

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

The changes in the curriculum towards more student-centered learning bring the shift of responsibility from teachers to students. Since language learning has become an essential component in people's lives, educational research has emphasized the need for students to take responsibility for their own learning (Nematipour, 2012). Learning indeed can be more effective when students take control over their own learning because they learn what they are ready to learn and they can carry on learning outside the classroom (Ellis and Sinclair in Yildirim, 2012). Indeed, student-centeredness provides a good basis for the development of student autonomy (Chan, 2000).

Learning autonomy has been considered as one of important parts of language education, since it requires students to be more responsible for their own learning. It is viewed as a way of empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning both inside and outside the classroom environment (Al Busaidi & Al Maamari, 2014). In autonomous learning, students are aware of and responsible for all the decision concerning all aspects in their learning. They are determining the learning objectives, defining the contents, selecting learning strategies, monitoring the learning, and evaluating the achievement (Holec in Borg, 2012). Hence, in autonomous

learning, students not only receive knowledge from teacher but also have a role in monitoring all aspects in their learning.

Indonesia has English as the foreign language which means English is not used in students' daily conversation. Classrooms seem to be the one and only place for students to get the experience of using the language. Whereas, language is too complex and varied for there to be enough time for students to learn all they need to in a classroom (Harmer, 2007). Additionally, A teacher may not always be available to assist due to the large classes; students might not have sufficient free time or budget to attend educational institutions; and the society may not provide resources needed (Koçak, 2003).

Therefore, to compensate for those limitations, students need to be more engaged in all aspects of their learning, so that they become autonomous in learning English. Another crucial reason is that English language learning is a life-long journey, not one that begins and ends in classrooms (Chen, 2015). Leaving school does not mean the end of English language learning, but means the beginning of a further autonomous English learning. That is why, during the process, there is a need to teach and guide students to be autonomous and take responsibility of their learning so as to improve their language skills (Chen, 2015).

Cultivating students' ability of autonomous learning has been accepted as one of the goals of language learning (Zhuang, 2010). It is important for students to become aware of its value, to acquire the habit of learning continuously, and maintain it after they have completed their formal

studies (Wang, 2011). It goes without doubt that to improve students' ability to learn autonomously becomes the duty of every teacher (Yan, 2012).

A quantitative data were gained by using 18 items questionnaire on students' autonomous activities and plans on survey conducted by Joshi (2011). There were 80 respondents of the Master level students, majoring in English Education, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. It was revealed that the students made a good practice of autonomous activities with more than 80% students are found to be aware of the goals and the learning process. 71% students did self-effort to improve their English. More than 60% students assessed themselves, 70% students used reference materials and only around 30% students used computers and internet for learning English.

Based on those statements explained previously, the writer was interested in having a research on "Students' Learning Autonomy in English Classes (A Descriptive Study on State Senior High School Students in Banyumas in the Academic Year of 2015/2016).

B. Reason for Choosing the Topic

Learning autonomy is regarded as the goal of today's language education. Since English language learning is a life-long learning process in which students should have the ability to continue learning after leaving school. It goes without saying that fostering students' ability to learn autonomously becomes the duty of every English teacher. In that case, it is important to know the present condition of students' learning autonomy. Only

then will the teacher find an appropriate way or strategy to foster autonomy into the students.

C. Research Problems

Departing from the background explained previously, this research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What autonomous language learning activities do the students perform?
2. To what extent do students perform autonomous language learning activities?

D. Aims of the Study

In line with the research problems, this research is conducted to find out autonomous language learning activities performed by students and the extent to which students performed autonomous language learning activities.

E. Clarification of Term

The idea of autonomy has been seen as connected with the concept of self-directed learning, learner training, independence, interdependence and individualization (Onozawa, 2010). Regardless of the term used, these concepts are concerned with teaching student how to think, how to learn and to take control over their own learning. The aim is to develop among students greater awareness of, and better control over their own thinking and learning process (Cole and Chan, 1994).

According to Holec (1981) in Al Busaidi and Al Maamari (2014), students are able to manage different aspects of their learning, such as determining the objectives, defining the content, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring the procedure of acquisition and evaluating what has been acquired.

F. Contribution of the Study

The study was mainly aimed to show students' learning autonomy in learning English. It is expected that the study would have contribution to the English teaching and learning literature on autonomy. These are some specific contribution:

1. The study may arise teachers' awareness of the significance of student autonomy in language learning.
2. The study may give insight to teachers to explore their ability in enhancing students to more autonomous in teaching learning process.
3. The study may give indication about what the education practitioners should do to promote learning autonomy.