Student awareness, attitude, affordances, and challenges in online autonomous English language learning

Kesadaran, sikap, kemampuan, dan tantangan siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris mandiri

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
	Autonomy in self-regulated learning using various online modes has currently become the norm in English language teaching and learning. This research aims to address student awareness and attitude towards autonomous language learning and their affordances and challenges as a part of such learning. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on English language students of a renowned private university in Malang, Indonesia. The findings suggest that student awareness on the importance of autonomy in language learning was very high. In general, their attitude towards autonomous learning was positive. They also reported that autonomous learning, especially those conducted in informal online settings were enjoyable and educative. However, some practical challenges were identified. The foci of the survey in the study were on the student affordances and challenges during autonomous language learning. Our data showed that student affordances include a number of technical aspects, learning resources, and learning management, while the challenges consist of technical and learning management aspects. We then proposed relevant activities to support students' autonomous learning.

KATA KUNCI	ABSTRAK
	Pembelajaran mandiri dalam bahasa Inggris saat ini tengah menjadi hal yang normal dilakukan, terutama dalam konteks pembelajaran daring selama masa pandemi tahun 2020. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tingkat kesadaran dan sikap pebelajar terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris mandiri, serta kemampuan (affordances) dan tantangan dalam melaksanakan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris mandiri. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain survei cross-sectional dengan melibatkan mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris di sebuah universitas swasta terkemuka di Malang, Jawa Timur. Hasil analisis data secara deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa kesadaran akan pentingnya pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara mandiri sangat tinggi, sementara sikap responden terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara mandiri juga secara umum positif. Pembelajaran ini, terutama yang dilakukan dalam konteks daring dan informal, menurut responden bersifat menyenangkan dan mendidik, akan tetapi beberapa masalah teknis juga ditemukan. Oleh karena itu, aspek selanjutnya membahas tentang berbagai hal yang memungkinkan responden untuk melakukan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris secara mandiri, yang ditemukan pada area teknis, sumber belajar, serta manajemen pembelajaran. Sementara untuk tantangannya, temuan dari analisis data menunjukkan bahwa kendala teknis dan aspek manajemen pembelajaran menjadi dua faktor utama. Beberapa implikasi dan saran praktis berdasarkan temuan dalam penelitian ini juga dibahas secara rinci dalam laporan penelitian ini.

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Introduction

The fact that English today has transformed as one of the most popular languages spoken by people around the world correlates positively with the increasing number of its speakers (Khansir et al., 2016; Graddol, 1997), and thus urges people from non-English speaking countries to invest to learn the new language, including Indonesian people. As part of Expanding Circle Community, the English Language Teaching practices in Indonesia have existed since the 1950s. Yet, it does not significantly impact the Indonesian young generations' English proficiency, which is relatively low (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Exposure is one of the significant factors to consider. With English as a foreign language, it is challenging for Indonesian students to find comprehensive input and comprehensive language output in their day-to-day environment. In other words, Indonesian students mostly learn English in the classroom settings, but there is a lack of English use outside. Therefore, creating rich exposure outside the classroom settings is considered necessary; one of the recommended strategies to do so is by conducting autonomous learning to complement classroom-based language learning (Inayati, 2015).

Autonomy is believed to have played a significant role in students' success in language learning, and as such, the issue has been prominent in the academic debates among language scholars for decades (Benson, 2013; Cakici, 2015; Holden & Usuki, 1999; Holec, 1981; Inayati, 2016; Ustunluoglu, 2009; Yang, 1998). Autonomous learning, which also appears in different terms in the literature such as independent learning, distance learning, self-regulated learning, or out-of-class learning, can be defined as learning activities done by learners who take full responsibility for their learning, especially outside classroom contexts (Benson, 2013), without depending on the existence or supervision from teachers. The critical point to underline from autonomous learning is that there is a transfer of responsibility to conduct the overall learning process from teachers to students (Cakici, 2017). Autonomy in foreign language learning is especially relevant for Indonesian contexts where most of its people do not speak the language; thus, the urgency for learners to be pro-active in finding rich English exposure to improve their skills is paramount (Inayati, 2016).

As a concept originating from the western culture (Pokhrel, 2016), numerous studies looking at autonomy implementation in English language teaching and learning in Asian contexts have also proliferated (Cakici, 2017; Teng & Huang, 2019; Lamb & Arysandi, 2019; Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). However, very limited studies focused on Indonesian education contexts. In a paper discussing autonomy as western hegemony and how it generally affected learners of non-western contexts, Pokhrel (2019) argued that such concept enhances students' learning in general, evidenced by various empirical studies conducted in Asian and African English language teaching contexts. However, she further suggests that the kind of autonomous learning approach used should not be globally generalized to consider the local cultural values relevant to learning. A recent study in Indonesian contexts by Lamb and Arysandi (2019) investigating Indonesian urban youth in autonomous, online, and informal English learning showed learners' general inclination towards entertainment-based activities. Further, they also found that the long-predicted fear of the negative effect of using online entertainment-based materials towards classroom learning was not present in their study, as their respondents generally expressed a positive attitude for both. This study has highlighted the importance of understanding learners' attitudes in conducting various forms of autonomous language learning activities, which are crucial before learners could even execute any forms of autonomous learning.

Students' attitudes and awareness towards autonomous learning through an online environment are vital for the current condition in which the education sector

worldwide is preparing themselves to embrace more online learning or distance learning practices due to the global pandemic of Covid-19. However, since online learning is relatively new in the Indonesian educational context, it is necessary to promote this type of learning and promote autonomous learning in teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, online learning is currently highly dependent on the use of technology. A study from Reinders and White (2016) suggested that "the use of technology for learning often requires a degree of autonomy, but also that our understanding of the impact of technology is changing our understanding of learner autonomy and, more broadly, the roles of learners and teachers." In other words, it can be highlighted that teachers' and students' autonomy are to some level influenced by their efficacy in utilizing technology and that autonomy and technology reciprocally affect the dynamic of teacher and learner roles. To be more specific, online autonomous learning requires teachers to be critical to prepare and control the learning activities. At the same time, the students are expected to be aware and open towards autonomous learning activities, including the use of technological affordances (Misir et al., 2018).

Awareness is considered as one of the pre-requisites of attitude and the basis for one's action or inaction. In this case, it is a basis to conduct autonomous language learning. The theory of *planned behavior* by Ajzen (1991), for example, suggested that attitude, along with subjective norm and perceived behavioral control, is one of the major elements that shape an individual's intention to do a particular behavior. In other words, having an awareness of the importance of autonomous learning is crucial in supporting the successful language learning process for both teachers and students. For teachers, awareness is essential to provide the right stimuli and intervention to support learners' autonomy. As for the learners, awareness is the key as it is the starting point that allows curiosity, a positive attitude, and eventually real actions and fruitful outcomes. As Wong and Nunan (2011) pinpoint, autonomy is a significant feature of successful language learners.

Several studies regarding awareness of and attitude towards autonomous language learning show that both are closely related to a higher level of learners' autonomy (Misir et al., 2018; Szocs, 2017). Studying Turkey English learners in a Massive Open Online Language Course (MOOLC) program, they found that the awareness and attitude towards autonomy were noted. This result was accompanied by the high level of autonomy which was indicated by learners taking responsibility for their learning processes, for example, shown by their ability to make decision, to set learning goals, and to make some free time to extend their learning activities, which result in relatively good achievement in their English subject. Interestingly, a study involving Hungarian teachers and learners conducted by Szocs (2017) found some correspondences and mismatches between teachers' and learners' beliefs about autonomy and what they did in the classroom settings. Some of the correspondences are in terms of immediate goal setting by students, which were more extrinsically influenced. At the same time, the differences found were, among others, about how teachers and students viewed motivation in maintaining autonomy.

As stated previously, this study was conducted as the world was fighting the Covid-19 pandemic, and much formal learning was conducted in online settings. Such learning demanded a higher level of learners' autonomy as most students worldwide were engaged in some forms of self-regulated learning. However, very limited research was focused on the awareness of and attitude towards autonomous learning and the learners' affordances and challenges in conducting autonomous learning; as such, this study aimed to fill in the literature gap. Such study is essential to assist answering many of the current practical problems of why, for example, learners were

relatively slower in their online language learning than traditional face-to-face learning. It is expected that understanding their awareness, attitude, affordances, and challenges could help shed some light on understanding. To be more specific, below are the research questions of the current study.
1. How is student awareness about autonomy in English Language Learning?
2. What are student attitudes towards online English Independent learning?
3. What are student affordances and challenges in conducting online English Independent learning?

Method

The current research uses surveys and interviews to gather the data to answer the research questions. This study is part of comprehensive research studying English language learners' autonomous learning in online settings; however, the current paper focuses on awareness, attitude, affordances, and challenges for better and in-depth discussion purposes. The use of surveys was considered suitable as this study aimed to tap information about students' awareness, affordances, challenges, and attitudes towards an issue, which is online autonomous language learning. As Creswell (2012) and Ary et al. (2010) suggested, survey design is best for collecting data about specific populations' characteristics, opinions, and attitudes. For practical reasons, the current study employs a cross-sectional survey administered online because, as Fink (2013) claimed, such design helps obtain time-effective data involving a huge number of population in vast geographical locations, which was the case in this study. For triangulation purposes, the interview was chosen to gather more profound insights into the survey respondents' answers.

This study involved 668 undergraduate students of an English Language Education Department in a private university in East Java, Indonesia, as the population. The online survey administered via Google Forms was distributed to all study populations invited to complete the survey through an invitation sent by the captain of each cohort. The data collection process took one month. The respondents' profile was considered representative of the population, with 11% first-year students, 27% the second year, 29% the third year, and 33% fourth year and older. As for the interview, the sampling method employed cluster sampling as it was deemed appropriate for the current study. Invitation to interview was sent to students of the different academic years to represent their clusters/cohorts. At the end of the data collection process, eight students of different academic year (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th) agreed to participate in the interview.

The instruments employed in the current study were a survey questionnaire and interview guide. The survey questionnaire was developed rigorously based on the relevant theories (Benson, 2013) and the study's specific goals. After that, the questionnaire's initial draft was first sent to an English Language Teaching expert for content and face validity. It was pilot-tested to 20 students to check its validity and reliability further. Internal consistency measures using Cronbach Alpha were applied for constructs with continuous data, resulting in a 0.835 and 0.805 alpha coefficient respectively for attitude construct and affordances and challenges construct. Using the standard suggested by George and O'Mallery (2006), such a coefficient was considered a sign of good internal consistency, meaning that the questionnaire was reliable. The questionnaire's final version had four main sections: personal detail, awareness, attitude, and affordances and challenges. The first section about personal detail contains basic demographical questions such as students' gender, academic year, and English proficiency level. Next, the awareness section contains four items with yes/no options. Third, the attitude section also contains four items of the six-

point Likert Scale (agree-disagree). Finally, the affordances and challenges section contain 11 items of the six-point Likert Scale (agree-disagree).

The second research instrument used was the interview guide, which was developed based on the research questions and the initial analysis of the survey results. The interview was done in a semi-structured manner as it allowed the benefit of structure and a more flexible manner. The students were interviewed using the Indonesian language as it facilitated better communication and more useful insights. The semi-structured interview, which was conducted in the form of a small, focused group discussion, was conducted three times, involving two to three students. The interview discussed their opinion about the survey's general findings, then focusing more on the reasons for their answers to the survey questions.

Once the data were collected, the survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the supporting data from the interview was analyzed using content analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to understand the general trends about population characteristics and the more specific trends found in the survey results (Fink, 2013). The descriptive statistics used were the measures of frequency and the measures of central tendency to be more detailed. As for the interview data, the interview transcript was thematically analyzed, which was conducted by carefully and repeatedly reading and identifying common topics and ideas found in the participants' responses and categorizing them into relevant themes of the specific research aims.

Results

This section presents the findings based on the research questions about awareness, attitudes, affordances, and challenges. Generally, the students showed high awareness about the need to do autonomous language learning, and their attitude was also largely positive. Next, the affordances for autonomous language learning were found in the area of learning resources, while some areas of technical and learning management aspects were found to be the affordances and challenges. The details of the findings are presented as follows.

Awareness of Autonomous Language Learning

As the first step in understanding learners' autonomy, it was deemed essential to start with their awareness as it becomes the basis for the number of autonomous works they do in their language learning journey. For this, the survey initially asked students to indicate their awareness by answering four items with 'yes' (2) or 'no' (1). Based on the survey results analysis, most students showed high awareness about the importance of conducting independent study in addition to the formal learning organized by the university. The overall mean for this construct was 1,87, which leaned very close to 2 (yes), showing that the general awareness of the items asked in the questionnaire was already valid.

Table 1. Students' Awareness of Autonomous Language Learning

Statements	Mean
I am aware that autonomy in English Language learning is important for the success of my learning	1,98
I am aware that rich exposure to the English language is important to my learning	1,95
I am aware that I can actively find English exposure from my environment	1,8
I am aware that I can integrate independent language learning into my daily activities	1,78
Grand Mean	**1,87**

As indicated in Table 1, the questionnaire started with an item asking if they believed that autonomy in language learning is important (item no. 1), which yielded

a very high result (mean 1,98) showing that almost all students were aware of such importance. The next items asked in the questionnaire showed the idea of autonomous language learning used in this study, which covered not only those activities which are intentionally and systematically done to increase English language proficiency, but also those unintentional activities which were done to increase exposure to the language, thus supporting general acquisition (Item no. 2). The mean obtained was very high (1,95), showing that almost all respondents were aware that rich exposure is essential in language learning.

In addition, considering that most people in Indonesian contexts do not speak English, the exposure towards the language can be further increased if there is awareness by the students to actively find and integrate various English exposure in their daily lives. Such notions were represented in the questionnaire as the third and fourth items, both of which also gained a high means, namely 1,8 and 1,78 respectively. These figures show that most of the respondents were aware of those points, but that a few of them were not. Now that general awareness about the importance of conducting autonomous language learning was confirmed, the following discussion focuses on students' attitudes towards conducting online autonomous language learning.

Attitude towards Online Autonomous Language Learning

Now that the awareness was noted, the survey moved on to ask about students' general attitude towards autonomous language learning. Four items asked about attitude in the questionnaire, and they were measured using a six-point Likert Scale of agreement, ranging from 1 for 'completely disagree' to 6 'completely agree'. The items asked about the respondents' general impression on conducting autonomous language learning online against their self-perceived improvement and enjoyment in English language learning. See the detail of the questionnaire and the weighted mean analysis results in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Attitude towards Autonomous Language Learning

Statements	Mean
• I like to do some forms of independent online learning to improve my English skill	5,03
• Online independent language learning helps me improve some aspects of my English skills	5,03
• I learn a lot when I do independent language learning online	4,80
• I find it easy to learn English online and independently	4,70
Grand Mean	**4,89**

As noted in Table 2, the grand mean was 4,89, which leaned closer to an agreement with the attitude statements. In other words, a generally positive attitude towards autonomous language learning was noted in the respondents. To be more detailed, the respondents generally agreed that doing autonomous language learning was quite enjoyable and at the same time helpful in their attempts to improve general as well as specific English language skills (item 1 and Item 2, both with 5,03 means). Next, when it comes to the practicality of conducting the online autonomous language learning (item 4), the respondents' aggregate responses still show a closer tendency towards the agreement, as shown by the mean 4,70. In other words, they generally agreed that it was relatively doable but that some challenges were faced in terms of practicality in doing autonomous language learning online. The following section looks closely at various factors becoming the enablers and challenges in autonomous language learning.

Affordances and Challenges in Conducting Autonomous Language Learning

The affordances and challenges that students potentially face when conducting autonomous language learning were identified from specific enablers that allow them to do the relevant activities. The questionnaire list was developed from extensive literature study that covered three main areas deemed important in autonomous language learning contexts: technical aspects, learning resources, and learning management. The questionnaire consisted of 11 items with a six-point Likert Scale of agreement with the score ranging from 1 for totally disagree to 6 means totally agree. This list was then used to map out the aspects that serve as the affordances and those that became challenges in conducting autonomous language learning. To be more detailed, the items that students generally agree with were considered the affordances, meaning they had the necessary resources to conduct autonomous language learning. As a result, the items that students generally disagree with were considered the challenges, meaning that they generally had problems with aspects that might hinder them from conducting autonomous language learning.

Table 3. Affordances for Online Autonomous Language Learning

Statements	Mean	Aspects
• I have the technology (e.g., smartphone, laptop) to access online independent learning resources	4,56	Technical Aspects
• I can easily access relevant resources (e.g., materials) for online independent language learning	3,75	Learning resources
• I know how to find relevant resources (e.g., materials) for online independent language learning	3,68	Learning resources
• I have reliable access to the internet connection in my place	3,65	Technical Aspects
• I know how to manage my time to do online independent language learning, among other activities	3,63	Learning Management
• I know where to ask if I have problems understanding the online independent language learning resources	3,59	Learning resources

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the affordances span in all three main aspects of autonomous learning; technical aspects, learning resources and learning management. The highest affordance belongs to the technical aspects, specifically the access/ownership of technology to access autonomous learning resources that yielded the mean of 4,56, showing that almost all students had the necessary technology to do the relevant learning activities. The second and third affordances belong to the learning resources and learning access and the knowledge to access the specific resources. Both aspects yielded the means of 3,75 and 3,68 respectively. In other words, most students knew how to access and could access the desired materials that they wanted to learn. The next affordances were reliable internet connection (3,65), time management (3,63), and problem-solving related to understanding the materials learned (3,59). The means indicate that although some students did have problems with those aspects, many of them afforded autonomy in their language learning because they had sufficiently reliable internet connection, working time management, and ability to find solution when facing problems related to understanding the materials.

Next, five aspects are found to be the challenges in conducting online autonomous language learning, which include the technical and learning management aspects (see Table 4). Two of the challenges are the technical aspects i.e. the problem related to financial resources, which was found to be the biggest challenge (3,38) and knowing how to find solutions upon facing technical problems when conducting autonomous language learning (3,46). In other words, the data indicate that students often have a

limited budget to spend on the internet quota for online language learning. In addition, not having someone or something to help them when stuck with technical problems is also a challenge in conducting autonomous language learning. The next challenges are the management of learning such as knowing how to plan (3,40) and evaluating their learning (3,40). These problems are also closely related to the last challenge namely knowing how to organize autonomous learning activities (3,47). The fact that all three problems lie in learning management indicates that students needed more assistance in managing effective autonomous language learning and making it more systematic to maximize their attempts to improve their English skills independently.

Table 4. Challenges for Autonomous Language Learning

Statements	Mean	Aspects
• I have enough financial resources (e.g., money, internet voucher) to do online independent learning	3,38	Technical Aspects
• I know how to plan (make specific targets) for my online independent language learning	3,40	Learning Management
• I know how to evaluate my online independent language learning progress	3,40	Learning Management
• I know how to find a solution if I have technical problems accessing online independent language learning resources	3,46	Technical Aspects
• I know how to organize my online independent language learning activities	3,47	Learning Management

Regarding the challenges identified above, data triangulation during the interview showed that many students did not plan, organize, and evaluate their learning because they thought that learning had taken place even without a rigid system.

> *"(being systematic) it's good, but I seldom do it because I think, the most important thing is that I do the learning, it doesn't matter if the evaluation is there or not."*—I1-IS

> *"Because plan makes it feel too rigid. I think independent learning is very much personal and is at times done unconsciously or unintentionally."*—I2-PR

In addition to the challenges listed above, the survey also asked open-ended questions about the challenges students face in doing autonomous language learning. Some of the recurring problems students mentioned here were motivation problems, unconducive environment, and learning management problems. First, students reported that finding and maintaining high motivation to do autonomous language learning could be a problem at times. Second, they also reported that the absence of a supportive environment was an issue, such as crowded housing situation and having no partner to speak English with. Next, some aspects of learning management not mentioned in the survey were not knowing the strategy to learn certain language aspects, not confident with students' own English proficiency, and lack of English vocabulary.

Discussion

The global pandemic of 2020, during which the current study took place, had forced the general educational system to shift from traditional face-to-face teaching and learning to mostly online learning. The current study investigates one of the essential elements of online learning practice, namely students' autonomous language learning.

Indeed, as Meyer et al. (2008) pinpointed, one of the key successes in online learning is the promotion of the autonomous learning concept, in which there is a considerable transfer of responsibility of learning activity and management from teachers to students. However, teachers still play major roles in managing and controlling the autonomous learning activities, including helping students to set the learning goals, identify and develop strategies to achieve the goals, develop study plans, identify and select relevant resources, and assess the study progress (Kopzhassarova et al., 2016).

To be precise, this paper has looked into the internal and external aspects which lay the groundwork for learners' autonomy in language learning. The internal aspects were represented from the awareness and attitude, both of which were found to be high and positive, showing respondents' openness towards autonomous learning. The current study's findings support the research conducted by Misir et al. (2018) and Orawiwatnakul and Wichadee (2017). Studying about the students' autonomy in online English course in Turkey, Misir et al. (2018) also found the high level of the students' awareness on autonomy, which was reflected in their relatively high proficiency in the language, believed to be the result of free and informal independent learning outside the classroom contexts. In other words, the respondents in the study generally spent a huge amount of their free time engaging themselves with English materials and activities independently outside the classroom. Besides, the high awareness was also complemented by the students' generally positive attitude in their learning, described through their ability to do self-evaluation on their learning abilities, followed by self-effort through engagement in out-of-class English activities to complement what they had done in the formal learning activity in the classroom. In a similar vein, a study investigating undergraduate students' beliefs about autonomous language learning in Thailand by Orawiwatnakul and Wichadee (2017) also claimed that the students who showed a high level of beliefs about autonomous learning tend to have positive attitudes towards their learning activities beyond the classroom. In other words, there was a positive relationship between the students' beliefs and the language learning behaviors outside the class. Students with high beliefs on the importance of autonomous learning showed a general tendency to be more active in searching for additional activities and materials which could support their learning independently outside the class to complement their classroom learning.
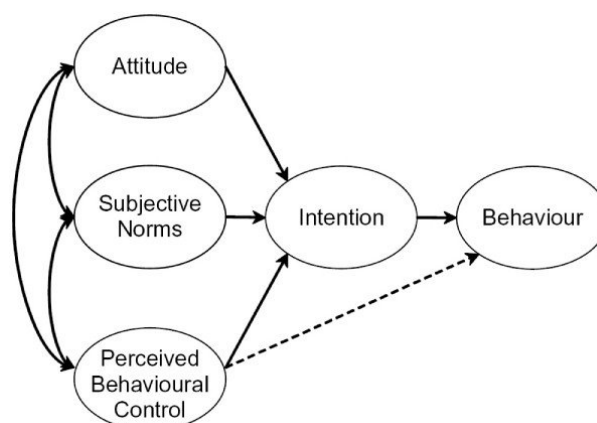

Figure 1. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991)

The high awareness of autonomy indicates that learners understood its importance to support their English language learning, while the generally positive attitude

towards autonomous language learning activities shows a certain level of familiarity and willingness to conduct the initiatives. Indeed, understanding and awareness are the starting point of attitude, and attitude is one of the key factors that shape a person's intentional behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, the high awareness and positive attitude towards autonomous language learning found in the current study are essential indicators of learners' readiness for the actual action of independent learning, provided that other supporting conditions are met.

Another important condition to be fulfilled for an actual intention to take shape, according to Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, was perceived behavioral control, that is the perceived ease or difficulty in conducting specific action. In this study, the perceived behavioral control, which was represented by the external factors believed to assert some influence in learners' intention to conduct autonomous language learning, was termed as the affordances and challenges. For the affordances, the findings suggest that some technical aspects in the form of technology access/ownership and internet connection, and learning resources aspects such as the knowledge and ability to access relevant materials and problem-solving skills related to the resource understanding were key factors. As for the challenges, it was found that some technical aspects like the lack of financial resources and limited problem-solving skills relevant to technical issues were at work, as well as the learning management aspects covering the difficulty in setting a goal and conducting evaluation. In addition, difficulty in organizing the learning activities based on students' individual learning strategies were also found to serve as other challenges in conducting autonomous language learning.

The current study has generally revealed high awareness of and positive attitudes towards autonomous language learning, which is believed to serve as a solid basis for further encouragement and intervention. As such, some practical implications and suggestions for teachers and educators are proposed. First, considering the importance of autonomy in language learning, it is necessary for language teachers to stress its importance to learners to support their autonomy in learning. As Orhon (2018) also suggested, it is impossible to address each student's individual needs in a classroom, thus learning outside is a must. Second, to support learners' autonomy, it is crucial that teachers and educators train learners to understand essential aspects of learning, including analyzing problems, setting the learning goals, making necessary decisions on the learning materials and activities, and reflecting on their works. Third, in addition to training learners with practical strategies in autonomous learning, the expected support is also in terms of motivation. As Cakici (2015) suggested, language teachers and educators are also expected to always motivate learners, for example by attempting to increase their confidence, knowledge, and skills in learning how to learn. Finally, based on the detail about the affordances and challenges identified in the study, some aspects could be taken into account in designing relevant supports for learners. For example, teachers may be able to provide support by designing, identifying, and suggesting the internet data-friendly activities for autonomous language learning, and inserting the discussion about learning management aspects into classroom teaching to train learners' autonomy.

Conclusions

Throughout the study, it can be concluded that students showed high awareness of the importance of conducting an independent study to complement formal learning activities traditionally held through face-to-face learning activities. Such high awareness is vital, mainly to deal with the long-established belief of limited English exposure since students can also actively seek English exposure in their daily lives.

This awareness was also accompanied by a generally positive attitude towards online autonomous learning. The students understudied generally assumed that doing autonomous language learning was quite enjoyable and helpful to improve their English language skills. Furthermore, in terms of affordances and challenges in conducting autonomous language learning, the study revealed that some technical aspects, learning resources, and learning management served as both affordances and challenges. Among the affordances, the technical aspect was the highest, followed by learning resources aspects. On the contrary, the challenges lie in technical aspects i.e. limited financial resources and in most management of learning such as planning, organizing, and evaluating the learning activities.

This study may be limited in terms of the number of respondents and the population. However, the insights could still be useful for the initial understanding of the starting points of autonomy in English language learning in other contexts similar to that of the current study. Future studies could be directed towards conducting a similar study with a wider population and understanding the role of subjective norms in autonomous language learning.

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