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Developing Toonly-Based Animated Videos for Teaching Pre-Intermediate Japanese Grammar Based on Minna no Nihongo Shokyū II

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Abstract

This study aims to develop Toonly-based animated videos to support the teaching of pre-intermediate Japanese grammar (*Bunpō Shōchūkyū*) in Indonesia and to evaluate their feasibility. The research employed the Multimedia Development Life Cycle (MDLC), consisting of six stages. The six stages are concept, design, material collection, assembly, testing, and distribution. A total of twelve animated instructional videos were developed based on grammar points from Chapters 38 to 49 of *Minna no Nihongo II*. The feasibility testing involved an alpha test dan beta test. Alpha test conducted by a media expert and a content expert. Beta test conducted by the course lecturer and six second-semester students from the Japanese Language Education Study Program at Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha. Data were collected through mixed-format questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The media expert gave a score of 57.75 (Excellent), while the content expert gave 50.25 (Good). The beta test conducted by the lecturer yielded a score of 109 (Excellent), and the small-group test yielded 106.6 (Good). These results indicate that the developed animated videos are feasible and suitable as supplementary learning materials for teaching *Bunpō Shōchūkyū* using *Minna no Nihongo II* at Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha. Overall, these findings highlight the potential of animation-based media to make Japanese grammar learning more engaging, accessible, and meaningful for students.

Keywords: Toonly; animated videos; Japanese grammar; Minna no Nihongo

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1. Introduction

The way students learn and engage nowadays are much influenced by contemporary technology. Digital tools integration has emerged as a solution to address the learning preferences of today's Generation Z students. The preference for audiovisual content characterizes generation Z. It is well-known that this generation is quite competent at using digital tools (Cilliers, 2017; Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015). Competencies relevant to the modern world are emphasized in Indonesian curriculum (Arnyana, 2019) which further emphasis the rationale for using digital media in the classroom.

Learning videos, among the various digital tools, has shown to be effective in boosting student understanding as well as motivation. Video helps breaking down complex ideas into simplify topics. Video also fulfills the digital-native learners' audiovisual learning needs (Adnyani et al., 2021; Luluhima et al., 2016). Among the many options, animated video emerges as an exceptionally engaging learning resource. Animated videos effectively combine visual, narrative, and auditory elements. Animated videos provide content in a more engaging and memorable manner (Apriansyah, 2020; Suprianti, 2020)., These elements are recognized as being vital in improving learning outcomes (Susilana & Cepi, 2007). Animation can facilitate comprehension and maintain student engagement. It can also improve recall of learning materials, particularly when dealing with complex topics (Limbong & Simarmata, 2020; Munir, 2012). Due to these advantages, animation has considerable potential for use in foreign language education. This includes its application in teaching Japanese grammar.

The acquisition of Japanese grammar in Indonesia presents considerable difficulty. Particularly, students often face difficulties in mastering grammar. The reasons are insufficient exposure, time limitations, and a deficiency of stimulating instructional materials. A preliminary study at Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha (Undiksha) indicated that students perceived the current YouTube grammar tutorials as excessively long and tedious. They were also viewed as visually unappealing. Both lecturers and students expressed a preference for brief, animated videos (duration 6–10 minutes). They suggested that the video incorporate engaging background music and visually stimulating media elements.

Bridging this gap requires the development of teaching resources which are pedagogically effective. Moreover, the teaching resources must align with students' needs. In response to these challenges, a more integrative approach is needed so that learning objectives can be achieved in a meaningful and sustainable way. One practical and promising option is the use of technology in language learning, as it opens up new possibilities to support teaching quality while actively engaging learners (Shinohara, 2025).

Toonly is one of a potential tool for generating animated explainer videos. It is well-known for its user-friendly interface. Toonly enables users to design customized scenes. Other features include adding voiceovers, customized characters, and incorporating royalty-free music making Toonly an ideal platform for creating language instruction educational content (Toonly Official Website, 2022). Several studies have highlighted the effectiveness of animation-based media in improving learning outcomes. For example, Toonly-based videos, which instructors have used to teach grammar demonstrate positive effects on comprehension, engagement, and motivation (Dewi et al., 2022; Megantari et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2023). More teachers have included animated videos in flipped classroom methodologies at the university level, producing encouraging outcomes in facilitating student-centred learning (Swamy, 2020).

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The implementation of the 4D paradigm in producing Indonesian language videos has led to increased mastery rates among students (Rahayu et al., 2021).

To date, limited research has investigated the use of Toonly in the realm of Japanese grammar learning, especially at the pre- intermediate level. To fill this gap, this study aims to develop and evaluate Toonly-based animated videos designed specifically for teaching Japanese grammar topics from the Minna no Nihongo II book. This book is widely used in Japanese language education. This study focuses on Chapters 38–49 because the grammar in these chapters often feels abstract and complex for students. Many of them find these points hard to grasp without clear visual support, making them ideal for development into animated learning materials.

Minna no Nihongo II is the second volume of the Minna no Nihongo textbook series. It is designed to support learners progress from a basic to an intermediate level of Japanese. The book's material covered vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and situational dialogues (3A Network, 1998). It reflects real daily communication in Japan. Many global educational institutions prefer it as a learning resource because of its organized approach (Japan Based, 2023). The aims of this research are to 1) develop a series of Toonly animated instructional videos, based on selected Minna no Nihongo II grammar points, and 2) evaluate their feasibility through expert validation and student feedback. The expected outcome is a set of engaging, accessible, and pedagogically effective videos. The videos are expected to enhance Japanese grammar instruction and fulfill the Generation Z students' learning needs.

2. Methods

This study employed the Multimedia Development Life Cycle (MDLC) model to develop Toonly-based animated videos for teaching pre-intermediate Japanese grammar using Minna no Nihongo II. The MDLC consists of six phases: concept, design, material collection, assembly, testing, and distribution (Binanto, 2010). To ensure the relevance and effectiveness of the developed media, the researchers gathered qualitative and quantitative data through semi-structured interviews and mixed-format questionnaires (including open- and closed-ended items). This study was conducted during the 2024/2025 academic year in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Bali, Indonesia. The participants were 32 students enrolled in the Bunpō Shōchūkyū (Intermediate Grammar) course, one Bunpō Shōchūkyū course lecturer, and two expert validators. The researchers conducted a needs analysis during the concept phase prior to the development stage. A semi-structured interview was held with the course instructor to identify challenges and expectations regarding existing learning media. The researchers also distributed two rounds of preliminary questionnaires to students. The first questionnaire explored students' needs and perceptions regarding previous media usage. The second (follow-up) questionnaire collected specific preferences related to the expected features of learning videos. The preferences covered aspects such as duration, animation elements, and content format. During the material collection and assembly stages, selected grammar points from Minna no Nihongo II were compiled and converted into animation scripts and storyboards prior to video production using Toonly software. In the testing phase, the evaluation of the developed media consisted of two stages: alpha testing and beta testing.

2.1 Alpha Testing

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Alpha testing involved assessments by one media expert and one material (content) expert using structured questionnaires adapted from Adnyani et al. (2021). Each expert completed a separate instrument:

2.1.1 Material Expert Questionnaire

This instrument included two aspects:

a. Material quality, which consisted of seven closed-ended questions assessing accuracy, alignment with objectives, completeness, systematic structure, up-to-dateness, source citation, and neutrality, along with one open-ended question inviting suggestions.
b. Material usefulness, which consisted of five closed-ended items evaluating clarity, usefulness, motivational value, ability to spark curiosity, and stimulation of learner activity, followed by an open-ended question for additional feedback.

At the end of the questionnaire, the researchers asked the experts to make an overall judgment about the media's feasibility (i.e., "feasible without revision," "feasible with revision," or "not feasible").

2.1.2 Media Expert Questionnaire

This questionnaire included:

a. Instructional planning consists of seven closed-ended items assessing the clarity of instructional objectives, content presentation, implementation suggestions, opportunities for reflection, learning integration, interactivity, and relevance, followed by one open-ended question for commentary.
b. Technical considerations, including five closed-ended items focusing on video design, visual focus, visual and audio quality, and the integration of audio-visual elements, followed by an open-ended question.

Similar to the Material Expert Questionnaire, this instrument concluded with a feasibility rating.

2.2 Beta Testing

The beta test phase included evaluations from both the course lecturer and a small group of six second-semester students from the Japanese Language Education Study Program. The questionnaire consists of three key aspects:

2.2.1 Implementation, comprising six closed-ended questions evaluating ease of use, usefulness, motivational value, ability to stimulate curiosity and learner activity, and interactivity.
2.2.2 Material, including four closed-ended questions focused on the attractiveness, alignment, completeness, and structure of the material.
2.2.3 Learning Design consists of four closed-ended items assessing delivery strategy, language clarity, image quality, and sound quality.

The questionnaire concluded with three open-ended questions requesting students' opinions, suggestions, and interest in using the animated videos in future learning sessions. The researchers adapted the instruments used in both alpha and beta testing from the validated evaluation tools for instructional video development described in Adnyani et al. (2021). The researchers analysed data from both qualitative and quantitative sources to determine the

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feasibility and appropriateness of the developed Toonly-based animated instructional videos for grammar learning in higher education.

Data analysis is an activity carried out by researchers after collecting data. The data obtained were collected and then analyzed and processed using qualitative descriptive techniques. The instrument on the alpha and beta test questionnaires uses a Likert scale with a minimum score of 1 (strongly disagree) and a minimum score of 5 (strongly agree). Then the total score is calculated using the following conversion formula.

Note :
Mi= ½ (Score Maks + Score Min)
Sdi= 1/3 (Mi)
Mi = Mean Ideal
Sdi = Standar Deviasi
X = Skor

Table 1. Conversion Score

Score	Criteria
$X \geq Mi + 1{,}5\ Sdi$	Excellent
$Mi + 0{,}5\ Sdi \leq X \leq Mi + 1{,}5\ Sdi$	Good
$Mi - 0{,}5\ Sdi \leq X \leq Mi + 0{,}5\ Sdi$	Fair
$Mi - 1{,}5\ Sdi \leq X \leq Mi + 0{,}5\ Sdi$	Poor
$X < Mi - 1{,}5\ Sdi$	Very Poor

Source : (Nurkancana & Sunartana, 1992)s

Based on Table 1, the score intervals for both the alpha and beta testing assessments are as follows:

Table 2. Alpha Test Score Interval

Range	Criteria
$X \geq 54$	Excellent
$42 \leq X \leq 54$	Good
$30 \leq X \leq 42$	Fair
$18 \leq X \leq 30$	Poor
$X < 18$	Very Poor

Table 3. Beta Test Score Interval

Range	Criteria
$X \geq 108$	Excellent
$84 \leq X \leq 108$	Good
$60 \leq X \leq 84$	Fair
$36 \leq X \leq 60$	Poor
$X < 36$	Very Poor

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The minimum feasibility score required is "$30 \leq X \leq 42$" for the alpha test and "$60 \leq X \leq 84$" for the beta test. If the developed instructional video media achieves the minimum score, it is considered feasible for distribution.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The quantitative data gathered from the expert validation and student questionnaires were processed using Likert-scale scoring system. The results were then interpreted using the score conversion categories presented in Tables 1–3 to determine the feasibility level of the developed videos.

Meanwhile, qualitative responses from the interviews and open-ended questionnaire items were examined through a thematic analysis process. This analysis aimed to identify common ideas and feedback relating to usability, clarity, and content quality. By integrating both data sets, the researchers were able to an improved understanding of the feasibility and potential efficacy of learning media.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

All participants took part voluntarily. They were provided with a comprehensive description of the study's objective. The researchers guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of all responses. Written consent was acquired before data collection began. No personal identities were used or revealed in the findings.

3. Result and Discussion

This section outlines the outcomes of each development phase based on the Multimedia Development Life Cycle (MDLC) model, presents the findings from the alpha and beta testing, and discusses the implications of these results for using animated videos in Japanese grammar instruction.

3.1 Development Results

To develop the Toonly-based animated videos, the researcher followed all six MDLC phases. The six phases are concept, design, material collection, assembly, testing, and distribution. In total, the project developed twelve animation videos. Each video focused on a specific grammar point from Chapters 38 to 49 of *Minna no Nihongo II*. The design process was drawn on insights from the initial needs analysis and student feedback gathered through two preliminary questionnaires.

Each video featured short, animated scenes contextualising grammar points using visual cues, straightforward narration, background music, and example sentences. To match student preferences, the video length ranged from 6 to 10 minutes. All videos were exported in MP4 format, with high-definition resolution, and designed for compatibility with mobile devices.

3.2 Alpha Test Results

3.2.1 Material Expert Evaluation

The material expert evaluated two main aspects: content quality and usefulness. The expert gave a total score of 50.25. According to the alpha test criteria (see Table 2), it fell within

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the "Good" category ($42 \leq X \leq 54$), This score indicated that the material aligned well with the learning objectives. It is also proved relevant for classroom use. The expert recommended improving the contextual clarity of a few sample lines in the video.

3.2.2 Media Expert Evaluation

The media expert reviewed the instructional design and technical quality of the product. With a score of 57.75, the expert classified the medium as "Excellent" ($X \geq 54$). The evaluation focused on the clear narrative and seamless transitions. It also focused on the suitable use of animation and text, and the successful blending of aural and visual aspects. However, in order to better hold students' attention, the expert suggested adjusting the speed in certain scenes.s

3.3 Beta Test Results

3.3.1 Lecturer Evaluation

The course lecturer, who served as the implementer, conducted a beta test and gave the animated videos a score of 109, which also placed them in the "Excellent" category ($X \geq 108$). According to the lecturer, the videos clearly conveyed each grammar point, clarified abstract concepts, and could easily support both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments.

3.3.2 Small Group Student Evaluation

Six second-semester students participated in a small group beta test. They completed a structured questionnaire to provide feedback. The average score given by students was 106.6, categorised as "Good" ($84 \leq X \leq 108$). The feedback gathered from students showed that the animated instructional videos were generally well-received. It was considered useful in supporting their understanding of the grammar points. Many students noted that the content was relevant, easy to understand, and aligned with the material in Minna no Nihongo II. They felt that the examples and explanations helped strengthen their comprehension, especially when the videos were used alongside the textbook.

Several respondents mentioned that the videos worked effectively for reviewing material. They could also be used to reinforce lessons they had already studied. Features such as the interactive quiz (at the end of the video) were highly appreciated. The reasons were the advantages for making the learning process more enjoyable and motivating.

At the same time, students also offered constructive suggestions for improvement. A few respondents suggested additional explanation through audio narration to enhance clarity, especially in the new vocabulary scenes. Others suggested incorporating vocabulary lists or more examples. This was needed to ensure that the students who are unfamiliar with certain terms could follow along more easily. Despite these suggestions, the overall sentiment was positive. Many respondents expressed that the videos were engaging, helpful, and motivating. The videos have made learning feel more accessible for them beyond relying solely on the textbook.

3.4 Feasibility and Effectiveness of the Developed Media

The alpha and beta testing confirmed the feasibility of the Toonly-based grammar videos for classroom use. Both tests produced scores that significantly surpassed the minimum

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thresholds: 30 for the alpha test and 60 for the beta test. These strong results reflected a positive response from both experts and student users.

The findings support earlier studies that emphasised the benefits of animated learning media in improving student engagement, motivation, and conceptual understanding (Ayub et al., 2018; Suprianti, 2020). In establishing the development process, the expert validation results played a vital role. Input from the material and media experts helped improve several aspects of the videos. It is including the integration of visual and audio elements, the clarity of explanations, and also the sequencing of content. These revisions strengthened the instructional quality of the final product. It ensured the videos to be aligned with pedagogical standards.

This study also adds to the body of knowledge. It shows how thorough evaluation and iterative review led to the creation of useful and practical teaching materials. The feedback from students during beta testing showed that the revisions made after an expert review made the material clearer and easier to use. It also made the material overally better for learning. This clear link between approval results and product improvement shows how important it is to carefully evaluate digital learning tools when they are being develop. In this way, this study has real-world implications. It is useful for teachers and coders who want to make animated grammar tools for teaching Japanese language.

4. Conclusions

This study developed a series of animated instructional videos for teaching Japanese grammar using Toonly. The video material focusing on twelve grammar patterns from Minna no Nihongo Shokyū II. The development followed the Multimedia Development Life Cycle (MDLC) model, encompassing six stages: concept, design, material collection, assembly, testing, and distribution. The resulting videos were evaluated through alpha testing (by a media expert and a content expert), followed by beta testing (by a course lecturer and a small group of students). The findings indicated that the videos met the required feasibility standards and received positive feedback in terms of content accuracy, visual appeal, and instructional relevance.

The results show that the development and validation method used in this study can be used to help make learning tools for students who are just starting to learn the Japanese language. The suggestions from teachers and students led to important changes that improved clarity, organization, and the way audio and visual were combined. This shows how important iterative improvement is for making effective grammar-learning materials.

However, this study did not assess the instructional effectiveness of the videos through an experimental or quasi-experimental design due to time constraints. Consequently, it did not measure the impact of the media on students' academic performance or learning outcomes. Future research may explore how animated grammar videos influence learner autonomy and engagement over time. It is also encouraged to study how the videos perform when integrated into blended or flipped classroom settings.

Overall, this study gives useful information to educators and learning material developers who want to make multimedia-based grammar resources for pre-intermediate

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Japanese students. It shows that Toonly-based animated videos can be a fun and useful addition to textbook lessons.

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