

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter discusses several theories used for the present study. It is divided into several parts such as a brief history of learner autonomy, perceptions of learner autonomy, promoting learner autonomy (the teacher's roles and the learner's roles), criteria of learner autonomy, issues and problems in the implementation of learner autonomy, and previous studies about learner autonomy. Furthermore, the last section is concluding remarks.

#### **2.1 Learner Autonomy: A Brief History**

Autonomy has become one of the interests in the field of language education for years. The idea of autonomy actually did not originally come from the language teaching and learning fields, but rather got the historical roots from the field of philosophy (Benson, 2009, as cited in Gholami, 2016). It was then brought and imported via psychology and educational theory into language teaching. Further, the idea derived from the philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill that contended the essential of free will as working society basis, which leads to the basis of learner autonomy (Benson, 2011, as cited in Ikonen, 2013). Educational reformers, philosophers, and educators (e.g. Rousseau, Dewey) tried to link autonomy to learning and teaching fields (Ikonen, 2013). Despite the fact that autonomy was not rooted from education, it has received more attention in the field of language education for decades and become the educational goal (Little, 1991). Interestingly, as it has been mentioned that the notion of learner autonomy has attracted many researchers especially in the language education field, many have tried to study how to promote it. However, before coming to the practices of promoting it, it is important to understand what the concept of learner autonomy actually means.

### 2.1.1 Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

The word perception derived from the Latin *percipere* which means “to receive, understand.” Cambridge (2008) defined perception as a belief and sight. It could be as opinion based on how things seem to people. Moreover, it could be one’s ability to be aware and understand things. Fakhry (2018) states, “perception equates the sum of your past conditioning.” It is shaped by experience. In this case it is perceptions of learner autonomy or about one’s way of understanding autonomy based on his/her experience.

The idea of learner autonomy in second language education was firstly introduced by Holec, the ‘father’ of learner autonomy in 1981. The notion of learner autonomy is perceived as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, as cited in Ikonen, 2013, p. 5). It can be seen that autonomy is a potential which lies within the learner. Benson (2006) explained that the definition by Holec has been widely used in the field. Sometimes, the ‘ability’ is replaced by the word ‘capacity’ like the definition by Little (1991), ‘to take charge’ becomes ‘take responsible for’ or ‘take control of’ one’s own learning. However, the main element of the definitions is actually that autonomy is ‘an attribute of learners, rather than learning situations’ (Dickinson, 1987, as cited in Benson, 2006). In sum, autonomy is the ability, potential, or capacity residing in the learner to take control of his or her own learning.

Interestingly, learner autonomy can be viewed from several perspectives such as technical, psychological, political, and sociocultural. According to Oxford (2003), technical perspective emphasizes the physical situation of the learning. Psychological perspective emphasizes learner’s characteristics. Political perspective focuses on power, access, and ideologies. Meanwhile, sociocultural perspective focuses on mediated learning.

#### 2.1.1.1 Technical Perspectives on Learner Autonomy

Technical perspectives focus learner autonomy on the settings of learning (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) or the physical situation. It is on the ‘when’ and ‘where’

learning takes place and ‘how’ it occurs. It also includes strategies of self-management in learning. It involves planning and organizing one’s learning and evaluating it as well for both within and out-of-classroom (Xhafferi, Waldisphül, Eriksson-Hotz, & Xhafferi, 2015). According to Benson (1997), as cited in Lee (2013), technical perspectives tend to focus on equipping learners with techniques and skills. It also encompasses situational conditions for the development of autonomy.

Moreover, autonomy is viewed as skills for ‘independent learning’ situations, for example in a self-access learning center (Oxford, 2003). It is also focused on skills and strategies (Benson, 1997, as cited in Palfreyman, 2003). From technical perspectives, learning strategies are taken into account as tools which are imparted by the teacher to their learners through strategy instruction. Considering this perspective, teachers may impart learning strategies to their learners to learn autonomously. Moreover, they need to bear in mind that situational conditions in classroom and beyond can develop learner autonomy. For instance, by encouraging learners to make use of learning activities in their own learning (e.g. making use of technology, self-access learning, etc.), learner autonomy can be promoted.

### **2.1.1.2 Psychological Perspectives on Learner Autonomy**

Little (1991) as cited in Benson (2009, p. 23) put psychology at the heart of learner autonomy. He defined autonomy as a *capacity* which is to detach, reflect critically, make decision, and act independently. The capacity can be seen from the way the learner learns and ‘how he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts.’ According to Benson (1997), as cited in Palfreyman (2003, p. 3), “a ‘psychological’ perspective, emphasizing broader attitudes and cognitive abilities which enable the learner to take responsibility for his/her own learning.” It emphasizes one’s characteristics in learning in which those characteristics make them responsible for their own learning.

Oxford (2003) believed that from this perspective, autonomy is viewed as a mixture of individual characteristics. The factors include attitudes, ability, learning strategies and styles. In this perspective, learning strategies are considered as

individual's psychological trait which can be changed through practice and strategy instruction. Thus, the psychological perspectives focus on identifying emotional and mental traits of learners and linking them to the development of learner autonomy. According to Candy (1991), as cited in Çakıcı (2015), autonomous learners tend to be reflective, self-aware, open and highly motivated.

In Indonesian EFL settings, a study by Lengkanawati (2017) revealed that psychological outlooks give an insight of some characteristics such age, motivation, self-evaluation, eventually influence learner's learning success. There is a link between motivation and learner autonomy (Benson, 2007). When one is motivated in learning, it is likely he/ she can develop autonomy. Considering motivation as one of the traits of autonomous language learners, teachers should be able to encourage their learners to learn autonomously.

### **2.1.1.3 Political Perspectives on Learner Autonomy**

Political perspectives focus on 'the issues and control' of learning itself. According to Oxford (2003), this perspective emphasizes power, access, and ideologies to cultural alternatives. In this perspective, it involves power or control of one's situation to be free and have choices in learning. Additionally, Palfreyman (2003) believed that a political outlook tends to focus on the encouragement of learners by providing them power over their learning (for example, in the contents or processes). Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) pointed out that political perspectives associate with providing choices to students about their own learning, for instance by giving support to them. The support can be in the form of the choices of the activities they want to learn, or how they choose their own learning styles or strategies in learning on their own.

Benson (1997) as cited in Palfreyman (2003) argued that political autonomy in language learning is more suitable in adult education context to support them seeing the knowledge and truth contextually and acknowledge that they can learn by themselves or in a group. Education is considered as inevitably political process according to Holec and Illich (Little, 1991). It has both positive and negative sides. In positive side, it means that learner is given freedom to take part in the learning

community. However, in negative side, it seems that there are challenges which there is a discrepancy between traditional educational processes and how we naturally interact and learn from each other in a learning community.

Littlewood (1996) as cited in Horváthová (n.d) believed that from a political perspective, an autonomous language learner is the one who has independent *capacity* to make decision and choices for their own learning. Thus, it has something to do with decision-making and choice-making that rule one's actions in their learning. From political perspectives, motivation also becomes one of the learner's traits in which it is linked to be free, to be heard and to have own choices. For learners, learning strategies also play a role to help show access within power positions and cultural alternatives.

In Indonesian EFL context, Lengkanawati (2017) investigated the teachers' beliefs of learner autonomy. She believed that learner autonomy has not well uplifted as one of the teaching-learning object. Regarding political perspectives, she mentioned that they encompass the learners' rights in classroom which generally are not manifest in a traditional classroom setting. It is assumed that learners could not be political in their learning because the learning is more teacher-centered. However, from political perspectives, it is clear that learners should have an independent capacity for making decision and choices which rule their actions in the learning process.

#### **2.1.1.4 Sociocultural Perspectives on Learner Autonomy**

The notion that learner autonomy has been considered as the Western ideal emphasizing the usefulness of 'active participation' and 'individualism' as essential to the critiques of autonomy addressed (Benson, 2006). Little (1999) argues that when it comes to autonomy in formal learning which is seen as 'a special case of a more general human behavioural trait', we should consider carefully about the cultural setting in which the learning occurs. For instance, the notion of autonomy is considered unsuitable for African settings for using technology-based approaches to language instruction (Sonaiya, 2002, as cited in Benson, 2006). Particularly in Asia in the 1990s, the notion also has been addressed mainly in favour of group-

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oriented approaches to the implementation of autonomy in these settings (Benson, 2006). Neupane (2010) states that in a culture which prioritize groups or communities, people tend to have their identity which is based on the community they belong to. This seems to be that learner autonomy works in self-oriented culture rather than in collectivist culture (Holliday, 2007, as cited in Neupane, 2010). However, she concluded that no matter what culture people belong to, they like individual freedom. It means that culture does not seem to be a challenge for fostering learner autonomy.

As Little (1999) argues that autonomy in formal learning context is a special case of a more common human behavioral characteristic, we need to have careful attention on the cultural setting in which the learning happens. In sociocultural perspectives, Oxford (2003) focused it on mediated learning. It is a learning where students and their teachers socially interact to empower the student's learning experience. She noted two types of the sociocultural perspectives labelled as Sociocultural I and II. Sociocultural I focuses on the work of Vygotsky. In Sociocultural I perspective, autonomy is defined as self-regulation which is acquired through social interaction with a more quality, mediated person in a certain setting. Mediation can also take place through books, technology, or other ways. It means that learning is occurred in a certain context in which a learner learns in a social and cultural setting where particular individuals live. This also includes a specific relationship between the learner and a more capable individual although mediated learning can occur through other means. Motivation is quite essential in this perspective since it is viewed as the trait which can encourage learner to be a self-regulated individual. Meanwhile, in Sociocultural II perspective, autonomy is not considered as the main goal. The main goal here is rather participation in the community of practice takes places. This perspective depends upon meaningful mediated learning. It occurs in a specific time and place. Moreover, it emphasizes on the context of autonomy than the thought of individual practicing it.

Smith and Ushioda (2009) as cited in Dang (2010) believed that learner autonomy is a socially-shaped variable. It is construed when one negotiates with his/her living environment. It is acquired during the processes of one being a part

of a community in which he/she needs to face various kinds of matters, people, and relationships in daily life. Related to learning in higher education, in Vietnamese education setting, Dang (2010) states that the lecturers need to consider the local sociocultural traits in order to know learners' level of learner autonomy and give appropriate facilities to support their language learning. In a local context, Lamb's study (2004) revealed that in an Indonesian state school, the autonomy was displayed by the two participants. He believed that it is shaped by, and for, the local context because motivated students are influenced to look for learning for themselves outside classroom. He suggests that if schools want to fully contribute to students' learning, they need to know that language learning is going on which is inspired by culture. Giroux and Simon (1989) as cited in Lamb (2004) state that schools need to know the relevance of everyday life situations. Therefore, they can help students become aware of their learning.

Accordingly, it is important to view learner autonomy from sociocultural perspective. As Oxford (2003) noted, Sociocultural I perspective views autonomy as self-regulation acquired through social interaction with a more capable individual in a situated, mediated, and meaningful learning. However, Sociocultural II perspective does not consider autonomy as the primary goal. The primary goal is rather a participation in the community of practice. Considering the explanation, it is important to consider the traits of sociocultural by facilitating learners in their language learning (e.g. opening the doors to 'the relevance of everyday life' of popular culture with English-language media).

## **2.1.2 Fostering Learner Autonomy**

### **2.1.2.1 The Teacher's Roles**

When it comes to the notion of learner autonomy, it is not necessarily learning alone, and it does not mean that teachers completely free themselves from teaching their learners. They have indeed significant role in supporting their learners to self-realize and offering regular guidance in learning (Benson & Voller, 1997, as cited in Xu, 2015). They need to play their roles to promote autonomous learning itself to their students beyond and inside the class.

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Camilleri (1997) states that in an autonomous learning, the importance of the teacher's role is clear and evident. The teacher plays as manager, a resource person, and a counsellor. (1) *The teacher as manager*: the teacher no longer transfers knowledge, but rather a person who can see connections. She should be good at planning both for short-term and long-term, individuals or groups. She should be able to give ways to her students and provide what consequences for each path taken. The teacher also needs to be a role model for the students, so they may imitate that way. (2) *The teacher as resource person*: the teacher makes the best use of learning atmospheres by supporting the students to be aware of various strategies, for instance, in developing learning style awareness. She also needs supports of the school to provide various materials and optimize them to be employed in learning. (3) *The teacher as counsellor*: being able to assist them in their learning processes and giving responses meaningfully to learning problems occurred.

Joshi (2011) also pointed out that teachers' roles are various based on contexts and personalities like learners'. He further states that in autonomous learning, the roles are to facilitate learning (a facilitator), organize learning (an organizer), give feedback and encouragement (a resource person), create learning atmosphere and space (a creator), co-operate (a co-operator), and initiate (an initiator) rather than authorize (authority). Knowing the roles, teachers need to be aware that autonomous learning requires them to make effort by playing those roles in their teaching. By playing the roles, they are indeed helping their learners become autonomous ones.

### **2.1.2.2 The Learner's Roles**

Learners play a crucial role in autonomous learning. They need to take responsibility for their own learning. But this does not merely mean learning alone. According to Holec (1981) as cited in Chan (2001, p. 506), in autonomous learning, a learner is expected to develop the capacity to take responsibility of every phase of their learning which includes:

- setting learning goals;
- identifying and developing learning strategies to achieve such goals;

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- developing study plans;
- reflecting on learning (which includes identifying problem areas and means of addressing these problems);
- identifying and selecting relevant resources and support; and
- assessing one's own progress (which includes defining criteria for evaluating performance and learning).

According to Joshi (2011), since learner is expected to take charge of his/her own learning, a new role for the learner is necessary which can be defined as: 'good learner', 'responsible learner', and 'aware learner'. 'A good learner' is expected to decide choices of learning objectives, content and materials to learn, methods and techniques, and how they assess their learning progress and outcomes (Holec, 1979, as cited in Joshi, 2011). Meanwhile, 'a responsible learner' is a person who accepts to take responsibility for effective learning and be co-operative with his/her teacher to monitor the learning progress through the paths available. 'An aware learner' is the one who is aware of the linkage between what they learn, how they learn and the resources available to control their learning. In autonomous learning, it is clear that the learner should be the one who is being active, doing most of the learning on their own with considering the facilitation and suggestions given by their teachers.

Thus, it can be summed up that autonomous learning is not learning without teacher. Both teachers and learners have their own roles. Teachers are not free from their task of teaching. They play significant roles such as manager, facilitator, monitor, resource person, counsellor, organizer, and initiator. Meanwhile, learners are expected to be the ones who are mostly active to participate and take responsibility for their learning.

### **2.1.3 Contexts of the Application of Learner Autonomy**

Talking about learner autonomy, Benson (2007) divided the contexts of the application into two: autonomy in the classroom, and autonomy beyond the classroom. Though initially learner autonomy is considered as a concept which is

promoted in the classroom, it is not limited there. It means that learning would not be effective if it only happens in the classroom. Students need to learn more beyond the classroom in order to develop their autonomy.

### **2.1.3.1 Autonomy in the Classroom**

When it comes to learning process, there would be likely that students should be the agent to develop their autonomy by taking charge of their own learning. They need to be responsible, make decisions, and be active in taking part of their learning. Classroom might become one of the places to develop their autonomy. However, developing autonomy is not limited to what are done by the students themselves in the classroom. For initial process, teachers could make efforts to promote learner autonomy especially if they are faced with non-autonomous learners. Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCinto, and Turner (2004) proposed ways of thinking about the practices that may encourage student decision making and ownership. By employing a qualitative research, they suggested three various ways to support autonomy: organizational autonomy support, procedural autonomy support, and cognitive autonomy support. Organizational autonomy support includes allowing students to decide on classroom management issues. Procedural autonomy support is like providing various choices to the students about the use of various media in learning. Cognitive support encompasses providing opportunities to students to learn how to self-evaluate their work with a self-referent standard. Their study suggests the teacher's role is to serve focused scaffolding for metacognitive skills to support the student's cognitive autonomy.

The fact that it was suggested that teachers have their roles to encourage their students' cognitive autonomy is then contested by other researchers. Ma and Gao (2010) tried to focus their study by focusing on developing the process syllabus negotiation as the basis of promoting learner autonomy. They believed that by providing learners with circumstances and contexts through developing process syllabus, they can be encouraged to make their own decisions for their learning since there is negotiation. Their study shows that through negotiated syllabus especially in negotiating purposes, contents, and methods of working and

evaluation of the learning, there is a shift in decision making in which students play the power to decide and be responsible for their own learning with indicating high motivation.

In views of the studies above that suggesting students should be highly motivated in an autonomous learning, some researchers then tried to implement several ways such as techniques, blogging, project-based learning, and ICT in promoting learner autonomy. Lee (2011) identified the use of blogging to promote learner autonomy and intercultural competence through a study abroad. She tried to promote autonomous learning through integrated modalities of asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) via blogs and face-to-face (FTF) interaction employing interviews to L1 or native speakers. The study involved 16 American undergraduate students who took part in blogs to enhance their intercultural competence for one-semester study abroad program. The findings revealed that blogs facilitated students with the opportunity to be independent in working on content and to learn to reflect upon cross-cultural issues they encountered. However, it seems that the students felt cognitively challenged to critically reflect on different points of view. She assumed that they were not used to reflecting. Moreover, the study shows that type of task promoted autonomy in various ways. Students could take control over their own learning when they were given free topics to work. Therefore, she suggests that in order to promote learner autonomy and intercultural competence through blogging, there is a need to design a task well, maximize metacognitive and cognitive skills, and give better access to the Internet.

In Bali, Indonesia, Padmadewi (2016) tried to investigate techniques of promoting autonomous learning in a primary bilingual school. Her study shows that the teacher implemented several techniques to promote students' learner autonomy. Some of the techniques are encouraging the use of reading log for students in which they got trained to like reading and choose their own reading books, evaluate their reading log, get rewards through 'reading rocket system' to get them interested in reading, improving students' literacy and critical thinking through Reading Response Journal system, and empowering students' reading habits. She states that

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by employing the techniques in the EFL classroom, learner autonomy can be encouraged. She also admitted that there is a limitation of not quantitatively the effects of each technique on the student literacy.

On the other hand, in a secondary school context, Yuliani and Lengkanawati (2017) tried to promote a project-based learning to promote learner autonomy. They employed a descriptive qualitative design at six participants of Junior High School students, grade nine for their study. The project was a role play. The result shows that project-based learning has promoted learner autonomy in the EFL classroom. The findings revealed that there are differences of learner autonomy among students. Moreover, there is a linear relationship between learner autonomy and students' achievements. Then, learner autonomy requires process which indicates irregular patterns. They also acknowledge that there is no one who is totally autonomous. Furthermore, seen from the three phases of project-based activity, it was shown that students reached highest level of learner autonomy especially in the implementation process.

Considering that there is a need to help students become responsible and can have choices to decide their own learning, Ardi (2017) then investigated the implementation of *Schoology* M-Learning Platform in an EAP class. His study tried to find out how *Schoology* promoted learner autonomy in an EAP class consisting of twenty-one students adopting a blended learning method. The study revealed that *Schoology* m-learning platform encouraged students to be autonomous. They could learn how to take control over their own learning since the application enabled them to learn best according to their pace, time, and place as well. They could also communicate and interact with their peers during their learning. Moreover, they could explore more materials available online. Thus, he recommended that *Schoology* should be incorporated in English language learning and teaching in order to promote learner autonomy. He also suggested that there is a necessity for future studies to assess the issue of engagement on *Schoology* integrated in the learning to explain how the application may serve to provide learners with better English learning experiences.

In the context of the application of learner autonomy in the classroom, both learners and teachers have things to do, for instance, learners should try to be responsible for their own learning, and teachers should make efforts to help them become autonomous. Some of the ways to develop learner autonomy could be by consulting the syllabus with the students, using technology in learning, implementing techniques to improve students' English skills which can develop their autonomy as well, using project-based learning, and providing practices which support autonomy.

### **2.1.3.2 Autonomy Beyond the Classroom**

The application of learner autonomy is not only limited in the classroom. Learners are expected to learn more beyond the classroom. They can develop their autonomy by using a number of ways in learning. Benson (2007, p. 26) exemplified some of the ways to develop learner autonomy beyond the classrooms as follows.

**Self-Access:** Students can learn on their own by making good use of learning facilities such as self-access center provided in their schools. A self-access center serves to provide materials when students can try to learn more on their own there.

**Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL):** CALL could be referred to the use of the computer in language teaching and learning. Today's era has been favored by the existence of the internet and computers resulting in CALL as the product of those instruments (Joshi, 2011). By making good use of CALL, learners can learn language autonomously.

**Distance Learning:** This is a kind of independent or remote learning in which the students can learn by themselves. This learning is a means which has no having face-to-face contact with their teachers in the classroom.

**Tandem Learning:** This learning is such a cooperative way in which two people are learning each other's language and discover a culture. In short, the two people are helping each other in learning a language. For example, a student may learn English from a native speaker and at the same time the native learns the student's language as well. Thus, both of them are benefitted in learning each other language.

**Study Abroad:** Nowadays many schools offer their students to join an exchange program. A study abroad program is likely designed to develop students' learning way to be more independent. Though their study most takes place in the classroom, they will also learn independently from interacting with the local people. By doing interaction, they are likely to develop their autonomy.

**Out-of-Class Learning:** The learning would likely to take place outside the classroom meaning that students may engage themselves in any activities to develop their autonomy. For instance, they may take classroom-based language courses where they can practice the language outside the classroom as a part of their autonomous learning.

**Self-Instruction:** This refers to the way in which the learners are learning without direct control of their teachers. This could be done by the use of printed or broadcast self-study materials which the learners use to study by themselves. Therefore, by doing self-instruction, learners would be likely to develop their autonomy.

#### **2.1.4 Criteria of Learner Autonomy**

The way students display autonomy in the learning can be seen from the criteria of learner autonomy. According to Dickinson (1987) as cited in Kumaravadivelu (2003), there are some terms used in learner autonomy to see if students display autonomy such as: (1) self-instruction in which it can be seen when students are working without teacher's direct control; (2) self-direction in which students are being responsible for all decisions made regarding the learning; (3)

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self-access learning in which students utilize learning material and instructional technology; and (4) individualized instruction in which learning process is adapted by teacher or student to meet individual learner's characteristics.

Alpha Omega Academy (2012) states that students who depend on their teachers for instruction can start building autonomous learning characteristics. The essential autonomous learning traits include (1) curiosity: finding out more about the world, seeking out ways to explore more; (2) self-motivation: having internal goals to achieve; (3) self-examination: evaluating their progress; (4) accountability: being responsible for consequences; (5) critical thinking: examining all possibilities; (6) comprehension with little or no instruction: seeking ways to understand material through trial-and-error; and (7) persistence: striving to understand a concept as much as possible on their own before seeking others' help. Moreover, Candy (1991) as cited in Çakıcı (2015) states the characteristics related to autonomous learners include having methods and discipline in learning; thinking analytically, critically, and logically; being reflective and self-aware, curious, open and highly motivated; being adaptable, having competence of interdependence and interpersonal; being strong-willed, responsible; willing to take risks and having creativity; having self-sufficiency, seeking information, having knowledge and skills about learning process.

To encourage learner autonomy, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2013) as cited in British Council (n.d) suggested five ways for teachers such as talking to students about autonomy and its value, encouraging learners to engage in autonomous behaviours, getting learners to reflect on their learning, using activities in class which promote autonomy, and setting activities out of class which promote autonomy. Additionally, Nunan (1997, p. 195) as cited in Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) proposed a framework for empowering autonomy among learners in a language programme as follows.

Table 2.1  
*A Framework for Empowering Learner Autonomy*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Learner action</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Process</b>
<b>1</b>	Awareness	Raising awareness	learners' of the strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and

		pedagogical goals of the materials used.	identify their own preferred learning styles/strategies.
2	Involvement	Learners are involved in selecting their own goals from a list of alternatives given.	Learners make choices among a range of options.
3	Intervention	Learners take part in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the programme.	Learners adapt tasks.
4	Creation	Learners create their own goals and objectives.	Learners create their own tasks.
5	Transcendence	Learners go beyond the classroom and make links between what they learn in class and the outside world.	Learners become teachers and researchers.

Following the explanation above, it is essential to encourage students to self-instruct and self-direct, for example, when it comes to have some practices. They can be more encouraged to be logical, analytical, and critical for making the best use of available learning materials to support their own learning. Furthermore, teacher may help them to finally adapt learning based on their characteristics. Teacher needs to see the criteria or characteristics and help students as well to finally be responsible for their own learning resulting a better learning outcome. Moreover, they can see the learner actions to take place in order to encourage autonomy in class.

### 2.1.5 Issues and Problems in the Implementation of Learner Autonomy

According to Little (1991), issues and problems in the implementation of learner autonomy can be seen in four sides: the teacher (regarding the initiatives taken by the teacher, e.g. teaching by examples, teacher's eagerness, and teacher's commitment), the learner (regarding the learner's level of autonomy), the process of learning (regarding learning scheme taking place and also involves learning resources and aids), and learner training to help learners decide what is best to go about their own learning.



Moreover, Pichugova, Stepura, and Pravosudov (2015) found most important issues of promoting learner autonomy drawn from some theories and approaches (e.g. Holec, Little, Nunan, Reinders, Sinclair, Thanasoulas, Usuki, etc.) such as learner's independent choices about their own learning, goals and needs in which learners need to set, support provided by the teacher for the learners, emotional climate to establish atmosphere to engage students to accept pedagogy change, learning strategies (e.g. learners' awareness of the ways they learn best), learner attitude and motivation (e.g. learners' reflection and motivation on their learning), and self-esteem (e.g. learners' evaluation made of their own worth with their language learning).

Based on the explanation above, Little (1991) broadly exemplified issues and problems of fostering learner autonomy in EFL context in four ways: the teacher, the learner, the learning process, and learner training. Meanwhile, Pichugova, Stepura, and Pravosudov (2015) classified the issues into seven and more focused on the learner itself. Therefore, it is important to note that teachers may encounter those problems when they foster learner autonomy in their teaching practice. Thus, it is suggested that teachers equip themselves with instruction to foster learner autonomy.

### **2.1.6 Related Studies**

Despite the fact that many studies have been focused on how learner autonomy is promoted through some ways, some gaps are still identified. Some of them are within the scopes of beliefs and perceptions.

The first gap about beliefs was addressed by Xu (2009) who identified the beliefs of Chinese non-English post-graduate students. By employing a survey, the study revealed that the overall degree of the postgraduates' autonomous English learning was not satisfactory. It was found that they had no clear motivation and objectives of autonomous second language learning in their stage of postgraduate degree. Moreover, they failed to be aware of the importance and the role of English language in their major study. Furthermore, most of them tend to be passive in cooperative learning and English activities (e.g. writing paper in English).

Therefore, there should be efforts made to promote the significance of learner autonomy and contribute to the understanding of learner autonomy for postgraduate students.

In addition to the first gap about beliefs about learner autonomy, Joshi (2011) investigated more on autonomous learning activities undertaken by Master's degree students majoring in English education program at one of universities in Kathmandu, Nepal. By employing a survey, he found that the learners made a good practice of autonomous activities while learning English. They also perceived that they play a crucial role in learning. Besides, it revealed that the teachers were highly positive towards autonomous learning and suggested that their learners should be autonomous.

Another study was conducted in identifying beliefs but more on the role of a certain way to promote autonomy. Mutlu and Eroz-Tuğa (2013) identified the students' beliefs in the role of CALL in promoting learner autonomy at a private university in Ankara, Turkey. They utilized language learning environments assisted with technology. Their study selected forty-eight students with intermediate level to be the participants. They were divided into two different groups: Strategy Training Group (STG) and Non-Strategy Training Group (NSTG). The STG got a five-week language learning strategy training through CALL while the NSTG continued with the university's curriculum. The study reveals that the STG indicated improvement in their language learning strategies usage, were highly motivated, and tended to be responsible for their own learning compared to the NSTG did. Therefore, they suggested that course objectives and classroom activities should be revised and designed in order to foster learner autonomy.

Considering the studies above about beliefs, in Vietnam, Nguyen (2014) also studied the teachers' beliefs of learner autonomy in the teaching practices in Vietnamese higher education level. The study revealed key underlying reasons why learner autonomy was not manifest in the teaching practices in Vietnamese higher education because teachers viewed a range of challenges. The challenges included their lack of understanding about the concept of learner autonomy, lack of time, little belief that their students have capability of becoming autonomous learners in

**Suci Noer Wulan Sari, 2019**

***LEARNER AUTONOMY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: LEARNING FROM NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' AND ENGLISH TEACHERS' VOICES***

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their learning. Thus, lack of understanding of learner autonomy led to little evidence of learner autonomy in the teaching practices.

Meanwhile, a study by Talley (2014) was more focused on identifying the students' beliefs in learner autonomy in Taiwan. The study revealed that the students viewed autonomous learning as significantly beneficial for its positive learning environment. Moreover, it was found that they could develop their learning strategies since it provided real opportunity to monitor the learning processes during instruction. The teachers were also found being aware of their students' thoughts on autonomous learning which could encourage their motivation and enhance their cooperation. Thus, generally, the study showed that the students had positive views about autonomous learning.

Some researchers tried to investigate the beliefs of students and teachers in learner autonomy. Xhafferi, Waldispühl, Eriksson-Hotz, and Xhafferi (2015) tried to compare the beliefs in two universities (Macedonia and Switzerland). By employing a questionnaire, the study found that psychological outlooks of learner autonomy (e.g. monitoring and reflecting on learning) were believed to be the most essential in autonomous learning. They suggested that teachers should be more responsible for supporting their learners to become more autonomous. Correspondingly, the teachers should take into account their role in promoting learner autonomy and teach their students about learning how to learn.

The second gap about perception was then addressed by Rushidi and Rushidi-Rexhepi (2015), Farahi (2015), and Ahn (2018). Rushidi and Rushidi-Rexhepi (2015) focused on finding out students' and teachers' views towards autonomous learning. By employing a mixed method design, they revealed that the students viewed their role as an important part in learning. They also showed good results in viewing autonomous activities they undertook to become autonomous. They showed their awareness in their learning, their self-effort, broader autonomous activities, self-esteem, use of reference materials, motivation, and use of technology in learning. Similarly, the professors had positive attitudes towards learner autonomy.

In addition to the study above, Farahi (2015) also tried to address the second gap. She identified the teachers' and students' perceptions of learner autonomy in English Education program in North Cyprus. The study was conducted with 69 ELT students and 11 instructors teaching at the ELT Department at Eastern Mediterranean University. The study revealed that both teachers and students have positive views about learner autonomy. It was found that students should be involved in decision making for their learning and they had potential to become autonomous. Meanwhile, most of teachers and students viewed that it is slightly possible to involve students in every decision to make (e.g. classroom management, teaching methods, allocation time for the lesson). However, the teachers thought that in order to promote learner autonomy, there should be a need to revise the ELT curriculum, redesign the course, and allow their students to select their topics for assignments or projects, and teach them how to learn.

In Vietnam, Anh (2018) identified the students' perceptions of learner autonomy in a tertiary education. The study involved 60 EFL students from a rural university in South Vietnam. By conducting a narrative interview, the study revealed that most of the students had positive voices on learner autonomy and its function at a higher education context. Meanwhile, in Indonesian school context, Lengkanawati (2016) investigated the teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and its implementation in EFL settings. The study involved teachers from junior high school to the tertiary level. By employing a descriptive analytical approach design, she revealed that the teachers perceived learner autonomy in four perspectives: technical, psychological, political, and sociocultural. The learner autonomy training given to the participants was found to support the teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy.

However, considering today's context in the terms of perceptions, some gaps remain in the surface. Perceptions could play a significant role in language learning and contribute to language learning behaviour and motivation (Cotteral, 1995). Moreover, "in promoting learner autonomy, it is essential to understand the perceptions of both teachers and students because perceptions influence their actions" (Farahi, 2015, p. 24). If looked from previous studies about learner

autonomy, it seems that they were focused on investigating the perceptions of EFL students. Yet, it is important to find out what learner autonomy means to General English learners or non-English major students since they study English to improve the English skills for everyday use. Thus, it was assumed that they would have different ways in perceiving learner autonomy. Moreover, the present study was conducted to investigate the teachers' perceptions as well. The perceptions included the autonomous activities undertaken by the students to develop their autonomy and the efforts made by the teachers to promote autonomy in classroom.

## **2.2 Concluding Remarks**

To conclude, this chapter has discussed the theories used for the present study. The section 2.1 has presented a brief history of learner autonomy. Moreover, the section 2.2 has discussed the concept of perceptions of learner autonomy and categorized them to four perspectives: technical, psychological, political, and sociocultural. Technical perspective focuses learner autonomy on the physical situation of the learning. Psychological perspective emphasizes autonomy on broader attitudes and cognitive abilities which enable learners to be responsible for their own learning. It also focuses on a mixture of individual characteristics. Political perspective focus on the control and issue of learning itself. Sociocultural perspective emphasizes the usefulness of active participation in the community of learning. Moreover, in the section 2.1.2 regarding fostering learner autonomy, it has been divided into two sub-sections 2.1.2.1 and 2.1.2.2. The section 2.1.2.1 is about the teacher's roles in fostering learner autonomy. They have some roles such as manager, resource person, counsellor, facilitator, co-operator, organizer, creator, and initiator. Meanwhile, the section 2.1.2.2 the learner's role has been pointed out such as being a good learner, responsible learner, and aware learner. The section 2.1.3 has explained the context of the application of learner autonomy into two: in the classroom and beyond the classroom. Moreover, the section 2.1.4 has presented the criteria of learner autonomy. The section 2.1.5 has presented issues and problems in the implementation of learner autonomy which can be seen from learners, teachers, learning facilities, and other factor. Finally, the section 2.1.6 has

discussed some related studies on students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy. It is believed that perceptions could play crucial role in language learning and contribute to language learning behavior and motivation. Thus, it is essential to see learner autonomy from both students and teachers since perceptions they hold may influence their actions in the learning.