



Exploring Learners' Autonomy in the Online Translation

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Keywords:

Learners'
Autonomy, Online
teaching,
Translation

ABSTRACT

Raising learners' autonomy is demanded in today's education. The more autonomous the learners, the better the result of learning outcome. This paper elaborates the findings from a case study on the development of learners' autonomy in an online translation class. One teacher and five students were invited to be the participants to share their perspectives and experiences during the course. The data were gathered through an in depth interview with both the teacher and learners. The findings revealed that the use of Google Classroom as a media of learning was quite effective. Most of the students became more autonomous in learning the materials, but some challenges such as late submission for the assignment, lack of motivation to learn, and some limitations of online learning still emerged during the implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

The autonomy of the learners has been widely applied in the western countries, but in Indonesia this is a challenge and a new thing to educational growth. According to Rahmadhiyah & Lengkanawati (2019), "Since the issue of learner autonomy has been more significant in educational circles nowadays, the Indonesian government has made a move in recent curriculum to demand the teachers to promote learner centered (learner autonomy) in the teaching and learning process". According to Benson (2001), the concept of autonomy refers to the learners' responsibility to control their own learning. It results better than non-autonomous learning since the learners become more independent and can manage their own learning, without waiting for the teachers' instruction. In brief, autonomous learning leads to better outcome of learning.

Autonomous learners know how to make decision for their own learning. Holec (1980) mentions five fundamental components, in which they will take responsibility for, including 1) determining the goals, 2) defining the contents and progressions, 3) choosing the methods and techniques for learning, 4) controlling the acquisition procedure accurately, 5) assessing what they have achieved. Autonomous learners can study modules themselves, repeat material that they find

difficult or directly work on assignments and exercises in modules if they have felt mastered certain material. Students are also free to choose whether to study the module alone or in groups with other friends. In addition, students can also choose which subjects they will study, either at the class, at home, or other possible location, and because this is online based class the student can be more free to do an assignment at anytime they can.

Autonomous learning has been widely researched in education today. Rahmawati & Wulyani (2013) found that the implementation of autonomous learning could effectively help the students to comprehend text. It was also made them more active in the classroom. Asadinik & Suzani (2015) discussed that motivation, confidence, course assessment, and physical learning supports were some factors contributed to the development of learners' autonomy. Next, Xu (2015) added that teachers have a major role in developing learners' autonomy so they needed to focus on teaching learning strategies and creating a positive learning environment. Lengkanawati (2017) mentioned that changing teachers perspectives to promote autonomous learning to their students were necessary and it could be done by involving them into a training. She investigated that autonomous learning training for teachers significantly affected their concept, principles, and desire to apply autonomous learning in the classroom. In another research, Ramadhiyah & Lengkanawati (2019) made a more comprehensible research by inviting both teacher and learner to better understand the application of autonomous learning in the classroom. They found that the teachers had willingness to facilitate the learners to be more autonomous, but it was not fully implemented. The students were also still dependent on the teacher because they were accustomed with the teacher-centred learning environment.

Those previous research, then, inspired the researchers to deeply examined the implantation of online learning in tertiary education setting. Online-based classroom learning has been widely applied in several higher institutions, because it is in a modern era so the learning system must also have advanced technological developments. This research aimed to investigate the experience and perspective of both teacher and students in the implementation of an online translation class at University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin. Therefore, there will be three main research focus, such as 1) the respondents' experiences and perspectives of online classroom, 2) the development of students' autonomy, and 3) some problems raised during the implementation. Last, recommendation regarding the problems will also be presented in the discussion.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach and the research design is a case study. A case study is an in depth study of a particular situation, it is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic. A case here can be an event, process, activity, program, or one or more several people. The purpose of case research is to learn intensively about the current state of the environment, and the environmental interactions of a social unit, individual, group, institution or community. In the case study the researcher tries to examine the individual or a unit in depth

Research Setting and Participants

Participant in this study were five students in fifth semester who took translation course at English Department, University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin. Two are male and the rest are female students. One of the researchers is one of the students who joined in the translation class. Thus, it helped the researchers to get easy acces to the research site. This research seeked to obtain in-depth information about the experiences of students who study translation using online-based classes. It explored the development of their autonomous learning skill based on their and the teacher's perspectives.

Data Collection and Analysis

The research instrument is interview and observation. The interview is intended to gather the main data related to the respondents' experiences and perspectives of teaching and learning using online mode. There were eight questions intended to each student related to their perspectives toward online translation class, their problems during the implementation, and the growth of their autonomous learning skill. Meanwhile, five questions were set for the teacher, including his perspective of online learning and his efforts to develop the students' autonomy. The observation was used as additional instrument so that all statements from the respondents could be confirmed and clarified.

In order to obtain the data for the research, there were some research procedures taken by the researchers. The researchers first asked for approval from the teacher to participate in this research. The researcher explained about what data was needed and what data obtained for what purpose. Data collection was carried out in afternoon with one interview session with the teacher and two subsequent sessions with the students to answer the questionnaire and interview separately. Before the interview began the researchers prepared the question sheet for students and voice recorders for the students' interview sessions. The teacher interview session was conducted through social media since he was not in Indonesia at that time. Last, all the data got in the interview were transcribed and analysed qualitatively. The result of observation was also noted to confirm all the data from the interview.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In order to provide a coherent overview of the findings, the research findings are discussed under the following main heading: The learners' perspective in the online class, the teacher's perspective about autonomous learning, some problems during the implementation, and recommendation for future project and research.

Learner's perspective of learner autonomy in the online translation class

This finding as based on the data obtained from the results of the interview. First of all, Most of the students said that online translation class was interesting because this was the first time for them to take online-based classes like this. The inclusion of technology also becomes the reason why this class is enjoyable. "I like this class cause of the use of technology" (Respondent 4, 20/12/2019). This class used Google classroom as the online platform. It has friendly interface so it was easy to use, even for new users.

Regarding the growth of the students' autonomy, they said that they sought learning material from sources other than what they got from the teacher. It is the sign of their autonomous learning is growing because they cannot fully expect from the teacher for explaining the materials. Benson (2001) defined autonomous learning as the learners ability to take control over their own learning. In the present research, the respondents said that they need to manage their own learning since in online class the teacher only gave written instruction and sometimes they felt shy to ask further when they got difficulty to understand. As a result, they searched the explanation from other sources or discussed it with their friends.

Teacher's Perspectives about Autonomous Learner

There are several things highlighted in this research. This includes the knowledge and views of the teacher about autonomous learner, and what is done to make the learner autonomy active, and whether students have been assessed as having autonomous learning.

First the teacher considers autonomy to be independent and not dependent on others. Student's have to learn independently because they are a mature learner to be responsible. As is it seen in the except below :

"Autonomy is independent of being able to do things independently not dependent on the help of others...because they are adult learners who have full responsibility for their learning assignments" (Teacher interview 12/01/2020).

This shows that the teacher has implemented independent learning with centralized learning to students not centered on the teacher. The way the teacher to facilitate and assess autonomous learning is by creating a discussion forum where students and teachers can interact. In the discussion forum, the teacher can assess all activities and student activity. In addition, teacher in online learning have assignments to keep all students knowledge straight, equate perception between each student, and aligning every piece of knowledge gained by the student. The teacher encouraged students to be more autonomous by making sure that the lesson delivered was clear so the students understood and could explore more by themselves. As is it seen in the except below :

"I give a detailed explanation of something until the student understand to be able to do it independently" (Teacher interview, 12/01/2020)

This mean, that the teacher did act as a facilitator but that it did not mean the lesson was not explained directly by the teacher himself. And the last is whether students have been assessed as having autonomous learning, this seems more inclined towards each different individual some have implemented autonomous learning and some have not. This findings support Xu's (2015)

research that teacher's roles have a big impact on the development of learners' autonomy. Teaching our students to be more autonomous does not mean that we teach them without our presence and help.

Some Problems during the Implementation

Although all the students were quite interesting with the implementation of online translation class, it is not a guarantee that everything ran smoothly. About 20% of the students admitted that they did not complete all the assignment in the online class because they did not understand what to do. The instruction was unclear and they were reluctant to ask further explanation since they preferred to get face-to-face explanation from the teacher. Respondent 3 said that she did not notice that there was an assignment since she was not 24 hours connected to the internet. It can be highlighted that the supporting facility, such as internet, becomes a factor contributing to the students' motivation to complete the online assignment.

The students' familiarity with the use of online learning also considers to be one of the problem. Respondent 2 mentioned that he preferred traditional class because he could talk and directly asked the teacher when there was a problem. In online learning, he only learn in front of his laptop and it was not the same as in face-to-face meeting. All of the students' statement was also supported by the teacher, as it is seen in the except below ;

"Not yet fully independent, students are mostly inequalized and not fully responsible with their duties as a student" (12/01/2020).

Here, we concluded that the implementation of online learning still faced some problems, especially related to students' time management, facility, and their familiarity. It is in line with Ramadhiyah's & Lengkanawati's (2019) findings that students in Indonesia was still dependent with the teacher.

Recommendation for Future Project and Research

Based on the findings, we can draw a conclusion that online learning mode has a promising future to be implemented in the higher education setting. The students enjoyed the class and it taught them to be more autonomous by independently learn the material by themselves. Online mode encourages them to have discussion among students when they find difficulty to understand the lesson. It offers flexibility in learning, which can lead the students to have control own their learning. Some components of autonomous learning from Holec (1980) were reflected during the implementation. The students show that they know the goal of learning, the content to learn, and techniques for learning.

However, some problems raised in the present research should be taken into account. The students' ability to manage their time should become a focus to fixed when designed an online learning. A discussion prior the class can be a recommendation to deal with this problem. Students and teachers need to set an agreement for the deadline of each assignment before the online class started. The students' readiness for the online class students also can help them to manage time for visiting the website so the facility problems is not a matter. Last, introducing a blended learning can be an alternative before giving them a fully online class so they have familiarity with this new learning mode. The future research is expected to be more comprehensive in examining other leaning variables not observes in the present research, such as the learners' motivation, participation, learning styles, etc.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion which have been elaborated above, some conclusions are drawn. First, online class promotes students autonomy. It offers advantages such as deeper learning experience and digital literacy development. It also helped them to find their own learning strategies. Second, teachers need to have a very clear instruction so the students will not find difficulty to comprehend the material. Creating a discussion forum is a good way to facilitate interaction among students and teacher. Third, teacher and researcher need to aware with some problems may arise during the implementation of online learning. Giving the students prior explanation and description of what online learning is and what they are going to do can be a good start before giving the lesson. Introducing blended learning also a nice choice so the students will not gain familiarity before joining a fully online learning. Training students' autonomy is important, especially in higher education because we expect them to learn by themselves so they can achieve maximum benefits from their education.

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