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Olena GAYEVSKA,

orcid.org/0000-0001-6850-8757

PhD in Philology,

Associate Professor at the Research and Education Institute of Philology

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

(Kyiv, Ukraine) olenasan@gmail.com

THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM OF THE JAPANESE CULTURE CLUB: MEMORY EFFECTS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY DYNAMICS

The article examines the formation of a digital ecosystem in a form of a virtual Japanese language and culture Club, implemented as an innovative educational environment that integrates foreign language learning, cultural studies and memory studies from stance of interdisciplinary context. The aim of the study is to substantiate the creation, dissemination and further implementation of the structural components of the club's digital ecosystem and to determine their impact on the development of linguistic competence, critical thinking and intercultural communication among its participants. The methodological framework, which constitutes the foundation of the club's ecosystem, is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines methods of analysis and synthesis within literary studies, comparative studies, ecocriticism, pedagogy and memory studies. The study analyses the results of a survey conducted among club participants on the significance of various ecosystem components, including online platforms, digital archives, virtual museums, language and literature learning tools, communication environments, among others. The findings indicate that digital archives, online dictionaries, and virtual museums are the most popular tools for foreign language learning among students. This underscores their important role in shaping the educational environment of the Club. At the same time, certain components, particularly online platforms and communication tools, require further refinement. Special attention is paid to course planning and instructional design, which should serve as the foundation of a virtual club dedicated to the study of the Japanese language and culture within a cross-cultural context, taking into account the complexity of the Japanese writing systems. The principal areas of the Club's activities include lexical and grammatical instruction, project-based learning, translation practice, online discussions, virtual tours, and other interactive educational formats. The integration of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence and immersive technologies, creates new opportunities for interactive and distance learning, ensuring continuous access to education regardless of learners' geographical location. The findings demonstrate that the digital ecosystem of the virtual Japanese Culture Club fosters the development of linguistic competence, promotes intercultural dialogue, enhances ecological awareness (radioactivity discourse in literary works), thereby ensuring the accessibility, sustainability, and effectiveness of the educational process in a global context.

Key words: educational ecosystem, Japanese language, radioactivity discourse in literary works, intercultural communication, memory studies.

Олена ГАЄВСЬКА,

orcid.org/0000-0001-6850-8757

кандидат філологічних наук,

доцент

Навчально-наукового інституту філології

Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка

(Київ, Україна) olenasan@gmail.com

ЦИФРОВА ЕКОСИСТЕМА КЛУБУ ВИВЧЕННЯ ЯПОНСЬКОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ: ЕФЕКТИ ПАМ'ЯТІ ТА МІЖДИСЦИПЛІНАРНА ДИНАМІКА

У статті досліджуються проблеми формування цифрової екосистеми віртуального гуртка (клубу) японської мови та культури як інноваційного освітнього середовища, яке інтегрує вивчення іноземної мови, культури та студій пам'яті. Метою дослідження є обґрунтування створення, оприлюднення та розповсюдження структурних компонентів цифрової екосистеми клубу й визначення їхнього впливу на розвиток мовної компетентності, критичного мислення та міжкультурної комунікації серед учасників цього клубу. Методологічна основа, яка є базою екосистеми клубу, ґрунтується на міждисциплінарному підході, що поєднує методи аналізу та синтезу в межах літературознавства, компаративістики, екокрітики, педагогіки, студій пам'яті. У дослідженні проаналізовано результати опитування, проведеного серед учасників клубу, щодо значущості різних компонентів екосистеми (онлайн-платформи, цифрові архіви, віртуальні музеї, інструменти для вивчення мови та літератури,

комунікаційні середовища, та ін.). Результати свідчать, що цифрові архіви, онлайн-словники та віртуальні музеї є найбільш популярними для вивчення іноземної мови серед студентів. Це підкреслює їх важливу роль у формуванні навчального середовища гуртка. Водночас деякі компоненти, зокрема онлайн-платформи та комунікаційні інструменти, потребують подальшого розвитку. Особливу увагу приділено ролі планування й розробки курсу, що має бути основою гуртка з вивчення японської мови та культури в міжкультурному та компаративному контекстах з огляду на складність її писемних систем. Визначено основні напрями діяльності клубу, які охоплюють традиційне «лексико-граматичне навчання», проєктне навчання, перекладацьку практику, онлайн-дискусії, віртуальні екскурсії, ін. Продemonстровано інтеграцію цифрових технологій (штучний інтелект, іммерсивні технології включно з віртуальною реальністю), яка створює нові можливості для інтерактивного та дистанційного навчання, забезпечуючи доступ до навчання в будь-який час, не залежно від місця перебування учасника освітнього процесу. У результаті дослідження нами було визначено, що цифрова екосистема віртуального клубу японської культури сприяє розвитку мовної компетентності, міжкультурного діалогу, екологічної свідомості (через тексти з включенням радіоактивного дискурсу), забезпечуючи доступність та ефективність освітнього процесу в глобальному контексті.

Ключові слова: освітня екосистема, японська мова, радіоактивний дискурс в літературі, міжкультурна комунікація, студії пам'яті.

In the context of globalization and the ongoing digital transformation of education, compounded by global challenges such as pandemics and large-scale social disruptions, traditional modes of studying the Japanese language and culture are becoming increasingly inaccessible to students due to financial, geographical and structural constraints. Within this framework, virtual communities serve to significantly broaden participation, rendering Japanese studies accessible to individuals with Internet access, irrespective of their geographical location or socioeconomic status. Simultaneously, the establishment of such digital learning environments ensures the continuity of education, a factor of particular importance in periods of instability. These periods may be conceptualized as liminal states, situated within a broader theoretical constellation that resonates with Benjamin's notion of the passage as a site of transition and mnemonic accumulation (Benjamin, 1999). Within this liminal context, virtual educational communities may function as spaces of productive *communitas*, supporting learners through shared practices, mutual engagement, collective meaning-making and the visualization of diverse aspects of memory. For this reason, a growing body of research draws attention to the concept of the digital ecosystem within the educational environment [1; 2; 3]. This concept foregrounds the intricate interconnectedness of digital platforms, memory effects, incoming informational resources and diverse pedagogical practices. Such ecosystems generate expanded opportunities for the development of inclusive and resilient learning models in interdisciplinary way.

The problem statement. Traditionally, the study of Japan required physical access to specialized resources and academic expertise, often necessitating travel to Japan or established academic centers to engage with the field. However, with the advent of the Internet and digital technologies, access to Japa-

nese studies has become increasingly democratized, enabling a global audience to participate in this area of scholarship. Virtual libraries, online courses, digital dictionaries and archives, as well as various discussion forums, have become integral components of the Japanese studies ecosystem. Researchers focus on how the digital ecosystem can contribute to foreign language teaching, as this field is new and promising. They analyze which tools can improve language acquisition, promote immersion in the language environment, support an individual approach to learning, develop communication skills, form and develop memory, etc. [4]. Within various eco-spaces, the study of literature – particularly environmentally oriented texts – acquires special significance, as it enables the interpretation of ecological themes such as human – environment interaction in various dimensions.

In this regard, *the integration of ecocritical approaches*, as proposed by Garrard (Ecocriticism, 2012) [5], which proposes analyzing literature through the lens of ecological and cultural memory, foregrounding key ecological themes such as nature, environment, catastrophe and human–nature interaction, allows for the analysis of literary texts through the interrelation of ecological and cultural memory, foregrounding shared environmental concerns. Such an approach is particularly productive in a comparative context, where literary representations of ecological catastrophe – such as those found in Ukrainian and Japanese traditions – reveal convergences in cultural responses to environmental challenges. Through the study of these texts within eco-spaces, learners can engage with transnational experiences of environmental crisis, thereby fostering deeper intercultural understanding and reinforcing the interconnectedness of global ecological and cultural narratives.

Garrard conceptualizes ecocritical analysis through a set of recurring images (pollution, apocalypse, animals and the Earth itself), that mediate envi-

ronmental understanding through literary representation. This study further draws upon the foundational contributions of Halbwachs (1992) [6], J. Assmann, and A. Assmann (2011) [7,8], as well as Nora's concept of *les lieux de mémoire* (1989) [9], medias in memory (2011) by Erll [10] which collectively constitute the theoretical basis of contemporary memory studies. The works of Halbwachs and A. Assmann establish memory as a complex socio-cultural process shaped by the interplay of individual experience, liminal conditions, cultural practices, with particular emphasis on its communicative and cultural dimensions. Within the humanities, these approaches provide a methodological framework for analysing the paradigm of memory and the interpretative processes through which the past is understood and reconstructed. In the present study, they constitute the conceptual foundation for the design and implementation of the Culture Club as an innovative educational environment. The development of the Club's digital ecosystem is informed by interdisciplinary research on the memory paradigm, encompassing its cultural, literary, and cognitive dimensions, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of memory as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon. Despite their increasing significance in contemporary education, digital ecosystems have not yet received adequate scholarly attention. Although research in this area has expanded over the past decade, the annual number of published studies has remained relatively modest, averaging fewer than twenty articles per year and reaching a peak of only twenty-five publications in 2022. This trend is particularly striking given the considerable potential of digital ecosystems to transform educational practices, foster innovative learning environments, and enhance the quality, accessibility of education.

Rojas and Chiappe (2024) [11] have analyzed a total of 135 studies related to the digital ecosystem

and education, and proposed the following components of the digital educational ecosystem, which are generalizable to any academic discipline (Fig. 1): users (their digital skills, emotional experiences, open communities), applications (videogames, digital footprints, social media), networks (coverage), services (informal learning, tutoring, data analysis).

The analysis of research on the digital learning ecosystem shows that such a system is flexible, it should adapt to learning goals, special students' learning styles, their needs and levels of knowledge about the educational field.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

It is important to note that the online course requires a scientific approach ensuring effective foreign language communication teaching methods in the form of: observation (viewing multimedia fragments in the practices described below); surveys (or problem solving), which are expediently used by teachers themselves on the part of students; reasoning and discussion; experimentation (the study of the material can be completed with the homework of composing a work based on an active dictionary); networking (creation of special chat groups for extra-auditory teacher-student communication) [12, 13, 14].

The concept of a digital ecosystem denotes a virtual environment in which technology, culture and community co-exist in a symbiotic relationship. This perspective may be further supported by ecocritical approaches, which emphasize the interconnectedness of human and non-human systems. As Garrard argues, environmental issues cannot be understood solely in scientific terms but must be examined as products of cultural ideologies shaping human behaviors and interaction with the environment [5]. As the more-than-human approach seeks to move beyond anthropocentric worldviews, it merits further discussion because of its fundamentally relational character. At the same time, it is essential to move beyond

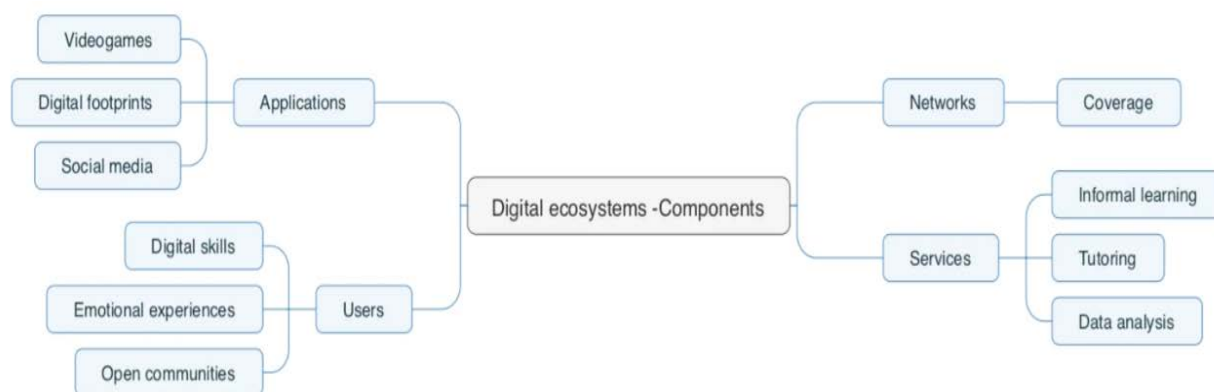


Fig. 1. Classification of components of the digital educational ecosystem by Rojas and Chiappe [11]

rigid conceptual frameworks in favor of an integrative and relational perspective that situates environmental challenges within communities and the interconnected networks of human and more-than-human actors, both in lived reality and in literary representation. In this context, digital technologies function as powerful catalysts for dialogue on the enduring environmental consequences of radioactive contamination and their literary representation, fostering community engagement and relational forms of knowledge production. Technology-based clubs facilitate intercultural exchange and community formation through the integration of virtual language-learning tools [15, 16], virtual museum platforms [17], and other digital resources [18], thereby creating participatory environments in which communities collectively negotiate environmental meanings, share lived experiences, in which participants explore the intersections of literature and memory (*Appendix 1. Core Literary Texts for Culture Club*).

In this context, digital technologies function as powerful catalysts for dialogue on the enduring environmental consequences of radioactive contamination and their literary representation, fostering community engagement and relational forms of knowledge production. Technology-based clubs facilitate intercultural exchange and community formation through the integration of virtual language-learning tools [15, 16], virtual museum platforms [17], and other digital resources [18], creating collaborative environments.

Researchers Nishio, Fujikake & Osawa (2020) focus on a mobility-based Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project with a Japanese institution that creates a unique online environment to enhance students' second language learning. This study was conducted as part of the COIL project between the University of North Georgia (UNG) and Nanzan University (NU), which was conducted in the spring of 2019. UNG is a public university with a relatively new Japanese program in rural Georgia, USA. NU is a private liberal arts university located in Nagoya, Japan with well-established international programs. In 2018, the two institutions began a COIL exchange and partnership and offer various COIL programs and courses, including those involving student mobility. One such program is called SakuraProject, which was launched in early 2019. Under the plan, UNG and NU students collaborate online for six weeks, after which NU students participate in a two-week study abroad program at UNG for in-person collaboration. The project's learning objectives were to (1) enhance cross-cultural collaboration skills by working together to compare college life in Japan and the United States and (2) improve students' practical

abilities in the target language, especially reading and communication skills. The topic of the collaboration was student life in Japan and the United States. Before the collaboration began in early January, institutional and joint orientations were conducted, and four groups were randomly created, each consisting of one UNG student and two to three NTU students. COIL activities included reading texts in the target language and group text discussions on an app called LINE, as well as video discussions on Skype, weekly journals and individual essay writing in the target language. The online discussion phase consisted of two periods: (1) a three-week discussion on the topic of "Life at a Japanese College" in Japanese and (2) a two-week discussion on the topic of "Life at an American College" in English. At the end of the second period, each group selected a sub-topic for American college life that they would use to create an informational video in English during face-to-face communication. After the project, faculty researchers (i.e., authors) at each institution interviewed each student. A learning management system called Canvas served as a platform for administrative purposes such as distributing materials and submitting and grading assignments [19].

Chung & Long (2024) research focuses on virtual environments to enhance students' immersion in language education practices that incorporate the cultural context of the country of language being studied [20].

Aim of the study is to delineate and theoretically substantiate the constituent components of the digital ecosystem of a virtual Japanese Culture Club.

Research Methods. Research methods include the analysis of pedagogical, methodological and special literature on the creation of a digital ecosystem for the organization of a virtual Japanese culture club; study of the pedagogical experience of using online resources for teaching of Japanese language during the implementation of the goals of the virtual Japanese culture club; analysis of the pedagogical experience of using online resources at the educational and scientific Institute of Philology of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv; synthesis and generalization to determine the main elements of the digital ecosystem when organizing the virtual Japanese culture club; analysis of research results by surveying students on the use of online resources in learning Japanese.

Presentation of the main research material. It should be emphasized that the digital ecosystem is not oriented towards a single, fixed objective; rather, it is structured in accordance with the goals articulated by participants within the educational environment and retains the capacity to adapt dynamically to their evolving needs. In the process of selecting digital

tools for the virtual Japanese studies club (Fig. 3), the following objectives were delineated:

- Learning the Japanese language: club members will have the opportunity to study and compare Japanese and Ukrainian literary texts, starting from the basic level and gradually progressing to more advanced topics and texts (see Appendix 1);
- Introduction to Japanese culture: the course will include lectures and presentations on traditions, history, art and literature of Japan (both traditional and contemporary);
- Communication practice: participants will be able to practice their language skills through interactive sessions, communication with native speakers and other club members;
- Interactive tasks: the use of various digital tools and materials for completing assignments, watching videos and participating in discussions [18];
- Research activities: participants will explore the Japanese language and culture through their involvement in educational projects, with focus on comparative approach – including modeling the relationship between cultures, analyzing patterns of co-evolution between cultural and behavioral factors, and comparing the meaning of constructs, expressions across languages [15, 16];
- Memory studies strategy: participants are encouraged to engage with methods that enhance retention and understanding through structured memory techniques and reflective practices that integrate cognitive psychology, linguistics, and cultural studies [17];
- Collaborative learning: collaborative learning, infused with social and emotional learning (SEL) prin-

ciples, creates an enriching environment for participants to explore Japanese language and culture [23].

Scholars emphasise a range of digital tools that are essential for students learning a foreign language [21], including online communities and discussion forums, online platforms, digital archives and libraries, virtual language-learning tools, online dictionaries, virtual museums and communication platforms (Fig. 2).

Online communities and discussion forums play a significant role in facilitating engagement with Japanese culture in the digital age. These platforms provide learners, enthusiasts, and scholars with opportunities to interact, exchange ideas, and deepen their understanding of Japanese traditions, arts and contemporary cultural practices. [21]. Online environments and dedicated forums like Japan Reference (JREF, <https://jref.com/>) offer spaces for discussions on a wide range of topics, from traditional arts to anime, manga and modern Japanese lifestyles. Online communities and discussion forums are important in facilitating engagement with Japanese culture; as such platforms typically support several key forms of interaction. First, they enable question-and-answer exchanges, allowing users to seek clarification on aspects of the Japanese language, customs and history. Second, they foster cultural exchange through the sharing of photos, videos and personal experiences related to engagement with Japanese culture. Third, they facilitate event coordination, as communities collaborate to organize virtual activities, including online tea ceremonies and calligraphy workshops. For instance, Reddit's Japanese cultural community function as dynamic hubs

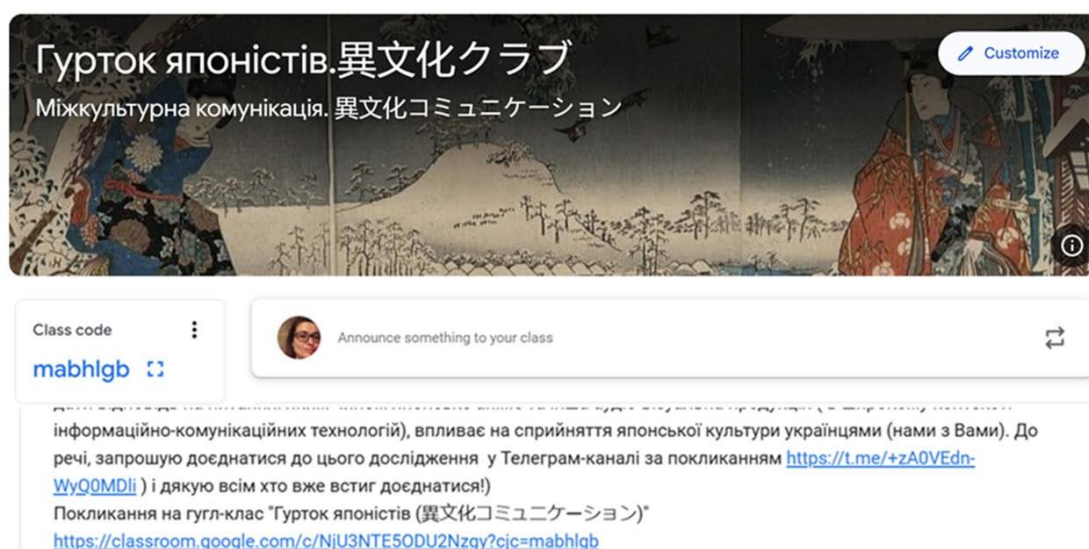


Fig. 2. Fragment of the Japanese culture club page

for discussions encompassing both traditional folklore and contemporary popular culture.

Noprival, Sadiq & Rofiah (2022) [22] studying multiple foreign languages in a community of practice highlight eight themes: empowering social media, innovative language engagement activities, learning support, personal freedom of learning, intercultural sharing, sharing online learning platforms, language learning for free, and social networking. The implications suggest that language enthusiasts can adapt to how multilinguals learn foreign languages from this community.

Some platforms are specifically tailored for Japanese culture enthusiasts (WaniKani Community, which focuses on Japanese language learners, discussing kanji, vocabulary, and grammar; Amino's Japanese Culture Community : a mobile app-based platform for sharing multimedia content and joining special interest-based groups (SIG); Japan-Guide Forums (<https://www.japan-guide.com/forum/quedisplay.html>): a resource for travelers and cultural learners).

Language exchange platforms (HelloTalk or Tandem) combine linguistic learning with cultural insights. Users connect with native speakers to improve their Japanese skills while learning about cultural nuances. In addition, platforms for organizing a circle, such as Google Classroom, Classroomscreen, Linoit, MURAL, Padlet and Moodle, can provide convenient and organized access to all learning materials. Club participants

should easily find and complete assignments, watch video lectures, download additional materials and communicate with the teacher and other participants. Platforms should be able to incorporate various multimedia resources, including video, audio, interactive exercises, and online tests, which will make learning more interesting and effective.

Digital archives and libraries play a crucial role in promoting the study of the Japanese language and culture. These platforms offer access to many resources, from traditional texts and manuscripts to multimedia tools designed for language learners and cultural enthusiasts (Japan's National Diet Library (<https://www.ndl.go.jp/en/>), The Japan Foundation (<https://www.jpf.go.jp/e/>), Kotenseki Digital Archive (<https://guides2.nihu.jp/resources/987>), Waseda University's digital library (<https://www.waseda.jp/library/en/?wovn=en>) among others.

Many platforms offer interactive tools and downloadable content that align with modern teaching methodologies, which provide the study of science, technology and art through an interdisciplinary approach in education.

Digital archives and libraries are indispensable for individuals aiming to achieve proficiency in Japanese and deepen their understanding of the culture. They bridge the gap between historical scholarship and modern technology, ensuring that learners worldwide have equal opportunities to explore Japan's heritage.

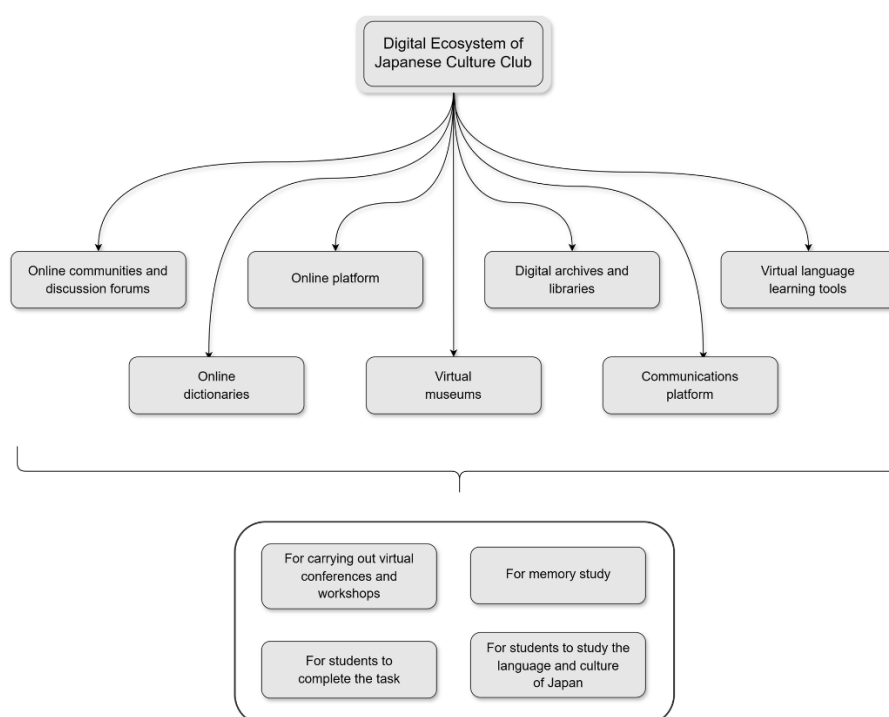


Fig. 3. The digital ecosystem components of the virtual Japanese culture club

Due to virtual reality and live streaming technologies, users can participate in traditional Japanese ceremonies, visit museums or festivals without leaving their homes. This creates a unique opportunity to experience the culture from the inside.

VR tools simulate real-world experiences, providing learners with an immersive way to practice Japanese and experience cultural environments (Mondly VR; ImmerseMe; JapanesePod101; NHK Easy Japanese; Culture Alley, among others). Despite its many advantages, virtual Japanese studies also have their challenges, one is the lack of direct cultural immersion, which only a stay in Japan provides. At the same time, technology is developing rapidly, and the integration of virtual reality and artificial intelligence can significantly reduce this disadvantage. Among the opportunities, a significant expansion of access to knowledge is worth noting. Studying the Japanese language and culture has become available to people worldwide, regardless of their location or financial capabilities. This also contributes to the development of intercultural ties and an increase in understanding between different cultures.

Online dictionaries play a critical role in Japanese language learning as essential tools for understanding vocabulary, kanji, and cultural nuances. Many dictionaries integrate memory-enhancing features such as mnemonics, spaced repetition, and user-generated content, making them valuable for language acquisition and cultural exploration (Jisho.org, Weblio, Tangorin, among others).

Virtual museums provide immersive and interactive environments that are highly effective in fostering Japanese language acquisition and deepening cultural understanding. These digital platforms enhance learning experiences and support memory retention strategies by integrating visual, auditory and textual elements among them: 1). National Museum of Japanese History (<https://guides.nccjapan.org/researchaccess/national-history-museum-rekihaku>) with interactive maps of environment and timelines to contextualize historical events and enables learners to practice reading and listening skills while exploring cultural narratives; 2). The Kyoto Costume Institute Virtual Tour (<https://www.kci.or.jp/en/>) is a digital archive featuring traditional Japanese clothing and textiles – material archives (images of kimonos, historical garments with searchable database for learning textile-related vocabulary enhance retention through visual association of words with cultural artifacts); 3). The Edo-Tokyo Museum Virtual Experience (<https://www.edo-tokyo-museum.or.jp/en/>) focuses on Edo-period culture, development of modern Tokyo with virtual recreations of historical Edo architecture where

learners can explore period-specific insights; 4). *The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum* (<https://hpm-museum.jp/?lang=eng>) is dedicated to documenting the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and its aftermath, presenting historical materials, survivor testimonies, *visual archives* that convey the human and environmental consequences of nuclear catastrophe. Through its digital exhibitions, the museum provides access to curated collections that enable learners to engage narratives of trauma and memory reconstruction within a global context.

It should be noted that the above-mentioned components of the virtual club ecosystem constitute its core framework and may be further expanded and adapted in accordance with learners' educational needs, instructors' pedagogical approaches, and other emerging requirements. To evaluate the proposed digital ecosystem, a survey was conducted among individuals interested in learning the Japanese language. The questionnaire was also made available through the Club's Google Classroom platform in 2024. The study was carried out over a one-year period (2024–2025) and sought to identify participants' needs and expectations regarding the structural components of the virtual club ecosystem and the digital tools required to support the educational process. Respondents were asked to assess the significance of each component using a five-point Likert scale and were invited to suggest additional elements they considered relevant. The findings indicate that all proposed ecosystem components were regarded as important for the effective organization and functioning of the virtual club. In particular, virtual museums received the highest possible rating from all respondents (5 – 100%), while online dictionaries were also evaluated highly (rating 4 – 32%; rating 5 – 68%). These findings confirm the educational value of integrating interactive digital resources into the virtual learning environment and highlight participants' strong demand for accessible, content-rich, and technologically enhanced learning tools.

Online communities and discussion forums (ratings 4 and 5 – 61%) were also evaluated as important; however, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the thematic focus of discussions. This suggests the need to develop dedicated forums that cover the issues related to the study of the Japanese language and culture. The ecosystem component online platforms received generally positive evaluations (56% at ratings 4 and 5), although approximately one-third of respondents (34%) assessed them at a moderate level, indicating potential for further development depending on instructional design and organizational strategies. Overall, the highest evaluations

were accorded to digital archives and libraries, online dictionaries and virtual museums, thereby highlighting their pivotal role within the digital ecosystem. Conversely, components such as online platforms and communication platforms require further optimization to address users' needs.

Conclusions. In light of the findings outlined above, several strategic directions for the further development of the virtual Japanese culture club may be delineated. Participants of virtual are expected to engage in systematic and sustained practice aimed at the acquisition of lexical and grammatical competence. This process entails the construction of associative memory maps within specific thematic domains (including, where relevant, the discourse of radioactivity in literary contexts), alongside the development of expandable lexical repositories. Continuous instructor feedback remains integral to monitoring learner progress and addressing emergent errors. Concurrently, project-based learning centered on Japanese culture should be further consolidated. Both individual and collaborative projects may engage with diverse cultural domains, including presentations from traditional festivals, literary texts, thereby facilitating the creation of structured memory archives.

Within this framework, the structural complexity of the Japanese writing systems (Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji), which necessitates advanced mechanisms of retention and recall, creates pathways for the integration of literary texts into the learning process. Literary texts selected for further analysis – articulation of “radioactive discourse”, as well as literary representations of nuclear trauma in the literary works of Kenzaburō Ōe (among other Japanese writers) – offer critical insights into the narrative dimensions of radioactive discourse. These materials may be productively integrated into translation practices as a core

component of the learning process. The adaptation of literary texts between Japanese and learners' native languages constitutes a cognitively complex and culturally mediated activity, requiring the deployment of both linguistic competence and memory-based strategies. Such practices contribute to the development of analytical reasoning and intercultural awareness. Regularly organized online discussions and debates further enhance communicative competence and enable participants to engage critically with diverse comparative perspectives on contemporary issues related to Japan [14].

Through digital platforms, participants in virtual tours may explore culturally and historically significant sites in Japan, including museums (as material archives) and natural landscapes (as environmental archives). This approach fosters contextualized understanding and supports experiential learning, particularly through engagement with key ecocritical concepts as mediated by literary representations of pollution, non-human life and the Earth itself. As digital technologies continue to evolve, the virtual Japanese language community is expected to expand and diversify. The integration of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, augmented reality will further intensify immersive learning environments where learners may participate in real-time virtual lectures, engage in simulations of traditional cultural practices, interact with AI-driven conversational agents in Japanese language. Ultimately, the digital ecosystem of the virtual Japanese Culture Club constitutes a dynamic environment for engagement with language and culture. Through the strategic deployment of digital tools and platforms, such environments facilitate accessible and interactive learning, while fostering intercultural exchange, advancing global memory-oriented inquiry and expanding knowledge about Japan.

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APPENDIX 1. CORE LITERARY TEXTS FOR THE CULTURE CLUB

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