
Language Learning and Learner Psychology: Building Autonomy in Multilingual Culture

Ramadhan Mahendra* and Sulis Triyono

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

*ramadhan.mahendra@gmail.com

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Abstract-The notion of autonomous learning used in second language learning has become a focal point of scholars in recent years. However, building an autonomy in specific language learners might be different in the view of psychology within multilingual culture which raised interesting issues. However, learners' psychology determines about how far they must learn the second language. In addition, the multilingual culture has important role as variable but in an abstract way. It appears that in some languages learners who had multilingual culture backgrounds have different situation in comprehending the English, which also affect in choosing suitable learning strategies to comprehend by their own. Therefore, this research addresses to find out the interrelation in case of building learner autonomy on English as second language learning in the aspect of multilingual culture in Indonesia. Through library research, the author found the correlation between learners' psychological condition such as interest, needs and motivation has some impact on how successful in their own language learning within the multilingual culture as it background. Therefore, building autonomy in second language learning must be aware of multilingual and social culture in society to reap a good result.

Keywords: Autonomy; building autonomy; multilingual culture; psychology; second language learning

I. INTRODUCTION

In the second language learning, there a lot of methods and strategies can be used by language learners. A search of the literature revealed that the decision making is being concern with the choosing the suitable learning methods and strategy lays within the language learner itself. Thus involvement will lead to more effective learning, more motivated and purposefully learning (Dickinson, 1995; Little & Smith, 2008). The movement in choose and decide regarding the language learning process can be said as autonomy. However, the justification about the autonomy in learning still manifold. In general, the term of autonomy come from the ability of one to manage and maintain their self to learn about any knowledge, such in this case is second or foreign language. In other words, the autonomy

in language learning can be defined as the ability to take full responsibility in the learning process (Holec, 1996; Benson 2007).

Learning a second language is not simple and short task. It comes from a lot of sequences, regards to the theory second language acquisition and second language learning by Krashen and Terrell (1983). In the perspective of acquisition, the term of second language acquisition comes from the process it acquired in which slightly different process from the first language acquisition process. Term of universal grammar may apply as instrument of second language learning. Second language learner has exposed with their first language and can processed the universal grammar as tool to learn and acquire the second language.

The terms of second language learning

and second language acquisition is relatable, but these has different term. Language learning refers to the formal learning of language, or how language is taught by teacher or instructor in classroom. Which is makes it become more nurture, because it has specific instruction to do. On the other hand, language acquisition means that it is acquired not in formal condition or learning. As seen in many literatures, the key terms between language acquisition and language learning become so distinctive. The important distinction made by [Stephen Krashen \(1981\)](#) which is consists five points of hypotheses. They are, the language acquisition and learning hypothesis, the monitor or editor hypothesis, natural order hypothesis, input hypothesis, and affective filters hypothesis. In order to give better understanding, in this research also discuss thus theories about the second language acquisition and second language learning which is proposed by Stephen Krashen.

In addition, there are several factors also plays a role as reason in learning the second language. A number of researchers have shown that language learner psychological condition also affects in choosing specific learning style and strategies between different individuals, it also shows that specific learning style are employed by language learner in regards of individual needs and the outcomes afterwards ([Benson, 2007](#); [Murray, Gao & Lamb, 2011](#); [Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013](#)). So far, however, there has been little discussion about the interrelation among the second language learning and how the learner autonomy can be built within the multilingual culture in bold. Regarding with above reason, the author hope that this kind of research topics can fill the paucity of related issues.

II. METHODS

This research is a library research, in which the the author collected, read, and noted the data and evidence found from previous research related with the research topic. Furthermore, the author tried to discuss and figure the relation and difference among the previous research to find some gap among them. Moreover, in the end of the discussion, conclusion is drawn based on the findings of topic discussion.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Second Language Learning Strategies

Regarding with the second language

learning strategies, as in general could takes up wide area of study. Therefore, in this research will represent them as an overview of all topic discussion about the language learning strategies which works as both in second language learning and also foreign language learning. To begin the discussion, learning strategies in general plays crucial roles on learners' understanding on information and solving problems in every subjects of learning. While not being aware with proper use of specific learning strategies may lead to learners' failure. There are believes that language learning strategies are denoting to conscious and semi-conscious thoughts and learner's behaviors which it is used to advance and comprehend their knowledge and the target language understanding ([Hosenfeld et. al., 1992](#); [Oxford, 1993](#); [Horwitz, 2001](#); [Norton & Toohey, 2001](#)).

Furthermore, strategies in language learning can be classified into different type of variables which every scholar, linguist and researcher has their own categories. If they are combined and put it in together, they are cognitive, meta-cognitive, mnemonic or related with memory, compensatory, affective and social-affective strategy. In direct classification, thus strategies can be described under the language learning strategies. From another literature, language learning strategies are classified into two categories based on the usage, they are direct and indirect categories. In the direct classification of language learning strategies are closely related to the use of language, they are involving of memory, cognitive and compensatory strategies. While on the indirect classification of language learning strategies are meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategies ([Oxford, 2011](#)).

As seen in details description, first is the cognitive strategy. It relates with the mental process in language learning, such as helping the language learners to select the relevant information and rejection of irrelevant one. In other word, the cognitive strategies are relating with recognizing, comprehending, organizing materials, summarizing, repeating, translating target language into first language, applying formulas and patterns, problem-solving and interacting in the target language. Second is meta-cognitive strategy. Which is strategy that involves in thinking about the mental process, in which engaged directly in the language learning process. Moreover, it has functions to controls and regulates the learning, plans and decides how to learn effectively, monitors and

then evaluates the whole learning progress. Third is the mnemonic or memory strategy, which is related with the learner's mind in storing, memorizing, and retrieve information. It is involved in representing sounds and images, semantic mapping and grouping every language exposure. Then it is about the compensatory strategy. Which has function as to continue the communication despite the gap of learners' linguistic knowledge; in other words, it helps the language learner to make up the missing knowledge by adjusting the message, combining words to words or switching to the mother tongue. Then the fourth is the affective strategy. It is involved with learners' personal or individual condition such as emotional, motivational, attitudinal, and personal characteristic. Last is the social strategy. Which is deals with the social phenomena, it is involved in learner's social interaction with the use of the target language to improve their communicating ability, cooperating with peers in group discussion and also emerging both social and cultural understanding (Halliday, 1978).

In summary, the uses of language learning strategies are to carry the language learners achieve the goals. Which the different learners have their own condition and desire to choose the most suitable language learning based on the needs. However, using not only one strategy or combination of some learning strategies also possible both in learning and comprehending the target language.

Building and Fostering Autonomy in Second Language Learning

The term of autonomy has a meaning as self-government condition, which may originally deliver from the fields of politics and moral philosophy. While in the fields of learning, the autonomy has slippery term because it can be interpreted as self-instruction and independent learning. It can be defined as the ability to act and make decisions without being controlled by anyone else (Hornby, 2012). Which is mean that, learners can decide about what action they will and should do to learn according to what they want, by having the power or capability to choose or make their own decision or rules would make learners become confident with. In other literature, the terms of autonomous in language learning can be defined as the condition, ability or capabilities to take charge their own learning (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991; Dam, 2011). Letter then, it is also can be said as the multidimensional concept. Through its

meaning vary and it has been discussed from another scholar's perspective (Benson, 2007; Ashurova & Ssali, 2015). The variety of definition comes from combination between different perspectives and relation with specific topic discussions.

In discussion about the terms of autonomous learning and independent learning, sometimes it may or must not be separated. The man reason is strongly related to each other and plays a role which is very important in the world of learning act. Terms of independent language learning can be said as the way of optimizing or extending the learner choice, by focusing on the needs of individual learners and the choice of decision-making to learners in learning every material. It is may showed up as the term of learner centered which views learners as individuals with needs and rights, who can develop and exercise responsibility for their learning. The rest, independent learners are expected to develop the ability to engage with, interact with, and derive benefit from learning environments which are not directly mediated by teacher or instructor. From above description, the independent language learning can be refers and also related to a context or setting for language learning. Which are the language learners can freely develop skills in learning or comprehending second or foreign language (Wright, 2005; Voller, 2014).

From another literature relate with this research, the relationship between the independence and autonomy in learning can be said that it is not unsettled. There are arguments that the learner autonomy emphasis the inter-independence over independence in learning. In other words, the autonomy in learning can come over within learner independency while learning (Little, 1991). Although there also argument that associates the independence is bound by the active responsibility and learner autonomy can be impartial (Dickinson, 1995; Dam, 2011; Najeeb, 2013). Furthermore, there are suggestions towards the independence in language learning or autonomous language learning. In one side it is concerned with the language learning as essentially an independent process. The other one is concerned with the ways to organize the learning, which has assumption that it can be done independently by learners with some control by the teacher or instructor (Lamb, 2008).

Building and developing the autonomy require time and efforts, it explicitly implies on lifelong language learning process. It has been

found that, being autonomous in learning is meant to be capable to control self in way of learning (Benson, 2007, Nakata, 2014). Therefore, second language learners definitely involved and enrolled into evolution of a learner agency. Moreover, in some previous research also shown that building autonomy in second language cannot be separated with the choosing right strategy to improve its effectiveness. By selecting different approach and learning styles had significant effect on second language learners also assisted with teacher and even educational technology (Yagcicoglu, 2015).

The term of fostering the autonomy in second language learning, means that thus second language learners should be able to decide the way they shall learning the language which basically it can be depended from their needs. Therefore, they should be able decide the proper way to learn and comprehend the second language by their own. In other words, fostering the autonomy in learning can also be defined as a task of learner become more independent in learning. However, by learning independently, learners should be able to have full responsibility in control, evaluates and monitor their very own process. Furthermore, the autonomous languages learners also have a capacity in determining their specific learning goals and also selecting desired or appropriate both in learning method and learning technique (Little, 2007; Ersanlı, 2015).

In the other literature, the fostering autonomy in language learning is about facilitating learning rather than focus on producing the learning itself. It becomes two points of view in defining the conditions that should be fulfilled by the language learner in fostering the autonomy. The first point is the learners; the language learners must ensure ability or capability to organize or responsible of their own learning. In other words, they must know how to make the decision which must be involved. Another point is that the structure of learning, in which has a function as control over their language learning. It may be developed by learners along with the learning progress, which are the learners has the possibility of exercising their ability to take care all of it completely by their own. In other words, that the fostering autonomy can be in the forms of indirect teaching from teacher or instructor. While in the autonomy of language learning, terms of fostering are being used rather than teaching the autonomy, which is the autonomy being possibly occur inside from the

learner itself.

In the end, the successful of autonomy in second language learning also comes on the good learning strategy. It includes the use or frequency and learner's aptitude towards the target language, it is ongoing development by language learners of a repertoire of suitable learning activities, and ongoing evaluation of their learning process. Moreover, it can also achieved by a combination of teacher or instructor, peer and self-assessment as support. In addition, the use of learning posters and learner logbooks could play as the central supporting role in three ways: they help learners to capture a lot of content in language learning, provide supports to the development of language skills, and provide focus for assessment (Little, 2007; Najeeb, 2013). In other words, those language learners must be aware of and understand about their own learning styles. Which is it will be work as their main advantages. Besides, the learner's adaptation vigor to be more autonomous in the way of learning second language is also important. As they gain confidence they will be more capable to monitor their own learning, which in turn, it will make them more confident and also giving them strong sense of how to achieve the goals effectively.

The Individual and Psychological Condition Difference

Discussion about the learner autonomy has moved beyond the literature, it can be associated with the other important concept of fields. Thus are includes within language learning strategies and self-regulation, motivational learning, differences on each individual language learners and the theories of sociocultural, and also the development from the teachers. There is several research that there are some indications that the focus of learner autonomy is implicitly influenced by the individual differences between language learners by the matters of sociocultural (Skehan, 1991; Robinson 1997; Dörnyei, 2009, 2014; Nakata, 2014). However, there is a vibrant conceptual relationship among the autonomy and difference in every individual. That the notion are represents in responding to the facts that individual learners are different from each other, and also may develops egoistic or very individuality character of learners, it might over from the different learning processes. The discussion about the individual differences, it can be come from the inner self of learner or the outer which embed with the learners. Thus have been relatively

slight associations concerning the two areas of research, psychological and also the variables in social approach may represent as ages, affective, aptitude, cognitive style, personality, gender, ethnicity, social class and setting for learning.

Begin with the learner personality, it also related with the term of behavioral characteristics. The theory about learner personality assumes that language learners are different; it means that individuals are unique. They characterized by unique and unchangeable pattern of their own behaviors, moods or temperaments. However, the personality has been studied in a variety of different ways besides on its original form and also it has views as pertaining to different forms of information processing styles or learning styles (Sharp, 2009). In personality discussion, there also exist terms of extroversion and introversion, which has effect in language learning or applying specific learning methods. The correlation both personality types are varying, which could have negative and positive impact (Grolnick and Ryan, 1987; Eysenck, 1996). The extroversion could show the successful of the second language learning in form of communicative, while the introversion found no bond. However, as in previous research shows that in the meter of learning habit, the introversion carried out the good learning habits, although it also remains some contradiction (Kiany, 1998; Sanches-Marín, et al, 2001).

Then, discussing about the language aptitude it appears to definition of individual ability in learning second or foreign language (Carroll & Sapon, 1959). However, some of individual has lacks or disability in leaning the second or foreign language. It happens as matter of cognitive process in understanding and relates the language exposure and knowledge (Dörnyei, 2003; Wen, 2012). In terms of pedagogy application, the language aptitude must be carefully matching the language learners' condition with the proper or specific learning instruction. Therefore, it may enable learners to learn the target languages more efficient (Erlam, 2005).

The notion of learning motivation is existing in many subjects. In language learning, the learning motivation and its role in the process of both second language acquisition and learning become the most salient topic discussion among scholars. The learning motivation could be as the reflection of personal interest in learning to another culture

or people (Gardner, 1985). Thus leads to the concept that could represent individuals' ideas of describing about themselves in specific. In other words, it may represent the self-identity (Winke, 2007). After all, the learning interest could be seen as the most basic reason of learning and comprehending the ability of second language.

In the end, the psychological condition of learners may different to each other. It represents their true personality in learning language, which has impact in choosing the suitable learning methods. Then, it also may represent their ability to learning the language based their cognitive aspects. Therefore, the learning motivation which is covers up the two other aspects in psychological condition of learners in acquiring or learning the second language which is cannot be separated from the second language learning.

However, the other background such socio-cultural might be a frame that has been set up above it all. Despite the psychological differences among the second language learners, the multilingual background also has another role in affecting of learner autonomy in second language learning. The concept of second language learning not only focused as a knowledge but also how it can be implemented in real life, therefore the second language must also be acquired by the language learners.

Context of Multilingual Culture

For many years, the concept of multilingual culture become phenomenon. Both multilingualism and multiculturalism are present as parts of society diversity. In case of second language learning and second language acquisition, the multilingual culture cannot be separated as it is become parts of linguistics framework. Several research investigating the multilingualism culture found out that, it became a factor which is represent as social condition in society such as on Panjabi cases by Rampton (1991) conducted in England. The research reveals that social matters play significant role in development of English on second language learners, on the research noted that ages, language selection, and learners' backgrounds become important factors not only for second language learners but also society in communicational purposes where the research conducted. In addition, educational curriculum also has another impact in English as second language learning in Saudi Arabia. On a research conduct by Althaqafi (2017) shows that the traditional culture of education become more challenging factors for both second

language learners and their teachers. Still, the research also shows that the multilingual background and social religion culture both language learners and language teachers also shown as another important factor.

Contrary, in European Union the multilingual culture became serious matter and it end up become language policy as it is resolution thus lies on the European Council 2007. It has been reported in several research about realization of this policy leads to the equality of language learning (Vez, 2008; Boeckmann, 2012). As for example, the minor society must be able to adequate with the major society in language competence and vice versa, not only in passive but also in active conversation. Moreover, the society must overcome to plurilingualism or have a capacity to use more than one language in social communication with different settings level of command (Beacco, 2005; Stratilaki, 2012).

Afterwards, in Indonesia the social condition in society refers to social economy aspect which is impact to purposes of how important English being learnt. According to previous research about sociolinguistics and cross-related with this issue it has been noted that English as second language just being seen as knowledge by the lower economy class of people, wether the upper class tends to view English not only matters as knowledge but also can be part of their lives as practical knowledge to communicate (Sudarma & Yadnya, 2017). Moreover, educational curriculum and language policy also has the same impact towards the development of English being second language in Indonesia. It can be seen as the school curriculum applied in Indonesia, English meant to be important subject on formal school starting on junior high school level. Despite, in private school there also Arabic that being taught even on early childhood which has relation with the religion culture most of Indonesian. Nowadays English as second language in Indonesia has been made up only as knowledge and not competence is not a fault, referring to thus reasons.

IV. CONCLUSION

The current research found that, second language learning and second language acquisition cannot be separated even they have different terms. Before a specific second language being mastered, there are several steps that language learner must go through. Concern with successful second language learning, there are also several approaches that

must be responsibly taken. In concern with that matter, second language learners cannot hang only on teacher at the school. They must have huge efforts and full of responsibility to what they want to achieve as second language learners. Despite one language learner has different reasons, both from inside such as this psychological issue and also from outside or their learning environment.

From some cases, multilingual culture has become yet abstract but is also a frame in second language learning. From previous section it has been pointed out that social condition has both bad and good influence towards the mindset of second language learners. Being autonomous in learning language also cannot be separated with learning environment. Good environment brought out some exposure which can help second language learners not only in base of language knowledge but also its practical, otherwise bad environment has nothing to help second language learners to overcome. Although building autonomy in language learning is important, there must be adapted both from it purposes and mind set of the society. It is reasonable to assume that in building autonomy on language learning is long-term process such in multilingual and multi-cultural society like in Indonesia. Furthermore, the author aware that in this research there are deficiencies. However, research on similar topics are needed to complete and find any better suggestion yet solution in the future. As the results, the learner autonomy in second language learning becomes more eligible topics for further research. By combining with another discussion, interrelation aspects and point of view, there will be new findings.

The author understand that this research still has some lacks at some points of discussion, whether it is not fairly clear in description and the provision of latest data. There are some reliable factors that embed in language learners. They could be in form of inner factors such as psychological condition and the outer factors such as sociocultural background. Therefore, the author may suggest either building or develop and fostering the autonomy in second language must concern about the existing individual differences amongst language learners and take a close look at their multilingual culture diversity as important perspective. Based on above discussion, the psychological factor can appear as learners' personality, language aptitude and

motivation.

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