

Development of The “Hoterun-Go!” Mobile App for Learning Japanese Vocabulary in The Hospitality Industry

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ABSTRACT

Mastering vocabulary is one of the essential aspects of language learning, particularly for students preparing to enter the job market, especially in the hospitality industry. This study aims to develop a mobile learning app titled “Hoterun-go!” to help students in the Japanese language and literature program at the university of informatics Indonesia learn Japanese vocabulary related to the hospitality industry in a more interactive and contextual way. This research employs the research and development (R&D) method, focusing on the design and development process of the app using the Thunkable platform. The app offers vocabulary organized by hotel department, such as front desk, housekeeping, and food and beverage. Each vocabulary word is accompanied by a definition, example sentences, and an image. It also features a quiz function via Google Forms to practice and assess knowledge. The app contains approximately 50 vocabulary words and is well-designed, considering that it is accessible via a mobile phone. This allows students to learn at their own pace. The use of images and example sentences helps students understand the vocabulary and apply it to real-life situations. The “Hoterun-go!” app is an excellent alternative to the traditional method of memorizing vocabulary. This app would undoubtedly help students acquire practical mastery of vocabulary and communication in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: *Mobile learning, Japanese vocabulary, Hospitality industry, Vocabulary acquisition, Thunkable*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is one of the fundamental elements of language learning, as it facilitates understanding and communication, both spoken and written (Nation, 2013). In the study of Japanese, mastery of vocabulary is particularly important when students are required to use the language in a professional context, such as the hospitality industry. Students in the Japanese Language and Literature program at the Indonesian University of Information Technology must prepare for an internship in Japan, a significant portion of which involves the hospitality and service sectors. Consequently, mastery of Japanese hospitality vocabulary is essential for effective communication in real-world situations.

Previous research has shown that mobile learning and digital media can promote vocabulary acquisition. (Alzahrani, 2015) found that mobile learning can improve vocabulary mastery through repeated exposure. (Traxler, 2016) explains that mobile learning allows students to access content anytime and anywhere. (Rahmawati & Sudirman, 2021) argue that interactive quizzes can enhance student engagement and help assess learning outcomes. (Salsabila & Setiana, 2025) demonstrate that

digital teaching materials promote self-directed learning, while (Aiman & Arianingsih, 2025) emphasize the need for practical teaching materials for Japanese in the fields of tourism and hospitality. However, most previous studies have focused on general or tourism-related vocabulary, whereas this study focuses specifically on hospitality vocabulary with visual and contextual elements.

In this context, this study aims to develop a mobile learning app called "Hoterun-go!" to help students acquire Japanese hospitality vocabulary. This study employs the research and development (R&D) method.

The development process includes identifying needs, designing the app, developing it using Thinkable, and implementing the lexical content. This app is designed to provide vocabulary organized by category, example sentences, images, and a quiz feature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vocabulary learning is an important aspect of language acquisition. (Nation, 2013) explains that vocabulary knowledge enables learners to understand spoken and written language and supports effective communication. Learners with a larger vocabulary repertoire are generally able to comprehend text and conversations more easily.

In Japanese language learning, specialized vocabulary related to professional fields is also important. (Yamada, 2018) states that learners World Health Organization plan to work in international environments need to understand vocabulary that is relevant to their professional field.

The development of digital technology has also influenced language education. One approach that has become increasingly popular is mobile learning. (Traxler, 2016) define mobile learning as the use of mobile devices to support learning activities. Through mobile learning, students can access learning materials anytime and anywhere, making the learning process more flexible (Kuimova et al., 2018)

Several studies have also discussed the development of digital learning media in education. Research published in the Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research shows that the use of digital learning media can help students access learning materials more easily and support independent learning outside the classroom. Digital media such as mobile applications can provide more flexible learning opportunities and allow students to review materials repeatedly according to their learning needs. This indicates that the development of mobile based learning media has the potential to support language learning, including vocabulary learning in specific professional fields(Salsabila & Setiana, 2025).

Previous studies have shown that mobile learning can promote vocabulary acquisition, as learners have the opportunity to review instructional materials repeatedly on their mobile devices (Alzahrani, 2015). Previous research also indicates that mobile language learning often takes place in structured environments and focuses more on general language skills than on the contextual use of vocabulary (Shadiev et al., 2017).

In addition,, interactive learning media can improve students learning experience. Interactive quizzes can be used as evaluation tools that help students riview their understanding of the leaning materials. (Rahmawati & Sudirman, 2021) explain that interactive quizzes can make learning activities more engaging and allow students to evaluate their learning progress.

Research conducted by Aiman & Arianingsih (2025) also highlights the importance of developing learning media that supports Japanese language learning in specific fields such as tourism and hospitality. The study shows that learners need learning media that are practical, easy to access, and relevant to real world professional contexts.

Based on these previous studies, the development of digital learning media such mobile applications has strong potential to support vocabulary learning. Therefore, developing a mobile learning application

such as “hoterun-go!” can provide an alternative learning tools that helps students learn Japanese hospitality vocabulary more effectively.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a Research and Development (R&D) approach to develop a mobile learning application for Japanese hospitality vocabulary.

Research Development is a method used to produce a product and examine its development process (Sugiyono, 2019). In educational research, this method is often used to develop learning media or educational applications.

According to Creswell (2014), research design provides a framework that guides the process of collecting and analyzing information in a study. In this research, the design focuses on the development process of a mobile learning application.

The development process of the “hoterun-go!” application includes several stages :

1. Needs identification
2. Application design
3. Application development
4. Implementation of vocabulary materials

Application Development

The “hoterun-go!” application was developed as a mobile learning tool designed to support the learning of Japanese hospitality vocabulary. The interface of the application was designed to be easy to use so that learners can navigate the application easily.

The main interface of the application can be seen in figure 1.



Figure 1. Main menu interface of the “Hoterun-go!” application

Vocabulary materials are categorized into several sections related to hotel services.

The vocabulary list interface is presented in a structured format to help learners access vocabulary more easily. An example of the vocabulary list interface is shown in figure 2.



Figure 2. vocabulary list interface

Table 1. Vocabulary Categories

Category	Description
Front Office	Vocabulary related to guest reception, check-in, check-out, and reservation services
Housekeeping	Vocabulary related to room cleaning and housekeeping tasks
Restaurant Service	Vocabulary related to food service and guest dining

Table 2. Main features of the application

No	Feature	Description
1	Vocabulary List	Displays Japanese hospitality vocabulary and its meaning
2	Example Sentences	Shows how the vocabulary is used in context
3	Images	Visual illustrations to help learners understand vocabulary

4	Category Menu	Organizes vocabulary based on hotel service departments
5	Quiz	Vocabulary quiz integrated through Google Forms



Figure 3. Vocabulary explanation with image and example sentence

Table 3. Sample Vocabulary in the Application

Japanese	Romaji	Meaning
受付	Uketsuke	Reception
予約	Yoyaku	Reservation
客室	Kyakushitsu	Guest room
清掃	Seisou	Cleaning
注文	Chuumon	Order

To evaluate learners understanding, the application provides a quiz feature integrated through google forms. The quiz interface used in the application is presented in figure 4.

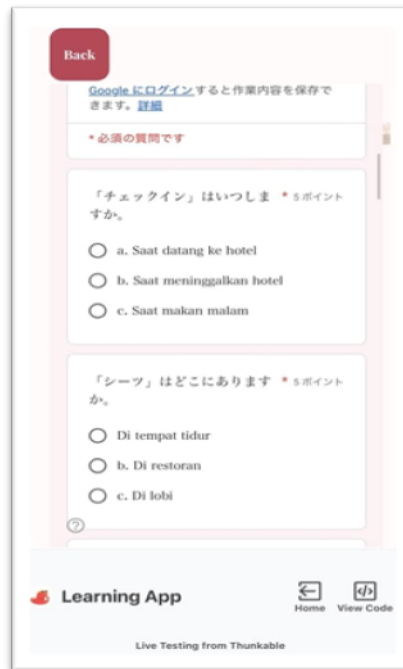


Figure 4. Quiz feature integrated through Google Forms

Currently, the application contains approximately 50 vocabulary items, but it's designed to be expanded to more than 100 vocabulary items in future development.

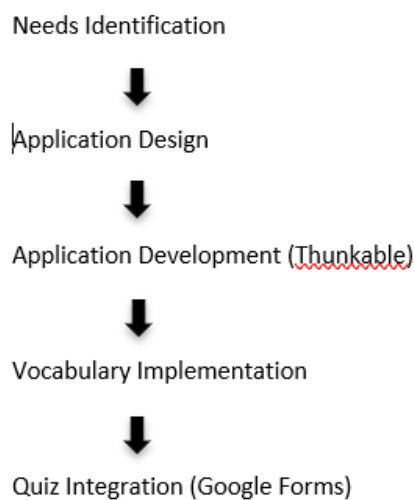


Figure 5. Application Development Process

DISCUSSION

The development of the “Hoterun-go!” app demonstrates that mobile learning can facilitate vocabulary acquisition in a flexible manner. This is consistent with the findings of (Traxler, 2016) and (Kuimova et al., 2018), who emphasize that mobile devices allow students to access content anytime and anywhere, thereby creating a more flexible and self-directed learning environment than in a traditional classroom setting.

The main conclusion of this study is the importance of visual and contextual support. The use of images and example sentences in “Hoterun-go!” helps students understand vocabulary in a situational context. This supports (Nation, 2013) theory that vocabulary learning is more effective when students see how words are used in real-life scenarios. Furthermore, the integration of interactive quizzes via Google Forms confirms the findings of (Rahmawati & Sudirman, 2021), which show that interactive elements can enhance student engagement and serve as effective self-assessment tools.

Comparison with Previous Studies

1. Although this study shares similarities with previous research on the effectiveness of mobile learning, there are several notable differences:
2. Content specificity: Unlike (Alzahrani, 2015) or (Shadiev et al., 2017), who focus more on general vocabulary or a structured environment, “Hoterun-go!” is specifically designed for the hospitality industry. This addresses the gap identified by (Yamada, 2018) regarding the need for specific professional vocabulary.
3. Visual and contextual integration: Compared to the digital resources mentioned by (Salsabila & Setiana, 2025), which may focus on grammar or common verbs, this app specifically combines three elements—definitions, images, and example sentences—tailored to different hotel departments (front desk, housekeeping, etc.).
4. Practical utility for training programs: Although (Aiman & Arianingsih, 2025) emphasize the importance of educational materials in the field of tourism, this study offers a concrete solution in the form of a Thunkable-based app that students can use immediately to prepare for an internship in Japan.
5. Overall, these results show that “Hoterun-go!” is not merely a repetition of existing theories, but a practical development of mobile learning specifically designed to meet the professional needs of the Japanese hospitality industry.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study focused on the development of the “Hoterun-go!” mobile application as a learning tool for Japanese hospitality vocabulary. The application was developed using the thinkable platform and provides vocabulary materials related to hotel services such as front office, housekeeping, and restaurant service. Each vocabulary item is accompanied by its meaning, example sentence, and illustrative image to help learners understand the context of the world the application also includes a quiz feature integrated through Google Forms to allow learners to review their understanding of vocabulary. For future development, the application could include a larger number of vocabulary items and additional interactive features to enhance the learning experience. For future development, it is recommended that the application include a wider range of vocabulary related to hospitality services and more varied quiz formats to enhance the learning experience. Future studies may also involve a larger number of participants and examine the effectiveness of the application in improving student’s vocabulary mastery in greater detail.

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