



The Consumption of Popular Pop Culture in Japanese Language Culture Learning at the University

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ABSTRACT

Popular Japanese pop culture is widely loved by students in Indonesia. This study aims to examine the use of popular pop culture by students while studying the Japanese language and culture. This study uses a qualitative research design with a qualitative descriptive method. The study was conducted at the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program at Darma Persada University, Jakarta, in the odd academic year 2024/2025 from September to December 2024. The subjects of the study were 100 people, consisting of 50 men and 50 women. The data collection techniques used were interviews, observations and forum group discussions. Data analysis techniques have three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and inference drawing and verification. The study's findings revealed that popular pop culture that is widely loved by students to learn Japanese culture and language is anime/cartoons and manga/comics. The background knowledge of students about Japanese popular culture has a significant influence on the choice of types of Japanese pop culture and can be used as authentic material in class. Popular language pop culture has an important role in the concept of building a learning environment that is under the character of the language culture. The results of the study can recommend to lecturers to research the development of authentic teaching materials from various types of popular Japanese pop culture.

Keywords: consumption, popular pop culture, Japanese language, culture learning, university

Konsumsi Budaya Pop Populer dalam Pembelajaran Budaya Bahasa Jepang di Universitas

ABSTRAK

Budaya pop populer Jepang banyak digemari oleh para mahasiswa di Indonesia. Tujuan pembelajaran ini adalah untuk mendapatkan penggunaan budaya pop populer oleh mahasiswa selama belajar bahasa dan budaya Jepang. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian dilakukan di Program Studi Bahasa dan Kebudayaan Jepang di Universitas Darma Persada Jakarta tahun akademik ganjil 2024/2025 dari bulan September sampai Desember 2024. Subjek penelitian sebanyak 100 orang yang terdiri dari 50 laki-laki dan 50 perempuan. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah interview, observasi dan forum group discussion. Ada tiga langkah teknik analisis data yaitu reduksi data, data presentation, dan inference drawing and verification. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa budaya pop populer yang banyak digemari mahasiswa untuk belajar budaya dan bahasa Jepang adalah anime/kartun dan manga/komik. Latar belakang pengetahuan mahasiswa terhadap budaya populer Jepang memberikan pengaruh yang cukup besar terhadap pilihan jenis budaya pop Jepang dan bisa digunakan sebagai materi otentik di kelas. Budaya pop populer bahasa memiliki peran penting pada konsep membangun lingkungan belajar yang sesuai dengan karakter budaya bahasa itu. Hasil penelitian dapat merekomendasikan kepada para dosen untuk melakukan penelitian pengembangan bahan ajar otentik dari berbagai jenis budaya pop populer Jepang.

Keywords: konsumsi, budaya pop populer, pembelajaran budaya, bahasa Jepang, university

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learning usually involves knowledge of the popular culture associated with the language. This means that language, culture and learning strategies cannot be separated and have a relationship that influences each other (Oxford & Gkonou, 2018). Thus, every teacher must understand the cultural and linguistic background of students so that foreign language learning activities can be effective (Habók et al., 2021). In addition, the popular culture of a language can be a fairly effective resource (Liu & Lin, 2017), and teachers can create a classroom environment for learning foreign languages that is inclusive of the culture of the language itself (Hossain, 2024a). This aims to ensure that foreign language learning activities for students can create an atmosphere that is influenced by the culture of the language.

Like Japanese pop culture, which is always popular with the current young generation in Indonesia, it has become quite an interesting phenomenon. They prefer this foreign culture rather than the cultural diversity that Indonesia has, which causes an invasion of local culture. This is happening more widely with the existence of the internet network which makes it easy for the young generation of Indonesia to access anime (Sihombing, 2022). Moreover, today's young generation has critical thinking and the ability to sort out popular cultural information on social media. As previously studied, the digital fandom of global popular culture has a critical attitude towards the context of cultural texts that the cultural industry has produced on social media (Sugihartati, 2020).

The results of the researcher's observations on social media concluded that students in Indonesia like a lot of Japanese popular culture such as manga, anime, video games, and so on. The researcher also discussed with colleagues who teach Japanese culture and language about the use of Japanese popular pop culture as a learning resource in the classroom because it can provide authentic material. Moreover, various types of Japanese popular culture such as manga, and anime films often

release new editions. In addition, researchers and colleagues have the same understanding that the teaching materials provided should be by learning experiences, previous knowledge or things related to students' preferences. This is assumed to be able to provide motivation and interest in students to learn.

Thus, the focus of this study is the continuation of previous research from the shortcomings that have been found and the novelty that we want to present as a gap with previous research is an in-depth study of the types of Japanese popular pop culture that by the needs and background characteristics of students in studying Japanese culture and language. Types of popular pop culture that are by students' perceptions. Thus, this study can find various types of Japanese popular pop culture that are by the learning environment at the University in the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program at Darma Persada University, Jakarta and the goals that each student wants to achieve when taking this study program. This is important for teachers because the provision of learning resources that are by the language culture itself can create a more authentic learning environment in the classroom. Moreover, the Study Program also requires innovation in learning resource maps that can be by students' perceptions. Thus, teachers can combine the concepts desired by students regarding learning resources with the understanding of lecturers and make them relevant to the learning outcomes to be achieved both in courses and graduates to be produced.

From the explanation of the problems that have been found, what are the types of popular pop culture that are widely consumed by students for learning the Japanese language and culture at the University?

So, the purpose of this learning is to obtain the use of popular pop culture by students while studying Japanese language and culture in the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program at Darma Persada University, Jakarta.



The results of this study are expected to be a map for teachers to use Japanese popular pop culture in the classroom, both by the learning objectives of each course or by increasing the wealth of learning resources in the study program.

Other studies have found that popular culture, with its wealth of authentic materials, can serve as a valuable tool for effective teaching and learning (Wijirahayu et al., 2024). American colleges use manga, video games, Japanese anime, and Japanese film or anime adaptations of classic literature for the process of teaching Japanese popular culture (Shamoon, 2010). One of the state universities in Malaysia uses anime to study language features for Japanese language learners (Chan & Wong, 2017). In addition to anime and manga, students also use computer games, Seiyu and VTuber as Japanese language learning tools (Mamat, 2021). Meanwhile, other studies also found the same thing comics help students develop ideas, determine the right vocabulary and sentence structure, formulate sentences in the correct order, and describe non-text images for Japanese writing activities (Kusrini et al., 2020). Even cosplay subculture activities have had a certain influence on the community and have proven to be useful activities that can help and motivate students to understand the Japanese language and culture (Wishnoebroto et al., 2017). The results of these studies are used as considerations for researchers regarding the provision of Japanese language and culture learning using Japanese pop culture, which is by student needs and learning objectives.

This is also a concept for the continuation of research that has been carried out by previous researchers. The results of previous studies that have been carried out related to Japanese popular culture used as a learning resource have had a significant impact on improving Japanese language learning for students of the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program at Dharma Persada University, Jakarta (Thamrin & Robihim, 2023). However, this study has not been studied in more depth regarding the types of Japanese pop

culture that are often used by students. This condition is an interesting gap to study because Japanese popular pop culture can function as an appropriate learning resource and can be more effective in improving student learning activities and achievements (Aina & Abdulwasiiu, 2023; Amos et al., 2022; Dietrich et al., 2021; Ogbaji, 2017). Thus, teachers must be able to provide learning resources through various sources, both those that can be accessed using technological networks or facilitated by Educational Institutions (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2017; David Somba & Omondi Otieno St Augustine, 2022; Dudar et al., 2021; Haleem et al., 2022; Kuzminskyi et al., 2019).

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research design. A qualitative research approach is an approach that explores, examines and understands the meaning of individuals, groups or events that occur in social or community life. This study collects and analyses data from texts, interviews, observations, and documentation in depth to reveal relevant meanings and findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Creswell, J.W., Clark, 2017). So, this study examines data related to students' perceptions of the consumption of popular Japanese pop culture for learning the Japanese language and culture. The research method uses a qualitative descriptive method that describes the results of observations with the help of data searches from existing sources (Ary, 2010). This research method describes completely, in detail and related to phenomena, experiences or events using non-numerical data. So this method describes who, what and where events occur without researcher interpretation or theory development (Flick, 2022). his study examines phenomena related to popular pop culture trends that are often consumed by students for learning the Japanese language and culture.

The research was conducted at the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program at Dharma Persada University, Jakarta, on students in the

third, fifth and seventh semesters of the odd academic year 2024-2025. The research was conducted from September to December 2024. The location selection was carried out using purposive sampling, which was based on the consideration that the researcher had conducted research related to Japanese popular culture and the need for the development of learning resources from the study program. The subjects of the study were 100 students at the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program, consisting of 50 men and 50 women. The technique for selecting research subjects also used purposive sampling with the consideration that students in the third, fifth and seventh semesters had received courses on Japanese culture and language. So, participants were considered relevant to the research data needs.

The data collection techniques used were:

- 1) Open-ended in-depth interviews. The researcher interviewed 100 students during the one-semester learning process. Interview activities were carried out for four months at the end of each semester with essay-style questions so that students could provide diverse and in-depth answers according to their perceptions.
- 2) Observations during Japanese culture learning activities in class through observing students in completing assignments about Japanese culture carried out through their technological devices. Observations were also conducted in peer classes to determine the use of Japanese popular culture.
- 3) Forum Group Discussion conducted with colleagues at the beginning of exploring the problem of developing this research.

The data collection technique uses data triangulation techniques to obtain data results that have validity and credibility. There are three steps in data analysis techniques, as explained by the explanation of Miles and Huberman (Flick, 2022; Miles et al., 2014) namely;

- 1) Data reduction is carried out for the data collection process, data simplification and focus on data that is relevant to the research problem.
- 2) Data presentation, namely the process of analysing data and presenting data either in the form of descriptions, tables or graphs that are by the needs of the research problem.
- 3) Inference drawing and verification are carried out through the activity of summarising data patterns, relationships and main findings.

The three processes can be described below.

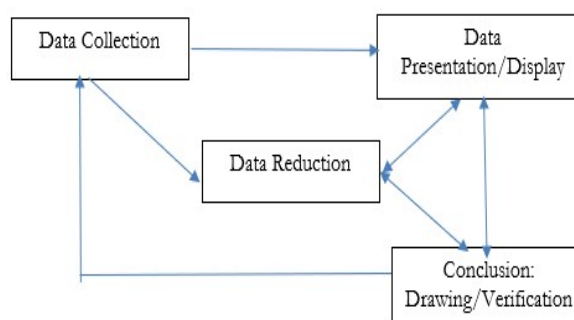


Figure 1
Data Analysis Process from Miles and Huberman

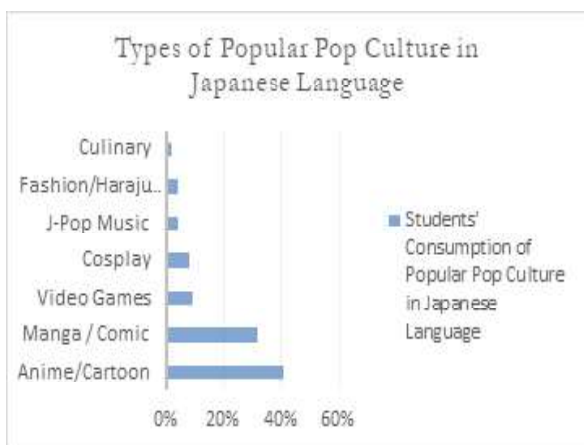
From Figure 1, it is known that data collection for activities at the data reduction stage is directly related to the data presentation process. At this stage, data obtained from interviews, observations, and FGDs are reduced and continued with the analysis process so that they can be presented and conclusions can be found. If the required conclusion has not been found, the data analysis activity will return from the data collection process to re-analysis.

RESULT

The results of the interview data analysis concluded that overall, Japanese language and culture learning requires learning resource media related to the concept of popular culture owned by

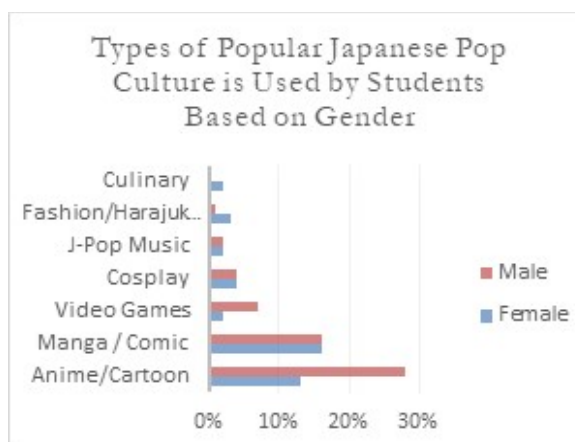


the language itself. From 100 interview answers given by students related to the existence of Japanese popular pop culture for Japanese language and culture learning, it was found that seven types of Japanese popular pop culture were often used by students in learning in the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program, namely anime/cartoons, manga/comics, video games, cosplay, J-pop music, fashion / Harajuku style, and culinary. These findings are depicted in graph 1.



Graph 1
Consumption of Popular Japanese Pop Culture for Japanese Language and Culture Learning

Overall, the data in Graph 1 found that the type of Japanese popular pop culture that is often used as a medium for learning Japanese culture and is most popular is anime or cartoons at 42% and manga or cartoons at 32%. While the least popular pop culture is culinary at 2%. Meanwhile, the data on the type of Japanese popular pop culture that is described according to gender is described in Graph 2 below;



Graph 2
Consumption of Popular Japanese Pop Culture for Japanese Language and Culture Learning Based on Gender

Graph 2 illustrates the findings of the types of Japanese popular pop culture that are preferred by students based on gender. From the gender category, it can be seen that each male or female student has a different percentage level. The description of the findings from the gender category is:

- 1) Anime or cartoons are preferred more by male students as much as 28%.
- 2) Manga has a balanced percentage between male and female genders, namely 16% each.
- 3) Video games are preferred more by male students as much as 7% and by female students 2%.
- 4) Cosplay has a balanced percentage between male and female students, namely 4%.
- 5) J-Pop Music has the same percentage between males and females as much as 2%.
- 6) Fashion or Harajuku style is preferred more by female students as much as 3% compared to male students as much as 1%.
- 7) Culinary is preferred more by female students as much as 2% and none of the male students like activities.

DISCUSSION

The results of observations of learning activities in the classroom of researchers and colleagues found that students often read manga through website access, such as Webtoon, to find information about Japanese language culture. There are even students who search for manga through electronic mass media websites. Meanwhile, students watch anime using paid Netflix channels and access free sites. One of the famous manga, the Doraemon manga, has shown its effectiveness in learning to understand hiragana letters (Dipa et al., 2023). Not only that, but anime can also increase students' motivation levels, and the desire to learn Japanese becomes interesting for students (Wisniawati et al., 2022). Moreover, anime has interesting and colourful values, characters, visuals and storylines, so it is attractive to the young generation of Indonesia (Hatami, 2018).

This finding is in line with previous research which found that more than 80% of students watch anime and listen to Japanese music to get to know Japanese and Japanese culture. In addition, as many as 63% of students were motivated to become Japanese language study program students because they previously liked Japanese pop culture (Dewanty et al., 2025). Even in Indonesia, the younger generation of Indonesia through anime prefers foreign culture over the cultural diversity that Indonesia has causing an invasion of local culture. This is happening more widely with the existence of an internet network that makes it easy for the younger generation of Indonesia to access anime (Sihombing, 2022). In addition, the Japanese government also uses a cultural diplomacy strategy to spread entertainment throughout the country using the Cool Japan strategy (Putri & Indrawati, 2020). The Cool Japan strategy is a very effective concept in building a positive image for people in various countries and can also have an impact on the development of the country's economy. Moreover, Japan has many popular cultures that

are unique and interesting for the younger generation (Alfarisy et al., 2021).

The Indonesian findings also have similarities with research conducted in Australia regarding Japanese pop culture. Even the results of a study on students studying Japanese as a foreign language at a multi-campus university in Australia showed that almost three-quarters of students declared themselves to be fans of Japanese Popular Culture. Reading manga, watching anime, listening to J-pop music, and playing video games are activities that are often done by students who are fans of Japanese popular culture and they have a higher level of motivation to learn Japanese through various types of Japanese popular culture (Armour & Iida, 2016; Imura, 2018).

In Indonesia, there are also quite a lot of Japanese language learners who like Japanese popular culture products, such as anime or manga. Moreover, the Japanese government's policy regarding learning opportunities in Japan is very large, thus increasing the motivation of future learners to master the Japanese language and culture (Djafri & Wahidati, 2020). Another study also found that anime can be used as a teaching tool for educators in teaching Japanese language and culture because this situation is connected to students' learning experiences (Chan et al., 2017). Moreover, Indonesia also has a good cooperative relationship with the Japanese government, so access to education in Japan attracts a lot of interest, and so far, many young Indonesians have worked in Japan.

Indonesia is also building a collaborative cooperation with Japan through the Cool Japan program (Khanz, 2018). Cool Japan is essentially a manifestation of the common Japanese identity construction in the 21st century. The elite narrative around Cool Japan easily imitates language reminiscent of pre-war identity construction. Although manga and anime are popular today, the claimed 'coolness' of these products is framed within an old construction of the Japanese Self that can trace its lineage back to the nineteenth century



(Tamaki, 2019). In addition, other Japanese popular cultures such as anime are also introduced in Indonesia to spread their culture (Patioran et al., 2023). This has a lot of influence on the social conditions of society (Ono et al., 2020). So, it can be said that anime and manga become soft diplomacy in introducing culture in Japanese (Garmabar et al., 2024; Iwabuchi, 2015).

From the findings in the previous study, it became a major consideration for the data findings in this study that Japanese popular pop culture has a significant influence on students' learning interests. The results of discussions with colleagues regarding the data findings for this research problem provide an understanding that the provision of authentic teaching materials should be associated with the unique cultural character of the Japanese language, student background, student needs and the achievement of learning objectives to be achieved.

The novelty found in this study shows that the background of students' knowledge of Japanese popular culture has a significant influence on the choice of types of Japanese pop culture in this study. In other words, new findings imply in-depth information about the importance of identifying the knowledge possessed by students before designing a learning model in the classroom. In other words, Japanese popular pop culture is one of the media that is quite effective as authentic material for learning Japanese culture and language. This finding provides a map of Japanese language culture learning that popular pop culture has an important role in the concept of building a learning environment that is under the character of the language culture itself, because culture depicts the reality of social life in society. So, from this finding, it can be understood that culture in language learning has an important role and can build an effective learning environment (Hossain, 2024b).

These findings provide positive implications for mapping the needs of learning resources for teachers, especially regarding the involvement of

the concept of Japanese popular pop culture as authentic teaching materials for learning the Japanese language and cultural content that is by students' learning experiences. In addition, the findings also provide a deep understanding for study programs to continue to provide support to lecturers so that they have a high spirit in conducting ongoing research, so that they can contribute to the development of learning resources in study programs. A different contribution from this study is that the map of Japanese popular pop culture, which is better used for learning Japanese culture and language, is anime/cartoons and manga/comics. Both types of popular pop culture can be developed into authentic materials that are more specific to learning Japanese or cross-cultural understanding. The results of this study also have implications for the development of teaching materials or the compilation of books on popular pop culture as authentic teaching materials for teaching and learning Japanese.

However, the results of this study have limitations, even though they are a follow-up study of previous studies. This study is limited to identifying the needs and consumption of students towards the types of Japanese popular pop culture that students use as learning resources for learning Japanese culture and language. So, these findings are only directed at the categorisation of the types of popular pop culture used for learning Japanese language culture (such as the Cross-Cultural Understanding course) and have not been studied quantitatively to determine the differences in achievement in the Cross-Cultural Understanding course. Thus, the results of this study can still be developed and continued quantitatively to test the use of Japanese popular pop culture learning resources for improving Japanese language skills

CONCLUSION

The results of the study concluded that popular Japanese pop culture found among students of the Japanese Language and Culture Study Program

were anime/cartoons, manga/comics, video games, cosplay, J-pop music, fashion / Harajuku style, and culinary. However, of the seven types of popular pop culture that are widely consumed by students as one of the media for learning Japanese culture and language are anime/cartoons and manga/comics. Of the two types of popular pop culture, anime/cartoons are more popular with male students than female students. Manga/comics are equally popular with male and female students. From these findings, it can be concluded that popular Japanese pop culture can be authentic material for learning Japanese culture and language. This is because almost all students like popular Japanese pop culture, so they have knowledge that is always updated and learning resources that come from learning experiences and previous knowledge can provide more effective learning.

The findings of this study are still limited to qualitative descriptive studies and identifying popular Japanese pop culture that students like to learn Japanese language and culture, so they have not gone into depth on the direction of the impact of each popular pop culture on improving Japanese language skills. Thus, the findings in this study provide an understanding that the map of authentic learning resources that have been identified can be used as material for further research studies related to teaching and learning methods or the use of technology as a learning medium. Lecturers or researchers can develop this popular Japanese pop culture in the realm of authentic teaching materials and in-depth studies for each type of popular Japanese pop culture that is most suitable for learning each Japanese language skill

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