

# THE CORRELATION BETWEEN LEARNER AUTONOMY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY OF INDONESIAN EFL COLLEGE LEARNERS

**I Putu Ngurah Wage Myartawan**

(wmyartawan@gmail.com)

*Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha*

*Jl. A. Yani No. 67, Singaraja, Bali, Indonesia*

**Mohammad Adnan Latief**

(adnanlatiefs@yahoo.com)

**Suharmanto**

(sinyorb@gmail.com)

*Universitas Negeri Malang*

*Jl. Semarang No. 5, Malang, Indonesia*

**Abstract:** The present study aimed to investigate the correlation between learner autonomy psychologically defined in the study as a composite of behavioral intentions to do autonomous learning and self-efficacy in relation to autonomous learning, and English proficiency. The sample comprised 120 first semester English-majored students of a state university in Bali, Indonesia. The data were collected from documents and by administering two questionnaires. Multiple linear regression analysis conducted revealed that learner autonomy and English proficiency as defined in the study had a significant, strong, positive relationship. Some suggestions related to the results of the study, especially in the EFL context, are discussed.

**Keywords:** learner autonomy, English proficiency, behavioral intentions to do autonomous learning, self-efficacy related to autonomous learning

There has seemingly been a shared agreement among scholars (Benson, 2001; Derrick & Carr, 2003; Scharle & Szabó, 2000; Suharmanto, 2003) that the capacity to do autonomous learning is a characteristic demanded of most learners in today's globalized world. Learner autonomy has been increasingly seen as important, so that it is considered as an educational goal of today (Benson & Huang, 2008; cf. Ponton & Hall, 2003), especially in higher education (Crome et al., 2011), including that in the Indonesian education context as obviously apparent in the principle of life-long learning in the development of the school-based curriculum in the country's education system (*Dirjen Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan dan Tenaga Kependidikan*, 2008).

In the field of language teaching, especially that in Europe, autonomy has long become a major concern. As discussed in Benson (2001), Benson (2006), and Benson & Huang (2008), the emergence of this concern was initiated by the Council of Europe through some projects intended to develop innovations in adult language teaching and learning. Developing learner autonomy at the time was manifested in the conception of self-directed learning, the realization of which was learning through self-access language centers and learner training based in *Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues* (CRAPEL), a unit established by the Council of Europe. Since then there has been a growing interest in learner autonomy, mostly due to the universal acknowledgement that success in foreign language acquisition is determined by the extent to which students achieve and exercise autonomy in relation to their learning (Benson & Huang, 2008).

Holec (1981, p. 3), a central figure in CRAPEL, defined learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning". His definition centers on two key concepts: *ability* and *to take charge of one's own learning*. Ability according to him is "a power or capacity to do something and not a type of conduct, *behaviour*" (p. 3). To take charge of one's own learning, on the other hand is "to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning", which include setting the objectives of learning, determining the contents and progression, selecting the methods of learning, monitoring the learning progress, and evaluating the product of learning (Benson, 1981, p. 3)—which, by Lewis & Vialleton (2011, p. 206), are referred to as a list of *learning management tasks* (see also Benson, 2001, p. 49).

Interestingly, as spelled out by Holec (1981, p. 4), "a learner may have the ability to take charge of his learning without necessarily utilizing this ability to the full when he decides to learn". An autonomous learner may learn with or

without teacher's help, with or without using teaching aids, or, in Little's (2009, p. 223) words, "autonomous learners always do things for themselves, but they may or may not do things on their own".

In line with the historical development of learner autonomy in the foreign language teaching context, Benson & Huang (2008, p. 424) noted that there has been a shift of view on learner autonomy. They mentioned that in its early development, learner autonomy was more associated with both learning situations and learners' capacity to take charge of their learning, but firmly agreed that recently the view of autonomy as a capacity to take charge of one's own learning tends to be much favored as apparent in the following quote.

In early work in the field of foreign language education, learner autonomy referred both to situations in which learning proceeds independently of teachers or specially prepared teaching materials (Dickinson, 1987) and to learners' capacity to take charge of their own learning (Holec, 1981). There has been a tendency in more recent work, however, to reserve the term 'learner autonomy' for the capacity to take charge of one's learning, while the terms 'self-directed' or 'independent' learning tend to be used for situations in which this capacity is put to use (p. 424).

Benson (2001, p. 49), however, argued that even though Holec's (1981) definition has sufficiently covered the main aspects of learning processes expected of an autonomous learner, the definition is problematic in the sense that the self-management tasks in the definition are mainly described in technical terms, lacking an important account on the nature of cognitive, psychological, mechanism that underlies effective self-management of learning (see also Little, 2007a, p. 16). In response to Holec's (1981) definition, Benson (2001) mentioned that learner autonomy is a multi-dimensional construct (2001; cf. Murase, 2007), and, furthermore, contended that a sufficient account of learner autonomy in language learning should include three levels of control over learning: control over learning management, control over cognitive processes, and control over learning content which are interrelated with each other. He prefers to use the term 'control' rather than 'charge' such as that used by Holec (1981), arguing that 'control' is more operational than 'charge'.

Under Benson's (2001) conception of learner autonomy, control over learning management is referred to as learners' observable behaviors to plan, organize, and evaluate their learning. While control over the cognitive

processes is more in terms of psychology of learning, control over the learning content has both the situational aspect and social aspect of learning. Control over the cognitive processes is more related to attention, reflection, and metacognitive knowledge rather than observable learning behaviors. The situational aspect of control over the learning content refers to the learners' freedom to determine their own goals and purposes of learning, while the social aspect may relate to learning situations and learners' ability to interact with others in the course of their learning.

Benson (2001; 2006) mentioned that the recent definition of learner autonomy also increasingly involves psychological aspects of autonomy, which he claimed Holec (1981) failed to address in his definition. The necessity of seeing the learner autonomy from the psychological perspective is, as Long (1998) asserted, due to the argument that the psychological account of learner autonomy was important and adequate to be used as the basis to explain self-directed learning which is now more frequently referred to as autonomous learning or independent learning. Departing from this, the present research focuses on learner autonomy as a psychological enterprise.

Psychologically, learner autonomy is often referred to in terms of learners' personal attributes and characteristics (Derrick & Carr, 2003). From this respect, they defined learner autonomy as characteristics reflected by individuals who show agency or intentional behavior with regard to their learning efforts. In terms of learner characteristics, they referred to Confessore's (1992) conception of personality characteristics associated with autonomous learning which includes desire, resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence.

Desire is defined as the extent to which a person can show intentionality in general, not specifically related to the context of autonomous learning; it reflects an adult's capacity to make use of influence (freedom, power, and change) over his/her life (Meyer, 2001). Resourcefulness is identified as a learner's intention to be resourceful (Carr, 1999). It is associated with the characteristics of the learner to anticipate future rewards of learning, prioritize learning over non-learning activities despite other goals and obstacles, postpone immediate gratification (fun or reward) of doing other activities, and solve problems in learning.

Initiative refers to behavioral intentions of a learner to create goals and work toward the attainment of the goals, to quickly translate the intention to learn into actual learning activities, to continuously pursue learning regardless

of obstacles, to actively develop solutions to overcome obstacles without necessarily waiting someone to develop solutions for him/her, and to self-start learning activities and their related processes such as setting goals and planning (Ponton, 1999).

Persistence is conceptualized as behavioral intentions of a learner to sustain or maintain their volition, self-regulation, and goal-directedness; volition reflects the motivation to sustain the intended behaviors (goals) while self-regulation is maintaining activities by regulating activities that fit with one's integrated self, mainly done through self-reflection; goal directedness, finally, refers to being perseverant toward goal attainment (Derrick, 2002).

A recent explanation of learner autonomy as seen from these four dimensions is given by Confessore and Park (2004) who operationally defined learner autonomy in conative and preconative terms. Referring to Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) behavioral model which mentions that behaviors are a function of beliefs (cognitive entity)/attitudes (affective entity) and intentions (conative entity), Confessore & Park (2004) made clear their conception of learner autonomy as a conative-preconative entity. Based on this model, Confessore & Park (2004) viewed that resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence exist within intentional dimension, while desire is seen as the precursor to behavioral intentions, thus implying that it exists as cognitive/affective entities. Departing from Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) model, Confessore & Park (2004) asserted that intentions are derived from the constant interaction between belief and attitude. Intentions, when they are strong enough, lead to and explain behaviors. On the opposite direction, experiences can influence beliefs and attitudes, which, in turn, may change intentions, which, then, may lead to changes in the following behaviors.

Confessore and Park (2004) have developed Learner Autonomy Profile Version 3.0 (LAP) based on the work of Meyer (2001), Carr (2001), Derrick (2001), and Ponton (1999), who respectively developed instruments to assess learner desire, resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence, each of which is the component of the four constructs of learner autonomy based on the Confessore Model (see also Derrick et al., 2007). However, according to Ponton et al. (2004), Meyer's construct of desire only measures the desire to learn in general terms. Through path analyses, they found that it "does not accurately measure one's motivation to engage in autonomous learning" (p. 66), and therefore, cannot "accurately reflect one's intention to engage in autonomous learning" (p. 66). Drawing on the previous work that has revealed that self-efficacy has a

mediating role between the expectancies toward goals and outcomes and the motivation to engage in particular behaviors (Bandura, 1997), Ponton et al. highlighted the importance of self-efficacy in understanding learner autonomy.

Self-efficacy determines whether or not a particular performance will be strived for, the amount of effort that a person will attempt to do for the sake of that performance, and how consistently the performance will be maintained when obstacles are faced (Bandura, 1986). Operationally, self-efficacy is defined as one's belief in his/her requisite capacity to successfully do autonomous learning in the presence of three kinds of impediments to learning including cognitive (self-inefficacy), situational (temporary), and structural (inadequate resources) barriers (Bandura, 1997). Seen from Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) behavioral model, self-efficacy exists in the pre-conative dimension similar to desire in the Confessore Model (Ponton et al., 2010, p. 55).

From Ponton et al.'s (2010) study, it was confirmed that self-efficacy as measured by Appraisal of Learner Autonomy (ALA) was slightly better than desire measured by the instrument developed by Meyer (2001) in predicting the three conative factors of autonomous learning (resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence). Therefore, it was self-efficacy instead of desire which was considered as one of the characteristics of autonomous learners investigated in the current study.

Deriving from Little (2007b, p. 2) and Little (2003, p. 1), there are three important reasons why autonomy plays an important role in students' learning. First, being one of the three basic human's needs (Deci, 1995), learner autonomy solves the problem of learner motivation because an autonomous learner is intrinsically motivated to meet his/her need of learning (Little, 2007b). Second, being motivated and reflective learners, the learning of these autonomous learners will become effective and efficient, so it is very likely that they will succeed, depending on the degree of their autonomy (Little, 2007b). The third reason is particularly related to second/foreign language learning. It is well accepted that any EFL/ESL program intends to help learners optimally gain high communicative competence. Since effective communication depends on a complex set of procedural skills that develop only through use, it is likely that language classroom is not able to develop all the skills the students need for effective communication to the full range. Therefore, learners who enjoy a high degree of autonomy (especially, social autonomy) in their learning envi-

ronment would have more opportunities to develop their communicative ability as compared to those who do not (cf. Scharle & Szabó, 2000).

Given the three advantages of learner autonomy above, it now seems clear why learner autonomy is often associated as effective learning, and why it is generally believed that learners with a higher degree of autonomy are more likely to succeed in their learning, especially in learning a second/foreign language, than those who are less or not autonomous. It is for the sake of testing the theoretical hypothesis that autonomy in language learning and better language learning are closely related and equivalent to each other (Benson, 2001) that the current study was conducted.

The research reported here investigated the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency, and language proficiency in this study was defined based on Hadley's (1993, p. 9) view on communicative competence. According to her, given the diversified goals of language programs/institutions, the ideally conceptualized communicative competence is better referred to in terms of language proficiency level. By this, language proficiency is expected to be different across language programs, depending on the goals of the programs. In line with Hadley's argument, English proficiency in the study is represented by the students' grade point averages (GPAs) related to English-related subjects they took in the semester in which the study was conducted. By referring to the goals of the courses of the English education program taken by the students in the university in which the study was conducted, the level of English proficiency developed was, in general, at the intermediate one.

To date, however, only a few researchers have studied the relationship between learner autonomy and language proficiency (Dafei, 2007), and among them are Dafei (2007), Hashemian & Soureshjani (2011), Lowe (2009), and Ng et al. (2011). Dafei (2007) conducted a study in China and found that the students' English proficiency was significantly and positively related to their autonomy, and there were no significant differences among the students' autonomy when their English proficiency was not significantly different. However, there were significant differences among the students' autonomy when their English proficiency was significantly different. Another study by Hashemian & Soureshjani (2011) in the English (L2) learning context in Iran investigated the interrelationship of autonomy, motivation, and academic performance. The bivariate correlation in the study also reported a significant correlation between learner autonomy and academic performance.

Lowe's (2009) study investigated the correlation between learner autonomy as measured by the Learner Autonomy Profile-Short Form (LAP-SF) constituting desire, resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence in learning and academic performance as measured by the GPA. The results of the study revealed that there was a positive, significant correlation between the LAP-SF total score and the total GPA, indicating a significant relationship between learner autonomy and academic performance.

Another study aimed at investigating the extent to which scores on the LAP-SF predicted academic performance of the pre-diploma students of a university in Malaysia was carried out by Ng et al. (2011). The results showed a significant correlation between the two. Moreover, the Pearson product moment correlation analyses indicated that five components and one construct of the LAP-SF were revealed as statistically significant predictors of the semester GPA. Ten of the components scores, three constructs scores, and the LAP-SF total score were statistically significant predictors of the semester GPA in the English course, while three components scores and one construct score were seen to be statistically significant predictors of the semester GPA in the Mathematics course.

In the Indonesian EFL setting, however, there have apparently been no deliberate attempts by Indonesian scholars to research the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency. If any, the research mainly focused on the development of learner autonomy through the use of learning strategy training (Susilowati, 2010), or on Indonesian students' belief and their development of belief about EFL learning (Wijirahayu, 2000), which is very important for increasing students' metacognitive skills—an important aspect of learner autonomy, or on the characteristics of autonomous learners (whether they exist or not) in the Indonesian EFL context (Lamb, 2004). Therefore, a study on the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency in the Indonesian EFL setting is becoming a pressing need. Given this motive and considering Dafei (2007) who articulated the need for studying the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency not only in China but also throughout the world, the current study explored the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency of the first semester students of a university in Bali, Indonesia. The research question of the present study was formulated as: "Is the higher the students' learner autonomy, the higher their English proficiency is?"

Besides the previously mentioned reasons, the present research is worth doing because, as stated by Benson (2001), the literature on learner autonomy, especially that on the relationship between learner autonomy and language proficiency, still lacks empirical support. Additionally, the results of the study can also serve as an additional validation for practices aimed at fostering learner autonomy, especially in the Indonesian EFL setting, and contribute to the issue that learner autonomy could be potentially used as a better predictor of academic performance (Lowe, 2009; Ng et al., 2011).

## **METHOD**

The study investigated learner autonomy and English proficiency from a single group of students and the characteristics under investigation had been possessed by the students. Therefore, based on Ary et al. (2010) and Latief (2010), the present study employed correlational research as its design.

A sample of 120 students were selected by using a proportionate sampling technique from a population of 171 first semester students of the English Education Department, Ganesha University of Education (Undiksha), Indonesia. All the 120 students in the sample were Balinese. Out of the 120 students in the sample, 79 were females and 41 males. Their ages ranged from 17 to 21 ( $sd = .63$ ), and the average age was 18. In terms of GPA, about 24.2% of the sample had GPAs of the A level (85-100), 65% of the sample at the B level (70-84), and only 10.8% at the C level (55-69) (see Table 1).

**Table 1 Composition of the Sample with Regard to GPA**

<b>GPA</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>A (85-100)</b>	29	24.2
<b>B (70-84)</b>	78	65.0
<b>C (55-69)</b>	13	10.8
<b>Total</b>	120	100.0

Data were gathered from available documents and by administering two questionnaires. The documents provided the data of the students' GPAs in English proficiency subjects, including Intensive English Course (10 credits), Listening I (2 credits), and Speaking I (2 credits). The first questionnaire, Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (LAQ), was used to measure the students' behavioral intentions to do autonomous learning. LAQ was developed by Macaskill & Taylor (2010) based on the theories of autonomous learning by

Chene, Knowles, Merriam & Caffarella, Ponton, and Ponton, Carr, & Confessore. It consists of 12 items, the responses to which are arranged in the Likert scale from 1 (*very unlike me*) to 5 (*very like me*). The LAQ was translated into Indonesian through consultation with a professional translator. Through the principal component analysis (PCA), the LAQ finally consisted of 10 items with two underlying factors: personal enjoyment about learning and independence in learning. The Cronbach's alpha of the first factor was .56 (acceptable according to Kline, 1999), while it was .72 for the second factor. The Cronbach's alpha of the LAQ total items was .71, indicating an acceptable reliability value. With the 10 remaining items of the LAQ, the minimum score a subject could obtain from the questionnaire was 10, and the maximum score was 50.

The second questionnaire, Appraisal of Learner Autonomy (ALA), was to measure self-efficacy related to autonomous learning. ALA was developed by Ponton et al. (2005) based on Bandura's Exercise Self-Efficacy Scale (ESS). It consists of 9 items, the responses of which are in the form of scales ranging from 0 (*cannot do at all*) to 100 (*certain can do*). The ALA in the study was translated into Indonesian through consultation with a professional translator. Using PCA, all the 9 items of the ALA were revealed valid with one component factor. The Cronbach's alpha of the translated ALA was .83, indicating a satisfactory reliability. The minimum score that a subject could obtain from this questionnaire was 0, and the maximum score was 900.

The two questionnaires were administered during the class hours, and as for the students who could not come to the administration time, due to sickness and an accident, the instruments were sent to their homes and were to be returned within one week. Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, the students were convinced of the confidentiality of the information they gave, and the anonymity of information in the research report. The response rate of the two questionnaires was 100%.

The data analysis was conducted with multivariate statistics through multiple linear regression performed by using the SPSS 16 for Windows. In terms of the regression model, the LAQ and the ALA served as the X variables, and the Y variable was represented by the GPA.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Reflection and square root transformation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) was performed to the GPA due to its non-normal distribution, and thus, the

transformed GPA (GPA\_transf) instead of the GPA together with the LAQ and the ALA was entered into the analysis. The descriptive statistics of the entered variables showed that the GPA\_transf ranged from 1.00 to 6.08 (sd = .99), while the LAQ ranged from 25 to 46 (sd = 4.80). The range of the ALA was from 185 to 770 (sd = 119.76). See Table 2 for the descriptive statistics of the variables entered.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of GPA\_transf, LAQ, and ALA**

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
GPA_transf	1.00	6.08	3.6379	.98690	120
LAQ	25	46	35.7583	4.79495	120
ALA	185	770	4.4395E2	119.75836	120

The magnitude of the correlation between learner autonomy as defined in the study and English proficiency is provided by the value of R provided by the model summary output of the SPSS in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 Model Summary Produced by SPSS Regression**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.700 <sup>a</sup>	.490	.482	.71061

Table 3 shows that the R is .70, indicating that learner autonomy and English proficiency were strongly correlated. In addition, it can be seen that the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is .48 (the unstandardized R<sup>2</sup> was .49), indicating that learner autonomy and English proficiency shared 48% variability between them. The correlation was also significant at p < .001 as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 ANOVA Table Produced by SPSS Regression**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	56.822	2	28.411	56.262	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	59.082	117	.505		
	Total	115.903	119			

The direction of the relationship can be determined from the signs of the beta value of each of the X variables in the SPSS coefficients output. Table 5 shows that the beta value of the LAQ is -.653, and that of the ALA is -.102,

both indicating a negative correlation with the GPA\_transf. However, since the GPA was performed reflection transformation, the direction of the correlation should be interpreted in the opposite direction (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). It means that the direction of the relationship between both of the X variables and the Y variable is, in fact, positive. In other words, learner autonomy and English proficiency were positively correlated. As far as the prediction of the GPA\_transf from the LAQ and the ALA is concerned, given the values of betas aforementioned, a change in one unit of the LAQ will result in .653 decrease of the GPA\_transf, and a change in one unit of the ALA will result in .102 decrease of the GPA\_transf. However, this should be interpreted in the opposite direction given the reflection transformation done to the GPA. In other words, it could be inferred that the higher the students' learner autonomy was, the higher their English proficiency was.

**Table 5 Coefficients Output Produced by SPSS Regression**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	8.814	.493		17.896	.000
LAQ	-.134	.015	-.653	-9.036	.000
ALA	.000	.001	-.102	-1.414	.160

As aforementioned, the main objective of the study was to explore the relationship between learner autonomy defined as a composite of intentions to do autonomous learning and self-efficacy in relation to autonomous learning, and English proficiency. The results of the study showed that learner autonomy and English proficiency was significantly, positively, and strongly correlated with each other. This was in support to the previous studies reported by Dafei (2007) in China, Hashemian & Soureshjani (2011) in Iran, and Ng et al. (2011) in Malaysia.

As to the positive direction of the correlation between learner autonomy and English proficiency found in the study, it seems that students with a higher level of autonomy are benefited in terms of having higher English proficiency. This confirms Little's (2007) and Benson's (2001) hypothetical arguments that higher degrees of autonomy will result in greater proficiency. This is also in

support to Corno & Mandinach's (as cited in Dafei, 2007) finding that autonomous learners are the learners of high language proficiency.

The significant, strong, and positive correlation between learner autonomy and English proficiency found in this study has an important practical implication for English (L2) language teaching and learning, particularly at the college level in Indonesian. Regarding the results of the study, English (L2) teachers should give more attention to the development of learner autonomy. Knowing the profile of their students' autonomy at the beginning of the academic term might help the teachers to plan their instructions so as to enable their students to have more autonomy (responsibility) in their learning in order to make them become more efficient and effective learners (see Hashemian & Soureshjani, 2011). As indicated by the construct of learner autonomy, the teachers should also be able to cultivate their students' intentions and self-efficacy to do autonomous learning to develop their students' positive attitudes toward having more responsibility or autonomy in their learning.

Another important implication should also apply at the curriculum level as advocated by Cotterall (2000). That is, the English syllabi need to be examined and redesigned in favor of learner autonomy. Course books may need to be reevaluated to accommodate the development of students' autonomy. The teachers' teaching and learning methodologies need to be adjusted so as to enable learners to exercise more autonomy in their learning. Incorporating trainings on learner autonomy during certain points of the course can also be considered, as suggested by Hashemian & Soureshjani (2011). Above all, the teachers should change their mindset about teaching and begin adopting learner autonomy paradigm in their teaching since, as stated by Benson and Huang (2008), in order that the principles of learner autonomy can be realized into practice, it is important that teachers first need to have a positive attitude toward autonomy. Specifically for teacher training and education institutions, this can be done by incorporating issues on learner autonomy in the pedagogical contents or courses given to teacher candidates in the hope that they can value the importance of learner autonomy, and pass on this concept to their students, that is, when they become real teachers in the future (see, for example, Suharmanto, 2003, p. 19).

Latief (2010, p. 114) stated that one benefit of a correlation study was to predict a variable from another variable which has a strong and positive correlation with each other. Since the study revealed that learner autonomy and English proficiency had a strong, positive correlation, learner autonomy can be

used for the purpose of predicting English proficiency as reflected by GPAs on English-related subjects. According to Schmidt (2009), the accuracy of prediction is determined by squaring the correlation coefficient ( $R^2$ ). Accordingly, given the adjusted  $R^2$  of .48 reported in this study, the prediction of English proficiency as reflected by the GPA of English-related subjects from learner autonomy as represented by the scores of the behavioral intentions to do autonomous learning and the scores of self-efficacy related to autonomous learning can be done with 48% accuracy. This seems to support Lowe (2009) and Ng et al.'s (2011) contention that learner autonomy can potentially serve as a good predictor of academic performance or potential.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

To conclude, the study showed that learner autonomy and English proficiency as defined in the study had a strong, positive, and significant correlation. Given the results of the study, some suggestions can be put forward. First, it is suggested that English teachers encourage and cultivate their students' positive attitude toward autonomous learning, foster the development of their students' autonomy in the teaching learning process, and above all, change their mindset to favor learner autonomy.

Concerning the EFL curriculum, it is also suggested that English programs accommodate the principles of learner autonomy, both in the development of syllabuses (including the choice of learning methodologies) and production of course books. Specifically, for teacher training and education institutions, it is suggested that they embrace issues on learner autonomy in some of the curricular contents offered to the students.

With regard to the strong correlation between learner autonomy and English proficiency found in the study, it is suggested that learner autonomy be considered as one of the variables used to predict academic potential—for instance, in the student admission test.

Finally, for future researchers, it is suggested that they include other pre-conative variables such as motivation and belief about language learning, so that a more comprehensive study on learner autonomy can be obtained. Research results will likely be more comprehensive if they use a bigger sample with more various characteristics, such as involving students of different mastery levels, students from non-English majors, students from different state and private universities, as well as high-school students. It is also

recommended that learner autonomy of a different construct be studied in relation with English proficiency in Indonesian EFL context.

## REFERENCES

- Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C., Sorensen, C., & Razavieh, A. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Benson, P. (2006). Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching*, 40(1), 21-40.
- Benson, P. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.
- Benson, P., & Huang, J. (2008). Autonomy in the transition from foreign language learning to foreign language teaching. *D.E.L.T.A.*, 24 (esp.), 421-439.
- Carr, P. B. (1999). *The measurement of resourcefulness intentions in the adult autonomous learner* (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University, 1999). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(11), 4697.
- Confessore, G. J. (1992). *An introduction to the study of self-directed learning*. In G. J. Confessore, & S. J. Confessore (Eds.), *Guideposts to self-directed learning: Expert commentary on essential concepts* (pp. 1-6). King of Prussia, PA: Organization Design and Development, Inc.
- Confessore, G. J. & Park, E. (2004). Factor validation of the learner autonomy profile, version 3.0 and extraction of the short form. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning*, 1(1), 39-58.
- Cotterall, S. (2000). Promoting learner autonomy through the curriculum: Principles for designing language courses. *ELT Journal*, 54(2), 109-117.

- Crome, K., Farrar, R., & O'Connor, P. (2011). What is Autonomous Learning. *Discourse*, 9(1), 111-126. Retrieved from [http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/view.html/PrsDiscourse Articles/113](http://prs.heacademy.ac.uk/view.html/PrsDiscourse%20Articles/113).
- Dafei, D. (2007). An exploration of the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency. In P. Robertson, P. & R. Nunn (Eds.), *Asian EFL Journal: Teaching Articles 2007* (pp. 1-23). Busan: Asian EFL Journal Press. Retrieved from <http://www.asian-efl-journal.com>.
- Deci, E. L., & Flaste, R. (1995). *Why we do what we do: Understanding self-motivation*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Derrick, M. G. (2003). Creating environments conducive for lifelong learning. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 100, 5-18.
- Derrick, M.G. (2002). Persistence and the adult autonomous learning. In H. B. Long & Associates (Eds.), *Twenty-first century advances in self-directed learning* (pp. 13-30). Schaumburg, IL: Motorola University Press.
- Derrick, M. G. & Car, P. B. (2003). Facilitating and understanding autonomy in adult learners. *New Horizons in Adult Education*, 17(2), 4-10.
- Derrick, M. G., Rovai, A. P., Ponton, M., Confessore, G. J., & Carr, P. B. (2007). An examination of the relationship of gender, marital status, and prior educational attainment and learner autonomy. *Educational Research and Review*, 2(1), 1-8.
- Dirjen Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan dan Tenaga Kependidikan. (2008). *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan [School-Based Curriculum]*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional.
- Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS (and sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll)* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). London: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company. Retrieved from <http://www.people.umass.edu/aizen/f&a1975.html>.
- Hadley, A. O. (1993). *Teaching language in context*. Boston, USA: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

- Hashemian, M. & Soureshjani, K. H. (2011). The interrelationship of autonomy, motivation, and academic performance of Persian L2 learners in distance education contexts. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1(4), 319-326.
- Holec, H. (1981). *Autonomy and foreign language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. (First published in 1979, Strasbourg: Council of Europe).
- Kline, P. (1999). *The handbook of psychological testing* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). London: Routledge.
- Latief, M. A. (2010). Tanya jawab metode penelitian pembelajaran bahasa [Questions and answers on research methods in language learning]. Malang: State University of Malang (UM) Press.
- Lewis, T. & Vialleton, E. (2011). The notion of control and consciousness in learner autonomy and self-regulated learning: A comparison and critique. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 5(2), 205-219.
- Little, D. (2009). Language learner autonomy and the European language portfolio: Two L2 English examples. *Language Teaching*, 42(2), 222-233.
- Little, D. (2007a). Language learner autonomy: Some considerations revisited. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(1), 14-29.
- Little D. (2007b). *Learner autonomy: Drawing the threads of self-assessment, goal-setting, and reflection*. Retrieved from [http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp\\_tt/Results/PagEF/e06.html](http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/Elp_tt/Results/PagEF/e06.html)
- Little, D. (2003). *Learner autonomy and second/ foreign language learning*. Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies Guide to Good Practice. Retrieved from [http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409#toc\\_1](http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/1409#toc_1)
- Long, H. B. (1998). Theoretical and practical implications of selected paradigms of self-directed learning. In H. B. Long & Associates (Eds.), *Developing paradigms for self-directed learning* (pp. 1-14). Norman: University of Oklahoma, Public Managers Centre, College of Education.
- Lowe, C. (2009). *A correlational study of the relationship between learner autonomy and academic performance*. (Doctoral Dissertation, The George

Washington University, Washington, D.C., USA). Retrieved from MI, Proquest LCC, <http://gradworks.umi.com/3338791.pdf>

- Macaskill, A., & Taylor, E. (2010). The development of a brief measure of learner autonomy in university students. *Studies in Higher Education, 35*(3), 151-359.
- Meyer, D. A. (2001). The measurement of intentional behavior as a prerequisite to autonomous learning (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., USA). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 61*, 4697.
- Ng, S. F., Confessore, G. J., Yusoff, Z., Aziz, N. A. A., & Lajis, N. M. (2011). Learner autonomy and academic performance among undergraduate students. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education, 1*(4), 669-679.
- Ponton, M. K. (1999). *The measurement of an adult's intention to exhibit personal initiative in autonomous learning* (Doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University, 1999). Retrieved from Dissertation Abstracts International, 60, 3933.
- Ponton, M., Carr, P., & Derrick, G. (2004). A path analysis of the conative factors associated with autonomous learning. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning, 1*(1), 59-69.
- Ponton, M. K., Carr, P. B., Schuette, C. T., & Confessore, G. J. (2010). Self-efficacy and the learner autonomy profile. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning, 7*(2), 54-63.
- Ponton, M. K. & Hall, J. M. (2003). The relationship between postsecondary education and personal initiative for adult learners. *Current Issues in Education, 6*(17). Retrieved from <http://cie.ed.asu.edu/volume6/number17/>
- Ponton, M., Derrick, G., Hall, J. M., Rhea, N., & Carr, P. (2005). The relationship between self-efficacy and autonomous learning: The development of new instrumentation. *International Journal of Self-Directed Learning, 2*(1), 50-61.

- Scharle, A. & Szabó, A. (2000). *Learner autonomy: A guide to develop learner responsibility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schmidt, S. R. (2009). *Research methods for the digitally inclined*. Retrieved from <http://capone.mtsu.edu/sschmidt/methods/correlational.html>
- Suharmanto. (2003). Learning autonomy: A way to improve English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. *TEFLIN Journal*, 14(1), 111-122.
- Susilowati, M. (2010). Learning strategy training and EFL learners' skill in writing expository essays. In B. Y. Cahyono (Ed.), *Second language acquisition and English language teaching* (pp. 151-161). Malang: State University of Malang Press.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Wijirahayu, S. (2000). *A study on the development of beliefs about language learning and language learning strategies of the English department students in Muhammadiyah University of Malang*. (Unpublished Master's Thesis, State University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia).