



THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING BY ENGLISH TEACHERS AT SMP SWASTA IT SITI HAJAR

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Abstract--All the subjects taught at the school aim to make students become independent humans in the future. The process of being an independent human needed to be prepared in the classroom by doing independent learning. Independent learning is a process, a method, and a philosophy of education in which students learn individually at their own level by regulating their own learning activity. This study was conducted using descriptive qualitative research. This study investigates the implementation of independent learning by English teachers at SMP Swasta IT Siti Hajar. The data of this study were collected during online learning by doing observation, video recording, and field notes. Furthermore, this study uses Gerhon's theory about techniques in implementing independent learning in the classroom. Based on the result of the study, it was found that the first teacher used three techniques: Give the end Away, Refusing Help, and Play Dumb. On the other hand, the second teacher used two techniques to implement independent learning: Refusing Help and Play Dumb. It was found that the teachers had similarities and differences in implementing specific techniques during the teaching and learning in the classroom. Although some techniques were found in the learning process, the implementation of independent learning is still not optimal and needs improvement. Thus, the result of this study indicates that both teachers implemented techniques to foster independent learning in the classroom to make students aware of their learning process.

Keyword: *Independent learning, techniques, English teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

All the subjects taught at the school aim to make students become independent humans in the future. The process of being an independent human needed to be prepared in the classroom by doing independent learning. Independent learning is a central concept in the study and practice of education. The terms of independent learning are synonymously used with autonomous learning, self-directed learning, independent study, and self-regulated learning. In general, there is a good agreement varying the interpretation of each term, but all these terms refer to a concept where learners are involved in their learning process (Morrison, 2011: 3).

Independent learning skills do not naturally bear with the student. El-Koumy (2019) explains that students do not become effective independent learners without being supported on the path towards independence. In recognition of the importance of independent learning strategies, the teacher should be able to help and set the independent learning system during the classroom.

In line with it, Curriculum 2013 is applying the student-centered learning which put student as the core of learning. The characteristic of Curriculum 2013 is the shift of mindset between teacher and student, known as Student-centered Learning. Student-centered learning has substantial implications for the implementation of independent learning in the teaching and learning process. Wangid (2014) describes three components as the correlation between student-centered learning and self-regulated learning: self-regulation of cognition, motivation, and emotion, and self-regulation of behavior. These three components are considered to be applied in the classroom following the three main cycles in the self-regulated learning cycle, such as preparation, performance, and appraisal.



The concept of independent learning is good to be promoted at the junior high school level. Thomas (1993) explains that the age range of 10-13 is an ideal time to implement independent learning because it can improve learners' ability to engage and decide, so their learning will positively impact their maturational component. Likewise, implementing independent learning to middle-grade students has two positive factors. Firstly, early adolescents have reached the age at which they can carry out sophisticated learning strategies and conduct learning tasks on their own. Secondly, instructional practices for prompt, independent learning are in most middle-grade schools (Thomas, 1993).

In line with the problem of the study, the objective of this research was to describe the implementation of independent learning by English teachers at SMP Swasta IT Siti Hajar. The implementation of independent learning by English teachers in the junior high school grades is expected to make students aware of their learning process to compete at the global level, which mainly uses English as the key of communication. Therefore, the objective of this research was to describe the implementation of independent learning by English teachers at SMP Swasta IT Siti Hajar.

1. Independent Learning

Independent learning is a central concept in the study and practice of education. Susanti (2017) argues that independent learning is considered as an appropriate strategy for students to make them aware with the learning process in higher education. Moreover, Wong (2013) states that an independent learning is an essential strategy for students to continue developing writing skills for school participants at the age of five.

Independent learning is not identical to learning alone. Garrison (1997) defines independent learning or self-directed learning as an approach where learners are motivated to assume personal responsibility and collaborative control of the cognitive (self-monitoring) and contextual (self-management) processes in constructing and confirming meaningful and worthwhile learning outcomes.

Independent learning takes time to be implemented entirely in the learning process. Pintrich (2000) in Virginia & Harvey (2007) explains three cycles that involve in the self-regulation cycle, such as preparation, performance, and appraisal. Preparation cycle is the process of forethought, task definition, planning, and goal setting. Performance cycle considered the goal striving, strategy monitoring and revision, and appraisal cycle is the process of self-reflection.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that independent learning is a strategy in which students learn individually at their own level by regulating their own learning activity in order to maintain their learning objectives, determine a method to achieve it and explore their strength and weakness assisted by teacher and peer to support the learning process.

2. The Implementation of Independent Learning in English Language Classroom

The concept of independent learning in language learning is intended to explore learners' behavior and attitude while acknowledging the possibility of learning a language inside and outside the classroom. Students, as the core of learning, should realize the importance of language by acquiring knowledge consciously.

In language learning, independent learning counts as the process of the student to be aware of the function of understanding the language itself. Nurieva (2019) mentions that students' engagement in independent studies is in line with increasing their engagement in ESP learning based on regularly updated authentic materials accessible by digital media, developing communicative skills, and raising their motivation for e-learning. This clearly shows that student participation in independent learning in language learning will affect their personal motivation to



regulate their own learning process in the classroom with the teacher and outside the classroom with the peer.

Gershon (2014: 15) initiates some techniques in implementing independent learning by English teachers in the classroom.

1) Give the end away

The teacher often begins lessons by telling students about the final and the expectation of learning. Nevertheless, instead of dictating it, the teacher can give the student a set of activities to help achieve the goals. The teacher can start by asking the student to work in pairs or threes. Students should develop a possible route by which the whole class can meet the learning objective.

Ask the groups to put forward their ideas and then select two or three of the most feasible suggestions for the class to vote. The suggestion that receives the most votes will form the basis of the lesson. This activity promotes independence as it asks students to take control of their own learning and to identify ways by which a specific learning goal. In order to make this technique more manageable, the teacher can present students with a collection of possible activities to choose from. This will support students who may struggle to produce good ideas. It will also save the teacher from having to teach an unprepared activity.

2) Refusing to help

Refusing to help students can be a powerful strategy for encouraging independence. For example, the teacher gives the student assignment and then refuses to help until they show that they are trying to do the task challenge independently. If students are still stuck after this, ask them to talk through their attempt, so that the teacher can explain how to solve a similar problem in the future, as well as helping with the current one.

Another option is to create a problem-solving checklist and refuse to help students unless they have already worked through the steps on the list. When they ask for help, respond by asking them to talk through how they have attempted to meet each item on the checklist. If they cannot do this, ask them to go away and try again before returning for help.

3) Play dumb

Playing dumb is another great way to get students to think for themselves. It worked for Socrates, and it can work in the classroom. The aim is to encourage students to think actively about the topic to draw on their existing knowledge and start to work out the answers on their own. This tactic tends to work best when the teacher knows the student has sufficient understanding to reach a solution alone but simply needs to be nudged in the right direction through a bit of role-playing on the teacher's part.

4) Making improvement

The teacher can help students to become more independent and more aware of the quality of their work by asking them to make improvements when they believe that they have finished. Create an improvements checklist, laminate it and hand it out to everyone in the class. When a student tells that they have finished their work, invite them to go through the checklist and work out what improvements they could make.

Refuse to accept that any piece of work is finished until at least three revisions have been made to improve it. Indicate that students should highlight their changes and note in the margin explaining what they have altered and why.

5) Personal challenge

When a student has finished their work, the teacher can ask students to challenge themselves by inventing their own extension task. The teacher might do this by presenting the student with a set of keywords (from the top two levels of Bloom's Taxonomy of



Educational Objectives, for example) and asking them to make up a question using one of these words.

Alternatively, the teacher can invite a student who has finished their work to convey the same information through a different medium. Explain that the choice of medium is up to them but that they should try to retain the essential meaning of their original piece of work.

6) Speak to a peer

When a student feels that they have completed a task, suggest that they go and share their work with one or two other people in the class. They should ask their peers' opinions about what could be done to develop the work and to make it better. In exchange, they can offer advice of their own.

Once students have elicited some ideas, they can put these into practice. Repeat this technique over time, and it will eventually become second nature to students.

7) Reflective self-assessment

A final technique that can encourage independence when students have finished a piece of work involves asking them to self-assess what they have done. Students should write a reflection that outlines the strengths and weaknesses of their decisions and the final product they have created.

This technique helps to promote a positive and self-critical mindset. Through assessing what students have done and reflecting on its merits, students will come to acknowledge that they are in control of the work they produce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this research used a descriptive qualitative method to answer the research question. The data source used in this study was two English teachers (MR and SL) of SMP Swasta IT Siti Hajar. The teachers were teaching in different grades of junior high school level. MR focused on teaching English for the seventh grade, and SL focused on teaching English for the ninth grade of SMP Swasta IT Siti Hajar. During the pandemic, the teachers were used Zoom Meeting to conduct the teaching and learning process.

The technique of analyzing the data used in this study is Interactive Model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). There are several steps to analyze the data, such as data condensation, data display, and conclusion; drawing/verification.

DISCUSSION

The researcher analyzed the data to find the research objective. The data were transcribed into written forms, condensing, categorizing, and finding the result of teachers' technique, describing, and drawing the conclusion. This study was conducted to determine the implementation of independent learning by English teachers (MR and SL) at SMP Swasta IT Siti Hajar. The researcher limited the analysis of the teachers' technique developed by Gershon.

During the observation, the researcher found that the teachers had a different teaching style. The data recorded through the whole teaching time for about 40 minutes started from the beginning until they closed the meeting in the online classroom.

Based on the observation result above, the teachers applied several techniques to implement independent learning in the classroom. The first teacher, MR, applied three out of seven techniques to engage students with their learning process. The techniques implemented by MR were (1) Give the End Away, (2) Refusing to Help, and (3) Play Dumb. The second- teacher, SL, executed two techniques, such as (1) Refusing to Help and (2) Play Dumb in the classroom.

Moreover, the findings of the study showed that the teachers used more than one technique in implementing independent learning in the classroom There are seven techniques in



implementing independent learning adopted from Gershon's theory: Give the End Away, Refusing to Help, Play Dumb, Personal Challenge, Making Improvement, Speak to A Peer, and Reflective Self-Assessment. MR applied three techniques, such as Give the end away, Refusing to help, and Play dumb techniques in the classroom. Meanwhile, SL carried out two techniques during the teaching and learning process in the classroom, such as Refusing to Help and Play Dumb.

The English teachers, MR and SL implemented two same techniques, such as Refusing to Help and Play Dumb. It was found that the teachers had similarities and differences in implementing the techniques in the classroom. In the implementation of the Refusing to Help technique, the similarities were the teachers gave the instruction and mentioned students' names as to engage and give them the responsibility to answer the question. The difference found in implementing this technique was media that mentioned by teachers related to the topic of discussion. MR mentioned his students to check the material on their book and dictionary, while SL asked students to review by referring to the previous material.

In implementing the Play Dumb technique, the similarities found were about the use of language. The teachers used easy language or simple instruction to make students understand and asked students' participation to make sure students were following the discussion. The differences found in implementing this technique were that MR focused on enriching students' vocabulary, while SL focused on elaborating students' point of view by related the topic to the context of the material.

Based on the data analysis, it is considered that the teachers set the class differently. MR set the class with many activities and practices to make students engage with the learning process independently. MR combined the instruction with quizzes using digital media to improve students' participation in the learning process. MR supported the material via digital media, specifically in visual using lyric, picture, and song. Meanwhile, it can be seen from the instruction given by SL that the teacher dominated the classroom, and the activity was focused on the teacher's interaction.

There are four techniques that were not implemented by the teacher in the classroom, such as Making Improvement, Personal Challenge, Speak to a Peer, and Reflective Self-Assessment. These four techniques are related to students work and peer discussion. Making improvement technique for student to make them become independent towards their works improvement. Next, Personal Challenge technique focused on student's extension task as the enhancement of knowledge after done the prior project or task. Moreover, Speak to a Peer and Reflective Self-assessment rely on sharing the project to their friend and make self-assess about the result of their work in order to evaluate their weaknesses and strengths.

In addition, the teaching experiences of the teachers showed maturity in preparing materials and adapting the techniques to students' needs. MR and SL have different range of age. MR was teaching English for more than fifteen years while SL being a teacher less than fifteen years.

Furthermore, Nurieva (2019) states that students engagement increased in self-independent studies on ESP learning basis of regularly updated authentic materials, accessible by digital media, develop students' communicative skills and raised their motivation for e-learning. The findings of this study indicated that the implementation of independent learning using online platform supported by digital media was significantly affected the authentic materials, especially using visual and audio, and improves students' communication skills and motivation using the content available on the internet.

However, this study showed that the implementation of independent learning by English teachers need more attention and improvement. The awareness of teachers about the independent learning cycle and independent learning techniques along with the suitable media is expected to make prepare student to become an independent learner during the learning process. Thus, the



result of this study indicates that both teachers applied certain techniques to implement independent learning in the classroom to make students aware of their learning process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The aim of this study is to describe the implementation of independent learning by English teachers at SMP Swasta IT Siti Hajar. During the implementation of independent learning, it was found that the teachers applied certain techniques in the teaching and learning process. The first teacher used three techniques, such as Give the end Away, Refusing Help, and Play Dumb and the second teacher used two techniques such as Refusing Help and Play Dumb. Although some techniques were found in the learning process, the implementation of independent learning is still not optimal and needs improvement. The awareness of teachers about the independent learning cycle and independent learning techniques along with the suitable media is expected to make prepare student to become an independent learner during the learning process. Thus, the result of this study indicates that both teachers applied certain techniques to implement independent learning in the classroom to make students aware of their learning process.

Suggestions

From the result above, the researcher has several points for the suggestion.

- 1) The teacher as the facilitator in the class should be more aware of the teaching technique to prepare students to be independent learners in the teaching and learning process.
- 2) The teacher should be more aware with the implementation of independent learning towards seven techniques of independent learning that can be applied in the classroom, such as Give the End Away, Refuse to Help, Play Dumb, Making Improvement, Personal Challenge, Speak to a peer, and Reflective Self-Assessment.
- 3) It is suggested to another researcher to conduct further studies about the implementation of independent learning in English language classrooms.

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