speaking class shows that $t_{Stat} < t_{table}$ ($-20.5542 < 2.0452$), it means that the use of Japanese popular culture as a learning resource has a significant impact on student learning outcomes in writing and speaking classes. The t-test results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The result of the t-test for Japanese Speaking and Writing Test Using Japanese Popular Culture

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means	Writing Class	Speaking Class
Mean	50.0333	55.36667
Variance	24.0333	44.7229
Observations	30	30
Pearson Correlation	-0.0608	0.112215
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	0
df	29	29
t Stat	-30.0667	-20.5542
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.0323	3.9083
t Critical one-tail	1.699	1.6991
P(T<=t) two-tail	2.0645	7.8166
t Critical two-tail	2.0452	2.0452

From the overall data processing results, this research contributes quite positively to developing authentic learning resources that can be taken from the student context. This means that using learning resources that are well-known to students can provide a reasonably high level of interest for them. This is supported by observations made during the experimental process, which show that there is a high level of interest in learning to write and speak Japanese. Students excel at developing writing ideas based on cultural themes. Even the process of reading activities demonstrates the involvement of all students who actively express opinions about a topic given in class. According to research, the introduction of Japanese popular culture into Japanese language education was prompted by the

instructor's struggle to find teaching resources. Recent research also shows that Japanese popular culture in Japanese language education aligns with students' demands and motivation in classroom teaching practices (Iida & Takeyama, 2018).

Thus, the findings in this research are also new ideas about developing Japanese language teaching materials or resources using Japanese popular culture for teachers at universities in Indonesia in general. According to previous studies, two popular Japanese cultural resources that can be used in Japanese language classes are anime and manga, both of which are extremely popular. The pedagogical points of these resources will determine their usefulness in motivating students to improve their Japanese language proficiency and for teachers to explore these resources in general Japanese courses. (Armour & Iida, 2018).

So, it can be said that many students study Japanese because they enjoy Japanese popular culture, and this can inspire them to continue their education. This position is supported by the findings of a research project conducted in Sydney, Australia. Student motivation trajectories reveal that a strong interest in JPC is associated with motivation to learn Japanese, which sometimes becomes a passion (Northwood, 2018). Popular culture with a global supranational character, which prioritizes fashionable words and emotionalism, can be a stronger incentive for language acquisition. A study demonstrates that Japanese popular culture has the potential to motivate students further to learn English while also increasing their communicative and sociocultural competence (Rets, 2016). This means that the existence of popular culture has provided confidence for improving language skills (Koh, 2015; Liu & Lin, 2017; Peacock et al., 2018).

The findings in this study have illustrated that the culture of a language can be one of the authentic teaching and learning materials in language classes such as Japanese. This means that teaching and learning other foreign languages can also use the popular culture of the foreign language itself as a resource for learning language skills. Thus, universities or educational institutions for secondary schools can use the results of this study as input to increase the potential of teachers in innovatively developing authentic teaching materials from popular language culture. Moreover, global developments have demanded the implementation of education that is oriented towards the international context and students. So, Japanese popular culture can be a teacher's consideration as a learning resource in Japanese language classes.

4. CONCLUSION

The data processing results concluded that learning resources using Japanese popular culture positively influenced student learning outcomes in Japanese writing and speaking classes. This positive impact can be seen in the t-test results for the two experimental classes, namely from the Japanese writing class showing that $t_{Stat} < t_{table}$ ($-30.0667 < 2.0452$) and the Japanese speaking class showing that $t_{Stat} < t_{table}$ ($-20.5542 < 2.0452$). The results of descriptive statistical tests reveal significant changes in each student's average class scores and grades. The findings of this study have implications for understanding how students use familiar and relevant learning resources in their daily lives. However, this research remains limited to two classes for learning to speak and write Japanese. In this way, researchers can develop Japanese popular culture as one of the teaching materials for the four Japanese language skills. Higher education institutions can also provide various training for teachers related to Japanese language culture to be used as innovative teaching materials that are authentic and appropriate to the context of students' needs.

Acknowledgements: Thank you to the Japanese writing and speaking students who helped carry out the research, as well as colleagues who helped with the research process through data analysis.

Conflicts of Interest: no conflict of interest

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