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3rd IMCoSS

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL SCIENCES

5 - 7 JUNE 2015

BANDAR LAMPUNG UNIVERSITY

INDONESIA

PROCEEDINGS

Hosted by :
- Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
- Faculty of Economics and Business
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3rd IMCoSS 2015

The Third International Multidisciplinary Conference on Social Sciences

5, 6 June 2015
Bandar Lampung University (UBL)
Lampung, Indonesia

PROCEEDINGS

Organized by:

PREFACE

The Activities of the International Conference are in line and very appropriate with the vision and mission of Bandar Lampung University (UBL) to promote training and education as well as research in these areas.

On behalf of the **The Third International Multidisciplinary Conference on Social Sciences (The 3rd IMCoSS) 2015** organizing committee, we are very pleased with the very good response especially from the keynote speaker and from the participans. It is noteworthy to point out that about 112 technical papers were received for this conference.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the International Advisory Board members, sponsor and also to all keynote speakers and all participants. I am also gratefull to all organizing committee and all of the reviewers who contribute to the high standard of the conference. Also I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Rector of Bandar Lampung University (UBL) who give us endless support to these activities, so that the conference can be administrated on time

Bandar Lampung, 6 June 2015

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SUPPORTING LEARNERS' AUTONOMY THROUGH DISTANCE LANGUAGE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT - *Computer has been widely use in all over the world. The functions of computer and modern technologies have influenced many educational institutions in developing networking language teaching learning processes that link participants from any places to join such learning processes. This situation of language learning is called distance language learning. It leads the participants or learners to be independence and responsible to their learning process, their self-assessment, self-actualization, and self-evaluation that bring them to the practices of promoting the autonomy. Thus, this paper tries to dig out how distance language learning influences language learning processes in promoting learners' autonomy.*

Keywords: distance learning, language, autonomy, language learning

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of computer has been rapidly expanded in many parts of the world. Almost all fields of work use computers to help them dealing with important activities such as saving data, counting statistics, making papers, doing presentations and keeping communication as well. As time goes by, the expanding use of computer transforms and increases the way we communicate with other people. People no longer use computer merely for the sake of saving and collecting data or doing statistics but expansively making use of computer networking for communicating and accessing essential and useful data or texts and multimedia information.

Interestingly, in the context of language education, the use of computer networking has been influencing the improvement of teaching learning process. This learning process provides the learners communicative learning experiences. They can access and/or publish texts and multimedia materials to extend their communicative learning with the world far beyond the classroom. Therefore, these activities can be done by providing learning materials for the learners that can be easily accessed anytime and anywhere. Those processes on computer networking learning activities have been expected to facilitate the learners to enhance their language learning as well as to invite them to be autonomous learners.

The expanding of computer networking has led the development of language education into an education in which the teaching learning processes are conducted through networking or the website provided by certain educational institutions. This kind of teaching learning process is sometimes called as distance education in which the learners experience distance learning in interacting altogether with other learners and the teachers. This kind of education, as stated by Mark et al. (2000), enables the learners who could not attend the classes for one reason or another to experience learning processes in a course to achieve a certificate, a diploma or a degree. Students could stay in their homes, offices, or in other places while they do and finish assignments then mail them to an address at a distant location to the teachers or the educational institutions. Besides, for some chances, they are invited to share and discuss the discourses they have made about particular topic discussions so that they may share knowledge and improve it from both the teachers and other students by publishing them on the website provided for them or sometimes by being online and interacting with the teacher and other students. Thus, learners in a distance learning context are possible to get a degree without going to a certain campus and attending all the classes provided for the courses.

When a learner is involved in a distance learning context, he or she is engaged to be an autonomous learner. Being autonomous learners, according to Little (2003) as cited by Linda (2007), they should "understand the purpose of their learning programme, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning and evaluate its effectiveness". Therefore, those who are experiencing a distance learning education at the same time can improve their knowledge and communicative learning as well as promote their learning autonomy since they should deal with activities that involve their independent learning.

2. DISCUSSION

Holec (1981) defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning". It is as what Benson (2001:8) states that autonomy is a natural product of the practice of self-directed learning in which the learners determine the objectives, progress and evaluation of learning by themselves. These definitions lead the concept of 'knowing how to learn' where the learners, the ones who involved in the learning process, are those who take the lead of being autonomous learners helped by the teachers as their facilitators. When the learners are trying to be autonomous or even more autonomous learners, they begin to encourage developing their own learning strategies.

Sarah Cotterell (2000, 143) as cited in Leaver and Ehrman (2005:394) suggests that having a number of defining characteristics for language courses is helpful

for promoting learner autonomy. Those typical characteristics are closely related to first, the learners' goal in its language, tasks and strategies should be reflected. By raising the students' awareness of ways of identifying goals, specifying objectives and identifying resources they will realize these goals. Second, tasks should be explicitly linked to a simplified model of language learning. It allows the learners develop an awareness of language learning theory and adopt the learning strategies. Third, the course should formulate real-world communicative task. When the students are engaged to the tasks and share them by publishing them, they are automatically trying to communicate their thought to others, the teachers and other students or even other readers, that may bring comments or responses to what they have written. Here, when discussions of such topics start, they start the real-world communication with others. Forth, it should promote reflection on learning. A learning process would be best supported by having a reflection for getting better comprehension of what have been learnt, what activities work best or worst and what things should be done for improving better learning. Thus, a reflection is needed for the sake of both the teacher and students' improvements.

According to Benson (2001:22), variety of approaches within the field of language learning has influenced and has been influenced by the concept of autonomy in language learning. It is believed that autonomous learning contributes positive influences to educational reform, adult education, the psychology of learning and political philosophy. Philosophical view sees learners as good responsible to learning, problem solvers, critical, reflective, and self-actualizer. Thus, education should direct the goals to promote learners' autonomy. By promoting their learning autonomy, they can become better learners in applying those elements and to some extents of other aspects of language learning. It is also assumed that self-directed learning preserve that learning is psychological process. It encourages the learners to be aware and participate in the learning processes. By getting actively involved in the learning processes they can get more benefits and deeper knowledge and experiences.

In developing learners' autonomy, Kohonen (2001:36) as cited in Danjun, states that teachers need to base the goal of autonomous language learning on broad experiential learning approach. He argues that "becoming an autonomous language learner is a question of a conscious and ongoing reflection of the tasks, based on personal experiences of language use". Therefore, experience and reflection, Kolb's model of experiential learning, become two keys of effective learning process. As a matter of fact, choosing appropriate learning process and content as well as reflecting both of them and being aware and responsible of the achievements are some essential elements of developing learners' autonomy (Kohonen, 2001:45, cited in Danjun).

According to Linda (2007:74), distance learners are often assumed to be learning autonomously because they control a number of aspects of their learning. They take their responsible of the time to study, the pace of their study, what content and when they want to study. However, they are not necessarily in charge of setting the goals, planning or evaluating learning. Thus, the materials of distance learning should be able to anticipate a wide range of potential language learning needs and provide sufficient materials access of students' being isolation without direct access to the teachers or their peers. Thus, teachers should be aware and pay much attention of this condition that they should facilitate the learners efficiently. They, according to Dickinson (1987) and Chamot (2001) as cited by Linda (2007), are to support and participate in learners' development and encourage themselves to reflect critically and make decision among their students.

Autonomy development in the context of distance learning will be closely related to discourse since the interaction among teachers and learners are gained. Teachers can understand better how their learners improve their autonomy on their learning through the discourses they share to them. Meanwhile, if the teachers provide a particular website as for the tools that both teachers and the learners use for the means of communication, where the teachers as well as the learners are able to share any of their developments through the discourses, they will create the atmosphere that the learners can learn from others' work in order to give them other samples of good or even better understanding to particular materials that a particular learner has. Thus, it can lead them to have harder work to improve their knowledge and interestingly their autonomy as well.

Some previous researches had conducted researches on finding out how distance learning influences the learners' autonomy. One of the researches was conducted in a-three-module-course for teachers of English as a foreign language, Teacher's Links (TL). The participants came from various kinds of educational institutions, private and state schools. The main purpose of the course was to help teachers become fully aware of the possibilities for development in worldwide context, in the classroom, and in the academic sectors as researchers.

From the finding of the research it is concluded that distance learning brought some influences for the participants. First, the forum provided for the participants can be considered as a privileged source of data. The forum provided to share the discourses can facilitate the participants a locus to a path of gaining their autonomous behavior. They were engaged to the opportunity for planning and reflecting on their learning that were considered as the essential processes of growing their awareness. Since the learning processes were conducted online, it is expected that they achieve higher degree of online interaction with other teachers participants in which they were engaged to challenge of some interactional processes including brainstorming, questioning, personal reporting as well as responding to opinions.

Second, to some of the participants who had the strong disposition and systematic process of informed and content-relevant decision making, in the learning process, they promoted autonomous learning behaviours. However, to some others who thought that the learning process in the course was less demanding and too easy that they didn't activate their autonomous learning, they seemed unsuccessful. They considered the demanding processes as a wasting time, whereas, distance learning autonomy depends good search skills. It requires the students to develop the ability to evaluate the quality the pages they brought to their screen telling to good or bad. Therefore, as what has been stated before that the teacher play a big role in preparing and developing interesting and challenging materials to motivate the learners to improve their knowledge and their critical learning as well.

Another research tried to find out how the teachers or tutors encourage critical reflection and decision making, how they are aware of difficulties in critical reflection and decision making and how they develop the practices of autonomization. However, from the result of the research, it may encounter us to the influences of distance learning in promoting the learners autonomy. When the tutors had strong commitment to develop learners' capacity of being critical in reflecting and deciding something, the learners are in processing of increasing their control over their learning, particularly to overcome workload problems and to break their 'comfort zone' and focus on their weaknesses to enhance their performance. Moreover, the learners become more aware on the difficulties on prioritizing their work and difficulties with self-assessments and self-evaluation they faced during the learning process. Having been helped by the teacher, the learners have developed their positive enthusiasm toward the feedback the teachers gave them a critical support for their reflection and basis for future development. The tutors gave them comments showing their responses to the learners' expectation of the language practice as what Little's (1999) concern as cited in Linda (2007) about the teachers' willingness to risk diverting time. Thus, by reflecting to the responses the teachers gave to them, they demonstrated their "theory-in-action' and practiced the concept of autonomy itself as learning to learn (Ehrman, 2005:395).

3. CONCLUSION

From the result of those two researches we can conclude that distance learning, with all those processes and strategies, to some extents, brings the learners the chances to promote their learning autonomy and interestingly, gives positive effects to the teachers as well. Learners are engaged to the process of being independent and critical in developing their skills as well as their knowledge, practicing autonomous behavior, becoming aware of their developmental growth including brainstorming, questioning, and giving personal report in delivering opinions. Furthermore, the students are encouraged to become aware on digging out their weaknesses and

reflecting on what the teachers respond to their works as the support for future development. They also become more aware on fulfilling their self-assessment and self-evaluating during the learning processes they experience. Besides, the teachers also gain positive impact of becoming more aware in encouraging the learners to be more critical and reflective and moreover in finding difficulties happening to the learners. This concept of teaching learning in distant places is an effective way to apply in order to build interactional teaching learning processes in order to gain more knowledge both from the teachers and from other learners or participants by 'jumping across' the boundary of being in far away different places. The most important support for this kind of teaching learning processes is good and manageable computerization since all the learning processes deal with the computers, internet and networking. Thus, teachers should be skillful in dealing with the networking or at least facilitated by an assistant to manage all those things related to mailing the materials.

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