Learner Autonomy in Mandarin Class

Mamik T. Wedawati[1,*] Galih Wibisono[1] Subandi[1] Urip Z. Fanani[1]

[1]*Facultyof Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia*
[*]*Corresponding author: mamikwedawati@unesa.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

In having good teaching-learning process and result in foreign language classes, students need to meet their being comfortable in doing all the learning process. In this situation, learner autonomy becomes one significance aspect to be considered especially since the learning process was held online. The class of intermediate comprehension which was held online had implemented 10 meetings using some online platforms as one of the solutions to overcome in finding the suitable way to keep having the best way of having class but not in the class. This online learning was believed can help students when they could not reach the campus to get the materials from the lectures in the class. Conducting qualitative research, this study tries to figure out the learner autonomy in doing online learning and the result of doing online learning process in Chinese Department. In the learning and evaluation activities conducted as initial research regarding the implementation of the Online learning, the team received positive responses and some deficiencies. Positive responses were given in the session by a variety of activities held by the lectures during the online activities carried out with students. An unsatisfactory response was obtained from a technical matter.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Online learning is not a new system, however this plays important roles when all sides of academia forbid anyone to have offline class. No exception for Convid-19, all universities in Indonesia have committed to hold classes online with various kinds of ways and solutions. This is the o e one and only to realizing a generation that is advanced, accomplished, professional and cultured. With this spirit, academia must immediately moves forward to answer the challenges of the existing problems to keep giving the best of all the existing potentials. Teaching and learning activities are no longer carried out conventionally, but must use fast and precise technology according to the needs and conditions in the field. Online learning is a solution that must be done by all lecturers and students. The use of the internet as a learning medium positions students to be able to learn independently, including accessing online references from various libraries, encyclopedias and various other online learning sites.

Students as the subject of the learning process would found many new experiences as well as the lectures. Since the online learning system will be their only way having communication with lectures and friends in mastering the materials, students need to prepare and maintain their mood. Students are millennial generation whom has live with technology in their life though in having regular activity studying lesson just like what they usually had in the class is another fact they could not avoid anymore.

Some of the uses of internet technology in learning activities are e-learning and online learning. Both use the internet in its application so that students can study independently anytime and anywhere. This dreams start from the reality was found in some places [1], [2], [3], [4], [5]. With the internet, learning can be done together like learning in a real class and more autonomy could be given to students. Another studies also done by Zhou Jian who done a research on morpheme; once there are letters, the meaning is open to be studied, but not necessarily be able to pronounce them correctly [6]. In studying Chinese script, Li and Yunming students often face major problems in learning Mandarin, especially the writing system, grammar structure and sentence structure [7]. Getting the reality that any challenging case may came up from mandarin language, through new learning media form, the communication process in teaching and learning activities will be more effective and efficient which is in line with Gagne statement [8].

In line with this, learner autonomous could work well into students.

Several factors cause the low competency achieved by students, one of which is the use of media as a learning aid. Only a few students who learn Mandarin have proficiency in using the language they are learning. For this reason, the role of the teacher as a designer for the education cannot be ignored in choosing the appropriate learning media for its students. This is expressed considering that teachers play an important role in determining the achievement of learning objectives. The learning objectives are clearly stated in the learning syllabus, but the fact shows that there are still many who have failed in achieving these learning objectives. The team will examine: (1) How is learner autonomy at the time online learning system being implemented in the Mandarin Education Study Program in the Intermediate Comprehensive Course class in the period Covid-19?, and (2) How are the results of online learning system in the Mandarin Education Study Program in the Intermediate Comprehensive Course class in the period of Covid-19?

1.1. Related Work

1.1.1. Learner Autonomy

In language learning, Little defines learner autonomy as sustained learning that attains long-term success [9]. Another definitions comes from Holec in JinJin Liu, He defines autonomy as capability to handle of one's own learning [1] of 5 aspects: a) determining the objectives, b)defining the contents and progressions, c)selecting methods and techniques to be used, d)monitoring the procedures of acquisition, and e)evaluating what has been acquired [1]

Learner autonomy is students' issue whose basically having great control over the materials and methods of learning [1]. It grows out of the individual's acceptance of his or her own responsibility for learning to achieve the purpose of learning process with positive attitude [10]. Therefore, in achieving the main goal of a course, a developing of positive attitudes toward learner autonomy and the necessary skills, are regarded as crucial to the success of the development of learner autonomy. Liu called learner autonomy as self directed who has lifelong process that explores four aspects (definition of self-directed learning, the learners' identification, the learning theory, and the practice on the development of self-directed learning) [1]. Building a good and comfortable environment to study, could influence the learner autonomy to be more active and a lot better especially this is happened in universities of mainland China.

1.1.2. Online Learning

Basically online learning allows flexibility of access, from anywhere and usually anytime. This allows learning to save time and space based on Cole who invest his research on how online learning deals with time consuming [11]. However, teaching materials must be designed properly by involving students and able to improve learning. According to Rosset[12], online learning has many advantages, but it must also be supported by commitment and resources, and must be done right. This means that the teaching materials in online learning are good, with a focus on learning and students with adequate supporting tools. Ring and Mathieux [11] argues that online learning must have high authenticity (students must learn in the context of a work environment), high interactivity, and high collaboration.

Many terms are used to define online learning making it difficult to develop a generic definition. Carliner defines online learning as learning material presented on a computer [13]. Khan defines online learning as an innovative approach to instructing learners who are far away and using the web as an intermediary medium [14]. Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland states, "online learning is an open and distributed learning environment that uses pedagogical tools, enabled by internet and web-based technologies, to facilitate learning and knowledge building through meaningful action and interaction."[15]. In a narrower scope, this online technology network can be seen in the use of online learning in classrooms. In the online learning environment [16] reveals that teachers have more responsibility in making designs. The materials needed by learners must be prepared before serving them to learn by learners. In addition, learners must understand about the goals (what) they are expected to have with regard to various responses to the stimuli they face. Learning will be more effective if learners can be actively involved. Morison, Ross, & Kemp state that learning can increase when learners are actively involved in the learning process[17]. It is considered very important to develop a design that involves learners actively in the learning process, besides that the learning process itself must be organized clearly and systematically. In short, the definition or definition of online learning or e-learning is a learning format that is

presented via a computer via CDROM, internet, or intranet by paying attention to the following features, 1) covering content relevant to specific learning objectives, 2) using the method learning for example examples and exercises to help learning, 3) using media elements. Learning through online (online learning) is also known as electronic learning (electronic learning), now better known as e-learning state by Smaldino, Russell, Heinich, Molenda [16].

Dabbagh, N. [15] states, there are several characteristics of students in online learning, as follows: students learning spirit will guide students to their being success, literacy of technology (apart from independent learning, the success of online learning is determined by the degree to which students understand the technology used for online learning), intrapersonal communication skills, collaborate understand and use interaction and collaboration learning. learning is carried out independently by students, and skills for independent study. Referring to Kirkman [18] independent learning is a process where students are directly involved in identifying what needs to be learned to be in control in the learning process. In independent learning, the motivational factor is very important in determining the success of the learning process.

In online learning, there are 8 competencies that can be observed and analyzed. According to Hardianto[19], there are 8 competencies that teachers must have in online learning, namely as follows: 1)mastering and updating the development of the internet, 2) mastering more basic and companion sciences, 3) creative and innovative in presenting material, 4) able to motivate students online learning, 5) ability in online learning design (teachers must be able to sort and choose learning designs that are suitable for all students), 6) ability to manage online learning systems in online learning (teachers are able to manage the systems used in online learning), 7) accuracy in the selection of online learning teaching materials, 8)ability to control the learning process (the teacher must be able to position himself as best as possible, continue to train students' instinctive traits such as socializing, empathizing, caring, working together, and so on).

In doing online learning, there are advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of online learning: 1) online learning provide varied media, 2) online learning provide up-to-date information, 3) online learning provides easy navigation, 4) online learning provide an opportunity to exchange ideas, 5) online learning make communication feel comfortable, and 6) online learning

is a low-cost activity. The costs of hardware, software, call time, and telecommunications services are nominal and decreasing. While the disadvantages of online learning are: 1) online learning it is not uncommon to provide material that is inappropriate and age-appropriate, 2) online learning have a challenge to get copyright, 3) because the information is so easy to access, 4) online learning provide unprecedented growth. it is estimated that every day thousands of new sites are added to the internet. This growth made finding information extremely difficult, 5) online learning need great support. Good technical support must be available and 6) online learning need good access to the network.

2. METHOD

This research, which is a qualitative research, was conducted in March to May 2020. The location of this research is in the Mandarin Language and Literature Education Study Program, FBS, UNESA. The object of this research is teaching and learning activities in the Intermediate Comprehensive Subject class in the Mandarin Language Education Study Program, batch 2018. Data collection techniques to be carried out in this study include: questionnaire and documentation techniques (SIAKADU and GoogleClassroom that provide a learning system for students). This questionnaire sheet was used to retrieve data from students by distributing questionnaires to students online. This online questionnaires are considered the most feasible way to explore how students meet their learner autonomy in doing online learning in period of 10 meetings.The online questionnaire data will be used also to explain the formulation of research problem number two. The second formulation of the research problem, regarding the learning outcomes will be obtained from the final grades obtained by each student as a result of their learning process online. With the two results that will be explained later in the discussion chapter, it will be seen in fact how learning is carried out online.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Learner Autonomy during Covid-19

The outline of comprehensive intermediate level states that a comprehensive intermediate (BM) course focuses on the discussion and use of vocabulary materials, grammar with various forms of themes and predefined topics and provides additional exercises in many forms of language skills such as: writing, reading,

revealing ideas or ideas and skills to interact in accordance with the ability to study foreign students in mid-level Mandarin. Using drill method, lecture, discussions, interactive questions and accompanied by exercises binding to the existing chapters, improve the language skills of the students that include 4 aspects of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing). This outline sounds perfectly well planned for classes meeting or called by offline meeting. While the reality this course outline must adapt to the situation had came since meeting 6 and in meeting 7 the class has been held in online learning.

The same as what has been studied by Zhou Jian[20] about Mandarin Language that one of the difficulties found by students is writing at once remembering Chinese characters in their daily activity especially when students meet vocabularies, sentence structure, and coherence between sentences. The same case has been studied in the level of senior high school [6] which is being solved with a game of jeopardy in doing the activity of writing vocabularies in mandarin. Comprehensive course is being applied to the students to give further chance to learn deeper Chinese.

In the 7th meeting the class was started its online learning with several choices of learning platform which is free for all users, especially college students. In comprehensive class, the lecture and students are agreed to use zoom. 72.7% students state that zoom is the most effective platform in doing online learning especially for comprehensive class. However, zoom is not the only platform they have last semester. There are Google Meet, WhatsApp group activities, and Google Classroom activities. The learner autonomy is already on their own since they have fully consideration about the benefit of one comparing to others. In doing online learning, there are some experiences students meet the differences, they are time allotment in having the learning process is more than the duration they usually have before they have online learning. In this pandemic era, mostly they spend more than 100 minutes per meeting. This number is inline with the data stated that there is better interaction relation between lecture and students. More than 35% of students agree that the interaction between students and teacher is good and it is proven by the statement that most students really enjoy studying the Chinese language because 50% of them think that the learning materials and all component of the learning process had been arranged very well which was based on students' need. However, the online learning may give another impact to all students significantly. They (50% students) spend money more

than usual budget they arrange. The reality of being loyal with zoom till the last meeting, gives problems to students that wi-fi connection is often not stable.

Furthermore, students think that the materials being provided in the whole online learning had already fulfill their expectation that 45% of them say it is just the same as what is planned in the course outline. Inline with this, 45% students say that the materials are good and also had already met the target they had arranged from the beginning. This fulfillment is supported by the percentage that around 40% of students say that the materials are good which means it is just already the inline with the theories given. Another good impact of online learning is around 40% students its fair that the materials are easy to understand and the presentation of the materials also direct the students (40% good) to understand fully the materials. Further details such as the continuous materials and quiz are being mark fair by around 40% students. The points that assignments given is already inline with the materials given and learning outcomes, are being respond good by more than 40% students. These are good responds from students which mean students found very small difficulties to the platform they use together with their friends and the most important thing is the materials are still showing its good quality at once they are easy to be learned, understood, and applied. When students found meaningless difficulties in the process of learning the materials, it shows that their need of further discussion had already met their target. Though, the questions coming from students never meet an ending they still have a lot of chance asking questions offline. This means that students are those who decide fully what they need as the principal of learner autonomy [4].

The responds given by students is in line with the fact happened in the online learning that besides the activities done through zoom, the class also has another support platform, it is WhatsApp group. The continuous process of learning is still happened between lecturer and students. The activities given in the form of personal assignment being distributed to students, then students submit it through pictures in WhatssApp. Receiving those pictures, the lecture will respond it one by one directly to the students as what is seen below in figure 1 and 2.
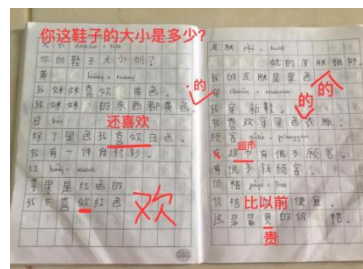
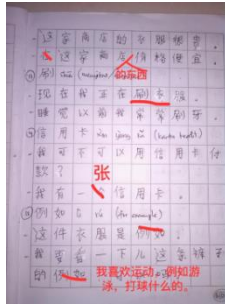**Figure 1** Student's work with lecturer's responses

Figure 2 Another student's work with lecturer's responses

The suggestion given from the lecture for one student is different from other student. Moreover, one-o-one feedback able to fulfill what students' need, that is getting indirect explanation from the answer/idea they have from the writing.

In collaborating online learning by zoom and another platform, comprehensive class also use a website as the support system in giving students another alternative doing some exercises in Chinese language; they are Busuu.com, Learnalanguage.com, Loescen.com, Memrise.com, and Zhongwenred.com. Since they are free, these five webs already provide activities including the answer and short explanation for the students especially when they are given order to complete the exercise taken from one of those 5 webs.

These good responds from students are not the only one ideas they given to this research. Students give some suggestion related to the next period of having online learning. They suggest that the class need to be divided into smaller which consist of 20 students in order to have more intensive class. Another valuable comment is the students suggest that the materials could be provided in the form of video recording. These ideas may come when students could not joint online because of technical reason, they still could follow the explanation or discussion from video. Last, in giving the assignment the lectures need to consider the situation and condition of the students. The quality and quantity of the questions is also may give credits to the fulfillment of the due date submitting the task.

The positive and suggestion toward the online learning held in the period of pandemic already could be handling easily by students and they still could show

their best quality in finishing the task and test. This condition is in line with ideas given by Dabbagh [15] some characteristics are the same at once can be seen from the responds given by students.

3.2. The Result of Online Learning during Covid-19

The online learning had showed that it goes smoothly in comprehensive class. In line with this, the score from several activities also able to tell that 80% of class member get A and the other 20% is B and C. Another fact says that 50% of students are able to raise their mark a lot more better than before after midterm and the highest score of it is 98,4. This numbers of percentage and score are significant since based on the result of questioner tells that students found no difficulties to the materials and platform they use regularly. What had been given in the zoom, WhatsApp, or additional Chinese web learning are good because they are inline with the course outline, learning target and outcomes they have decide from the beginning.

4. CONCLUSION

Students share that while doing online learning they meet their autonomy concerning to the teaching-learning activities not in the class. Zoom as the online system that the class uses is quite easy for them. Even they need longer time to have the lesson, but they satisfy with the model of interaction among students at once to the lecture. This is inline with the fact that students state all the learning process has ran very well. No difficulties in understanding the materials and running the learning platform are form of their positive responds to the online leaning. The negative sides they state is about the internet connection that give dominant obstacle among the learning process. Good suggestion are presented by students that video recording is needed especially when students could not joint the online, assignment given need to consider the quality and quantity of its content of the assignment, and the class itself need to be held in small number of students in order to have the class more intensive.

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