

Providing independent-learning space to promote English learners' self-regulation

Memberikan ruang belajar mandiri untuk mengembangkan regulasi diri pembelajar bahasa Inggris

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KEYWORDS

language learning, independent learning, self-regulation

ABSTRACT

Independent learning is a powerful way to enhance English mastery. Yet, its effect on self-regulation is not yet explored further. This research investigated that matter by answering the following questions: 1) How is the independent learning activity perceived by English learners? 2) Can independent learning activities assist English learners in developing self-regulation skills? Twenty-nine university-level English learners participated in this qualitative-descriptive research which uses an open-ended questionnaire and interview. This study showed that independent learning is perceived positively by the participants. They mentioned that independent learning gave them more chances to understand the materials. Furthermore, they believed that the main outcome of independent learning was the increase in their English skills. For them, the enhancement on the self-regulation skills became a secondary outcome. As such, while independent learning has the potential to enhance learners' self-regulation skills, the participants believed that they did not really grasp the concept of self-regulation and how independent learning would promote it. Thus, it is suggested that the learners must first be familiar with the concept of self-regulation and how independent learning can enhance self-regulation skills. This concept, therefore, must be promoted first by the teachers before independent learning activities are carried out.

KATA KUNCI

pembelajaran bahasa, pembelajaran mandiri, regulasi diri

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran mandiri sangat efektif untuk meningkatkan penguasaan bahasa Inggris. Namun, dampaknya pada regulasi diri belum diteliti lebih lanjut. Penelitian ini mengeksplor hal tersebut dengan menjawab pertanyaan berikut: 1) Bagaimana pembelajaran mandiri dilihat oleh pembelajar bahasa Inggris? 2) Apakah pembelajaran mandiri dapat meningkatkan regulasi diri mereka? 29 mahasiswa berpartisipasi dalam penelitian kualitatif-deskriptif yang menggunakan kuesioner dan wawancara. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran mandiri dipandang positif oleh peserta. Mereka mengatakan bahwa pembelajaran mandiri memberi lebih banyak kesempatan bagi mereka untuk memahami materi pembelajaran. Mereka melihat bahwa hasil utama dari pembelajaran mandiri adalah peningkatan kemampuan Bahasa Inggris. Bagi mereka, peningkatan kemampuan regulasi diri menjadi hasil sekunder. Oleh karenanya, meski pembelajaran mandiri memiliki potensi untuk meningkatkan regulasi diri pembelajar, mereka berpendapat bahwa mereka tidak benar-benar memahami konsep regulasi diri dan bagaimana pembelajaran mandiri berdampak pada hal tersebut. Maka, mereka menyarankan bagi pembelajar untuk memahami terlebih dahulu konsep regulasi diri dan bagaimana pembelajaran mandiri dapat meningkatkan kemampuan regulasi diri. Hal tersebut perlu diberikan terlebih dahulu oleh pendidik sebelum pembelajaran mandiri dilakukan.

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Introduction

As English is considered a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia, the opportunity to learn and practice English is limited. Other than the exposure given in school and higher education, the majority of Indonesian people rarely use English in their daily lives (Alrajafi, 2021; Laufer, 2008). As such, compared to the countries that use English as a second language, Indonesian people rarely read and listen to English.

However, as stated by Krashen (1992), the most important aspect needed in learning a language is input. This notion is echoed by various recent research (e.g., Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Lichtman & VanPatten, 2021; Zhang, 2020). As language learners are frequently exposed to comprehensible input that is compelling to them, they will acquire the language faster and more effectively (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016). By that notion, input is indispensable in acquiring the language. A study done by Yuzar and Rejeki (2020) further supports this. The researchers found significant correlations between receptive and productive skills to the point that “participants who scored higher on the receptive skill tests have a considerable probability to also score higher on the productive skill tests and otherwise” (p. 105). They identified that receptive skills, especially listening, are fundamental in developing the participants’ overall language skills.

On that account, it is crucial for English language learners to deliberately and regularly expose themselves to content (e.g., videos, movies, songs, etc.) delivered in English in their daily life, in addition to the ones given in the classroom (Melvina & Julia, 2021). This requires them to be responsible for their own learning. However, this becomes a challenge in the Indonesian EFL context as Indonesian learners are still lagging behind in terms of learner autonomy (Cirocki et al., 2019; Wiraningsih & Santosa, 2020). Further supported by Agung’s research (2019), the learners actually wanted to master English, but they rarely practice outside of the classroom. Indonesian EFL learners still believe that they just need to carry out the learning and that it is up to the educators to plan and evaluate their learning (Khotimah et al., 2019). Clearly, this is a misconception. They need to be made aware of the importance of lifelong learning and, especially, trained to regulate their own learning. As stated by Zumbunn et al. (2011), not many learners can naturally self-regulate their learning well, and thus, self-regulation skills need to be nurtured.

To help learners in nurturing their self-regulation skills, an environment where they can plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning must be provided (Fukuda, 2020; Zimmerman et al., 1996; Zumbunn et al., 2011). While there are plenty of studies focusing on identifying factors affecting self-regulation and strategies enacted by Indonesian learners (e.g., Alhadi et al., 2019; Hafnidar et al., 2021; Mahardika & Kuswandono, 2022), current studies focusing on the effect of an environment provided to develop the learners’ self-regulation, especially English learners, in Indonesia are limited (e.g., Maisson et al., 2019; Mbato, 2013; Qohar & Sumarmo, 2013). Only Mbato’s (2013) study was done in an English learning environment; the others were done in the context of physics and mathematics education. In his study, while the facilitation for improving students’ self-regulation was deemed effective, the focus was more on the instructors’ side.

Hence to mend the gap and widen the literature, this research focuses on examining an independent learning environment provided by the lecturers in a private university as seen by the students. Specifically, this research would examine the impact of independent activities done outside of the classroom on learners' self-regulation and, ultimately, their English skills. For that, there are two research questions formulated to guide the present research: (1) How is independent learning activity perceived by English learners? and (2) Can independent learning activity assist English learners in developing self-regulation skills?

To answer the research questions, literature related to self-regulation and independent learning is first reviewed. It is then followed by an explanation of the methodology. The findings will be presented for each of the research questions. They are then followed by a discussion to connect to the theories and a conclusion to sum up the research.

Self-regulation

To put it simply, self-regulation is the students' ability to be responsible for their own learning. To put it in a theoretical way, it is the capability of a learner to reach a certain educational goal by regulating their thought, feelings, and actions (Zimmerman et al., 1996). With its self-fulfilling cycle of forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Zimmerman, 1998), learners can plan, monitor, and evaluate and improve their learning. In the forethought phase, learners are to analyze the goal of the task and consider their self-motivation beliefs to prepare themselves to finish the task. In the next phase, performance, the learners need to do self-control dan self-observation. In the final phase, self-reflection, learners are to evaluate their performance through self-judgment and self-reaction. It must be noted that this is a cyclical process.

Research on self-regulation has grown significantly since it was first introduced. Many of which have empirically proven the benefits of being a self-regulated learner, including in language learning (e.g., Irsyadella, 2020; Mahardika & Kuswandono, 2022; Woottipong, 2022). According to Schunk and Zimmerman (2003), self-regulation is fundamental for someone to further enhance their knowledge as "rather than being passive recipients of information, students contribute actively to their learning goals and exercise control over goal attainment" (p. 59). This notion is reiterated by Reparaz et al. (2020) as they found that students who have higher self-regulation have higher retention in their own learning. Furthermore, Pelikan et al. (2021) found that highly regulated students are generally more motivated, procrastinate less, and cope better with the challenges; and they need less support compared to those having lower self-regulation during the pandemic. Whether or not one can practice self-regulation in their learning can also be used to predict their academic performance (Viberg et al., 2020).

Understanding how self-regulation is very beneficial for language learners, it is imperative to nurture it as self-regulation is not an innate skill. Zumbrunn et al. (2011) and Viberg et al. (2020) mention that there are not many students who can naturally self-regulate their learning well; that is generally difficult for learners. Similarly, García Rodicio et al. (2013) suggested that support should be given to learners when they are trying to master complex materials so that they are able to navigate their self-regulated learning.

Regarding this matter, a great deal of literature has documented many ways to foster self-regulation skills. Summarizing the literature, Zumbrunn et al. (2011) suggested four effective strategies to encourage students' self-regulation. First, through direct instruction and modeling, educators are to explicitly inform the students about self-regulation strategies while also demonstrating and giving models to them. Second, educators can also provide students with guided and independent practice. In guided practice, students are to exercise self-regulation strategies under educators' guidance whereas independent practice students are practicing more autonomy in learning. This is similar to what is examined by Yabukoshi (2020) who tapped into self-regulation learning processes outside the class, where the educators are suggested to guide the students learning out of the classroom learning experiences. Third, through social support and feedback, students are to receive support from the educators or peers, often in the form of feedback. Regarding this matter Xiao and Yang (2019) specifically noted that educators provide formative assessment in order to engage students to their self-regulated activities. Fourth, educators can also make use of reflective practice to explore various ways to provide meaningful learning experience to students.

Independent practice environment to nurture self-regulation

While the aforementioned strategies are mutually important, this research takes an interest in providing the students with an environment for them to do independent practice outside of the classroom. According to Meyer et al. (2008), independent practice is often described as self-regulated learning due to the fact that these terms “describe very similar themes and processes, including pupils having an understanding of their learning; being motivated to take responsibility for their learning; and working with educators to structure their learning environment” (p. 15). Independent practice itself has been proven effective in enhancing learners' language competency as it increases students' exposure to the target language.

In reading, doing independent practice such as extensive reading has been proven beneficial to their reading skills (Wu, 2019), just as extensive listening is beneficial to improve their overall listening ability (Ivone & Renandya, 2019). Independent practice is also valuable for learners' language productive skills. In terms of speaking, Su & Fatmawati (2019) found that extending speaking activities outside of the classroom, for example in social media, impacts students' speaking ability positively. Similarly, related to writing skills, Rodliyah (2019) and Pham et al. (2022) found that extensive writing, in the form of journaling, can offer benefits of writing improvement. Nevertheless, only some researchers have pointed out the importance of such environment for the students' self-regulation development (Fukuda, 2020, 2022; Maison et al., 2019).

The importance of it is pointed out by Cleary and Zimmerman (2004) as for students to better develop their self-regulation skills, “the key element is teacher giving frequent performance opportunities for students” (p. 548). This can be done whether in a guided practice, where the educators can yield initial instructions or expectations (see Saks & Leijen, 2014), or in completely independent practice, students may practice their self-regulation strategies outside the classroom. It is also important to give students choice and voice in their learning so that they own their own learning (Korinek & deFur, 2016). Yet, as pointed out by Chong and Reinders (2022), this particular topic has rarely been researched. They highlighted that research should “extensively investigate learners'

experiences beyond the classroom so as to better capture both the lifelong and lifewide nature of autonomous learning” (p. 20). The potential of it has been echoed by Fukuda (2020) as self-regulation in learning can be “be acquirable by learners without them necessarily being taught it” if the learners are apprehensive to their learning goals and attitude and being reflective about them (p.114). As such, this research would like to explore the impact of providing independent practice environment outside of the classroom not just to the learners’ language skills, but especially to their self-regulation skills.

In the context of this research, the English learners in the university level are assigned with a weekly independent learning activities to help them get more English exposure outside the class. The assignment was also to assist learners to improve their self-regulation skills in learning English. The learners were free to decide on which English skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing) to improve and what materials or topics they wanted to study. Whenever the students had done the independent study, they would make a short-written report indicating what skills they had learned that week. The roles of the lecturer here were to give initial, technical guidance (i.e., how to submit, what was expected from the students) and give feedback.

Method

The present research is descriptive-qualitative research (Ary et al., 2010; Cohen et al., 2018). It deals with describing how the participants feel about the benefits of the independent learning activity. It also explains the possibility of such activity to improve the participants’ self-regulation skills.

The data used for this research is taken from two data-gathering sources in a sequential manner. First, we distributed a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained nine open-ended questions as the triggers for the participants to share their experiences of their independent learning and how it was perceived by the participants and their suggestions to better improve the activity. Those nine questions were based on the three phases (i.e., planning, monitoring, and evaluating) in self-regulation cycle (Zimmerman, 1998). Twenty-nine freshmen university students from English Language Education Study Program and Office Administration Study Program voluntarily participated in this present research and filled the questionnaire. All of them were expected to use English in the workplace so English subjects were compulsory.

Second, to strengthen the data of the questionnaire, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 6 participants. The participants were chosen purposefully to represent the whole picture of the phenomenon, three of the participants who hinted that the independent learning was not very beneficial to their self-regulation, and the other three who gave a positive outlook on it. The interviews were transcribed and member checking was done to ensure the validity of the data.

To analyze the data, three steps of coding (Ary et al., 2010) – open, axial, and selective – were used to examine both the data from the questionnaire and the interviews. From the analysis of the data, several themes emerged. Those themes were discussed in accordance with the two research questions.

Results

The present research deals with two questions. Thus, the findings will be presented in the same order. The first one will describe the students' general perceptions of independent learning. It is then followed by data presentation on how independent learning activity assist English learners in developing their self-regulation skills.

Students' general perceptions of independent learning

In general, the participants displayed positive views on independent learning. After one full semester of doing independent learning activity, the participants shared that independent learning is important for them. Specifically, the data from the questionnaire showed that the majority of the participants considered independent learning either very important (14), important (8), or pretty important (3). Four participants did not give a specific answer, and no participant mentioned that independent learning is not important at all.

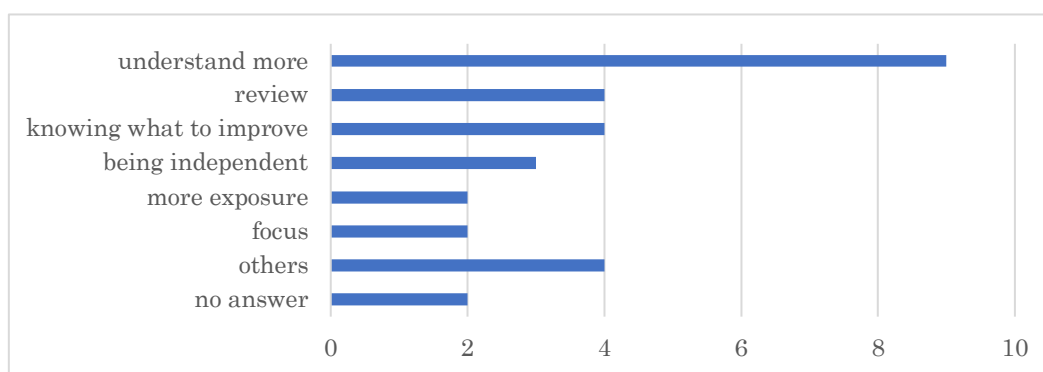


Figure 1. Reasons why independent learning is important

When asked why they think independent learning is important, the participants give various reasons (see Figure 1). The most common reason is that independent learning can provide the participants with a chance to understand more about English language. Participant 12, for example, mentioned how through independent learning activities, she can learn more about “*the knowledge and information related to the class.*” The second most common reasons are related to how independent learning enables them a chance to review that they have learned in class as well as how independent learning helps them to understand what areas to improve their learning. For instance, with independent learning, Participant 6 mentioned that at times she “*was not able to immediately understand the materials explained by the lecturers in the class, for example of when [her] brain found it hard to focus, or when [she] was sleepy and losing focus*” but with independent learning, she was able to “*find a better time to focus.*” Similarly, Participant 11 also shared that she “*knows what needs to be improved or what is wanted to be mastered*” and she was able to do that in her independent learning session. In addition, the participants also mention other benefits of doing independent learning, such as learning to become more independent as “*the one always available for [them] is [themselves]*” (Participant 20); giving themselves more exposure such as in exposing themselves with “*more vocabulary they have not encountered before*” (Participant 2); as well as training them to focus more on “*what [they] want to learn*” (Participant 26).

This positive perception of independent learning is also reflected in the way the majority of the participants consider independent learning as an opportunity (n=28) – rather than as a burden (n=2). Most of the participants who considered independent learning as an opportunity suggested that independent learning allows them to improve their English skills (n=20). Participant 6 viewed this activity as a chance for her to assess herself – her strengths and weaknesses – and further develop herself. She said that she “*just realized that [her] speaking skills in English are quite good, compared to what [she] perceived ... [she] still needed to practice [her] listening because it was very difficult [for her] to listen to different accents*”. This is further reiterated by the other participants who shared independent learning as “*an opportunity to improve skills*” (Participant 10), a chance to learn anything which “*does not have a limit on what to learn*” (Participant 12), and a media to “*learn a lot of new things indirectly, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar*” (Participant 22). Another perception is about having more freedom to navigate their learning (n=5). As Participant 14 said, during the independent learning, “*[she] can freely choose the topic that to learn*”. Some participants also viewed independent learning as a chance to enhance their English scores (n=1) and a place to share with their friends and lecturers (n=1).

In spite of the favorable attitudes, the participants admitted that sometimes they were not very consistent in doing the independent learning activities. Only less than half of the participants (n=13) claimed to be consistent in learning independently. The rest of the participants mentioned that they were not very consistent (n=14) or not consistent at all (n=2). For those who were not very consistent or were not consistent at all, they mentioned that “*there were too many other tasks*” (Participant 1) so they “*did not check the deadline*” (Participant 2). On the other hand, for those who did it consistently, they did it because “*it was fun*” (Participant 14) and the realization to do it in order to “*improve the skills deemed necessary to be improved, like writing and speaking*” (Participant 24).

Additionally, a large portion of participants considered that the independent learning helped them to improve their language mastery outside the classroom. Figure 2 shows the perceived benefits of independent learning activities in relation to their language mastery.

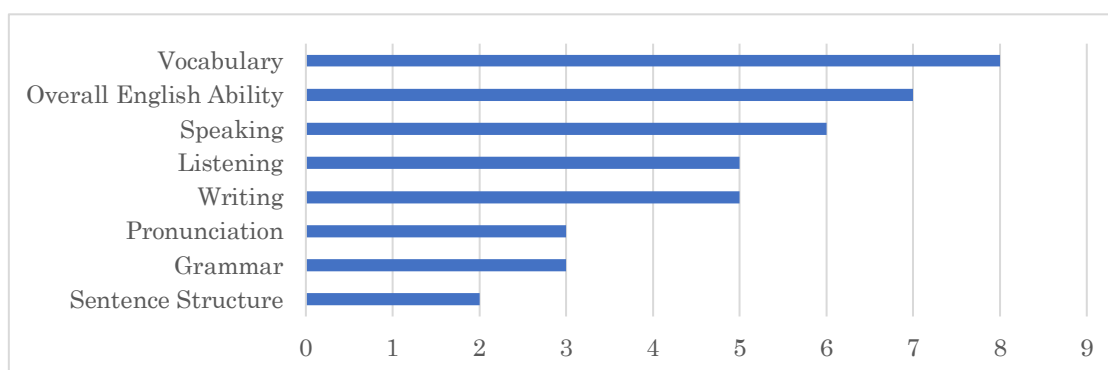


Figure 2. Independent learning for students' language ability

The highest benefit perceived is in terms of improving their vocabulary range (n=8). Participant 14 acknowledged that during the independent learning, “*there were a lot of*

new words that [she] got from watching videos”. This was further corroborated by Participant 6 who mentioned how independent learning was able to provide a chance for her to “get new vocabulary items, listening to the correct pronunciation of those words, and being able to write the words correctly”. Besides pronunciation, they also saw improvement in their grammar (n=3), pronunciation (n=3), and sentence structure (n=2).

The participants also shared how independent learning was able to help them improve their English skills. A case in point, some participants (n=6) saw improvement in their speaking ability after doing independent learning. Compared to her skills in senior high school, participant 15 noted that “[she] was able to speak English more fluently now”. This was reiterated by Participant 24 as “[he] became more confident to speak in front of the public”. Besides speaking, participants also noticed some improvement in their writing and listening skills.

Independent learning assisting self-regulation: A potential

Related to self-regulation skills, the participants generally indicated a positive effect of independent learning activities. Figure 3 shows how the participants responded to the questions and whether they feel the positive effect of independent learning on the planning, monitoring, and evaluating stages of self-regulation, respectively.

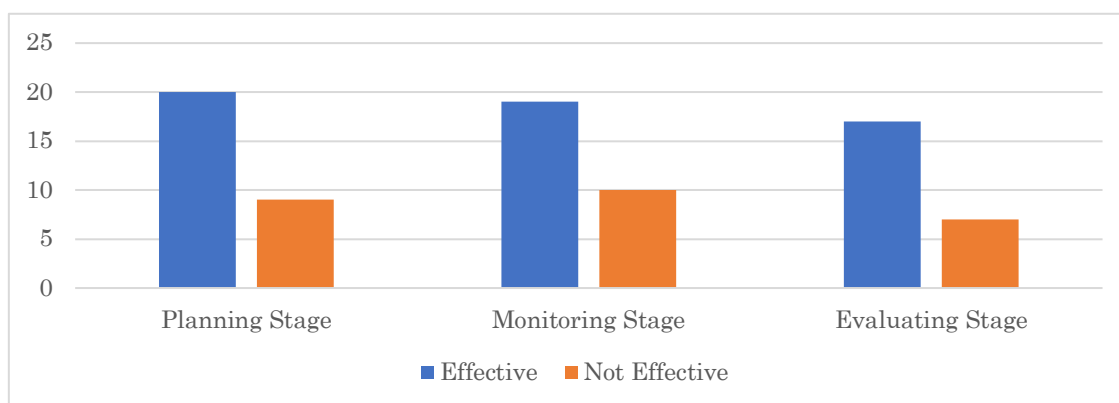


Figure 3. Independent learning to improve SRL

From Figure 3, it is clear that the participants indicated positive reviews on how independent learning was able to improve their self-regulation strategies. These positive views are spread to all three stages of self-regulation. Figure 4, 5, and 6 show the effect of independent learning in improving the participants’ self-regulation skills in planning stage, monitoring stage, and evaluating stage, respectively.

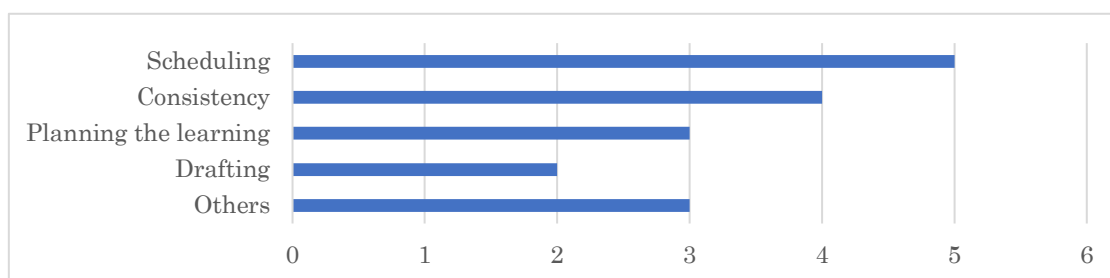


Figure 4. Independent learning to improve planning stage in SRL

In the planning stage (see Figure 4), the participants perceived scheduling as the most improved aspect (n=5), followed by becoming more consistent in doing the tasks

(n=4). In regard to scheduling, participant 5 mentioned that from doing the independent learning activities, “[she] learned to routinely schedule the tasks that [she] had and the topics that [she] would do next”. As for consistency, a case in point, participant 6 highlighted that “[she] tried to be consistent with what [she] had planned”. Though, she also noted that it was a work in progress for her. In addition, independent learning also helps learners to develop their skills in planning their learning. In terms of the improvement towards the planning of the learning itself, Participant 19 shared that “when [he] felt that [his] listening skills were not enough, [he] tried to improve it”. This signifies that the participant considered independent learning a chance to be reflective on his abilities and come up with a plan to improve such abilities.

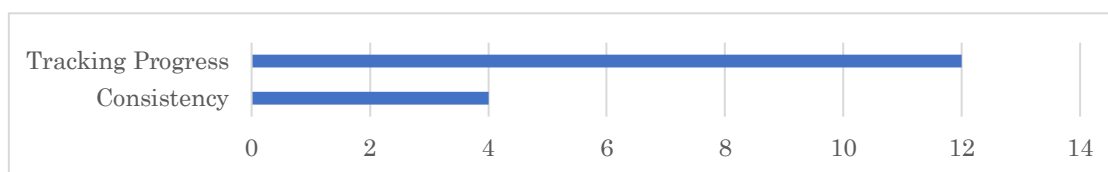


Figure 5. Independent learning to improve monitoring stage in SRL

Related to the monitoring stage (see Figure 5), the participants reported improvements in two aspects during their independent learning process, which are tracking progress and being consistent in learning. Pertaining to the first aspect, the participants saw some improvement in how they learned to track their progress during the independent learning (n=12). For instance, participant 19 recalled that “usually [he] wrote [his] progress, like what [he] had learned in week 1, and then checked the progress of it in week 2”. To that, Participant 25 added, “[she] compared [her] skills from when [she] first joined this study program until now, and [she] felt a lot of [her] skills had developed”. Related to the latter improved aspect, consistency, Participant 5 noted that “[she] needed to train [herself] to routinely work on the reading text, speaking, listening, and writing”. Further, Participant 16 added that “[she] could learn more regularly by doing independent learning”.

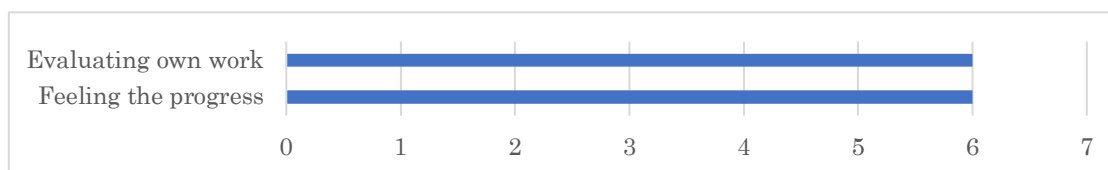


Figure 6. Independent learning to improve evaluating stage in SRL

Referring to evaluating stage of self-regulated learning (see Figure 6), the participants recognized that independent learning helped them to evaluate their own work. Participant 20, for example, saw that independent learning was an opportunity to evaluate her own work and be able to “understand how to correct the sentence that was previously wrong”. Further noted by Participant 8, with independent learning, she “was able to see [her] ability to learn English and observe [her] English skills level”. Additionally, another aspect viewed positively is about feeling the progress. As highlighted by Participant 11, with independent learning she felt that her vocabulary grew and “the way [she] expressed [herself] in English became a bit better than before”.

Despite the positive favor to the potential of independent learning in improving learners’ self-regulation, it is still found out that there are still a number of participants

who considered independent learning not very effective in improving their self-regulation skills (see Figure 3). Although these numbers are certainly lower than the positive favors, they are still relatively prominent. This indicates that there is something that needs to be done to enhance the positive impact of independent learning in nurturing students' self-regulation skills. This particular result invited the need to further elaborate on the data.

The interview data indicated that it became a common consensus among the participants that independent learning is more to develop their English skills than to develop their self-regulation skills. As mentioned by Participant 5, she thought that independent learning activities were intended to *“train grammar and English skills”*. Similarly, participant 11 also mentioned during the interview that she considered independent learning's ultimate goal was to make her *“get used to speak, write in English, with the appropriate use of tenses and grammar.”* This tendency that independent learning was mostly about improving their English skills was reiterated by the participants.

This phenomenon may have stemmed from how the participants were not familiar with the concept of self-regulation. When the participants were asked if they had comprehended the concept of self-regulation, out of those six interviewees, only two participants got close to defining self-regulation. Participant 5 thought that it was about *“discipline and managing time”* whereas participants 22 considered self-regulation as the awareness to *“know our strengths and weakness that in turns help us to improve.”*

These participants, therefore, suggested some improvements to improve the independent learning activities to better assist them both in the English language mastery area and self-regulation skills. To begin with, all interviewees agreed on the importance of explaining what self-regulation is before the independent learning activities started. Regarding this matter, participant 22 highlighted that self-regulation skills *“can be more emphasized”* as *“[she] thought that the independent learning was intended more for [her] English skills improvements.”* In the same light, participant 11 shared that an explanation about self-regulation at the beginning of the class would be helpful to *“provide a broad overview”* which in turn can help them develop the skills.

Furthermore, the participants indicated the need for the educators to provide support for their independent learning activities. Participant 5, for example, suggested that the educators provide them with clearer guide in relation to their independent learning to help them being more consistent with the learning, for example by giving them *“deadlines”* to avoid them *“doing everything last minutes.”* Furthermore, educators are also expected to be aware of the learning processes, giving them a chance to reflect on their independent learning activities. For instance, participant 22 suggested the educators to give them a reflection opportunity to *“look back to the process.”* In addition, the participants also acknowledged the benefit of the lecturer's feedback specific to their self-regulation in the activities. While Participant 4 noted that the feedback so far was only for the content and not the self-regulation, she also mentioned that *“[she] is always waiting for the feedback”*. As such, the prominence of feedback is emphasized by all of the participants.

Discussion

The present research is to examine how the independent learning activity is perceived by English learners as well as the possibility of such activity in improving the learners' self-regulation skills. While the findings have been elaborated in the previous section, this section is to discuss the findings further in relation to the available literature.

Pertaining to the independent learning activities, the participants generally have a positive attitude towards independent learning and perceive it as beneficial to improve their language skills. The present findings showed that the participants have elaborated on many reasons why independent learning is essential to their learning as well as mentioned many language-related improvements they can get by doing independent learning activities. These findings resonate well with what has been widely documented in the literature. The researchers have agreed that independent learning is beneficial for students' language performance (see Ivone & Renandya, 2019; Pham et al., 2022; Su & Fatmawati, 2019; Wu, 2019). This is especially true for non-native language learners (Apse & Farneste, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021).

In relation to self-regulation, the participants indeed indicated a potential for independent learning to improve their self-regulation skills, yet it alone is not enough. The data the questionnaire indicated that the participants showed positive responses to the questions of whether or not independent learning activity assisted them to plan, monitor, and evaluate their language learning. These findings, therefore, support what has been proposed by Fukuda (2020, 2022) who stated that there is likely a positive impact of independent learning in improving one's self-regulation skills. Further noted by Blau et al. (2020), as students are being provided with a chance and environment, their self-regulation would develop naturally. Despite the generally positive responses, however, there are still a number of participants in the questionnaire who suggest that independent learning alone cannot help them develop their self-regulation skills. Furthermore, in the interviews, the participants were inclined to how the independent activities helped them more to enhance their English language skills, compared to the self-regulation skills. Hence, several steps need to be taken to extend the chance of independent learning in improving students' self-regulation skills.

To enhance the chance of independent learning activities improving learners' self-regulation, there are several take-aways we can get from the findings. First, it is essential that the learners are made aware of the concept of self-regulation and their strategies. As self-regulation skills are not an innate ability, therefore, the learners should acquire the skills. As the findings suggest, there is indeed a potential for independent learning in helping learners to improve their self-regulation skills – without needing to be explicitly taught – on a condition that they if they are aware of their learning objectives and mindset and actively reflect on them (Fukuda, 2020). Unfortunately, as the general level of self-regulation skills in Indonesia is still low (Cirocki et al., 2019; Wiraningsih & Santosa, 2020), educators' intervention may be needed. In this case, the educators can introduce explicitly the knowledge on self-regulation and their strategies and provide a model for their students (see Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Once they are familiar

with the concept of self-regulation, the learners can be more apprehensive to their strengths and weaknesses (see Prasetyanto et al., 2021).

Second, it is also important to create a better and supported learning environment for independent learning outside of the class to take place to help them develop their self-regulated learning. Wong et al. (2019) corroborated that appropriate aids would help students in improving their self-regulation. To begin with, educators can provide a clearer guide for independent learning. For example, the educators can provide some protocols about how independent-study can be conducted instead of just asking the learners to study more Zeng and Goh (2018). This is especially important because it has been highlighted that independent learning also depends on goals set by the educators (Gyamfi et al., 2019). In addition, it is also suggested that the educators provide a support for students to “reserve a few minutes at the beginning of class to ask each student to reflect on their out-of-class learning experiences and set relevant goals to overcome their learning difficulties as a warm-up exercise” (Yabukoshi, 2020, p. 770). It is also advisable for the educators to check on students’ weekly plans to help them achieve the goals of their independent learning activities that have been set (Nguyen et al., 2021). This can be done by giving students timely and meaningful feedback to their plan and progress. To conclude, it is indeed great for the educators to provide plenty of opportunities outside the class to do independent learning and improve their self-regulation skills. Yet, as the students are not yet prepared in terms of their self-regulation, proper scaffolding should be provided by the educators to ensure effective development of students’ self-regulation.

Conclusions

The present research focuses on independent learning and self-regulation skills, particularly on how independent learning is perceived by English learners and the potential of independent learning activity in assisting English language learners develop their self-regulation skills. The findings suggest that generally English learners displayed a positive attitude towards independent learning and consider independent learning beneficial for their English mastery improvements. Pertaining to self-regulation skills, the study found out that independent skills indeed have a potential to assist English learners’ self-regulation skills development. However, to maximize the potential, it is suggested that the educators provide initial explanation about self-regulation and their strategies. It is also recommended that the educators make sure that there is a supported environment for the independent learning to take place outside the classroom, ranging from providing a clearer independent learning guide to provide support throughout the process.

Although the present research has contributed further literature on the dynamics of independent learning and self-regulation as well as brought forth some suggestions to optimize its potential in developing students’ self-regulation, some limitations are still present in this study. First, this study only focuses on a small number of students within a specific context. Therefore, the result of this study cannot be used as generalization in other contexts, apart from the insights it brought. Second, as this research is a cross-sectional study, it does not gather the longitudinal development of students’ self-regulation. Thus, it is recommended for future researchers to conduct a more in-

depth – possibly experimental – study about the use of independent learning to improve self-regulation strategies in other context to broaden the understanding about the matter.

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