

Japanese Women's Daily Vlog as an Alternative Media for Learning Japanese Culture

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Abstract. This study aims to discover what cultural elements students can learn from Japanese women's (Tina's Life) daily vlog on YouTube channel who live in urban and what messages can be understood from their daily vlogs. This qualitative descriptive study used content observations on her channel and student opinion surveys as primary data. The results of this study are 1) Tina daily videos are effective as an alternative learning media for understanding Japanese cultural elements for students of Japanese culture, sequentially contains the following elements knowledge system (96,6%), system of technology and equipment (68,5%), language (64%), arts (23,6%), social systems and organizations (13,5%), livelihood systems (7,9%), and religion (2,2%). 2) Students are able to catch the message that Tina wants to convey as a content creator even though the content she has uploaded is of the silent daily vlog type.

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1 Introduction

Learning and understanding Japanese culture for students learning Japanese is important. Because language itself is part of culture. Likewise, the Japanese language is undoubtedly a cultural product that was developed with the Japanese people itself. According to Lafamane, on the other hand, language is the most important element to explore the deepest awareness contained in a culture. Without language, culture cannot be understood by its subtle elements.¹ In Japanese, culture is translated by the word '*bunka*' which can be defined as a set of things that are learned and transmitted as members of a group. Culture consists of a set of thoughts, feelings, clothing, food, housing, machines, institutions, and so on whose constituent elements are roughly divided into four areas: language, values, society, and technology². As Susanto concludes in his book that culture is everything that is produced by the human mind with the aim of managing its place of residence and producing works to meet the needs of life³. From such definitions then culture is a representation of the things that humans do in their daily lives.³

For Vocational Schools' students with a concentration in foreign languages (English and Japanese), simply learning Japanese without exploring the culture is not enough to master the use of the language itself. For example, certain expressions and terms used in certain cultural situations, the use of language that reflects certain respect and etiquette, and so on. In addition, studying and understanding Japanese culture not only enriches knowledge about Japan itself, but also helps in the development of intercultural awareness more generally. Japanese language students will learn to recognize the differences and similarities between their own culture and Japanese culture, and understand how cultural values influence human perception and behavior. This will help in cross-cultural communication in the future.

This research is based on a trial by researchers using daily video blogs (vlogs) on the YouTube channel as an alternative learning media that is more real for students in class in learning Japanese culture directly from the Japanese themselves.

Some research results regarding video as a learning media such as research by Hartanti⁴ et al (2017), Pangestika and Yanuar⁵ (2020), Sablic et al⁶ (2021), and Hendriyani et al⁷ (2022) state that learning videos meet the criteria of high validity, practicality, and attractiveness. Video is very appropriate to be used as a supplement to learning about cultural diversity, providing flexibility and new insights in studying art from various backgrounds, can add to the quality of the classroom experience and improve students' creative thinking skills. So in this study, 89 students with a concentration in Japanese who took the Japanese Culture course in their first year (August 2022) were given initial material about culture

according to Koentjaraningrat's theory, especially cultural elements. Then, they were given several vlogs from the Tina's Life YouTube channel to finding and analyzing cultural elements in it and what messages were understood of the video content. The Tina's Life channel has been chosen as an alternative media for learning Japanese culture due to several factors; 1) Tina's Life channel has many subscribers with positive comments from all its viewers, 2) the type of content is silent daily vlogs, and 3) presenting the life of urban youth in Tokyo. The results of watching, finding, and analyzing elements of Japanese culture and the messages obtained are written on the Google form.

2 Result and Discussion

Based on the results obtained from the answers of 89 students, all stated that they benefited from watching the daily vlogs uploaded by Tina to her YouTube channel. They have found 7 cultural elements based on Koentjaraningrat's cultural theory (with various percentages) and they have understood the message that the content creator wants to convey to her viewers.

2.1 Culture's Elements

Koentjaraningrat defines culture as a system of ideas possessed by humans by learning. According to Meinarno et.al, in Koentjaraningrat's view, culture has three components (material, social, and mental) which include 7 universal elements namely; a) religious systems and religious ceremonies, b) social systems and organizations, c) knowledge systems, d) languages, e) arts, f) livelihood systems, and g) systems of technology and equipment⁸.

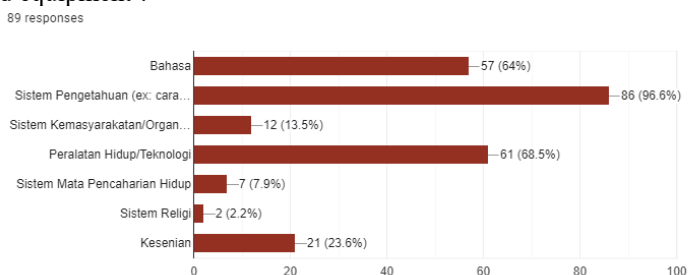


Fig. 1. Cultural elements that have been explored by students

Figure 1 shows the cultural elements found by students after watching some of Tina's Life vlogs. The students' answers show that the content of Tina's Life contains 7 elements which are sequentially as follows; knowledge system (96,6%), system of technology and equipment (68,5%),

language (64%), arts (23,6%), social systems and organizations (13,5%), livelihood systems (7,9%), and religion (2,2%).

2.1.1 Knowledge Systems

The cultural element found with the largest percentage (96.6%) is the knowledge system. Tina's Life content shows everyday life which naturally can make students discover a lot of new knowledge about Japanese people's habits, especially how to process food, Japanese spices, and food consumed according to the season. Tina also showed that as a Japanese person she does not only consume Japanese food (*washoku*), but also consumes non-Japanese food (*youshoku*). She also shows her audience some good restaurants and how to order and enjoy them.

2.1.2 Systems of technology and equipment

Tina is a woman who lives alone and works in Tokyo, which is known as a metropolitan city where residents are used to the convenience of living using technology. Tina describes her practical and easy life even though she lives alone. After watching Tina's videos, students found many cultural elements of technology and living equipment (68.5%). In her content, Tina shows her personal high-tech equipment, such as cooking utensils, coffee makers, washing machines, and hair straighteners. He also demonstrated the modern and practical transportation system in Japan and the use of vending machines.

2.1.3 Language

Language is the third most common cultural element found by students (64%). Even though the vlog doesn't contain Tina's voice, she provides Japanese subtitles which can help her viewers understand what she wants to convey at certain moments. With subtitles that are simple and not too long, Japanese learners are able to find familiar vocabulary in the right context and add new Japanese vocabulary from Tina's vlog content.

2.1.4 Arts

Art has a deep connection with Japanese society and has played an important role in the development of their culture for centuries. This art is learned, preserved, and valued by Japanese society which then influences their lifestyle. Aesthetic concepts such as *wabi-sabi* (beauty in imperfection) and Japanese minimalism influence interior design, architecture, fashion, and even everyday habits. The artistic elements in Tina's vlog content can be seen in the arrangement of the apartment she lives in which is aesthetically pleasing and minimalist, but still looks modern. He also collects art objects such as bowls, plates, glasses, *hashioki* with beautiful patterns, makes tablecloths and pillowcases from used clothes so they have a new value. As a working woman in Tokyo, she also likes to collect branded items such as Prada, Furla, Barneys, and so on.

2.1.5 Social systems and organizations

This cultural element is not very visible in Tina's vlog content (13.5%). The social and organizational systems that students are able to understand in Tina's content are the interactions that occur between Tina and her friends when carrying out barbeque activities and order in public areas such as obeying the rules of standing in line on the street and using public transportation.

2.1.6 Livelihood systems

Elements of the livelihood system that students have found in Tina's content include the type of work or profession carried out by individuals or groups in society. Tina as a content creator is a female office worker in Tokyo who goes to the office in the morning and returns home in the afternoon. The content also shows several jobs such as snack traders, game stall owners, and restaurant businesses as part of the Japanese people's livelihood.

2.1.7 Religious systems and religious ceremonies

Cultural elements religious systems and religious ceremonies that students found in Tina's content are places that have religious values in Japanese society, such as the Taishakuten temple (Buddhist temple) and traditional Japanese houses inspired by Zen Buddhist teachings. Tina also visits famous film locations where statues of movie characters are believed to bring good luck. Tina also invites the audience to watch *Hanabi* which is a symbol of unity and celebration. In some traditions, *hanabi* is used to honor ancestors or nature spirits. Thus, *hanabi* reflects the spiritual, symbolic dimensions, unity, and respect in culture.

2.2 Messages

Someone certainly has a specific goal when doing something like Tina, the creator of the Tina's Life channel, who regularly uploads her daily vlogs. After showing several vlogs on Tina's YouTube channel, I asked students what message they got from Tina's content. Of course, every student has a different interpretation of the content, but the messages that they already understand can be mapped out as follows: 1) The content creator wants to show the daily routines of Japanese people who live alone in Tokyo in order to motivate the audience to stay enjoy life in the midst of busyness. 2) Tina promotes Japanese culture, especially Japanese daily cooking, in her own way, by inviting the audience to participate in the preparation, processing, serving, and enjoying the dish, as well as introducing Japanese in a simple way.

3 Conclusion

This research found that Tina's Life's daily vlog content can be a more real alternative learning media in studying Japanese culture. By watching and having an understanding of Japanese cultural elements beforehand, students can find and differentiate cultural elements in content created by Tina and are able to understand what kind of messages Tina as a content creator wants to give to her viewers.

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