Assessment Ideas For Fostering Online Learning Autonomy

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Abstract The objective of this study is to determine some techniques of English learning assessment that can foster students' learning autonomy in online learning environment. Qualitative research was applied as research design done at English Education Department of the Institute for Islamic Studies of Padangsidimpuan. Ten lecturers of the English Education Department were chosen purposively as respondents and interview was used as data collection technique. Then, the data were analyzed through qualitative data analysis in which the data were described and elaborated in detail ways. Related to findings, this study found some techniques of English learning assessment that regarded effective to improve students' independence in online learning i.e. portfolio assessment, discussion and problem solving, essays and summary writing, online presentation, multimedia presentation, mini-research, and recording performance task. Finally, this study concluded that there are many assessment techniques to foster students' online learning autonomy and the promotion of learning autonomy becomes an important aspect to be included in online learning environment.
Keywords: learning; autonomy; assessment; online; fostering.

Abstrak Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui beberapa teknik penilaian pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang dapat menumbuhkan kemandirian belajar siswa dalam lingkungan pembelajaran online. Penelitian kualitatif diterapkan sebagai desain penelitian yang dilakukan di Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Institut Studi Islam Padangsidimpuan. Sepuluh dosen Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dipilih secara purposive sebagai responden dan teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara. Kemudian, data dianalisis melalui analisis data kualitatif dimana data dideskripsikan dan diuraikan secara rinci. Terkait dengan temuan, penelitian ini menemukan beberapa teknik penilaian pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang dianggap efektif untuk meningkatkan kemandirian siswa dalam pembelajaran online yaitu asesmen portofolio, diskusi dan pemecahan masalah, esai dan penulisan ringkasan, presentasi online, presentasi multimedia, penelitian mini, dan rekaman kinerja. tugas. Akhirnya, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa ada banyak teknik penilaian untuk menumbuhkan otonomi belajar online siswa dan promosi otonomi belajar menjadi aspek penting untuk dimasukkan dalam lingkungan belajar online.
Kata Kunci: belajar; kemandirian; penilaian; online; membina

INTRODUCTION

Students' learning autonomy is needed during the process of online learning (Misir, 2018 ; Muhammad, 2020 ; Muliyah et. al., 2020). This is because the students and teachers cannot have direct interaction and face to face meeting, thus the teachers are required to facilitate the learning with media and materials needed by students (Tafonao et. al., 2019). Then, both students and teachers also do not have lots of time to talk about the material as well as the content being learned. This is why students need to have independent process of learning. In other words, they are forced to have responsibility for their own successful learning.

Related to learning autonomy, Holec in Najeeb (2013) defined it as "ability to take charge of one's own learning". It means learners' capability in handling and taking responsibility toward their learning. This is in line with Muhammad's (2020) argument saying that learning autonomy is related to students' willingness to take responsibility and manage their own learning. Holec also said that learning autonomy should be acquired and learnt which can be implied that learners learning autonomy is a part of educators duties in teaching so that learners can learn by themselves independently. By looking at the previous definition, it is illustrated that learning is not only a process of acquiring and knowing certain knowledge from certain subject matters but also a process of enabling students to learn and acquire the knowledge by themselves.

There are many ways that can be implemented by educational stakeholders including teachers to foster learners' autonomy in online learning. According to Ribbe and José (2013) there are three principles of scaffolding the development of learners' autonomy; "1) to facilitate learner involvement through including them in definition of learning goals, selection of contents and techniques, 2) to promote learner reflection through supporting self-monitoring and self-evaluation of the learners and 3) as far as possible, to scaffold the immersion of learners in an authentic learning environment and community of practice". Regarding the ideas proposed by Ribbe et al (2013), it seems that the point of learning autonomy is seen in learners' involvement and engagement in the instructional process like in designing the lesson objectives, in evaluating and monitoring their learning, and in putting themselves in the real learning environment and community. Related to this types of task, Talebinezhad and Esmaeili (2012) said that tasks which have real world relevance means "problems inherent in the activities are ill-defined and open to multiple interpretations".

In addition, to learners' learning autonomy, selecting types of assessment techniques in online learning also influence the effectiveness of online instructional process (Suartama, 2014; Coman et. al., 2020). Teachers' selection and creativity in designing learning assessment can affect learners' learning engagement as well as the result of learning achievement itself. This is because online learning problems are related to cheating and plagiarism (Gaytan, 2015), can be minimized by selecting types of assessment techniques during the learning.

Then, the discussion below is related to some kinds of assessment that can be used by the teachers in online learning assessment (Conrad and Openo; 2018. Garrison et. al.; 2013).

1. Modified traditional assessment.

Some examples of assessment tools that are used in traditional classrooms actually can successfully be used and adapted for online learning assessment. The assessments are "essay exams, thought- provoking discussion questions; and projects that require students to demonstrate proficiency in content knowledge, solving problems, working well with each other, and communicating effectively" (Gaytan and McEwen, 2014). For example, the teachers can ask students to make a project like field research while working together with friends. During the field research, the students need to record all activities including interviewing people and observing objects, etc. From many kinds of assessments stated, it is clear that assigning projects to students is one of alternatives for learning autonomy promotion. The project could be in a form of problem solving, case studies, and field research. For example, in *Language Testing and Evaluation* subject, the project could be asking students to analyze types of tests and evaluations in schools.

2. E-Learning Assessment

Orlando (2011) proposed some techniques of E-learning environment. The assessments are: (a) Blogs; a Google application where students can post writings, essays, pictures, videos, links, and activities that teachers can easily grade and give feedback, (b) Papers; students' writing that can be published on blogs, journals and can be commented by others, (c) Group Assignment; asking students to work in a small or big group to do certain task like solving real case study, (d) Discussion; an activity when students comment each other like discussion on blogs, FB, etc, (e) Wikis; "good for hosting group projects that develop, and assess, teamwork and team building", (f) Group Teaching Modules, (g) Voice Thread; "uploading PowerPoint slides, videos, photos, etc., and adding voice narration to create a multimedia presentation", (h) Digital Storytelling; loading "photos or videos and then adding a voiceover to create five-to-ten-minute digital stories to illustrate a point". From the

assessment techniques mentioned, it is true that those assessment are regarded effective to foster students' learning autonomy in online learning.

3. Alternative assessments

It includes authentic, performance, and portfolio assessments, when they are used effectively, they will provide evaluation information related to students' performance (Gaytan, 2015). In this case, portfolio assessment is also regarded very effective to make students autonomous in learning process. For examples, in Sociolinguistics subject, asking students to interview people from different cultures and languages and analyze the use of language dialect can become a type of project to be assessed.

METHOD

This study was conducted by following the principles of qualitative approach which is a type of descriptive qualitative research. The research in this study was conducted in English Education Department or *Tadris Bahasa Inggris (TBI)* of the Institute for Islamic Studies Padangsidimpuan (IAIN Padangsidimpuan). Then, ten lecturers of English Education Department were chosen as respondents and interviewed to get data needed. The research in this study was done through several stages of the process that began from (1) Data collection; (2) Presentation of data; (3) Data reduction; and (4) Conclusions based on the principles of qualitative data paradigm. The process of choosing the respondents was done by using purposive sampling technique because all of them did online learning and of course online assessment. Then, data collection technique used was structured interview.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The finding and discussion in this study is related to teachers' assessment techniques to foster students' learning autonomy in online instructional classes.

a. **Assessment Techniques that Can be Used to Foster Students' Learning Autonomy in Online Instructional Classes**

Related to this type of data, ten lecturers of English education department were interviewed and these are the elaboration of data related to it. As it is mentioned in the background of this study, there were ten techniques of language assessment become indicators of assessment techniques used by the teachers. They were multiple choice quiz, essay test (Gaytan and McEwen, 2014), discussion or problem solving, summary, research-

based paper, recording and videotaping of performance, online presentation, storytelling, and creating content in social media like *youtube, fb, blogs* (Orlando, 2011 and Gaytan, 2015). However, not all techniques can support learners' autonomy in online learning context. Again, assessment means here related to kinds of daily tasks, homework, assignment, and tests given by lecturers during online learning process. Thus, kinds of assessment techniques used by the lecturers in online learning are elaborated below.

1. Portfolio Assessment

All of the ten lecturers interviewed in this study agreed with the portfolio assessment in teaching. It means that using more than one type of assessment in instructional process like the use of daily discussion and weekly essay report as students' learning assessment can be used to create effectiveness of online learning assessment. Portfolio is regarded very effective in fostering learners' learning autonomy since the lecturers sometimes are not familiar with students' capability and skills in certain subjects. Through this portfolio, the lecturers can see students' learning achievement not only from one aspect but also many assessment techniques. Then, through the use of portfolio, students can monitor their learning and have self-reflection. Also, the lecturers will have real record of students' learning process which means knowing students' strengths and weaknesses on the subject being taught.

2. Students' self-journal writing

Related to this type of assessment, four of ten lecturers think that writing summary of the material is important to make students autonomous in online learning. Writing summary means summarizing materials that are learnt which could be limited in numbers of pages or words. Learners' independence can be seen in a reality that through this technique, learners will read the books or other learning resources and indirectly they will try to understand materials while summarizing it. In addition to the ideas, one of ten lecturers assigned students to write personal journal containing what they have learnt, what they haven't understood, and what they want to learnt for the next material.

3. Discussion and Problem Solving

Then, as a weekly assessment assessed to students in every meeting, it was found that classroom discussion and problem solving were chosen as a favorable technique. Usually, the lecturers began the lesson by posting some questions, problems, and related issues on WhatsApp or Google Classroom and let students give their opinions. This was to see students' involvement and understanding toward the subject being taught. Also, the lecturers could see how many students participated and engaged in the learning process. In

fact, the lecturers said that not all students wanted to attend the online learning and the discussion was used as an attendance or absence during online learning. Even, one of the lecturers used this technique as the most dominant measurement of students' achievement in a semester.

4. Multimedia-based Assessment

Online learning is very identical with the use of technology as media in instructional process like the use of Google Classroom and other platforms. One of assessment techniques that is regarded applicable to make students autonomous is an online presentation using multimedia. This type of assessment can be designed as a weekly assignment. Regarding this type, five lecturers of English Education Department of Institute for Islamic Studies applied this in a condition, the students worked in groups yet separately and each group member posted a video of his/her presentation and the lecturers asked the students to ask questions and comment to the answers. Learning autonomy is seeable through this assessment technique because students will work individually to design their multimedia presentation and to understand the materials. While the groups were assigned to make an online presentation, the rest of students were assigned to write a summary as a report that the students have read the materials before learning it in online learning. Through this assessment, the lecturers would believe that students learnt autonomously before the lecturers discussed it. Related to this technique, four lecturers applied it in online learning.

6. Performance Task/ Practice

The following explanation is related to assessment techniques applied by the lecturers to deal with practical knowledge evaluation. Related to practical knowledge assessment, asking students to do real practice or show their performance at certain skills was the most chosen technique comparing to others. In that case, the students were assigned to record their performance like micro teaching activity and load it on WhatsApp and Google classroom group or make it as social media content like in FB and Youtube. In fact, eight of ten lecturers used this technique and they perceived that it's very objective to measure students' certain skills. The description of techniques used by lecturers are shown on table 1.

Table 1 Assessment Techniques for Fostering Learning Autonomy

No	Assessment Techniques	Numbers of Lecturers Who Used it
1	Discussion/Problem Solving	8
2	Practice/Performance	8

No	Assessment Techniques	Numbers of Lecturers Who Used it
3	Online Presentation	7
4	Essay Test	6
5	Writing Summary	6
6	Multiple choice test with/out Google form application	3
7	Online Interview	2
8	Mini research/ research based paper	2

Table 1 shows that discussions in terms of problem solving and doing practice/performance were used by most of the lecturers (eight lecturers) in English education department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan. Then, from the ten lecturers, 7 lecturers used online presentation followed with essay test and writing summary. Finally, a few lecturers used multiple choice (three lecturers), online interview and research-based paper (two lecturers) as assessment techniques in online learning.

From the finding elaborated previously, it is stated that the lecturers preferred discussion and problem solving as a weekly assessment. It is really needed because the lecturers sometimes get difficult to recognize their students. Thus, with this weekly assignment, they can know at least general capabilities of their students in online learning. In fact, through discussion, the students can participate and engage in learning process actively and let the lecturers familiarize with their identity. Thus, the online learning is not perceived as only product-oriented instruction but also process-oriented learning. Related to this idea, Omar (2013) said that having problem solving will foster and create the students' participation and communication in online learning environment.

Then, making a video or recording of students' performance and real practice was also the most favorable technique of language assessment related to practical knowledge, as Orlando (2011) wrote in his book "turning students into teachers can be the best way to produce and assess learning". It means that asking students to practice teaching like in micro teaching and publish the result is the most effective ways to make students successful in learning. Swan (2017) also saw the benefits of using instructional video in e-learning which is assumed that "video content published on global video-sharing websites can be a source of valuable information and can be used to increase effectiveness of learning processes.

Looking at the benefits of recording students' performance and skills through video, it is perceived that there are advantages that lecturers and students can take (Soni, 2015). The lecturers could see students' real and authentic ability in online learning and of course it avoids plagiarism and cheating among the students (Patak, 2018). Then, students also can use video to record their interactive presentation in certain materials during online learning. That is why to assess students' theoretical knowledge; lecturers also could ask students to make the online interactive presentation. Finally, video lets "students view actual objects and realistic senses, to see sequences in motion, and to listen to narrations" (Swan, 2017).

Moreover, this study also argues that giving an online test like via Google form application to assess students' knowledge and comprehension is also another alternative technique which this study perceives it as one of the effective ways to avoid material cheating and plagiarism during the test in online learning (Soni, 2015). This test is assumed effective because the test makers can randomize the questions which every test taker will have different question in different numbers. In line with this idea, Hasan (2018) suggests to make various types of questions randomly as one of the ways to avoid cheating in online learning test.

CONCLUSION

There are some points that can be concluded from this study. The first, there should be effective techniques used by the lecturers to overcome problems related to online learning assessment like cheating and plagiarism which lead to less objective result and scoring. Then, using more than one assessment technique is required in online learning like the use of writing summary, projects, presentation, and tests. Finally, choosing effective assessment is really needed to foster students' learning autonomy.

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