

Promoting Learner Autonomy Through Online Global Interactions Among ESL Students

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ABSTRACT

The trend of teaching English as foreign language in the 21st century has changed from teacher centered to students centered paradigm which results the need of students' autonomy in learning process. Accordingly, this research was aimed to depict how students' interactions via online with their peers from a different continent in a global setting could promote 25 Diploma students' autonomy in learning English as a second language (ESL) in Integrated Language Skills 11 course. This was a case study qualitative research by applying Thematic Analysis of the data. Students who participated in the global learning project between a Malaysian public university and a university from India were asked to write four written reflections based on their experiences during the four interactive sessions with the lecturers and peers from the selected country. Each session was given a specific theme. Students from both countries were asked to present the assigned tasks and had an active online discussion in google meet sessions. The analysis of the student's written reflections revealed that the student's participation in global learning activities successfully promoted learners' autonomy by considering some facts such as students' active participations through logging in and commenting others' ideas; students' control on deciding learning modes, setting, and materials; and students' enthusiasm to finish the lecturer's challenges. One interesting discovery was that shy students were more active in global learning sessions. Finally, this research suggests introducing global learning sessions in teaching content course.

Keywords: learner autonomy, global learnings, global interaction, written reflections

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The demand for new delivery systems and learning media has become more urgent as institutions of higher learning (IHLs) struggle to compete for the intake of students both locally and worldwide. In anticipating a future when more students will require more independent learning, new technologies and opportunities are being developed and explored by IHLs to capture students' interest that will allow greater flexibility, autonomy and learner-centeredness yet does not diminish students' learning experience. This calls for a change in the way education can and will be delivered. In the globalized twenty-first century era, the trend of teaching English as foreign language has shifted from teacher centered to student centered paradigm where it requires students' readiness to be the active participant in the learning process (Ardi, 2017). This change in roles demands the lecturers in tertiary education level to equip students with the qualities including technology and digital literacy, critical thinking, being an autonomous learner, and being able to solve problems. Furthermore, according to Ratheeswari (2018), in the digital age, the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) allows students to learn and apply the skills that they need in the 21st century. Hence, the management of pedagogical processes should be conducted creatively and undergo innovation to facilitate interaction between teachers and students. By interacting online, instructors and educators remain connected with their students notwithstanding being in different locations (Hussin, 2017 in Zulaikha et al., 2021).

Zulkifli et. al. (2018) reported that at present the education system in Malaysia is guided by the 10 Shifts as stated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 as it aims to improve the quality of its higher education system, and one of the aims is to produce graduates who can meet the challenges of the 21st century. Romero (2015) as cited in Zulkifli et. al (2018) contends that individuals are required to embrace lifelong learning strategies in order to remain competitive in the globalized world. In addition, Lai, Yeung and Hu (2015) as cited in Zulkifli (2018) suggest that lifelong learning requires three important skills: learning and innovation skills, digital literacy skills, and career and life skills. Hence, autonomy is a pivotal aspect for lifelong learning in real life because students are engaged in real situations with freedom of opinion sharing and become the decision makers after graduating from the academic level pursuit.

The government is aiming to produce lifelong learners; therefore, it is undoubtedly important to support learners to become autonomous learners. Autonomous learners mean learners who are able to take responsibility for their own learning (Little, 2007 and Oxford, 2008 as cited in Zulkifli, 2018). Holec (1981) as cited in Muhammad (2020) stated the most crucial property for students is being autonomous learners. Some characteristics of being autonomous in learning is having the ability to manage student's own learning which then shapes the development of autonomous learners' mentality. Huang and Benson (2013) as cited in Muhammad (2020) strongly suggest that this needs to be incorporated and boosted as one of English educational goals since students need the language skills in proper guided ways by the lecturers. This study concerns the development of autonomy in Diploma level learners working on an online learning platform as part of a global learning project with a foreign learning institution in English language. Our goal was to identify the influence of reflective and collaborative dimensions on the construction of autonomy for online learners in this programme.

Muhammad (2020) added becoming an autonomous learner is not without the designed situation through training, but there is a connection between students and managed situations or designed society, in Benson (2011). Muhammad (2020) cited Chia (2010), the teacher must facilitate learning and control the learning environment which may be used as a place for practice to improve students' autonomy. Autonomy-supportive styles involve creating relationships that nurture students' intrinsic motivation. However, the opposite of supporting autonomy is controlling or pressuring students to think, feel or behave in a particular way. When the learning environment is perceived as controlling, students' feelings of self-determination and intrinsic motivation are diminished. They become demotivated and less engaged, which has a negative effect on both wellbeing and achievement. Students of autonomy-supportive teachers display more positive learning behaviours and achieve better outcomes than the students of controlling teachers.

Learner autonomy comprises two dimensions as cited by prominent scholars in the field of autonomy and language learning such as Benson (2011), Garrison (1997), and Stolk, Martello, Somerville and Geddes (2010); Lai et al. (2015) highlights that there are two dimensions of learner autonomy in Zulkifli et. al. (2018). The first dimension relates to one's ability to self-regulate his or her own learning, and the second dimension is one's willingness to regulate one's learning process. It is important to note that both dimensions value learners' autonomous engagement with language learning opportunities across settings and contexts. In terms of autonomous use of technology for language learning, Bailly (2011) and Lai (2013) highlight the importance of three skills: the ability to locate, select, and use technology meaningfully for language learning in Zulkifli et. al. (2018).

In the 21st century, language proficiency promotes cooperation and communication among people from diverse cultural backgrounds in all facets of life, education, and work. Language learning must therefore be a lifelong commitment, carried out in several ways to meet social, occupational and educational needs, as well as personal needs and desires (Kukulka-Hulme, Lee, & Norris, 2017). The English language is widely regarded as the lingua franca and the most widely spoken language in the world (Yen & Mohamad, 2020). Due to the needs and value of the English language in the current global period, English as a second language (ESL) learners travel across the world to learn the language. As a result, much work has been put into finding suitable approaches for learning English. Learning English as a second language is a challenging task. It will take a collaborative, massive and extraordinary effort from both learners and educators (Khasbani, 2018). As a result of societal globalization, the teaching of English in Malaysian Higher Education has increasingly shifted from grammar translation to communicative approach (Zakaria & Shah, 2019).

This approach allows learners to actively engage in class and helps them improve their English especially in speaking and listening skills. Speaking is one of the most important skills to learn because it is used as a form of communication all over the world. Though listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities are all important, speaking competence generally takes precedence over the others since speaking or, in other words, communication occurs frequently in one's everyday life, both in formal and informal settings. Furthermore, communication is one of the components in the 4Cs of the 21st century skills, emphasizing the relevance of the talent. As a result, the ultimate objective for many nations' governments to assure the empowerment of speaking skills among students is expressed in the education policy in order to generate competent

English language speakers.

Furthermore, the demand for new delivery systems and learning media has become more urgent as institutions of higher learning (IHLs) struggle to compete for students' intake, both locally and worldwide. In anticipating a future when more students will require more independent learning, new technologies and opportunities are being developed and explored by IHLs to capture student interest that will allow greater flexibility, autonomy and learner-centeredness yet does not diminish students' learning experience. This calls for a change in the way education can and how it will be delivered. In fact, Ziguras (2001, p.6) reported many educationists see educational technologies as a means to encourage greater self-direction and creativity on the part of students such as the appeal of educational technologies is that they will require learners to be more pro-active and autonomous and these personality traits are increasingly important in the 'knowledge economy.

The purpose of this case study was to investigate whether or not learner autonomy through asynchronous online interactions via Google Meet interactions between ESL learners in a public university and their peers from a university in a foreign country could promote 25 Diploma students' autonomy in learning English as a second language (ESL) in Integrated Language Skills 11 course. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate learner autonomy via planning, organising, monitoring and evaluating in achieving their learning tasks help develop the learner autonomy among the students who participated in the global learning project. Besides that, learners' views and suggestions relating to Global Learning Project were also sought.

The purpose of this case study is to investigate whether the global learning tasks design can help students develop learner autonomy by understanding and working with the mediating effect of online tools. The study also aims to examine whether the students' interaction with peers online can contribute to the development of language learner autonomy. Besides that, students' opinions about their participation in Online Global Communication through web 2.0, including their perceived benefits and challenges, and how these experiences influenced their language learning and autonomy are sought.

The research questions for the case study were as follows:

1. Did the students' participation in the global learning tasks design help students develop learner autonomy through understanding and working with the mediating effect of online tools?
2. Did the students' interaction with peers' online help develop language learner autonomy?
3. What are the students' opinions about their participation in Online Global Communication through web 2.0?

In this paper, we first outline our understanding of the interrelationship between the multimodal communicative competence, multiliteracy, and learner autonomy. Then, we present the participants, project phases, and task and research designs. Afterwards, we describe our approach to data collection and analysis; finally, we conclude by discussing our findings and highlighting our main conclusions.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Autonomy in English Language Teaching and Learning

In the field of foreign language learning and teaching the importance of supporting students in becoming more autonomous has become one of the most prominent themes. The majority of theorists, researchers and methodologists have been stressing the need for making learners capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. As Gordon (2000, p.3) highlighted “the world in which children grow, learn and interact will have significantly different modes of exchange than those of the previous generation”. Rising to this call, the dawn of the new millennium in the information age has brought a plethora of new technologies and new ways of teaching in Institution of Higher Learnings. As pointed out by Alagic et al. (2004) that the ultimate goal of adult education is to help them achieve learner autonomy. There are many suggestions to define what is called as autonomy, but the basic concept of being autonomous according to Holec’s idea is that the learners must be responsible for their learning success (Cotterall, 2000; Vanijdee, 2003; Sert, 2006; Sanprasert, 2009; Lo, 2010). Similarly, Smith (2008) mentioned that being an autonomous learner means having ability to manage the learning for practical as well as theoretical background by themselves. Associating with the English language teaching and learning, the learners are able to manage, monitor and direct themselves to learn English without being forced or instructed by the teacher, though there is still guidance which is situated inside the textbook, institution learning objectives, syllabus, and many other manuals to achieve success in language learning (Smith, 2008). Furthermore, learner’s autonomy enables students to have responsibility for their own learning and evaluation of learning. Whenever students have the learner autonomy, they love to study without anyone having to force them. It also stimulates endless curiosity which will lead to lifelong learners, a goal that today’s educators expect and desire to give to every person.

Another perspective of autonomous learning or self-directed learning has been suggested by Holec in Benson (2011) is that it usually happens to the learning with the mode of technology or in Computer Assisted Language distance learning, and personal access learning. This perspective is in line with this study whereby the researchers involved the ESL learners in a program called; Window to the Borderless World: The Student’s mentoring global learning program which required students to use the online platform for communication with their international peers and they need to work cooperatively by using several web applications to complete certain tasks given to them. In addition, in this program, the students were required to do their own research on several topics and themes assigned to them which means they did personal access learning. Moreover, in the program, the role of the lecturers is to be the trainers, moderators, and counselors to develop learners’ autonomy. Hence, this is directly related to Benson (2011) perspective.

Although many scholars have over the past two decades debated on a holistic definition of learner’s autonomy, basically the most agreed theme is learner’s responsibility toward their own learning. For this research, the researchers are also keen to adhere to Little (2002) definition which stresses that autonomous learners accept responsibility for their learning and regularly engage with the cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social dimensions of the learning process. In addition to this discourse, Sinclair, and Thang (2009), reiterate that learner autonomy refers to learners who are self-driven, take responsibility for their learning and actively seek new knowledge. They

highlighted that there are two kinds of autonomous learners - proactive and reactive autonomous learners. The former refers to learners who actively take control of their own learning whilst the latter suggest learners who are pushed towards various forms of independent learning (Littlewood, 1999 cited in Sinclair and Thang, 2009). In this research, students who participated in the global learning project will receive a different task which required them to discuss the instruction given, delegate work among members of the group, preparing, rehearsing, recording, and presenting in a google meet platform and later having a post presentation discussion in a social media platform. The students' activities in the project are relevant to the definition of learner autonomy by researchers and scholars. It is hoped that the task design will help to promote learner autonomy among the students.

The concept and ideas of learner autonomy, which refers to learners' abilities in taking responsibility for the management of their own learning has taken centre stage as the responsibility of learning has shifted from the teacher to the learner. This paradigm shift in learning, which is less devoted to rote memorization of facts but more to learner-centredness is dedicated towards promoting independent and self-directed learners. In this context Jones (2006) in Kaur and Sidhu (2010) stressed that there is a shift from lecturing and telling ("sage on the stage") to facilitating and guiding ("guide on the side"). The overarching principle in this new paradigm shift is to help learners 'learn how to learn'. Learning how to learn means to build up learners' "capabilities to learn independently (e.g., creative and critical thinking, mastering of information technology, communication), to become self-reflective on how to learn and to be able to use different ways of learning..." (Curriculum Development Council, 2000 p. 3 in Kaur and Sidhu, 2010). All these skills have been identified as components of autonomy.

Characteristics of Learner Autonomy

Different learners possess different characteristics to fit their learning habits. Autonomous learning refers to the learners' ability to take charge of their own learning. A number of previous studies listed similar characteristics of learner's autonomy which support the definition of the term. Utami (2007) in Lengkanawati (2017) found the autonomous learners in her studies possess characteristics such as taking responsibility for their learning, being aware of needs, setting goals, planning their own learning, finding resources, allocating time, and working collaboratively. In another study, Kemala (2014) in Lengkanawati (2017) affirms that autonomous learners are characterised by the ability of finding resources or materials they intended to learn, identifying their learning needs and selecting the learning projects. However, Lengkanawati (2017) mentioned the term learner's autonomy is rarely discussed in Indonesian literature as it is more associated to the Western culture and way of learning, and that the quality of Indonesian students' higher order thinking ability is considered as low. These claims by Lengkawati (2017) suggests that it is unlikely for Indonesian students to practice autonomous learning in contrast of the findings in Utami (2007) and Kemala (2014).

On the other hand, one of the characteristics of learner's autonomy that support the autonomy in learning is "relatedness" (Sanparsert, 2009). He emphasizes the need to be related in autonomy which includes need of support, contact, and need to be in community or being part of it. Associating to the context of this research, which was conducted in Malaysia as part of Asia countries, Littlewood (1999) stated that Asia society learning habit is suitable with the concept

of relatedness. The learners' need on being autonomy and being part of community becomes the focus of relatedness concept. In classroom context, the teacher or lecturer and the students are required to be related or have relatedness (Andrade and Bunker, 2009).

Additionally, the characteristics of learner autonomy listed on Utami (2007) and Kemala (2014) are only fulfilling the metacognitive strategy mentioned by Thanasoulas (2000). Thanasoulas (2000) emphasised that autonomous learning is achieved when certain conditions are obtained, which are cognitive and metacognitive strategies on the part of the learner, motivation, attitudes, and knowledge about language learning. Thanasoulas (2000) further wrote metacognitive strategies are skills used for planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning activity.

Consequently, another significant focus to promote autonomy is having freedom of choice. In ESL classroom context, learners do not only depend on the lecturer's preference of materials and resources only. Cotterall (2000) indicated that the basic need for learners in deciding the learning mode or style is not about being controlled by the lecturer as decision makers, but they are fostered with the scaffold instructions to find their own choice. In relation to Thanasoulas (2000), Lamb (2017) also talked about the knowledge about language learning as one characteristic of learner autonomy. Lamb (2017) distinguishes between two broad theoretical orientations: one which focuses on learning systems in which learners take decisions about the content and processes of their learning and one which focuses on the cognitive and metacognitive capacities which enable learners to take responsibility for their learning.

Learner's autonomy in English language is essential for learning English for people of different ages, amidst so many changes. Everybody has problems that affect their lifestyles. Learner's autonomy is an important skill to solve these problems in various scenarios and to make learning most successful. Researchers have not yet found a way to develop a person who is characterised as having a good learning autonomy; this is because there are many varieties of characteristics in the learner's autonomy in English language. The researcher, therefore, was interested in developing the indicators for developing the characteristics of learner's autonomy in English language of Diploma students in a Malaysian public university.

Based on the discussion, clearly, there are various types of humans' characteristics, learners may have different portions of those dimensions. This is because the autonomy produces different forms for any individuals, and even the same person in different cultural context and time (Benson, 2011).

Promoting Autonomy through Online Interactions.

Compared to traditional learning, online or web-based learning provides more benefits. The advantage of online platforms is, they help to boost learning not only inside real classroom buildings, but also outside the classroom or virtual learning. It helps to foster learners' autonomy in ESL classroom learning. In terms of collaborative learning, web-based serves the needs of ubiquitous learning (anywhere and anytime), caters various learning goals, etc. (Fan & Li, 2011). It can be delivered in an online environment, bring enjoyment and relaxing atmosphere, also able to decrease students' anxiety (Wang, Cheng, Chen, Mercer, & Kirschner, 2017; Senyuva & Kaya, 2014) and increase motivation, particularly in the chat session (Chandra & Watters, 2012; Wang

et al, 2017; Senyuva & Kaya, 2014)

According to Benson (2011), media can give ample linguistics and non-linguistics input by proposing new approaches in displaying new language. One of the examples is that Malaysia and India students are able to enhance learning using the online platform. (Google Meet). It means that technology in this case is Google Meet platform was providing significant role for students from both countries to improve language ability through virtual discussions and other language activities assigned to them. In addition, it also motivated those students to be autonomy since they could use their personal computers and gadgets at home to learn language and motivated them since online learning/communication provided easier than face-to-face (FTF) learning. Another quite similar research was conducted by Liaw (2010) implemented a cross-cultural email project with bilingual or ESL pre-service teachers in US. Using the email, the Taiwanese students had less intervention from the teacher when interacting with the US pre-service teachers and they got many useful cultural information.

The Development of English in Teaching and Learning

Since Malaysian independence, English language teachers have conducted their classes against a backdrop of continual education reforms. The most significant of these reforms was the change of the medium of instruction from English to Bahasa Malaysia in 1961. Ever since, the education system places English as a second language (Gill, 2005) which is in line with the education policy. This reform in the medium of instruction has unfortunately affected the standard of English in the country. As reported by Mohamed et al. (2008) pupils' proficiency has decreased following the change of medium of instruction.

Quite recently, a former cabinet Minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz claimed that the focus on 'dignifying' Bahasa Melayu is a backward move that does not help Malaysians to progress in the modern world. (The Star, 27th March 2022). She further commented that English is the recognised international language so prioritizing English language will deteriorate the mastery of English language among students. Ironically, the media blame English language teachers for the decreasing standards rather than the system itself (e.g., Aruna, 2014; Jalleh, 2013). However, the Malaysian government was aware of the declining standard of English and has taken the move to use imported textbooks to achieve proficiency levels aligned to international standards by implementing the new Common European Frame-work of Reference for Languages (CEFR) for preschoolers, Standard One, Standard Two as well as Form One and Form Two students. In congruence with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, part of the plan for the English language to be improved is to upskill all English language teachers.

The decline of the standard of English can be seen through the unemployment of undergraduate students due to their lack of proficiency in the language (Pemandu, 2016 as cited in Abu Bakar et. al. (2021). Thus, in order to address the issue of the declining standards of English, the Malaysian government has decided to form a body that is known as the English Language Standards and Quality Council (ELSQC). The director of the English Language Teaching Center (ELTC) together with other experts have been appointed by the Ministry of Education to manage the new formed body. One of the aims of the body is to advise the government on the appropriate of language policy and help elevate the standard of English in Malaysia. The council is assisted by

the English Language Teaching Center (ELTC) which is the leading agency to elevate and improve English proficiency among Malaysian students (Mohamad Uri & Abdul Aziz, 2017 in Abu Bakar et. al., 2021).

Since the quality of communication is more significant and most of communication at international level and industries is using English, mastering it is deemed to be crucial. In the context of this study, students were considered, and they were given opportunity to learn and develop themselves through the interaction with their peers from an international university. The educational process the students went through has encouraged students to develop naturally and to maximize their potential. Effective communication depends on a complex set of procedural skills that develop only through use; and if language learning depends crucially on language use, learners who enjoy a high degree of autonomy in their learning should find it easier to master the full range of discourse roles on which effective spontaneous communication depends (Little 2002). In the field of second and foreign language teaching and learning, the importance of helping students to become more autonomous in their learning has become one of its more prominent themes (Benson 2011). Due to the significance of learner autonomy, it should be at least attempted to be installed into the learning process.

Autonomous learning is more effective than non-autonomous learning. In other words, the development of autonomy implies better language learning. This is one of the hypotheses which almost all research in the field of autonomy is based on and has implications for (Benson 2001). As Benson (2001) explains that many advocates for autonomy are concerned primarily with the ability to learn effectively in terms of personal goals. Autonomy may ultimately lead to greater proficiency in language use. Many scholars, if only in theoretical level, ascribe to the autonomy the ability to foster proficiency, claiming that “an increasingly desired outcome of formal instruction is development of ability to continue improving language proficiency through self-instruction and experiential forms of learning” Dickinson and Wenden (1995), as quoted in Hrochová (2012). Cotterall (1999) proves that the level of language skills needed for the desired language fluency could not be achieved by the sole means of in-class tutoring; but by the students' practice and opportunities to use the target language by themselves and ahead of the teacher in terms of their importance for successful language learning.

The Technology Involved in Teaching and Learning

The introduction of computer technology is becoming a mandatory requirement in many educational systems, and language education is often expected to be at the forefront of such changes. However, the most important argument for harnessing computer technology in the service of developing learner autonomy is the fact that for many learners the use of the computer or the Internet is an integral part of their lives. This means that directing them to use these tools in beneficial ways can on the one hand make them more autonomous in language learning and on the other enhance the effectiveness of that process.

2020 was the year that educators, students, and parents all over the world transitioned to the new normal of education through virtual or online learning. This has also resulted in a massive growth

in the educational technology industry. Various platforms, websites and apps, and other tools to facilitate online learning have been developed to meet the rising demands from schools. Furthermore, the intensity of the pandemic has prompted university students to be independent online learners. For instance, video conferencing platforms are profoundly used to meet the demand for online learning, such as Google Meet, Zoom, Skype and WebEx, as well as Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Google Classroom, Padlet, Moodle and social media applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram and YouTube. Since online learning provides an excellent platform and offers a great deal of flexibility, Dhawan (2020) contends that the role of the internet in the learning process is crucial to students. In agreement, Wildana et al. (2020) consider online learning to be practical as it facilitates the use of various applications such as 'Whatsapp', 'Zoom' and 'Google Classroom'. Due to its flexibility in terms of time and location, global online learning sessions are possible to be conducted between students from different higher institutions. For example, in this study students from Malaysia and India were communicating using internet connections and also digital devices such as computers and handphones and optional accessories such as headphones, speakers, and printers to complete their tasks.

One of the significant advantages of students' online interaction is it allows students to uncover new information by exploring digital libraries and websites. As further technologies are introduced to the field of education, distance learning facilitates the global dissemination of information and knowledge (Hasifah, 2020). She contends that online learning is important because it can enable more effective self-learning. Students can choose the time they spend, the content they learn, and the direction of their learning. Students also have the opportunity to revisit challenging topics until they feel confident in their understanding. Furthermore, technology and online learning allow students to study in a "safe" environment, without experiencing embarrassment about asking questions. Thus, students gain more confidence interacting with their international lecturers and peers.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Twenty-Five students were selected for this case study. The study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and behaviors of a specific group of individuals. According to Yin (2018), a case study can be particularly useful when the research questions focus on "how" and "why" questions, as they allow for detailed and comprehensive exploration of a phenomenon in a real-life context. In such cases, a small population can provide more detailed information that can be missed in larger studies. The focus is on the richness and depth of the data rather than the quantity of data. The selection is based on their active participation in four Global Learning Sessions conducted via Google Meet. These students were given questions reflecting on the research questions. 4 reflection questions were asked to retrieve their responses. These responses were written after they had completed each of their sessions. The total number of global Learning sessions that they attended is 4. Thus, every session will result in one reflection. These are the questions for their reflection on global learning.

1. Write a written reflection on your experience and participation in Window to the Borderless World Program session.
 - Reflect on your contribution as a presenter and group member and your interaction

with the Indian lecturers and friends from Somaiyya College

2. Write a reflection on
 - Your preparation for the presentation. (What is your theme, how do you discuss the idea, how do you divide your work in group)
 - Share your experience what have you learned from this presentation with Somaiyya College
 - How do you think your participation in this project can help you as a student?
3. Please write a reflection on your experience with your third presentation. These questions may guide you to write.
 - Share your experience in your discussion and planning before your presentation.
 - Share your experience during your presentation.
 - Share your experience post presentation.
 - Overall, do you think this presentation is helping you to improve your speaking test?
 - In future do you still need your lecturer's guidance for presentations and communication skills?
4. After having four googles meet sessions and interactions in Facebook, what is your understanding of Window to the Borderless World Project?
 - How do you rate your participation in this project?
 - Will you join this kind of project again in the future?
 - Do you have suggestions to improve this project in the future?

These reflections were then analysed into several themes to suit the research questions. The themes obtained were mined according to the research questions. This mining for themes is called Thematic Analysis where the response from the students is coded into several open coding which means the keys, or the themes are open for interpretation. However, each of the themes will be related to the characteristics of autonomous learning.

4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

For this section, the result and analysis are divided according to the task or reflection response.

Reflection One

1. Write a written reflection on your experience and participation in Window to the Borderless World Program session.
 - Reflect on your contribution as a presenter and group member and your interaction with the Indian lecturers and friends from Somaiya College.

The respondents were asked about their contribution as a presenter and as a group member. After that, they need to respond to their interaction with the Indian lecturers and friends from Somaiyya College.

Based on this result, most of the respondents were very positive in their interaction with the Indian lecturers and students. A clear explanation is described in Table 1 below.

Interaction with Somaiya College Lecturers & Friends	Positive Experiences	Difficulties Encountered
Fun/Joy	/	
Culture	/	
Motivation	/	
Interesting Content	/	
Language Difficulties		/
Technical Difficulties		/

Table 1 : Interaction With Somaiya College Lecturers and Friends

According to Table 2, it explains the contribution of these respondents as a presenter and group member.

Contribution As Presenter And Group Member	Positive Experiences	Difficulties Encountered
Cooperate	/	
Teamwork	/	
Fun	/	
Motivation	/	
Anxiety		/
Technical Problems		/

Table 2: Contribution as Presenter and Group Member

Reflection Two

- Write a reflection on
 - Your preparation for the presentation. (What is your theme, how do you discuss the idea, how do you divide your work into groups)
 - Share your experience and what have you learned from this presentation with Somaiyya College

- How do you think your participation in this project can help you as a student?

For reflection two, the respondents were asked to answer how they came up with the idea for their presentation, delegating their work and presenting their presentation. The students also shared their experiences interacting with lecturers and friends from Somaiya College. These responses indicated their positives experiences as well as the difficulties that they faced. Later, the respondents responded on the benefits that they gained from participating in this activity. These data are shown in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5.

Selecting, Tasking ad Delegating	Positive Experiences	Difficulties Encountered
Cooperation	/	
Teamwork	/	
Fun	/	
Motivation	/	
Anxiety		/
Technical Problems		/

Table 3: Selecting, Tasking and Delegating

Interaction With Somaiya College Lecturers and Friends	Positive Experiences	Difficulties Encountered
Culture	/	
Cooperation	/	
Motivation	/	
Privilege	/	
Interesting Content	/	
New Knowledge	/	
Impart Knowledge	/	
Technical Difficulties		/

Table 4: Interaction with Somaiya College Lecturers and Friends

Advantages of Global Learning	Positive Experiences
Enjoyable	/
Friendship	/
Opportunity	/
Knowledge	/
Self-Esteem	/
Improve Powerpoint Skills	/
Confidence	/
Improve Knowledge	/
Impart Knowledge	/
Motivation	/
Improve Language Skills	/

Table 5: Advantages of Global Learning

Reflection Three

1. Please write a reflection on your experience with your third presentation. These questions may guide you to write.
 - Share your experience in your discussion and planning before your presentation.
 - Share your experience during your presentation.
 - Share your experience post-presentation.
 - Overall, do you think this presentation is helping you to improve your speaking test?
 - In the future do you still need your lecturer's guidance for presentations and communication skills?

Based on the Third Reflection, these respondents shared their experience with planning, presenting, and the post-presentation in Table 6. Then, in Table 7 the students gave their opinions on whether the activity affected their speaking test.

Planning, Presenting & Post Presentation	Positive Experiences	Difficulties Encountered
Teamwork	/	
Cooperation	/	
Confidence	/	
Motivation	/	
Enjoy/ Happy	/	
Improve Language Skills	/	
Language Experience	/	
New Knowledge	/	
Impart Knowledge	/	
Anxiety		/
Technical Problems		/

Table 6: Planning, Presenting & Post Presentation

Improvement Of Speaking Skills	Positive Experiences
Improve Pronunciation	/
Cooperation	/
Motivation	/
Practice	/
Improve Language Skills	/
New Knowledge	/

Table 7: Improvement of Speaking Skills

Reflection Four

1. After having four googles meet sessions and interactions on Facebook, what is your understanding of the Window to the Borderless World Project?
 - How do you rate your participation in this project?
 - Will you join this kind of project again in the future?
 - Do you have suggestions to improve this project in the future?

In Table 8, it explores the rating of the activity given by the respondents. The following table, which Table 9 are the respondents' motivation to join the activity and last but not least, Table 10 is students' suggestions on improvements that could be made in the future for this global learning.

Rating The Activity	Positive Experiences
Perfect Program	/
Enjoyable	/
Improve Language Skills	/
Honored	/
New Knowledge	/
Strengthen Bonds	/
Finding Resources Skills	/
Teamwork	/
Communication	/
Participation	/
Understanding Culture	/

Table 8: Rating the Activity

Motivation	Positive Experiences
Cooperation	/
Improve Pronunciation	/
Motivation	/
Practice	/
New Knowledge	/
Improve Language Skills	/

Table 9: Motivation

Improvement	Positive Experiences
Cooperation	/
Improve Pronunciation	/
Motivation	/
Practice	/
New Knowledge	/
Improve Language Skills	/

Table 10: Improvement

5.0 DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher extended its discussion and conclusion to complete this study. Since the thematic analysis is utilised to conclude, a clear description of the discussion is needed. Based on Shcarle and Szoba (2000) in their Learner Autonomy book, they defined autonomous learners with these characteristics:

1. Sharing Information
2. Learning Strategies
3. Self-Evaluation
4. Self-Discipline & Self-Monitoring
5. Motivation
6. Responsibility
7. Self Confidence
8. Learner Cooperation

Thus, each of the themes identified from these reflections are categorised into its themes and later matched with these Autonomous Learners as defined by Scharle & Szabo (2000).

RQ1: Did the global learning tasks design help students develop learner autonomy through understanding and working with the mediating effect of online tools?

Each of the reflection questions was prepared for the respondents focusing on this item. The most significant answers given by the students are 3 important aspects of autonomous Learning. The result shows that Teamwork, Confidence, Cooperative, and also Motivation themes are repeatedly used by the respondents when they answer their reflections. Some of the samples by the students are shown in the table below:

Table 11: Students' Feedback

Samples	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>me and my group from UiTM Kedah doing, our group decide to present, member contribute to make a preparation</i> b) <i>All of them is excited when doing it</i> c) <i>Fortunately, my group members are very helpful</i> 	Teamwork
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) <i>I give 10/10 to this program because it really helped me in many things like building self-confidence and improving my English</i> 	Confidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>group enjoy doing the project together, I enjoying session last night</i> b) <i>We also having fun doing it because it's awesome</i> 	Fun/ Enjoy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>help each other</i> b) <i>We are working hard for doing it by searching it in Internet and other platform, But with our successfully leader, our group is smoothly outcome in present.</i> 	Cooperation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>we encourage ourselves to be confident, support each other, I'm very excited</i> 	Motivation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>I was upset because I couldn't interact much with the Indian lecturers and friends form Somayya College because my internet line</i> b) <i>I having a trouble when want to present because my Internet connection is so low.</i> c) <i>My team members and I are glad that our presentation was present smoothly even though we got a technical problem such as poor Internet connection and others.</i> 	Technical Difficulties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) <i>their pronunciation, Its a challenging to me</i> 	Language

	Difficulties
<p>a) <i>While hunting for the content, I became more informed about Malaysian cuisine. Students from Somayya College also taught me a lot about their cuisine.</i></p> <p>b) <i>My experience that I have learned from this presentation with Somaiyya College is every film in other country has their own unique and has many genre of film.</i></p> <p>c) <i>I can learn a lot thing about their country film.</i></p>	Culture
<p>d) <i>It is very enjoyable to know about all these movies.</i></p> <p>e) <i>And not to be forgotten is the guest, namely Mr Chinmay.</i></p>	Interesting Content

By using the Autonomous Learner characteristics from Scharle and Szabo (2000), here are the description of the analysis.

Table 12: Autonomous Learner Characteristics

Autonomous Learner Characteristics	Themes
<i>Sharing Information</i>	Culture
<i>Learning Strategies</i>	Teamwork, Interesting Content
<i>Self Evaluation</i>	Language Difficulties, Fun/ Enjoy
<i>Self Discipline & Self Monitoring</i>	-
<i>Motivation</i>	Motivation
<i>Responsibility</i>	Technical Difficulties
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	Confidence
<i>Learner Cooperation</i>	Cooperation

Referring to Table 12, each of the characteristics was listed there with matching themes. This analysis shows that each of the themes derived from the respondents' reflections parallels the characteristics laid out by Scharle and Szabo (2000). The respondents shared their information when exchanging their cultures with The Indian culture. At the same time, they also learned about Malaysian Culture in depth. One of the samples stated that "*I can learn a lot thing about their country film.*" in which this shows that autonomy takes place when these students are involved in this global learning program. The process started as soon as they were given the tasks where they had to search for different themes of Malaysian Identity namely Traditional Dances & Songs, and Malaysian Movies to name a few. Thus, *sharing information* is one of the aspects which the

respondents deal with when they complete their tasks.

One of the most significant characteristics of autonomous learners is *teamwork*. This category falls under the Learning Strategies where students collaborate with each other to complete their tasks. The respondent answered “*me and my group from UiTM Kedah doing, our group decide to present, member contribute to make a preparation*” in a reflection. This shows that they work together to ensure that their presentation will run smoothly during their webinar. This Learning strategy helps the students to get involved in a discussion and able to agree and disagree with each other. Another theme that is categorised in Learning Strategies is *Interesting Content*. It is apparent to educators and also learners that the learning process requires materials that are able to attract learners. Other than the educators, the materials provided could enhance and encourage the learners to learn.

For the third characteristic, there are two themes categorised under Self-Evaluation which are *Language Difficulties, Fun/ Enjoy*. These themes reflect that the learning process takes place when the learners are able to assess their own learning. Another important aspect of autonomous learning is students could evaluate their own learning. From the sample, the respondents gave “*their pronunciation, it’s challenging to me*” and “*group enjoy doing the project together, I enjoying session last night*” as their responses. This evidence indicates that they are unconsciously assessing their own learning.

Other worth mentioning characteristics are Motivation and Confidence for learner autonomy. These two themes are classified under Motivation and Self-Confidence. Another word for mentioning characteristics of motivation and confidence for the new afternoon this too seems that are classified under motivation and self-confidence based on Shcarle and Szabo (2000). A study by Lengkanawati (2017) also supported Shcarle and Szabo (2000), she found that autonomous learners possess characteristics such as taking responsibility for their learning, being aware of needs, setting goals, planning their own learning, finding resources, allocating time, and working collaboratively. The respondents responded, “*we encourage ourselves to be confident support each other, I’m very excited*”. These two samples show that the students are motivated in completing their tasks. Referring to the *confidence* theme, the students wrote “*I give 10/10 to this program because it really helped me in many things like building self-confidence and improving my English*”. The answer given by the respondent posits the idea that this Global Learning Program enables students to build and boost their confidence. As an important aspect of the autonomous learner, this theme is repeatedly written in the student’s answers.

In conclusion, the most significant of these characteristics rely on these four which are Teamwork, Confidence, Cooperative, and Motivation. Thus, it shows that this Global Learning Program resulted in positive feedback in incorporating learner autonomy.

RQ2 : In what ways do participants develop language learner autonomy?

In accordance with research question no 2, the themes are analysed by adapting Nunan (1997) Autonomous Learning Level. Nunan (1997) laid down these levels to implement autonomous learning.

Table 13: Implementing Autonomous Learning Level (Nunan, 1997, As Cited In Khaerudin & Chik, 2021)

LEVEL	LEARNER ACTION	PROCESS	THEMES
1	Awareness	Learners identify strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred learning styles/strategies	Culture, Teamwork, Interesting Content
2	Involvement	Learners make choices among a range of options.	Fun/ Enjoy
3	Intervention	Learners modify/adapt tasks.	Language Difficulties, Technical Difficulties
4	Creation	Learners create their own tasks.	Teamwork, Cooperation
5	Transcendence	Learners become teachers and researchers.	Motivation, Confidence

Based on Table 12, these themes are matched into each of the levels for learner action. These levels start from Awareness, Involvement, Intervention, Creation, and Transcendence. Furthermore, the themes are placed according to their significance. Learners are able to identify the learning when they are aware of *Culture, Teamwork*, and also *Interesting Content*. These themes reflect the Learning Strategies which have been mentioned in the previous section.

Then, the level proceeds to Involvement as the students are able to identify their learning strategies. The need to be able to make choices among a range of options. For example, they were asked to prepare a presentation on Malaysian Cuisine. These students discussed the option of the Malaysian Cuisine and decided what they wanted to focus. So, they needed to enjoy the process so that it will ease their task.

The third level is invention, where they must modify or adapt the tasks. The themes related to this level are language and technical difficulties. As they have gone through several sessions with the Indian lecturers and students, these students had already anticipated their upcoming presentation. They made necessary changes and adjusted their presentations so that they would not disturb their presentation.

The next level is Creation, these respondents create their own tasks once they figure out their intervention. Each of these levels is connected to one another which enables the students to be considered to reach their autonomous level. Finally, is the Transcendence level, in which they are able to plan their own presentation and learning process. The themes categorised in this level are motivation and confidence.

RQ3 : Is Online Global Communication through web 2.0 relevant to ESL students?

This research question explores the Motivation to join (Table 9) and Improvement (Table 10). Referring to both tables, the result shows positive feedback on the Global Learning Program.

Table 14 : Motivation To Join & Improvement

Samples	Themes
MOTIVATION TO JOIN	
<p>a) <i>I would like to join this programme in the future because it's so interesting to show our culture to foreign people, I feel like a proud citizens as Malaysian</i></p> <p>b) <i>I definitely will join projects like this again in the future as this program can give me various benefits.</i></p> <p>c) <i>I will join it because its fun, This project also helps our improvement in understanding English but in fun way., It's a enjoyment thing when we can learn a new things.</i></p> <p>d) <i>I also would be over the moon to participate in this kind of program in the future!</i></p>	Interested to join
<p>e) <i>I really love to edit the video slide presentation with my members because every session happen, it's improve our video presentation to the very interesting and beautiful one</i></p> <p>f) <i>improving speaking skills, skills in finding presentation material and others.</i></p>	Powerpoint Skills
<p>g) <i>improving speaking skills, skills in finding presentation material and others.</i></p>	Language Skills
<p>h) <i>We also learning a lot of things that we do not know about other country such as what food or movie that interesting in India, My suggestion for this project that we can get more information or more title to present because we are still student, so we will learn a lot of things about other culture.</i></p>	New Knowledge
<p>i) <i>I believe I can do better.</i></p> <p>j) <i>I give 10/10 to this program because it really helped me in many things like building self-confidence and improving my English.</i></p> <p>k) <i>I will join</i></p>	Confidence
<p>l) <i>I give 10/10 to this program because it really helped me in many things like building self-confidence and improving my English</i></p>	Improve Language Skills
<p>m) <i>This program helps me in making new friends</i></p>	New Friends

IMPROVEMENT	
a) <i>I suggest the improvement for this programme in the future is to make the theme in every session is different for each class and also invite a guest to our programme to make it more interesting</i>	Different theme for presentation
b) <i>I would suggest to hold competitions such as poetry writing competitions, storytelling and others</i>	Competition
c) <i>my suggestion is to hold more activities for Malaysian students and Indian students to interact with.</i> d) <i>I also would like to suggest that this program can be continued in the future with more activities we can do and more interactions between Malaysian students and students from other countries.</i>	More activities
e) <i>I hope this program continues, and I hope not only two countries that participate in this program, but other countries can participate in this program.</i>	Include another country

These themes derived from the questions asked in Reflection 4, which concerns the respondent's willingness to participate in the related program sometime in the future. These respondents responded with very positive feedback. These open coding themes are listed as *Interested in, Improve Powerpoint skills, Improve language skills, Attain new knowledge, Self-Confidence, and Making new friends.*

Based on the samples, the respondents agreed that Global Learning is relevant when their responses showed that they are very *Interested in* joining the program again. They responded "*I would like to join this programme in the future because it's so interesting to show our culture to foreign people, I feel like a proud citizens as Malaysian*", "*I definitely will join projects like this again in the future as this program can give me various benefits.*", "*I will join it because its fun, This project also helps our improvement in understanding English but in fun way., It's a enjoyment thing when we can learn a new things.*" and "*I also would be over the moon to participate in this kind of program in the future!*". All of these responses proved that the respondents found involved in this program will benefit them. None of the responses stated otherwise. Hence, it indicates a positive sign to continue this program in the future.

Another positive response is the respondents believe this program boosts their *Confidence* level. This is evident in their responses; "*I believe I can do better*", "*I give 10/10 to this program because it really helped me in many things like building self-confidence and improving my English*" and "*I will join*". Not only that, but respondents also signal this global learning program enables them to "*Improve PowerPoint skills*", "*Attain new knowledge*", "*Improve language skills*" and last but not least "*Making new friends*". As language learners indirect learning process is seen as a medium for second language learners to improve their language skills. Other than the one attained in the

classroom, activities that promote language learning are a great tool for these learners. Hence, this program is seen as relevant for the students to participate in the future.

This notion is in line with the subsequent question asked which refers to any improvements that could be made to improve this global learning program. There are 4 main themes reflected in the respondents' feedback. The themes are *Different themes for presentation, Competition, More activities* and *other countries participation*.

To conclude, based on the findings from students' reflection, there is relevant evidence to show that Global Learning Communication indicates positive feedback. Therefore, it is essential for Higher Education institutions, educators, instructors, students, and language learners to see this program as an opportunity for a new herald. As advanced technology develops, so does language learning. It requires a new medium, methods, and materials in order to succeed.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The research findings suggest that the Global Learning Program has been successful in incorporating learner autonomy and has received positive feedback from students. This success can be attributed to the four key characteristics of teamwork, confidence, cooperation, and motivation, which were found to be most significant in achieving learner autonomy. As students progressed through different levels of learner autonomy, they were able to create their own tasks and plan their own learning and presentation process. The positive feedback highlights the importance of incorporating such programs in higher education institutions and for language learners, especially with the continued development of advanced technology in language learning.

Continuing with this line of research, future studies could explore the long-term effects of the Global Learning Program on students' language proficiency, learner autonomy, and academic achievement. Additionally, researchers could investigate the impact of the program on students' motivation to learn and their attitudes towards language learning. It would also be interesting to examine the effectiveness of the program in different educational contexts and for learners of different ages and backgrounds. By conducting further research on this topic, educators and institutions can continue to improve language learning programs and ultimately enhance students' learning experiences.

Therefore, it is recommended that educators and institutions continue to incorporate such programs and methods to help students develop their learner autonomy and enhance their language learning experience. By doing so, language learners will be better equipped to succeed in a rapidly changing and globalized world. Through continued research, language learning programs can be further improved, and educators can continue to support their students in becoming autonomous learners.

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