

## Learner's Autonomy In English As A Foreign Language Teaching And Learning

A Case Study at A State University in Indonesia

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### Abstract

This article presents the outcome of a case study research which is particularly aimed at investigating dimensions of learner autonomy in EFL teaching-learning particularly in an English education program and situations under which learners learn autonomously. To collect the data, a questionnaire adapted from Murase (2009) was distributed to forty first-year undergraduate students of a university in Bandung and interview was addressed to nine undergraduate learners. The findings showed that all dimensions of learner autonomy are found and each dimension is reflected in various degrees. The degree of technical and political dimensions of learner autonomy is in respect not as satisfactory as expected. However, the degree of learner autonomy in the psychological and socio-cultural dimension is high enough. This means that learners are mostly autonomous in terms of that they learn a language on their own outside the classroom without the aid of a lecturer and they have a capacity for critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action in their learning. There are four major aspects related to situations under which learners learn autonomously, including the subject matter, the lecturer, the time, and the challenging task. This means that learners learn autonomously when they are interested in a certain subject, aware of the importance of the subject, and realize that relying on the classroom session is not enough. Besides, they learn autonomously when the lecturers engage them actively in the classroom, give feedback positively, and motivate them. Most learners learn autonomously when they have free time and get a challenging task such as movie project. It is recommended for further research to investigate learner autonomy in a more specific context of class, for example learner autonomy in a speaking class, in order to get more in-depth data.

**Keywords:** *Dimensions Of Learner Autonomy; EFL Teaching-Learning*

### Abstract

*Artikel ini menyajikan hasil penelitian studi kasus yang secara khusus ditujukan untuk menyelidiki dimensi learner autonomy dalam pembelajaran EFL khususnya pada program Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dan situasi dimana mahasiswa belajar secara mandiri. Untuk mengumpulkan data, kuesioner yang diadaptasi dari Murase (2009) dibagikan kepada empat puluh mahasiswa tahun pertama sebuah universitas di Bandung dan wawancara ditujukan kepada sembilan mahasiswa sarjana. Penemuan menunjukkan bahwa semua dimensi learner autonomy ditemukan dan masing-masing dimensi tercermin dalam berbagai tingkat. Tingkat learner autonomy pada dimensi teknis dan politik dalam hal ini tidak memuaskan seperti yang diharapkan. Namun tingkat learner autonomy pada dimensi psikologis dan sosial budaya cukup tinggi. Hal ini berarti bahwa kebanyakan mahasiswa mandiri ketika mereka mempelajari bahasa sendiri diluar kelas tanpa bantuan dosen dan mereka memiliki kapasitas untuk merefleksikan secara kritis, membuat keputusan dan mengambil Tindakan independent dalam pembelajaran mereka. Ada empat aspek utama yang berkaitan dengan situasi dimana mahasiswa belajar*

*secara mandiri, diantaranya materi pelajaran, dosen, waktu, dan tugas yang menantang. Hal ini berarti bahwa mahasiswa belajar secara mandiri ketika mereka tertarik pada suatu bidang, sadar akan pentingnya bidang tersebut, dan sadar ketika mereka hanya mengandalkan sesi di kelas tidak cukup. Selain itu, mereka belajar secara mandiri ketika dosen melibatkan mereka secara aktif di dalam kelas, memberi feedback secara positif, and memotivasi mereka. Kebanyakan mahasiswa belajar secara mandiri ketika mereka memiliki waktu luang dan mendapat tugas yang menantang seperti proyek film. Disarankan untuk penelitian lebih lanjut untuk menyelidiki learner autonomy dalam konteks kelas yang lebih spesifik, misalnya otonomi pembelajar di kelas berbicara, untuk mendapatkan data yang lebih mendalam.*

***Kata Kunci: Dimesnsi Learner Autonomy; Pembelajaran EFL***

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of cooperation among ASEAN members in ASEAN Free Trade Association (AFTA) and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by the end of 2015 affects various fields, one of which is the field of education. Therefore, learners need to be prepared to encounter some situations which force them to compete globally with other learners from different countries. In this case, English becomes an important skill to be developed in order to be able to communicate well with people from the other countries. Encouraging learners to learn autonomously in their language learning can be one of ways that help them to acquire English successfully and aid them to compete with other countries.

Learner autonomy in language learning is essential for three reasons. Firstly, autonomous learners are determined as efficient learners since they are able to take responsibility for their own learning which implies the existence of intrinsic motivation, metacognitive skills, and learning awareness as characteristics of efficient learning (Benson, 2011). Secondly, being able to control one's own learning implies life-long learning which is important in today's era where globalization and the development of information technology led to fast and vast exchange of information (Kohonen 1992). Thirdly, since autonomous learning is characterized by critical evaluation and reflection on information, autonomous learners also imply active and critical participants in the community, which in turn, can help to develop the community (Benson 2011).

The concept of learner autonomy itself has been defined and interpreted in a lot of ways by many researchers and theorists concerning with this topic. Based on the approaches to knowledge and learning (positivism, constructivism, or critical theory), learner autonomy can be divided into four dimensions: technical, psychological, social, and political (Benson, 1997; Oxford, 2003).

Technical dimension of autonomy, which implies positivism, is defined as "the learners' act of learning a language on their own outside the classroom, without the aid of a teacher and, also, as the situation in which learners, for some reason, are obliged to take control of their own learning" (Benson, 1997: 19). This technical dimension of autonomy can be distinguished between behavioral and situational sub-dimensions. The behavioral sub-dimension is based one of the major definitions of learner autonomy by Holec (1981: 3), who defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" and an autonomous learner is "capable of making all decisions concerning the learning with which he is or wishes to be involved". The behavioral autonomy is related to the learners' use of learning strategies and task implementation such as setting goals, choosing materials and tasks, planning practice, monitoring and evaluating progress (Cotterall, 1995), which are frequently called as metacognitive strategies (Wenden, 1998). The situational sub-dimension can be seen in what Benson (1997: 19) describes as "situations in which learners are obliged to take charge of their own

learning”. Those situations include both physical settings, such as self-access center, and the learners’ circumstances, such as being away from formal schooling after graduation.

The second dimension of autonomy - psychological autonomy, which implies constructivism, focuses on the capacity of individual learners which “allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning” (Benson, 1997: 19). This can also be seen in Little’s (1991: 4) definition of learner autonomy, wherein he sees autonomy as “a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action”. This dimension of autonomy includes metacognitive, motivational and affective sub-dimensions. The metacognitive sub-dimension of psychological autonomy refers to the metacognitive knowledge which underpins the learner’s ability to use the metacognitive strategies effectively (Benson, 1997). The motivational sub-dimension of psychological autonomy is assumed to include the learner’s desire, responsibility, willingness, and sense of agency which have been considered as essential to learner autonomy (Little, 1991, Kohonen, 1992, Sinclair, McGrath, and Lamb, 2000). The affective sub-dimension is concerned with the affective factors for individual learners, such as the learner’s anxiety, self-esteem, and emotions (Benson, 1997).

The third dimension of autonomy is named as political-philosophical autonomy which can be differentiated to two different levels: group and individual autonomy (Pennycook, 1997). Group autonomy concerns with the autonomy of the groups to which the individuals belong, such as institutions. It is considered to be a ‘higher’ level since the policy and/or ideology of the group has some degree of power over the individual members of that group. At the ‘lower’ level, there is individual autonomy, which concerns the ‘autonomy of the individuals within the hierarchical relation to the groups to which they belong.

In addition to those levels, the political dimension of autonomy is often associated with the notion of two kinds of freedom: negative freedom and positive freedom (Berlin, 1969). ‘Negative’ freedom is the situation where the learners have total freedom to learn whatever they want to, without any barriers or constraints, whereas ‘positive’ freedom is the situation where the learners gain the freedom to control their own learning in the presence of self-mastery and self-realization, with the consent and collaboration of teachers or other authorities (Berlin, 1969).

Finally, the social perspective is also considered to be important by Oxford (2003). This fourth dimension of autonomy, socio-cultural autonomy, can be subdivided into social-interactive and cultural sub-dimensions. The social-interactive sub-dimension of autonomy is strongly influenced by Vygotsky’s (1978) socio-cultural theory cited Cameron (2001) focusing on the role of social interaction in developing learner autonomy. In other words, autonomy does not necessarily mean complete independence from teachers or other learners. However, autonomy involves the learner’s interdependence rather than total independence (Little, 1991; Kohonen, 1992).

The cultural sub-dimension is concerned with the social aspect of learner autonomy in a broader context of culture or also known as national/ ethnic culture. One of the issues that are frequently discussed regarding to this sub-dimension is whether or not the concept of learner autonomy is just an artifact of Western culture, which is therefore not compatible with Asian culture, for example (Oxford, 2003). Murase (2007) asserts that autonomy is not entirely a Western concept and anyone has some degree of autonomy and can develop greater autonomy.

A great deal research related to learner autonomy were conducted by many researchers such as Borg & Al-Busaidi (2012), Xu’s (2009), and Ceylan (2015) with different focus. Borg & Al-Busaidi (2012) concerned with English language teacher’s belief and practices on learner autonomy. To collect the data, questionnaires and interviews were addressed to sixty one teachers of English at a large university language center in Oman. The findings pointed out various ways of teachers’ conceptualization of learner autonomy, in which they commonly see it in terms of strategies for independent and individual learning. The study also showed that the teachers have positive theoretical dispositions to learner autonomy but they have less optimistic views about the feasibility of promoting

it in practice. The teachers viewed that factors that hinder the development of learner autonomy were a lack of motivation, limited experience of independent learning, and institutional factors such as a fixed curriculum were also seen to limit learner autonomy.

Xu's (2009) study was aimed at figuring out the extent to which Chinese postgraduate students conduct autonomous learning. To collect the data, a questionnaire adapted from Xu Jinfen (2004) distributed to 100 first-year non-English major Chinese post-graduates and semi-structured interview was addressed to some participants. The findings showed that the overall degree of the postgraduates' autonomous English learning is not as satisfactory as expected. A large number of postgraduates have no very definite motivation and objectives of autonomous L2 learning in the stage of being postgraduates. They also fail to be aware of the significance and the role of English in their major research. Moreover, most of postgraduates are so passive in cooperative learning and English activities, such as exchanging with foreign experts and paper writing in English in the foreign journals.

Ceylan's (2015) experimental study was aimed at finding out whether training learners on language learning strategies fosters the learner autonomy or not. It was carried out at Kocaeli University in 2013- 2014 education year with Prep School students. It involved four experimental and four control groups. This study was carried out in three phases; firstly, language learning strategies and learner autonomy surveys were conducted as pre- tests to identify students' use of language learning strategies and their level of learner autonomy; secondly, the experimental groups were trained on language learning strategies for the two weeks and observed until the end of the first term on their use of the language learning strategies while the control groups did not receive the training; finally, language learning strategies and learner autonomy surveys were conducted as post- tests. The results showed that the more strategies the students employ or the more frequently more autonomous they might become by starting to take the responsibility of their own learning process.

To conclude, Borg & Al-Busaidi (2012) focused on teacher's belief and practices on learner autonomy in Oman context, Xu (2009) concerned on figuring out the extent to which Chinese postgraduate students conduct autonomous learning, and Ceylan's (2015) experimental study was aimed at finding out whether training learners on language learning strategies fosters the learner autonomy. However, research which focuses on the multi-dimensions of learner autonomy in an undergraduate program in Indonesia context is still rarely to conduct. Therefore, this research is intended (1) to explore the dimensions of learner autonomy which are found in EFL teaching-learning in a state university in Bandung, particularly in English education program; and (2) to figure out the situations under which learners learn autonomously.

The results of this research are expected to enrich the literature on dimensions of learner autonomy in EFL teaching-learning context and to encourage the teachers to create a supporting environment that enables the learners to raise their autonomy in the formal education context.

## **2. METHODS**

This research employed a qualitative design, embracing characteristics of a case study. The case study approach is appropriate since it can provide an in-depth description and analysis toward the issue investigated in this research, namely learner's autonomy in EFL teaching-learning (Heigham & Croker, 2009; Malik & Hamied, 2014).

The participants involved in this research were forty first-year undergraduate students of English Education program in a state university in Bandung. Undergraduate students were chosen purposively as the participants since they require the high degree of autonomy in their learning than senior high school students do. In other words, they are required to set goals in learning English, make study plans, reflect and evaluate what they have learnt. The choice of purposive sampling here is in line with Malik & Hamied (2014) who state that the sample in the qualitative research is typically purposive.

To collect the data, a questionnaire adapted from Murase (2009) focusing on measuring language learner autonomy in multiple dimensions was distributed to forty undergraduate students. This questionnaire was chosen considering that it reflects the multiple dimensions of learner autonomy based on Benson’s (1997) framework. Furthermore, interview was addressed to nine undergraduate students to find indepth description of situations under which learners learn autonomously.

To make ease the process of data analysis, all the data obtained were organized based on the instruments used. The data from questionnaire were analyzed in two kinds of five Likert scale answers. First, the frequency scale included never, rarely, sometimes, frequently, and always, which showed how often the learners did the statements. Each answer had its own score starting from 1 to 5. Second, the agreement scales involved strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree, which showed how often the statements were true based on the learners’ belief. Each answer had its own score starting from 1 to 5.

Before analyzing data from interview, the data were transcribed. When the data were ready to be analyzed, the researcher initially read through the overall data to get the general sense of the data, drawing ideas, thinking about the organization of the data, and considering whether or not more data are required (Cresswell, 2008). Then, the data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion. As stated by Alwasilah (2002), the data analysis of qualitative research commonly uses parallel flows, namely data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusion.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As presented in the previous section, there are two purposes of the present research: (1) to explore the dimensions of learner autonomy which are found in EFL teaching-learning in a state university in Bandung, particularly in English education program; and (2) to figure out the situations under which learners learn autonomously. The findings and discussions are discussed separately below:

#### Findings

##### 1. The Dimensions of Learner Autonomy

In response to the first research question, a questionnaire adapted from Murase (2009) focusing on measuring language learner autonomy in multiple dimensions based on the theories of Benson (1997) and Oxford (2003) was distributed to the participants. Based on the result of the questionnaire, all dimensions of learner autonomy are found and each dimension is reflected in various degrees for different learners. In general, the degree of autonomous learner can be divided into three: highly, nearly, and low autonomous learner. The representation of learner autonomy degrees in each dimension is showed in the following table.

Table 4.1 Representation of Learner Autonomy Degrees in each Dimension

Dimension of Learner Autonomy	Sub-dimension of Learner Autonomy	Percentage of Learner Autonomy in Each Degree					
		Highly Autonomous Learners		Nearly Autonomous Learners		Low Autonomous Learners	
Technical Dimension	Behavioral	17.5%	28.8%	75%	65%	7.5%	6.2%
	Situational	40%		55%		5%	
Psychological Dimension	Metacognitive	82.5%		17.5%		-	
	Affective	65%	79.2%	35%	20.8%	-	0%
	Motivational	90%		10%		-	
Socio-cultural Dimension	Social-interactive	60%	50.8%	35%	45.8%	5%	3.4%

	Socio-cultural (Western)	50%		50%		-	
	Socio-cultural (Indonesian)	42.5%		52.5%		5%	
Political Dimension	Freedom Individual	17.5%	33.7%	60%	53.8%	22.5%	12.5%
		50%		47.5%		2.5%	

From the table, it can be seen that the degree of learner autonomy in the technical and political dimension is in respect not as satisfactory as expected. Nevertheless, the degree of learner autonomy in the psychological and socio-cultural is high enough.

The table shows that the percentage of highly autonomous learners in the technical dimension is in low number (28.8%). The learners who are categorized as highly autonomous learners in the behavioral sub-dimension are only 17.5% of the total participants. In the situational sub-dimension, the learners who are determined highly autonomous are 40% of the total participants.

Different from the technical dimension, the percentage of highly autonomous learners in the psychological dimension is high (79.2%). 85% of the total participants are categorized as highly autonomous in metacognition sub-dimension, 65% of them are included into highly autonomous learners in affective sub-dimension, and 90% of the participants are considered as highly autonomous learners in motivational sub-dimension.

In terms of socio-cultural dimension, the percentage of highly autonomous learners is in moderate number (50.8%). There are 60% of the total participants who are included into highly autonomous learners in social-interactive sub-dimension, 50% of the participants who are highly autonomous in socio-cultural sub-dimension (especially for western culture), and 42.5% of them are highly autonomous in socio-cultural sub-dimension for Indonesian culture.

In the political dimension, the percentage of highly autonomous learner is in relatively low number (33.7%). Learners who are considered to be highly autonomous in freedom sub-dimension is only 17.5% of the total participants. In terms of individual sub-dimension, learners who are highly autonomous are 50% of the participants.

In conclusion, all dimensions of learner autonomy are found and each dimension is reflected in various degrees for different learners. The degree of learner autonomy in the psychological and socio-cultural is high enough while the degree of learner autonomy in the technical and political dimension is low.

## 2. The Situations under which Learners Learn Autonomously

In response to the second research question which is under what situation learners learn autonomously, the interview was addressed to nine first year of undergraduate learners. Based on the result of interview, there are four major aspects which are related to situation under which learners learn autonomously. They are related to the subject matter, time, lecturer, and task.

In terms of the subject matter, four participants said that when they are interested in a certain subject they are motivated to learn autonomously, such as learning outside the classroom, setting goals in learning, monitoring and reflecting their learning process. This can be found in the interview as shown below:

### Excerpt 1

I learn autonomously not in all courses, but in **a certain course, which I like and interested in**, such as listening subject.... In fact, **I always manage how to learn listening well and attempt to find ways to learn effectively** in order to **get a good result** ... as I said before that I am really interested in listening, so I frequently listen to conversation from the internet or movie (Participant 6).

From the excerpt above, it can be seen that the learner's interest to the subject matter makes the learner more enjoyed in learning and motivates him/ her to learn outside the classroom. Furthermore, the learner's interest to the subject matter encourages the learner to monitor the way of learning and reflect it in order to achieve the goal, which is getting a good result.

In addition, the learners learn autonomously under two other situations: when they are aware of the importance of the subject and realize that relying on the classroom session is not enough. Those reasons are stated by two participants as presented in the excerpts bellow.

**Excerpt 2**

I learn autonomously when **I realize that the knowledge is important for my future** because the purpose of coming here is to get knowledge. So it depends on my own consciousness that it is important, not being forced by the lecturer. .... For example, the reading subject is important because reading is related with the other course. (Participant 4).

**Excerpt 3**

I learn outside the classroom for the certain courses. For example, I often learn the day before the listening course because **it is hard for me to rely on the classroom session; I need more time to learn the listening outside the class**. Whereas, I rarely learn outside the class in MKDU (Participant 1).

As seen in the excerpts above, the learners' awareness of the importance of the subject encourages them to learn autonomously. In addition, when the learners realize that relying on the classroom session is not enough, they provide more opportunities to learn outside the class. The curiosity to the subject and learner's awareness of the importance of the subject and learning outside the class can be included in the intrinsic motivation.

In regard to the lecturer, there are three situations related to the lecturer where the learners learn autonomously, namely the way the lecturer teaches, the way the lecturer gives feedback to learners' mistake, and how the lecturer motivates the learners. Two learners admitted that the lecturers who greatly engage them in the learning process can motivate them to learn outside the class, set goals, make plans of learning, and evaluate what they have learned. This can be seen in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 4**

It is like **the way he/she teaches which greatly engage learners in the learning process so that they enjoy the learning and willing to take more time to learn outside the classroom** (Participant 5).

**Excerpt 5**

... especially in the context of this course. Actually, I love the subject but because the lecturer has different belief, I do not learn optimally in this subject. But **when the lecturer is enjoyable in which he/ she more engages us in learning, I am more encouraged to set goals, plans, and evaluate my learning...** for example, we do some mistakes in his/her class but this lecturer thinks that we are not allowed to do mistakes. In my own opinion, it is common to do mistakes in the learning process. Meanwhile, **if I do mistakes in this class the lecturer directly judges me wrong or bad. So it really decreases my motivation to learn** (Participant 1).

From the excerpts above, it can be said that the way the lecturer teaches can influence learners' motivation to learn outside the class. Furthermore, the way the lecturer gives feedback to learners' mistake can influence their motivation to learn. In other words, the positive feedback is better to be used by the teacher to raise students' mastery achievement goal and the motivational climate in the classroom. Therefore, it is suggested for the lecturer to be more wisely in giving feedback to the learners, especially when they do mistakes.

The other situation related to the lecturer where learners learn autonomously is when the lecturer gives learners motivation to set goals and learn outside the class. In other words, the lecturer encourages the learners to learn autonomously. It is stated by the participant below.



#### Excerpt 6

The lecturer said that if we have answered all the listening practices in the module, **we may not stop practice, we can practice our listening more in this web .....** The lecture often gives us motivation, such as one day he said that it does not matter when your English skill is not really good since you are still in the second semester... **Never feel inferiority from others, at least you should be like me, an English lecturer or more, That advice always motivates me when I find my English skill is not really good enough.** (Participant 6).

The above statement shows that the lecturer's encouragement is important to motivate learners to learn outside the class by giving more information about the supplementary materials or website which can be used by the learners to practice their listening skill. The lecturer's encouragement is also necessary to raise learners' confidence and enthusiastic in learning, and to encourage them to set back the goals of learning.

The next major aspect related to the situation under which the learners learn autonomously is he time, four participants agreed that they learn autonomously when they have much free time. It is hard for them to make plans, monitor the learning, and evaluate what they have learned when they lack the free time. They should manage their time with the other activities inside or outside the campus. This reason can be seen in the excerpts below.

#### Excerpt 7

Evaluating what we have learned and monitoring our learning are important but because **I do not have much time so I do not do such activities.** As I said before, since I should practice harder to encounter PON (National Sport Period), I have limited time to learn. Even, I only learn at campus and sometimes I do the task at campus (Participant 8).

#### Excerpt 8

**I rarely reflect what I have learned and evaluate my own learning because of the limit of time.** Because there are so many tasks that I should finish, I do not have enough time to reflect or evaluate my own learning. I usually evaluate my own learning the day before I attend the class (Participant 1).

The last major situation where learners learn autonomously is when they get a challenging task, such as a final project which requires learners to set their own objectives, make learning plans by themselves, monitor and evaluate their own learning. This is found in the result of interview below.

#### Excerpt 9

**I create learning plans, monitor, reflect, and evaluate my learning when I get challenging task such as a final project.** In the speaking class, I got the final project to make a short movie within a group work. In this project we decided the story for our movie, we decided who would be the director or the casts, **we also made plans when we should finish the script, when we rehearsed, and when we should take the record.** During this project, **we monitored and evaluated whether our project had been good enough or still needed improvement** (Participant 3).

From the excerpt above, we can see that the short movie project requires the learners to self-direct their own learning by deciding what story that they will perform for the movie, determining who will be the director and the casts, making plans for every process of this project, monitoring the progress of the project, and evaluating their project as a whole.

In conclusion, there are four major aspects related to situations under which learners learn autonomously, including the subject matter, the lecturer, the free time, and the challenging task. Regarding the subject matter, learners learn autonomously when the learners find that the subject matter is interesting, appropriate with their needs, difficult and they realize that it is not enough to rely on the classroom session. In terms of the lecturer, learners learn autonomously when the lecturer teaches enjoyably and they give motivating feedback when the learners make mistakes. Furthermore, learners learn autonomously when they have free time and get challenging task, such as a final project.

## **Discussion**

Based on the research purposes, the discussion is divided into two focuses: (1) to explore the dimensions of learner autonomy which are found in EFL teaching-learning in a state university in Bandung, particularly in English education program; and (2) to figure out the situations under which learners learn autonomously

### **1. The Dimensions of Learner Autonomy**

The degree of learner autonomy in the technical and political dimension is in respect not as satisfactory as expected. Nevertheless, the degree of learner autonomy in the psychological and socio-cultural is high enough. The low percentage of highly autonomous learners in the technical, especially behavioral sub-dimension (17.5%) means that the majority of the participants do not show self-management of learning behavior, such as setting goals, making plan for studying, reflecting their learning, recording their learning improvement, and evaluating their learning (Benson, 1997). The results are similar with what Xu (2009: 27) found that a large number of Chinese postgraduates were incapable of determining their own English learning objectives and having a clear schedule for English learning after class.

This finding is in respect not as satisfactory as expected since having a goal in language learning (either long-term or short-term goal which is achievable) is necessary for learners' progression in learning. Learners who set goals in their learning English will be more focused to the goal and give more effort to achieve it. This statement is supported by Bandura and Schunk (1981 cited in Dörnyei 2001:83) who said that when the goal is achievable, believable, conceivable, and desirable, progression is much faster than when the goal is vague. That is because "a person who sets the goal and thinks that it is reachable for him, that is if he has a strong sense of self-efficacy, will put in more effort and will be more persistent in striving to achieve the goal" (Dörnyei 2001:10-11).

Furthermore, the low number of participants who make study plans, reflect, monitor, and evaluate their own learning is in respect far away from being satisfactory because planning, monitoring, reflecting, and evaluating are included in the metacognitive strategies, which are paramount in language learning (Panahandeh & Asl, 2014). In addition, the use of metacognitive strategy differentiates between effective and ineffective learners (Anderson, 2002).

Nevertheless, the amount of highly autonomous learner in situational sub-dimension is higher (40%) than in behavioral sub-dimension (17.5%). This reveals that there is quite a few learners who are autonomous to study outside the classroom, such as in the library, self-access center, or a certain English community (Dickinson, 1987).

Different from the technical dimension, the percentage of highly autonomous learners in the psychological dimension is high (79.2%). The large number of highly autonomous learners in the metacognitive sub-dimensions (82.5%) reveals that most of the participants are aware of their responsibility as learners, their learning process, and the purpose of and demands for completing task, which are necessary as underpinning of self-management (Benson, 1997). This finding is as good as expected considering that learners' knowledge of various language learning methods which suit them best can make their learning easier. This is stated by Cohen (1998: 65) that "language learning will

be facilitated if learners become more aware of the range of possibilities that they can consciously select during language learning and language use”.

Furthermore, a rather high percentage of affective sub-dimension (62%) means that more than a half of the participants know under what condition they learn best and how to motivate themselves to learn English (Benson, 1997). This is good enough considering that learners who can control their emotion and attitude about learning are determined as good learners. As argued by Oxford (1990: 140), “good language learners are often those who know how to control their emotions and attitudes about learning” by using affective strategies such as encouraging themselves and taking their emotional temperatures.

The high number of motivational sub-dimension (90%) reveals that almost all the participants have intrinsic or/and extrinsic motivation in learning English, which are important for language learners (Little, 1991). The high percentage of learners’ intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning English is as satisfactory as expected. As stated by Dickinson (1987), “autonomous learners become more highly motivated and work more effectively”. Furthermore, Spratt, Humhreys & Chan (2002) argue that motivation may lead to autonomy or be a precondition for it. However, the high motivation itself is not enough to lead to autonomy if self-regulatory strategies (such as setting goals, planning, monitoring, and evaluating) are not present at the same time, (Spratt, Humhreys & Chan, 2002).

In terms of socio-cultural dimension, the percentage of highly autonomous learners is in moderate number (50.8%). The quite large number of highly autonomous learners in the social-interactive sub-dimension (60%) shows that more than a half of the participants feel autonomous when they learn collaboratively with other learners (Oxford, 2003). They also agree that they can learn from their friends when they study with them. This finding confirms Littlewood’s (1999) hypothesis on Asian Learner Autonomy that Asian students are eager to engage in activities which involve discussion within groups. Furthermore, one main reason why Asian students feel more autonomous and open to learn and discuss within group work as opposed to individual work is that Asian value collectivism over individualism and collaboration over competition (Samovar & Porter, 1995).

In the political dimension, the amount of highly autonomous learner is in relatively low number (33.7%). The low percentage of political dimension of learner autonomy shows that most of participants agree that they get limited freedom to negotiate what they want to learn, the goals, the lesson plan, the topics, and the materials for their English learning (Benson, 1997). This situation is in respect related with the educational curriculum in Indonesia where the important decisions (such as setting goals, making lesson plan, deciding materials and topic) are mostly determined by authorities such as teachers or the institution. This is also found by Borg & Al-Busaidi (2012: 19) that one of some challenges the teachers face in helping learners become more autonomous is ‘prescribed curricula and materials’. Since the curricula and materials have been decided by the authority, learners only have little or no space to explore their autonomy in this political dimension.

## **2. The Situations under which Learners Learn Autonomously**

Regarding to the second research question which is under what situation learners learn autonomously, the interview was addressed to nine participants. Based on the result of interview, there are four major aspects related to situation under which learners learn autonomously. They are related to the subject matter, time, lecturer, and task.

Based on the interview, the learners’ awareness of the importance of the subject for their future can encourage them to learn autonomously. Furthermore, when the learners realize that relying on the classroom session is not enough, they provide more opportunities to learn outside the class. The curiosity to the subject and learner’s awareness of the importance of the subject and learning outside the class can be included in the intrinsic motivation. As stated by Deci & Ryan (1985: 245 cited in

Yu, 2006), intrinsic motivation is “in evidence whenever students’ natural curiosity and interest energize their learning”. The intrinsic motivation is more favorable for leaning than the extrinsic one since it retains learning for a long-term period (Jane Arnold & H. Douglas Brown, 1999 cited in Yu, 2006).

In terms of the lecturer, there are three situations related to the lecturer where the learners learn autonomously, namely the way the lecturer teaches, the way the lecturer gives feedback to learners’ mistake, and the way the lecturer motivates the learners. Based on the interview, the way the lecturer teaches can influence learners’ motivation to learn outside the class. This is supported by Bowen and Madsen (1987) who state that the teaching style is a primary determinant of students’ motivation in learning. The more the teacher engages learners in the learning process, the higher motivation the learners have to learn.

In addition, the way the lecturer gives feedback to learners’ mistake can influence their motivation to learn. As stated by Bandura (1997), information regarding performance outcomes is an important source of perceived efficacy, which can be defined as a major determinant of motivation. Erturan’s (2014) study found that the learners who got the positive feedback had significantly higher mastery achievement goal and mastery motivational climate scores than the students who got the negative feedback. In other words, the positive feedback is better to be used by the teacher to raise students’ mastery achievement goal and the motivational climate in the classroom.

The other situation related to the lecturer where learners learn autonomously is when the lecturer gives learners motivation to set goals and learn outside the class. The lecturer’s encouragement is important to motivate learners to learn outside the class, to raise learners’ confidence and enthusiastic in learning, and to encourage them to set back the goals of learning. As stated by Mullener et al.(2011), encouragement is very important to enhance learners’ psychological factor. This is also supported by Dinkemyer & Dreikurs (2000) that learners will feel confident to perform their own learning if they are encouraged by using motivating words or wise instructions in a right way.

The third major aspect related to the situation under which the learners learn autonomously is about the time. According to the result of interview, the participants agreed that they learn autonomously when they have much free time. The learners need much time to make plans, monitor the learning, and evaluate what they have learned.

The last major situation where learners learn autonomously is when they get a challenging task, such as a final project which requires learners to set their own objectives, make learning plans by themselves, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Based on the interview, when the learners get a final project, they are required to make plans in every stage of the final project, to monitor the progress of the project, and to evaluate their project as a whole. This finding is in line with what Griffiee (1998) states that the attractive and challenging task can encourage learners to be interdependent and work collaboratively in which they work in groups to solve a problem, complete a task, create a product, or even take their responsibility for what they are doing.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This research is intended to answer three purposes of research: (1) to explore the dimensions of learner autonomy which are found in EFL teaching-learning in a state university in Bandung, particularly in English education program; (2) to figure out the situations under which learners learn autonomously; and (3) to investigate how the lecturers’ belief about learner autonomy influences their efforts to encourage learner autonomy.

In terms of the first research question, all dimensions of learner autonomy are found and each dimension is reflected in various degrees. The degree of technical and political dimensions of learner autonomy is in respect not as satisfactory as expected. However, the degree of learner autonomy in the psychological and socio-cultural dimension is high enough.

Regarding to the second research question, there are four major aspects related to situations under which learners learn autonomously, including the subject matter, the lecturer, the free time, and the challenging task. For the subject matter, learners learn autonomously when the learners find that the subject matter is interesting, appropriate with their needs, difficult and they realize that it is not enough to rely on the classroom session. In terms of the lecturer, learners learn autonomously when the lecturer greatly engages them in the learning process and encourages them to set goals and learn outside the class. Furthermore, learners learn autonomously when they have much time and get a challenging task, such as a final project.

As this research investigated the dimensions of learner autonomy in EFL teaching-learning in an English program study of a university which included English skills courses (speaking, listening, reading, and writing for general communication), the further research is suggested to investigate learner autonomy in a more specific English skill class, for example learner autonomy in a speaking class, in order to get more in-depth findings for a specific context. In addition, the further research can conduct a research which implement a certain method to promote autonomy in a certain skill which is helpful for learners.

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