



CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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This chapter presents the background of the study, the statements of the problems, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the definition of key terms, assumptions, theoretical framework, and organization of the thesis.

1.1. The Background of the Study

English is an international language which plays an important role in this globalization era. Many purposes of learning English can encourage foreign language learners to master English, such as for aiding them to cope with their everyday activities like getting jobs, reading imported books in English, and even integrating themselves with the English culture. The ability to communicate in English as a foreign language is not naturally acquired skill, it is usually learned.

Learning is “acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience, or instruction.” Oddly, an educational psychologist would define learning even more succinctly as “a change in an individual caused by experience.” (Slavin, 2003, p.138).

Furthermore, learning a foreign language is a long and complex undertaking. A whole learner is affected as the learner struggles to reach beyond the confines of the first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Because of that, language learning is not a set of easy steps that can be programmed in a quick time.

In Widya Mandala Catholic University, there is an English Department where the students are prepared to become English teachers or translators that need the ability to use English well. That's why they need to master English. In the process of learning English, the students get difficulties. One of the reasons is that the process of learning at universities is completely different from the process of learning at senior high schools. The lecturers at universities don't fully take part of the students' learning process like in high schools where the teachers are fully responsible to the students' learning process. Most of the lecturers let the students study by themselves and consider that the students are mature enough to be responsible in their study. In other words, the lecturers don't directly spoon-feed their students with the materials.

Moreover, English as a foreign language is rarely used in the real situation and the students only use English in the classrooms. That means they need to take more effort to survive in their study. The materials and the

explanations given by the lecturers during the lessons are not enough to master English well. In order to learn English effectively, the students need to be aware of their study inside and outside the class including listening to the lecturers' explanation carefully, searching more materials and sources to enrich their English and so on.

Further, in order to be successful in language learning, learners need to develop their own sense of responsibility with their study by promoting autonomy. The students set their autonomy in their learning and become autonomous learners. In autonomy learning, the learners learn a foreign language independently at any pace they feel comfortable with. The learners set their autonomy in learning English in order to be successful in their study. In the process of learning, they identify their learning strategy implications of academic tasks and preferred learning styles/ strategies based on their awareness.

Additionally, learning autonomy inside the learners grows out of the individual learner's acceptance of responsibility for his or her own learning (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). This means that learning autonomy is a matter of explicit or conscious meaning: learners cannot accept responsibility for their own learning unless they have some idea of what, why, and how they are trying to learn. Autonomy inside the learners is very important, because some degree of autonomy is essential to successful

language learning. The learners don't only need to learn through lessons, but they need to learn by practice, on their own. The needs in learning will change from time to time, so that the learners should go back to their own and then they are able to study in their own. That is called an independent learning.

Moreover, the learners who are independent and responsible with their own learning are called autonomous learners. Autonomous learners are free and independent, but not isolated, because they are social figures. They strengthen their individual sense of identity. They also enhance their individual awareness of interdependence that they necessarily depend on others even as they exercise their independence.

Learners are not automatically autonomous in learning a foreign language. There are many factors affecting the students' ways of learning and also indirectly affecting their learning autonomy. Those factors are divided into two factors, internal factors which are from inside the learners like personality factors, psychological factors including internal motivation; and also external factors like social factors including rewards, role models, home support and many other which are from outside the learners. There are some other factors in learning language such as orientations to motivation which belong to external factors, because they are also from outside the

learners. The internal factors are the strongest factors affecting students' autonomy, because autonomous learners have strong self-motivation inside.

It is hoped that to be successful in learning English, English Education Study Program (EESP) students are autonomous learners because some degree of autonomy is to successful language learning. Additionally, any successful learning is an independent learning (Dickinson, 1987). EESP students as university students are hoped to have capacity for being active and independent in their learning because the lecturers who are just as facilitators in their learning process do not directly spoon-feed the students with guides and materials.

Further, the statements and theories above bring a phenomenon about autonomy in learning English which are discussed in this study. After reading the theories and finding the phenomenon about autonomy, the writer was interested in investigating EESP students' autonomy. In this case, the writer was the first researcher conducting a study of learning autonomy at English Department in Widya Mandala, because it hadn't been conducted a study about autonomy at English Department in Widya Mandala before. In her study, the writer tried to find out whether EESP students promote their autonomy in their language learning or not. That is worth it to be discussed in a research because if the students promote their autonomy, they must use self-directed learning which is important in adult

education in order to be effective learners and social beings. Self directed learning can also encourage the students to develop their own rules and leadership patterns in their own learning.

In this study, the writer analyzed whether the EESP students in Widya Mandala are autonomous in their language learning or not and also what factors affect the students' autonomy in language learning. In addition, to know whether degrees of learning autonomy are closely related to the students' learning achievement, the writer identified the correlation between students' learning autonomy and their learning achievement (Grade Point Average or GPA).

1.1. The Statements of the Problems

In line with the background of the study above, the study aims at investigating learning autonomy of English Education Study Program students in Widya Mandala. The problem statements are formulated as follows:

- 1.1.1. Are English Education Study Program students in Widya Mandala autonomous learners?
 - What is their degree of learning autonomy?
- 1.1.2. What factors affect English Education Study Program students' learning?

- 1.1.3. Is there any significant correlation between students' learning autonomy and their learning achievement?

1.2. The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems above, this study is intended to:

- 1.2.1. Find out whether English Education Study Program students in Widya Mandala are autonomous learners or not; and describe the degree of the students' learning autonomy.
- 1.2.2. Find and describe the factors that affect the EESP students' learning.
- 1.2.3. Find the correlation between students' learning autonomy and their learning achievement in learning English.

1.3. The Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study will:

1. Give some insightful information for language learners and lecturers in English Department in Widya Mandala about learning autonomy, the factors that affect the English Education Study Program students' learning.

2. Show the correlation between students' degree of learning autonomy and students' learning achievement.
3. Provide insightful information for the lecturers about the EESP students' degree of learning autonomy, so that later on the lecturers can promote autonomy more in the ways they are teaching.
4. Provide the role of autonomy in EESP students in their language learning.
5. Encourage the EESP students to promote their learning autonomy in order to be successful in language learning.

1.4. The Scope and Limitation of the Study

Realizing how broad the study is, the writer intended to limit the scope of her study as follows:

1. The discussion and data analysis of learning autonomy is in the general point of view.
2. The writer distributed the questionnaire randomly to the EESP students from academic year 2006. And then the writer distributed the questionnaire in some classrooms under the study to the students from academic year 2007, 2008 and 2009.

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3. The writer only chose eight respondents to be interviewed. Those respondents who are in the different degrees of learning autonomy are the representatives of all respondents.

1.5. The Definition of Key Terms

Before further discussion, it is necessary to define some key terms used in this study:

1. *Autonomy*

Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's learning (Holec, 1981).

2. *Learner Autonomy*

Learner autonomy is the capability, not an inborn ability, to govern and regulate one's own thoughts, feelings, and actions freely and responsibly (Gwiazda-Rzepecka, 2000).

3. *Autonomous Learners*

Autonomous learners are those who have the capacity for being active and independent in the learning process; they can identify goals, formulate their own goals, and can change goals to suit their own learning needs and interests; they are able to use learning strategies, and to monitor their own learning (Opalka & Beata).

4. *Motivation*

Motivation is a prerequisite for learning and responsibility development alike. Moreover, motivation is a key to successful learning (Weiner, 1986; Deci, 1975; Maslow, 1970).

1.6. Assumptions

1. The students' answers in the questionnaires and interviews represent the students' learning autonomy.
2. Interviews can indicate the students' consistency in their responses to the questionnaires given and give further information.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

The writer uses the theories especially those dealing with autonomy and the factors affecting the students' learning language. There are other several theories which are related to them, such as motivation, factors in autonomous learners, self directed learning, and also learning styles and strategies. Those theories will support the discussion about autonomy. They can also be used for developing points in the questionnaires and interviews. Moreover those theories are important for analyzing the data collected.

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1.8. The Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the background of the study, the statements of the problems, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, the definition of key terms, the assumptions, the theoretical framework, and the organization of the study. Chapter II presents the review of related literature, including theories and review of previous studies. Chapter III describes the research method. Chapter IV contains obtaining results of data analysis, findings, and discussion of findings. The last chapter, chapter V, deals with the summary, conclusion, and suggestions.