

The Implementation of Autonomous Learning in English Language Teaching (ELT)

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Abstract This research aimed at examining the implementation of autonomous learning in English Language Teaching (ELT) in vocational high school 2 Kuningan. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. The participants of the research are 2 English teachers and 16 students. The instrument used to collect the data are observation, interview, and questionnaire. The findings show that semi-autonomous learning is implemented in the process of English Language Teaching (ELT) in this pandemic situation by using zoom, WhatsApp group and Moodle platform as the media of teaching and learning process. The second, students are aware and understand autonomous learning, but most of them still difficult to implement autonomous learning in their learning process. Therefore, it is concluded that the implementation of autonomous learning in high school is not optimal/maximum yet because of many obstacles faced by both teachers and students.

Keywords: autonomous learning; English language teaching; high school

1 Introduction

Autonomous learning is one of learning methods that existed since 1981 which was discovered by Henri Holec (1981) father of learner autonomy. Wang (2010) pointed out that autonomous learning is a modern learning theory based on constructivist theory. The learning activities in this method are students- centered. Hayta and Yaprak (2013) also define that autonomous learning as the ability to involve themselves in their own learning process. In this learning method, students are responsible for their own learning process. They learn according to their own needs.

There are three reasons which can help learners take more responsibility for their learning. First, learners who choose will be more effective at controlling their learning because they have learned what they want to learn. Learners who are responsible for their learning will be able to learn outside of the classroom; and third, learners who know how to learn will be able to transfer their learning method to other subjects. Tanjung (2018) stated that Indonesian students who are still learning English cannot be separated from the presence of a teacher. This means that most students just learn English when they are in school.

Autonomous learning has become a major issue in English language teaching. The success of learner depends on their learning style through appropriate learning method. During this pandemic situation, autonomous learning is one of suitable methods for teaching and learning process. Based on the foregoing, and several previous studies that most of them

are analyzing autonomous learning in higher educations with a normal situation. So, the author is interested in examining the implementation of autonomous learning in Vocational High Schools, particularly in this pandemic situation in which students are learning online.

2 Methods

In this study, the researcher applied a qualitative research design. To conduct the qualitative research to enhance understanding of personal culture, beliefs and values, human experience, and circumstances, and develop theories describing these experiences. Qualitative research does not convert linguistics symbols into digital data but uses the word of participants or researcher to describe the phenomenon under study. The study aimed to know how the teacher implementation of autonomous learning in English language teaching (ELT) and the students response about the implementation of autonomous learning in English language teaching (ELT) in Vocational High School 2 Kuningan. Which the participants of the research are 2 English teachers and 16 students of 10th and 11th grade.

This study used three instruments such as; observations, interview and questionnaire. The observation done in the zoom meeting, moodle platform and WhatsApp Group. Meanwhile, the interview is done to the teacher by using some modified questions by Borg & Al- Busaidi (2012). Another instrument is questionnaires which given to the both of participants. The list of questionnaires for students is adapted from Ustunluoglu (2009) and for the teacher questionnaire is adapted from Borg & Al-Busaidi (2012).

3 Results and Discussion

The result of the observation shows that the two English teachers implemented autonomous learning in the process of teaching and learning. It was also found that the teachers focused on semi-autonomous learning method where students should be encouraged to do some learning autonomously under the guidance of the teachers. At the same time, teacher should adopt new teaching methods to complete the transition from a teacher-centered teaching model to a student's-centered teaching model.

The role of the student must still be defined when deciding what kind of material will be explained and what kind of topic will be discussed. The teacher must be aware of the materials that students require, particularly in online learning activities, as there are numerous misunderstandings during the teaching and learning process. So, in choosing the kind of material and topic that will be discussed and then customizing it to the situation of the teaching and learning process, the involvement of the students is needed.

Therefore, students' involvement is clearly needed. So, it is also related to the teaching methods that teachers use and classroom management; with student involvement, the teacher will know what kind of teaching method to use and how to manage the classroom itself, making it easier to see how learning is assessed. In autonomous learning students must be able to identify their own needs, strengths, and weaknesses, monitor their progress, and evaluate their own learning in addition to learning independently and cooperatively.

Other discoveries in the process of observation are how feasible to qualify the needs in the teaching and learning process. The researchers discovered that the course's objective can be seen in figure that shows a basic competence which is the goal of a course. There is a list of

materials that must be taught in one semester based on the syllabus and it was needed for students and it was needed as a teacher's reference in qualify the goal criteria in the teaching and learning process.

However, the kinds of tasks and activities that teachers give to students are still slightly more feasible. In these pandemic situations, teachers have a little difficulty carrying out learning activities; many activities are cut by the teacher, which influences the tasks that are assigned to the students.

In addition to classroom management during the online teaching and learning process, the teacher faces some challenges in dealing with students. Many students do not attend the Zoom meeting for a variety of reasons, and some turn off their cameras. It makes teachers confused about choosing a learning method to make the online teaching and learning process conducive.

Another finding was that while some students' ability to qualify their needs was quite feasible when learning cooperatively and independently, they were still unfeasible when identifying their needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Most students face many difficulties in the process of teaching and learning English, and it is still difficult to identify their needs, strengths, and weaknesses in learning English.

During the interview the question is about what teachers' perception through the implementing of autonomous learning in English Language Teaching (ELT) with a list of questions are adapted from (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) and modified. The interview result is used to persuade and answer the first research question.

There's a little different perspective about autonomous learning from the teacher. The first teachers believe that autonomous learning is a process where's students can learn on their own with the teacher as a facilitator or guide. She believes that the role of teacher still needed in the way of implementing autonomous learning in English language teaching. Meanwhile, the second teacher believes that autonomous learning is a student-learning centered where students can learn independently without being "fed" by the teacher.

The two teachers have the same opinion related to the characteristics of autonomous learners, the first teacher said that students can be said as an autonomous learner if they have a quick response to the teacher instruction and know what to do. It is in line with the second teachers' opinion, she believes that a quick response from students is one of the characteristics of autonomous learners.

About the effect of autonomous learning in English Language Teaching, both of teacher have the same opinion that autonomous learning should be very influential in English Language Teaching. The first teacher said that in this pandemic situation autonomous learning play an important role in the process of teaching and learning. Moreover, the second teacher stated that the implementation of autonomous learning in the 10th grade was hard, the transition period of the students being a big obstacle in implementing this method, which making this method ineffective.

Both of teacher were implementing autonomous learning method in the process and it's become the main methods in the process of teaching and learning online, the second teacher said even though the method was less effective if implemented in 10th grade, but the situations was forces us as teacher to implement that method to adapt to this pandemic situation.

In the way involving students in making decisions both of teacher have do the same thing, which involves students in decision-making in the classroom, such as establishing rules in the classroom and haggling over the teaching and learning activities by doing voting.

The main difficulties that their faced is about the internet quota, both of teacher claimed

that SMKN 2 Kuningan was a middle school, so that many of students were complaining about internet quota even though it has been subsidized by the government. Another difficulty mentioned by the first teachers that students' self-awareness is very low, they must be being caught by the teacher to join the class because there are still many students that skip the class.

In the last question of interview was related to the conclusion of all the questions before. It is about, is the implementation of autonomous learning in pandemic situation is effective or not. Both of teacher stated that it still ineffective because the situation. The student must adapt to the new situation that forced them to change their leaning method.

Meanwhile, both teachers had the same opinion at several points and chose to "agree" with the statements. It can be seen in the nineteenth point. They agreed that learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together. The twenty-seventh point about learner autonomy is then promoted when students can select their own learning materials. Then, learner-centered classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy. Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy, and they agree that learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.

At some points, the teacher has a slight difference of opinion. The first teacher chooses to strongly agree, while the second teacher chooses to agree, indicating that they both agree with the statement. It can be seen in the fourth point that they agree that autonomous means that learners can make choices about how they learn to learn. On another point, both teachers agree that involving learners in decision making about what to learn promotes learner autonomy and that confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.

There are some disagreements on some points, such as the eighth point, which states that learner autonomy means learning without a teacher, and the ninth point, which states that it is more difficult to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than with beginners. Next is the twentieth point about learner autonomy. Autonomy is only possible with adult learners. Autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher and the last is about promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners with more proficient learners.

4 Discussion

According to observations and interviews, autonomous learning in high school was still cannot being full autonomous. Because there are still many students who do not qualify the criteria for being autonomous learners. According to Little (2011), autonomous learners must understand their plans' goals, act, plan and implement learning activities, and review and evaluate their own learning. Many students skip class and must be coerced into attending by their teachers.

Based on the findings of the interviews, both teachers stated that autonomous learning is being used, particularly in this pandemic situation, and that they are being forced by the situation to implement autonomous learning methods in English Language Teaching (ELT). So far, the implementation of autonomous learning in SMKN 2 Kuningan is still semi-autonomous due to the numerous difficulties encountered in the teaching and learning process, as well as all the limitations.

Moreover, the data obtained from questionnaire which is distributed to the teachers and students. The data obtained from the teacher's questionnaire shows that the results are in

accordance with the results of previous observations and interviews. The data gained from the teacher questionnaire is to support and strengthen another two instruments. In the result of questionnaire, the two teachers agree on several points and disagree on a few others. Both teachers agree that the implementation of autonomous learning at the high school level is not completely autonomous.

Meanwhile, the results of the student questionnaire differ slightly from those of the previous observations. Some of the students are aware and understand autonomous learning, but they still difficult to implement autonomous learning in their learning process.

5 Conclusion

The Autonomous learning method is a good method to implement in the teaching and learning process. Especially in this pandemic situation, the use of autonomous learning is very important in the process of teaching and the learning process. Students' participation is essential in this method.

To sum up, the findings of this study show that teachers have been implementing autonomous learning methods in English Language Teaching (ELT) to encourage students to become more active and independent, particularly in pandemic situations, but there are still many problems and obstacles that teachers face when implementing autonomous learning methods. As a result, implementing this method in high school is still not maximized. So, teacher still implementing semi-autonomous learning strategies.

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