

Teacher's Perceptions Approaches, and Roles to Foster Learners' Autonomous Learning

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Abstract:

An autonomous learning emphasizes learners' responsibility in their own learning process. Nonetheless, it does not mean that learners' learn by themselves without teacher's guidance. Thus, teachers must understand the concept of autonomous learning, their own competence, and their approaches to develop learners' autonomous learner. The objectives of this study are to identify the teacher's perception about autonomous learning and the teacher's approaches to develop autonomous learning for the learners. The participants of this study are an English lecturer and students at the second semester of 2017/2018 academic year. A case study is applied in this qualitative research. The qualitative data are obtained from interview and observation. The findings show that (1) the teacher agrees that autonomous learning will give positive impact to the learners' learning process as long as they consistent to read up, realize that learning is for their need and can collaborate with the teacher during teaching learning process. It is because autonomous learning is not the only one factor that influences the learners' intelligence. It is one of learners' ways in their learning process. Hence, the teacher is still needed to help learners in learning process. (2) The teacher mostly uses teacher-based approach and learner-based approach as his approach to develop the learners' autonomous learning. It happens because between the teacher and the learners are interdependent each other. Furthermore, the teacher needs to be more closed to the learners so he can motivate them intrinsically. (3) The teacher realizes that he must teach, educate, and motivate the students. It is line with the concept of 2013 curriculum, i.e. the shift of teacher-centeredness to students-centeredness. The main teacher's responsibility is in supporting students become actively involved in teaching learning process. Thus, in developing students' autonomous learning, the teacher cannot only function as the source of knowledge for his students anymore.

Keywords:

autonomous learning, teachers' perceptions, teachers' approaches, teachers' roles

JEL: A10, A19

INTRODUCTION

The important aspect of education is to teach learners how to acquire knowledge and how to maintain learning enthusiasm. Unfortunately, Indonesian learners are not ready to be autonomous learners since the strong influence of Javanese paternalistic values in their daily life. In Javanese society, the interrelation among its members is determined by social factors such as rank, social status, and age. The higher the rank, the higher the social status and also the older the age, the more respect is given. That is based on Dardjowidjojo' research in 2001. Kirkpatrick (1995) also adds that in many Asian societies, knowledge is traditionally seen as something to be transmitted down through generations and the knowledge is passed down from teachers to learners. Besides, the Indonesia education system provides all information for learners and use one-way communication which a lecturer is only one who takes the main role

during teaching learning process. Those things make learners lack critical thinking skill, become a passive and dependent learner, and develop less academic skills.

Therefore, those discussions are in line with the concept of autonomous learning. In terms of autonomous learning, learners function as the main character while, teacher function as a supporting character in learning process. It does not mean that learners learn something without teachers' guidance. This paper aims to explore teachers' perceptions and approaches in fostering learners' autonomous learning.

The concept of autonomous learning is believed to be important in learners' education life. The concept of autonomous learning urges teacher to shift their roles from teacher-centeredness becomes students-centeredness. Teachers do not pour knowledge to learners everytime but, learners must be active and responsible to find out what, why and how they want to learn.

Autonomus learning is different to learning alone. According to Han (2014), autonomous learning is different to self-instruction and self-direction. Moreover, Holec (1981), the conceptor of autonomous learning, adds that autonomous learning is the ability to take charge of one's own learning. The word "autonomous" refers to attitude of learners rather than situation of learners in learning process. Autonomous learning as essentially the matter of learners' psychological relation to the process and content of learning, a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action. By doing this, learners know their weaknesses and find solutions to prevent the weaknesses reappear.

In the context of foreign language learning, teacher functions as a primary role in helping students to learn autonomously. A teacher can help students not only to acquire the target language successfully but also to create responsible behavior so that they can be more active in their learning process. In autonomous learning, students have the responsibility to make decisions and responsible to their learning. But without teacher's supervision, the whole process will result unsuccessfully. In this case, teacher should strive to inculcate the autonomous learning in the students' behavior.

According to Harmer (2007), the aim of teachers is to facilitate students' learning process. Teachers should be able to adopt a variety of teacher's roles within the classroom which facilitate the students' learning process. Based on his research findings, some of the teacher's roles come naturally to most teachers, while others have to be thought carefully. There are five teacher's roles that stated by Harmer. First, a teacher functions a controller. Teachers are responsible for the class' activity. Teachers function this role when lecturing, giving explanation to a student individually, and group working activity. Second, a teacher functions a prompter. Teachers encourage the students to think critically and creatively. They also should encourage students' motivation in their own learning process. Third, a teacher functions a participant. Teachers should have making friend with their students. In this role, the teachers can join to the students' discussions, role-plays, or group decision-making activities. The teachers can live things up from the inside, instead of having to prompt from the outside. Fourth, a teacher functions a resource. Teachers function as a transmission of knowledge from themselves to their students. Therefore, the students still need their teacher even they can search for some materials from media such as a book or a website. It shows that a teacher still be one of the most important resources the students have. Fifth, a teacher functions a tutor. In this role, teachers combine the roles of prompter and resource. Teachers must care to their every student. They should be ready to help their students in case of the students' academic aspects.

In line with Voller (cited in Han, 2014), teacher acts as a facilitator who initiates and supports decision-making processes, a counselor who responds to the ongoing needs of

individuals, and a resource who makes his or her knowledge and expertise available to the learners when it is needed.

In addition Xu & Xu (cited in Han, 2014) reveals that teachers act as a cooperater by building students' belief and confidence in autonomous learning. Teachers can be a guide by helping students to think about their learning strategies and making effective use of self-directed to facilitate autonomous learning. Besides, teachers act as a facilitator by giving opportunities for students to develop their autonomous ability. Teachers also act as a controller by encouraging more communication between teacher and students through various media to monitor students' learning process.

As mentioned above, the teacher's roles in developing autonomous learning are various and complex. It can be seen that teachers should not function as a director in the teaching learning process. In autonomous learning, teachers function as a guide, facilitator, cooperater, prompter, controller, and resource. Basically, the teachers' primary responsibility is in supporting learners to become actively involved in their learning process such as planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating learning. In brief, implementing autonomous learning by teachers is not only just a matter of changing techniques in teaching learning process but also, it is a matter of changing teacher personality. Furthermore, the function of the teacher is not only related to knowledge development.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher conducts this study by using qualitative approach in the type of case study. According to Yin (2003), a case study is an in-depth study of single unit, such as one individual, one group, and one organization. Hence, in this study, the researcher describes the result of observation and interview about the teacher's perceptions and approaches towards autonomous learning. The main subject of this study is an English lecturer namely RW. The supporting subject of this study is students at the second semester of 2017/2018 academic year. The collecting data of this study was obtained from interview and observation.

In this study, the researcher conducts this study by using qualitative approach in the type of case study. According to Merriam (1998), case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. By applying it, the writer can investigate the phenomenon, single instance, or social unit. In addition, the writer argues that case study is appropriate to the research which focuses on process. According to Yin (2003: 12), a case study is an in-depth study of single unit, such as one individual, one group, and one organization. Hence, in this study, the researcher describes the result of observation about the implementation of autonomous learning in EFL classroom as the realization of 2013 curriculum and describes the impact of the implementation of autonomous learning by the students' English proficiency.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Teacher's Perceptions about Autonomous Learning

According to the research problems, the findings of this research shows that the teacher agrees with the implementation of autonomous learning which makes the learners are active, creative, independent and responsible to their learning. It changes the learners' learning behavior into good behavior. This is cleared by Little (2003, 2007) about the reasons why autonomous plays an important role in learners' behavior. Autonomous learning can solve the problem of learners' motivation. It also makes learners' learning more effective and efficient. Related to the foreign language, it can gain communicative competence optimally.

Thus, autonomous learning is associated as effective learning and it is believed that learners are more success in their learning.

Meanwhile, the teacher is still needed by the learners although they have become an autonomous learner. Autonomous learning does not mean that the learners learn without teachers' guidance. Learners sometimes do not know which materials are appropriate for their learning. It is also related to their evaluation of their learning.

The implementation of autonomous learning especially in the EFL classroom allows the teacher and the learners to change the concept of authority. When autonomous learning is implemented, the learners become the center in the teaching learning process. This finding is in line with Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan No. 69/ 2013 which Indonesia government redesigns for the pedagogical way of thinking from teacher-centeredness into students-centeredness to meet the Indonesia education needs. In EFL classroom, Kumaravadivelu (2006) has classified EFL methods into three main points, and one of them is learner-centered method. In the method, learners function as the central aspect of learning process. Thus, the learners become more active, creative, and fully responsible toward their learning process. In brief, the students know what, why, and how they do their learning successfully.

Related to the learners' intelligence, it cannot be judged that learners' intelligence can be seen from their autonomous learning. It is because intelligence is affected by genetic factor, instead of their will to learn autonomously. This statement is supported by a previous research conducted by Gang (2015). She proposes that students with comparatively intermediary English proficiency and learners with lower scores in English proficiency are more to believe can learn English autonomously than learners with higher scores in English proficiency.

Teacher's Approaches to Develop Learners' Autonomous Learning

An autonomous learning concern with the ability to learn effectively in terms of learner's learning goals. In other words, autonomous learning is a transfer of responsibility for learning from teachers to learners. Therefore, in this research, the teacher uses some approaches, namely resources-based approach, technology-based approach, learner-based approach, classroom-based approach, and teacher-based approach as their strategies to develop learners' autonomous learning. The teacher only implements five of six approaches. The strategies are taken from Benson's approach (2011). They are six approaches, namely resources-based approach, technology-based approach, learner-based approach, classroom-based approach, curriculum-based approach, and teacher-based approach.

The most commonly used approach is learners-based approach and teacher-based approach. It is because teachers and learners are interdependent from each others. It can be seen from the class activities that the teacher always asks the learners to discuss anything during teaching learning process such as when explaining a new material and doing assignments.

Teacher's Roles in Developing Students' Autonomous Learning

Teachers still function as an important role in students' academic life. Han (2014) reminds that teachers must know their competence when developing the students' autonomous learning. If the language teachers lack of the knowledge to develop learner autonomy, how can they be expected to play their respective roles in promoting autonomous learning.

As mentioned before, the teacher's help is still needed by the students in developing their autonomous learning. It is indeed, in autonomous learning, students have the responsibility to make decision and responsible to their learning process but, the process will unsuccessfully happen without a teacher's supervision. It is because autonomous learning does not mean that students learn something without teacher's guidance as Yan (2012) stated. He proposes that

autonomous learning involves students in taking greater responsibility for what, how, and when they learn. In other words, it makes teachers to let students as the center of the learning process.

Eventhough the teacher is still as the resource supplier, the role does not take a big portion in this learning process. In autonomous learning, the teacher functions as a facilitator rather than a source of knowledge for the students. As Harmer (2007) says that the aim of teachers is to facilitate students' learning process. Teachers should be able to adopt a variety of teacher's roles within the classroom which facilitate the students' autonomous learning process. Thus, this learning process focuses more on students-centeredness than teacher-centeredness.

In autonomous learning, teachers cannot function as a director anymore. It is because the main teacher's responsibility is in supporting learners become actively involved in their learning process. Thus, the teacher functions as guide, facilitator, cooperater, prompter, controller, and resource of knowledge. A little different to Fumin & Li's statement (2010) that teachers play a crucial role in developing students' autonomous learning. Teachers do not only function as resources knowledge but also function as learning regulation, classroom organizer, and study guide. By guiding from teachers, students can develop the ability to learn independently as stated by Han (2014). He also mentions that students expect their teachers function as a guide, facilitator, assessor, psychological coordinator, peer cooperater, source of information, learner and researcher. In other side, the students' expectations are different to Xu's findings. In her research, Xu (2015) finds that teacher's actual behavior does not match students' expectations. It can be seen that there is still a lack of teacher's communication with students about their English problems. There is also a lack of teacher's guidance in helping students make English learning plans. Thus, it is better when the role of teachers and students is equal during autonomous learning process.

CONCLUSION

Autonomous learning can be done effectively if there is a good collaboration between teachers and learners. Furthermore, autonomous learning is not the only one factor that influences the learners' intelligence. Hence, the teacher is needed to help the learners to develop their own autonomous learning. The teacher uses some approaches to develop the learners' autonomous learning. The mostly approach used by the teacher is teacher-based approach and learner-based approach because the teacher needs to more close with the learners to motivate them so they can develop the learners' autonomous learning. It also refers to the learners' level in autonomus learning. The learners are still in first level so the teacher should hard work to urge the learners to be more creative. Besides, the teacher also should urge himself to be more autonomus as a teacher. By implementing autonomous learning to the students, the teacher knows his other roles instead of as a resource of knowledge. He functions as a guide, facilitator, cooperater, prompter, and controller. He not only teaches and educates his students but also motivates them. Furthermore, motivating students is not easy to do. Therefore, the teacher must realize what he should do to change the students into a better learner.

Implications

Based on the findings, the pedagogical implication can be proposed as follows.

1. Teachers know the benefit of autonomous learning

Eventhough, autonomous learning is not the only one factor that influencing students' intelligence, it is important to improve students' competence especially in English subject. Furthermore, autonomous learning can change students' learning behavior to be better. By knowing the benfits of autonomous learning, teachers can encourage students who are lazy

to be more aware toward their own learning process. Students become good learners when they are more responsible to their own learning process.

2. Teachers must be aware of their roles in educating their students

Teachers realize that they should teach, educate and motivate students by doing their roles. By reading this study, teachers will realize about their roles in teaching learning process. Regarding to the teachers' roles, it is expected that students will be more autonomous in their own learning process especially in English.

3. Teachers know what approaches they should use to develop students' autonomous learning

Teachers are an important agent who knows students' competence so by reading this study; teachers will know some appropriate approaches in teaching their own students and developing their students' autonomous learning. Therefore, this research is expected to figure out what teachers should do in developing students' autonomous learning.

Suggestions

1. To English lecturers

The English lecturers are recommended to support the learners to become an autonomous learner. By implementing autonomous learning, the teacher helps learners' learning process more effective.

2. To students

In autonomous learning, learners function as the main character. They can control their own learning process. They can find their weakness on learning and know how to overcome it. By doing this, the learners gain greater active involvement and better learning. They become active, creative, independent, and responsible in learning process.

3. To other researchers

It is necessary to follow-up this study to get more understanding about autonomous learning. There are some factors of this study which may be interesting to explore. For example, it is possible to other researchers to implement the autonomous learning in one of English skills.

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