

Analysis of Culture-Based Learning Media in Marugoto Books

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis media pembelajaran berbasis budaya yang terdapat dalam buku *Marugoto A1 Nyumon dan A1-1 rikai dan katsudou*, serta mengetahui persepsi siswa terhadap media tersebut dalam mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Jepang di era sekarang. Buku *Marugoto* dirancang dengan pendekatan komunikatif dengan mengintegrasikan budaya Jepang dalam materi pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik analisis isi terhadap seluruh unit dalam buku, serta menyebarkan angket kepada siswa yang telah menggunakan buku tersebut dalam proses belajar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa buku *Marugoto* secara konsisten menghadirkan berbagai bentuk media berbasis budaya, media audio (rekaman pengenalan kosakata dan percakapan), media visual (gambar ilustrasi, peta, makanan khas Jepang), media cetak (teks kosakata, teks percakapan, dan worksheet) dan media audio visual (video, gabungan audio+visual+teks yang disajikan secara bersama). Media-media tersebut tidak hanya memperkenalkan budaya Jepang secara eksplisit, tetapi juga membangun konteks sosial penggunaan bahasa yang nyata. Dari hasil angket menunjukkan bahwa media pembelajaran berbasis budaya dalam buku mempermudah pengenalan budaya Jepang, media yang digunakan dalam buku *Marugoto* mencerminkan kehidupan saat ini, media pembelajaran berbasis budaya yang muncul dalam buku *Marugoto* membuat lebih mudah dalam memahami bahasa Jepang, dan media pembelajaran berbasis budaya dalam buku *Marugoto* berperan penting pada pemahaman bagaimana bahasa Jepang digunakan dalam konteks. Elemen budaya yang muncul dalam media terdiri dari system pengetahuan, elemen gaya hidup, elemen nilai dan norma dalam masyarakat Jepang. Dengan demikian, media berbasis budaya dalam *Marugoto* terbukti mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Jepang yang lebih autentik, komunikatif, dan bermakna.

Kata Kunci: *Media pembelajaran, budaya, pembelajaran autentik, marugoto*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the culture-based learning media contained in the *Marugoto A1 Nyumon and A1-1 rikai and katsudou* books, and to find out students' perceptions of these media in supporting Japanese language learning in the current era. *Marugoto* books are designed with a communicative approach by integrating Japanese culture in the learning materials. This study used descriptive qualitative method with content analysis technique of all units in the book, as well as distributing questionnaires to students who have used the book in the learning process. The results showed that *Marugoto* book consistently presents various forms of culture-based media, audio media (vocabulary introduction recordings and conversations), visual media (illustrative pictures, maps, Japanese specialties), print media

(vocabulary texts, conversation texts, and worksheets) and audio-visual media (videos, combined audio+visual+text presented together). These media not only introduce Japanese culture explicitly, but also build a real social context of language use. The questionnaire results show that the culture-based learning media in the book facilitate the introduction of Japanese culture, the media used in Marugoto books reflect current life, the culture-based learning media that appear in Marugoto books make it easier to understand Japanese, and the culture-based learning media in Marugoto books play an important role in understanding how Japanese is used in context. The cultural elements that appear in the media consist of knowledge systems, lifestyle elements, values and norms in Japanese society. Thus, the culture-based media in Marugoto proved to support more authentic, communicative, and meaningful Japanese language learning.

Keywords: *Learning media, culture, authentic learning, memarugoto*

1. Introduction

Language not only functions as a means of communication, but also as a reflection of the culture of the people who speak it. Every vocabulary, expression, and way of interacting used in a language contains cultural values that reflect the way of thinking and the way of life of a community. Therefore, learning a foreign language cannot be separated from efforts to understand the culture behind it. In the context of Japanese language learning, cultural understanding becomes very important so that learners are not only able to use the language grammatically, but also to communicate appropriately according to the norms and customs of Japanese society. Culture-based learning media acts as a bridge that connects linguistic aspects with the socio-cultural context, so that the learning process becomes more authentic and meaningful.

Learning media is one of the important components in the teaching and learning process. Media not only serves as a means of delivering information, but also as a tool that can clarify material, increase motivation, and create a more meaningful learning experience. According to Arsyad (2011), learning media can strengthen students' understanding because it presents abstract concepts to be more concrete through visualization, audio, or a combination of both. In foreign language learning, the role of media becomes even more crucial. Language is not only learned in terms of structure, but also in the context of its use. The right learning media can present real communication situations while introducing the cultural aspects inherent in the language. Thus, the media functions not only as a linguistic aid, but also as a bridge to understanding the values, norms, and habits of the language-speaking community.

Culture-based learning media has an important role in supporting foreign language learning, because it not only conveys linguistic aspects, but also provides authentic and contextual learning experiences. Koentjaraningrat (2009) asserts that culture includes seven universal elements that are present in people's lives, while Arsyad (2011) states that media serves to clarify messages, increase motivation, and help students understand the material more concretely. Thus, culture-based media can be a bridge that connects language learning with understanding the culture of its speakers. In the context of Japanese language learning, the Marugoto book developed by The Japan Foundation is designed to integrate language and culture. At the A1-1 Nyuumon and A2-1 Katsudou levels, various media are used, including conversational text, pictures, maps, graphics, and audio. These media play a role not only in introducing vocabulary and sentence patterns, but also in presenting real communication situations that are full of Japanese cultural elements. For example, the use of illustrations of daily activities, dialogs about people's customs, and audio conversations in specific social

contexts help students understand how language is used according to Japanese cultural norms and values.

Koentjaraningrat (2009) suggests seven universal cultural elements which include, 1) religious system and religious ceremonies, such as Nyepi ceremony (Balinese Hinduism), Eid al-Fitr, Vesak, Shintō ceremony at temples, Obon festival, Hatsumōde (visit to temples at the beginning of the year). 2) Community organization system, such as gotong royong, arisan, patrilineal/matrilineal kinship system, ie system (traditional family), senpai-kōhai culture in school & workplace, kaisha (company) with strong hierarchy. 3) knowledge system, such as local knowledge of rice cultivation, herbal medicine concoction, traditional astronomy, knowledge of seasons (kisetsu), traditional weather forecast, modern transportation technology (shinkansen). 4) languages, such as Indonesian, local languages (Javanese, Sundanese, Batak), Japanese (Nihongo), with levels of formality (keigo), characters (Hiragana, Katakana, Kanji). 5) arts, such as shadow puppetry, batik, gamelan, kecak dance, kabuki, noh, ikebana (flower arrangement), origami, manga & anime. 6) livelihood systems, such as farming, fishing, market traders, tuna fishermen, rice farmers in Niigata, company employees (salaryman), technology industry (Sony, Toyota). 7) equipment technology systems, such as traditional farming tools (hoe, mortar), houses on stilts, tricycles, shinkansen, humanoid robots, tatami & futon (traditional home appliances), vending machines (jidōhanbaiki).

According to Azhar Arsyad (2011) learning media can be divided into several types based on their form and characteristics, namely, 1) Visual media, namely media that can only be seen, without sound, such as pictures, photos, sketches, charts, graphs, maps, posters. 2) Audio media, which is media that only relies on hearing, such as radio, voice recordings, audio CDs. 3) Audio-Visual Media, which is media that can be heard as well as seen, such as videos, sound films, television. 4) Silent Projection Media, which displays images or text through a projector but does not move, such as slides, film strips, OHP (Over Head Projector). 5) Multipurpose Media, which are diverse media and do not fall into the media categories mentioned above, for example, real objects, models, games, embossed maps. 6) Multimedia or often called Computer-based Media, which is media that combines text, images, audio, animation, interactive video, such as interactive CDs, e-learning, computer-based learning applications.

Culture is very important role in effective language learning. In many cases, the ability to speak the language correctly is not enough to achieve successful communication. Language teaching that involves cultural aspects, such as speech etiquette, customs, and other social ways, will help students to understand the social context behind the language they are learning. This research aims to introduce and assess media that can integrate both elements, so that students not only learn how to speak Japanese, but also know when, where, and how the language is used in authentic Japanese culture.

In an increasingly connected world, an understanding of Japanese language and culture is essential for students who want to pursue an international career. This is especially true for those working in the fields of international business, diplomacy, tourism and education, where cross-cultural communication skills are in high demand. By integrating elements of Japanese culture in the language learning process, students not only become proficient in the language, but are also prepared to adapt and communicate more effectively in global situations involving Japanese people.

Herrington & Oliver (2000) mentioned that there are nine main characteristics of authentic learning, namely, Real-world relevance, learning tasks must be relevant to the real world and have a direct relationship with daily life practices or certain fields of work. Defined problems, the problems given are open and complex, thus requiring students to analyze, explore

and formulate solutions independently. Sustained investigation, the learning process involves continuous investigation or exploration, not just instant answers.

Multiple sources and perspectives, learners are encouraged to access diverse sources of information and viewpoints to build deeper understanding. Collaboration, authentic learning emphasizes cooperation between learners in completing tasks or projects. Reflection, learners are given space to reflect on their learning experience so as to improve their understanding and metacognitive skills. Interdisciplinary perspective, authentic tasks or problems involve various disciplines, thus encouraging learners to see the interconnectedness of knowledge areas. Integrated assessment, assessment is not only done at the end of learning, but integrated throughout the learning process, thus measuring the development of skills as well as understanding. Authentic products, learning outcomes are realized in the form of real products or solutions that can be applied in the context of everyday life or the world of work.

This research has a very high urgency to overcome the challenges of Japanese language learning that only focuses on linguistic aspects without paying attention to the cultural context, as well as to meet the needs of more authentic and culture-based communication skills in the era of globalization. Globalization has changed the way we interact with different cultures around the world. This has implications for the way we communicate, especially in cross-cultural communication. Students studying Japanese today need to be prepared for communication with Japanese speakers in a global context, whether in business, education or culture. Culture-based Japanese language learning will help students not only speak the language, but also understand Japanese social norms, customs, and cultural values, which are essential for effective communication and respect for cultural differences. This research will contribute to preparing students for the challenges of globalization and developing the skills necessary for success in an increasingly multicultural world.

2. Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive method. Content analysis was conducted to identify the elements of Japanese culture present in the learning media and how these elements can be used to enhance authentic Japanese language learning, then the findings will be presented in the form of descriptions. The instruments in this study include Marugoto textbooks. Marugoto book as the main research instrument in analyzing the application of culture-based learning media and authentic learning. Questionnaires and interviews were used to find out students' opinions and perceptions about the use of Japanese culture-based learning media. This questionnaire measures the extent to which the culture-based media helps students' understanding of Japanese language and culture and its suitability for authentic learning. Marugoto books will be systematically analyzed to identify the language and cultural elements present in them, identify the parts of the book that present cultural elements and their frequency. Furthermore, the categorization of cultural content, and the assessment of the quality of cultural teaching, namely assessing the depth and authenticity of Japanese cultural teaching, and finding out whether the cultural information presented is relevant to the global context. Questionnaire data was calculated using a linkert scale and presented as a percentage. Meanwhile, the interview data was analyzed with a certain pattern to find the successes and shortcomings in teaching culture through this book.

3. Result

Culture-based learning media in Marugoto A1-1 Nyumon and A2-1 katsudou books include:

- 1) audio media. Audio media includes recordings of vocabulary introduction and

conversation (practice listening to intonation, pronunciation, and how to interact according to Japanese culture).

- 2) visual media. Visual media includes illustrations of matsuri, traditional clothing (kimono and yukata), nihon no tabemono, nihon chizu, bunka katsudou no shashin, celebrations, tourist attractions and so on.
- 3) Print media. The print media includes vocabulary texts (pictures of typical foods such as sushi and ramen, Japanese transportation vocabulary such as densha, jitensha, public place vocabulary such as eki and mise), conversation texts (featuring typical Japanese expressions such as greetings, self-introduction, asking for help, buying tickets and so on), and worksheets (practice writing Japanese-style greeting cards, making daily schedules, filling out personal profiles according to Japanese format)media audio visual.
- 4) Audio-visual media includes videos in marugoto plus. In addition, the audio-visual media in marugoto is also in the form of audio + visual + print presented together, namely audio pronunciation + text + image. For example, in the vocabulary introduction section which consists of audio, pictures and vocabulary writing. In addition, audio+visual+print media is also found in the hanshimashou section, which contains audio conversations by native speakers + conversation text with written Japanese expressions and illustrations.

The picture below is of culture-based media in the form of audio+visual+print.



Picture 1. Audio+visual+text learning media (vocabulary recognition)



Picture 2. Audio+visual+text learning media (conversation practice)

The questionnaire was given to the learners to find out whether the culture-based

learning media in Marugoto book supports authentic learning. The first question asked whether the culture-based learning media in the book facilitates the introduction of Japanese culture. The results showed that 20% strongly agreed, 75.9% agreed, 3.4% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. The second question asked learners' perceptions of whether the media used in Marugoto books reflected current life. The questionnaire results showed that the learners strongly agreed by 10.3%, agreed by 86.2%, disagreed by 6.9% and strongly disagreed by 0%. The third question is from the culture-based learning media that appears in the Marugoto book does it make it easier to understand Japanese. The results showed that 48.3% of the answers strongly agreed, 48.3% agreed, 3.4% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed. The results of the fourth question regarding whether culture-based learning media in Marugoto books play an important role in understanding how Japanese is used in context. The results showed that 17.2% strongly agreed, 79.3% agreed, 3.4% disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed.

The cultural elements that appear in the media consist of knowledge systems such as the use of Japanese language, vocabulary, and expressions in Japanese. Then it also contains lifestyle elements such as Japanese food, traffic in Japan, uniforms, places of public facilities in Japan. In addition, there are also elements of values and norms in Japanese society.

4. Discussion

The results show that the Marugoto A1-1 Nyūmon Katsudou and A2-1 Katsudou books utilize various culture-based learning media, namely audio media, print media, visual media, and audio-visual media. The existence of these media not only supports Japanese language learning from a linguistic perspective, but also presents authentic Japanese cultural nuances so as to support a culture-based learning approach. Audio media in the form of recordings of vocabulary pronunciation and conversations of native Japanese speakers provide opportunities for learners to understand intonation, pronunciation, and expressions typical of Japanese society.

This is in line with Arsyad's (2011) opinion that audio media can improve listening skills while supporting communicative learning. The presence of audio media is also related to the elements of language and social organization according to Koentjaraningrat (2009), because through authentic conversations, learners not only get to know vocabulary, but also typical interaction patterns of Japanese society.

Print media in the form of vocabulary texts, conversation texts, and worksheets serve as a means of practicing and reinforcing the material. Conversational texts that include greetings, self-introductions, and interactions in public spaces illustrate the norms of politeness and manners in Japanese culture. Worksheets also often present tasks that reflect Japanese customs, such as making a daily schedule, writing greeting cards, or introducing specialties. This shows that print media in Marugoto is not just a means of language practice, but also incorporates elements of knowledge, art, and the social system of Japanese culture.

Visual media in the form of illustrative drawings and cultural photographs (e.g. matsuri, Japanese food, Japanese maps, cultural activities) strengthen learners' understanding through the presentation of cultural symbols. This visualization is important because it can bridge cross-cultural understanding between students and Japanese society. In accordance with Arsyad's theory (2011), visual media can clarify messages and make it easier for learners to understand abstract concepts. In the context of Koentjaraningrat (2009), these illustrations represent elements of material culture such as food, clothing, and means of transportation, as well as elements of art and tradition such as cultural festivals.

Audio-visual media comes in the form of videos in Marugoto Plus and the integration of audio + visual + print in the main book. The videos in Marugoto Plus show daily life in

Japan, so that learners can witness firsthand how language is used in real contexts. Meanwhile, the combination of audio, pictures, and text in vocabulary introduction and conversation (Hanshimashou) strengthens the simultaneous involvement of learners' senses. Thus, this audio-visual media becomes the most authentic representation of culture-based learning, as it presents Japanese language and culture in one.

Overall, the results show that the media in the Marugoto book not only serves to convey Japanese language material, but also integrates elements of Japanese culture including language, social organization, knowledge, arts, and material culture. This strengthens Marugoto's position as a textbook based on a communicative and intercultural approach, in line with Herrington & Oliver's (2000) authentic learning theory which emphasizes the importance of real context in the learning process.

Based on the results of the questionnaire given to the learners, it can be seen that the majority of respondents assessed that the culture-based learning media in Marugoto book supports authentic learning. The first question about whether the culture-based learning media in Marugoto book makes it easier to introduce Japanese culture shows a very positive result. 20% of respondents strongly agreed and 75.9% agreed, while only 3.4% disagreed and no one strongly disagreed. This finding shows that the majority of learners felt that the media in the Marugoto book facilitated an easier understanding of Japanese culture. This is in line with Arsyad's (2011) view that learning media can clarify information and increase students' absorption. In addition, in accordance with Koentjaraningrat (2009), the media in Marugoto contains cultural elements such as language, knowledge, and tradition so that learners can recognize Japanese culture more easily. The second question highlighted whether the media in Marugoto reflects current life. The questionnaire results showed that 10.3% of respondents strongly agreed, 86.2% agreed, and only 6.9% disagreed. There were no respondents who strongly disagreed. This result proves that the learners think the culture-based media in Marugoto reflects the real life of modern Japanese society, for example through illustrations about transportation, clothing, food, and daily activities. This supports Herrington & Oliver's (2000) theory of authentic learning, where learning tasks and media should relate to real-world contexts. The third question related to whether culture-based media makes it easier to understand Japanese. Results showed 48.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 48.3% agreed, with only 3.4% disagreeing. This figure confirms that the integration of culture-based media in Marugoto not only helps to understand the culture, but also facilitates the acquisition of the Japanese language itself. For example, through authentic conversations, native speaker audio, and cultural illustrations, learners can more easily understand vocabulary and expressions in their context of use. This shows that the knowledge system and language aspects according to Koentjaraningrat (2009) play an important role in facilitating language skills. The fourth question addressed whether culture-based media plays an important role in understanding how Japanese is used in context. Results showed 17.2% of respondents strongly agreed, 79.3% agreed, and only 3.4% disagreed. No respondents strongly disagreed. This data confirms that the media in Marugoto supports contextualized Japanese learning, in accordance with Herrington & Oliver's (2000) authentic learning characteristics that emphasize the use of knowledge in real situations. Examples that support this are the use of polite expressions (*keigo*), greetings, and daily conversations that reflect the values and norms of Japanese society. In addition to the questionnaire results, cultural elements that appear in the Marugoto book media also include knowledge systems (vocabulary, Japanese expressions, communication manners), lifestyles (Japanese food, transportation, uniforms, public facilities), and values and norms (politeness, respect in interactions). The presence of these cultural elements reinforces that the media in Marugoto is not just a means of learning the language, but also a means of

understanding Japanese culture as a whole.

Thus, the questionnaire results support the conclusion that culture-based learning media in Marugoto books play an important role in facilitating authentic learning, introducing Japanese culture, reflecting real life, facilitating language comprehension, and showing the context of Japanese language use in society.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that culture-based learning media in the Marugoto A1-1 Nyūmon Katsudou and A2-1 Katsudou books function not only as a means of delivering language materials, but also as a bridge to understanding Japanese culture in an authentic context, so that the research objective of identifying media forms and their role in authentic learning can be achieved. The findings confirm the importance of language and culture integration in learning media, as they complement each other in building communicative competence as well as intercultural competence. For future practice, teachers are expected to be able to utilize and adapt culture-based media to better suit the needs of learners, while further research is recommended to expand the object of study at other book levels or compare it with different foreign language teaching materials to obtain a more comprehensive picture. The limitation of this study lies in the scope of analysis which is limited to two levels of books and descriptive data collection instruments, so the results cannot be generalized widely or measure the direct impact on learning outcomes.

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