EXPLORING AUTONOMOUS AND SELF-REGULATION IN VOCABULARY LEARNING

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Abstract: Vocabulary is the most fundamental aspect of language learning. However, the limitation of classroom-based vocabulary learning to cover large amount of vocabulary, implies the necessity of learning vocabulary independently and regulate their learning effectively. This study aims to identify the learners' autonomy and self-regulation strategies in learning vocabulary as well as the benefits and difficulties of independent vocabulary learning. This study implements descriptive qualitative design with questionnaire as instrument in data collection. The researcher collects the data taken from 10 late-semester students in University of Islam Malang. The result shows that all students learn vocabulary independently on their own preferences, but only four students are autonomously self-regulate, the other respondents considered ineffective in self-regulation. In the identification of independent learning benefits and difficulties, the researcher found seven benefits and five problems. The research concludes that 10 out of 21 students are independent learners, but only 4 out of 10 students considered as an effective autonomous learners. Independent learners is greatly benefits vocabulary learning. Meanwhile most of the problems encountered by the students in this study aside from difficult words signify similar difficulties of other independent learning.

Key Words: Autonomous, Independent-learning, self-regulated vocabulary learning

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is the most fundamental aspect for every language, in the context of EFL learning, mastering vocabulary comes first prior to the learning of four English skills. One of the most important things when learners study a new language is vocabulary mastery. Moreover, the role of vocabulary is crucial in EFL language learning and proficiency that affects how well learners use the language (Rouhani & Pungharib, 2013). However, due to immense range of English vocabulary, it is difficult to effectively if vocabulary learning only happens in English class especially in a community with EFL standard.

Regarding to this, it is important to consider autonomy in vocabulary learning that allows the learners to develop behavior of learning independently beyond the classroom. As described by Holec, (1981) learner autonomy is the learner's capability to take charge of owns learning and has the responsibility for every aspects of this learning. The importance of learners' autonomy further implied by Khotimah, Widiati, Mustofa, and Ubaidillah, (2019) that successful learners is progressively seen as an individuals that are capable to conceptualize knowledge from the world experiences directly instead of those who responds to lessons well.

In developing autonomous behavior, self-regulation act as significant aspects as it comprises several important role of independent learning including planning, preparation, process monitoring and evaluation. In accordance to Zimmerman (2008) self-regulation is the level that learners are metacognitive, behavior and motivationally active and in their private process of learning and emphasis to their use of practical methods or feedback to achieve of the advancement in academic. This study aims to explore the way independent learners from late-semester EFL students in University of Islam Malang conduct their independent vocabulary learning.

This study focused on how the learner manages their learning independently, this study also aims to identify the difficulties and benefit of conducting vocabulary learning autonomously and independently. Based on the background information, the researcher tries to points out some problems that identify on how the respondent autonomously self-regulates in vocabulary

learning and the factors affecting the difficulties of independent vocabulary learning.

METHOD

Based on the research problems, the researcher tries to find the answer using descriptive qualitative research, qualitative research is needed since the researcher need to find the data of the research not in the forms of numbers. the data taken from 10 late semester students of English students of University of Islam Malang who have completed 4 basic skills and hypothetically have more experience in English and vocabulary learning compared to newer students as respondents.

The data in this research collected using online questionnaire about self-regulated vocabulary learning that consist of question related to the respondents self-regulate their vocabulary learning started from forethought phase that involves planning, setting goals and preparation, performance phase that entails the learning process and monitoring, the self-reflection that comprises how the learner respond to their effort during two previous phases. The researcher also includes questionnaire about the convenience and difficulties encountered when conducting self-regulated vocabulary learning.

 The data will be analyzed by organizing the transcript of response in the questionnaire, scanning, organizing, and grouping the data into suitable information for the result followed by elimination of unnecessary content to focus the aims of the research. The data then processed by grouping and categorizing the response to be interpreted and presented in the finding.

The research initiated from identification and determination of the topics, problems, research purpose and the importance of the research based on the issues related to the topics of the research. These steps then followed by the implication of literature that support the importance and information for the topic based on literature and previous research that influence the idea of the research. To get suitable method and planning for the research the researcher formulate the research method and determines the direction of the research by deciding source

of the data, the method of data collection, method used for data analysis and formulation of research procedure. After the completion of the whole initiation, planning and formulation, the researcher begins to collect the data from late semester EFL students of University of Islam Malang, the main data taken from 10 most suitable students as sample, the data received from the questionnaire then analyzed using steps of qualitative analysis proposed by Miles & Huberman consisting of organizing the data, data reduction and selection, classification, presentation and conclusion. The analysis and conclusion are organized based on research problems of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the first stage of data collection researcher attempts to identify whether the students learn vocabulary independently, learn on their own or directed by someone else. Based on the data on the first item in questionnaire the researcher found that 90% of the respondents are motivated due to their needs to be better in English, while the other one is learning vocabulary for easier access in receiving information worldwide. However, from the second question it is found by the researcher that all of the respondents attempt to learn English vocabulary in consistent manner independently. Meanwhile most of the respondents are conducting independent learning based on their own merit without being influenced by other people, but one of them are doing vocabulary learning independently in order to get better in English that because someone wants that respondents to be better in English. In regarding the use of English learning media, the researcher found that all the respondents are enjoying English based media.

However, only four of the ten total respondents are intentionally use that media actively learn English while the other six are not. In accordance to the availability of learning facility, all the respondents are agree that internet connection as the world's bank of knowledge helps them in improving vocabulary learning. In response to the next questions all the respondents agree the statement.

This indicates that the availability of learning facility encourage those learners to learn vocabulary independently.

In summary, the data shows that all the participants are learning independently in their own volition and take responsibility of their learning, this indicates that even though the reason of learning is due to many reason including someone else, as long as the learners learn in their own will, they are considered as independent learners in their learning purpose. Moreover, the data also shows that all the respondents also manage their independent learning that indicates the independent behavior. From both data the respondents are considered to be autonomous in term of meta-cognitive and behavior.

Students' self-regulation strategy

In attempt to identify how the respondents conduct self-regulation, the researcher first has to identify the forethought process of self-regulation, which comprises of setting goal and identifying the learning needs. The data shows that, eight respondents are setting their goal, while the other two did not, this indicate that those two students whose are R2 and R5 are not effective independent learners. This is due to the strong importance of setting goal in the whole process of learning while all the respondents are identifying their learning need before proceeding to main process.

Preparing the learning

In this preparation of the learning, the researcher aims to identify how the source and material are taking and what supporting tools used in vocabulary learning. The preparation of learning usually based on the need identified at the planning stage. Based on the data, seven respondents are taking their material source from the internet and the rest three of them are choosing the material based on their preference. It is also found that five of the respondent choose their learning material based on their level of proficiency, this indicate that half of the respondents are concerned about their level of understanding. Based on the data it also found that interned based material receive the highest frequency 70% in the

data distribution and followed by 30% that learns from self-preference. This indicates that half of the respondents did not manage their material well. In preparation of the learning, the respondents also need to consider the use of supporting tools to make learning process more effective. Based on the data, seven respondents are using the supporting tools.

Process monitoring

From the data about how students monitor their learning progress, eight out of ten students give positive response in the matter of monitoring the learning process independently while the other two are not. Monitoring in this case of vocabulary learning is similar to taking notes of slang and difficult words, monitoring how many words learned in a day and identifying problems encountered during learning. One of the important aspects of process monitoring is identification of learning problems. Identification of learning problem enables the students to finds a way to solve the problem and configure anticipation for the next problems to come. From the data, seven respondents are identifying learning problems, but three other students are not.

The data indicates that content learning problem have the same score and only two respondents have motivation problem and most respondents 7 of 10 trying to find the solution online and the rest of them choose asking others, none of them are choosing the offline solution from printed materials. It is indicated that only half of the respondent is doing self-motivation during learning process, motivation is not technical issues in learning strategies but the lacks of motivation will have possibilities of making the students stop learning in midway.

Evaluation and reflection

In this section, the researcher aims to identify the final stage of independent learning process that is evaluation. This is the important part where Independent learner will receive information of the result of their learning. It is indicated that 9 out of 10 students are making evaluation consisting of 4 students evaluate by reliable guidelines and self-evaluation, and 1 evaluate with the help of

others, while 3 respondent didn't evaluate at all, this make this individual excluded from the next following question and cannot be included as effective self-regulated learners. These questions will be followed by five respondents due to the question are related to self-evaluation that three respondent did not do. From the data above five respondents are willing to make improvement after knowing the result of their study, which means that their development is not limited to certain result. While 2 of them choose to move on without making improvement enables the respondents to study more subjects rather than focusing to improve on finished subjects. In these data we can also see that only 2 respondents are willing to identify learning issues. It also can be found that 3 of the respondents are willing to look back and identify what problems found in their learning and 2 students wants to retry the learning, a respondents taking note of the problems and 4 of them choose to move on to the next materials.

The researcher also identify that the respondents have different method of self-evaluation in vocabulary learning, therefore, the researcher divide the method into 3 categories. 3 of 10 respondents are using this retention test. Taking vocabulary test from many sources, based on the result of this research only two of them are testing this way, and the other two respondents are practicing of new words in daily activity. In the data, the researcher found that 50% of the respondents are considering giving reflection in vocabulary learning.

Factors affecting self-regulated vocabulary learning

In identifying determining factors in self-regulated vocabulary learning, the researcher found that all the respondents mention that learning vocabulary independently enables the students to learn more vocabulary compared to in class environment, it makes this benefit as the most recognized benefit in independent vocabulary learning.

The second most recognized benefit of independent vocabulary learning Is that independent vocabulary learners have more extended time to memorize vocabulary as the learning itself did not bound to any classroom or course time limit, based on the data above 6 respondents mention this benefit. The next benefit that recognized by 4 respondents is that independent vocabulary learning has more

flexibility of learning that support the acquisition of information, the data above also shown that 3 independent vocabulary learners mention freedom in preference along with the benefit of the improvement or prolonged vocabulary retention after acquiring the vocabulary independently. The next two benefits are mentioned once by different respondents one mention that vocabulary learning can be done occasionally when spotting unknown words, and one other respondent mention that learning independently allows less pressured learning environment. In this research, the researcher found seven different benefits from the response of the students during data collection. the researcher also aims to identify the difficulties encountered by independent learners when conducting self-regulated vocabulary learning that involves learning inconsistency that mentioned by 9 of respondents, and in this case make this kind of difficulty is the most recognizable vocabulary self-learning difficulty.

The next most considerable difficulty is the learner's lacks of motivation that mentioned by 7 of the respondents. The data shows that 4 of the respondents are mention that being too busy is one of problem encountered by independent learners along with the difficulty regarding the memorization of words with hard to pronounce and hard to read that makes more difficult to memorize them.

The least recognizable difficulty that mentioned by 2 of the respondents is that lack of practice makes some early memorized vocabulary to be forgotten. In this identification of the difficulties based on the response of the students in independent vocabulary learning, the researcher found in total 5 types of difficulties that encountered by the respondents.

DISCUSSION

Every respondent have their own different motives in learning English six respondents are learning vocabulary on their own because something they want requires English while the other three because they like English and only one of them because of someone told them to be better in English. However, in the data all respondents learn vocabulary on their own will and consistent in doing it. In

the data, the researcher found that the use of digital media, easy access of information and internet encourages the respondents to learn on their own.

This indicates that the availability of facility encourages the learner to become autonomous in their learning. To success in language learning especially in English, it recommended that the students themselves capable to learn English outside the classrooms on their own. However, it is necessary to provide them with equipment, facility and required skills of autonomous learners (Tsuda, 2013).

Respondents' Independent Learning Strategy

In the research the researcher finds that in the beginning or forethought process, most of students partaking this research are setting their goal. this indicates that these particular students are studying aimlessly regarding to the result. The significance of setting the learning goal is in the entire process and the result of learning, without learning goal, the students will conduct their learning almost randomly. Decent learners in self-regulation process, in comparison to deficient learners, are more active in learning processes of and setting learning goals (Zimmerman, 2008). Aside from learning goals, the students need to identify the learning needs, in this research all the students are aware of what they need in learning. However, this can be achieved effectively if the students set the learning goal beforehand.

This is due to in order to know what is needed I the learning one should understand the purpose of the learning, in this context is setting the learning goal. To become effective L2 learner over a multipart progression, the learner have to take charge in one's processes of learning and discover suitable methods of learning, that is the process encompassing self-regulation (Choi et al, 2018). In this case, the students that did not set the learning goal did not effectively aware and able to prepare the need of learning and did not self-regulate effectively.

In regards to learning preparation of learning, half of the respondents are doing well in the preparation of source material; every respondents have different preference in selecting materials, but what important is the way the select their material. From the data the researcher, identify that the respondents have different

consistency in learning and found that all the respondents are trying to maintain those consistency. In conclusion, five of the respondents are not choosing and selecting their source material carefully, this could leads to misunderstanding. The validity, reliability in term of vocabulary, some students adapts some idioms and sometimes-improper words that cannot be used in normal circumstances. The step of monitoring is important because by monitoring the progress the respondents are able to identify issues in learning and give immediate resolution. According to Zimmerman (2008) monitoring progress, help to preserve in attaining learning goals. The final step of self-regulation is self-reflection that comprises of reflection, evaluation and feedback. From the data the researcher found regarding to reflection that R1, R2, R5, R9, R10 are not doing self-reflection, this indicates that this particular student did not self-regulate.

In conclusion, to how the respondents self-regulate, the researcher categorizes the respondents into two groups of students. In this research, found that 6 of 10 students are not considered as effective self-regulated learners because those students are self-regulating their vocabulary learning from the forethought process of planning to self-reflection by evaluating their learning progress, for having all the requirements for SRL models these students that are categorized as self-regulated learners or autonomous learners. Based on the finding it can be concluded that 3 of 10 students are not self-regulate their vocabulary learning effectively, Respondent 1 are not self-regulating, because of not evaluating the learning results, as evaluation are considered important in 3 steps of self-regulated learning this particular students are not considered as autonomous self-regulated learners.

Respondent 2 and 5 are not self-regulate due to the skipping of setting goal, goal setting is important as it is will determine the focus of whole learning, however, since they still take charge of their own learning, they can be considered as independent learners. Based on Khotimah, Widiati, Mustofa, & Ubaidillah, (2019). autonomous learning is the concept in the teaching of English language that explains the state where learners independently learn English without the support of teacher or the state where students owns complete control in their

process of learning English. Meanwhile, planning and evaluation processes are subject to teachers' responsibility.

To be an efficient self-regulated learner and complete the complex process of learning, it is required to set goals, find suitable method of learning, and control the learning processes of self-regulated learning (Choi et al. 2018).

Factors affecting independent vocabulary learning

In answering the second question about factors influencing independent vocabulary learning the researcher deeply look into the response of every respondents to gain insight of the reason behind the respondents' answer. Based on the data above there are two kinds of factors, which are beneficial factors, and the factors regarding to the difficulties encountered by the learners based on the response of the respondents about the beneficial factors in learning vocabulary independently.

There are numbers of benefits of independent vocabulary learning, the first benefit is autonomous or independent vocabulary learners are able to learn more vocabularies in learning outside the class compared to class activity. Based on the data above all 10 respondents consider this as the benefit and the next most considerable benefit that are mentioned by 6 of 10 respondents of independent vocabulary is more extend time for vocabulary memorization.

The third most considerable benefit is flexibility, independent vocabulary learning is not bound by material and environment, the learners can learn vocabulary anywhere or anytime they want. Some response also says that in doing vocabulary learning independently learners are able to choose what material they like allowing more potent memorization, this indicates that freedom in preference is considered beneficial in learning vocabulary, in the data this benefit is recognized by 3 respondents along with more potent vocabulary retention.

Other two benefit of independent vocabulary learning is less mentioned than the other pre-mentioned benefit, and only recognized by an individual, those are based on the respondent statement that independent vocabulary can be done occasionally when learner stumbles upon slang and unknown vocabulary, in

contrast, this is more considerable as vocabulary acquisition, however, by identifying the meaning as well as taking note, the learners are actively engage in learning of vocabulary. and the other less considerable benefit of independent vocabulary learning is less pressure in learning, it is stated that learning with no pressure support the mental condition that makes the learner more receptive to new information.

Based on the data overview, it concluded that every respondent gains the benefit of independent vocabulary learning. Especially the benefit of more vocabulary that every learner gets during independent vocabulary learning. The data also shows that 7 respondents mention 3 or more benefit, this implies that independent vocabulary learning have strong recognizable benefits to the respondents. There are many benefits by autonomously learn vocabulary, specifically, the development of receptive and productive language skills. (Kaur, 2013).. From the previous study the researcher found mostly about the benefit of having good vocabulary itself, but in this research the researcher identify the benefit of independent vocabulary learning that distinguish from regular in class vocabulary learning.

In this study, the researcher found 5 difficulties in total based on the response of the students that implement their vocabulary learning independently. The most mentioned problem is about learning inconsistency, this indicates that most of the respondents encounter this kind of problem followed by the lack of motivation that caused by learning inconsistency, this learning problem also caused by the third most recognizable difficulty of being too busy.

The other two difficulties seem to be common problem in vocabulary learning. this two difficulties is rather the side effect of the three other learning difficulties, lack of practice is cause by inconsistency of learning while hard to remember vocabulary can be learn through frequent practice. This indicates that all the difficulties encountered by independent vocabulary learners are connected one to another. In regards to the result of finding about the difficulties and benefit of independent vocabulary, learning it is conclude that the learners are aware of the benefits of vocabulary learning that can improve their vocabulary mastery.

However, it is utmost difficult for them to maintain learning consistency that caused by many factors such as motivation and time management.

Research conducted in Indonesia by Agustina, (2018) found that students realize of the important advantages of being independent learners of English. Nevertheless, they are incapable of maintaining maintain their autonomy. Sometimes, the students are enthusiastic to learn independently and sometimes not. This indicates that the students in the research are inconsistent towards their independent learning which is in line with the result in the current study.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The researcher concludes some significant result to answer the research problem. Based in the research data, All the respondents are considered to be independent in vocabulary learning even though one of the respondents learn because of someone else, all of them learn on their own will, and the data indicates that easy access on information encourage them to learn on their own.

In regards to how the students' self-regulate to achieve learning autonomy, the researcher conclude that four of the respondents are considered as effective self-regulated autonomous learners, those are; R3, R4, R6, R7. because they apply the learning strategy from planning to self-reflection in their independent vocabulary learning that signifies the criteria of self-regulated learning, while the other six participants are not considered as effective self-regulated learners but still considered as independent vocabulary learners because all participants learns on their own volition and learn independently.

This study confirms seven benefits and five difficulties regarding to autonomous vocabulary learning. The result shows that the majority of the respondents mention three or more benefits, this indicates that independent vocabulary learning have significant benefit to the learners, with the most prominent benefits allowing the respondents to learn more vocabulary and more time to memorize them. In regards to the problems encountered by the respondents, the most recognized difficulties are learning inconsistency and lack of motivation the result shows that most difficulties encountered other than

difficult word is considered as common problem in many forms of independent or autonomous learning.

Based on the result of the data analysis and conclusion, the writer proposes some suggestion. For the independent learners should apply planning, preparation, monitoring and evaluation in learning, for optimal learning progress. It is suggested in learning vocabulary should be consistent as independent vocabulary learning is flexible and can be done anywhere anytime. For the next researcher, it suggested to analyze the reading competency of the independent vocabulary learners, because vocabulary related strongly to reading competency.

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