Implementing Nunan's Autonomous Language Learning Model (Nallm) To EFL Students of Widyatama University

Hendar, English Department, Widyatama University, h.hendar@widyatama.ac.id

Abstract

In Indonesia, the efforts to have better outcome in language teaching have been carried out through years starting from the implementation of audio-lingual method to communicative approach, and from grammar to language function orientations; on the other hand, students have studied English for at least 9 years from the third grade of elementary school to the second years of higher education. yet the results still seem unsatisfactory as they are not able to communicate in English well. Some linguists think that language is too complex and varied for students to master if they are only limited by learning time in a classroom. Therefore, in this information and technology era, language teachers need to try to implement the way of teaching - learner autonomy - especially in higher education due to the fact that all language teachers actually have the same wish in that they want their students to become autonomous learners who have ability to take responsibility for their own learning. The autonomous learning is seen as the result of students' own self-initiated interaction with the world and who takes a (pro-) active role in the learning process, generating ideas and availing themselves of learning opportunities, rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher. In fact, it is definitely not an easy matter as the language teacher should make their students have ability to set learning goals, monitor the learning process, and carry out self-evaluation, besides attitude to self-directed learning is frequently conditioned by educational culture in which students have studied or are studying. This paper tries to elaborate on 1) the implementation of Nunan's Autonomous Language Learning Model (NALLM) to the students of Widyatama University taking Academic English, 2) some difficulties or barriers the teachers and the academic English students have in implementing autonomous language learning system, and 3) pedagogical implication of those two for setting better teaching learning process .

Keywords: autonomous learners, learning strategies, self-evaluation, self-directed learning

Introduction

In facing up the challenges in globalization and information technology, a great demand of paradigm shift in education is such an inevitable matter that how education should be responsive to the trends and challenges of globalization has become a major concern in policy making this year. Brown and Lauder (2006) state that some ongoing examples and common evidence in globalization in education are web-based learning; use of internet in learning and research; international visit/immersion programs; international exchange programs; international partnership in teaching and learning at the group, class and individual levels; interaction and sharing through video-conferencing across the countries, communities, institutions and individuals.

In a line with the advance of information and technology, in the context of language learning, some changes in language teaching methodology have inevitably occurred through the years starting from audio-lingual methodology which is based on the behaviorist model of learning by using the Stimulus-Response Reinforcement model attempting through a continuous process of such positive reinforcement, to engender good habits in language learners, Total Physical Response (TRP), Silent Way, Community Language Learning , The Natural Approach, Suggestopedia to the communicative approach or Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which emphasizes on the significance of language functions rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary as cited by Harmer (200: 278-84) and from teacher-centered approach in which a language teacher plays very dominant role in teaching-learning process in the class to student-centered approach in which the teacher plays the least dominant role in the class. In other words, in teaching learning process a teacher will give a big or dominant portion to the students in order that they become more active than the teacher.

Some changes in language methods or approaches as explained above seem to be natural to have better outcomes of teaching learning process. However, some language teaching experts still think that in terms of student-centered approach, even though the language learners have dominant role in

teaching and learning in the class, they still do not obtain maximal results as their language learning is only limited to time and space in other words, they learn a language limited only in the classroom. Harmer (2002:335) elaborates that language is too complex and varied for there to be enough time for students to learn all they need to in a classroom. Nunan (1988:3) also says that not everything can be taught in class, but even if it could a teacher will not always be around if and when students wish to use the language in real life. Therefore, due to the limit of classroom time and passivity, the real enemy of true learning, the students need to develop their own learning strategies so that as far as possible they have to be encouraged to become autonomous learners in language learning.

Literature Review

Autonomous Learner

Autonomous learner or learner autonomy is defined in various terms by many researchers, sometimes with conflicting ideologies (Oxford, 2003); therefore, it is difficult to arrive at a single definition of the terms. Holec (1981:1), for example, defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" which is considered by some as "more effective than other approaching to learning" ; meanwhile, Dickinson (1995) explains that autonomous learning is known to not only allow learners to cater the learning content and speed to their own needs but also to motivate learning, and thus to lead them to greater language learning.

Similar to the explanation above, Benson (2001) puts forward that autonomous learning is firstly a problematic term because it is widely confused with self-instruction, The rapidly expanding literature has debated, for example, whether learner autonomy should be thought of as capacity or behavior; whether it is characterized by learner responsibility or learner control; whether it is psychological implications; and whether the development of learner autonomy depends on a complementary teacher autonomy. According to Little (1991), there is, nevertheless, a broad agreement that autonomous learners understand the purpose of their learning program, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in setting of learning goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness. He further explains that there is a consensus that the practice of learner autonomy requires insight, a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and readiness to be proactive in self-management and in interaction with others. Autonomous learner is as a matter of fact based on the idea that if students are involved in decision making process regarding their own language competence, they are likely to be more enthusiastic about learning and learning can be more focused and purposeful for them. Additionally, autonomy can be seen as part of an individual process where teacher is mere observer or only a classroom guide, but it affects much more: It also involves raising students' awareness of their responsibility as language learners as well as knowing themselves and understand their goals and their work inside and outside the classroom.

The Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

Ellis and Sinclair (1989:2) state that there are three reasons for helping learners take on more responsibility for their own learning. Those are: 1) Learning can be more effective when learners take control of their own learning because they learn what they want to learn; 2) Learners who are responsible for their own learning can carry on learning outside the classroom; and 3) Learners who know about learning can transfer their learning strategies to other subjects.

Coinciding with Breen and Mann's study as quoted by Benson (2001:84)), he presents the following characteristics of autonomous learners:
1. They are able to see the relationship to what is to be learned, to how they will learn and to the resources available as one in which they are in charge or in control;
2. They are in authentic relationship to the language they are learning and have a genuine desire to learn that particular language;
3. They have a robust sense of self that is unlikely to be undermined by any actual or assumed negative assessments of themselves or their work;

4. They are able to step back from what they are doing and reflect upon it in order to make decisions about what they next need to do and experience;
5. They are alert to change and able to change in an adaptable, resourceful and opportunistic way;
6. They have a capacity to learn that is independent of the educational processes in which they are engaged;
7. They are able to make sense of the environment they find themselves in strategically;
8. They are able to negotiate between the strategic meeting of their own needs and responding to the needs and desires of other group members.

The last description is connected with the Good Language Learner research, published by Naiman et al. in 1978 and cited in Weden (1991:121). Interestingly enough, while this research was carried out to determine the characteristics of successful language learners, all or almost all of the aspects it discovered seem to be closely related to the issue of autonomy. Here is a brief overview of the findings as adapted from Weden dealing with good language learners:

1. They find a style of learning that suits them (*i.e. adapt learning situations to their personal needs and try to get something out of every situation*)
2. They are actively involved in the learning process (*i.e. plan other activities outside class to get better practice, try to cope with their problems*)
3. They try to figure out how the language works (*i.e. devise techniques to improve their pronunciation etc.*)
4. They know that language is used to communicate (*i.e. have good techniques to practice communication and look for opportunities to do so*)
5. They are like good detectives (*i.e. look for clues, make guesses, ask questions and ask for corrections*)
6. They learn to think in the target language
7. They realize that language learning is not easy and learn to overcome their feelings of frustration, lack of confidence.

Besides, becoming autonomous learners means that they have to be independent, highly motivated and self-directed learners and along with the teacher, they have to control their own learning process.

Nunan's Autonomous Language Learning Model (NALLM)

Since teacher's role is merely to help learners take on more responsibility for their own learning and to play the least dominant role inside and outside of the class, In implementing autonomous language learning model, the learners are introduced to the following nine steps to language autonomy in brief introduced by Nunan (2003:193).

Making instructional goals clear to learners

To make learners be actively involved in teaching learning process, a teacher has to make his or her specific instructional goals clear to learners. For example, one of the stated goals in a curriculum is to make comparisons such as *Which do you prefer, tea or coffee?* or make plans such as *We're going to visit our grandmother for our vocation next month.* Next, the teacher gives the language skill review's card learners have practiced, the learners have to carry out a self-checking exercise as follows:

Review the language skills you practiced in this unit. Check (V) your answer.

CAN YOU?
Make comparison?   [   ] yes   [   ] a little   [   ] not yet
Find or give an example:……………………….
Make plans?   [   ] yes   [   ] a little   [   ] not yet
Find or give an example:……………………….
Give advice?   [   ] yes   [   ] a little   [   ] not yet
Find or give an example:……………………….

By knowing the self-checking exercise above, the teacher then knows how far the specific instructional goals have been achieved.

1. **Allowing learners to create their own goals**
   Starting by evaluating their English language needs and reasons why they are studying English the learners are asked to create their own goals. It is expected that by knowing their own short and long terms goal to study English whether for their future study or future careers, they will do their best to achieve them. The teacher in this case just provides assistance in re-evaluating the learners' skills goals. Lee (1998) says that this teacher support is a crucial factor for developing autonomy. The teacher checks whether or not they have achieved each small goals every week.

2. **Encouraging learners to use their foreign language inside and outside the classroom**
   Having known their English language goals to meet, the learners are encouraged to use their English inside or outside the classroom and make use some facilities an institution has or even they are out of campus, they are still encouraged to stay contact with English by watching English Language TV programs or by listening to English radio channels, English pop songs, or by reading English language newspapers. magazines or novels.

3. **Raising awareness of learning process**
   To make students become autonomous learners is not an easy task to do as it needs their awareness and motivation to get actively involved in the learning process and to use their EFL ability to communicate inside or outside the classroom, and to raise the learners' awareness of their own appropriate learning strategies is one of a teacher' tasks.

4. **Helping learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies**
   Teachers should know that every student has their own learning styles and strategies; however, they have to focus them on learner-centered classroom due to the fact that students do not like classes in which they sit passively reading or translating as Widdow and Voller, (1991) add that the students do not like classes where the teachers control everything. Therefore, radical changes in the content of courses, and especially in the types of courses that offered, and the systematic retraining of EFL teachers in learner-centered classroom procedures are steps that must be taken.

5. **Encouraging learner choice**
   According to Nunan, (2003:200), the notion of student choice may be a relatively unfamiliar or even alien one in some foreign language contexts. He further explains that in such a case it is preferable to engage the learners in a relatively modest level of decision-making in the first instance. So, if the data for a lesson include a reading passage and listening test, learners might be asked to decide which they would rather do first, the reading or the listening but if some disagree or the teachers are uncomfortable with the idea of students doing different things at the same time, it can, then, put to a class vote.

6. **Allowing learners to generate their own ideas**
   Having encouraged learners to make choice, the next step is to provide them with opportunities to modify and adapt classroom task. This could be preliminary step to teaching students to create their own tasks.

7. **Encouraging learners to become teachers**

Assinder (1991:228) once said, *"I believe that the goal of teaching each other was a factor of paramount important. Being asked to present something to another group gave a clear reason for work, called for greater responsibility to one's own group"*. it is no wonder that when she gave her students the opportunity of developing video-based materials with they subsequently used for teaching other students in the class, they could present them successfully. The success of each group presentation was actually measured by the response and feedback of the other group; thus there was a measure of in-built evaluation and a test of how much had been learned. Being an 'expert' on a topic noticeably as Assinder further explained, increased self-esteem, and getting more confident week by week and gave the learners a feeling of genuine progress.

8. **Encouraging learners to become researchers**

Finally Nunan (2003:2002) explains that it is possible to educate learners to become language researchers. A teacher gives them a chance to work together beyond the classroom as a community of ethnographers, collecting, interpreting, and building a data bank of information about language in their worlds (Darwowidjojo, 2001:313). Similarly Naiman, Frohlih, Stern,&Todesco, (1978) explains they are like good detectives as they try to look for clues, make guesses, ask questions and ask for correction by their own ways. All students, as a matter of fact, moved out of the Basic English in 'regular' English classes, and two moved into 'honor' English as accomplishment were real and meaningful for these students.

Research Method

This qualitative descriptive research implemented in the odd semester of 2013 – 2014 Academic Year was held in University of Widyatama, Bandung

Subject

The number of students who took part in this research is 32 students consisting of 17 male and 15 female students. They are students of Academic English class. The academic class is the English subject provided for non English department students and the materials of that subject are the combination between general English and English proficiency materials focusing on Paper Based Test of TOEFL materials (Test of English as a Foreign Language).

Procedure

To get the data needed for this research, the writer did the following techniques:

a. **Observation**

During the teaching learning process in the classroom, the writer observed the students' activeness and interaction with their peer directly, and took some notes on the obstacles faced by the students in implementing autonomous learning model in the classroom. They were able to negotiate between the strategic meeting of their own needs and responding to the needs and desires of other group members.

b. **Questionnaire**

In addition to direct observation, the writer handed out questionnaire to know deeply their motivation, as well as their responses towards the implementation of Nunan's autonomous language learning model as well as difficulties faced by the students during implementing that learning model.

c. **Interview**

The last technique used to get the data needed for this research is interview. The writer interviewed the students to know to monitor and know whether or not they were encouraged to use their English outside the classroom, use some facilities a university has such as Self Access Centre (SAC), and stay contact with English by watching English TV programs or by listening to English radio channels, by and English pop songs, or by reading English language newspapers. magazines or novel. Besides, it is also used to know difficulties faced by the students during implementing their autonomous language learning model

Data Analysis

The whole data obtained from observation, questionnaire and interview were analyzed in three broad steps to include categorization, interpretation and condensation and the source of data triangulation was conducted by comparing information from three different instruments.

Finding and Discussion

The Implementation of NALLM in Widyatama University

In implementing NALLM in Widyatama University, a teacher used the following procedures / steps:
Step 1
A content curriculum of Academic English mainly focused on listening, structure and reading in odd semester was exposed to the students and let them decide which they would rather do first, the reading, structure, or the listening but if some disagree or the teachers are uncomfortable with the idea of students doing different things at the same time, it can, then, put to a class vote.

If they choose structure as the first lesson, the students have to break down the specific subject stated on structure lesson. For example, The first unit of the book deals with types of sentence; simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences, a teacher gives them the language structure review's card they have practiced and they have to carry out a self-checking exercise as seen below:

Review the language structure in unit 1. Check (V) your answer
Can you identify
1. Simple Sentence ? [ ] yes [ ] a little [ ] not yet
   Find / give an example……………….
2. Compound Sentence? [ ] yes [ ] a little [ ] not yet
   Find / give an example……………….
3. Complex Sentence ? [ ] yes [ ] a little [ ] not yet
   Find / give an example……………….
4. Compound-Complex Sentence ? [ ] yes [ ] a little [ ] not yet
   Find / give an example……………….

Step 2

The students were asked to evaluate their own English language mastery especially dealing with types of English sentence and to know the reasons why they studied types of sentences in English. They are then asked to create their own goals related to the types of English sentence above and know how to achieve them and all of which are put on a worksheets put them on a worksheet.

Step 3

Having known their goals to meet, the learners were encouraged to ask for some information to other English teachers or to search for and gather some data related to the topics discussed individually or in groups outside the classroom. They were also encouraged to make use SAC (Self-Access Centre). It is the place where the students can find English book references, dictionaries, English texts, English audiovisual materials videos /CDs, and video and internet access. To make sure that they have carried out some activities out of the class, a teacher gave them study log or learning journals containing some activities done by the students as well as a signature from the one in charge in SAC.

Step 4

A teacher raised the students awareness and motivation in order that they got actively involved in the learning process. and let them identify their own preferred learning styles and strategies as generally

speaking, students do not like classes in which they sit passively whereas their teacher control everything. the teacher then created a good atmosphere for his students to learn language actively by giving the different and interesting teaching techniques such as games, pairs work, work in groups, simulation or role playing. In addition to those teaching techniques, the English teacher sometimes gave a dominant role and time to the students to become a teacher to teach their peer the lessons they have prepared alternately and they had peer assessment in return.

Step 5

The students are encouraged to put their collections of students' work (language skill review cards, worksheets, study log etc.) in portfolios selected by students (with the teacher' guidance) to represent their learning experiences and their selecting and gathering samples of their language use into a folder to show peers, parents and other. Their Portfolios included some information about the students' learning activities, their language learning improvement or progress, a short written description of a time the students use English and their self-reflection. Therefore, they definitely provide a type of personal assessment that is directly related to classroom activities.

Different from Nunan' autonomous language learning model consisting of nine steps to learner autonomy, EFL teacher in Widyatama University used five steps which basically covered the nine steps existing in Nunan' model plus portfolios.

Based on the results of questionnaire given to the students who took Academic English, There were 9 students who were categorized to highly motivated students (28,125%), 10 motivated students (31,25%), 13 low motivated students (40,625%). For those highly motivated students, English was important for their future carrier. That was why they did their best to implement NALLM even though they did not belong to English Department students and motivated students thought that even if English was important, they focused more on their own department as Academic English was just an additional course or subject for them whereas low motivated students thought that English was difficult subject to master even though they have learnt English since there were in the third grade of Elementary school and some of them said that they did not have any talent in English.

In line with the data above, the data taken from observation and interview showed that the students who actively used their English inside or outside the classroom individually, in pairs or in groups was 14 students (43,75%). 8 of those students (57%) based on interview had ever taken English course before when they were in Senior High School; therefore, they enthusiastically made use some facilities an institution has to search for some information related to English such as language lab, self-access center, digital lab with internet access as proven by their attendance in those places and they could fulfill their portfolios well; meanwhile, the other 18 students (56,26%) took part in every activity unenthusiastically as proven by their attendance in the English facilities less than the former group as a result, they could not fulfill the portfolios completely besides, they seemed reluctant to take part in every English activity guided by their teacher in the classroom due to many reasons as mentioned above.

Some Barriers faced by students and teacher in implementing NALLM

Based on the data taken from the interview, it showed that most of the students' perception towards the implementation was fairly good and positive; on the contrary, the data from questionnaire and observation showed differently. Some barriers the students as well as the teacher had are related to the followings:

a. **Enthusiasm and motivation**
   The implementation of learners autonomy gives a great impact on both teacher and student. A teacher is no longer pictured as a figure with authority who acts as a master of the class, and who dominates the class. In other words in teaching learning process the teachers play least dominant

role as they merely become observer or classroom guide as a result, they are   lack of their enthusiasm in teaching. On the other hand, the students who get used to being passive learners in the class have to be more active or proactive and   initiative as they have to take on more responsibility for their own learning. For some slow and passive learners or students, they are reluctant and even lack of enthusiasm and motivation in learning and applying NALLM becomes a big burden for them but for fast and active learners, being autonomous learners is a challenge that can make them learn something more enthusiastically.

b. Instructional goal setting

Curriculum is a document that specifies the content to be covered in the courses of study along with general and specific instructional goals as well as the principles of how they are to be delivered and evaluated. Since being autonomous learner is based on the idea that students have to be involved in decision making process regarding their own language competence, most of the Academic English students of Widyatama University still got confused to set their own goals dealing with the courses they took as they   had fixed goals and never created their own instructional goals. Therefore, the content of curriculum needs improving based on the learners' specific goals.

c. Time

Based on the observation, all activities held outside the classroom could be joined by the students since they had limited time to do those activities due to the courses they have to take in every semester, as a result they could not meet their portfolios.

d. Learning and teaching habits

Changing a student's learning or teaching's teaching habits or cultures is not an easy matter. The concept of learner autonomy as presented above according to Weden (1991) may have worked very well in society where human relations are not based on culturally bound social hierarchies. In Indonesia increasing role of learners while at the same time making the teacher a facilitator is easier said than done due to cultural constrain. Nunan. (2003) also adds that in ASEAN countries knowledge is traditionally seen as something to be transmitted down through generations and that knowledge is passed down from teachers to students. In other words, changing the role of the learner and that of the teacher takes us deep down into our fundamental values and tradition which whether we realize it or not have shackled our ways of thinking and behaving.

Pedagogical Implication

Knowing that teaching learning process is commonly held inside the classroom and mostly dominated by a teacher, Introducing Nunan's Autonomous Language Learning Model (NALLM) to the students of higher education is a promising and positive thing to encourage them to be active and autonomous learners inside or outside the classroom. As autonomous learners, they can see the relationship to what is to be learned, to how they will learn and to the resources available as one in which they are in charge or in control. Consequently it can definitely affect on the pedagogical changes such as curriculum, classroom management, teacher's role, students' learning habit etc.

Conclusion

In Indonesia, English as the first foreign language is a compulsory subject taught to the students from elementary schools to higher education but the result of their English seems unsatisfactory as they are not able to communicate in English well. An effort of introducing NALLM to 32 students of Widyatama University taking Academic English seemed to have good and positive response from the students. From the five steps implemented in autonomous learner model in Widyatama University, the students could show their involvement and participation; however, since becoming autonomous learners needs extra efforts from the learners as they have to be independent, active, responsible, as well as self-evaluating learners, there were only 28,125% or 9 students was considered to be highly motivated students. This group shows very active participation. The data also show that 31,25% (10 students) was categorized as motivated students meaning that their involvement was moderate , and 40,625% (13 students) was categorized to the low motivated students meaning that their involvement

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