

INDONESIAN GEN Z'S DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AS A RESOURCE FOR JAPANESE LANGUAGE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Generation Z, frequently characterized as digital natives, spends a considerable amount of time engaging with short-form digital content on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. While digital media engagement is often seen as a distraction from formal education, recent discussions have focused on its potential as a valuable tool for informal learning, especially in language acquisition. This study examines how the digital consumption habits of Indonesian Generation Z can be strategically applied to enhance Japanese language learning in higher education. It explores the pedagogical opportunities of incorporating digital media practices into university Japanese programs. This study is motivated by a growing recognition of the disconnect between conventional textbook-based instruction and the immersive, fast-paced digital environments to which Gen Z learners naturally gravitate. Employing a literature-based methodology, the paper draws upon theoretical frameworks such as multiliteracies and edutainment to examine how popular Japanese content—including short-form videos, anime clips, and social media narratives—can serve as authentic and meaningful learning materials. The findings indicate that aligning instructional design with Gen Z's digital habits can boost learner motivation, cultural involvement, and language exposure outside the classroom. Furthermore, the study shows that using multimodal and culturally relevant content promotes more personalized and independent learning experiences. The paper outlines essential implications for language educators, highlighting the necessity of developing digital literacy, designing adaptive pedagogical strategies, and embracing blended learning environments. Moreover, this study advocates for a paradigm shift in Japanese language education, transitioning from traditional, textbook-centered approaches to dynamic, multimodal instruction that reflects the lived media experiences of contemporary learners.

Keywords: Generation Z, digital media, Japanese language learning, higher education