THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING BY STUDENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

   This paper reports on a study that aims to find out the extent to which the students of English Education Study Program implemented Independent Learning. This study is qualitative in nature employing phenomenological approach. Independent Learning involves individuals' planning, self-monitoring, controlling and evaluating their learning activities. The participants of this study were students of the English Language Education Study Program of a private university in Surabaya. The implementation of Independent Learning by the students participated in this study was analysed based on those activities involved in Independent Learning. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The result of this study revealed that the extent to which the students implemented Independent Learning varied. The majority of the students did not do complete activities supposedly involved in Independent Learning. Only a few of them did self-monitoring and evaluation of their learning activities.

Keywords: Independent Learning, Implementation, sel-regulated learning

INTRODUCTION

Independent Learning has been an interesting issue in Indonesia in recent years since it is promoted through "Merdeka Belajar". The term Independent Learning is sometimes used interchangeably with the terms 'self-directed learning', 'learning how to learn' (Meyer et al., 2008) and 'self-regulated learning' (Zimmerman, 1986). Independent Learning is part of cognitive learning theory which states that the behavior, motivation, and aspects of the learning environment affect a student's achievement.

In applying Independent Learning students are given the opportunity to take control of themselves during the teaching-learning activity. The ability of students to implement Independent Learning will be reflected in their ability to actively participate in learning both in terms of metacognitive, motivational, and seriousness of behavior in achieving learning goals (Mayer et al, 2008). In Independent Learning, teachers' role is minimized along with the increase in students' learning sources that can be easily accessed. According to Chan (2010) Independent Learning in higher education refers to students' ability to take charge of their own learning. The responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning is the student's concern. Some people usually have a wrong definition of Independent Learning (Daar, 2020). Some think that Independent Learning is the same as online learning when the students must learn about the topic given to themselves and do the assignment from the teacher. Especially during the pandemic situation when students must learn at home.

Zimmerman (1986) stated that there are three key characteristics that should be owned by self-regulating

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learners: (1) learners understand their own approach of learning and how best to efficiently maximize their learning, (2) learners have the motivation to take responsibility for their own learning, and (3) learners possess the ability to work with others to increase their learning depth and breadth.

In doing Independent Learning, students are free to choose what platform that they want to use for their independent learning. Learning platforms and applications can become media and learning sources if they are used in the right way to improve skills and competency. The students also have to manage their time in doing it. While doing Independent Learning, every student will have different results; according to the findings of some studies, for those who regularly do Independent Learning they will get a higher score than the students who just do Independent Learning once a week or never do Independent Learning. Independent Learning itself is different from when the teacher gives homework for students, and they have to do it themselves.

The ability of students to implement Independent Learning will be reflected in their ability to actively participate in learning both in terms of metacognitive, motivational, and seriousness of behavior in achieving learning goals (Mayer et al, 2008). After doing Independent Learning, students can try to evaluate the result of their independent study by doing exercises, practicing with their friends or discussing and asking for feedback from their friends.

An example of Independent Learning is when the students are learning by themselves, they are searching for more information or doing exercises on the internet, reading books, or asking their friends who master the lesson they do not really understand. Another example that students can do in Independent Learning is learning outside the classroom. It is the opportunity for the students to improve their English mastery. For example, the students can make groups to practice their speaking skills before having the presentation in the class. Students can also correct their friends' writing, or they can read English texts and discuss the content with their friends. Students can also interact online with foreigners through social media. They can improve their vocabulary by reading English texts on the internet. Asking friends who are considered smarter or asking lecturers outside the class is also a form of students' efforts to fulfil their curiosity about a particular learning material and this shows the existence of students' independent strategies in learning. Students who have the initiative to learn independently show that they have a sense of responsibility for their learning.

Zutchi as cited in Nalatambi et al., (2015) stated that learners who possess the ability to apply Independent Learning have the skills of (1) self-management skills, in particular, the ability to manage time, (2) critical thinking which includes being aware of the underlying suppositions of one's thoughts and beliefs, and (3) creative thinking which includes the ability to identify worthwhile goals and methods of achieving them.

While doing Independent Learning students might have some challenges. It can be from their time management, the facilities they have, or other difficulties that students might have. Internal and external motivation also will give an impact to their achievement after doing independent learning.

In reference to the above concept, this study explored the extent to which the students of English Language Education Study Program in a private university in Surabaya applied Independent Learning, what are the benefits of employing independent learning, and what are the obstacles found based on students' perspectives.

Definition of Independent Learning

Independent learning is a form of education in which the learners are self-contained and separated from their teacher in terms of space and time. Other learning techniques such as "personalization", "student-centered learning", and "learning ownership" are often related to "independent learning". It is often discussed in relation to important issues such as the responsibilities and relationships between students and teachers, as well as the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in education (Meyer et al., 2008).

Independent learning is part of cognitive learning theory which states that the behavior, motivation, and

aspects of the learning environment affect a student's achievement. In applying independent learning students were given the opportunity to take control of themselves during the teaching-learning activity. The ability of students to implement independent learning will be reflected in their ability to actively participate in learning both interms of metacognitive, motivational, and seriousness of behavior in achieving learning goal (Meyer et al., (2008).

Independent learning is also known as a modern learning theory of constructivism. In this context, students need to take charge of their own learning. It can be undertaken by carvingout their own learning plans according to their own needs. It is also a student focused learning model that emphasizes the learning environment and cooperative learning (Dehnad et al., 2014).

There are a number of different terms used to describe Independent Learning, the most common being 'self-regulated learning'. All these different terms describe very similar thmes and processes, including students having an understanding of their learning; being motivated to take responsibility for their learning; and working with teachers to structure their learning environment (Meyer et al., 2008). In doing Independent Learning students must be motivated so that they can focus on doing it and achieve their targets in learning.

Independent Learning also known as self-regulated learning. Zimmerman and Schunk (2004) define self-regulated learning as 'the process where students activate and sustain cognitions, behaviours and affects which are systematically oriented towards attainment of their goals'.

From an independent learning method, EFL students can gain their knowledge without waiting for their teacher to explain the lesson materials in the classroom. As a result, the teacher's position is no longer that of a director, but rather that of a resource. On the other hand,when the teacher has explained about the lesson materials and the EFL students do not completely understand, they may develop their understanding by independent study (Latifah, 2019).

Key Elements of Independent Learning

There are some elements that we need while students and teachers do independent learning. According to Mayer et al., (2008), the key elements of independent learning may comprise factors which are internal and external to learners. The external elements are the development of a strong relationship between teachers and students and the establishment of an 'enabling environment'. The internal elements are the skills that individual students have to acquire. By internal and external elements for developing independent study, students will do independent study and hopethat after doing independent study they will get more knowledge in the subject that they haven't mastered before.

The skills that students need for independent learning are cognitive skills, metacognitive skills and affective skills (Sani, 2015).

a. Cognitive skills refer to the human ability to perform complex tasks closely associated with problem-solving and learning. The human brain uses cognitive skills to think, learn, read, remember, concentrate and focus on daily tasks and process new information.
b. Metacognitive skills are skills associated with an understanding of how learning occurs.
c. Affective skills are skills that are related to feelings and emotions. High achieving students have been found to possess more metacognitive awareness and engage in moreself-regulatory behaviour than low achieving students.

In doing independent learning we need the strong relationship between teachers and students involving trust and a mutual responsibility for learning, which is based on teachers providing explicit messages about learning, teachers being attentive and responsive to students'interests and needs, and schools developing a greater consistency in their approach to learning. On the other hand, the factor not only comes from the relationship

between teachers and students, but also from the students' environment. Like their family. The first-time students learn before they go to school is learning at home with their parents. If they get support from their parents, they will succeed.

In enabling environment' includes the physical environment and material resources. It will be very important to include social interaction and support from teachers, family, and peers. The successful promotion of independent learning will require careful attention to the learning environment, focusing both on the relationship between teachers and pupils, and the wider physical environment and resources within it, including ICT. This has implications for the scope and content of any guidance offered (Meyer et al., 2008).

Models of Independent Learning

Models of independent learning build on the theoretical notion of learning styles. Of the many theories of learning styles, some suggest that individuals have different ways of learning, such as through written text or through imagery. Let see how the opinion about models of independent learning:

1. Pintrich (2000) proposes a theoretical model of self-regulated learning that emphasizes the importance of individuals planning, self-monitoring, controlling and evaluating their learning activities.

2. Zimmerman (2002) extends Pintrich's model by emphasizing the importance of motivation within self-regulation. Zimmerman suggests that motivation influences the three phases of self-regulation: forethought, performance and self-reflection.

Skills Required in Independent Learning

According to Sani (2015) there are some skills that students require for independent learning that can be divided into cognitive skills, metacognitive skills and affective skills.

a. *Cognitive Skills*: Cognitive skills include memory, attention and problem-solving. Students need to have reached a certain level in their cognitive development, such as being able to decode basic information before they can do independent learning. Teachers are also able to promote this cognitive development to encourage independent learning.

b. *Metacognitive Skills*: Metacognitive skills are skills associated with an understanding of how learning occurs, such as students being able to state how they learn and students being able to identify other people who help them with their learning. Metacognitive skills are necessary for students to self-assess their learning.

c. *Affective skills*: Affective skills are skills that are related to feelings and emotions, such as developing a value system, then internalizing and acting on these values. Motivation is considered the most important affective skill and is directly associated with increased independent learning and can also be an outcome of independent learning.

Since motivation includes persistence in the face of difficulties and being willing to try again following initial difficulties, 'delay of gratification' may be important in order for motivation to be used for independent learning.

How Teachers can Promote Independent Learning

Students can't become effective independent learners by themselves. Rather, students need to learn how to learn, indicating that effective ways to learn can and should be promoted by teachers. The promotion of independent learning requires a new role for teachers, which is based not on the traditional transmission of information, but on process-oriented teaching, which ensures that students are actively involved in the learning process.

The literature provides a variety of suggestions relating to how teachers can promote independent learning

by using a range of strategies, including scaffolding; providing pupils with opportunities to self-monitor; offering models of behavior for example developing a language for learning and providing feedback on homework.

ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is highlighted as a potentially important tool for transforming teaching and learning although this review found little evidence to provide guidance on how this might be done. By using technologies, they can easily find more explanations about the subject that they don't understand. After learning the explanation, they also can do exercises using websites or other tools provided using technology. They also can evaluate if they are doing online exercises and after submitting the test they can see the result.

Clarity is lacking about the skillset teachers require, how these skills might be acquired for the promotion of independent learning and how teachers can build these skills into current classroom practice. The evidence of the impact of teachers promoting independent learning on students' outcomes is based mainly on case studies.

Much of the literature focuses on observation, rather than on the views of teachers and students. To gain a clearer understanding of how independent learning could be applied successfully in schools, it would be helpful to gather the views of teachers and students in more detail.

The Impact of Independent Learning

According to (Meyer et al., 2008) there are two different claims for the impact of independent learning

1. The literature claims have been made for wide-reaching benefits of independent learning including:
    a. Increased academic performance
    b. Increased motivation and confidence, and the ability for pupils to engage in lifelong learning
    c. Allowing pupils to become more aware of and better able to manage their limitations
    d. Enabling teachers to provide differentiated tasks for pupils
    e. Promoting social inclusion by countering alienation.

2. The literature indicates that the use of independent learning may have a specific impact on particular pupil groups:
    a. Boys seem to be more inclined towards performance goals and more superficial or surface learning strategies (such as rote learning) than girls.
    b. Gifted pupils seem to be more likely than other pupils to use self regulated learning strategies.
    c. Independent learning may highlight the progress of pupils with special educational needs and give them a sense of control over their achievements.
    d. Independent learning strategies may be effective in countering the alienation of 'socially excluded' children.

However, caution is needed in interpreting the evidence base for these claims. Most of the research methods used involve case studies and observation rather than experimental studies.

Challenges and Suggested Solution

The literature identifies a number of challenges in implementing independent learning and also suggests some solutions (Meyer et al., 2008).

1. One of the main challenges is the teachers' perception that the delivery of the National Curriculum requires some whole class teaching approaches. The literature suggests that this may restrict the opportunity for independent learning because it is teacher directed rather than fostering pupils' involvement in and responsibility for their own learning.

2. Another challenge is that teachers' perceptions of how pupils learn may not correspond to the conceptualisation of independent learning. This may pose a barrier to the implementation of independent learning since some

teachers do not perceive pupils to be able to learn independently. This barrier could be overcome by supporting teachers and ensuring that they understand that independent learning does not undermine their role as teachers.

3. A further challenge is that pupils may resist the introduction of independent learning ormay abuse the freedoms associated with its introduction, which makes theimplementation of independent learning impossible. To overcome this barrier it is necessary for independent learning to be appropriately planned and structured. This involves supporting teachers and adopting a whole-school approach.

4. The use of ICT for independent learning may prove challenging since it requires time and effort to create appropriate resources. It is suggested that this barrier could be overcome by designers ensuring that they consult pupils and engage them in the production of ICT resources. This would ensure that ICT resources are appropriate andmay provide opportunities for teachers and pupils to learn collaboratively.

5. Last, but not least, another challenge is that the level of parental support that pupils receive for schoolwork is linked to their socio-economic background. Therefore,independent learning may benefit pupils from a more advantaged socio-economic background more than pupils from a less advantaged socioeconomic background, thusincreasing the socio-economic divide

Some previous studies that are related to the present study have been reviewed by the writer. These are summarized below.

The study conducted by Daar (2020) explored students' independent learning during the Learning from Home Period within this covid-19 outbreak. The research results showed that (1) Students use books, modules, portable computers, and mobile phones as the media to apply independent learning. Certain teachers use online applications such as Google Classroom, Email, Whatsapp, and websites to engage students with internet learning instruments. Dealing with learning sources, students use files in the form of PPT, PDF, a word containing the materials, learning videos, notes, google, YouTube, assignments distributed by teachers, and some other materials gained by the students themselves from the internet; (2) Students haven't possessed time management skills. They don't provide a specific time to learn the materials they obtain from teachers. They only used the learning schedule provided by thecampus; (3) Teachers play most of their roles as instructors and facilitators. As instructors, teachers provided some instructions through materials or subject matters to be learned by the students.

The study conducted by Agustina and Fajar (2019) aimed to get the importance and the meaning of independent study by students' perception. The finding of this study is that students basically had a positive perception about the importance of independent learning. Even though the students perceived the meaning of independent learning differently, all respondents reported that they perceived the benefits of doing the independent learning to support their English mastery. In this way, it can be concluded that students felt the advantages of learning the language independently without the presence of the teacher. Based on the findings of the study, the writers suggested that independent learning activities should be assigned to English Education Department students specially to help the students in mastering English.

The study conducted by Soliman (2014) explored the use of E- Learning to develop EFL students language skills and activate their independent learning. Increasing EFL students' language skills and independent learning are issues of paramount concern because the contact hours in traditional face to face classes are not enough to help students develop their language skills.

The study conducted by Sani (2015) aimed to explore the concept of independent learning and to identify reliable, robust and relevant research to develop a detailed picture of the different aspects of independent learning and possible impact on pupils. The review used a mixed-method approach guided by a combination of the principles of 'systematic review' and 'realist synthesis' to explore several research questions linked to independent learning. The study conducted by Latifah (2019) aimed to introduce YouTube as independent learning media to

EFL students in order to help them overcome their difficulties in learning English. The study found that the amount of time students spent on YouTube was related to their ability in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is qualitative in nature employing phenomenological approach. It is defined as a qualitative research approach used to gain a deeper understanding of a complex issue in areal-world context; it is a design widely used in the social sciences (Crowe et al., 2011). This approach is used by the researcher because it allows the researcher to examine in depth a phenomenon of interest to the researcher, which is the implementation of independent learning by the students in a natural context from the participant's perspective.

The participants of this study are the students are from Batch 2021 at an English Educatioan Study Program of a private university in Surabaya. All the students from Batch 2021 were asked to fill out the questionnaires. From the filled-out questionnaires, the respondents were classified into two groups: Those who are implementing independent learning and those who are not. Those who are implementing independent learning were interviewed as well. Besides students, as mentioned earlier this study need lecturers as the participants who are implementing independent learning in their classes.

The research data are the information/opinions/perspectives from students and lecturers. The data included the students' perspectives about independent learning, how they implement independent learning, the reason why they do independent learning, and how the independent learning impacts their English learning. In addition, the data included lecturers' perspectives about how they implement independent learning and the challenges in implementing independent learning. The data sources are questionnaires and interviews.

This study used questionnaires to collect data. Google form was used as a platform to deliver the questionnaires to students. Interviews were also be given to some students and lecturers. For the lecturers the researcher interviewed them to get information about how the teachers implement independent learning in their teaching and the obstacles in implementing independent learning.

The questionnaire covered questions about:

a. Students' understanding about independent learning

b. Whether or not students implemented independent learning

c. How students implement independent learning

d. The perceived benefits of implementing independent learning

e. Constraints experienced in implementing independent learning

The researcher asked the Head of English Language Education Study Program for permission to conduct the research which involved the students and lecturers, especially to distribute questionnaires to the students and give interviews to the lecturers. After the permission was granted, the researcher tried out the questionnaire with some students. After the questionnaire was revised, it was then distributed to the actual respondents through Google form. After the questionnaire had been filled out by the participants, some students may be interviewed to get clarification about their unclear responses. Some lecturers were asked whether they implemented independent learning and interviewed more if they implemented independent learning.

The technique of data analysis was undertaken using a qualitative description. And to describe the systematic, factual, and accurate data, an inductive description is applied by implementing the model of analysis proposed by Miles and Habermas consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion (Sugiyono, 2013).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

When asked whether the students know about Independent Learning, all of the respondents (100%) answered "yes"; however, what they have known about the concept of Independent Learning is not 100% correct. The majority of them (83.30%) understood the complete concept of Independent Learning, namely: Independent Learning emphasizes the importance of individuals planning, self-monitoring, controlling and evaluating their learning activities.

The rest of them (16.70%) understood the concept of Independent Learning partially. Some of these students thought that Independent Learning involves students to learn the materials by themselves without the assistance of other people, and the others thought that Independent Learning gives students the opportunity to take control of themselves during the teaching - learning activities.

When asked whether the respondents agree that Independent Learning is important, the majority of them (66.7%) chose "strongly agree" and the rest (33,3%) choose "agree".

When asked whether the students implement Independent Learning, the majority of them (73,3%) answered "sometimes" and only the minority of them (26.7%) answered "always". These students belong to the ones who have the complete concept of Independent Learning.

When asked about the reasons why the students did Independent Learning, they had many reasons. The reason most chosen by the students is that they were curious to learn about the materials (73.3%). Next, they wanted to improve their academic performance (60%). They had self-motivation (60%). They wanted to improve their independence (60%). They wanted to improve their critical thinking (53.3%). They wanted to improve their responsibility (40%). Lastly, they did Independent Learning because they were asked to do independent learning by their lecturers (26.7%).

Table 1. Reasons why the students do Independent Learning

NO	Reason	Percentage
1	Because I am curious to learn the materials	73.3%
2	Because I want to improve my academic performance	60%
3	Because I have self – motivation to do independent learning.	60%
4.	Because I want to improve my critical thinking	53.3%
5	Because I want to improve my independence	60%
6	Because I want to improve my responsibility	40%
7	Because my lecturer asked me to do independent learning	26.7%

Regarding when the students started doing Independent Learning, the majority of (46.7%) started implementing Independent Learning when they were in senior high school, 26.7% in junior high school, 20% in elementary school and the rest 6.7% in the university.

Regarding what activities the students did when they implemented Independent Learning, the students did differently. Even though they did what were supposed to be done in Independent Learning, not everyone did all of them. In Independent Learning students are expected to do planning and deciding on the materials or what they need to learn by themselves. Most of them did this activity (66.7%). Next, the students scheduled their Independent Learning regularly and also did self-monitoring for their Independent Learning; however, this activity was conducted by the minority of the students (20%). The students also controlled their Independent Learning (33.3%), evaluated their learning activities as well but this activity was conducted by only 20% of them. They also evaluated

the result of their Independent Learning activities, but this was only done by 26.7% of the students. Happily, quite many of them chose and decided to learn the materials even though they were not instructed to learn by their lecturers (60%) and some of them did Independent Learning even when there was no homework (46.7%). There were quite many of them (46.7%) who tried to improve the ways they did Independent Learning.

Some other activities which are not the characteristics of Independent Learning but the majority of them did are that the students did Independent Learning when they learned the materials which they were instructed to learn by their lecturers (80%) and when there was homework (53.3%).

Table 2. Activities the students did in implementing Independent Learning

No	Reasons	Percentage
1	I did independent learning when there was homework	5.3%
2	I did independent learning even if there was no homework	46.7%
3	I learned the materials which are instructed to learn by my lecturer	80%
4	I chose and decided to learn the materials even though they are not instructed to lecturer learn by my lecturer	60%
5	I planned and decided on the materials or what I need to learn by myself	66.7%
6	I scheduled my independent learning regularly	20%
7	I did self–monitoring for my independent learning	20%
8	I controlled my independent learning	33.3%
9	I evaluated my learning activities	20%
10	I evaluated the result of my independent learning	26.7%
11	I tried to improve the ways I did independent learning	46.7%

When asked whether the lecturers encouraged the students to implement Independent Learning, most of them (46.7%) chose "agree" and 26.7% chose "strongly agree", meaning that the majority of the students (73.4%) agreed that their lecturers encouraged them to implement independent learning. However, the rest of the students (26.7%) did not think so about this. From this result we can learn that not all lecturers asked their students to do Independent Learning.

According to the theory of Independent Learning, there are four activities that Independent Learning emphasizes, namely: (a) the ways the students plan their Independent Learning, (b) self-monitoring, (c) controlling their learning activities, and (d) evaluating their learning activities. The data found related to how the students do those activities are presented as follows.

The ways the students planned their Independent Learning

- Two students were not really consistent in doing Independent Learning. They did if they did not understand the material. So, there was no planning.
- One student planned the schedule to study by himself.
- Some students took a note about the materials that they did not really understand, then read the materials and did some research on google.
- Some other students did their own research and asked questions, rather than relying soly on the materials that their lecturers taught.
- One student said if he did not understand the material, he would try by himself, and the first step was to read the material and if he could understand the material, then he wrote the material by explaining for himself so he could understand the material more.

- One student spends 2 to 3 hours every weekend to do Independent Learning. However, the plan about what to study was not clear.

In conclusion, the majority of the students did not carefully plan what to do for Independent Learning and did not set up a regular schedule for Independent Learning.

The ways the students did self - monitoring for their Independent Learning
- Some students did not do self-monitoring for their Independent Learning.
- One student reviewed some materials and checked whether he still understood/remembered them or not.
- One student kept studying and asking if there was something that he did not understand.
- One student usually did self-monitoring his Independent Learning by carefully checking what he had to learn; checking what was important for him to learn independently.
- One student did self-monitoring by keeping track of the subjects he had learned on his own, as well as his progress.

In conclusion, the majority of the students did not do self-monitoring for their Independent Learning.

The ways the students control their Independent Learning

- Two students focused on the things that he wanted to learn and avoid getting distractedby other things.
- One student gave specific time for him to learn and search more information from theinternet.
- One student did it continually and evaluated his learning results.
- One student made questions and answered them by himself.
- One student mentioned that he had to study at least 1 subject every day.
- One student used timers for himself in regards to when to begin his learning and limited himself to the subjects that are important.
- One student made a reminder and prepared the materials that he wanted to learn.

In conclusion, all of the students controlled their Independent Learning and they had different ways to control it.

The ways the students evaluated the learning activities in Independent Learning
- Some students did not evaluate their learning activities
- One student checked whether he still understood/remembered the material or not.
- One student said if he was still confused when studying independently, he will ask the lecturers.
- One student evaluated his learning activities by making questions and answering them.
- One student corrected the wrong answers.
- One student evaluated his Independent Learning by reviewing the materials again and trying to really remember and memorize them.
- One student said if he was unsatisfied, he will go back to the board.
- One student tries to reflect his Independent Learning activities to see how far he has up to.

In conclusion, the majority of the students did not evaluate their activity while doing Independent Learning. The rest had different ways in evaluating their Independent Learning.

When asked about what the students did to increase their Independent Learning skills, the majority of them watched video lectures or tutorials (86.7%), and learned online materials(80%), looked for information from other books (60%). Discussions with friends to get feedback from their friends was also done by quite many of the

students (46.7%). For example,in writing they could discuss with their friends and did peer reviewing to make them better in writing and also in their grammar. The least activities done by the students to increase their Independent Learning skills were doing exercises in laboratories (13.3%) and getting information from the internet (6.7%).

Table 3. The ways the students do to increase their Independent Learning skills

No	Activities	Percentage
1	By watching video lecturer / tutorial	86.7%
2	By learning online materials	80%
3	By doing discussion with friend	46.7%
4	By getting information from other books	60%
5	By doing exercises in laboratories	3.3%
6	Getting info from the internet	6.7%

Based on the literature review, students need to be guided and encouraged by parents, teachers, lecturers, or other adults. When asked about how the lecturers encouraged the studentsto do Independent Learning, the students mentioned that every lecturer has his or her own ways of encouraging their students to do Independent Learning in their course. These are the wayshow their lecturers encouraged them to do Independent Learning.

In the interview with the lecturers, it was found that two of the lecturers said that they motivated their students to do Independent Learning by giving some examples but some students still did not do Independent Learning. They also provided the materials that students could read and learn before the class. Especially for those who have difficulties in learning English, the lecturers always encouraged them to learn from any sources to get better in their English. The other lecturer said she has been encouraging her students to do Independent Learning because she teaches English grammar. She provides exercises in the LMS that students can try, she gives them the link for their practices but not all students do them independently. Also she said that Independent Learning must come from students' internal motivation, they must have desire in doing Independent Learning so that they will do it. In conclusion, the lecturers have encouraged their students to do Independent Learning,even though not all students were motivated to do Independent Learning.

The Benefits of Applying Independent Learning

The data of the study revealed that everyone gained benefits from applying. Independent Learning. No one did not gain any benefits. What benefits they could gain and the extent to which they gained the benefits can be explained as follows:

a. They were motivated to implement Independent Learning. The majority of the students (73.3%) chose "agree" that they were motivated to implement Independent Learning and 13.3% of the students chose "strongly agree". Quite small number of students (6.7%) disagreed that they were motivated to implement Independent Learning, and 6.7% of them did not have an idea about it.

b. According to Table 4 through applying Independent Learning, the students could increase their academic performance (73.3%), increase their confidence (53.3%), increase their motivation in learning (53.3%), did self - reflection better (53.3%), were more engaged in life - long learning (46.7%), although the ability to manage their limitations is still low (26.7%).

Table 4. The benefits the students got from implementing Independent Learning

No	Benefits	Percentage
1	Increased my academic performance	73.3%
2	Increased my confidence	53.3%
3	More engaged in life – long learning	46.7%
4	Increased my motivation in learning	53.3%
5	Better able to manage my limitations	26.7%
6	Did self – reflection better	53.3%

c. The students had positives experiences in applying Independent Learning. Table 5 may explain the details about what the positive experiences are the students got in applying Independent Learning. The majority of the students (73.3%) experienced getting more knowledge by doing Independent Learning. They were also happy in doing Independent Learning (60%), so their motivation to learn increase (55.3%). As a result, they could increase their scores from doing Independent Learning (40%).

Table 5. The students' positive experiences in implementing Independent Learning

No	Reason	Percentage
1	I'm happy in doing independent learning	60%
2	My motivation to learn increased	53.3%
3	I can get more knowledge by doing independent learning	73.3%
4	I can increase my scores after doing independent learning	40%
5	I got benefits from doing independent learning	66.7%

d. They acquired positive characteristics of learning from doing Independent Learning although not everyone acquired all the positive characteristics of learning. The majority of them had self-motivation in learning (93.3%), had curiosity in learning (73.3%), had critical thinking (60%). The following positive characteristics of learning acquired by less students, namely: comprehension without instruction (40%), doing self-examination of their independent learning (20%), accountability in doing independent learning (26.7%), having persistence in Independent Learning (33.3%), and the least characteristics acquired by the students is having strong struggle and spirit in learning (6.7%).

Table 6. The characteristics of Independent Learning that the students acquired

No	Characteristics	Percentage
1	Curiosity	73.3%
2	Self – motivation	93.3%
3	Self-examination	20%
4	Accountability	26.7%
5	Critical thinking	60%
6	Comprehension with no instruction	40%
7	Persistence	33.3%
8	Strong struggle and spirit	6.7%

The Obstacles Found in Applying Independent Learning Based on the Students' Perspectives

There are many challenges that the students have to face in implementing independent learning. It is not only because of the external factors, like facilities they have or do not have, or about the environment, but from

the internal factors, like their motivation in doing independent learning, their understanding while doing independent learning, etc. More detailed data about the challenges the students faced in doing Independent Learning are presented below. The most provoking challenge faced by the students was that they could not focus while doing Independent Learning (66.7%). The next challenge was that it was still the lecturers who directed rather than fostered the students' involvement in and responsibility for their own learning (33.3%). Another challenge which was quite problematic for the students was that they needed to use the internet, but they did not have a good internet connection or the problem with the use of ICT for Independent Learning. They did not have good internet access (26.7%). Two less challenging ones include the fact that they were confused about how to implement independent learning (6.7%) and sometimes they did not understand the materials to learn by themselves (6.7%).

Table 7. The challenges the students faced in implementing Independent Learning

No	Challenges	Percentage
1	It is the teacher who directed rather than fostering pupils' involvement and responsibility for theirown learning	33.3%
2	The use of ICT for independent learning	26.7%
3	I'm confused how to implement independent learning	6.7%
4	I can't focus while doing independent learning	66.7%
5	Many distractions if I have my independent	6.7%
6	Sometimes I still do not understand the material I	6.7%

The Obstacles Found in Implementing Independent Learning Based on the Lecturers' Perspectives

According to the lecturers, the students' motivation in doing Independent Learning is still relatively low even though they have already motivated them to do independent learning. They gave some examples from their experiences, but some students still did not do independent learning. They also provided the materials that students could read and learn before the classes. Especially for those who have difficulties in learning English, they always encouraged them to learn from any sources they could get to improve their English. One lecturer said that she had encouraged her students to do Independent Learning because she teaches English grammar. She provides exercises in the LMS that students can try, she gives them links for their practices but not all students do it independently. Also, she said that Independent Learning must come from students' internal motivation, they must have desire in doing Independent Learning so that they will do it.

Discussion

The term independent learning is sometimes used interchangeably with the terms 'self-directed learning', 'learning how to learn', and 'self-regulated learning' (Meyer et al as cited in Field et al., 2015). There are three key characteristics that should be owned by independent learning or self-regulating learners (Zimmerman as cited in Field et al., 2015), namely: (1) learners understand their own approach of learning and how best to efficiently maximize their learning; (2) Learners have the motivation to take responsibility for their own learning; (3) Learners possess the ability to work with others to increase their learning depth and breadth. According to Daar (2020) some people usually get a wrong definition of independent learning.Sometimes people define independent learning the same as online learning when the students must learn about the topic given to themselves and do the assignment from the teacher.

The concept of Independent Learning employed in this study is that Independent Learning involves four activities: individuals planning, self-monitoring, controlling and evaluating the students' own learning activities (Pintrich, 2000). The finding of this present study reveals that when asked whether the students know about

Independent Learning all of them (100%) answered "yes", but 83.30% out of them understood the complete concept of Independent Learning as mentioned above.

There are many ways that the students implemented independent learning. They did independent learning when there was homework (53.3%) and did independent learning even when there was no homework (46.7%). Referring to the concept of Independent Learning, learning should be internally driven, students should be self-motivated in learning. Therefore, if students did independent learning because of homework assigned by their lecturers, it meansthat the students are not doing independent learning. The data of this present study reveals that half of the respondents have not done independent learning to some extent. Similarly, if students learn materials which they are instructed to learn by their lecturers, it means that the students are not doing independent learning. In this case, the majority of respondents of this present study (80%) did it. Ideally students choose and decide to learn the materials even though they are not instructed to learn by their lecturers. In this present study, 60% of the respondents did it. In addition, in independent learning, students plan and decide on the materials or what they need to learn themselves. In this case, 66.7% of the respondents did it.

In independent learning, it is expected that students schedule their independent learning regularly and do self-monitoring for their independent learning. In this case, not many respondents did it, only the minority of them (20%). In addition, students are expected to control their independent learning. Unfortunately, there are only 33.3% of the respondents didit. Other activities that are required to do by students in independent learning but only few students did them include evaluating their learning activities (20%) and evaluating the result of their independent learning activities (26.7%). Fortunately, the number of students who wanted to improve the ways they did independent learning is quite reasonable (46.7%).

There are many benefits that students can get from implementing independent learningespecially in learning English. 73.3% of students said they can increase their academicperformance. By doing independent learning students can master the topic that they are confused about before. So that they can increase their academic performance after doing independent learning. 53.3% of the students increase their confidence. When the students havemore knowledge about the topic given by the lecturer, they will be more confident. 46.7% of the students said they were more engaged in life - long learning. 53.3% of the students said they increase their motivation in learning. Having motivation before doing independent learning is very important. If students have high motivation, they will regularly do independentlearning and they will get the benefits of independent learning. 26.7% of students said that theyare better able to manage their limitations. Doing independent learning is like going out of ourcomfort zone where we have to learn the material independently. It might not be easy but we will get the benefits after we regularly do it. The last 53.3% of the students said that they did self - reflection better. After doing independent learning students can do self - reflection or self evaluation to make sure their understanding about the goals that they will reach.

When the students regularly do independent learning, they will also get more benefits for their achievement in learning English. Those who do independent learning since they are in elementary get more knowledge and get better in their achievement than those who do it since university. In the interview the students who do independent learning and implement it since elementary do not have many difficulties in doing independent learning in the university. They also get a good achievement and can easily solve problems they face.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that most (not all) students have correct understanding of the concept of independent learning, that is, it includes individuals planning, self-monitoring, controlling and evaluating their learning activities. However, in the implementation of independent learning, few

students of English Language Education Study Program implemented independent learning as expected. Some students just learn independently because the lecturers ask them to do homework or assignments.

Some students who do independent learning regularly get better in their achievement. Self-motivation is one of the important elements in doing independent learning for students. Some lecturers have been encouraging their students to do independent learning but not all lecturers do it. Lecturers encourage students by giving them examples of how to do independent learning based on their experience, and provide them materials in the LMS so that students can learn by themselves before the class.

By doing independent learning students can increase their ability in learning, improve their knowledge, increase their confidence, and get better in managing their limitation. One of the most important elements that students must have is motivation. Students who are motivated in doing independent learning will do independent learning as a habit. Students who are not motivated in doing independent learning will not do or never do independent learning. Independent learning is not the same as doing assignment or homework, but students must have their time to learn or read the material chosen by themselves without teachers asking them to do it.

To be independent learners need practices and encouragements, as students do not become effective independent learners by themselves. In this case, lecturers have a crucial role in assisting students to learn how to become independent learners. It can be done by using various strategies including scaffolding, providing students with opportunities to self-monitor; offering models of behavior, for example developing a language for learning and providing feedback on homework.

Teacher encouragement in implementing independent learning for their students is also important because it can help students to be motivated to do independent learning. Even though not all lecturers implement independent learning in their classes, some lecturers have implemented it for their classes. Some lecturers encourage their students in some ways and hopefully other lecturers can encourage and implement independent learning for students, too.

The present study involved limited numbers of participants. For further studies, it is suggested that a similar study can be done by involving more participants. In addition, in-dept interviews will be better if they are done to collect more thorough and profound data about how students implement Independent Learning.

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