

## NEEDS ANALYSIS AND DIGITAL FORMAT DEVELOPMENT OF INTERMEDIATE JAPANESE GRAMMAR LEARNING MATERIALS BASED ON JF STANDARD

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which Japanese language education standards, namely the JF Standard, are included in the existing Japanese grammar teaching materials. This study also examines the extent to which active learning is included in Japanese grammar teaching materials, and the extent to which the digital format of Japanese grammar teaching materials is adopted in existing teaching materials. This study uses research and development methods. The results showed that the Japanese education standard, namely the JF Standard, did not yet exist in the current Japanese grammar teaching materials, nor did the existing teaching materials adopt active learning and the format used was still an old format that did not use digital formats.

**Keywords:** JF Standard, grammar learning material, digital format

### INTRODUCTION

When examining the problems that exist in learning Japanese in Indonesia, from a recent survey conducted by The Japan Foundation, various problems were found whose data were taken from 133 Japanese language learning institutions in Indonesia. The main problems in learning Japanese found in The Japan Foundation survey were inadequate facilities/equipment and lack of learning materials (table 1). This shows that in addition to educational facilities/equipment that must be improved/equipped, Japanese language learning materials which are still lacking need to be developed to answer various problems of learning Japanese in Indonesia.

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**Table 1**

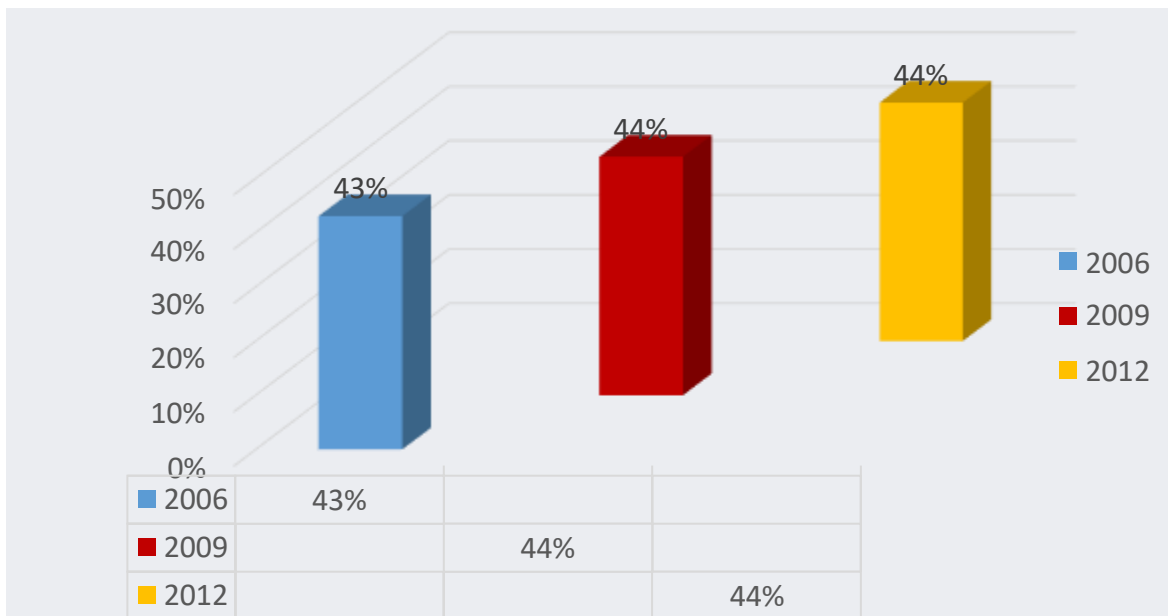
**Problems in Learning Japanese at the Higher Education Level in Indonesia**

Problems	2006 (115 institutions)	2009 (133 institutions)	2012 (133 institutions)
Inadequate facilities/equipment	48,7%	62,4%	57,1%
Lack of teaching materials	43,5%	44,4%	44,4%
Lack of information on teaching methods	30,4%	55,6%	51,9%
Lack of information about Japanese culture and society	13,0%	33,8%	39,1%
Lack of learner interest	12,2%	27,1%	33,1%

(Djafri, 2018)

**Table 2.**

**Availability of Japanese Language Learning Material**



(Djafri, 2018)

In table 1 and table 2 above, it can be seen that from the various problems that exist in learning Japanese at the higher education level in Indonesia, there are two main problems, namely inadequate facilities/equipment (48.7%) and lack of teaching materials (43.5%). Here it is seen that the urgency to develop Japanese language learning materials is a necessity to answer the problems that arise in the implementation of Japanese language learning in Indonesia.

As we understand that language learning materials are anything that is used to help language learners to learn. Tomlinson stated that learning materials can be in the form of textbooks, workbooks, cassettes, CD-ROMs, videos, photocopied leaflets, newspapers, paragraphs written on the blackboard: or anything that presents or informs about the language being studied (Tomlinson, 2011). Types of learning materials in terms of shape are divided into four, namely (1) Printed materials include handouts, books, modules, student worksheets, brochures, photos/pictures, (2) Listening teaching materials (audio) such as cassettes, radio and audio compact discs, (3) Hearing learning materials (audio visual) such as video compact discs, films, people / resource persons, (4) Interactive learning materials such as interactive compact disks (Fajarini, 2018).

In learning Japanese, JF Standard is known which is the standard for learning Japanese throughout the world. The JF Standard was developed on the basis of a concept that supports the CEFR, which serves as the basis for language education in Europe. CEFR stands for Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment. Japanese language learning standards are set by The Japan Foundation (hereinafter referred to as JF), where The Japan Foundation has determined the levels of ability that must be achieved in learning Japanese. Using the JF Standard it is possible to see the level of Japanese language proficiency in a way that is based on the CEFR (Japan Foundation, 2010). However, Japanese language teaching materials compiled based on the JF Standard are still limited, namely only Marugoto. In Marugoto, Japanese language learning is carried out by integrating all Japanese language skills.

From the explanation above, it is known that the JF standard teaching material is Marugoto, in which the JF Standard-based material integrates all Japanese language skills. In fact, Marugoto has not met the needs of learning Japanese for Japanese language learning that is carried out partially (separately), such as intermediate level grammar courses. This causes not all of universities in Indonesia use these teaching materials in learning Japanese grammar at the intermediate level.

At Darma Persada University, Marugoto is only used for teaching Kaiwa (conversation) courses, while for early and intermediate level Japanese grammar courses, other teaching materials are used. The Minna no Nihon Go book is used for learning basic level Japanese grammar material and the New Approach book for learning Japanese grammar material at the intermediate level. Meanwhile, the achievement of

learning Japanese grammar at the intermediate level at Darma Persada University is being fluent in Japanese in the context of general, academic and work communication in accordance with Japanese Language Proficiency standards equivalent to JLPT N3 and Can-do Level B1 Japan Foundation.

In a survey conducted by the author, from 10 universities and foreign language colleges that have Japanese language study programs in the Jabodetabek area, namely the University of Indonesia (UI), Jakarta State University (UNJ), Darma Persada University (UNSADA), National University (UNAS), University Al Azhar Indonesia (UAI), Bina Nusantara University (BINUS), Muhammadiyah University Prof. Dr. Hamka (UHAMKA), STBA LIA, STBA JIA and Pakuan University, only one university namely Al-Azhar University Indonesia (UAI) uses Marugoto's book for all Japanese language courses. This shows that there are various teaching materials used in Japanese language learning at universities and foreign language universities in Jakarta and its surroundings area which have not been investigated whether the teaching materials are in accordance with the JF Standard or not.

Along with the development of the era which has now entered the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, teaching materials using digital media is a much-needed change challenge. Inevitably, this increases the needs of users who are now focused on the basis of "anytime, anywhere, and anyhow" (anytime, anywhere, and anyhow) (Ghinea and Chen, 2006). So that in accordance with the demands of the development of science and technology, even in learning, teachers must be able to provide teaching materials in digital form.

In addition, in the era of globalization where learners can learn from vast and unlimited resources, active learning methods are needed in language learning. Active learning encourages students' autonomous learning, gives them greater involvement and control over their learning and provides them with life-long learning skills (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2008). Other approaches and terminology which are associated with active learning include (1) Student-centred, or learner-centred learning, where students play an active role in their learning, with the teacher as an activator of learning, rather than an instructor, (2) Inquiry-based, problem-based or discovery learning, where learners learn by addressing and posing questions, analysing evidence, connecting such evidence to pre-existing knowledge, drawing conclusions and reflecting upon their findings, and (3) Experiential learning, which broadly describes someone learning from direct experience (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2008).

So, in this study, it will be investigated about the content of the existing grammar teaching materials, whether they are in accordance with the standards set by The Japan Foundation, contain active learning, and use digital formats. The formulation of the

research problem is proposed with the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent is the Japanese grammar teaching material in accordance with the JF standard grammatical demands?
- 2) To what extent is active learning integrated into existing grammar learning materials?
- 3) To what extent are digital formats used in current grammar learning materials?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative and quantitative approach. The method used in this research is design-based research. Design research is one of the stages that must be passed or made by a researcher so that the research to be carried out can be carried out in accordance with the objectives to be achieved. Design research is a work plan by making a construction so that each question can be answered. In conducting research, a researcher certainly has a research paradigm that explains how the researcher's perspective understands a problem, as well as testing criteria as a basis for answering research problems (Mulyadi, 2013).

The data in this study is the relevance of the current intermediate level Japanese teaching materials (Minna no Nihongo Chuukyuu, New Approach) with JF standard teaching materials. Data were also obtained from the description of intermediate level Japanese grammar teaching materials that were relevant to the JF standard, digital media-based Japanese language teaching materials, and also data on the feasibility of digital media-based JF intermediate level Japanese grammar teaching materials.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Based on research conducted using the rubric of existing teaching materials with the indicator descriptor of teaching materials based on the JF Standard, it is obtained that the current intermediate level Japanese grammar teaching materials are not in accordance with the standards set by JF in learning Japanese, namely the JF Standard. The content of grammatical teaching materials in medium-level Japanese teaching materials according to the JF standard are as follows:

- 1) Can understand the essence of a conversation on commonly encountered topics, such as work, school, and entertainment, using a standard way of speaking.
- 2) Can respond in the most likely situations when traveling in areas where the language is spoken.
- 3) Can make texts in certain simple contexts on topics that are known and of personal interest.
- 4) Can explain experiences, events, dreams, hopes, or ambitions, and can express opinions, reasons for a plan, and brief explanations.
- 5) Can understand the essence of a complex text, both concrete and abstract topics,

including technical discussions in the area of expertise they master.

- 6) Can interact casually with native speakers fluently and naturally.
- 7) Can make detailed and clear texts on topics with a broad scope, and can provide an explanation of self-views by providing the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

The results showed that the existing Japanese grammar teaching materials did not meet the 3 components in the JF Standard, namely the "JF Standard Tree" which describes the relationship between communicative language activities and communicative language competence as a tree. It is useful to know what learners can or want to do using Japanese and what kinds of language competencies (lexical, grammatical, sociolinguistic, etc.) are required. Second, the existing Japanese grammar teaching materials do not yet contain "Can-do", which is a series of sentences that explain what learners "can do" in Japanese, using the six CEFR language proficiency levels. The six levels are divided into "Basic User" (A1 and A2), "Independent User" (B1 and B2) and "Advanced User" (C1 and C2). Third, the existing Japanese grammar teaching materials do not yet provide a portfolio, which is a tool to record and preserve the learning process of each student.

This portfolio is also in accordance with the active learning method (Active Learning), where the student portfolio can assess achievements and reflect on their language and cultural experience records, students' competence in completing assignments and intercultural understanding can be fostered. It is well known that active learning encourages students' autonomous learning, gives them greater involvement and control over their learning and gives them life-long learning skills.

The results of this study also show that most of the existing Japanese grammar teaching materials have not been published in digital format. Research in Indonesia that discusses Japanese language learning in digital media format is already widely available, but mostly conducted by researchers with a scientific background in Computer Science and Computer Engineering. Research on Japanese language learning media in digital format, for example, was conducted by Rusli (2012) who made an Android-based Japanese language learning application intended for the initial stage of learning basic Japanese and contained a dictionary page menu consisting of various kinds of Indonesian-Japanese and Japanese-Indonesian vocabulary, with the aim of making it easier for learners to learn Japanese through android smartphones (Rusli, M., Nurahman (2012). Syafitri (2015) made learning media using Adobe Flash CS3 tools to design objects used and equipped with audio to provide sound in the application. The resulting application is an interactive media for basic Japanese language learning for children presented with images and animations so that learning is more fun. (Syafitri, Y., & Sari, U. A. (2015). Sunarti (2016) et al developed an Android-based Hiragana and Katakana

letter learning application with the aim that basic Japanese learners become easier to recognize and learn the letters Hiragana and Katakana (Sunarti, Ranga, R. Y., & Damhudi, D. (2016). Komaruddin created an interactive animation of knowing Japanese that contains learning material for basic Japanese letters (Hiragana and Katakana) accompanied by sound and Japanese cultural learning material. (Komarudin, R., & Noor, R. R. (2017). Indra Kanedi (2020) examined the method of learning basic Japanese using Macromedia Flash MX, with the aim of making it easier for teachers, students and students to learn basic Japanese so as to increase interest and attractiveness in learning Japanese. (Indra Kanedi, S. (2020).

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that most of the existing Japanese grammar teaching materials are still not standardized by JF, have not used active learning methods, and have not been displayed in digital format. Thus, the need for intermediate level Japanese grammar teaching materials in accordance with the JF Standard, using active learning methods, and in digital format is a necessity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on theoretical studies and the results of previous research, it is known that research relating to Japanese language teaching materials in digital media format that is currently available is mostly made by researchers with knowledge that is not in direct contact with the field of Japanese language science, so that the quality of the research results not yet significant. This results in the quality of the teaching materials being developed not being supported by adequate Japanese language knowledge and skills. Here it can be seen that the domain related to digital media is a field that is very compatible with the disciplines of Computer Science and Computer Engineering, thus attracting the interest of researchers in this field. However, the quality of the teaching materials developed must be in line with a quality understanding of Japanese.

Apart from that, some Japanese language teaching materials in digital media format do not yet discuss JF standard intermediate level Japanese grammar material. Japanese language teaching materials in digital media format mostly only focus on communication skills, so what is mostly displayed is teaching materials that contain conversation examples. Other Japanese language teaching materials only discuss vocabulary related to understanding Kanji letters. The Marugoto and Minato websites managed by The Japan Foundation present language skills in an integrated manner and do not specifically discuss grammatical material.

Based on the results of a needs analysis of currently available teaching materials, a needs analysis of user needs, and based on a literature review of previously conducted research results, it can be understood that the media used as digital learning media such as teaching material websites have great potential and need to be developed as an opening

material for a Japanese grammar course. This media can present content contextually and interestingly which can increase students' understanding of grammar and motivation to learn. The interactivity and multimodality of digital media suit the demands of a communicative approach in teaching Japanese. Thus, the development of digital media-based grammar teaching materials needs to be carried out to produce innovative teaching materials that can improve Japanese language skills as a whole.

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