


English Language Lecturers' Perception About Learner Autonomy

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ABSTRACT

The English language lecturers' perception about learner autonomy is important in order to help their learners develop their learning autonomy in the classroom. The purpose of this research was to know what was the English Language Lecturers' Perception about Learner Autonomy. The descriptive quantitative research has the English lecturers of IAIN Bukittinggi as subject of the research. There were 11 English lecturers that used as the sample in this research. The instrumentation in this research was questionnaire. In analyzing the data, the researcher used the percentage formula. The research findings showed that most of the English lecturers were "unsure". Data analysis was proven that there were 69 (34.84%) the total responses from the English lecturers that stated "unsure (U)" in the questionnaires about learner autonomy. In conclusion, most of the English lecturers were "unsure" about the learner autonomy.

Keywords: Perception, English Language Lecturers, Learner Autonomy (LA)

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INTRODUCTION

Learner autonomy (LA) is the ability of the learners or students in arranging, developing and handling their own learning activity. It is also known as autonomous learning that refers to the ability of the learners to take charge of their own learning by making themselves capable of making their own decision in determining learning objectives, defining the contents and his progress, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring the procedures of acquisition, and evaluating what has been acquired. Since English language learners in Indonesia are EFL learners, autonomy is a potential capacity which needs to be developed in learners themselves.

There are many definitions about learner autonomy delivered by some experts. According to (Brikena, Xhaferri, & et.al, 2015) mention that learner autonomy means the ability to take charge of one's own learning. Autonomy is essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning. It is a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his [or her] learning and the implementation of those decisions. Then, autonomy is a recognition of the rights of learners

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within educational systems.¹ In conclusion, learner autonomy is the ability of the learners to take control of themselves.

Learner autonomy means the effort of the students in understanding fully about their action in learning activity. Barnard and Li define learner autonomy as the ability of a learner to determine learning goals, manipulate learning actions, and show a positive attitude toward learning activities in order to work independently, self-regulate learning, and assess one's own learning results (Kjisik & et.al, 2009).² So, the students with autonomous learning will be able to take care about their own's learning, even without the help from the teacher.

Nowadays, strategies used to deliver knowledge in English language teaching and learning are focused on the new form which enables learners to direct their own learning. "Autonomous learning" has become a term extensively used in education, and its core concept, and has a meaning the ability to take charge of one's own learning. This implies that learners can work on their own pace and know what, when, why, how and where to learn. Learners have the power and right to learn for themselves. The autonomous learning capacity is a willingness to assume learning responsibility. The ability of autonomous learner includes both the knowledge and skills for carrying out whatever choices the learners see appropriate for their learning. It means, the students who have learning autonomy have full responsibility for their learning process.

There are some researches related to this research. First, the research from Ahmadzadeh and Zabardast (2014) (Shalaleh, 2014) with the title "Learner Autonomy in Practice". The results of the study show students tendency to well-planned combination of communicative and non-communicative activities that will enhance both effective teaching and learning at different fields. It should be noted that the findings should feed into classroom practice, and provide guidance for materials and syllabus revision and a pedagogical framework for developing learners' autonomy. The method of this research is a survey research by given the questionnaire to the participants.³

The second research is (all, 2013) entitled "The Correlation Between Learner Autonomy and English Proficiency of Indonesian EFL College Learners". This study showed that learner autonomy and English proficiency as defined in the study had a strong, positive, and significant correlation. Given the results of the study, some suggestions can be put forward. First, it is suggested that English teachers encourage and cultivate their students' positive attitude toward autonomous learning, foster the development of their students' autonomy in the teaching learning process, and above all, change their mindset to favor learner autonomy. The data of this research were collected from documents and by administering two questionnaires. Multiple linear regression analysis conducted revealed that learner autonomy and English proficiency as defined in the study had a significant, strong, positive relationship (Myartawan et al, 2013).

The third was the research from (Fidyati, 2021) with the title "Learning Autonomy and Its Significance for Indonesian EFL Learners". The findings of this paper showed that autonomous learning is a good model for Indonesian EFL learners and should be considered as a premier strategy to enhance their English proficiency. The method of this study is the literature review.⁴

The last was the research from (Guo, 2007) with the title "Autonomous English Learning among Postgraduate EFL Learners in China: A Study of Attitudes and Behaviors". The findings revealed that postgraduate students generally held strongly positive attitudes towards AEL but exhibited only moderate frequency of autonomous learning behaviors outside of class. The research method is descriptive research by using questionnaire as the instrumentation.

Furthermore, this research has similarity with those researches above in the point of learner autonomy or autonomous learning. But, those researches above conducted the research related to learner autonomy in different contexts and different research designs. Meanwhile, this research focused on "English Language Lecturers' Perception about Learner Autonomy". The result of this research showed that most of the English lecturers were agree about their students have capabilities to have learner autonomy based on some indicators stated in the questionnaire.

Based on preliminary research by conducting interview to some English lecturers. The researcher found that some of English lecturers have different opinion about the learners autonomy. Some of the English lecturers agreed that the learning autonomy of the students was high, meanwhile other English lecturers stated that the students' learning autonomy were still low. It is important for the lecturers to notice because without autonomy in language learning, the students can not do their activity well. Then, the English lecturers have different perception about how to create the learner autonomy. (Kardena, 2020). It means that, the students' learner autonomy was still promoting by the lecturers in the language teaching and learning activity. The English lecturers guide the students to accept responsibility for their own learning, guide them to be reflectively engaged in planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning.

Furthermore, most of lecturers said that they have an essential role in developing their students' autonomy, namely as facilitator and motivator, meanwhile the other lecturer said that there is no role of the English lecturers in developing learners autonomy, since the autonomy should come from the students themselves. However, some students admit that their learning autonomy will be developed by the help of their lecturers. They stated that students generally considered the teacher as the main figure in language classroom. They stated that the ideal lecturer they had in their mind was everything in the class who knew everything, told what to do, where they were wrong and what they could do for that. The lecturer should provide them with interesting, enjoyable and meaningful ways of language learning. So, there is a gap between the lecturers' perception and students' perception about learning autonomy of the students. (Hakki, Dogan, & Mirici, 2017).

Since English language lecturers have some roles in developing learner autonomy, such as as the facilitators, counsellors, motivators and so on, so the learner autonomy seem depends on the lecturers. Therefore, it is important to know about the English language lecturers' perception of learner autonomy. So, this study was aimed to discuss "English Language Lecturers' Perception about Learner Autonomy".

METHOD

In this research, the researcher used descriptive quantitative research. The researcher tried to analyse and made the descriptions about the English Language Lecturers' Perception about Learner Autonomy in IAIN Bukittinggi in 2019/2020 Academic Year. The subject of the research was the English lecturers of IAIN Bukittinggi in the academic year 2019/2020. The instrumentation in this research was questionnaire. In collecting data, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the sample of the research. It means that the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the 11 English lecturers in State Institute of Islamic Studies (IAIN) Bukittinggi. In analyzing the data of English Language Lecturers' Perception about Learner Autonomy in IAIN Bukittinggi in 2019/2020 Academic Year, the researcher followed these following steps: 1) Read and checked the lecturers' answers on questionnaire. 2) Categorized and counted the lecturers' answers in every items. 3) Described every items in the table and found the percentage of every items. 4) Made the explanation about the finding and discussion. 5) Made a conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research, it can be explained that some of the English lecturers were agree if the students are able to decide the objectives for each lesson, and some others were unsure.

This might be happened because some students were able to identify the lesson objectives from the topic given or from the subject of their study. Whereas, some other students were not able to identify the objectives of the lesson until their lecturers told them before learning activity. As explained by (putra, iqbal, & Iswara, 2019) that regardless the learners' awareness of their learning progress, it does not mean that the learner did the learning all by themselves without teacher assisting. The role of the teacher is still needed in the classroom. Despite the learners' ability in managing their own learning, teacher's presence is still necessary as a controller, prompter, participant, resource, and tutor. In other words, the teachers' role in learning activity is still important. Although the students did most of the learning and can guess the lesson objectives, teachers still required to assist, to facilitate and to encourage the students in the learning activity, especillay to tell the students the learning objectives of the lesson.

After that, for item number 4 that was about the English lecturers' perception of "My students are able to choose the learning activities for each lesson". The diagram showed that most of English lecturers were agree about this point. There were 7 English lecturers (63.63%) who answered unsure and 3 English lecturers (27.27%) who answered disagree. Then, there was 1 English lecturer (9.09%) who answered unsure. It means, most of the English lecturers were agree about their perception of "My students are able to choose the learning activities for each lesson".

From the data , it can be identified that most of the English lecturers were unsure about students are able to choose the learning activities for each lesson. It means, the learning activities mostly come from the lecturers and presented or performed first by the lecturers. This was make sense, since at the first time most of the students did not know what exactly the lesson talked about. In this case, the learner autonomy was not developed yet. (Hakki, Dogan, & Mirici, 2017) admitted that teachers' perception on learner autonomy is crucial because their beliefs about independent learning either intentionally or unintentionally impede the development of learner autonomy. In developing learner autonomy, the role of teachers is substantial. Since autonomy is not innate but must be taught with formal education later on, learners need much guidance which will be enabled by teachers. In order to promote autonomy, teachers need to put a good deal of effort in the job. In other words, to make the students able to choose the learning activities for each lesson, it was needed the help from English lecturers.

Moreover, for item number 5 that was about the English lecturers' perception of "My students are able to monitor their progress". The diagram showed that most of English lecturers were disagree about this point. There were 5 English lecturers (45.45%) who answered disagree and 4 English lecturers (36.36%) who answered unsure. Then, there were 2 English lecturers (18.18%) who answered agree. It means, most of the English lecturers were disagree about their perception of "My students are able to monitor their progress".

From the data analysis of the research, it can be described that most of the English lecturers were disagree about statement students are able to monitor their progress. This was because most of the students were busy to do their tasks and assignments, participated in language learning and listened to the lecturers presentation and doing their presentation. However, they tend to ignore and did not know how to evaluate and monitor their progress. Most of them were just wait for their lecturers' opinion about their progress in language learning. This was caused since one of the lecturers' roles was monitoring. According to (Alrabai & Fakieh, 2017), the teacher plays a central role in learner autonomy. The two additional characteristics of autonomy-supportive teachers; they are both managers (mapping out and managing the most likely paths available to the students and the consequences of following each particular path) and resource people (optimizing learning conditions by helping learners develop an awareness of the whole range of alternatives, strategies, and learning styles and by providing them with feedback and encouragement). So, the job for monitoring students' progress was usually done by the lecturers.

In addition, for item number 6 that was about the English lecturers' perception of "My students are able to evaluate their learning". The diagram showed that most of English lecturers were unsure and disagree about this point. There were 5 English lecturers (45.45%) who answered unsure and disagree. Then, there was 1 English lecturer (9.09%) who answered agree. It means, most of the English lecturers were unsure and disagree about their perception of "My students are able to evaluate their learning".

Related to the data presented of the research, it can be indicated that the English lecturers were unsure and disagree about the students are able to evaluate their learning. This was happened because the job for evaluating the students learning was for the lecturers as the doer of teaching and learning process. Then, one of the lecturers' roles was as evaluator in language teaching and learning. This opinion was supported by Yan, which stated that the course of promoting autonomy does not make a teacher redundant, instead, he/she must work more as a "facilitator, helper, coordinator, counselor, consultant, adviser, knower and resource".⁵ In other words, the job for evaluating students' learning was for the English lecturers.

In discussion, English Language Lecturers have different Perceptions about Learner Autonomy in IAIN Bukittinggi. Meanwhile, most of them were unsure that the learner autonomy should be developed mostly by the students themselves. In addition, in developing the students autonomy, the lecturer has an important role and the English lecturers should help their students in developing their learner autonomy well.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this research showed that most of the English lecturers were "unsure" about learner autonomy. Data analysis was proven that there were 69 (34.84%) the total responses from the English lecturers that stated "unsure (U)" in the questionnaires about learner autonomy. In the statement about "able to identify their needs", there were 6 (54,54%) total answer from the English language lecturers "unsure". In the statement about "able to learn independently", there were 4 (36,36%) total answer from the English language lecturers "agree" and also "disagree". In the statement about "able to decide the objectives for each lesson", there were 4 (36,36%) total answer from the English language lecturers "agree" and "unsure". Finally, in the statement about "able to evaluate their learning", there were 5 (45,45%) total answer from the English language lecturers "unsure" and "disagree". In conclusion, most of the English lecturers were "unsure" about the learner autonomy.

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