
EFL teachers' challenges in promoting learner autonomy in the 21st-century learning

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Received: March 18, 2020

Accepted: July 27, 2020

Published: September 16, 2020

Abstract

Teachers have a responsibility to help students become autonomous learners. However, in promoting learner autonomy, the teachers were faced with the challenges. This descriptive qualitative study aimed to describe the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning faced by EFL teachers and their strategies. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview technique. Four qualified EFL junior high school teachers with at least five years of teaching experience in Singaraja Bali Indonesia were involved. The interview guideline was constructed based on the dimensions of policy constraints, institutional constraints, language teaching methodology, and learner's background. The interviews were transcribed and categorized into the table of identification based on the four dimensions. Finally, the data regarding the challenges and the strategies were interpreted, and the excerpts of the interview were provided. The results show that the policy constraint identified in this study was due to the school zoning system. The institutional constraint was due to the unscheduled events. The language teaching methodology was due to the lack of knowledge of teaching strategy and different characteristics of students. Thus, in transforming the challenges into possibilities, some strategies were implemented, such as initiating activities, applying collaborative learning, and having good planning and time management.

Keywords: learner autonomy; EFL teachers' challenges; 21st-century learning

How to cite this paper (in APA style): Wiraningsih, P., & Santosa, M. H. (2020). EFL teachers' challenges in promoting learner autonomy in the 21st-century learning. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 10(2), 290-314. <https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v10i2.1881>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23971/jefl.v10i2.1881>



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Long-life education is a concept where individuals will always learn along with their life since education is life itself (Nasir et al., 2017; Waseso, 2018), known as a long-life education. In line with education's main purpose, life-long learning is seen as a continuous lifetime experience that leads individuals for self-development and autonomous (Candy, 1991; Holec, 1981; Little, 2007; Littlewood, 2017). It means that individuals are expected to be autonomous learners since teachers cannot always provide learners them with all the knowledge in their lives. Moreover, in 21st-century learning, students' active involvement and collaboration are taken into consideration to achieve meaningful learning (Rochmahwati, 2013; Widiawati et al., 2018). The integration of critical thinking with problem-solving can also be developed through effort, persistence, and good self-reliance that belongs to autonomous learners (Alonazi, 2017). Therefore, the significance of being an autonomous learner gives additional value for potential aspects that need to be developed, such as leadership, creativity, and innovation. It also helps students succeed in today's integrated digital and global environment (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2016; Widiawati et al., 2018). It means that Nowadays education cannot be separated from the use of technology that actively contributes to promoting promoting students' 21st -century learning skills and life-long learning (Fidyati, 2016; Santosa, 2017; Tran & Duong, 2018; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Thus, the learners are expected to be autonomous who are responsible for their learning. Considering that learner autonomy benefits students in achieving their goals, it is essential to be shaped by teachers' roles.

In Indonesia, the concept of learner autonomy is reflected in its Foundation of Education, including philosophical, sociological, and ICT (Claramita, 2016; Zainuddin, 2015). Learner autonomy through the implementation of Curriculum 2013 proves that the foundation of education in Indonesia is based on Constructivism as one of the Philosophical Educational Foundation (Nasir et al., 2017; Waseso, 2018). Constructivists view education as the freedom and opportunity of learners to make a choice (Borisov, 2014). It is

in line with Curriculum 2013 that emphasizes the learner's role through a student-centered approach. that This approach enables students to be accountable for managing their learning, which and leads to the improvement of their EFL skills (Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, 2016). Thus, as a result, learner autonomy is highlighted in the teaching-learning process. Besides, a philosophy *Tut Wuri Handayani*, that means 'to give support from behind' means implies that the teachers should facilitate the students to use their potentials to achieve their goals without being spoon-fed (Claramita, 2016). It also reflects student-centered learning characterized by constructive and collaborative learning (Benson, 2011). The teacher facilitates students to reflect on their faults, encourages their engagement in learning that results in being an individual thinker and accountable, provide role models, and minimizes the gap between attitudes and behaviors (Claramita, 2016). This learning philosophy expects students to be autonomous learners.

However, the cultural influence seemed to be the challenge for Indonesian EFL learners. The learning style of Indonesian students as a part of Asian countries was influenced by the culture (Loh & Teo, 2017). These societies tend to be collectivist, reticent, and, passive. , and The social interactions were influenced by the status and power that create distance between the teacher and students that reflect Indonesian EFL learners. Previous studies found that Aalthough Asian students were are diligent, have a good persistence in learning, have a good skill in memorizing the material, and have a strong desire to learn English but, they are very reticent and passive in doing individual work (Iftanti, 2012; Masduqi, 2011; Permatasari & Arianti, 2016; Pham, 2016; Sanprasert, 2010; Santosa, 2017). These conditions make students dependent on their teachers to do their works. Besides cultural influence, in Indonesia, the growth of the economy in Indonesia impacts education as proposed by Pham (2016) that a country's economy may influence students' learning orientation as proposed by Pham (2016).

Learner autonomy is considered as one of the prominent factors in creating meaningful learning. However, the teachers were faced challenged with by reticent and passive students. Thus, it is necessary to identify the challenges and trace the factors to provide a reference for EFL/ESL teachers in improving their English classes and help students be autonomous learners. Furthermore, very little work on learner autonomy was conducted in Bali, especially in junior high schools, that only focused on students' points of view (Padmadewi, 2016; Permatasari & Arianti, 2016). Therefore, this study aimed to

solve this gap by focusing on the teacher's point of view. By these considerations, the statements of the research problem were proposed as follows, "What are the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in the 21st century learning faced by EFL teachers?" and "How do the EFL teachers face the challenges?" This research leads to a deeper understanding of the difficulties in promoting autonomy in EFL teachers' language learning. It also describes the teachers' strategies and explores the connection to the literature's principles regarding language learning. Thus, it was also expected that the learners could get a better educational experience when they can face the challenges.

METHOD

Research Design

This study applied a descriptive qualitative research design since this study involved natural settings in junior high school classrooms where teaching and learning were conducted. The teachers, as the subject of the study, directly experienced the issues under the study. Furthermore, through descriptive research, the researchers were able to fully comprehend the teachers' characteristics and their issues related to the promotion of learner autonomy in 21st-century learning. Hence, considering that this study focused on EFL teachers' actual challenges in promoting learner autonomy in the classroom, the descriptive method was appropriate for addressing the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning and finding the research outcomes following Creswell's (2009) research design.

Participants

Purposive random sampling was conducted to decide the study's subject of the study following some criteria or characteristics such as the seventh-grade junior high school teachers, experiencing teaching in that school for five years, and being willing to be interviewed. Six schools were involved. The sampling resulted in four seventh-grade junior high school teachers from four different schools in Singaraja Bali Indonesia as this study's subjects. The consideration to choose those English teachers is that English is officially taught as a junior high school compulsory subject (Lengkanawati, 2017). Furthermore, they were chosen because they have experienced the teaching and understand well the characteristics of their students. Their roles and teaching strategies may affect how the students perceived their own learning due to greater awareness about their learning levels, styles, and reflection. The

teachers plays a vital role in guiding their students since learner autonomy does not mean learning without a teacher. Therefore, gaining information from the teacher's point of view is worth conducting to identify their challenges so that the teachers may guide their students to optimize learner autonomy.

Data Collection

In this study, the researchers interviewed the subjects using interview guidelines with an audio recorder's help. The teachers' statements toward the challenges faced in promoting learner autonomy in their classroom and how they met faced them were collected through a semi-structured interview technique where the questions are formulated. Still, the researchers may modify the formulated questions during the interview process following Ary et al. (2010). An interview guide was used as the instrument of the research. The investigation items were constructed based on the dimensions proposed by Little (2007), as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The blueprint of the interview guide

No.	Dimensions	Indicators	Item Number
1	Policy constraints	National educational policies	1
2	Institutional constraints	a)Institutional pressures	2
		b)conflicts in learner and teacher agendas	3
3	Language teaching methodology	a)Teachers' knowledge of the relevant teaching strategies	4
		b)Learning resources and learning activities	5
			6
4	Learner's background	a)The characteristics of students	7
		b) Socio-economical background	8

Based on the categorization from the dimensions, the EFL teachers' challenges to promote learner autonomy were divided into four points; policy constraint, institutional constraint, language teaching constraint, and learner's background constraint. In the data collection technique, the four EFL teachers were given code T-1 (Teacher 1), T-2 (Teacher 2), T-3 (Teacher 3), and T-4 (Teacher 4). An audio recorder was used as the documentation and to get the input of data of the research process. It helped researchers record any information stated during the interview, so there was no essential data left. This instrument was validated through expert judgment. They are EFL experts who have experience in teaching and learning. During validation, some suggestions and recommendations were given to make them the questions represent each

dimension. This study also used a triangulation technique to achieve the credibility and validity of the findings.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study followed the five steps by Creswell (2009): data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. After collecting the data in the form of an interview, all of the interviews were transcribed. The data transcriptions were read carefully. The teachers' statements were categorized and added to the identification tables, as seen in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. The identification of EFL teachers' challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century Learning

Dimension	Identification			
	Policy constraints	Institutional constraints	Language teaching	Learner's background
Challenges	Challenge 1, 2, etc.	Challenge 1, 2, etc.	Challenge 1, 2, etc.	Challenge 1, 2, etc.

Table 2 was used to identify the appropriate statements regarding the challenge and strategy in promoting learner autonomy based on with the four dimensions of the challenges; policy constraints, institutional constraints, language teaching methodology, and socio-economic background, and the strategy applied to face the challenges. After identifying the challenges, the statements on how the teachers meet the challenges were classified into Table 3.

Table 3. The identification of EFL teachers' strategies in facing the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Strategies	Strategy 1, 2, etc.	Strategy 1, 2, etc.	Strategy 1, 2, etc.	Strategy 1, 2, etc.

After identifying the teachers' statements into Tables 2 and 3, those statements were then described in displaying the data in the form of narrative. The teachers' views were quoted and interpreted based on the data analysis supported by the theories and relevant literature. Finally, the conclusion was drawn.

FINDINGS

The findings are divided into two parts. The first part deals with the identification of challenges in promoting learner autonomy. The second part described how they the teachers faced the challenges. Based on the result of the interview, the findings can be identified in Table 4.

Table 4. The Summary of challenges and strategies applied by EFL teachers in promoting learner autonomy

Identification					
Dimension	Policy constraints		Institutional constraints	Language teaching	Learner's background
Challenges	School System	Zoning	Unscheduled events on the education calendar	Lack of knowledge toward teaching strategies to promote learner autonomy	Student's different characteristics; Unsupported socio-economic background
Strategy	Applying collaborative learning strategies		Planning and managing time	Applying collaborative learning strategies	Initiating activities to involve in learning; Giving reinforcement

Table 4 presents the challenges faced by the teachers and the strategies applied to meet the challenges—the detailed information, as was described in the first and second part of this section.

The Challenges in Promoting Learner Autonomy in 21st-Century Learning

The result of the interview shows that some the challenges were faced by the teachers in promoting learner autonomy. The identified challenges were educational policy and institutional constraints, language teaching, and learner's background. The identification is shown in Table 5. The identifications in Table 5 about the challenges faced by the EFL teachers in promoting learner autonomy were described for each dimension.

Table 5. The identification of EFL teachers' challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Identification				
Dimension	Policy constraints	Institutional constraints	Language teaching	Learner's background
Challenges	School zoning system	Unscheduled events on the education calendar	Lack of knowledge toward teaching strategies to promote learner autonomy	Student's different characteristics; Unsupported socio-economic background

Policy constraints

The interview result revealed that there was an indication of the school zoning system that determines students' quality, which will affect the student's autonomy. It can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. The identification of policy constraints faced by EFL teachers' in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Challenge	School zoning system impact on the quality of students	-	-	School zoning system; emphasize the distance of student home from school instead of their quality

One of the questions asked was, "Is there any national educational policy that hinders the teacher from conducting teaching-learning to promote learner autonomy?" This question was asked to identify policy constraints. There is policy constraint that hinders learner autonomy as stated by the T-1 during the interview:

School zoning system that has been applied impacts on the quality of the students nowadays. My students in the seventh grade have low English competency.

Also, T-4 added that:

A student who has a high achievement is because of his effort in learning. He is diligent. But, not all of the students who live near the schools are diligent.

School zoning system is a policy in which state schools prioritize students living near them to improve overall education quality. Since the school zoning system has been applied, the teachers believed that it had a significant effect on their students' quality because not all of them who live near the school are high achievers students. Although the teachers did not underestimate their students' competencies, they doubted that the students' quality would not be the same as in the previous years. Supporting this finding, T-4 added that a diligent student is one of an autonomous learner's indicators. Diligent students are Active, students are persistent, have a strong desire to learn, and try to find various sources to support their learning as the characters of, autonomous learners (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981; Littlewood, 2017).

Institutional constraints

Institutional constraints include rules and regulations, certification, examinations, curriculums, the school's physical and social organization, and classroom practices that may hinder teachers' roles in promoting learner autonomy (Little, 2007). Table 7 shows a summary of the institutional constraints that challenged the teacher.

Table 7. The identification of institutional constraints faced by EFL teachers' in promoting learner autonomy in 21st century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Challenge	School Expectation	-	Unscheduled events on education calendar impact on learning activities; religious ceremony	-

In the interview session, T-1 stated that:

Every school expects the students to be the best. That is the challenge, but I believe that all professional teachers want to give their best for them. That is not the constraint. Moreover, my school supports the programs that the teachers made.

Besides school expectation, an additional challenge was uttered by T-3:

Sometimes, religious ceremonies such as *Purnama* and *Tilem* that are not attached in the academic calendar have spent the regular effective time of learning.

Even though the schools required the teacher to result in students' excellence, T-1 thought that it was one of her obligations as a professional teacher. She believed that every experienced teacher for sure tried to give the best for students. Thus, she argued that it could not be said as the challenge that hind her roles in promoting learner autonomy.

Another challenge proposed by T-3 in promoting learner autonomy is the limitation of time in curricula. It shows that unscheduled events on the education calendar, which is time-consuming, impact learning activities. The teachers could not emphasize their role to facilitate students to promote their learner autonomy. It is as admitted, "I have to sum up the material and ask my students to do their work in a group to reduce the time." It means that the teachers did not facilitate students to decide which learning styles work best for them, and students need to plan, execute, and assess their learning since their teacher implemented group tasks only. Also, the limitation of time in curricular was identified as the challenge from institutional constraints.

Language teaching constraints

Language teaching constraint is the assumption of how languages and relevant learning resources and activities are learned (Alonazi, 2017; Benson, 2011; Nakata, 2011). The summary of language teaching constraints can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. The identification of language teaching constraints faced by EFL teachers' in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Challenge	-	-	Lack of knowledge for a teaching strategy that can promote learner autonomy	-

T-4 stated that she delivers the information by herself to ensure that her students get the same concept. She was very concerned about the learning goals itself, so she sometimes ignored the process. Although Curriculum 2013 was used, she tended to apply conventional teaching. It resulted in teacher-centered with less involvement from students. Thus, her students became dependent on their learning. They waited for her to explain and give instructions on what they should do in the teaching and learning process.

T1, T-2, and T-4 did not find any challenges for their knowledge of language teaching since various learning sources provide them as stated that:

The teachers have a lot of teaching sources that can be from books, internet... There is no challenge in it.

In contrast, T-3 realized that in order to promote their student's autonomy, he thought that he was still lack of knowledge for teaching strategy integrated with learner autonomy by saying:

It (the teaching strategy) needs to be improved. (the teaching strategy). Maybe, I have to read more sources and research findings of the autonomous learner. The articles are related to teaching strategies to support my teaching in promoting learner autonomy.

It implies that, along the times, teaching strategies are also growing and developed. The teachers found that they should be up to date and follow the development and innovation in their teaching. Thus, the present study's result also identified that the teachers faced the challenge in language teaching, especially for teaching strategy, which is appropriate to promote learner autonomy.

Learner's background constraint

The interview result revealed that cultural influence, such as collectivism and high-power distance as the challenge. It is summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. The identification of learner's background constraints faced by EFL teachers' in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Challenge	Attention seekers, less motivated students	Individualist students	The unsupportive learning environment at home; financial problem	A different characteristic of students; passive,

As the influential person in the class, the teacher remains a central figure; thus, the students become passive learners. It was because not all students have willingness to ask for teacher's assistance when they found difficulties in their learning. The teacher is seen as a powerful figure in the classroom makes

students hesitate to show themselves individually. It leads them to be collectivist as they found more courage while in a group. have autonomous learners' characteristics, such as having a desire to learn, persistence, resourcefulness, and initiative. This statement is in line with the result of the interview with T-4:

Every student has a different characteristic. It's a bit difficult to meet all the characters in one learning. There are diligent, passive, attention seekers, and less motivated students.

Students' characteristics, such as passive and shy, affected the involvement in their learning. Aas argued by T-1, around ninety percent of students being silent because they were afraid of making mistakes or corrected by others. They were also shy and not confident enough to state their minds, whereas they have something to say in their minds. The teachers argued that they were unwilling to be involved in their learning due to low self-esteem, even though they were competent enough. Although the students have questions in their minds about the topic or have an opinion to be stated, they were less courageous in saying their thought. Making mistakes seems to bring a significant effect on students' psychological and self-esteem. So, they seemed to avoid making mistakes by being silent and keeping the questions to themselves.

Another characteristic of students that become the challenges in promoting learner autonomy is being individualist, as proposed by the T-2:

Sometimes, some students like to do their work alone, even though it was group work. They said, Sir, I want to do it alone by myself.

This statement implies that learner autonomy is not merely about how the individuality of learners. They also need others to support their learning since learning sources can come from anywhere. But by being individualistic, the students will be stuck there because they lost their chance to share with others, listen to others' suggestions, and identify their difficulties and weaknesses as the point of collaborative learning in the 21st century. They need to socialize with others so that they could to handle the rapid social shifts for life. Therefore, they need to work as a group.

The result of the interview also considered the socio-economic background became the challenge in promoting learner autonomy. T-1

encouraged her students to find other learning resources, but she didn't force them. The reason revealed by T-1:

I worried about students' finances. I'm afraid that the students will assume the assignment that I give as a burden, making them skip the class.

In line with T-1, T-3 stated that most of the students' parents work as farmers. Students from families with low incomes have to help their parents after school. It makes them spend their energy and time on it; meanwhile, they should study after the routine. The mind-set of their parents also effected their motivation to learn. The reason was confirmed by T-1, who said that a family's financial ability also has an impact on students' learning. It means that the student's family's financial background could be a great deal, whether students have received attention at home and whether or not they have introduced the right approach. When a child is not provided with enough attention, he will naturally not grow self-sufficiently and will lack the drive to learn further.

The Strategies to Face the Challenges in Promoting Learner Autonomy in 21st-Century Learning

In facing the challenges of autonomy into learning possibilities, the teachers have applied some strategies and approaches. It was found that initiating students to be involved in their learning, using collaborative learning, providing reinforcement, and having good planning and managing time seemed to encounter the challenges effectively. Further explanations for each strategy were described below.

Initiating activities to involve in learning

Less motivated and encouraged students might create a passive teaching-learning activity. Furthermore, the school zoning system as the educational policy constraint affects student's quality. The teachers conduct strategies to face the challenge, as seen in Table 10.

Table 10. The identification of EFL teachers' strategies in facing the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Strategy	Initiate students to review the previous material.	Providing encouragement	-	-

In Table 10, the teachers initiated some activities to make students aware of their learning, including their learning styles and potential, as stated by T-1:

I ask my students to review the previous material, so I know how well my students prepare for their study. I know whether they are ready to learn or not.

T-1 makes sure that her students are responsible and put effort into their learning. As facilitators, teachers initiated students to propose questions. Besides checking students' understanding, it enabled them to know the reason for why their students become less motivated in questioning. Some assumptions were identified, such as because they have low self-esteem or have no clue about the material being taught. Another way was to give appreciation for students to increase their motivation, enthusiasm, and participation in class. Giving compliments was believed that it could make students promote their self-confidence. When they are confident, they will not be worried about doing something. So, when they are asked to read, speak, or answer questions, they will be willing to do it.

Another way to overcome students' lack of participation in class was through a psychological approach to create a friendly relationship between teachers and students, as stated by T-2.

I never judge my students when they make an error during learning. At least, they will not be afraid of me.

Creating a warm and friendly atmosphere in class was believed by the teachers to make their students more relaxed (Dewey, 2012). It will prevent students from feeling stress and insecure. T-2 argued that teachers should bond with students so that they won't be afraid of their teacher. As a result, the students will not be afraid to participate in class. In short, teachers encourage the students to give extra effort to their learning and value their effort for working by themselves.

Applying collaborative learning strategies

The EFL teachers applied chose collaborative strategy through group work through by some consideration. Particularly, collaborative learning taught those students to be self-directed. These strategies were summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. The identification of EFL teachers' strategies in facing the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Strategy	-	Involving group activities	Allowing to work with peer	-

Table 11 shows that the EFL teachers' assumption that their students find it more straightforward and engaging to speak to the English partners as students' involvement and their favorite topics were included in the group activities. T-2 stated that:

I prepare a topic that is close to my students' life. I involve them in group work. It makes them enjoy the lesson by giving attention to their autonomy.

The teachers found that their students become more communicative when they work in a group. This activity is not merely for their interest and but also for supporting other members. Working in a group helps, so each member of the group is to be accountable; thus, each member can feel a sense of accomplishment.

Collaboration provides the possibility of becoming autonomous. The learners have selected their approach to accomplish the target and, becoming more easier relaxed and simpler to accomplish. Therefore, Cooperative collaborative learning fosters a substantial degree of flexibility as it enables students to choose their interests and select the most suitable tasks for achieving their objectives.

Giving reinforcement

The teachers used reinforcement to overcome the challenges of students' different characteristics, as seen in Table 12.

Table 12. The identification of EFL teachers' strategies in facing the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Strategy	-	-	Praise individualist students who work in a group	Providing positive and negative reinforcement

As shown in Table 12, attention seekers students were given negative reinforcement because they tended to do unexpected activities during the learning process such as talking different topics or disturbing their friends while the teacher explained the material. As T-4 stated that:

To manage their misbehavior, I asked them to talk in front of the class about what they have learned. It is like a wary effect.

The purpose is to make students realize their misbehavior and won't repeat it in the next meeting. T-3 further added that individual students they must work with their friends when the task required them to work as a group. work for students who like working individually. The teachers told the students about the importance of working together as a group. Through cooperative learning, students will learn how to listen to and , appreciate others' opinions, share information, and make decisions. As added by T-4, the teachers gave different tasks or codes for each line during the quiz or exam for students who rely on their friend's work. It will prevent students from cheating, so it makes them responsible for their tasks and ability. When they are responsible for their learning, learner autonomy can be promoted.

Planning and managing time

To cover the limited time within curricula, the teachers make planning such as preparing an academic calendar to manage the meeting, as seen in Table 13.

Table 13. The identification of EFL teachers' strategies in facing the challenges in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning

Code	Identification			
	T-1	T-2	T-3	T-4
Strategy	-	Group work to save time	Sum up the learning	-

Table 13 shows that when the meeting was too short such as when *Purnama* or *Tilem* ceremony takes sufficient time, the teachers sum up two learning indicators into one meeting or give students homework as admitted by the T-3:

Willing or not, I have to sum up the topic and allow students to do the exercise at home.

For this situation, teachers' autonomy also took essential roles because they should manage their teaching. They should prepare anything before coming to class and use an appropriate teaching strategy so that the teaching and learning process can run effectively.

Besides, to enrich their knowledge, the teachers often looked at many references, such as research findings related to teaching strategy in promoting learner autonomy and attending a workshop to develop the latest issue in learner autonomy.

DISCUSSION

Many issues have plagued teaching, including the absence of the teacher's independent thinking capabilities, the laws and legislation in schools, and the shortage of clear policy for teaching (Alonazi, 2017; Lengkanawati, 2017; Nakata, 2011; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). The present study identified the same problems faced by that EFL teachers faced in promoting learner autonomy: educational and institutional constraints, language teaching, and learners' backgrounds. Under the Foundation of Education, this study found that passive learners were identified as the challenge. Less participation of students in the class was found in the present study for the challenges which in line with Permatasari and Arianti (2016), proving Bali learners tend to be passive. It was caused by unconfident, afraid of making mistakes, and lowless motivation. It was found that the ability and desire to be autonomous learners inside and outside of the schools is low (Alhasony, 2016). Less motivated and encouraged students might create passive teaching-learning activity (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Fidyati, 2016; Lengkanawati, 2017; Nakata, 2011). Thus, the teachers should be able to change students' perceptions where they come to believe that if they put forth an effort, they can be successful with their tasks. These findings corroborate with Loh and Teo (2017) that Indonesian people, as part of Asian countries, were conservatives that tend to be collectivists and reticent.

The present study found that EFL teachers faced a limitation of time in curricula. It proves that the limit of classroom time is one of some challenges in promoting learner autonomy, as found in Harmer (2007). Time allotment in the classroom affects the duration the teachers will play their roles in the learning process. When the time is limited, teachers' chance to perform their roles to promote learner autonomy cannot be run effectively. Some functions cannot be emphasized (Borg & Al-busaidi, 2012; Lengkanawati, 2017). It might be because

some activities were shortened or summed up so that the roles cannot be performed intensively. This challenge was come up through collaboration and good communication skills.

The present study shows that the teachers were already implemented 21st-century learning in some aspects through collaboration and communication. It indicates that the EFL teachers performed their roles as manager/organizer by assisting students in using various strategies to overcome the challenges (Harmer, 2007). To recompense for time limitation, the students had peer- and self-assessment to develop their ability to evaluate their learning (Rochmahwati, 2013). It was shown by giving students a chance to assess others' works. Teachers should encourage students' autonomy by the integration of self-reflection into their teaching (Nunan, 1997). Besides, teacher autonomy was also needed since they have to be able to manage their teaching. It also determines the initiatives they take in their classrooms. This is considered as one of the collaborative strategies as the characteristics of 21st-century learning. Through communication, collaboration, and information, media, and technology skills, the students would create meaningful learning.

However, the present study shows the absence of ICT application to the educational process in 21st-century learning. The students still used conventional learning aids such as a dictionary to find difficult words. The teachers did not involve their students in utilizing media and technology during the teaching-learning process. Although in 21st century learning, the utilization of media and technology cannot be separated (Iftanti, 2012; Masduqi, 2011; Santosa, 2017). In line with Lamb (2012), computers' use is still limited to adolescents in Indonesia. It indicates that it may be another obstacle to using media and technologies to foster Indonesian learners (Fidyati, 2016; Santosa, 2017; Tran & Duong, 2018; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Along with Alonazi (2017), the present study found that the lack of students' proficiency in English is the challenge teachers face. The teachers believed that when their students did not understand the information delivered in English, they will rely on their teacher to explain it. Less effort from students made this condition more challenging for teachers. The students get used to being spoon-fed by the teachers in which this situation leads students to be dependent on their teachers (Alonazi, 2017; Fidyati, 2016). The higher level of beliefs about autonomous learning appears to be felt by high proficient students (Fidyati, 2016). The more autonomous instruction they undergo, the greater their confidence in language learning autonomy. Therefore, when students

have less belief in learning autonomy, it will affect their lack of proficiency in English.

An unsupportive learning atmosphere outside the classroom was revealed to be part of students' problems maintaining their learning activities. Permatasari and Arianti (2016) stated that one of the factors that affect student's autonomy is their learning motivation. Motivation can come from internal and external factors. In this study, an unsupportive learning atmosphere became the external factor that causes students to be less motivated. The students seemed to face the issues of maintaining the learning concentration outside the classroom.

On the one hand, the students needed a certain degree of concentration for learning, but on the other hand, they could not ignore the calls from the parents who needed some help to do the household. It was in contrast with the characteristics of autonomous learner who are persistent, have a strong desire to learn, and try to find various sources to support their learning (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981; Littlewood, 2017). The students also seemed to face a financial issue affecting on unsupportive learning facilities at home. This finding is in line with Pham (2016) who stated that the student's family's financial background could be a great deal, whether students have received attention at home and whether or not they have introduced the right approach. When a child is not provided with enough attention, he will naturally not grow his self-sufficiency and will lack his drive to allow little further effort toward his own learning.

A discrepancy was identified where institutional pressures and , rigidity and societal expectations factors were no longer belong to the challenges in encouraging autonomous learners as found by Nakata (2011). The EFL teachers argued that schools supported them to implement their roles in promoting learner autonomy. As professional teachers, it was their obligation to meet the school expectations, especially to make their students autonomous. Moreover, any challenge related to societal expectations, such as parents' expectations of their children's achievement at school, was not found in this present study. The parents seemed supportive since the teachers always tried to give information about their children's performance in class through a report card. Following Alonazi (2017), a professional development program helps teachers develop strategies to promote learner autonomy since education is a dynamic and ever-growing changing field. Professional development can enhance their teaching performance. and It creates a better classroom environment that supports the

promotion of learner autonomy and, allowing teachers to learn new teaching styles, strategies, and tips and interact with other educators to improve their own teaching.

A new factor as the challenges to promote autonomy for learners was identified, namely the school zoning system. It is in line with Little (2007) who proposed that national educational policies might hinder the teacher from conducting teaching-learning to promote learner autonomy. The school zoning system is a program under which government schools offer students preference for locally residing to overcome such issues. The standard of education ultimately enhanced. The EFL teachers believed that this system might limit the school to decide the passing grade to enter the school since all students who live near the school should be accepted, no matter how their final score. It might affect the quality of their students and their roles in promoting learner autonomy. The assumptions that students with learner autonomy on themselves would have high achievement were in line with Holec (1981) since they could conduct autonomous learning inside and outside the classrooms. When the students are autonomous, they will make an effort for their learning so they would be able to achieve their learning goals in their own ways (Holec, 1981; Little, 2007; Littlewood, 2017). It will affect the improvement of their achievement in class. This finding supported that learner autonomy is part of the inborn capacity that students brought before entering the schools (Lengkanawati, 2017).

Students with less autonomy would have fewer responsibilities for their learning, affecting their achievement (Lengkanawati, 2017). As a result, the teachers spent time longer for facilitating them to be autonomous. As Littlewood (2017) explained, students with learner autonomy tend to be more active in class. For example, when they did not understand yet certain topics, they have the initiative to ask their teacher. Lengkanawati (2017) found that the students were also responsible for their tasks, such as finishing their assignments and homework on time. They were also more confident to speak or answer questions since they prepared themselves with the material they learned at home before the meeting.

Another example is that when they worked in a group. These autonomous students divided their tasks so that they have their responsibility. The teachers also confirmed that autonomous students are students with high achievement in the class. Myartawan and Latief (2013) stated that students with a higher level of autonomy benefit from having higher English proficiency. It

was also supported by Benson's (2011) finding who argued that a higher degree of autonomy would result in greater proficiency.

Therefore, the present study corroborates the theories and empirical reviews studies which that revealed that EFL teachers were faced with educational and institutional policy, teaching strategy, and student's background in promoting learner autonomy. Furthermore, strategies such as collaborative learning strategy, initiation, and having good teaching management seemed to be effective in facing the challenges.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is noteworthy to identify the challenges in teaching and learning, which provide teachers with references to improve their teaching. The result of the present study revealed that educational and institutional policy, language teaching, and learner's background were identified as the challenges faced by EFL teachers in promoting learner autonomy in 21st-century learning. The EFL teachers have applied some strategies and approaches in transforming challenges such as initiate learning, collaborative learning strategy, planning, and time management. Through this identification, it was expected that the learners get a better educational experience. For further research, the investigation on the external factors that might affect learner autonomy, such as the school zoning system, was recommended.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Greatest appreciation and sincere gratitude are addressed to the advisors and all parties who are willingly observed and interviewed during this study. While conducting this study, the researchers received much assistance from many people for their valuable guidance, corrections, suggestions, advice, and support. Without them, the writing of this study would never be possibly completed.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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