Promoting Learners' Autonomy through Online Learning Media in EFL Class

Abstract
The trend of teaching English as foreign language in 21st century has changed from teacher centered to students centered paradigm which results students autonomy is needed to exist in learning. Then, this research was aimed to depict how the schoology as e-media platform promote 25 VII A class students' autonomy in learning English as foreign language (EFL) in discourse analysis course at State Islamic University of Mataram. The present study was a case study qualitative research by applying triangulation of the data. The results of this research mentioned that schoology successfully promoted learners' autonomy by considering some facts such as participating actively by loging in; commenting others' idea; having control on deciding learning modes, setting, and materials; and showing enthusiasm to finish the lecturer's challenge. One unique thing was that shy students were more active in Schoology. Finally, this research suggests to present schoology in teaching content course.
Keywords: Autonomy; EFL; English Discourse Analysis; Online Learning Media; Schoology

Introduction

The trend of teaching English as foreign language in 21st century has changed from teacher centered to students centered paradigm which the request students readiness to be the agent in learning process (Ardi, 2017). This shifting demands the lecturers in tertiary education level to equip students with the attributes including technology and digital literacy, critical thinking, being autonomous learner, and able to solve problem. Furthermore, the most essential property for students is being autonomous learner (Holec, 1981). The characteristics of being autonomy in learning is having the ability to manage someone's own learning which then it influence the emergence of independent mentality. Huang & Benson (2013) states that this needs to be in boosted as one of English educational goal since students are mostly using the language without the guidance of lecturers. In addition, autonomy is pivotal aspect for lifelong learning in real life because students are engaged in real situation with its freedom of opinion sharing and become the decision makers after graduating the academic level pursuit. Furthermore, being autonomy is not merely appear without the designed situation through training, but there is connection between students and managed situation or designed society (Benson, 2011). Moreover, Chia (2010) states that the teacher has power to control the learning environment which may be used as place for exercise to lead students' autonomy.

Discussing the context of teaching English in Indonesia where English is known as foreign language or EFL and also there are still some traditional convention in developing tradition inside teaching and learning, the English classroom still shape students' behavior to be dependent to the lecturer and less autonomous. The Asian students are mostly obedient, dependent to teacher, and not active or passive (Nakata, 2011). This due to the traditional belief that lecturer is the center of knowledge and becomes the most knowledgeable person in class. Also, there is a belief that no students are able to confront the lecturers' ideas. Furthermore, the inappropriate match of students' understanding on learning science must always be under the supervision of teacher hinder students' creativity to inquire knowledge by themselves. Implicitly, the classroom in Indonesia context has shown high power and authority between teacher and students (Littlewood, 1999).Consequently, to make students are able to adjust themselves with need of education in 21st century, a set situation in class the promotion of autonomous learning skill is needed.

In designing the learning space that promote autonomy, lecturer may employ the benefits of technology as one of literacy skill that is pivotal in 21st century and industrial revolution 4.0 era. The sophistication of technology development of web 2.0 and mobile 2.0 technologies have led the proposal of autonomy in learning English as foreign language since it gives more opportunities for learners to manage their learning. As mentioned by Villanueva, Ruiz-Madrid and Luzón (2010) that technology trigger development to learn and practice the exercise more by preparing more accesses to the authentic materials as learning sources, increasing possibility to interact between users and any sources, boosting metacognitive ability as self-experienced learning, and sharing information and discussing essential topics. Technology improves students' accessibility to new scientific inquiry approach, students' self-directive mentality to control the learning till reaching the targeted achievement, and develop students with collaborative and cooperative self-directed learning as well

as promoting independent learning (Benson, 2011). Another benefit of using technology in EFL setting is enabling students to learn across time and space (Wang and Heffernan, 2009). The conventional idea of learning mentions that the only place to learn English is only inside the classroom. The use of Web 2.0 technology allows learners' mobility in learning which reults minimizing the teacher's intervention, providing a lot of spaces possibility to accomplish job by themselves, creating links with partners or classmates to create collaborative learning model, and creating chances of both inside and outside learning experiences. Mohanty (2009) stated that the university will be outdated when they do not give access to new approach in language learning and exercises with technology.

The use of Web 2.0 technology to boost students' autonomy in learning English has been popular in some countries outside Indonesia. The research that used Blog as e-media for language learning has shown the it is very effective to promote students' autonomy which was reflected by students' cognitive skills improvement on language and students' independence to choose the solution as well as the appropriate action to solve the problem (Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010). Another one is a research which was done by Snodin (2013) that mentioned CMS were able to initiate autonomous learning for Asian students.

Another benefit on the advent of technology in industrial revolution 4.0 is the development of School Management Learning System (LMS). The LMS is used a the resemblance of real school as place to provide education not in real classroom building but in virtual spaces with electronic resources for learning. Furthermore, LMS is internet operated system that allows user to explore more information and knowledge from many different locations in the world. Hence, many institutions in various level of education have implement LMS for online learning, flipped classroom model learning, and blended learning, or even extensive reading.

There are many kinds of LMS that are now popularly used such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, Blackboard, and Schoology. Each of them has strength and weaknesses in case of features and operation easiness. Then, many researches propose Schoology as LMS e-media that provide best easiness to use, security for students safety, effective to supervise students activity, sufficient for uploading big data of resources, easy connectivity to scientific groups across platform, and teacher's practicality to develop test and discussion (Snodin, 2013).Schoology is accessible in www.schoology.com as online classroom management system that make possible the teacher and students to interact and do collaboration. This platform is applicable in any mobile and computer operating systems although there is minimum requirement.

State Islamic University of Mataram or UIN Mataram has requested the lecturers to equip their classroom activity with technology as ransom of the lack of infrastructures after being crashed by 7.0 SR earthquakes including the lecturers in English education department of *tarbiya* and teacher training faculty. The discourse analysis lecturer employed schoology as e-media to bridge or even to multiply the learning meeting in the form of blended flipped class model. Hence, it is needed to depict the use of schoology as e-media platform in case of promoting students autonomy in learning English especially discourse analysis course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Autonomy in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Many ideas define what s called as autonomy, but the basic concept of being autonomous according to Holec's idea is that the learners must responsible for their learning success (Cotterall, 2000; Vanijdee, 2003; Sert, 2006; Sanprasert, 2009; Lo, 2010). Similar sound had been mentioned by Smith (2008) that being autonomous means having ability to manage the learning for practical as well as theoretical background by themselves. Correlating with the English as Foreign language learning, the learners are able to control and direct themselves to learn English without being forced or directed by someone else, 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). Another characteristics of autonomous learning or self-directed learning as suggested by Holec in Benson (2011) is that it is usually happens to the learning with the mode of technology or in Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), distance learning, and personal access learning. Since, not all learners are able to work alone with the technology, consequently, it is needed that they should be equipped with the training and counseling strategies to make them automatically able to use it. Then, this becomes the role of teacher or lecturer to be the trainer and counselor to develop learners' autonomy.

Another characteristic that support the autonomy in learning is 'relatedness' (Sanparsert, 2009). He connected the autonomy to the needs of being related. The needs are including need of support, contact, and need to be in community or being part of group. Connecting with the context of this research that happened in Indonesia as part of Asia countries, Littlewoood (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 having relatedness (Andrade and Bunker, 2009).

Adrande & Bunker (2009) mentioned another important focus to develop autonomy that is having freedom of choice. In classroom context, the learners do not relying on their choice to the lectures input only. Later, Cotterall (2000) stated that the basic need for learner 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.

The aforementioned ideas on defining what is so called as autonomy, the learners chance to practice to be independence is pivotal to control their language learning. According to Benson (2011), there are three dimensions that need to be controlled to promote autonomy. First, it is control the learning management. This means that learners know when, where, how to learn their targeted language (Huang & Benson, 2013). Second, the control on learning materials. Every learner has preference to decide which materials are fit to their learning objectives. Learners may also explore more sources not only relying on materials that have been situated by the lecturer. Last, it is a control on cognitive process for cognitive achievement that means the learners are able to manage their psychological factors that influence the learning success such as their belief, emotions, and motivation (Benson, 2011). In order to be able to control it, learners are required to think and make reflection on their language learning (Little, 2009). Referring to 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).

2. Promoting Autonomy through E-Media

The use of media has been suggestion to foster learners' autonomy in EFL classroom learning. It is because media help to boost learning not only inside real classroom building, but also outside the classroom or virtual learning. According to Benson(2011), media can give ample linguistics and non linguistics input by proposing new approach in displaying new language. One of the examples is that Indonesia and Queensland students are able to enhance learning using QUPNet (Hoven & Crawford, 2001). It means that technology in this case is e-media was providing significant role to improve language ability. 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 e-media provided easiness more than face-to-face (FTF) learning. Another research with the same mode of learning using e-media that was email, 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 interacts with the US pre-service teachers and they got many useful cultural information.

Another idea that support the benefits of the use of e-media which from mobile learning according to Sung, Chang, and Yang (2015) is that it is quite effective to enhance learner's autonomy in language learning. The reasons are mobile learning helped students to be personally control learning by deciding the preferable time, place, and pace. Then, its boost students' interaction and cooperative learning between teacher and students or even peers. Finally, mobile learning provided wide opportunity to explore more sources to support their comprehension through internet. But, in their research, they suggested that the teacher role to guide and assist students to use appropriate mobile platform of important to gain better autonomy since mobile platform is only machine or software that is not automatically improve autonomy. Otherwise, the students will be distracted with unrelated sources.

3. Schoology as e-Media for Language Learning

Schoology is one kind of Learning Management System (LMS) which is provide online as social learning interactive mode. This e-media platform has been developed by four students namely Ryan Hwang, Jeremy Friedman, Bill Kindler, and Tim Trinidad in 2007. Lately, the users of this e-media have reached over seven millions from various levels of education (Sarrab et. al., 2016). This platform is able to be access through www.schoology.com with all kinds of browsers like mozila firefox, chrome, puffin, internet explorer, and safari. Amazingly, the latest gadgets that have been installed with Android, Apple, and Kindle Fire are compatible to operate this e-media which improve the mobility usage. The great achievement of the e-media platform was as the winner of CODiE award seven years after it was launched publicly by SIIA as best software for K-12 and higher education (Schoology, 20015).

Schoology as e-media platform which is provided online give social and pedagogical experiences in learning. The learners may have interaction as well as collaboration during learning. As the learning management system, schoology has many features like organizing lesson starting from planning, action, and evaluation; having discussion rooms; having folder for resources; and owning external link to grab more information (Sarrab et. al., 2016). Furthermore, teacher and students may give comments on each post as well as giving batch for awarding students and the learners attendance is recorded.

This e-media platform has been designed to have capability to present video, picture, document, and even website link as the sources of learning. This feature is accessible for both teacher and students. Another sophisticated feature, teacher is also given link to connect to other professional group or learning network that trigger communication and sharing among experts and academicians from all over the world (Trust, Krutka, and Carpenter, 2016).

Research Method

The present study was a case study qualitative research involving 25 students in VIIA Discourse Analysis class at English Education Department of State Islamic University of Mataram. Hood (2009) mentions that case study is applied when someone need to deeply explore a bounded system form an object or group as well as the context where the social action occurs. In the present research, someone represents the lecturer, and the context means the classroom and university. The data that were collected were from multiples sources of information (Creswell, 2017). The data were categorized into the following topics: Firstly, students activities such as their log in process and their interactions inside the e-media were observed to signal the outside classroom learning process. This can be seen from the data in analytics which is able to be check anytime which the researcher observe it monthly. Secondly, students participations on giving comments on others idea in updates features which may be categorized as personal comment. Thirdly, students activity on fulfilling the lecturer's challenge on some topic in Discourse Analysis. Fourth, students comments as reflection of the use of schoology as medium to develop autonomy. Fifth, students' control on cognitive achievements. Furthermore, all data are elaborated to grab deeper understanding and directed to meet the discussion on promoting autonomy in learning (Benson, 2011).

After that, the triangulation was done to analyze them (Duff, 2008). Triangulation was implemented in order to broaden and deepen the possible look of a variable from different angle (Hood, 2009). The Discourse Analysis class was designed by applying blended learning model both real classroom meeting and online learning using schoology. The aim of the present research is depicting the implementation of Schoology as e-media learning management system helps learners to be autonomous in learning Discourse Analysis not only in real physical class but also in a space beyond their classroom or virtual class. The course has been aimed to help the learners to grab the basic knowledge of Discourse Analysis including the theory of discourse analysis to make them aware of the complexity and functions of language so that they can analyze texts in various contextual environments with various activities such as group discussion, individual text analysis through mini research, presentation using paper and electronic media, and analyzing the published research article in field of discourse analysis.

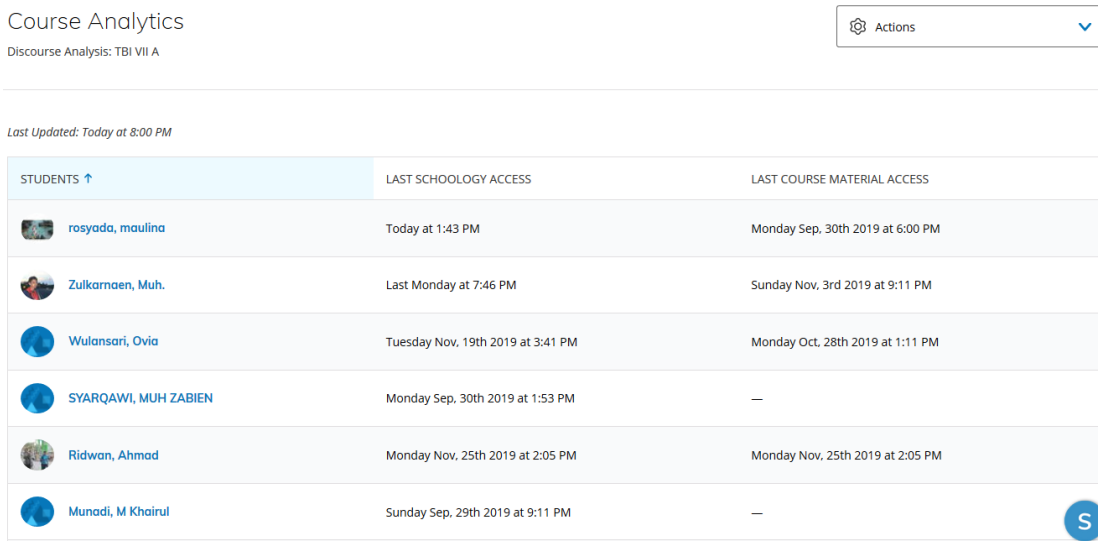
Finding and Discussion

Schoology has many features that makes ease the learners to manage their learning period and model. The followings are data that were collected as findings in the present research that indicated the increasing autonomy of learners in learning discourse analysis from schoology.

1. Students' Active Participation Inside Schoology

Schoology has shown both combination of being social users and pedagogy learners which then influence learners enthusiasm to be active in using it. It is more flexible and applicable compared to another LMS and also social media like facebook, friendster, instagram, and others. The students enthusiasm to engage themselves in using schoology is able to be seen from the activity analytics as seen in course analytics in figure 1 as one of features in schoology which is provided for teacher to supervise the students participation.

Figure 1. Students Active Participation inside Schoology



Schoology created new nuance of learning by providing different ways to make students interact with the learning materials including e-book, video, and links; discuss topic in non-face-to-face space with the lecturers as well as students which may increase their confidence; collaborate with peer or group to present certain topics; do online assignment and tests; and even just read classmates idea and give its like. Moreover, since schoology is able to provide personalization on its usage, learners are allowed to find the best learning style that may fit them. Furthermore, schoology surely support an idea to develop students active participation by developing personal independence to choose best approach to learn discourse. Figure 2 shows the students personal active participation.

Figure 2. Students Personal Active Participation inside Schoology

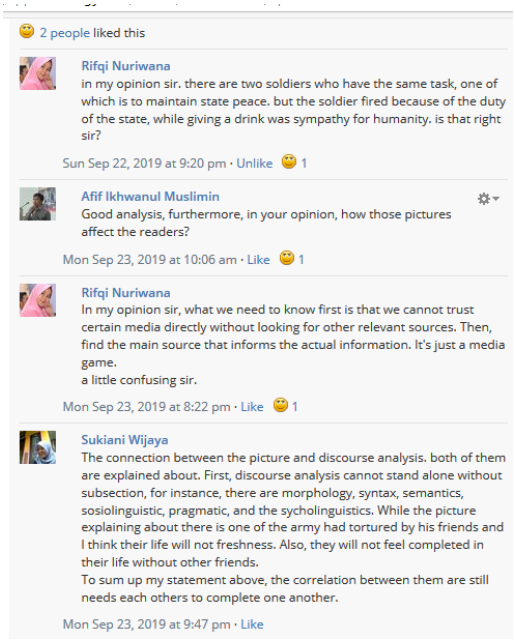
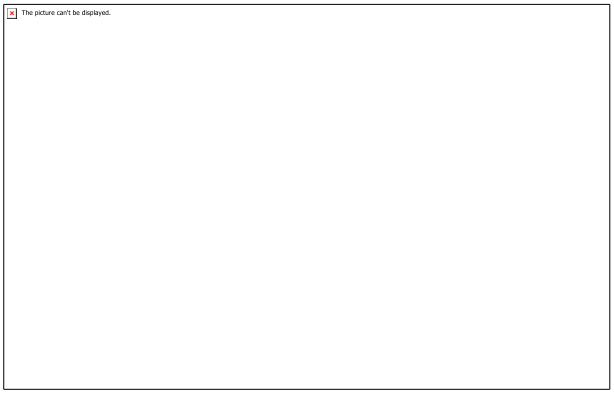


Figure 2 shows that schoology creates good impact on students with lack of confidence such as RN, SW, and PI. Both of them in the real classroom face-to-face meeting are mostly shy to share opinion even answering the lecturer's question. But, it can be seen that, both gave long comments inside schoology which strengthen the idea that schoology boosted their confidence and improved students' engagement in learning discourse analysis. Hence, this condition became the foundation to develop students' autonomy. As being mentioned by Little (2007) that when students are quite confident to share idea as result of being responsible to achieve better performance in learning, it means that they have started to be autonomy. When the students have grown their confidence which influence to reduce their dependent to the teacher guidance, they may start to have sense of ownership in learning that develop students' ability to control the learning style and preference.

2. Students' participations on giving comments on others idea

In case of students participation in peer and group interaction to create collaborative learning, schoology as e-media has equipped itself with features for the learners to exercise to give control on creating interaction to everyone inside the virtual classroom. When students used handphone or any other mobile devices, they were spoiled by the ability to connect with other to communicate, share, and discuss something as long as their internet connection without being limited by space and time boundaries. Collaborative learning and the interaction between learners develop autonomy in learning (Murray, 2014). In discourse analysis class, the students might do collaboration in the form of group discussion though sometimes they were from different classes. The student had admitted this as in the figure 3 as follows:

Figure 3. Students Comment on Others



3. Students' activity on fulfilling the lecturer's challenge

The discourse analysis class was designed to apply blended learning model by implementing face-to-face meeting and online meeting. The lecturer has decided to create challenge in the form of some topic and picture that trigger students curiosity to dig more understanding on next face-to-face meeting in real classroom. The interesting response was that students actively participated more to answer the challenge from the lecturer inside schoology as can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4. The students activity to fulfill lecturer's DA challenge 2

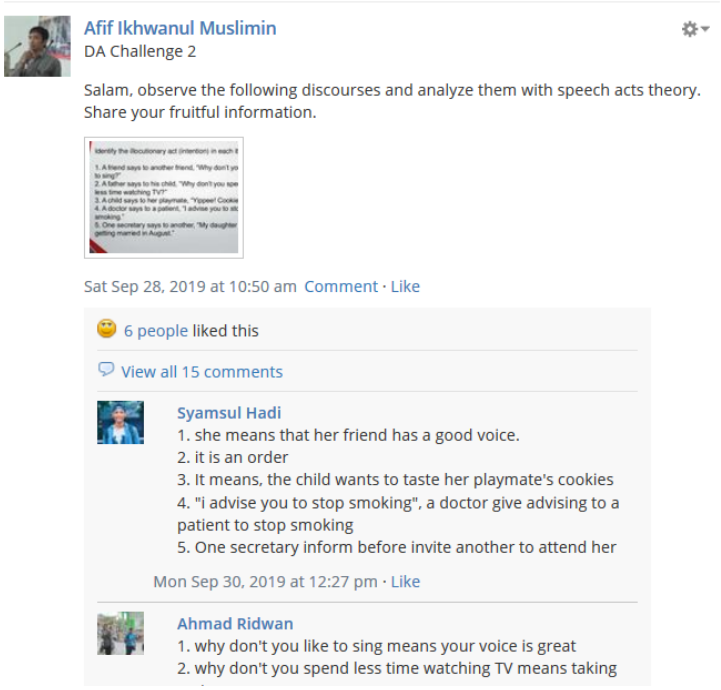
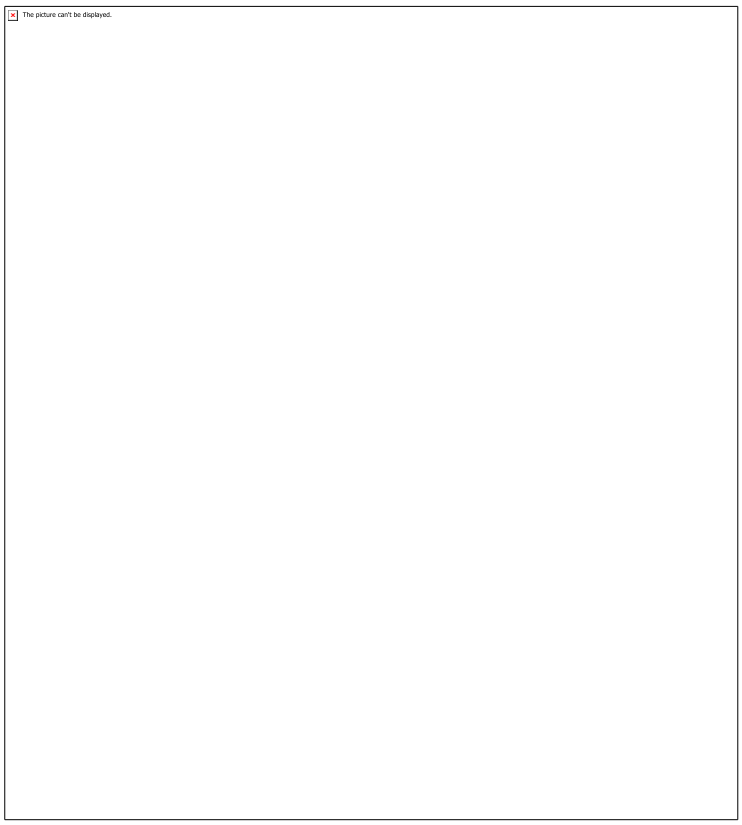


Figure 5 has shown that students' participation to overcome the lecturer's challenge has increased compared to DA challenge 1.

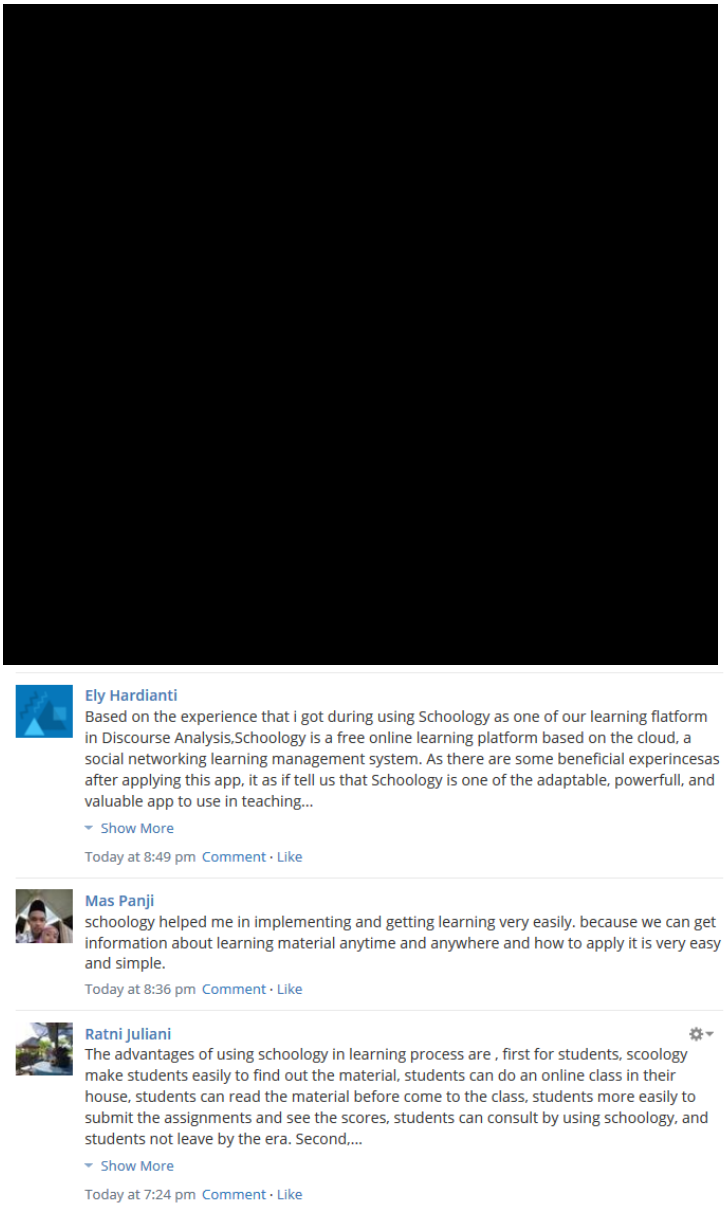
Figure 5The students activity to fulfill lecturer's DA challenge 1



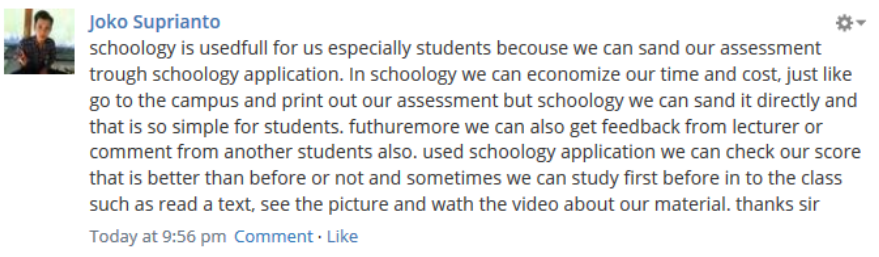
4. Students comments as reflection of the use of schoology as medium to develop autonomy.

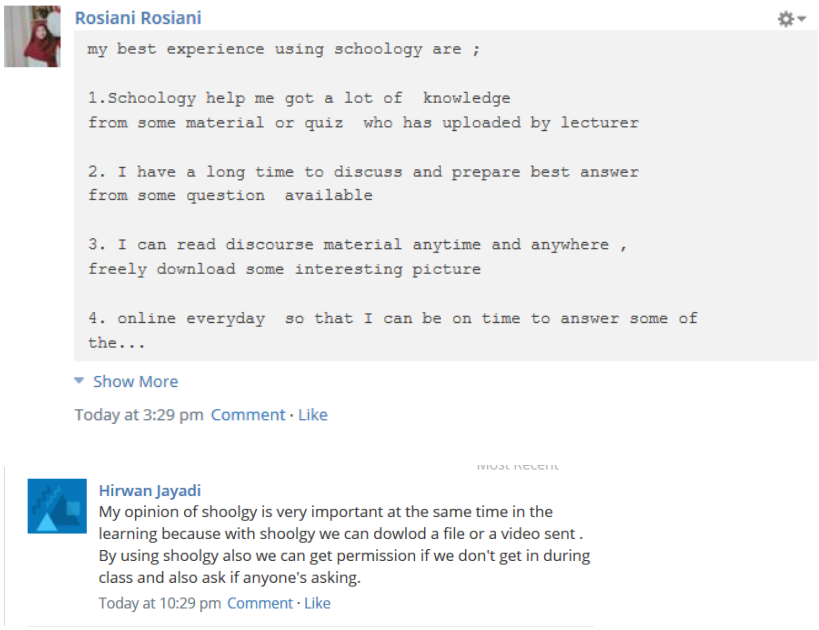
Schoology as e-media which is easily operated by learners promote the learners power to take control on their learning management as basis of developing autonomy in learning. First, this e-media made possible the learners to decide the places, and time for learning discourse analysis course outside the face-to-face classroom. Hence, it can be said that schoology facilitate students to enjoy learning at anytime and in anywhere. This notion supports the benefits of the currents trend of technology that is used in education that brings the multiple settings of language learning without space and temporal limitations (Sung et. al., 2015). Without the need to sit inside the classroom, or spending time to move from their boarding house to university, while they are lying on bed, learners are able to comprehend the existed materials in online sources inside schoology and even submit the tasks. Consequently, learners had independence to choose the best place and time to facilitate their learning or being self-directed learner (Benson, 2011). Figure 6 explains how student experience of learning without time and space limitation was.

Figure 6 The students' reflection on learning without time and space limitation.



Second, as the LMS which has flexibility in providing learners with many types of uploaded files as sources, schoology gives freedom for learners to decide their preferred learning modes. Since they could learn not only what is provided inside the real classroom, the learners could choose the best ways of learning that match with their preference. Gadgets and any mobile devices allow their users including learners to customize and adjust their English language learning (Sung et. al., 2015). The freedom to choose personal learning mode becomes very important and meaningful. When learners are able to decide the best suit mode of English language learning for themselves, it means that they have a capacity to manage autonomously their learning (Huang and Benson, 2013). Furthermore, this research has found that learners in discourse class had ability to choose the best mode of learning as in figure 7.





In addition, schoology as e-media has provided a feature as storage of e-material that the lecturer uploaded which is called as resources. This made the learner had the control to select their learning content that suitable with their preference earlier. Benson (2011) stated that every learner should have learning control to choose the content material freely in order to grab the objective of English as foreign language learning. Moreover, schoology does not block learners' interest on non-provided sources by lecturers, but it facilitates all materials in any internet browser since it has portal to connect to any open sources material in internet. The following figure 6 describes the example of provided sources and online provided sources.

Figure 8The example of provided sources

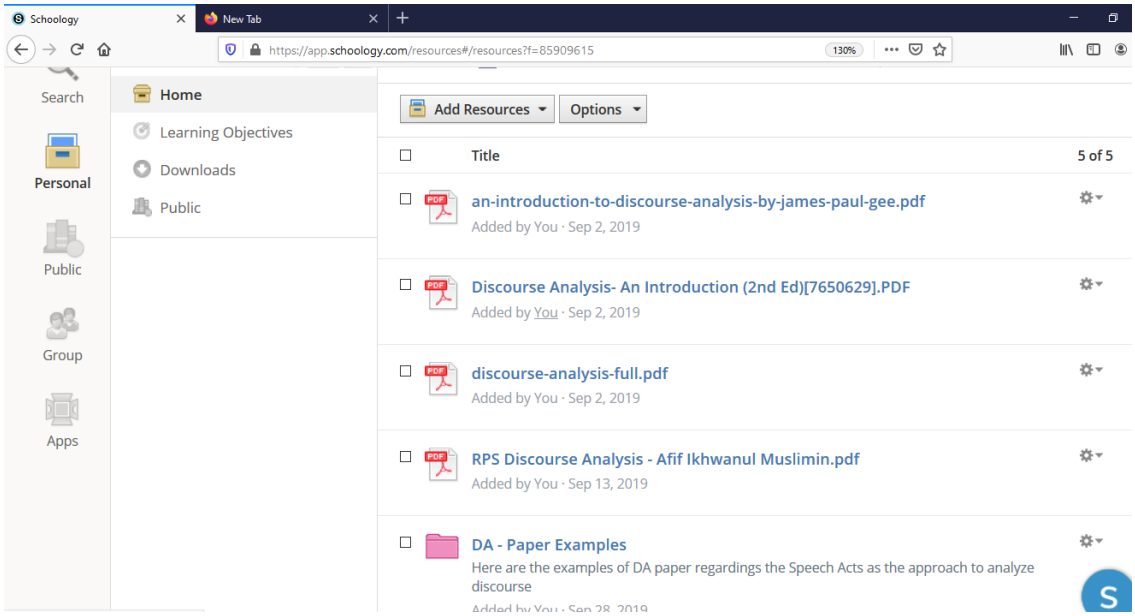
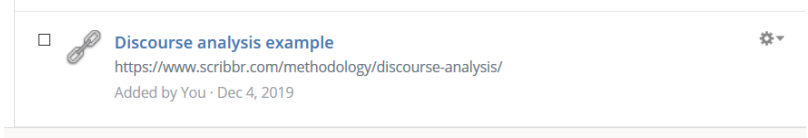


Figure 9 The example of online provided sources.



The provided sources in the schoology e-media platform directed learner to do self-accessing the other authentic material form other open sources in internet website to dig more information regarding the topic and to achieve the learning objectives. This situation draws a condition that learners have power to control by themselves the content for learning English discourse analysis materials (Little, 2007). One of learners admitted her freedom to choose any material for course comprehension.

Figure 10. The admission of a student on freedom to choose resources

When the lecturer asked learners to discuss certain topic in the course by doing collaborative activity, learners shared their mind-map project to schoology as sources for another group source to learn deeper their topic. Here, the learners played maximum control to choose which shared materials that they would use as primary resource to help them to comprehend discourse analysis. So, learners were successfully employed technology as medium to share relevant learning sources (Sung et. al, 2015) which then resonates idea that someone who has control to share needed authentic materials as sources using technology, this act depicts the development of autonomy (Villanueva et. al., 2010). The following figures are examples of learner's sources sharing:

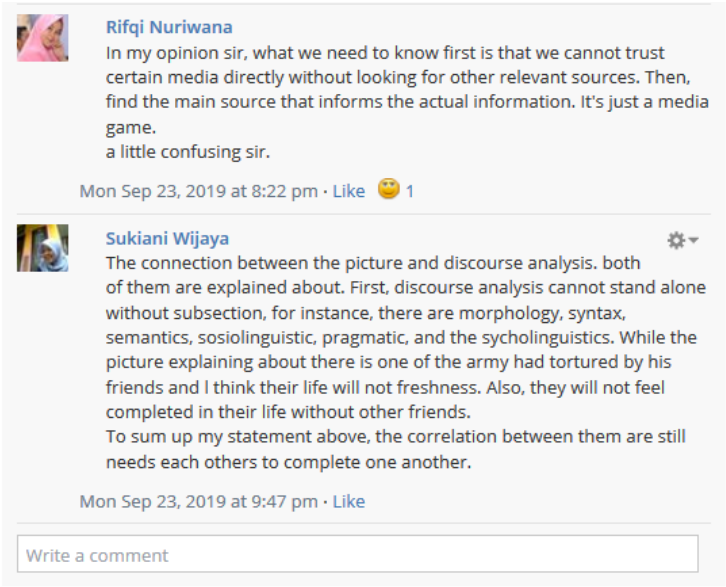
Figure 11 The example of learner's sources sharing:

5. Students control on cognitive process and achievement

Cognitive achievement is important in learning process since it is the reflection of the successful education inside the classroom. The components that are being focus on cognitive achievements are the ability to give response on failure or mistakes or even answer the comprehension questions. The cognitive achievement is reached after having the cognitive processing which includes controlling metacognition, reflection, and attention (Benson, 2011). The learners must be able to show their attentive act on a case in schoology, develop awareness on mistake or answer on a task, and providing suggestion or comment as the reflection. The feature in schoology which is called as Features is able to provide those processes in discourse analysis course.

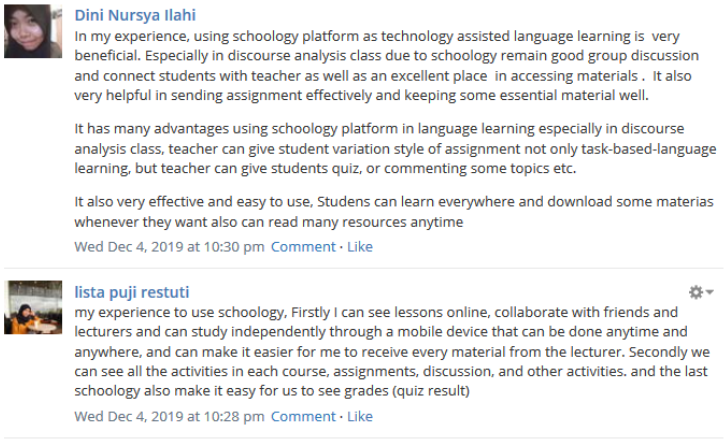
The Features makes possible the learners to give opinion and feedback toward others idea since all posts are able to be seen by all classmates or members in online class. They may support, object, or suggest something for the posts. Figure 12 shows the students reciprocal comment on other by using indirect feedback. It seems that SW a little bit shy to show her idea directly to RW which mentions confusion on understanding a challenge.

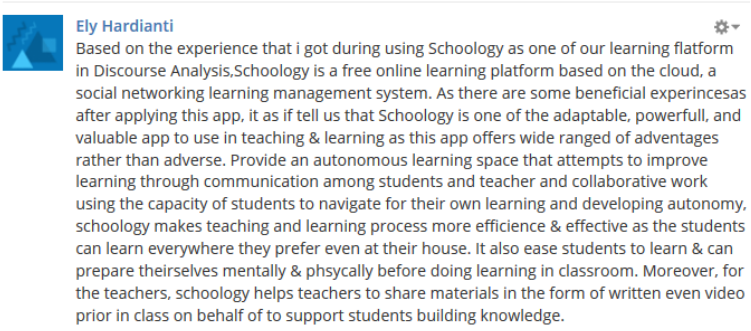
Figure 12 The students reciprocal comment on other



As additional information, the Updates feature enable learners to show their collaborative work interactively by discussing certain topic within a group. As in the challenge that was given by the lecturer, a group of students tried to accomplished the challenge objectives. One of the personal statements regarding it is as follows:

Figure 13 The students statement on the existence of group discussion





The statements from the learners have shown that schoology successfully developed students' collaboration and promoting autonomy. Then, interaction between members of class directs the students' autonomy (Little, 2007). Furthermore, when each member of virtual class feels to have responsibility to help other with understanding, it means that they have sense of relatedness. This is a key to promote autonomy (Littlewoord, 1999)

Conclusion

This research was aimed to depict on how the schoology as e-media promoted learners' autonomy in EFL classroom which specifically was in Discourse Analysis course. The schoology class for VII A class students had tabulated some facts that supporting if this e-media successfully promote learners to be autonomy in learning outside the face-to-face (FTF) classroom. The finding said that: (1) Students showed enthusiasm to be participants in schoology which was seen from their analytics to log in that was rapid or frequent. A unique finding was some students who were shy in FTF class showed better confidence in schoology;(2) Students actively gave comments on others idea in the form of group discussion; (3) Students progress on accomplishing the lecturers challenges increased which indicated their interest to learn also raises without being forced by the lecturer; (4) Students mentioned positive feedback that schoology triggered them to be autonomous learners. It was because schoology gave learners' freedom to learn anytime and anywhere, and it provided opportunities to select any learning mode and sources; and (5)Students performed good cognitive achievements as depicted by their ability to be aware of others' opinion which then they gave ideas and suggestions based on their comprehension. In short, they have shown the ability to control over materials, cognitive process and achievement, and learning management. Finally, this research suggests that schoology need to be incorporated in teaching content course such as discourse analysis.

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