

Digital Independence in Action: Students' Voices in Completing Digital-Based Indonesian Language Assignments

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Abstract:

The development of digital technology has driven significant changes in the learning process, including in Indonesian language subjects. Digital-based independent learning requires students to be able to manage time, understand material, and complete assignments reflectively without complete dependence on teachers. This study aims to explore students' experiences in completing Indonesian language assignments independently through digital media, highlighting adaptation strategies, obstacles encountered, and the role of environmental support. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations of secondary-level students. The results indicate that students demonstrate adaptive abilities in organizing learning strategies and utilizing technology to support language skills, especially in reading and writing. However, technical barriers such as device access and emotional barriers such as anxiety and low self-confidence remain challenges. Social support, especially from family, has been shown to play a crucial role in maintaining motivation and sustaining independent learning. This study emphasizes the importance of integrating digital literacy, a reflective approach, and emotional support in Indonesian language learning to make it more meaningful and contextual for students.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought about significant transformations in the world of education, including in Indonesian language learning. The internet, gadgets, and digital platforms have become inseparable parts of students' learning activities, necessitating the emergence of a new form of independence known as digital independence (Cynthia & Sihotang, 2023; Fajriyani et al., 2023; Ismanto et al., 2024). In this context, students are not only required to be able to access materials and



complete assignments independently, but they must also have the ability to manage time, choose appropriate learning resources, and develop appropriate learning strategies, especially in understanding and processing Indonesian language materials that require critical reading skills, creative writing, and reflective thinking.

However, in practice, adaptability to digital assignments is uneven. Some students struggle to understand assignment instructions, develop learning strategies, or even feel stressed about having to complete academic responsibilities without direct guidance from teachers (Febrian, 2023). This often occurs in complex Indonesian language assignments, such as writing essays, reviewing literary works, or creating speech texts (Srimuliyani, 2023; Triana et al., 2023). On the other hand, there are also students who show a positive response by developing creativity and responsibility in completing these tasks independently (Hidayat et al., 2020). This phenomenon demonstrates an interesting dynamic in the implementation of digital-based independent learning, which needs to be understood more deeply from the perspective of students as the primary actors.

The increasing use of digital platforms in Indonesian language learning, particularly in independent assignment models, raises a critical question: to what extent are students truly prepared and capable of managing their own learning process? Problems arise when technical skills are not balanced with effective learning strategies or when learning motivation is driven solely by obligation, rather than by a conscious effort to understand the material (Sodik et al., 2023; Zulham et al., 2023). In fact, many digital tasks are reproductive in nature, such as simply copying information from the internet without any reflective or problem-solving processes that encourage deep understanding (Basri et al., 2024; Khalid et al., 2021). The gap between the goals of self-directed learning and the reality of classroom practice prompts the need for further exploration of students' lived experiences.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of digital literacy in supporting students' learning participation. Khoriroh et al., (2024) emphasized that the success of independent learning is greatly influenced by intrinsic motivation and environmental support. Meanwhile, Kareena Nugis & Ayu Sanggarwati, (2024) noted that technical challenges such as device access and time management were major barriers to online assignments. However, most studies still focused on systemic approaches or teacher perspectives, and few explored students' subjective experiences in completing learning tasks, particularly in the context of Indonesian language subjects, which demand personal expression and critical thinking skills.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to explore in depth how students interpret and navigate the process of completing digital-based, independent Indonesian language learning assignments. Using a qualitative approach, this study highlights students' adaptive strategies, the technical and emotional barriers they face, and the role of their family and social environments in supporting their success. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on students' voices as subjects of learning, thus hopefully contributing significantly to the development of a more contextual, reflective, and

relevant approach to Indonesian language learning in the face of the challenges of the digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to explore in depth the experiences, strategies, and meanings constructed by students in completing Indonesian language learning tasks independently through digital media (Fetra Bonita Sari, Risdha Amini, 2020). This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to contextually understand the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dynamics of students during the learning process, especially when they face literacy challenges such as reading, writing, and analyzing Indonesian texts independently.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and analysis of documentation of students' digital assignments. Researchers observed how students composed, accessed, and completed Indonesian language assignments through digital platforms such as Google Classroom and WhatsApp Groups. Data validation was conducted through source triangulation, matching information from students, Indonesian language teachers, and collected assignment results.

Data analysis was performed using an interactive model of Miles et al., (2014), which includes three main stages: Data reduction: this process is carried out by sorting, simplifying, and focusing data from interviews and documentation that are relevant to independent Indonesian language learning. Data display: the results of data reduction are arranged in the form of a thematic matrix and descriptive narrative to facilitate drawing conclusions, including patterns of learning strategies, obstacles, and forms of social support that influence the student's learning process. Conclusion drawing and verification: the initial conclusions found from these patterns are then re-verified by cross-checking between sources and considering the context of each participant.

The research was conducted at Al-Azhaar Islamic Senior High School in Rejoagung, Kedungwaru District, Tulungagung Regency, which has actively integrated digital learning since the pandemic. This location was chosen because it has diverse student characteristics in terms of digital literacy skills, levels of independence, and family backgrounds, thus providing rich and representative data. Furthermore, the school's support for academic activities also enabled the data collection process to proceed ethically and effectively. Informants were selected purposively to represent diversity in terms of academic achievement, technology skills, and family background: eleventh and twelfth grade students who had participated in online and hybrid learning for at least two semesters. Analysis was conducted repeatedly and in-depth so that the results were not superficial but able to fully describe how students develop independence and strategies in digital-based Indonesian language learning.

Table 1. Informants and Interview Materials

Informant	Class	Digital Assignment Material	Focus of Discussion
NA (Female)	XI Science	Biology – Ecosystem	Time management and use of learning videos in understanding concepts

Informant	Class	Digital Assignment Material	Focus of Discussion
RS (Male)	XI Social Studies	Sociology – Social Change	Barriers to internet access and motivation when studying alone
AF (Female)	XII Science	Mathematics – Derivatives - Function	Strategy for working on questions through digital platforms and using YouTube tutorials
MH (Male)	XII Social Studies	Economics – Financial Planning	Feelings when not getting direct guidance and how to solve it independently
SG (Female)	XI Science	Indonesian – Writing Essays	The challenge of constructing arguments and the process of searching for references on the internet

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Adaptive Strategies in Completing Digital Tasks

Students' ability to manage independent Indonesian language learning assignments digitally demonstrates an adaptive and strategic approach. Facing the challenge of learning without the presence of a teacher, students develop various creative approaches, particularly in composing narrative texts, writing short stories, and working on assignments analyzing text structure. They flexibly utilize digital platforms such as Google Classroom, YouTube, and WhatsApp to adjust study time, find language references, and even evaluate the structure of their own writing. This phenomenon reflects the natural growth of students' learning independence, along with the increasing demands of technology-based Indonesian language learning.

Student activity data shows that the majority have developed a systematic personal work pattern for completing Indonesian language assignments. Seventy-three percent of students create independent study schedules, while 66% actively search for linguistic references and text structures on YouTube and Google. Fifty-eight percent of students also habitually review material, such as explanatory texts or fables, through independently saved learning videos. These findings demonstrate students' awareness of taking the initiative to resolve difficulties understanding Indonesian language material without having to wait for direct guidance from the teacher. This response is reinforced by consistent learning behavior during independent activities outside of class hours.

Table 2. Student Strategies in Digital Independent Learning

Independent Learning Strategy	Number of Students (n=30)	Percentage (%)
Create your own study schedule	22	73%
Accessing digital sources (YouTube, Google)	20	66%
Reviewing material through learning videos	17	58%
Create personal digital notes	14	47%
Discuss via WA/Telegram group	12	40%

The table shows that students have developed independent approaches to learning Indonesian through the use of various technologies. Most students are accustomed to creating structured study schedules, seeking references for language

structures and rules from online sources, and reviewing material with the aid of visual media. They also take digital notes to facilitate understanding of language elements and discuss them with friends through online groups. This pattern indicates a strong learning initiative, flexibility in facing challenges, and the ability to utilize technology as a means of continuously improving language skills.

Influential Technical and Emotional Barriers

In the process of independent, digital-based Indonesian language learning, the obstacles students face are not only technical but also emotional. Based on their experiences, technical obstacles include unstable internet access, limited data quotas, and inadequate learning devices, such as slow phones or incompatibilities with assignment submission apps. These obstacles often lead to delays in submitting assignments, including important tasks like recording poetry readings, uploading videos of speeches, or submitting text structure analysis results. Some students even have to wait until nighttime for a more stable signal, or use Wi-Fi at friends' homes, which can sometimes be uncomfortable.

On the other hand, emotional challenges also pose a significant obstacle. Many students feel mentally burdened because the Indonesian language assignments they must complete independently often require a high level of creativity, such as writing short stories or essays. Without direct guidance from teachers, some students struggle to fully understand the assignment instructions. This leads to feelings of boredom, frustration, and even anxiety about the outcome of their assignments. One 11th-grade student shared her experience:

"If the signal is bad, I'm late for my assignments. Sometimes I have to go to a friend's house or use WiFi, but that also sometimes makes me embarrassed."

This statement reflects that barriers to digital Indonesian language learning are not only technological but also related to social and emotional pressures. When students must rely on others to complete assignments, their self-confidence is affected. In the context of Indonesian language assignments that require personal expression—such as reading a speech or creating a video poem—this feeling of discomfort can hinder creativity and decrease learning motivation. Therefore, independent Indonesian language learning requires the support of an inclusive environment and adequate access to technology so that students can navigate the learning process calmly, confidently, and remain productive.

The Role of Family Environment and Social Support

The environment in which students grow up plays a vital role in shaping their attitudes and enthusiasm for learning, including in independently completing digital-based Indonesian language assignments. Emotional and technical support from those closest to them, especially family and peers, is crucial for maintaining student motivation. In learning Indonesian, students are often faced with tasks that require high levels of concentration and critical thinking skills, such as analyzing the structure of observational report texts or interpreting the implied meaning of poetry. Based on student learning activity records, those in responsive environments, such as those

provided with quiet study spaces, access to devices, and moral encouragement, demonstrate more consistent and focused progress.\

Conversely, data shows that students who don't receive similar attention tend to struggle to complete Indonesian language assignments on time. In a three-week period of late assignment submissions, students with low levels of family support averaged two days late, while students with high levels of support generally completed assignments before the deadline. This was particularly true for short story reading and analysis assignments, which require in-depth understanding and discussion. Students who actively engaged in discussions with peers via WhatsApp groups tended to demonstrate better comprehension.

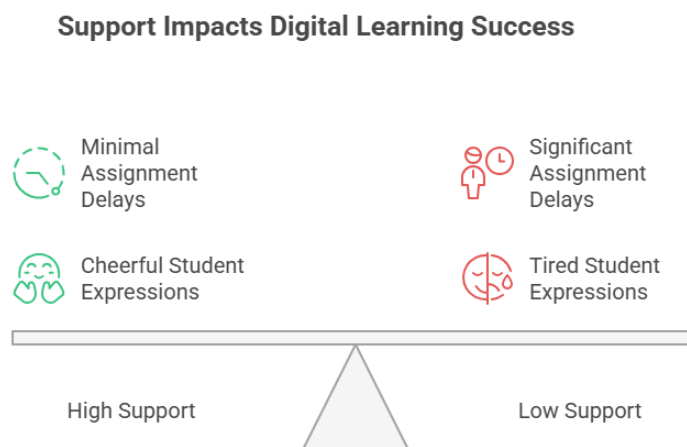


Figure 1. Balancing Support and Independence

The image above shows that the level of support students receive directly impacts their success in digital Indonesian language learning. Strong support from family and social circles, such as parents accompanying them while reading online literary works or friends actively discussing the material, contributes to students' cheerful expressions and timely completion of assignments. Conversely, a lack of support leads to emotional exhaustion and significant delays in completing assignments. This visual emphasizes that digital independence does not occur in isolation but relies heavily on a balance between external support and students' internal readiness to optimally navigate independent Indonesian language learning.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that students develop adaptive strategies in digital Indonesian language learning in response to the need for independent learning. This aligns with the theory of self-regulated learning. Net et al., (2023) which emphasizes the importance of students' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning process independently. In this context, creating a study schedule, searching for digital resources, and reviewing material through videos are tangible indicators of students' self-regulation skill(Fata et al., 2024; Khusnu Alif et al., 2024). The use of platforms such as YouTube and Google not only demonstrates learning initiative, but also metacognitive abilities in selecting appropriate strategies to understand the text structure and linguistic elements of Indonesian.

However, this ability is not free from technical and emotional barriers experienced by students. Barriers such as limited signal, inadequate equipment, and emotional stress in completing Indonesian language tasks (e.g., writing short stories or making speech videos) support Vygotsky's view on the importance of scaffolding in learning (Michalsky, 2024). The absence of teachers in digital contexts deprives students of direct scaffolding, which results in feelings of frustration and anxiety (Baruza & Mahmud, 2024). This confirms the important role of mentoring and motivational reinforcement during the online learning process, as stated in Bandura's social cognitive theory. Ibrahim & Rusdiana, (2021), that students' self-efficacy is greatly influenced by environmental conditions and previous experiences.

Furthermore, family and social support have also been shown to be significant contributing factors to the success of digital Indonesian language learning. This finding reinforces Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which states that individual development and performance are strongly influenced by interactions between individuals and their microenvironment, such as family and peers (Koutsouveli & Geraki, 2022; Marosi et al., 2024). Students who receive emotional and technical support from their immediate environment are better able to manage task pressure and demonstrate better learning performance, especially in Indonesian language assignments that require in-depth understanding and creative expression (Bag et al., 2023; Imamah et al., 2024). Thus, the success of digital Indonesian language learning is determined not only by students' technological readiness and independent learning strategies, but also by the quality of social support they receive during the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Digital-based independent learning in Indonesian language subjects requires students not only to understand the material conceptually but also to be able to apply it in the context of language skills, such as critical reading, argumentative writing, and conveying ideas effectively. The results of the study indicate that most students have developed adaptive strategies in completing Indonesian language assignments independently by utilizing technology as a learning tool. However, this success is still influenced by environmental support, especially the role of the family in providing emotional motivation and technical facilitation. Barriers that arise are not only technical, such as access to digital devices, but also emotional, such as a lack of confidence or confusion in understanding text-based assignment instructions. Therefore, the effectiveness of independent Indonesian language learning in the digital era depends heavily on the balance between students' cognitive competencies, the learning strategies they develop, and environmental support that supports digital and emotional literacy. A learning approach that emphasizes reflection, language creativity, and personal meaning will further encourage active and sustained student engagement.

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