Students' obstacles on autonomous English learning

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to give teachers a perspective regarding what problems students face during the process of learning English material by employing the Autonomous Learning. The researcher used Pragmatics as the subject of learning to observe the process of Autonomous Learning during one semester. This is a descriptive qualitative research in which 7 students of English Education of PGRI University were employed as the subjects of this study. Those students are the most active ones in class. After they conducted a series of learning process autonomously, they were expected to fill the questionnaire as the data source to reveal the basic need of the students that they are expecting from the teachers. Then the data would be explained descriptively. It is expected that the teachers are going to have some new perspectives regarding the autonomous learning, which is related to the students' problems. What they want the teachers to do and what the teachers should provide are two fundamental considerations. This study reveals that the autonomous learning does not mean that the students learn the material fully autonomously. Bigger than that, the students still need the presence of the teachers as the agent of autonomous learning.

Keywords: Students' Needs and Perspectives, Autonomous Learning, Pragmatics

1. INTRODUCTION

There are great numbers of teaching methods that have been invented and implemented to achieve learning goals effectively and efficiently. However, generally speaking, the process and the result of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia have not been satisfactory yet. Students, teachers, environments and the curriculum being implemented are the problems. This is very contrary to the fact that English language is considered by many as the international language. Its acquisition can guarantee the availability of opportunities to employment, travelling, higher education and even better life (Crystal, 1997).

Learning English is not an easy task, since Indonesian language has different Aspect and Tense system with the English. (Comrie, 1976) described Aspect as follows:

Perfective denotes a complete situation and often indicates the completion of a situation when contrasted with an imperfective situation. There is an obvious close connection between perfectives and past situations, because it is past situations that are most often complete. In many languages, perfectives can also represent non-past situations.

The students of Indonesia, who are learning English, still, cannot be free from the lecturer's or teacher's presence. Meaning that, most of them learn the English skills only when they are at school. Most of schools conduct the English subject not more than twice a week. This results on the low students capabilities to write, listen, read and hear English To avoid this, students and teachers/lecturers should have the equal power (Tanjung, 2018). Regarding this, this research was conducted to reveal the students' perspective on lecturer's role on autonomous learning. Observing the autonomy learners, does the lecturer's presence in a classroom really matter? In fact, in Indonesia, lecturer and the students do not have the equal power to 'make' the learning material. This research investigates the English Pragmatics as the subject that employs the autonomous learning. 35 Students were used as the respondent to be used as the source of the data about perspective during the classroom of autonomy.

1.1 Students' Learning Styles

During teaching and learning processes, teachers' quality depends highly on students' perspective or feedback continuously. As a result, the quality of teaching process is controlled. Contrast to the fact, most of students have various learning styles, teacher's duty is to facilitate all of them so that all students achieve the learning and teaching goals. There are students who are visual learners, kinesthetic, audio-lingual and so on. This requires English teachers and lecturers to make sure that all students' learning styles will be accommodated properly, which sometimes teachers focused only on the most 'attractive students' in a classroom. Teacher should accommodate the four students' learning styles, the visual, aural, written/read and kinesthetic (Martinez & Tuesca, 2018). Proponents of learning style contend that optimal instruction requires diagnosing individual's learning style and tailoring instruction accordingly (Pashler, Mcdaniel, Rohrer, & Bjork, 2009).

A lot of researches have been conducted on students' learning styles. Those investigated what is the best learning styles that suit all of students' characters when facing

the learning material. The big question is 'what is learning style?' Learning style is defined as the best way to learn subject material with fewer struggles, but in the most effective way. Pupil tends to learn material through this way than the other way (Eva, 2016; Maric, Penger, Todorovic, Djurica, & Pintar, 2015). Teachers/lecturers duty on this is to understand and comprehend that pupils may have various learning styles and should be able to accommodate them well. It is expected that, teachers/lecturers teaching material in a class, all pupils learning styles can be accommodated. The question is, 'how can it be?'

Before accommodating all students' styles on learning material, teachers and lecturers should investigate two basic things, they are what kind of information that will be exposure to the students (e.g., words versus pictures versus speech) and what kind of metal activity they find most engaging, either it is listening or analysis, because the basic knowledge that should be possessed by all teachers is that the most instructional method that proves most effective for students with one learning style is not the most effective method for students with a different learning style (Pashler et al., 2009). Most of students find it difficult to learn material from a pile of books, power point and dictionary. This is more challenging whenever they learn from you tube video containing lecture or speech delivered by the well known experts that have written a lot of sold out books.

1.2 Teaching and Learning Autonomously

To be successful learners of English language, on some language aspects/skills, is not as easy as expected. To many factors that should be conquered. Many students come to the English courses, expecting that they can speak English fluently and write English well. Still, a little progress is made. Students may have access to the book in the library, as the additional material to supplement what is being learned in a classroom, students get a little improvement on using language both academic and daily uses. The questions that have been raised since decades ago that 'can students learn autonomously?' and 'what should a teacher/lecturer do to guide students to learn autonomously?'

The main point in autonomous learning is the students' evolving actively to learn material (Yagcioglu, 2015). This statement has the meaning that autonomous learning obligates students to actively join all kinds of classroom activities, including the learning assessment to ensure that all the processes are successfully conducted with little obstacles.

1.3 Students' Perspectives

Students, in a classroom on a particular subject, may have various perspectives regarding the subject. Understanding that fact will be a good start of a teacher to decide the teaching method which is the most proper, in this case, students' motivation plays the important role.

1.4 Online and Offline English Learning Environment

Teachers have been using online communication in the language classroom since the 1980's. From an investigation of the experiences of dozens of teachers around the world who have used the internet in language teaching, a few common guidelines emerge that can assist teachers in successfully planning and implementing network-based learning projects. (Warschauer, 1995 in Richard and Renandya, 2002). The following guidelines are designed to help teachers implement computer network-based activities and technologies into the second language classroom:

a. Consider carefully your goals

Several possible reasons do exist for using the internet in language teaching. One rationale is found in the belief that the linguistic nature of online communication is desirable for promoting language learning. It has been found, for example, that electronic discourse tends to be more lexically and syntactically complex than oral discourse (Warschauer, 1995). Another possible reason for using the internet is that creates optimal conditions for learning to write, since it provides an authentic audience for written communication. A third possible reason is that it can increase students' motivation (Warschauer, 1995). A fourth possible reason is the belief that learning computer skills is essential to students' future success; this reason suggests that it is not only a matter of using the internet to learn English, but also of learning English to be able to function well on the internet.

None of these reasons is more or less legitimate than any of the others. However, since there are so many ways to integrate the internet into classroom instruction, it is important for the teacher to clarify his or her goals. If, for example, one of the teacher's goals is to teach students new computer skills, the teacher may want to choose internet applications which will be most useful outside of the classroom, with activities structured so that students steadily gain mastery of more skills. If the immediate goal is to create a certain kind of linguistic environment for students, once again, the teacher should consider what types of language experiences would be beneficial and structure computer activities

accordingly. Employing youtube channel to increase students' input on the sound of English will be very much beneficial since students are significantly in need of English sound environment to increase the accuracy and fluency. Such environment is hard to gain whenever students can only practice English in the classroom, not in the outside of the classroom. If the goal is to teach writing, internet activities should be structured so that they steadily bring about an increase in the types of writing processes and relationships essential to becoming a better writer (Warschauer, 1995).

b. Involve Students in Making Decisions

The concept of learner-centered curriculum (Nunan, 1988) predates, and has broader significance than, the internet enhanced classroom. However, this concept seems particularly important when considering network-based teaching. First of all, network-based teaching involves a number of special complexities. It will be difficult for a teacher to be fully aware of the impact of these complexities without regular consultation with students. This might involve anonymous surveys, class discussions, or similar means of involving students in expressing their opinions about the process of implementing technologies. Beyond that, though, the nature of computer-mediated communication is that it creates opportunities for more decentered interaction. To fully exploit these opportunities, the teacher must learn to become a 'guide on the side' rather than a 'sage on the stage'. A situation which is based on communication between students, but in which the students have little say over the topics or outcomes of that communication, is not likely to lead to the kind of atmosphere optimal for language learning.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a descriptive qualitative research which employs 40 students of the third year, consisting 30 female and 10 male students. They possess various backgrounds of ethnics and level of English proficiency. It is intended to reveal the fact that autonomous learning fits to all students learning styles, of course with the minimum lecturer's interferences during the learning process.

Perspective is something abstract since it is a product of cognition. Therefore, it requires instrument to measure it. Instrument used on this research is questionnaire consisting 10 questions about how students feel and describe teacher roles in an autonomous learning situation. Elements of the questionnaire are designed fully based on

Benson (2011) who made characterization on Autonomous Learning. The designing of this questionnaire is also by considering type of online and offline self-study. Using Likert scale from 1 (very disagreed) to 5 (very agreed), student score on perspective later are numbered and calculated. This is how data of this research are collected. Once data have been collected and counted, they will be analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis by looking at the highest and the lowest score of each question and looking at the higher and lowest score maker based on the classification of students.

Looking at the highest score on elements measured on teacher role in autonomous learning, it will reveal student perspective on what is the most important role of a teacher while the lowest score on element measures will give perspective on the least matter of teacher role. The highest score maker based on student classification will give information on what year of student considers autonomous learning is important and beneficial. Knowing each of these important factors is advantageous to a teacher in designing the best class to help student in self improvement.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Subjects of this research are the students with various backgrounds, such as ethnicity, genders, level of exposures to English and level of English proficiency. It is expected that Autonomous Learning will accommodate all students learning styles and habits so that they are going to have such kind of freedom to find material and the way to learn it so that the learning goals would be achieved effectively and efficiently. The most important thing that should be considered as a vital element is that students and lecturer build the learning environment which is real life like and which is comprehensively develop the communication between students and lecturer and also among the students (Ozkan, 2015).

In Autonomous Learning, students are going to have less amount of attendance in a classroom to have such kind of freedom to decide how, where and when to attain the goals of learning, choose the material topics and amount of homework as the way to assess the result of learning process. During the learning process of Pragmatics, I used this approach to promote students' independence on deciding how to adapt themselves to the learning materials since I have provided books and links to learn. Some of the books were written in the years of Pragmatics began to rise, meaning that the books are old-fashioned which used

philosophical styles which not-so easy to understand by students who have less experiences on Pragmatics. It is expected that students are going to have more creative way to understand materials, not only learning the provided books but also being benefited from internet. 6 students joined in this research to describe their perspectives regarding these questions on google form to give assessment to each of these from range 1 to 5, from 1 to 8. The rest are essay. The questions are as follows:

Question Number	Questionnaire	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	How much do you understand the basic principle of Autonomous Learning?					
2.	How much do you agree with the application of Autonomous Learning on Pragmatics?					
3.	How much do you agree that Autonomous Learning is better than the teacher-centered classroom method?					
4.	How much do you agree that the lecturer should provide the books and other learning sources to promote Autonomous Learning?					
5.	How much do you capable to find the learning material outside the classroom to promote Autonomous Learning? (Library, Youtube, Seminar/conference and so on)					
6.	How much do you agree that lecturer should be present in the classroom every the scheduled-day as the consequence of Autonomous Learning?					
7.	How much do you enjoy being a student that responsible to all of your activities in the learning process of Pragmatics?					
8.	From range 1-5, how much Autonomous Learning will be applicable to all of subjects in					

	your English Education Department?					
9.	According to your argument, describe your perspective on Autonomous Learning which was applied to Pragmatics last semester in two paragraphs.					
10.	According to your argument, what should a teacher or lecturer do in the classroom regarding the Autonomous Learning approach?					

From the answer of the first question, it is revealed that most of the students are aware and understand the basic principles of Autonomous Learning, which means to minimize the presence of the teachers. They are aware that they should learn by themselves with no expectation of being helped, guided and corrected if the students are producing errors during the process of learning. They are also aware that when they choose the wrong way to learn the material, the turning back point always exists so the students always have the opportunities to find the most suitable approach based on the preferred learning styles. Then, we will see how being aware of one's own learning styles and provide good learning strategies can help learners in acquiring a foreign language more efficiently (Laz, 2013).

All respondents are agree that teachers or lecturers should come to the class, not necessarily till the time is over, but more on giving support and feedback when the students are in the class at the scheduled time. Teacher should be exist to discuss students' problems during their learning processes at home, obstacles they found, support of their parents whether it is less or more that what is expected and so on. This research respondent claimed that the supportive and obstacles variables of autonomous model should be discussed and realized by the teachers, meaning that teachers should be aware about everything related to this learning model as a way to attain the learning goals.)

4. CONCLUSION

This has been clear for us that students can not or, we can say that, they are not ready for a 100% manage their learning by themselves. This is due to the existence of low reading literacy of the students, meaning that they are not ready or not accustomed to reading English academic textbooks. In fact, they are having difficulties on doing long-time reading in a particular period. In this case, teachers may help students by giving more portions to give exercise on reading English textbooks, so that the eagerness for knowledge through English textbooks may rise. Whenever it rises, the autonomous model will run automatically and the students become more responsible for their own successful in learning.

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