FOSTERING LEARNER AUTONOMY THROUGH WEB-BASED LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

One of the requirements for nowadays adult learning is to be learner autonomy. Learner autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning. Learner autonomy can be nurtured through web-based learning. Web-based learning is a platform that can be used for individual learning needs anytime anywhere they want, in accordance, the learner is often learning without interaction with other people directly. There are some problems in implementing web-based learning in Indonesia. Students felt dissatisfied with the current system and the lack of teacher's feedback and scaffolding. This study tried to investigate what is the learner's perception of improving learner autonomy using web-based learning. This study is a case study. The instrument used are questionnaire and interview. This study uses analytical analysis. There are some drawbacks that demotivate the students such as the poor variety of media, the lack of teacher's scaffolding and confirmation. Web-based learning is able to help students in sending their homework, participate in online discussion, increase their critical thinking, get immediate feedback and share ideas. For recommendation, SPOT UPI needs to be developed well to promote learner autonomy.

Keywords: learner autonomy, web-based learning, student's perspective

INTRODUCTION

Learner autonomy is the 21st-century skill that allows the learners to be an independent learner. It is an ability to take charge of one's own learning (Holec, 1981). Web-based learning is believed to be beneficial to the learner. Since 1991, World Wide Web's is developed and gradually accepted as an educational tool to find and share resource and deliver the course, even the skill in this field increasingly demanded nowadays teacher (Khosrow-Pour, 2002). Bringing technology in the classroom is able to raise students' willingness to engage in learning (Gonzalez & St Louis, 2006; Senyuva & Kaya, 2014).

Compared to traditional learning, web-based learning provides more advantages. In term of collaborative learning, web-based serves the needs of ubiquitous learning (anywhere and anytime), caters various learning goals, etc (Fan & Li, 2011). It can be delivered in an online environment, bring enjoyment and relaxing atmosphere, also able to decrease students anxiety (Wang, Cheng, Chen, Mercer, & Kirschner, 2017; Senyuva &Kaya, 2014) and increase motivation, particularly in the chat session (Chandra & Watters, 2012; Wang et

al, 2017; Senyuva &Kaya, 2014). The online discussion provides debate mode which in turn helps in developing learner's critical thinking (Fan & Li, 2011; Senyuva & Kaya, 2014). Web-based can accommodate the learner tendency in learner-centered learning, enrich the learning environment, and is already seen as a daily teaching and learning occurrence in higher education. It is effective in organizing, delivering, and managing the courses, moreover, it is also easier for the teacher to interact with the students, make them feel belonging to the community leading them to have a deeper understanding and achieving a higher score. Websites can facilitate learning beyond classroom hours and accommodate teacher's effort in scaffolding and be coaching the students' learning in filling their gap of knowledge and understanding (Chandra & Watters, 2012; Senyuva & Kaya, 2014). It also raises their self-determination which in this regards related to learner autonomy (Chandra & Watters, 2012). Senyuva and Kaya (2014) studied the effect of self-directed learning readiness using the web-based learning, it made students steady, goal-oriented, & confidence. They also found that web-based learning influence the self-learning skills & self-control. Miura (2017) promoted web-based lessening the burden on the students and enabling the learner distance learning course, sharing, having cooperative learning with their peers and teacher. On the other hand, there were some problems in implementing web-based learning in Indonesian Context. The findings indicated that the students are not satisfied with web-based learning. They dissatisfield with the poor media, the low teacher students interaction, and the discussion and feedback is not as effective as face-to-face classroom setting (Elida, Nugroho, & Suyudi, 2012).

Therefore, referring back to the title of the research "The Role of Web-based Learning in Promoting Learner autonomy", the research question will be: "What is the learner's perception on improving learner autonomy using web-based learning?".

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the research are postgraduate students of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. This research will conduct purposive sampling and chose the students who participate in the forum discussion in Sistem Pembelajaran Online Terpadu (SPOT). Purposive sampling is done because the participants from particular subgroup share important experience relevant to the research (Dornyei, 2011). In this case, the participants share the same experience in SPOT forum discussion.

Data collection and Data analysis

The term of the case study in this research is best defined as 'the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case' (Stake, 1995). This research uses case study as 'a method of collecting and organizing data to maximize our understanding' (Dornyei, 2011). Case studies often use quantitative data collection instruments such as survey and questionnaires. The data from the questionnaire will be described using descriptive statistics by means and percentage(Verschuren, 2003). The data analysis will be coding, inputting, screening and cleaning the data, and data manipulation. Questionnaire permits us to collect data in short time although it cannot dig the respondents' engagement deeply. To overcome this drawback there is a need to conduct follow up-interview for selected individuals. The data analysis is a qualitative content analysis which is divided into five phases. They are transcribing, pre-coding and coding, growing ideas using data display, interpreting the data and drawing conclusions (Dornyei, 2011).

Procedure

The research is conducted from March till May 2018, the questionnaires are distributed and collected during the end of the semester on May. The researcher will act as the interviewer using the semi-structured interview for selected respondents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The term social networking is defined as the environment as a medium to have cooperation and collaboration used in the classroom, boardroom, and online discussion room (Othman, Suhaimi, Yusuf, Yusof, & Mohamad, 2012). Currently, the era of technology allows the students to develop strong digital literacy and share resources and high access to social media anywhere anytime, this led them to have more opportunity to interact, collaborate, create content, and communicate with other people. The current pedagogy shifted to cater students need. The new learning must promote learner autonomy such as independent learning and self-regulated learning. students will be able to express their ideas freely, enhance their critical thinking, and create their own material (Zdravkova, 2016). One of respondent opinion about WBL is as follows:

"Web-based learning is one of the ways we can promote learner autonomy. I can improve my knowledge and comprehension of functional grammar. It makes me think a lot, read a lot, ponder a lot. ... In the forum discussion, I can share my reading report and give comments to others." <AN>

From the interview and questionnaire that the researcher conducted, the respondents said that SPOT UPI still unable to support web-based learning. From its system, the access is slow and need longer time to establish a connection and it is agreed by 62% of the respondents. They also prefer to access it through a mobile phone than a computer, 46% prefer mobile phone and 54% against using a computer. Sixty-two percent of the respondents also claim that the web sometimes disrupted when accessed. It is not supported by visual (85%) and video (46%).

The students are not satisfied with the current system and the online discussion is not optimized. The use of WBL means all the resources and material are provided virtually in one packet. It is it's like a double edge sword because any technical problem no matter how small it is will make learner dissatisfied, increase their stress, and also hinder their learning process (Cook, 2007). 54% Respondents stated that web-based is not quite useful for them. 62% of respondents said that it is still unable to support distance learning. they also complained that they are unable to understand the learning material presented (85% claimed they are unable to comprehend the material). WBL is unable to save time (69% claimed they disagree that WBL can save time). 54% disagree and 38 % strongly disagree with the notion that WBL can help them manage their sources, access digital library. 85% claimed that WBL is useful for retrieving data, sending their homework, uploading a file, conducting online discussion, class discussion and in developing critical thinking. Although the system can support online discussion, 62% disagree that WBL is challenging, it truly discourages them to participate in the online lesson. WBL is seen an uninteresting way of delivering the lesson (69% disagree WBL is an interesting way of delivering material). 85% disagree that the teacher conveyed the instruction clearly. For the good part, 69% of the respondents claimed that they get teacher's feedback immediately and 62% of them said WBL is easier than face to face lesson.

The use of WBL is still not optimal in improving students interaction and teacher scaffolding. In social aspect of WBL, many of the students (23%) were agree that WBL can accommodate interaction and communication with their peers and teacher, 38% disagree, and 38% strongly disagree Although the interaction perspective, the use of WBL is still poor, 46% agree that they can feel the class unity in online discussion, although, some other 38% disagree with this statement. In monitoring the students' activity, 38% agree that the teacher did the job well, but 62%% said otherwise.

In term of media richness, students response about the exchange of non-verbal communication are 31% strongly agree, 23% agree, 38% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree. 46% disagree that WBL provided a variety of multimedia. The good aspect of using WBL is students can easily exchange ideas easily with peers and teacher, as stated in the statement " it takes a long time to exchange ideas with peers and teacher" 77% disagree. For teacher clarification, 85% disagree that the teacher provides it.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that SPOT UPI is still had some drawbacks such as the poor media richness, lack of teacher scaffolding. The teacher provides feedback but rarely give clarification. in promoting learner autonomy, language course must reflect the learner's objective in its language, tasks, and strategies, developing language-learning process awareness, reproduce authentic communicative tasks, and encourage students to do reflection on their learning (Harmer, 2007, p.395). The pedagogical learning structure to develop LA includes providing suitable conceptual and practical tools for the learner, using manageable steps in strengthening the development, using proper resources such as a learning library, internet, and peer support (Kuhn & Cavana, 2012). According to constructivist, "the scaffolding system can help learners who learn below the zone of proximal development". The scaffolding can include conceptual, procedural, strategic, and metafunction scaffolding to develop student's skills and comprehension. In traditional scaffolding, the scaffolding happened face to face, but using web-based learning can enrich it with cyberspace, and community (Deejring, 2014).

The system can support online discussion but the students are discouraged and unmotivated in actively participating in the class discussion. As a responsible learner, students must realize their efforts in determining their learning progress. They need to strive every chance the teacher gives, they should show their eagerness and cooperate with their peer and teacher to promote their autonomous learning (Scarle & Szabo, 2000).

The benefits the students get from WBL using SPOT UPI are it enables them to retrieve data, sending homework, uploading a file, participate in online discussion. WBL develop their critical thinking, getting teacher's immediate feedback. They can utilize web-based resources to improve discovery learning (ideas, knowledge, innovation, & group unity) (Fan & Li, 2011). This type of learning can avoid any misconception and develop students' thinking process through multiple perspectives especially in higher education (Deejring, 2014). WBL enable them to exchange ideas easily. WBL can facilitate because it has some ability such as retrieving information, developing ideas and constructing, the capability in generating the idea methodologically, contributing to problem-solving, reporting attendance and diligence, and communication skill (Willmot & Crawford, 2007). WBL can offer immediate feedback, record and store the student's learning development in terms of their difficulties and their successful achievements (Cook, 2007).

CONCLUSION

WBL using SPOT UPI enables students to retrieve data, sending homework, uploading files, participate in online discussion, and develop their critical thinking, getting teacher's immediate feedback, and enable them to exchange ideas easily. For recommendation, SPOT UPI need to be improved. The system needs to be able to provide rich media and the willingness from teacher to scaffold the students.

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