



The 7<sup>th</sup> COTEFL International Conference  
Fakultas Sastra  
University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto  
16 - 17 May 2015

# Proceedings

International Conference on  
Teaching English as a Foreign Language

“Questioning What Works Best:  
Implementing Pedagogic Innovations for  
Creating Teacher & Learner  
Autonomy in TEFL”





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Assalamu'alaikum wr. wb.,*



This Seventh Conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (7<sup>th</sup> COTEFL) is monumental this year, held to commemorate the golden anniversary of the University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto and the 15<sup>th</sup> one of Faculty of Letters. The word 'monumental' not only implies the spirit of gratitude for the anniversary, but also the commitment the Faculty of Letters has been making and sustaining to facilitate the development of English language learning and teaching by the conference. By the development, teaching English should be seen as growing along the growth of human culture in which the novelties of pedagogic innovations are there. Their essence not only marks the dynamic of English classrooms but also their implications on the independence of English learning process.

Hence, the conference focuses on the essence of pedagogic innovations on the learner autonomy. This theme is taken into account as the best practices from the theoretical domains of teaching method in attempt to enhance the students' self efficacy in learning and using English as a foreign language. It also suggests that the innovations should lead to the contextualization of English language from which the learner autonomy will be achieved.

At last, I would like to express my gratitude to all of presenters and participants who have attended and presented the papers. The gratitude is also expressed to the committee who has worked hard and well to run the program. For all inconveniences, may we be forgiven.

We will welcome you to our next conferences.

Purwokerto, 1 April 2015

**Sulasih Nurhayati, S.S., M.Hum.**

Dean of Faculty of Letters

## PREFACE



First of all I'd like to start by saying *Allhamdulillah* 'alamin, thanks to Allah for allowing us to have The 7th International Conference on Teaching English as A Foreign Language (7th COTEFL). I wish to thank the Rector, the University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto: DR. H. Syamsuhadi Irsyad S.H.,M.H. and the vice rectors for supporting us to have this conference. I wish to thank and congratulate the committee who has worked hard to prepare this annual activity. I'd like to thank all the keynote speakers: Bapak Anis Baswedan, Ph. D. (The Minister of Indonesian Education and Culture), Prof. James Chapman, Prof. Dr. Lindsay Miller, Assoc. Prof. Lubna Alsagof, Prof. Helena I.R Agustien, Shanty Hawanty, Ph.D., Handoyo Puji Widodo, P.h.D., and our Dean Ibu Sulasih Nurhayati. My gratitude also comes to our reviewers: Prof. Jufrizal, Rina Agustina, M.App.Ling. TESOL, Handoyo, Ph.D., Michelle Kohler, Hameed Barjesteh, Prof. Amporn Sa-ngiamwibool, Vineet Kaul, and Johana Woods for reading and sorting out lots of abstracts, to refine the best ones. I wish to thank the presenters, as you are the chosen. I wish to thank all the participants for spending your time at this COTEFL, without you all this conference will never be.

We have passed a long journey to survive. It was seven years ago we started this conference with the spirit of *Hari Pendidikan Nasional*. We realize that education, in which the day we celebrate every May 2nd, is one of principal elements we have to pay attention to make this country a counted one. COTEFL is meant to be parts of the endeavors to achieve the goal.

Surely, the people behind the education are the essence to drive the ideal education, then. In their hands, we rely on the future of our beloved country. I know I address to most of those angels, the teachers who will shape the face of the world. You are here now because you care, you want to promote your excellence, especially in English Language Teaching.

The papers we received have shown us that promoting good standards need good practices. Some of you show us you have done well. Some practice humanitarian touch in which varieties of activities done. Some prepare themselves by implementing high technology as well as creating new methods. The ultimate goal is to create an 'autonomous atmosphere' in the teaching and learning process of English in all education levels among the students and the teachers.

Your ideas are the seed of higher success tree that, I believe, can protect us from the hot sun's shine. They will grow up into big trees that give us fresh atmosphere to breathe, to live our life. I do hope our sharing ideas will exist, as we have passed it into the 7th COTEFL.

Finally, with the souls of *Hari Pendidikan Nasional*, let's color the education on earth. I wish you a fruitful and flying color conference. Thank you.

*Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.*

**Khristianto, S.S., M.Hum.**

Chairperson

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## FOSTERING EFL LEARNER AUTONOMY BY IMPLEMENTING PROJECT-BASED LEARNING IN EFL CLASS

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### ABSTRACT

Life in the twenty first century requires that people possess various kinds of life skills, such as decision-making, managerial, intrapersonal, interpersonal and technological skills. These skills are required to be owned by school graduates. Therefore, teachers must be capable of selecting instructional strategies appropriate for the development of life skills. A decision to select strategies depends on learners' characteristics and characteristics of competencies targeted to be achieved. In relation to learner autonomy, Tanyeli and Kutter (2013) state that one of the aims of English language curriculum has been learner autonomy by placing learner at the center of instruction. Supporting learner autonomy, Scharle and Szabo (2000) suggest the development of learner responsibility and learners' involvement in deciding their own learning. In addition, the development of students researchers (Nunan, 2003) constitute a step to learner autonomy. As a model of inquiry learning, project-based learning gives learners' room to determine direction of their own learning through negotiation during the planning stage of the project. In addition, research skills are acquired by learners through studying a topic or a problem deeply over a period of time. This paper examines project activities contributing to the formation autonomous learners by examining the project activities that promote learners' responsibility and the formation of research skills. In line with technical and sociocultural models of autonomy, these activities are believed to be able to lay a strong foundation in the formation of EFL learner autonomy.

**Keywords:** learner autonomy, project-based learning, EFL class

### 1. Introduction

Living in the twenty first century needs to own various kinds of life skills, such as decision-making, managerial, intrapersonal, interpersonal and technological skills. In response to this, intentionally school/university as an organization has formulated its vision as the institutional ideal targeted to be achieved in the future, and via its vision public will know the school ideal and direction. To realize its vision, a school/university needs to possess a number of supporting factors, in particular the existence of qualified human resources who are capable of translating its vision into reality. With regard to the production of competitive graduates, a

school/university is required to equip its graduates with such kinds of capabilities. A number of instructional strategies suitable to the development of various skills have to be selected by teachers.

In the case of instructional strategies, teachers may choose a number of strategies existing in the continuum of structured/guided to free learning activities. A decision to select the strategies depends on the characteristics of learners and the target competencies among them. In this respect, teachers are suggested to use learner-centered strategies believed to be able to maximize learners' active role as the



constructor of knowledge and minimize the teachers' role as the source of information.

The use of student-centered learning strategies triggers the development of learner autonomy as the outcome of education. Learner autonomy is important because it encourages each learner to find their own way of learning (Camileri, no year) [1]. Tanyeli & Kutter (2013) [2] add that [o]ne of the aims of English language curriculum has been learner autonomy by placing learner at the center of instruction.

In moving learners towards autonomy, Nunan (2003) [3] recommends a nine-step program to be taken into account when planning and implementing learner-centered instruction. The nine steps recommended are ordered sequentially as follows: 1) make instruction goals clear to learners, 2) allow learners to create their own goals, 3) encourage learners to use their second language outside the classroom, 4) raise awareness of learning processes, 5) help learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies, 6) encourage learner choice, 7) allow learners to generate their own tasks, 8) encourage learners to become teachers, and 9) encourage learners to become researchers. Steps one to three focus on the contents of instruction, whereas steps four to nine focus on the learning process.

Considering the previous statements, this paper examines the project activities fostering learners' responsibility and project activities fostering formation of research skills. These activities are believed to lay a strong foundation in the formation of learner autonomy as revealed in the technical and sociocultural models of autonomy.

## 2. Some Views of Learner Autonomy: Technical and Sociocultural Perspectives

There is no single definition of learner autonomy. According Holec (1981) cited in Qi (2012) [4] autonomy is defined as "the ability

to take charge of one's own learning". He further explains that "to take charge one's own learning is to have and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning. . Little (1991) in Tanyeli and Kutter (2013) [2] describes autonomy as "a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action". It is an ability which learners should act independently, reflect on their needs critically and make their own decisions. Two definitions indicate that autonomy refers to learners' ability to self-regulate the direction of their own learning. Learners are responsible for defining their learning goal, designing appropriate learning strategies, monitoring learning progress, and evaluating learning outcomes.

In the next development, referring to the previous definitions, learner autonomy is viewed from four perspectives, i.e. technical, psychological, sociocultural, and political-critical perspectives. For the purpose of this paper, technical and socio-cultural perspectives will be discussed. The following paragraphs are the summary of technical and sociocultural perspectives from Oxford (2003) [5].

### 2.1 Technical Perspective

The technical perspective emphasizes the situational conditions under which learner autonomy may develop (Oxford, 2003) [5]. Context in this perspective consists of literal surroundings, such as a self-access center, a classroom, a home setting, or a travel environment. The self-access center is the most frequently mentioned context in the technical perspective. In self-access center, learners are totally responsible for the decisions of their learning and the implementations of these decisions. The development of agency is merely a matter of handing over the reins, of giving students greater control over or access to resources of letting them to negotiate what, when, and how they want to learn. Motivation is variable, depending on the situational

conditions and the response of the individual to those conditions. If the learner wishes to read more effectively, solo learning may be satisfactorily motivating, chiefly if the person has an introverted style and therefore enjoys working alone. The technical perspective treats learning strategies merely as tools that are 'given' by the teacher to the students through learner training or strategy instruction.

The technical perspective with its emphasis on external conditions has value. A rich description of literal, physical circumstances is often very important for understanding psychological, social, and political factors in learning situations.

## 2.2 Sociocultural Perspective

The sociocultural perspective on learner autonomy involves socially mediated learning by emphasizing on social interaction as a major part of cognitive and language development. More importantly, the sociocultural perspective centers on the development of human capacity through interaction.

Sociocultural perspective mostly relies on the work of Vygotsky. In this perspective, context is important in two ways, i.e. (1) learning is situated in particular context, and (2) context consists of a particular kind of relationship through mediated learning. Mediation involves dynamic interaction between the learner and more capable learner. Mediation can also occur through books, technology, and cultural artifact. Mediation helps learners move through the zone of proximal development. In sociocultural perspective, agency is viewed as the power to control one's learning through self-regulation. The more capable other provides the learner with scaffolding consisting of various kinds of assistance, the learner becomes more self-regulated. Motivation is not highlighted as a key feature, but it is important. In this perspective, learner is motivated to become a self-regulated learner. Learning strategies are not typically used, although metacognitive,

cognitive and social learning strategies are clearly implicit in Vygotsky's work.

## 3. Project-based Learning

### 3.1 Definition

Following Becket (2002) [6], the term 'project-based learning' in this paper is used interchangeably with other terms, such as project work, project method, project approach, project-oriented approach, and project-based instruction.

There is no one accepted definition of project-based learning. According to Becket (2002) [6] a project is defined as "a long-term (several weeks) activity that involves a variety of individual and cooperative tasks, such as developing a research plan and questions, and implementing the plan through empirical or document research that includes collecting, analyzing, and reporting data orally and/or in writing". More comprehensively, Buck Institute for Education (2010) [7] states that "project-based learning requires students to go through an extended process of inquiry to respond to a complex question, problem or challenge. While allowing for some student "voice and choice", rigorous projects are carefully planned, managed and assessed to help students learn key academic content practice 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking), and create high quality, authentic products and presentations".

Of the two definitions, it can be restated that project-based learning refers to an inquiry teaching method that asks students to investigate a complex problem through individual and cooperative tasks for a certain period of time. Students' voice can be heard by involving them, chiefly during the planning stage of the project.

### 3.2 Steps in Project-based Learning

The project approach is an emergent approach to developing and implementing

curriculum in the classroom. This style of curriculum is not prescribed in advance (Leekeenan & Edwards, 1992) [8], rather it is built together with children in the classroom.

Different writer proposes different steps in applying project-based learning. Principally the project activities can be classified into planning, implementation and evaluation stage. Alan and Stoller (2005) [9] propose 10 steps, whereas Katz and Chards (1992) [10] propose five steps in implementing the project-based learning.

The ten steps are listed in the following: 1) agreeing on a project, 2) determining the final outcome of the project, 3) structuring the project, 4) preparing students for information gathering, 5) gathering information, 6) preparing students for compiling and analyzing data, 7) compiling and analyzing information, 8) preparing students for the final activity, 9) presenting final product, 10) evaluating the project. Steps 1 to 3 belong to planning stage, steps 4 to 9 belong to implementation stage, and step 10 belongs to evaluation stage. Katz and Chards (1992) [10] propose five steps in implementing the project-based learning. Planning stage starts with topic selection and preliminary teacher planning. Implementation stage continues with getting the project started and project in progress, while evaluation stage is closed with concluding the project.

#### 4. Project-based Learning and EFL Learner Autonomy

In language education, autonomy defined as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning' is used in five different ways: 1) for situations in which learners study entirely on their own, 2) for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning, 3) for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education, 4) for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning, 5) for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning (Benson & Voller, 2003 in Nunan, 2003) [3]. Further, it is

stated that the most important abilities that can control students' learning are those that allow learners to plan their own learning activities, monitor their own progress and evaluate their outcomes. The strategy believed to be effective in the formation of autonomous learners (learners who are capable of controlling their own learning) is the learner-centered instruction emphasizing on learners' construction of knowledge through mediation.

As a learner-centered approach, project-based learning promotes learner autonomy because there is a room for students to decide on what they will do and how they will carry out (James, 2001 in Blazquez, 2007) [11]. In addition, students' active involvement in gathering, processing, and reporting information leads to mastery of content knowledge and language skills. Besides, this also increases learners' motivation, autonomy, and a more positive attitude towards English (Alan & Stoller (2005) [9].

##### 4.1 Project Activities Fostering the Formation of Responsible Learners

To foster learner autonomy, Scharle and Szabo (2000) [12] suggest the development learners' responsibility and active participation in making decision of their learning.

There are many project activities that are believed to give contribution to the development of learners' responsibility. In preparing the project, for example, learners must be involved actively in the process of developing the project. In this case, teachers and learners have to negotiate in selecting the project topic, in determining the final outcome of the project, and in structuring the project activities. When students are actively involved in planning the project, they are stimulated and asked to own the project. These managerial skills in the long run will trigger the formation of self-regulated learners. They independently determine learning objectives, define contents and progressions, select teaching methods and

techniques, monitor their own learning, and to evaluate what has been acquired. When the project runs, learners must also be in charge of completing the project tasks (in teams, in pairs, and/or individually) based on the project structure and schedule. In this case, teachers serve as a mediator, facilitator, mentor, and advisor. The end phase of the project also gives students' responsibility to evaluate the whole process of the project. The domains to be assessed are related to the language skills and subject-matter mastery by using multiple forms of assessment techniques, such as self-assessment, peers assessment, and portfolio assessment.

#### 4.2 Project Activities Fostering the Formation of Research Skills

Research skills embodying in project activities is a path in the development of learner autonomy (Nunan, 2003) [3]. Through stages in a project, learners will learn the value of objectivity and honesty as the important characteristics of autonomous learners.

Following the concept of scientific method, project-based learning adapts the scientific process in structuring the project activities. The scientific method moves from the process of identifying research problem, reviewing literature, formulating hypothesis, developing research instruments, collecting and analyzing data, up to reporting the research results. As described previously that project-based learning starts from planning the project, implementing the project and evaluating the project. Through project-based learning, students do not learn the contents of instruction passively as happened in the model of teacher-centered instruction. In contrast, students learn the contents of instruction and language skills actively through various modes of instruction, such as reading, listening, writing, speaking, conducting observation, interview, studying documents, and internet searching.

Learning from a ten-step process of project work advocated by Alan and Stoller (2005) [9], it becomes clear that guidance from EFL teachers is still needed although project-based learning is a form of student-centered instruction. Teachers' facilitation are needed since the beginning stage up to the evaluation stage.

In the planning stage, for example, teachers have to listen to students voice in determining the project topic, the project outcome, and the project structure (structured project, semi-structured project, and unstructured project). In the implementation stage, before students gather information, teachers need to prepare skills for conducting interview, observation or documentation. Before interview, for example, teachers provide learning activities on how to ask questions and follow-up questions, to request clarification, and to take notes. Besides, teachers also guide students how to manage the data collected, analyze and interpret the data, write a report, and conduct oral presentation. In the last phase of the project, students are given opportunities to reflect on the language mastered and the subject-matter acquired during the project. In addition, students are asked to make recommendations for improving similar projects in the future. Then, teachers provide feedback on students language and content learning.

#### 5. Conclusion

Possessing various kinds of life skills is needed in order to live in the twenty first century. Consequently, school needs to facilitate the development of those life skills. As learner autonomy becomes an important issue to respond to the needs of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers must be capable of selecting model of instruction that supports the formation of autonomous learners. Autonomous learners must be in charge of their own learning that includes determining learning objectives,

contents, and strategies to achieve the objectives. This paper has analyzed project activities contributing to the formation of autonomous learners by examining activities promoting learners' responsibility and activities promoting formation of research skills. Through stages in a project, learners will learn the value of objectivity and honesty as the important characteristics of autonomous learners.

As learner autonomy is an important issue in EFL curriculum, EFL teachers of the secondary levels of education and tertiary levels of education in Indonesia are suggested to implement project-based learning as one of the instructional strategies that facilitate the development of autonomous learners. Project-based learning can be used as an alternative to complement the different models of instruction under the constructivist learning theory.

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