



Lentera

JURNAL ILMIAH KEPENDIDIKAN

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AUTONOMOUS LEARNING ON ESSAY WRITING CLASS

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How to cite (in APA Style): Sahrawi. (2021). The Implementation of Autonomous Learning on Essay Writing Class. *LENTERA: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan*, 14 (2), pp. 219-226.

Abstract: The spread of corona virus in 2020 has an impact on various sectors in Indonesia including the world of education so that the learning system is changed to online based. Essay writing class in one of the courses that must be carried out online using an autonomous learning approach. Therefore, the purposes of this study were to know the students' perception and the impact of the implementation of online autonomous learning in essay writing class. This research was conducted in quantitative and qualitative method. The participants in this study consisted of 36 second semester students of English education study program IKIP-PGRI Pontianak who were selected purposively. The data was obtained from questionnaire which was then randomly selected for online interview. The data was also enriched by document in the form of students' score. The result of the study showed that the implementation of online autonomous learning is not really significant in helping students to understand materials, organize ideas or topics, helping them to be independent learner, and improving vocabulary on essay writing class. Besides, most of the students preferred face-to-face class where the teachers could guide them directly. Some students also find it difficult to find stable network. Then, the lack of detailed explanations and many assignments from the teacher make students reluctant to join the class.

Keyword: *Autonomous learning, Essay Writing, Implementation, Online learning*

Abstrak: *Penyebaran virus corona pada tahun 2020 berdampak pada berbagai sektor di Indonesia termasuk dalam dunia pendidikan sehingga sistem pembelajaran dirubah menjadi serba online. Kelasa essay writing merupakan salah satu mata kuliah yang harus dilaksanakan secara online menggunakan pendekatan autonomous learning. Oleh karena itu, tujuan dari penelitian yaitu untuk mengetahui persepsi mahasiswa serta dampak dari penggunaan pendekatan autonomous learning dalam kelas essay writing. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam bentuk quantitative dan kualitative. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini terdiri dari 36 mahasiswa semester 2 program studi pendidikan Bahasa Inggris IKIP-PGRI Pontianak yang dipilih secara purposive. Data di kumpulkan melalui questionnaire yang kemudian dilanjutkan dengan online interview beberapa mahasiswa secara acak. Data juga diperkaya dari dokumen dalam bentuk nilai mahasiswa. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan dari online autonomous learning tidak terlalu signifikan dalam memahami materi, menyusun*

ide atau topic, menjadi pelajar yang mandiri, dan dalam meningkatkan kosakata dalam kelas essay writing. Disamping itu, sebagian besar mahasiswa lebih memilih kelas tatap muka secara langsung dimana dosen dapat membimbing secara langsung. Sebagian mahasiswa juga kesulitan dalam mencari jaringan internet yang stabil, kurangnya penjelasan dari dosen dan banyaknya tugas dari dosen membuat mahasiswa merasa enggan mengikuti perkuliahan.

Kata Kunci: *Pembelajaran Otonom, Penulisan Esai, Implementasi, Pembelajaran Online*

INTRODUCTION

The spread of corona virus 19 had a very significant impact in the world of education including in Indonesia. That is why, the teaching and learning process had to be carried out online in order to break the chain of the very dangerous spread of COVID-19. It is feared that the crowds that occur during the learning process will increase the number of patients exposed to the corona virus. With policies issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, all activities are carried out online from home and digitally based. Online learning is proses of learning where the teacher and students are not directly face to face interaction (Allen & Seaman, 2007). There are several positive impacts of online learning, namely students are more likely to be independent at home in doing assignments. The teaching and learning process is more flexible both in terms of time and the number of participants. However, there are several things about online learning that must be concerned by teacher such as the students do not have maximum access to communicate with educators and peers, they cannot collaborate with classmates directly, and they also cannot interact face-to-face in the teaching and learning process so that their social skills are disrupted. The other problem is that most students feel the unstable network. The network that is not evenly distributed in every area makes students have to look for a wifi place or buy internet quota which is relatively expensive.

Essay writing class is one of the courses that must be conducted online where students can develop their writing skills. Writing is an activity of expressing ideas or information to others in written form. According to Murcia & Elite (2000), writing is language skills that can be used for communication. The other definition of writing delivered by Langan (2010), he says that writing is behavioral process to produce message that conveyed in the written form. Writing is an activity of compiling, developing, and communicating knowledge or ideas to others. Good writing skills will provide detailed and comprehensive information. The reader will easily understood and get the information they are looking for. In order to develop essay writing skill, one must often do exercises or practice.

Besides, there are several aspects that must be considered in producing good essay writing such as the content of the reading that is conveyed to the reader, the composition of the sentences made and the choice of words used to keep it coherent, as well as the grammar of the sentences. In other words, the writer must determine in advance the type of writing to be made, who the intended reader is, and the type

of information to be conveyed in order to arouse the curiosity of the reader. Essay writing class is carried out as a place for students to develop their ability to write essays. Essays writing is one of the most important skills possessed and developed by students. Therefore, students must use the right way in order to improve writing skills effectively. In this research, essay writing class was conducted using online based where the teacher implement autonomous learning approach in order to help students improve their writing skills. The uses of autonomous learning can help students study independently because they explore their abilities, they can determine their own way of learning, they can find the appropriate learning methods in achieving or understanding the material being discussed. Students can express their ideas in written form using a way that suits to their wishes which can increase their knowledge and experience when they write several topics in essay writing class.

Autonomous learning can be implemented inside and outside the classroom where the students learn and act independently. Learner autonomy is independent teaching learning that keep students' control to implement their knowledge and experiences, they take notes and then evaluate their own faults themselves (Ene, 2006). The other definition stated by Merawati (2016) that autonomous learners are people who can learn independently in making decision they want to learn. In addition, the teaching and learning process also does not depend on the teacher's policies. The teaching and learning system that is commonly used is teacher-centered where students are still more likely to depend on the teacher in the classroom. The teacher also provides knowledge that will be shared in the classroom where students only receive all the information presented. It makesthe studens become passive. The students tend to lack initiative so that the class becomes boring. Online autonomous learning transforms all of the above systems into fully independent, online, and digital-based systems. Autonomous learning is one approach that changes the direction of learning to become student-centered where all activities are focused on students. In the implementation of autonomous learning, the teacher is not the center of the activities during learning. However, the learners become the center of these activities so they have to work independently. Students carry out learning as a whole independently, they can find out the abilities that can be developed and applied in learning, students can also determine the direction of the learning that is followed.

Students organize their own class, carry out activities in learning according to their abilities, students can also evaluate the process they are doing, and determine the goals of the learning they are doing. Zulaihah and Harida (2017) state that the students will find out their learning need, goal of learning, appropriate learning way, monitor and evaluate learning progress. The use of autonomous learning can motivate and assist students in doing tasks more effectively. Autonomous learning can be implemented by controlling the learning situation by setting learning objectives, compiling the material to be studied, choosing the

methods and techniques to be used, and monitoring the learning process that occurs. Students carry out all activities independently which are also influenced by the background of students in writing essays. The application of autonomous learning in essay writing class provides opportunities for students to develop their own abilities independently.

Students are aware of the purpose of learning and the material they learn in the implementation of autonomous learning. Learners can identify their way of learning that is appropriate and in accordance with their wishes or learning styles. Learners are directly involved in choosing the objectives offered. In addition, students can also modify and adapt the objectives, content, and assignments given using their initiative. In other words, learning using an autonomous learning approach in essay writing class is a way in which students are aware of their essay writing skills and understanding the material discussed. The students can use the right strategy in carrying out the essay writing class to know the surrounding environment that can support the learning optimally. The application of autonomous learning also provides opportunities for students to exercise control over the activities carried out as well as the responsibility to adjust their abilities.

The implementation of the autonomous learning approach will give more specific impact in essay writing class where students are expected to be able to transfer knowledge in written form independently. In addition, students also have the responsibility to improve the final results of the essay writing tasks given to them and determine the way of learning that suits them. They can determine a strong desire and awareness in participating in essay writing class based on learning objectives. They can even go outside the classroom to connect the content of the material discussion with the world outside the classroom. In other words, students become teachers as well as researchers because they can explore knowledge and choose their own goals. They can determine the content of various options, modify and adapt various materials, create predefined materials, and make connections among them. The process of autonomous learning is independently conceptualized where students can still be in control when they express their knowledge and experiences, they can also record and evaluate the failures they face in learning. It is in line with definition of Dang (2012) that there are three categories of learners' autonomy these are, initiating, monitoring, and evaluating. It means that the implementation of autonomous learning makes students more active than teachers.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to determine the perceptions and impacts for students of the implementation of autonomous learning in essay writing class which are carried out online. There are some applications used in the teaching and learning process they are WhatsApp Group, Zoom, Google Meet and Google Classroom. In applying the autonomous learning approach, students and teachers can share written texts, voices notes, and videos using the application. The data in this study were collected using

a questionnaire that was distributed online. Questionnaire is used to identify or determine opinions, belief, attitudes, behaviors, or characteristics of participants (Creswell, 2008). Then, the questionnaire data supported by interviewing several students which is conducted online. According to Creswell (2008) interview happens when the researcher asks to participants and records their answer. The data is also enriched by using documentation in the form of student scores. In getting the students' score, the teacher gives writing tests at the beginning and at the end of the teaching learning process.

The points explored in this research are the implementation of online learning, the material discussed in the classroom, and the application of autonomous learning on essay writing class. This information can be used as a basis for presenting the right material and finding gaps that occur in the process of teaching and learning. This research was carried out in quantitative and qualitative forms with 36 participants in the second semester of the English Education Study Program, IKIP-PGRI Pontianak.

DISCUSSION

The teacher has responsibility to increase students' motivation during the teaching and learning. That is why, the implementation of online autonomous learning is expected to help students become more independent in doing tasks with high motivation. The findings of the study showed that online autonomous learning approach is the learner-centered system where the students carry out learning activities independently in formulating ideas, determining the topic of the material discussed, choosing or making paragraphs or sentences based on the learning objectives using online platforms. Students can discuss with friends or teachers, analyze the material in the class, rewrite based on the students' understanding, and edit interesting topics to produce good essays writing. The results also show that students have more flexible time in carrying out online learning. Online learning also makes them able to communicate with each other even though they do not meet face to face directly.

Besides, there are some contrast findings of the study that need to be considered before implementing online autonomous learning namely some students found it difficult in conducting online learning. They do not understand well about the implementation of autonomous learning. They can not interact with their peers during the process of teaching learning maximally. They want to have face to face learning, they want a guide of the teacher directly. It is in line with the statement of (Churiyah, Sholikhan, Filianti, & Sakdiyyah, 2020) that Students can not study effectively without the help of teacher, they can not solve problems. In other words, students' ability to work independently or in online autonomous learning is still weak. This research finding is supported by Cirocki, Anam, and Retnaningdyah (2019) say that learners are not ready to use autonomous learning. The results of

study state that it is different from the theory that says autonomous learning can be implemented in all conditions (Alonazi, 2017).

The questionnaire of the research:

Statements	Responses				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. The teacher facilitates me in learning to solve difficulties and achieve learning goals	9 %	19 %	37 %	21 %	14 %
2. I have high motivation when studying online	12%	15 %	32 %	28 %	13 %
3. I plan my lessons, choose my learning objective, and decide for myself the appropriate learning style	4 %	9 %	39 %	31 %	17 %
4. I can collaborate with classmates online	17 %	26 %	25 %	18 %	14 %
5. I evaluate the learning that has been done independently	18 %	28 %	20 %	19 %	15 %
6. I'm more confident because my abilities and initiative keep growing	14 %	16 %	41 %	15 %	14 %
7. The use of online autonomous learning is more flexible	7 %	31 %	17 %	35 %	10 %
8. I like to study outside the classroom without the guidance of a teacher	14 %	28 %	28 %	18 %	12 %
9. I have no problems in online learning	18 %	36 %	19 %	16 %	11 %
10. I can study independently outside of class	14 %	24 %	34 %	18 %	10 %

The results of the analysis also showed that the data from the students' scores of tests given twice. The tests are given before and after the implementation of online autonomous learning approach. The first test is given to know the ability of the students before the implementation of autonomous learning in the essay writing class, while the final test is given to determine the writing ability of students after the implementation of the online autonomous learning approach. The results of the essay writing test given indicate that the impact of online autonomous learning is not really significant on students' writing skills.

CONCLUSION

Essay writing is one of the skills that must be developed by students in order to convey ideas, share information, and communicate smoothly and effectively with others in written form. The ability to write essays will be easy to be developed if it is supported by the right facilities, human resources, and methods or approaches used in the class. In addition, the motivation and desire to learn from students must also be maintained so that they can participate in learning optimally. The implementation of online autonomous learning approach is one way that can be used by a teacher in achieving the objectives of learning effectively.

There are several findings of this research they are the implementation of online autonomous learning approach is not really significant on the essay writing skills of students. It help them become active and independent students. The teaching and learning process can be conducted every where and anywhere. The number of groups or participants in the implementation of learning can be more flexible. However, there are some contrasting findings that need to be considered for a teacher before carrying out online autonomous learning, namely most students prefer face to face learning because they still need direct guidance of the teacher. They need the teacher as information providers, facilitators, and managers in teaching learning activities to share knowledge. It is in line with Xiao, *et al* (2005) that the teacher as facilitator has to make sure the learning resources.

Besides, the understanding of the autonomous learning approach is still not fully understood by the students, the number of assignments given by teacher is more than offline learning, and the explanation of the learning material is not too detailed. Some students thought that distance learning is learning that occurs where students do not attend school so students follow the class from their home or hometown. It is supported by (Sadeghi, 2019) that distance learning or online learning is the learning process where the students do not come to the school. However, the real condition of readiness for the implementation of online autonomous learning did not run well because the internet is not stable in their places. The facilities used by students did not support the online autonomous learning. In short, the students are not ready to use online autonomous learning in essay writing class. In other words, the implementation of online autonomous learning has different concepts and views compared to offline or face-to-face learning.

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