

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present study investigates students' autonomous learning in the process generating ideas to write through reading activities for publication. The study focuses on the description of the activities that students do in the process of generating the ideas to write and the description of how they do the activities in order to find the evidences of the students' autonomous learning.

1.1 Background of the Study

Autonomous learning has become heated discussion of research over the years in viewing that teacher-directed language learning has been dominant in language teaching and learning at school for many years. In the concept of autonomous learning, students are not again viewed as passive learners who are always instructed to do whatever the teacher ask them during the learning process as in the traditional teaching. Students are required to be active and responsible for their own learning. In addition, the students have to be promoted to become autonomous as they will adapt to the demands and challenges in the real environment.

The Importance of students' active involvement in the learning process is in accordance with the education policies in Indonesia, such as *Standar Proses*, *Panduan Umum KTSP*, and *Naskah Akademik KTSP*. *Standar Proses* (2007:5-6) stated that the implication of the principle is the

transformation of education from teaching to learning. It emphasizes that the students as the subject of learning. It is in accordance with the statement in *Panduan Umum KTSP (2006:5)* as follow:

Curriculum is developed based on the idea that learners are the actor to develop their own competency to become religious, good, healthy, knowledgeable, creative, autonomous, and responsible people. In attempt to pursue the objective, the development of the learners' competency must be suited with the development of learners' need and importance along with the social demand. In doing so, the learning activity must be learner centeredness.

It is stated that students are supposed to be the center in the learning process to become autonomous and responsible people. Unfortunately, this practice does the opposite. Students do not get enough space and opportunity to explore their potential in an active involvement during the learning process. Then, *Naskah Akademik KTSP (2007: 33)* stated three main points in the development of school-based curriculum as follow:

There are three main points in the development of school based curriculum, learners' importance, school and society's condition, and curriculum developer especially teachers. The main attention is given to learners because they are the subject of education. Education is carried out in purpose of developing learners' competency optimally.

Developing students' competence optimally in a normal class which consist of more than 40 students might not be easy. However, giving

the students with the learning environment which can stimulate them to feel comfortable and motivate them to actively engaged with the learning can be conducted by considering what has been stated in Government Regulation No. 19 about National Education Standards article 19 verse 1, the learning process in school-based curriculum is implemented interactively, and interestingly to challenge and motivate students to participate actively and to give enough space for initiative, creativity, and autonomy in accordance with the potential, interest, and physical and psychological development of students. While article 21 verse 2 stated that the implementation of the learning process is held to develop reading and writing culture. Thus, the challenge faced by teachers is how to facilitate students with interactive teaching and learning process by giving the students opportunities for initiative, creativity, and autonomy as well as developing the reading and writing culture.

Autonomy is viewed as the capacity of the learners to take charge of their own learning while autonomous learning is viewed as the process or the situation which provides opportunities to the students to get involved and become responsible for their learning. Responsibility is defined by Scharle and Szabo (2005: 4) as being in charge of something, but with the implication that one has to deal with the consequences of one's own action. Self-directed learning, which is often used in relation with autonomous learning, is defined by Thomson (1996: 78) as the technique used to direct one's own learning. In other words, autonomous learning is the capacity while self-directed learning

is the ways a learner takes responsibility toward the learning process initiate by them.

The concept that the learners have right to initiate their own learning and to take responsibility toward the process is in accordance with the philosophical background of behavior stated by Schwartz (1978: 14),

We view people as free to act as they choose. They have intention or purpose, and they act to achieve certain ends. People have reason for their actions and these reasons provide a sufficient account of human action. Because people are free to act, and have reason for acting, we hold them responsible for what they do.

The learners' responsibility and the active involvement in learning is often missed by the dominant teacher-centered teaching which put aside the assumption that the learners also have the capacity to get involved in deciding their own learning, including the learning strategy, sources, and condition. The problem faced by the learners to become autonomous is that the learning and teaching process does not give enough space for the learner to initiatively involve through the process due to the lack of awareness of the learning objective given to them. Thus, the learners often directed by the teacher of what they have to do which leads them to be reluctant learners who less contribute towards the activity given.

Learning is viewed as the process of problem solving to achieve certain goal as proposed by theorists of psychological development, Vygotsky

(1978), Piaget (1985) and Bandura (1977). In addition, Anderson (et. all, 2001: 65) also supports the view by stating that meaningful learning provides students with the knowledge and cognitive processes for successful problem solving. Learning process happened when students find problem through communicative activities and the thinking process and find ways to solve the problem.

Autonomous learning is not viewed as individual learning. It is a gradual process when learners guided and engaged in the interaction to develop their competence before they are able to do it independently. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (1978) as cited in Cole (1989: 155) refers to the difference between a child's "actual development as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". Thus, the learner first experience the active involvement in the problem solving task through the interaction with peers and guidance from the teacher before s/he gradually become independence in doing the task without the presence of others. Bandura (1977) in his theory of Social Learning Theory also emphasized the importance of social environment in the development of individual competence. He argued that students should interact in the social environment to be faced with the problems and solve the problem by observing (observational learning) of the ways used by other people.

In reality, there are still many teaching and learning practices in school which emphasize the role of teacher rather than the students and use textbook as the primary source of learning which may hamper the students to face the real problem and use the knowledge in the real environment. This may be the causes we may find many students just acknowledge the content of the English lesson in the school but cannot apply it to the communicative purposes in the real world. However, the nature of English curriculum which is based on the genre-based approach has gives the teacher to be more involved in the learning process. This approach is flexible to be used in giving more opportunities for the students to use genres as meaningful as possible so that the students become actively involved in the learning process and develop their autonomy in learning. Thus, the activities of genre-based approach can also be used to promote students' autonomous learning in reading.

This study is designed to investigate how the English learning activities promote students' autonomous learning in reading as the focus of this study is the process of getting autonomous as the students are not yet independent in learning and lack or competence in reading. Thus, the researcher will attempt to find out the evidence of autonomous learning through the process of learning and to discover the activities which can promote autonomous learning.

1.2 Research Questions

The study aimed to answer “*What evidence of students’ autonomous learning appeared in the process of generating ideas to write through reading activities for publication?*” In finding the evidence, the researcher elaborated the question by using the aspects of the autonomous learning to the following questions:

1. What did the students do to do the reading activities?
2. What did the students do to collaborate with peers?
3. What did the students do to ask for teacher guidance?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

The purposes of the study were derived from the aspects of autonomous learning used to describe the evidence of students’ autonomous learning in the process of generating ideas to write through reading activities for publication. The findings of the study aimed to:

1. Describe what the students did to do the reading activities.
2. Describe what the students did to collaborate with peers.
3. Describe what the students did to ask for teacher guidance.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study focused on the aspects of autonomous learning; the engagement with the activities, collaboration with peers, and teacher guidance. By considering the nature of English curriculum in SMP, the

learning activities appeared in this study were based on the genre-based teaching. The result of this study only presented the students whom I concerned in the investigation, English Club students of SMPN 71 Jakarta.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is hoped to give clear idea on the process of encouraging students' autonomous learning through reading activities in English teaching and learning practice. Furthermore, the study is also hoped to be beneficial for the students to provide an alternative strategies in learning English and promoting their autonomous learning. Lastly, this study is beneficial to enrich the study of autonomous learning for English Department Students who investigate the same field.

1.6 Definition of Terms

1. Autonomous Learning

In this study, autonomous learning is seen as a process of giving more opportunities for the students to get involved with the learning process by interacting with other capable peers and teacher guidance before they can independently do it without the presence of other assistance.

2. Process of Generating Ideas to Write

The process of generating ideas to write emphasized the activities that students do before they come to produce written texts which involve deciding the content of the texts to be learned, read and understand many

texts, analyze the purpose, structure and linguistic features of the texts, and share understanding about the texts with other peers and teacher.

3. Publication

The term publication in this study refers to a media to facilitate the students with a meaningful and authentic learning activity in a form of wall magazine. Students can publish their own texts on it so that it is viewable for all students and teachers in the school.