

## Research on the Design of Autonomous Multi-language Learning in the Information Age

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**Abstracts:** Facing with the information era, we are affected in all aspects, among which the autonomous learning and language learning come first -- the former features informatization, and the latter features multilingualism. In view of this phenomenon, we hereby study the autonomous learning method of multilingual under the information technology, and the training of multilingual talents. This paper explained the concept of autonomous learning and analyzed the way to realize effective autonomous learning. It revealed some common difficulties in independent language learning by interviews. And the main influencing factors of language transfer and application are analyzed. By combining the research results with the present analysis, we summarized some suitable methods of autonomous learning for non-language major learners. Through this research, we can better understand the current situation of autonomous learning of multilingual learners, the advantages and disadvantages of the traditional autonomous learning method as well as the autonomous learning method of multilingual learners in the information age, making contributions to the development of language learning. We also hope that our research results may provide more talents for the human community development. The application and pervasion of multiple languages will surely help with world peace.

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. National Policy.

With the deepening development of world multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversity and social informatization, a new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is poised to take off. Modern technologies such as the Internet, cloud computing and big data are profoundly changing the way people think, work, live and learn. International competition is increasingly fierce, talent training and competition become the focus [1].

*The outline of the national medium - and long-term education reform and development program* pointed out that the development of educational information infrastructure will be accelerated. Information technology has a revolutionary influence on the development of education. Education information should be incorporated into the national information development strategy, the deployment of education information network should be advanced. By 2020, an education information system covering all levels and types of schools in both urban and rural areas will be basically completed, and education content, teaching methods will be modernized. We should make full use of high-quality resources and advanced technology, innovate the operating mechanism and management mode, integrate existing resources, and build an advanced, efficient and practical digital education infrastructure. We will accelerate the popularization of terminal facilities, promote the construction of digital campuses, and provide access to the Internet in various ways [2].

Therefore, information-based education and independent learning are the mainstream of social development and the direction of educational reform. We need to cultivate our independent learning ability and learn to use abundant information resources in such an information age.

### 1.2. Economic Demand.

The anti-globalization political trend brought by trump’s protectionism and radical unilateralism, as well as and, has posed a serious threat to the existing global multilateral system. Though the cold war mentality of the US has interfered the process of globalization, economic globalization is still the mainstream.

Trade cooperation among many countries, especially those under the One Belt and One Road economic policy, has further promoted the development of economic globalization and successfully dealt with the challenges brought by anti-globalization. At the same time, the demand for foreign language talents in One Belt and One Road countries is also greatly increased. Talents with foreign language ability have become indispensable in transnational trades. To keep up with the pace of economic development, learning of multiple foreign languages is particularly important.

### 1.3. Internet Development.

The autonomous learning system based on the Internet and campus network has entered its maturation stage and created the modern distance education supported by two-way interactive network technology. These external environments have laid a material foundation for the independent learning of foreign languages.

## 2. The Concept of Informatization and Autonomous Learning.

### 2.1. Informatization.

Toffler called the third wave the information revolution. Starting around the 1950s, its iconic symbol was the “computer”, which focused on the creation, development and storage of knowledge and was dominated by information technology. In the third wave, he divided the history of human development into the first wave’s “agricultural civilization”, the second wave’s “industrial civilization” and the third wave’s “information society”, which provided a new perspective for human improvement [3].

### 2.2. Autonomous Learning.

As our research shows, almost half of the 100 people sampled have never heard of the concept of autonomous learning. Most people in modern society are still ignorant of autonomous learning. Autonomous learning means that learners can manage their own learning behaviors, establish learning objectives, formulate learning plans, choose learning methods, monitor the implementation of learning plans and the application and development of learning skills on the basis of their own conditions, and conduct self-examination and evaluation for continuous improvement. Studies have found that successful language learners generally have strong self-management skills. They not only master the skills and strategies to engage in various learning activities and solve various learning difficulties, but also can choose appropriate processing methods in accordance with specific learning tasks. Autonomous learning ability is essentially self-monitoring ability, and its development is mainly reflected in the improvement of cognitive level. [4] Holec (1981) argues that the goal of foreign language teaching is not only to help students acquire language and communication skills, but also to help them gain autonomy, to learn how to learn independently.

Table 1 Do you know the concept of multilingual autonomous learning?

Know	24(24%)
A little	27(27%)
Don’t know	49(49%)
The number of people	100

### 3. The Effective Approach to Autonomous Multilingual Learning.

#### 3.1. Set Goals and Look for Motivation.

When we learn something, setting goals can help to get maximum results. The same is especially true for autonomous multilingual learning. Because we are learning autonomously, we don't have pressure from a dictation or a test that gives us motivation. Without goals, we are sleepwalking and don't know what direction to work towards. To set goals, first and foremost, we need to decide what we really want to achieve. Every language learner has his own purpose when choosing to learn this language. Some people learn it for fun while some many need to use this skill in the work, or some people have to take language tests like TOFEL, TELF and then go abroad to pursue further study. We can see from the Table 2, the most of us learn foreign language for certificate. This is the ultimate goal. It doesn't matter if it is fairly broad at this point. We will narrow it down next. Then we should split this ultimate goal into a slew of small targets. For example, I will increase my vocabulary to five thousand within one month or I will write an essay in English. Next, it is critical to prioritize these areas. Trying to work on every area of the goal at once can leave us overwhelmed and unable to achieve any of them. We should start from easy ones or urgent ones, step by step, gradually reaching the ultimate goal. Don't forget to set deadlines for your goals. That means a specific date. This is important because it creates the tension that is necessary to give ourselves the message, that we are serious about our happiness. At last, it is time to create an action-plan and execute it. Losing passion for language learning is quite common. After the "honeymoon phase", language learning becomes more like a series of plateaus rather than a sharp rising curve. We need to reignite our passion. Find something about the culture we enjoy, or a reason to learn the language (other than to "be fluent". Think about why a foreigner would want to speak to us personally!). Otherwise, it will be a slog [5].

Table 2 Your purpose in learning a foreign language (multiple choice)

Get language certificate	67 (76.14%)
Go abroad	39 (44.32%)
Watch foreign language TV series etc.	26 (29.55%)
other	4 (4.55%)
The number of people	100

#### 3.2. Choose a Second or Third Language According to the Language Family.

A language family is a group of languages related through descent from a common ancestor, called the proto-language of that family. As we all know, Membership of languages in a language family is established by comparative linguistics. Sister languages are said to have a "genetic" or "genealogical" relationship. For example, English and German, Japanese and Korean. They have similar vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Therefore, learning a foreign language from the same language family is easier.

#### 3.3. Positive Language Transfer.

Many languages belong to the same language family and they have a lot in common. Language contact and borrowing often occur among these languages. Thus we should pay attention to word association and analogy method. For example, when we learn "café" in French, we are supposed to think about "café" in English. Also, "pour" in French can remind us of "for" in English. However, we should also make a distinction in order not to get confused.

#### 3.4. Search for Online Learning Platforms.

There are host of apps for language learning such as electronic dictionary, English daily listening, Le monde, Le figaro, Frhelper... These different apps help language learners learn foreign languages from different aspects like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Some people learn languages through online courses. For example, Mooc, Hujiang operations, Tutorabc, 51 talk, Spiiker, and so

on. Some of these courses are expensive. But according to the survey data, they are helpful to language learners.

Some foreign social softwares like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are also suitable for learning foreign languages as they can help people make some foreign friends and learn some foreign cultures.

Besides, some WeChat official accounts like Teacher Gwen, Learn And Record and New Concept are useful to language learners. They push articles and magazines in foreign languages every day. Subscribing these Wechat official accounts, we can broaden our horizons as well as enrich our vocabulary. Mooc, Hujiang operations

### **3.5. Reasonable Time Allocation.**

Make the most of fragmentation time. Contrary to full-time, the characteristics of fragmentary time are scattered and unsystematic. But as we know, there are many pieces of time in a day. If we can take full advantage of it, we will definitely make great progress.

Do the most important things first. Things should be prioritized, and we should pay attention to doing important things instead of lumping them together. Alternate work with rest. When working, we should put our heart and soul into it but we are not supposed to work all the time. Instead, we need to set aside some time for leisure.

### **3.6. Feedback Mechanism of Multilingual Autonomous Learning.**

We can get feedback from numerous ways. For example, taking examinations, which is the most direct and intuitive way to get feedback? In addition, doing questionnaires and interviews are also good ways to acquire feedback.

## **4. The Problems and the Measures.**

### **4.1. The Effect from Social Media.**

The expansive use of social media has greatly intruded the way of communication. Convenient and vivid as it is, the internet language does harm to the learning of foreign language. The beginners often feel bewildered facing bunches of internet memes such as ‘sup (what’s up)’, lol (laugh out loud), etc. The abbreviations are freely created, which may confuse the learners. Besides, many vulgar words are more often seen on the internet, which may hurt the image of the target language for learners.

Therefore, we suggest learners with a basic knowledge of language to use social media instead of the beginners, for they are less prone to the side-effects of internet language.

### **4.2. The lack of Bidirectional Interaction.**

Admittedly, language learners have a wider access to boundless resources of learning material covering almost all dimensions of language. However, according to our survey, means such as online courses cannot offer evaluative information available to learners concerning their linguistic performance. Compared with off-line courses where feedbacks from teachers are immediate and communicative, the situation for online courses easily falls to one-to-hundreds mode, which makes feedback almost impossible. Exceptions such as One- to-one courses do fix the problem, but its high price has already scared most people away.

Our suggestions are as follows: first, more qualified teachers are called for to meet the escalating demand for online courses, expanding the popularity of mini class, so as to cool down the expensive courses. Second, develop the AI technology for specified aspects of language learning. For example, a conversational AI which can help in pronunciation and wording by offering feedbacks.

### **4.3. Problems in Language Transfer.**

Learners tend to bring the grammar or expressions from the mother tongue to foreign language, which may result in language transfer.

Given that most Chinese multi-linguals learn English as their second foreign language; if their

third language is Indo-European such as French and German, then they can transfer their knowledge of English to the learning of the new language. Those languages are closely related, the distance is much smaller compared with Chinese languages. Generally, learners affected by Chinese and English usually have positive and negative transfer. In terms of words- spelling, some students think words with similar affix helps in learning; while on the contrary, some students think too similar words may confuse them into mistakes. As for grammar, student tends to make mistakes when the word order of the target language does not correspond to any of his learned languages.

Odlin (1989) et al. emphasized the importance of interlingual commonality which reveals that more comparative study should be put on to restrain its negative effect [6]. Besides, more input of the third language also helps to avoid the negative transfer. As learners dive into the new language, they can gradually pick up the native expression.

## 5. Conclusions

By analyzing the information age background and the way of autonomous learning, this article has sought to unveil the effective measures of multi-language learning. Firstly, we briefly point out that with the development of economic globalization, multilingual learning is becoming more and more important. Then this paper explains what is information age and autonomous learning, and analyzes their characteristics so as to make use of them to learn languages.

Specifically, the rationality of advocating autonomous multi-language learning in the information age is that we have the adequate condition and it conforms to the development of the times and policy orientation. Drawing on personally perspective, the analysis has shown that a slew of adults has no idea about autonomous learning. Popularizing the concept of autonomous learning is particularly urgent for our society. Therefore, this paper summarizes a set of methods of autonomous multilingual learning. First of all, set goals and look for motivation so that we learners can persevere until we achieve the ideal level. According to survey, the goal of most foreign language learners is to obtain related certificates. But we suggest that practical application is the most important. Then if you still don't choose your second or third language, we advise you choose a second or third language according to the language family and interests. Next you can take advantage of the positive language transfer to learn the relevant foreign languages. Then it's time to start looking for resources, searching for online learning platforms. The text has been described in detail, and we will not repeat here. As we learn more than one foreign language at a time, reasonable time allocation is necessary. See the text for specific steps. When we have already studied for some time, feedback mechanism autonomous learning is going to come in handy so that we can always check our level and supervise our study.

Nevertheless, and as our evidence has shown, there are still several caveats. However, the negative social media effect can't be ignored, we suggest that it is better to use social media to learn native speakers' idiomatic usage after you have a certain foundation. At the same time information-based learning need to strengthen bidirectional interaction. Finally, we should master the solid foundation of this foreign language knowledge so as to avoid negative language transfer.

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