



CHI'E Vol. 13 (1) (2025)

**Chi'e: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Jepang**

**Terindeks Sinta 3**

<https://journal.unnes.ac.id/journals/chie/index>



# Beyond the Classroom: Exploring Self-Directed Learning Strategies of an Indonesian Japanese Language Learner

**Wury Dwiwardani<sup>1\*</sup>, Wahyu Handayani Setyaningsih<sup>2</sup>, Retno Dewi Wulandari<sup>3</sup>**

Japanese for business communication and professional, Sekolah Vokasi, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia

email: wury\_dwiwardani@ugm.ac.id

\*) Corresponding Author

## Article Info

### Article History:

Received: November 2025

Approved: January 2025

Published: March 2025

### Keywords:

Self-directed learning strategies, Japanese language learners, technology resources, and learning strategies.

## Abstract

*Advancements in technology, particularly the internet, have provided learners with extensive opportunities to access various resources for independent learning. However, not all learners can effectively utilize digital media and technology, and many face challenges in selecting appropriate materials and methods to support their learning. This study examines the self-directed learning strategies of a Japanese language learner, addressing the following questions: (1) What strategies are employed for independent learning? (2) What media are used, and how does he facilitate self-directed learning? This study employs a qualitative research approach, specifically narrative inquiry, to explore the learner's experiences. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed to identify patterns in self-directed learning strategies. Findings reveal that the learner adopts multiple strategies, including goal setting for short- and long-term learning, adaptation, combination, evaluation, and validation. Additionally, the learner engages with various online resources, such as interactive learning platforms, receptive learning materials, social media, and authentic content. The study further identifies six key aspects of technology used in self-directed learning, with variations in frequency based on individual needs and perceived advantages and limitations.*

© 2025 Universitas Negeri Semarang

✉ Alamat korespondensi:

Gedung B4 Lantai 2 FBS Unnes

Kampus Sekaran, Gunungpati, Semarang, 50229

E-mail: chie@unnes.ac.id

E-ISSN 2685-6662

P-ISSN 2252-6250

## INTRODUCTION

Every language has its uniqueness that distinguishes it from other languages. These differences affect the difficulty felt by those who learn it as a foreign language, especially when the foreign language has many differences from the language that has been mastered before. Some factors that can lead to these difficulties include differences in accent, morphology, and writing systems (Racoma, as cited in Quintos, 2021). In addition, different cultural nuances also bring additional challenges (as mentioned in Quintos, 2021).

Therefore, Japanese differs from Indonesian and is often considered one of the most difficult foreign languages for Indonesian learners. This difficulty can be seen from the fact that although the number of Japanese language learners in Indonesia is quite large, the percentage of learners who reach high levels in Japanese language proficiency tests is still relatively low compared to the number of learners. Data shows that the number of Japanese learners in Indonesia who take one of the Japanese Language Proficiency Tests (JLPT) at high levels is fewer than those who take the test at low levels.<sup>1</sup>

One group of Japanese language learners in Indonesia is students studying in Japanese Language Study Programs in higher education. These students aim to use Japanese as an asset to compete in the world of work. This goal can be realized if the competencies align with workplace needs. In general, to communicate actively and productively in the world of work, the level of Japanese that must be mastered is intermediate or advanced.

For Japanese language students, efforts to acquire Japanese language skills are mainly done in class activities. However, because the difficulty level of Japanese is perceived to be

relatively high, it takes a long time to master the language. This condition results in learning activities that rely not solely on class activities. Through various strategies and efforts, students must independently improve their Japanese language competence outside the classroom.

Some studies show that learners who achieve high proficiency are often associated with their success in learning activities outside the classroom (Nunan, 1991; Pickard, 1995, as cited in Benson, 2011). The development of information technology nowadays also opens up wider opportunities to obtain various necessary materials that support self-learning activities outside the classroom. Many Japanese language learners have started actively accessing multiple media to develop their Japanese language skills.

The problem is that not all Japanese language learners, including students of the Japanese Studies Program, actively carry out self-study activities using various media to improve their mastery of Japanese. In addition, the abundance of learning resources that can be accessed creates difficulties in choosing effective materials and methods to utilize them.

The diverse learning activities outside the classroom, which are part of learning strategies, are very likely to occur considering that each learner's learning strategy is influenced by various factors such as learning style, motivation, beliefs, gender, career orientation, personality, and so on (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Nyikos, 1990; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Green & Oxford, 1995; Yang, 1999 as cited in Gao, 2003). In this case, strategies refer to the steps or actions learners choose to develop their foreign language learning activities, their usage, or both (Gao, 2003).

Although most teachers agree on the importance of self-learning outside of class and

---

<sup>1</sup> Data taken from <https://www.jlpt.jp/statistics/index.html> shows that JLPT participants in Indonesia in 2023 in July showed the total number of examinees from the highest level, N1, to the lowest level N5 was 13,347 participants. Of these

examinees at the highest level, N1, a total of 612, the lower level, N2, a total of 1717. JLPT participants in Indonesia in 2023 December totaled 16,468 participants, with 889 N1 level participants and 1977 N2 level participants.

are aware of the variety of student learning activities outside of class, there have not been many attempts to take a closer look at student activities outside of class. This study aims to respond to this issue. The problems in this study are described as follows: 1) Regarding open opportunities to access various learning media, what strategies are chosen by the research informant to develop their Japanese learning activities? 2) What media are used, and how does the informant use them for self-learning?

Several studies have been conducted on self-learning activities and foreign language learning connected to Japanese language learning. One is research conducted on students in Johor Baru, Malaysia, by Liyana Zakaria, Abd Aziz, and Ramayah (2017).

This study raises three main issues, namely: what strategies are used by students in learning Japanese, especially to prepare for Japanese language proficiency exams, how autonomy in learning plays a role in their learning activities, and how the relationship between learning strategies and learner autonomy in Japanese learning activities (Liyana Zakaria, Abd Aziz, & Ramayah, 2017).

This study was conducted quantitatively using a data collection method through questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: (A) demographic information including gender, faculty and year of study; (B) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) adapted from Oxford (1990); and (C) Learner Autonomy Inventory on Language Learning, which was developed based on the questionnaire used by Ustunluoglu (2009) and Sakai, et al. (2010) (Liyana Zakaria et al., 2017).

The results showed that the students used language learning strategies moderately and had average learner autonomy. In addition, it was found that there was a significant correlation between language learning strategies and learner autonomy in Japanese language learning.

The study of Liyana Zakaria, Abd Aziz, and Ramayah is one of the essential references for this research. Although there are similar

issues in the research, Liyana Zakaria, Abd Aziz, and Ramayah's research is quantitative research, which does not specifically and deeply reveal the activities carried out by Japanese language learners when doing self-learning, along with the conditions that may be different for each learner. Understanding the various activities and conditions students face is important because it will be the basis for developing learning activities, so further research still needs to be done.

Self-learning activities at a time when digital media has become part of the daily lives of Japanese language learners will be closely related to learning activities using digital media. Several studies are related to the use of digital media for learning activities of Japanese language learners.

One study by Thornton and Sharples (2005) explores how Japanese language self-education participants use technology to support their learning activities. Thornton and Sharples's research was conducted using in-depth interviews with six participants, four women and two men. Five were in Japan (one Canadian, three Americans, and one Australian), and one (an American) lived in the United States.

The study used the theory from Glaser and Strauss. The results of Thornton and Sharples's research showed patterns of technology use by the interviewees, where they used technology to 1) to manage time and make learning more efficient; 2) to get learning materials when they need them; 3) to provide facilities to try to apply their language skills, through reading and writing activities; 4) to combine learning with entertainment (Thornton & Sharples, 2005).

The study also found some things participants did not do related to technology. Participants rarely used CD-ROMs or websites on the Internet that provide facilities for practising vocabulary, grammar, or listening, citing different levels of language acquisition or materials they did not find interesting. Some

participants had little information about these facilities (Thornton & Sharples, 2005).

Another study related to Japanese language learning activities using digital media was conducted by Kelly (2018). Kelly's research was conducted by examining the responses of first-year Japanese language education participants at a university regarding the use of a Japanese language module, which includes activities involving the use of social media, specifically Facebook.

The study used qualitative methods with case studies (Kelly, 2018). The participants were 106 first-year students in Ireland, aged seventeen to twenty. The results of Kelly's study showed that most students understood that Facebook could facilitate efforts to improve their mastery of the foreign language they were studying. However, it did not show that students liked it or found it interesting as a learning medium (Kelly, 2018).

Some research participants (20%) thought using Facebook as a learning medium was distracting to the language learning environment and wanted to keep Facebook activities as non-academic activities. However, some research participants (36%) felt that using Facebook could play a positive role in encouraging and helping students engage in classroom activities (Kelly, 2018).

These results show that even in studies with a limited group of research participants, there are differences in the comfort level of using technology in the learning process. Kelly suggests conducting further research on the participants' educational backgrounds for future studies.

Thornton, Sharples, and Kelly's research above has similarities with the research in this paper, which is related to self-learning activities and the Japanese language. However, these studies focus more on the use of digital media and do not focus on the specific strategies and methods used by Japanese language learners when doing these activities. This research will continue these studies by looking at learners' self-learning activities to see

how they are connected to improving their abilities.

Another study related to self-language learning activities, which was more specific to learners in Indonesia, was conducted by Noprival, Rafli, Nuruddin, and de Felice (Noprival, Rafli, Nuruddin, & de Felice, 2021). Noprival et al. examined how polyglots in Indonesia experience independent language learning through online platforms.

The study was conducted on polyglots in Indonesia, and the criteria were those who have mastered at least three languages and have experience learning online. The interviews conducted with seven polyglots in Indonesia showed several results. First, these polyglots feel more comfortable using interactive resources (virtual practice) in their language learning. They feel that learning using this medium makes them less anxious when learning a foreign language, and they can use the medium to practice and learn the language remotely.

Another conclusion is that polyglots consider media designed for language learning to be helpful for their learning activities despite the monotony of learning. In addition, various social media sites are perceived as beneficial even though they are not designed for language learning.

Finally, the polyglots in the study enjoyed learning through the use of media that used foreign languages in an authentic way that made them feel like they were not learning a language and were doing the things they do daily, such as watching movies, watching the news, and reading online newspapers. Access to online media is crucial in their journey to becoming proficient in languages that are not widely available. Like the research of Liyana Zakaria, Abd Aziz, and Ramayah, research becomes an essential reference to understanding self-learning activities.

However, the research of Noprival, Rafli, Nuruddin, and de Felice does not deeply highlight the unique conditions individual Japanese language learners face, especially in

Indonesia, so further research related to these matters is still needed.

## METHODS

This research was conducted using qualitative research methods. The qualitative method is an interpretative and naturalistic approach to the world, which means studying things in their natural settings and trying to understand or interpret phenomena based on the perspective of the meaning given by the community (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The qualitative research method was chosen for this study because it supports the research objectives that seek to find the subjective experiences of research informants. In a qualitative approach, knowledge is obtained from subjective experiences, and subjective facts are organised based on individual views (Creswell, 2015).

Various techniques are used in qualitative research, including narrative inquiry. This study uses narrative inquiry, which focuses on how people use stories to make sense of their experiences in areas of inquiry where it is important to understand phenomena from the perspectives of those who experience them. (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014).

The data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with an informant. The analysis focused on identifying the strategies employed by the research participant. In this study, strategy refers to actions or techniques related to foreign language learning-specifically, the steps learners take to enhance their proficiency in a second language or both (Cohen, as cited in Gao, 2003).

The focus of this study is to look at strategies related to self-learning activities. Self-learning in this study refers to independent learning activities outside the classroom/lecture, with the learners themselves as decision-makers. Knowles refers to this activity as self-directed learning, which he defines as a process in which individuals take

the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning objectives, identifying human and material resources for learning, selecting and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Knowles, 1975)

There are several terms to mention learning activities outside the classroom related to locus of control, related to the presence/absence of a teacher, or more broadly, who makes decisions about learning activities, whether the learner himself or another party, such as independent, self-directed, autonomous learning (Benson, 2011).

The informant in this study is a male (age 20), a 6th-semester student at a university in Yogyakarta. The informant passed the JLPT Japanese language proficiency test at the highest level, N1, in his second year of higher education. This achievement is different from other second-year Japanese language students. The results of the in-depth study of the informant's learning journey will be presented as follows.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **The story of the informant, a male student of the Japanese Language Study Program**

The informant explained that his journey of learning Japanese began with a love for Japanese pop culture, such as anime and manga. Initially, the informant was only an admirer with no intention of studying Japanese more deeply. The informant became interested in learning Japanese after seeing colleagues in high school who started learning Japanese. The informant started by learning one of the Japanese scripts, namely hiragana. When learning the simple hiragana writing system, he found that Japanese was not as difficult as he had imagined. This motivated him to continue studying independently. The informant began learning Japanese in the 10th grade of Senior High School.

The informant's parents saw his seriousness early in learning Japanese. Then,

they supported him by financing a private course, which was carried out in a group with several friends. Although this course activity only lasted for 6 months, it helped increase the informant's confidence in learning, especially since, at that time, the informant found his abilities had exceeded those of his colleagues who took the course with him. This fact validated the learning method chosen, even though it did not come from a formal learning institution.

After the private course, the informant continued to study independently through various media. In 2019, before entering university, the informant took and passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level N5, the most basic level. After that, the informant intended to take the higher level JLPT, N3, but it was not implemented because it coincided with the pandemic, which caused the JLPT exam to be cancelled.

Finally, the informant could not take the exam until the informant entered the Japanese language study program. When he became a student, formally, the informant only had a JLPT N5 certificate. However, he had independently reached Japanese language learning materials equivalent to the JLPT N2 level.

The informant used various materials that he got offline and online for self-directed study. He recounted that the material or module he used underwent several changes to adjust to the level of Japanese he was learning.

The learning media used developed gradually through a trial-and-error process. At first, the main focus of learning was memorizing vocabulary. The strategy used was that he learned vocabulary first, and then after that, he learned sentence structure. In the early stages, the informant learned using platforms that focus on learning activities for Japanese language proficiency tests at various levels, such as [www.tanos.co.uk](http://www.tanos.co.uk), and online Japanese language learning platforms for various levels, which are more general, such as Nihon-go Master ([www.nihongomaster.com](http://www.nihongomaster.com)).

The second strategy applied at the beginning was that the informant set a target for the number of vocabulary words he had to memorize daily. This strategy was applied especially when the informant was learning basic-level Japanese (equivalent to JLPT N5 and N4).

When the informant started learning Japanese at a higher level (JLPT N3), he felt that the grammar used was more complicated, so he combined his learning materials with JLPT Exercise textbooks (offline). When the informant learned Japanese with even higher difficulty levels (levels N2 and N1), the informant used learning materials from the Nihon-go no Mori YouTube channel and sites that provide JLPT exercises. Nihongo no Mori is a YouTube channel that is quite popular among Japanese language learners, with a recorded subscriber count of 791K (recorded as of November 21, 24).

This YouTube channel offers a variety of educational Japanese content, from basic to advanced levels. The videos from the channel cover various topics such as vocabulary, grammar, kanji, and everyday conversations, all designed to help foreign speakers learn Japanese. Then, the informant also combined it with efforts to learn kanji after he learned the vocabulary needed at that level through kanji books (kanji dictionary). The learning strategy chosen by the informant is adjusted and changed according to the needs and proficiency level to be achieved at each level. When encountering difficulties, the informant used the HiNative Website (<https://hinative.com/>)

In addition to the various media mentioned above, the informant also used the online communication media Discord. Discord is a text, voice, and video-based communication platform designed to build online communities. The platform, which was initially provided for gamers, then developed into a gathering place and interaction for people with various interests. Users can create or join servers that serve as virtual spaces to

communicate with other members. Servers can be arranged according to topics like games, hobbies, or learning communities.

Through Discord, the informant who initially felt less skilled at communicating felt comfortable practising communicating in spoken Japanese online without meeting face-to-face with their interlocutors. The informant finally used Discord after he tried searching the internet for a way to talk directly with Japanese people online. The informant feels that his activities on Discord have greatly improved his ability to communicate verbally in Japanese.

The informant said that if he had not met Discord, he might not be able to speak Japanese like now; the difference he felt was very far compared to before.

When the informant was asked what his most significant difficulty in learning Japanese was, he mentioned that his greatest difficulty was finding a method that suited him and could give the best results. The informant found his learning strategy after he tried it out, with trial and error, without many recommendations from his surroundings. The informant also mentioned that if he had known the right learning strategy from the beginning, his Japanese language skills would have been mastered more quickly.

### The Informant Learning Strategies

On the one hand, the abundance of information and media is an advantage for learners. However, it is also a challenge that is not easy, especially when choosing the right strategy for utilizing this information and media as part of the learning process. The strategy in this study refers to an understanding related to foreign language learning, namely the steps or actions learners choose to develop their foreign language learning activities, their use, or both (Gao, 2003).

The focus of the strategy discussed in this study is related to self-directed learning, which is defined as a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning objectives, identifying human and

material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (Knowles, 1975).

The various things conveyed by the informant during the interview and in informal conversations after the interview show that the informant is aware that various materials can be accessed to learn Japanese independently. This awareness prompted him to choose one important strategy: to learn Japanese independently before entering the Japanese language study program. He chose this step because he wanted to determine his study program and curriculum by adjusting to his needs and finding the most appropriate way.

This strategy was not carried out without obstacles. The informant said he encountered difficulties, especially when choosing the right media. The informant admitted that he carried out a trial-and-error process during his self-study period until he could find a suitable medium. This indicates that the informant is **evaluating** the effectiveness of the media used for his learning process.

Although he chose to carry out most of his learning activities independently, the informant acknowledged that formal education also played an important role in his learning process. An important strategy is to use formal education as a **validator**.

The informant commented that his short process of taking a private Japanese language course before entering university increased his confidence and validated that his learning method was on the right track. He gained this belief after seeing that his abilities had exceeded the abilities of his colleagues who took the course with him. He conveyed similar thoughts regarding the Japanese language learning he took in college. For him, his learning activities in college are very important for his study journey, especially to validate that what he did during independent learning was correct.

Another important strategy the informant used is **setting learning targets**. The main objective of this activity is to pass the



JLPT Japanese language proficiency test. This goal motivates him to be consistent with his short-term goals. The informant sees that passing the Japanese language JLPT proficiency test at the highest level is the key to opening various doors of opportunity.

The material or module used by the informant undergoes several changes to adjust to the level of Japanese he is learning. The informant **adapted** and developed learning methods and chose the right media to adjust to the development of his Japanese language skills and the difficulty level with the Japanese language, which was his target then.

This step is one of the important strategies in the informant's self-directed learning activities. The informant chose to start his learning stage by learning vocabulary first, according to the level that was his target. When learning this vocabulary, as written in the previous paragraph, the informants' set is consistent with the targets set each day. He memorised and learned how to use it, then continued learning Japanese sentence patterns.

The informant believes, and has proven with his experiences, that vocabulary mastery supports improving Japanese language skills. It has brought him to pass at the highest level in the JLPT. At higher levels, which are equivalent to N3, N2, and N1. He **evaluated** the learning media used and measured the level of difficulty of questions equivalent to that level, which he considers more complex, and finally took a strategy **to combine** online media with learning media offline through printed JLPT practice books, as well as accessing learning videos that discuss Japanese sentence patterns according to the JLPT level presented by the *Nihongo no Mori* YouTube channel. The informant used multiple online media and a combination of online and offline media.

The informant chose not to use authentic media, such as films, too much to learn Japanese. The authentic media referred to here are various products not designed for language teaching but can be used to improve foreign language skills. This authentic media is a

product of native speakers and is used in real-life situations so that the language displayed follows the original context of its use.

The informant found it challenging to capture the vocabulary in Japanese in the media, so he felt that the media was less effective as a learning tool for him. The authentic media he chose to apply the Japanese language material he had learned was *anime*. This choice was made after observing that the articulation of pronunciation in *anime* carried out by dubbers or voice actors was clearer than what he heard in films.

According to the informant, anime is more suitable for him. Other authentic media he uses, such as NHK broadcasts, are precisely after passing the JLPT N1. He considered this step to help him review more quickly. From the explanation above, in the authentic media selection stage, the informant also evaluated the effectiveness of each media, which was adjusted to their Japanese language skills at that time.

This evaluation was also carried out when choosing media to learn to communicate verbally. Foreign language skills cannot be separated from the ability to communicate verbally. The informant saw he had weaknesses in interacting directly in the early days of learning Japanese. Therefore, the informant chose to use Discord to practice speaking in Japanese. The informant felt comfortable communicating through online media and not meeting face-to-face. He admitted that his activities in Discord media helped improve his speaking skills in Japanese.

### Self-Directed Learning Media

The media that can be used to carry out self-directed learning activities are very diverse, with their respective characteristics according to the production objectives of each media. The interview results show that most of the materials the informant uses in self-directed learning outside of formal classroom learning activities are materials they access using internet technology. Various learning media play an important role in supporting the process



of teaching and learning foreign languages. These media can be classified into several types with unique characteristics. (Noprival et al., 2021):

- interactive learning resources, such as Duolingo
- receptive learning resources such as BBC, VoA, Google Translate, YouTube
- Social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter (X)
- authentic materials resources such as films, YouTube, and online news platforms provide direct access to materials used in everyday life.

Based on the narrative from the research informant, information was obtained on the media used to learn Japanese independently as follows:

**Table 1. Media used**

Media type	Media
Interactive learning media	JLPT Exercise Sites
Receptive learning media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tanos (<a href="http://www.tanos.co.uk">www.tanos.co.uk</a>)</li> <li>• <i>Nihon-go Master</i> (<a href="http://www.nihongomaster.com">www.nihongomaster.com</a>),</li> <li>• Youtube channel: <i>Nihongo no Mori</i>,</li> <li>• HiNative (<a href="https://hinative.com/">https://hinative.com/</a>)</li> <li>• JLPT exercise books</li> </ul>
Social media	<i>Discord</i>
Authentic materials	NHK news content, <i>anime</i>

The Research informant used these media to develop activities according to the Japanese level being studied. The frequency of use of these materials also varies, adjusting to the needs and effectiveness of these materials in the research informant's learning process, which is connected to the informant's self-evaluation of his strengths and weaknesses.

There are six aspects of self-regulation in language learning that are supported by the use of technology, namely: regulating emotions and increasing the attractiveness of learning; planning, evaluating, and monitoring learning progress; strengthening social connections and

seeking help from native speakers and fellow students around the world; encouraging oneself to persevere and commit to learning goals; seeking and expanding learning resources; and to increase cultural understanding. (Lai & Gu, 2011).

The presentation of the informant's strategy shows that the informant used online media for these six aspects (explained in Table 2). Thus, it can be concluded that the informant used online media optimally and combined it with activities in the offline realm to improve competence and achieve their goals in learning Japanese.

**Table 2. Use of online media in six aspects of using technology for self-directed learning**

No	Six aspects of using technology for self-directed learning	Media and its use
1	Regulating emotions and increasing the appeal of learning	Comfortable and enjoyable learning can be achieved by communicating via Discord and watching Anime
2	Planning, evaluating, and monitoring learning progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercises on the JLPT website</li> <li>- The informant combines evaluation and validation efforts with offline activities through formal educational institutions (courses, universities)</li> </ul>
3	Strengthening social connections and seeking help from native speakers and fellow students around the world	Discord: through communication with other users from various countries.
4	Encouraging yourself to persevere and commit to learning goals	Setting targets with the help of JLPT learning sites that provide material guidance according to level
5	Seeking and expanding learning resources	Using various online sources with materials and methods that change/develop according to the level.
6	Increasing cultural understanding	Discord: through communication with other users from various countries

## CONCLUSION

Research shows that the research informant carried out several strategies in their activities, summarising them as **setting long-term and short-term targets, adaptation, combination, evaluation, and validation**. **Setting long-term and short-term targets** is an important point to maintain learning consistency.

Informants adapted to develop learning activities and media following the development of Japanese language skills and the desired target. Informants carried out the **combination** strategy through online and offline materials and online and offline activities. **Evaluation**, in this case, includes: 1) evaluation of Japanese language proficiency and the effectiveness of learning activities through practice questions and activities consuming authentic materials; 2) evaluating the level of difficulty of the target to be achieved to adjust to the learning materials and learning methods; 3) Self-evaluation to find out one's strengths and weaknesses to be able to adjust the effective learning method.

**The informant validates** learning materials and strategies through learning

activities in formal learning institutions, such as the universities where he is currently studying.

The study also shows that informants used online media, including interactive learning, responsive, social, and authentic media. The informant utilizes six aspects of technology for independent learning activities, with different frequencies of use adjusted to the informant's needs, strengths, and weaknesses.

The informant mentioned that the difficulty in self-directed learning is choosing the right source. This difficulty is not only felt by the informant but is a challenge for learners, including Japanese language learners. To get the right materials and strategies, learners must evaluate themselves and find their strengths and weaknesses to choose the most appropriate and effective media and strategies.

Strategies that are effective for one learner may not necessarily be effective for another learner. This condition opens up further research to obtain comprehensive information about various conditions of foreign language learners, especially Japanese, to support self-directed learning activities.

## REFERENCES

- Barkhuizen, G., Benson, P., & Chik, A. (2014). *Narrative Inquiry in Language Teaching and*

- Learning Research*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Benson, P. (2011). Language Learning and Teaching Beyond the Classroom: An Introduction to The Field. In P. Benson & H. Reinders (Eds.), *Beyond the Language Classroom* (pp. 7–16). Hampshire, New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Penelitian Kualitatif dan Design Riset: Memilih di antara Lima Pendekatan* (3rd ed.). Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Fifth Edition, pp. 29–71). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, Melbourne: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Gao, X. (2003). Changes in Chinese Students' Learner Strategy Use after Arrival in the UK: A Qualitative Inquiry. In D. Palfreyman & R. C. Smith (Eds.), *Learner Autonomy across Cultures* (pp. 41–57). New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd.
- Kelly, N. (2018). Student Perceptions and Attitudes Towards the Use of Facebook to Support the Acquisition of Japanese as a Second Language. *Language Learning in Higher Education*, 8(2), 217–237. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cercles-2018-0014>
- Knowles, M. S. (1975). *Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers*. Chicago: Follett Publishing Company.
- Lai, C., & Gu, M. (2011). Self-regulated out-of-class language learning with technology. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(4), 317–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2011.568417>
- Liyana Zakaria, N., Abd Aziz, A., & Ramayah, K. (2017). Language Learning Strategies and Learner Autonomy in Learning Japanese. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences Journal Homepage*, 9(3), 50–60. Retrieved from [www.akademiabaru.com/arsbs.html](http://www.akademiabaru.com/arsbs.html)
- Noprival, N., Rafli, Z., Nuruddin, N., & de Felice, D. (2021). Indonesian Polyglots: Lived Experiences of Adults Learning Languages Online and Beyond the Classroom. *Qualitative Report*, 26(2), 352–366. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4555>
- Quintos, S. (2021). Difficulties in Learning Japanese as a Foreign Language: The Case of Filipino Learners. *Bicol University R&D Journal*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.47789/burdj.mbtcbbs.20212402.04>
- Thornton, P., & Sharples, M. (2005). Patterns of Technology Use in Self-Directed Japanese Language Learning Projects and Implications for New Mobile Support Tools. *Proceedings - IEEE International Workshop on Wireless and Mobile Technologies in Education, WMTE 2005*, 2005, 203–205. <https://doi.org/10.1109/WMTE.2005.49>