



Learning English from Home during the Covid-19: Investigating Learners' Experience for Online and Autonomous Learning

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ABSTRACT

Albeit the covid-19 pandemic impacts on education have been extensively discussed, little empirical evidence addresses students' experience of autonomy. The present study investigates and obtains information about the experience that the students encountered during online English learning, their perception about it, and how their experience shapes their autonomous learning potentiality. The study was conducted in a quantitative approach adopting survey design and correlation procedure. Data was collected through an online form questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using both descriptive and inferential statistic to look for trends and correlation between the variables. The result of the study indicated that the students participating in the study seemed to have a quite good online English learning experience. They received various learning instructions and were engaged in different types of language learning activity. The majority of students perceived online English learning as fairly enjoyable, yet many of them displayed considerable potential to act as autonomous learners. Furthermore, the correlational analysis indicated a positive correlation ($r=.312$; $sig=.008$) demonstrating that students' potentiality to learn autonomously to some extent, was influenced by their experience of online English learning. This study implies that both teachers and students gradually become more accustomed to online and autonomous learning.

1. Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic has caused a significant change in the Indonesian education system. The circular letter (*Surat Edaran No. 4 Tahun 2020*) from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) impacts on the implementation of a new learning mode in all Indonesian education institutions. As it is known, through this letter, MOEC declared several regulations regarding the implementation of education during the emergency state of the covid-19 pandemic. The steps taken include the cancellation of the national examination for the last year students and the instruction to carry out the teaching and learning process from home (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2020).

In response to the regulation stated, teaching and learning activities at schools all over Indonesia was stopped. Schools have no other choices. Online learning was the only possible alternative to carry on the teaching and learning process in the emergency state of covid-19 pandemic. Each school has been making its best effort to continue educating Indonesian generations despite having little or no experience

conducting online learning. In other words, regardless of its effectiveness, schools across Indonesia are performing online learning to the extent of their most capable of.

Online learning is, indeed, quite a new topic within the context of Indonesian education. It has not been extensively studied, and the literature concerning this issue was limited to teacher's professional development or educator training programs and university students (Burns, 2013; Luschei et al., 2008; Sari, 2012). However, along with integrating ICT and mobile technologies in learning, the issue has received increased interest, particularly from language teachers and researchers. Although the learning process has not been carried entirely online, it has featured English learning activities to bridge classroom and outside classroom learning. The students were made to engage in online learning through various mobile applications and learning platforms (Ardi, 2017; Pasaribu, 2018; Yudhiantara & Nuryantini, 2018).

There is, actually, no clear definition of online learning. Literature indicated that the term had often been attached to a wide range of meanings and definitions. Singh & Thurman (2019) found 18 terms over 46 definitions used to describe online learning. It was often used synonymously with e-learning, distance learning, web-based learning, blended learning, online courses, and others. Moore et al., (2011) acknowledged that it was challenging to differentiate e-learning, online learning, and distance learning. There was inconsistent use of terminology referred to these modes of learning, and the term was sometimes used interchangeably without a meaningful definition.

Interestingly, one commonality was found to characterize these learning instructions: the integration of technology as the central element in the learning process. Considering this commonality and the varying definition of online learning, Singh & Thurman (2019) proposed defining online learning in two options. First, it is learning experienced through internet/online computers in a synchronous classroom where students interact with instructors and other students and are not dependent on their physical location for participating in this online learning experience. Second, it is learning experienced through the internet in a synchronous environment where students engage with instructors and fellow students at a time of their convenience and do not need to be co-present online in a physical space (p.302).

The integration of ICT within the context of Indonesian ELT was considered potential to change and improve its condition as teachers could have the resources to various learning activities, train students to have a more active role, and create student-centered learning experience (Hidayati, 2016). Moreover, mobile technologies were particularly indicated to be powerful to foster learner autonomy as learners can be given the responsibility to learn on their own while being out of school and far from the teacher (Hidayati & Diana, 2019; Pasaribu, 2018). Having complete access to learning materials and resources means that teachers are no longer the sole source of knowledge and information. Learners can be made less dependent on the teacher and become more active in the learning process. The role of the teacher, in this regard, is to provide students opportunities to exercise autonomy and become more independent in learning by making use of the available resources provided by the technology (Reinders & White, 2016).

The term autonomous learning has been interpreted in many ways to different people. This concept has become a center of attention for the last three decades as student-centered classroom style was encouraged (Yildirim, 2008). Autonomous learning is defined as learners' ability in taking charge of their learning (Benson, 2011). Whereas Holec (1981) defined learner autonomy as the ability to take their responsibility about their learning in which the learners must be able to determine their learning objectives, define the contents and progression, select methods and techniques, monitor the procedures of acquisition, and at the end to evaluate what has been acquired through their learning.

In the Indonesian case, studies on the concept of learner autonomy yielded multifaceted findings. Despite originated as the western concept of learning, teachers were found to accept the concept as part of the 2013 curriculum they were assigned to implement (Agustina, 2017a). Many of them also believed that it is an important concept to be inculcated among learners (Lengkanawati, 2017). However, some teachers were also found to lack understanding and misconception toward the concept, such as viewing it as an inborn capacity or an opportunity to decrease teacher workload by letting students learn without the teacher (Agustina, 2017b). Moreover, many students were also indicated to be highly dependent on the teacher. Thus, they were not familiar with the concept, not ready to act as autonomous learners (Cirocki et al., 2019). This involved understanding and diverse perception of learner autonomy concept both among the teacher and students implicated in promoting learner autonomy in the classroom (Agustina, 2017b).

In addition to this complexity, challenges in fostering learner autonomy in English language learning were also pointed to relate to the national education system's rigid structure. There is minimal time to meet the learning outcomes stated in the curriculum. Many learning activities focused on preparing students to sit in the national exam, and teacher proficiency in English was considerably low (Lengkanawati, 2017). Hence, although learner autonomy was perceived as a desirable concept, implementing the concept is doubted. Unless, there is a dramatic change in the curriculum and high commitment from teachers, expecting Indonesian English learners to act as autonomous learners tend to be difficult (Khotimah et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2018).

The covid-19 pandemic has unexpectedly brought some changes and new learning experience for both teachers and students. Students who rarely learn utilizing mobile technology has now been forced to use their smartphone to receive learning instruction. Teachers who never consider online learning platform as media of delivering a lesson, interacting, and communicating with students, have currently been forced to make themselves accustomed to using this technology. In short, through this pandemic, everyone has learned a lot of new things.

Considering the facts above, this study is interested in finding out more information about students experience in learning English online during the emergency state of the covid-19 pandemic. It intends to see what kind of learning experience students encounter, how they perceive it, and how their experience in learning English online contribute to their capacity to act as autonomous learners. For these purposes, the following questions are constructed. 1) What experience do

students encounter in learning English online? 2) What is the students' perception of learning English online? 3) How does online learning experience shape students' potentiality to learn autonomously?

2. Method

The study was conducted in a quantitative approach adopting a survey design. In this procedure, a researcher collects quantitative data using questionnaires and statistically analyzed them to identify or determine individual opinions, belief and attitudes, behaviors or characteristics Creswell (2008). Also, it employed some correlational design procedure to see whether students online English learning experience influence their potentiality to learn autonomously.

There was a total of 71 participants taking part in the study. They were senior high school students from different regions of Aceh province. The majority of them (80,28%) studied in quite well-known schools with a good reputation. Many of them (76.06%) also lived in the regions with a fair and considerably good internet connection. The students were invited to participate in the study and filled in the online questionnaire through a message sent via WhatsApp application.

The questionnaire items were written in Bahasa Indonesia to anticipate for language barrier among the participants and make it easier to understand. Thus, the responses given may be less bias. It was divided into five sections labelled as background information, learners experience of online learning, learners' perception of online learning, learner potentiality to learn autonomously, and learners autonomous learning activities. The majority of items were set in single and multiple choices closed-ended and semi-opened statements. Nevertheless, a few were arranged as open to elicit more details and more in-depth information. The questionnaire items were either modelled or adapted from (Cirocki et al., 2019). However, they were also based on the foundational theory, research and practices associated with online learning and learner autonomy.

In data analysis, section 1,2, and 5 were analyzed using a simple statistic to look for the percentage and major trend. Meanwhile, Section 3 and 4 were analyzed, employing both descriptive and inferential statistic. The descriptive statistic was performed to look for each questionnaire item's mean score and the total score of students' responses. The total score on students' perception of online learning was classified into highly enjoyable (93-105), considerably enjoyable (69-92), reasonably enjoyable (45-68) and not enjoyable (37-44). Whereas the score on students' potentiality to learn autonomously was grouped into highly potential (83-100), considerably potential (62-82), fairly potential (41-61), and not potential (20-40). The inferential statistic was employed to examine whether students' perception of learning English online correlates with their potential to act as autonomous learners. This statistic was performed using the Pearson correlation test utilizing SPSS statistic application.

3. Findings and Discussion

As has been stated earlier in the introduction, this study aimed to answer three research questions. In this regard, the study's result will be presented in separated headings based on the questioned proposed.

3.1. Students experience in learning English online

Students' experience was viewed through four elements; the way they take part in learning, learning instruction they received, types of interaction and feedback, and difficulties. Finding from the data showed that in taking part in online learning, most students appeared to rely heavily on their smartphone (63,38%). Nevertheless, some of them also use both smartphone and laptop interchangeably (35,21%). The media used for learning seemed to vary from one another. Almost half of the students reported that their teacher only employed a single media of either WhatsApp (28,17%) or Google Classroom (18,31%) to deliver the lesson while almost half of other reported to receive English lesson through a combination of 2, 3 or 4 media comprising WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, YouTube, Quizziz (46,48%). Table 1 shows detail information.

Table 1. The way students' take part in online learning

No	Attributes	Responses	Percentage
1	Access to online learning	Laptop and mobile phone interchangeably	35,21%
		More often mobile phone	23,94%
		Mobile phone only	39,44%
		Laptop only	1,41%
2	Learning Media	WhattsApp	28,17%
		Google Classroom	18,31%
		Others (Zoom, Youtube, e-learning)	5,63%
		Combination of 2, 3 or 4 media	46,48%

Like the way students take part in online learning, the learning instruction students received also indicated some degree of variation. The majority of the student (53,52%) obtained learning materials in different types, ranging from learning applications and resources from the internet to teacher-made and textbook screenshots.

Nevertheless, many of the students (47.89 %) also reported being given only one learning material such as teacher made only or screenshots only. However, the learning process the students underwent was commonly similar, in which the process started with an explanation of the topic either via a link to learning resources/videos, teacher recorded video, or presentation slides then followed with discussion and assignment (91,5%). Only a few students reported to sometimes do not receive an explanation (11,27%) or were only given tasks without explanation (7,04%). The online mode of English learning was also indicated to be filled with various activities. Although there were some students admitted that they were only given individual tasks (35,21%), the majority of others reported to engaged in various learning activities integrating the four primary skills of English comprising conversation practices, reading, writing, listening (38,03%) and also group work (9,86%). Table 2 shows detail information on the learning instruction the students received during English online learning.

The students also acknowledged the existence of interaction with the teacher and classmates. Most commonly, it was possible through chat via the learning

platform used (35,21%), yet they also reported to interact with teacher via messages (WA/SMS) anytime having difficulties (29,58). A few of them also talked directly via the learning platform used (9,86%). For the tasks given, most students reported getting different types of feedback comprising comment or specific instruction for improvement (54,83%). Yet, some students admitted to receiving the only excellent, excellent comment (29,58). It was also given in reviewing the assignment together during class time (8,45%). Table 3 shows detail information on types of interaction and feedback in English online learning.

Table 2. Learning Instruction

No	Attributes	Responses	Percentage
1	Types of material	Combination of various types of material (teachers made, internet link, learning app)	53,52%
		Teachers made material	21,13%
		Internet Link	14,08%
		Textbook screenshot	8,45%
		Learning App	2,82%
2	Learning Process	Link to material/ video - discussion-exercises	33,80%
		Different learning process interchangeably	32,39%
		Ppt-discussion-exercise	15,49%
		Task with no explanation	7,04%
3	Learning Activities	Individual task, writing, listening, reading, conversation practice	38,03%
		Individual task only	35,21%
		Group task, individual task, conversation practice, writing, listening, reading	9,86%

Table 3. Interaction and Feedback

No	Attributes	Responses	Percentage
1	Interaction with teacher & classmates	Chat via learning platform used	35,21
		Send messages (WA/SMS) to teacher anytime facing trouble	29,58
		Either chat or talk via learning platform used	9,86
		Either chat via learning platform or send messages (WA/SMS)	9,86
2	Feedback	Specific direction for what needed to be corrected	21,13
		Only comment (excellent, very good, need improvement)	29,58
		Reviewing task/ assignment together during class time	8,45
		Different types of feedback given interchangeably	33,80

The last item asked were difficulties during the online learning of English. Some students revealed that it was only hard to communicate with the teacher (21,13%). A few others pointed not to understand the lesson given (14,08%). However, most students indicated numerous problems that include no interaction and not able to understand the lesson or instruction given (36,62%). Interestingly, there were also some students (16.90%) who reported to have no significant difficulties in undergoing learning English online. Figure one shows a detail description of the difficulties the students faced during English online learning.

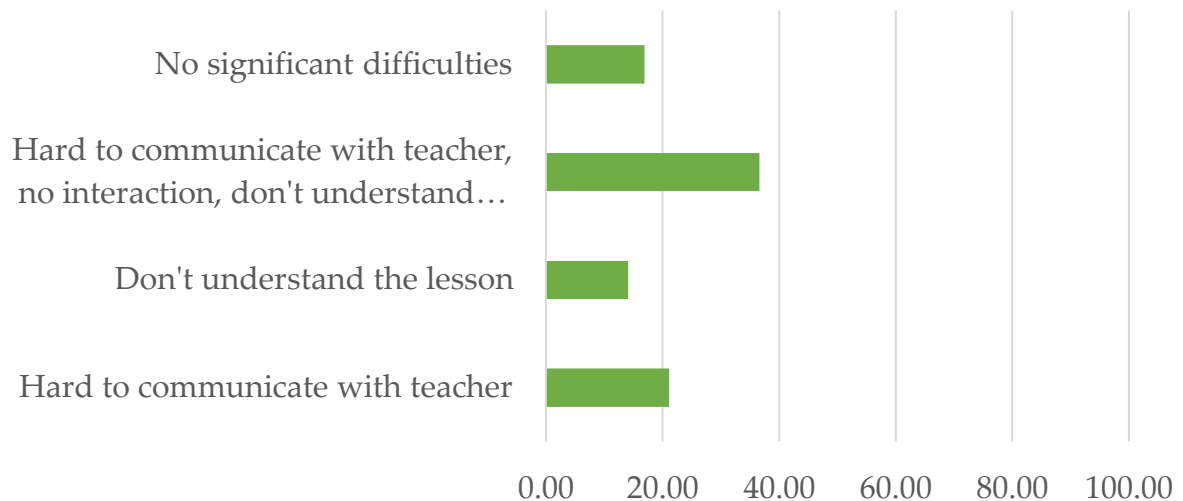


Figure 1. Difficulties faced during English online learning:

As the data has shown, the students displayed more positive reactions than the negative ones. They appeared to have a relatively good online English learning experience, receiving various learning instructions and engaging in different types of language learning activity. Echoing some earlier studies (Rusli et al., 2020; Suni Astini, 2020), the present study also found a mobile phone as the most common device used by students to participate in online learning. The smartphone was highlighted for its practicality and multifunctionality (Barrs, 2011; Godwin-Jones, 2011), but it was also acknowledged to have drawbacks such as small screen, unpractical keyboard, and limited memory capacity (Hilao & Wichadee, 2017). For some reason, the present study did not investigate whether it was utilized to be convenient or for not possessing a laptop computer or other mobile devices. Figuring out students' preference for the types of device used to participate in online learning could be valuable information in designing a useful online mode of instruction. Future studies on this issue should not miss this critical information.

Earlier studies conducted at the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic found WhatsApp Group the most influential media used for learning (Suni Astini, 2020; Wargadinata et al., 2020). WhatsApp Group was still apparent as teachers' common choice in the present study, yet it had more commonly been employed in a combination of two or more other learning applications. Churiyah et al. (2020) pointed out that WhatsApp Group was more prevalent among teachers in rural areas and those teaching at the elementary level. Simultaneously, schools in urban areas and teachers teaching at the secondary level utilized more appropriate online

learning platforms such as Google Classroom, Schoology, or Edmodo and combined it with other learning applications. In this regard, the current study supported Churiyah et al. (2020)'s finding. As the students participating in the study were senior high school students mostly located in the city, the teachers did not rely heavily on WhatsApp Group. However, they combined some learning media to perform online English learning.

Another issue being highlighted about online learning lately was students' complaints about being burdened with many tasks and were not provided with proper learning materials and lesson explanation (Megawati, 2020; Oktawirawan, 2020). However, in the present study, this case seemed to be less frequent. The majority of students' responses demonstrated that they received different learning material types and various forms of lesson explanation before being given specific tasks. Moreover, many students also admitted to engage in numerous enhancing language skill activities and receive constructive feedback. Such an experience could indicate that both students and teachers have gradually adjusted themselves to this learning mode and become better at performing it.

Nevertheless, the present study also still recorded a few challenges faced by students. In particular, it was the absence of physical interaction and direct communication. As it was mediated rather than direct, many students reported having trouble understanding learning instruction and the lesson sometimes. It might be that teachers do not make a thorough preparation for online learning so that they cannot provide the maximum assistance possible according to students' need (Reinders & Lazaro, 2011). Benson & Huang (2008) suggested that the guidance provided by a teacher must be able to fulfil students' actual need, not too much and not too little. Similarly, teachers must direct students' goal and provide encouragement, reinforcement, and fruitful feedback.

3.2. Students' perception of online learning

Students' perception was rated based on the total score derived from questionnaire responses in section 2. The responses indicated that 51 students (78%) perceived online learning as reasonably enjoyable. Although no students recorded to perceive online learning as highly enjoyable, there were 14 students (20%) regarded online learning as considerably enjoyable and only very few students (8%) found to perceive it as not enjoyable.

Regarding questionnaire items analysis, some statements appeared to be generally agreed while some others seemed to be viewed differently. Items related to the absence of interaction with friends and teachers reached an average score of 4,06 and 3,82, indicating that the students did not enjoy online learning for interaction with peers and teachers. Interestingly, attributes associated with freedom to explore learning resources and the opportunity to act independently scored almost the same as the interaction items (3,86 and 3,68, respectively). It likely shows that the students found these elements of online learning enjoyable. These four highest average score attributes also emerged as common themes in the open section questionnaire asking students about other things they like and disliked online learning. The overall perception about online learning effectiveness reached an average score 2,87, which can be interpreted that the students do not regard online

learning as effective either ineffective. Table 4 showed all the items in the order of their average rate.

Table 4. Students' perception of online learning

No	Questionnaire items	Mean	SD
16	I don't like learning English online because there is no interaction with friends	4,06	0,80
5	I like learning English online because I can freely search for learning resources other than those provided by the teachers.	3,86	0,83
11	I don't like learning English online because there is no interaction with the teacher.	3,82	1,01
9	Learning English online make me more independent and responsible in my learning.	3,68	0,96
10	I don't like learning English online because I can't learn without teacher's supervision.	3,66	1,10
6	I like learning English online because I can no numerous English learning applications.	3,65	0,75
12	I don't like learning English online because the internet connection is bad.	3,65	1,06
4	I like learning English online because I can learn independently	3,63	0,97
17	I don't like learning English online because it is monotone and boring	3,63	1,06
13	I don't like learning English online because there is a huge workload given.	3,62	1,11
3	I like learning English online because I can learn from home	3,61	0,91
1	I like learning English online because I can learn in relax	3,59	0,99
18	I don't like learning English online because teachers give many new applications consuming my mobile phone memory space	3,56	1,00
21	I face many difficulties in learning English online	3,54	1,00
14	I don't like learning English online because there is no explanation from the teacher.	3,52	1,19
19	It's hard for me to follow online English learning	3,48	1,07
20	Learning English online troubles me to improve my English skills	3,48	1,03
2	I like learning English online because it is not timely	3,38	0,97
7	I'm able to learn English well through online learning.	3,18	0,95
15	I don't like learning English online because I am not good with technology	2,99	1,18
8	Online English learning is effective for me.	2,87	0,92

Finding the majority of students perceive online learning as somewhat enjoyable is, indeed, understandable. Online learning has not exponentially grown as a highlight in the Indonesian national education system. It was still limitedly implemented as a supplementary part of classroom learning. Moreover, it was often

carried with university students rather than school students. Many teachers at schools tend to focus on preparing students to sit for the national exam rather than exploring new ways of learning. Consequently, if it is not highlighted in the curriculum, it is improbable to find teachers provide a 'different' learning instruction.

It is important to note here that students reacted negatively to online learning for lack of interaction with peers and teachers because of the absence of teachers' provision in learning. However, they admitted to enjoy a more flexible class hour and exploring learning resources of their own. One plausible explanation for this case is that students still view learning in a traditional portrait. Teachers take control of the classroom and provide only a little space for students to take responsibility for their learning (Blidi, 2017). Thus, although students are getting used to online learning with less teacher involvement, students still prefer to work under teachers' guidance because of their inability to make decisions about their learning and adjust to their own learning pace.

Learning from cases outside Indonesia, online learning does not only feature higher education but has also shifted to K-12 education. This instruction model has been growing and is considered a potential alternative for school with teacher shortage (Basham et al., 2016; Picciano & Seaman, 2007). Online learning has long become an alternative mode of instruction, providing another option of learning for individuals who cannot attend a regular classroom for specific reasons (Gemin & Pape, 2017). Some studies had also reported that this learning instruction model provides learners with some advantages including the exercise of autonomy (Ardi, 2017), learner-centered, and global connection by having collaboration with other language learners or native speakers (Lee & Kim, 2018; Lie & Yunus, 2018).

With such benefits, online learning should not only be an alternative learning mode during this covid-19 pandemic, but it needs to be continuously implemented as part of learning instruction in Indonesian national education system. The current study has shown that many students could enjoy online learning as long as they were provided with meaningful language learning activities.

3.3. Students' potentiality to learn autonomously

A little different from students' perception, students' responses on the questionnaire section measuring their potentiality to learn autonomously indicated that most students (79%) were considerably potential to learn autonomously. Three of them (4%) demonstrated high potential. There were no students found not potential to be autonomous learners, although 12 students (17%) indicated a fair potential. Among the items portraying autonomy in learning, attributes associated with having choices, identifying a weakness, having freedom, and being involved in the learning process displayed an average score above 3,6. It can be reasonably interpreted that these autonomous learning elements were tended to be agreed and valued by the students. Table 5 showed questionnaire items in the order of their rating.

To seek whether students' experience of learning English online during the pandemic's emergency state contributes to their potentiality to learn autonomously, a

correlation analysis using a score from perception and autonomous potential was performed. The statistical analysis displayed a positive correlation ($r=.312$; $\text{sig}=.008$). Although the correlation coefficient was small, it was a significant correlation that cannot be ignored ($.008 < .05$). In other words, the statistical analysis demonstrated that students' potentiality to learn autonomously at some extend (9,7%) was influenced by their perception of online learning.

Table 5. Students' potentiality to learn autonomously

No	Questionnaire items	Mean	SD
14	I like to have choices in the way I learn	3,90	0,72
2	I'm able to identify my weakness in learning English	3,83	0,67
19	I want to be given tasks/assignment that I can choose	3,82	0,70
13	I like to find other resources of learning out of the ones prepared by my teacher	3,73	0,86
18	I like to be asked for opinion about the learning process I like	3,69	0,74
16	I want to be involved in deciding learning topics	3,62	0,74
1	I'm able to identify my strenght in learning English	3,59	0,78
6	I always make target in my learning	3,59	0,83
3	I'm able to decide on what to learn next in my English course	3,58	0,76
17	I want to be involved in deciding learning target	3,56	0,76
4	I can plan my learning	3,55	0,78
5	I can make target in my learning	3,54	0,82
7	I can suggest activities for my classwork	3,54	0,75
15	I want to be involved in deciding learning activities	3,54	0,75
10	I can evaluate for what I have learned	3,44	0,78
20	I don't really like to be strictly controlled in my learning	3,44	1,02
8	I can accomplish the tasks by myself without much detail instruction from the teacher	3,34	0,96
12	I like to learn on my own outside school time	3,32	0,90
9	I can assess for what I have learned	3,28	0,83
11	I can learn on my own without much teacher involvement	3,07	1,01

Analysis of students' frequency to learn independently outside online class hour yielded 12 students (16,90%) do it often, and five students (7,04%) do it very often. Nevertheless, the majority of students (63,38%) only do it sometimes. Five students (7,04%) seldom do it, and four students (5,63%) confessed never to learn independently outside the online class hour. Among activity types performed as independent English learning by the students, listening to English song emerged as the most common activity followed by watching English movies and writing in English (SMS, social media posts, blogs, diaries). However, most of the activities were not performed solely. The majority of the students do independent English learning through various activities performed interchangeably. Only a few students acknowledged to performed just one type of activity such as taking private English course only (13 students) or listening to English song only (5 students). Table 6 shows the list of

independent English learning activities performed by students in the order of their commonality.

Table 6. Independent English learning activities

No.	Activities	Responses
1	Listening to English songs	50
2	Watching English movies	37
3	Writing in English (SMS, social media posts, blogs, diaries)	32
4	Playing English games	25
5	Studying from books (doing grammar exercises, checking dictionary)	23
6	Speaking English with foreigners through social media (Skype, WA, facebook, Instagram, etc.)	23
7	Watching English TV programs (BBC, CNN, National Geographic)	23
8	Speaking English with friends	17
9	Reading English books (short stories, novels, comics)	15
10	Taking private English course	13
11	Always seeking opportunities to practice English	13
12	Learning English with friends (English club, study group)	11
13	Speaking English with a family member	11
14	Reading English articles in magazines or newspaper	9

Considering this finding, the current study came out with a promising development of the autonomous learner. In general, all autonomy attributes presented in the questionnaire were rated with an average mean of 3,5 indicates that the students tended to agree with the statements presented. Moreover, items related to preference for having choices in learning and accomplishing tasks, exploring learning resources independently, and having a role in determining the learning process were rated higher than other items. These attributes are essential in autonomous learning and serve as autonomy indicators (Blidi, 2017).

This finding contradicts some earlier studies, in which the majority of students were found to have a high dependence on the teacher and were not ready to act as autonomous learners. A reasonable justification for this contradiction is that fewer students were participating in the current study. Moreover, most students had experienced online learning for sometimes due to the pandemic and seemed to have sufficient access to learning resources. It was proved by the statistical analysis, which indicated that students learning experience of online learning, to some extent, influence their self-rated potentiality to learn autonomously.

As such, this finding cannot be taken for granted. Cirocki et al., (2019) described the character of an autonomous learner to be intrinsically motivated, responsible for their learning, set target in learning, contribute to making learning instruction, can identify personal strength & weakness, know when, how, and why learning certain information and what learning resources can be utilized, adaptable to a new learning environment, use appropriate strategies, monitor their learning progress, collaborate

and seek help when needed, and reflect on their learning. Some of these attributes cannot be identified in the present study, as the students were only asked to respond to the questionnaire's statement. They were not explicitly measured based on the real practice of these attributes. Thus, although an indication of autonomy was detected among the students, it is probably more justified to categorize it in reactive autonomy instead of the proactive one (Littlewood, 1999).

Another point to be carefully considered from this autonomy development was the force from the situation. Here, the students developed the habit of exploring more resources of learning independently to keep up with all the tasks given for having no teacher accompanying. Naturally, this process will be complicated and distressing for students who usually have their teacher in the surrounding – which was the particular complaint addressed by students participating in the present study about their online English learning experience. In this regard, to assure autonomy development, learners must be provided with autonomy support such as listening to their opinions and suggestions, allowing their contribution, appreciating their perspectives, understanding their learning pace, and willingly communicating with them. With autonomy support, students' distress can be minimized, motivation can be enhanced, and a sense of autonomy in learning will develop (Phithakmethakun & Chinokul, 2020).

4. Conclusion

Some literature has repeatedly contended that the covid-19 pandemic can serve as a potential trigger for realizing and transforming digital education in Indonesia. This condition has also allowed students to exercise autonomy in learning (Abidah et al., 2020; Pujilestari, 2020; Suni Astini, 2020). The result of this study has also strengthened this argumentation. Despite the constraints of lacking human interaction undergoing online learning or remote learning from home, both the teachers and students are gradually adjusting themselves to this learning mode. Teachers increasingly varied their learning instruction, and the students are finding learning through technological applications more enjoyable.

However, this finding needs to be addressed carefully. It is essential to highlight that the students participating in this study did not perceive online learning as effective either ineffective. They just found some elements enjoyable while others, particularly interaction with peers and teacher, were appointed as something they missed to have back. One relieving fact, though, is that the majority of students show a considerable potential to be autonomous learners. Although it was not a significant correlation, students' online and remote learning during the pandemic has influenced their potential to learn autonomously.

In conclusion, amid all complains and difficulties addressed to online learning at current, findings from the current study, again, shed light to the potentiality of realizing engaging online learning and promoting autonomy within the scope of Indonesian ELT in particular, and digital education at all level of Indonesian education in general. Nevertheless, this study has a minimal number of respondents and did not precisely measure students' autonomy level. Further studies need to be performed with more respondents and specifically explore students' autonomous action and attitudes toward online and autonomous learning.

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