


Independent Learning Curriculum for Vocational Students' Motivation and Interest in Learning English Language

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ABSTRACT

Abstract. This study aims to analyze the implementation of independent learning curriculum for increasing students' motivation and interest in learning English language at SMK Analis Kesehatan Nasional, Surakarta. The respondents of this study were 25 eleventh grade students of vocational high school. This research method in this study applied qualitative research with case study. Techniques of data collection in this study were observation, interview, and closed-ended questionnaires. From the results of questionnaire, 90% of students had high motivation in learning English language, 95% students had high curiosity in English language, 90% of students had high interest in learning English language independently, 85% of students preferred fun English language learning method, and 90% of students also had high target to English language learning achievement. Thus, the implementation of independent learning curriculum positively influenced students' motivation and interest in learning English language.

Keywords: *Independent Learning, English Language Learning, English Learning Motivation, English Learning Interest*

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INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is a foundation in the world of education that must have renewal and evaluation in each generation and the development of times and technologies. The curriculum is the "spirit" of education that must be evaluated in an innovative, dynamic, and periodic manner in accordance with the development of time and IPTEKS (Technology and Science), and also in line with the necessary competences of society and graduate users (Barlian et al., 2022). Curriculum reform is something that must be done to create progress in the world of Indonesian education along with the presence of technological advances. This is because technology is able to support breakthroughs in the field of modern education.

The transition from curriculum 2013 to the independent curriculum begins from the beginning of 2022. In February 2022, Kemendikbudristek launched an independent learning curriculum to replace the name of the prototype curriculum. The curriculum of independent learning has been applied to schools in Indonesia, one of them at SMK Analis Kesehatan Surakarta, Central Java. Hattarina stated curriculum characteristics of independent learning are: (1) Project-based learning to develop soft skills and character, (2) Focus on essential materials, (3) Teachers have the flexibility to carry out the training process according to the ability of students (teaching at the right level) (Hattarina et al., 2022). Therefore, the learning methods used in this independent learning curriculum tend to refer to student talents and interests.

English courses are one of the compulsory subjects to be studied for students on this independent learning curriculum so that English learning is created with situations, strategies, techniques that are pleasant for students and can generate motivation and interest for students. Rianti's research showed that key components and knowledge bases needed for understanding and implementing learner autonomy across instruction and curricula and suggest ways to promote EFL learner autonomy for autonomous learning (Rianti, 2017). Therefore, learning English should be in accordance with the provisions in the curriculum of independent learning, which is education that points to the students. In this regard, Lynch stated that students should be encouraged to interact through class tasks, such as presentation and group exercises using 4 language skills, namely listening, writing, speaking, and writing (Lynch, 1996). The relationship between the four aspects of skills in English language lessons is so close that students are required to be able to master every aspect of English language skills.

The obstacle that students often encounter in mastering all aspects of skills is the low motivation and interest of students in mastering English. Whittaker in Sardiman stated that motivation activates behavior to the goals caused by the motivation, while learning is a process in which behaviour is changed through exercise or experience (Sardiman, 2018). In this case, motivation plays an important role in the student's learning process because learning activities will not be maximum without student motivation. First-secondary school study revealed that the motivation of students in responding to teachers in the classroom decreased during online learning during pandemic times (Ernawati et al., 2022). Therefore, breakthroughs and research in education, especially in relation to the curriculum, are necessary to enable the motivation of students in learning English.

Meanwhile, in the process of learning English, the interest of students also influences in supporting the learning process beside having a high motivation. Students who have high interests will have a strong impetus to their goals. Syah stated that "Interest is one of the factors that affect the quality and achievement of students' learning outcomes in certain fields of study." (Syah, 2017). It suggests that the interest in learning English is influenced by student and language teacher. This does not exclude the possibility that the curriculum can bridge between learners and language teachers in finding and enhancing learners' interest in learning English. Therefore, the researchers reviewed the implementation of the curriculum of independent learning in increasing the eleventh-grade students' motivation and interest in learning English in SMK Analis Kesehatan Nasional Surakarta, Central Java.

METHOD

This research focused on qualitative approach using case studies because this study focused on the motivation and interest phase of vocational high school students as second language learners. According to Moleong, using a range of natural methods, qualitative research aims to understand phenomena of what the subject of the study experiences, such as behavior, perception, motivation, and action, holistically and in a descriptive manner in the form of words and language (Moleong, 2018).

This study took case on the application or implementation of an independent curriculum in vocational senior high school of National Health Analyst (SMK Analis Kesehatan Surakarta) in Yos Sudarso No. 338, Serengan district, Surakarta, Central Java. Meanwhile, the respondents in this study were 25 students of class XI A in academic year 2022/2023.

Data Collection

Interview

The interview first asks a set of structured questions, then one by one is deepened by looking for further explanations (Arikunto, 2011). In this interview section, the researchers asked students questions related to the implementation of an independent curriculum in

English language subjects. With targeted and detailed questions, students are expected to be able to answer all questions in the interview correctly and in accordance with the experiences they experience and feel. The interview was conducted to 15 students as a sample of a total of 25 students of class XI A. The purpose of the interview is to dig information with sources directly related. This interview is done face-to-face so that the source can easily answer and answer questions from the researcher.

Observation

Observation begins with recording, analyzing and subsequently making conclusions about the implementation and results of the program seen from the existence or absence of the development of the enterprise owned by students (Sugiyono, 2015). In this study, the researchers performed observation on students of class XI A. The observation is based only on the conclusions of the observers. The observation carried out is to observe class conditions that include changes in attitudes and behavior of students when the curriculum of independent learning is applied in English language learning. From these changes, researchers can draw independent conclusions about whether or not progress has been made in increasing motivation and interest in learning English.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire is a method of data collection that is done by giving a set of statements or written questions to respondents to be answered according to user (Widoyoko, 2016). In this study, the authors gave a closed questionnaire in Likert scale from Google Form with ten questions to 25 eleventh grade students from class A.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of Interview

The results of the interview with eleventh-grade students of class XI-A in SMK Analis Kesehatan Nasional Surakarta showed an increase in their motivation and interest in learning English. Most of them said that they felt motivated because in this independent learning curriculum, students can freely express themselves to improve their English-speaking skills. In this curriculum, students can also actively follow the learning because in this curriculum, the learning model focuses on student activity as well as student participation in learning. Meanwhile, in this learning the role of the teacher is only as a companion and gives motivation to students so that students here do not feel intimidated if they make a mistake in learning. The conclusion of Leny's research also revealed that teachers should be able to grow and stimulate all the potential in their students and direct so that their students can be motivated and teachers strive to guide them to use their potential appropriately, so that students can learn with determination and can improve their learning outcomes (Leny, 2022).

In this study, students also stated that they tended to learn communication in English through project or tasks as well as presentations in the real world situation of socialism and work. Therefore, students also felt motivated with innovative learning that grows their interest in the field they are delighted with with exciting and creative themes. Learning outcomes will increase if students have a high motivation and interest in learning English because of the desire to learn with determination or discipline already formed. This is in line with research from Sasmita that interests and self-discipline have a significant influence on student English learning achievements so that the higher the student's interest and self-discipline, the higher is the English learning performance (Sasmita, 2018).

Findings of Observation

The findings of the interview were confirmed by the results of observations made by the researchers. The researcher also acts as a class teacher who teaches English. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher started the class with an opening greeting and the students enthusiastically answered the opening greets with enthusiasm. In the middle of learning, the teacher gave a little explanation about the project to be done on the class.

Students were also excited to listen and discuss with the group determined by the teacher. Significant changes occurred when teachers began to give instructions of starting the presentation of project results that they had already discussed in groups, and students preferred to move forward to the classroom to present their discussions. Based on the observations of the researchers as teachers in the classroom, the results of the students' presentations were very satisfactory even though there were still some students who felt a little embarrassed when presenting the results in English. It is along with the research from Wulandari and Ahmad that students' result in experimental class with project-based learning method is more exciting and satisfying than control class (Wulandari & Ahmad, 2020). Moreover, students will feel comfortable to have self-demonstration when teachers are good facilitators and mediators who become integral part of the successful educational process.

It can be concluded that teachers tend to strive to increase the motivation and interest of students in pursuing English language learning with creative projects in accordance with the interests of learners and perform presentations in front of the classroom as the applied independent learning curriculum. It also reduces the tendency of teachers in teaching methods with lectures without the presence of student activity. Pardede dkk research on motivation in the era of New Normal with the new curriculum after the Covid-19 pandemic stated that the higher the teacher's efforts in improving learning the better the learning offered by the teacher so that the pupils do not quickly get bored with learning using the method of lectures (Pardede et al., 2022). In addition, the observation results of this study also show that this independent learning curriculum covers the shortcomings of ineffective online learning for school students.

Findings of Questionnaire

Findings of the questionnaire in this study from eleventh-grade students of Class XI-A at SMK Analis Kesehatan Nasional Surakarta to know the increased motivation and interest of those students in learning English using the curriculum of independent study. Here are the details about the questionnaire using Likert scale. The results of the questionnaires presented in the following presentation table:

Question 1: I never give up when I have trouble learning English.

This first statement or question shows whether students have a high passion in solving difficulties in learning English or not. The results of the calculation of the number of respondents who chose the answer option in questionnaire 1 can be seen from the following table:

Table 1. Respondents' Percentage Result of Question 1

Likert Scale	Students' Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	25%
Agree	13	65%
Disagree	2	10%
Strongly Disagree	-	0%

The ranking table above shows that as many as 5 students with 25% percentage stated strongly agree and 13 students with 65% percentages stated agree with the first question. It can be understood that 90% of students did not give up easily in facing difficulties in learning English. They tend to see difficulties in learning English as a challenge and look for solutions to those problems. Challenges in English language projects after independent curriculum affect the motivation and interest of eleventh-grade students of class A at SMK Analis Kesehatan Nasional, Surakarta. This is consistent with the findings of Widodo and Winarti. Those researchers stated challenges are also one of the factors that influence students in learning English beside teachers, exams, and aspirations (Widodo & Winarti, 2020). In this case, the challenge is something that is used to be passed by respondents as professional students to the goal, that is, the ability to speak English for the purpose of professional work.

Question 2 : I'm excited to find new vocabulary with other sources of information such as listening to English songs, watching English-language movies or reading English-speaking books.

The second question indicates the high level of students' curiosity for English language lessons so students look for other sources to further improve their English language skills. The results of the detailed calculation of the second questionnaire question can be seen from the following presentation table:

Table 2. Respondents' Percentage Result of Question 2

Likert Scale	Students' Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	9	45%
Agree	12	60%
Disagree	1	5%
Strongly Disagree	-	0%

From the table above can be seen that as many as 9 students with a presentation 45% expressed strong agreement and 12 students with the presentation 60% expressed agreement with the details of the second question. It can be interpreted that 95% of students have a high sense of curiosity in learning English. This curiosity tends to come from the demands of the times with technology and communication using English as an international language. This is in line with Herawati dkk research that the relationship between motivation and interest in learning English students due to the strong demands of modern era, with the scope of worldwide association and also the increasingly strong demand of international languages, therefore students compete in mastering English (Herawati et al., 2021). Therefore, in this study, students as respondents tend to look for other sources of information with songs, movies, and even books from digital media that they didn't get at school.

Question 3: In my free time, I flexibly study English.

The third question refers to the high interest of students in learning English so they can work on improving their English language proficiency independently. The following presentation table shows the results of the calculations for the second questionnaire question:. The results of the calculation details of the second questionnaire question can be seen from the following presentation table:

Table 3. Respondents' Percentage Result of Question 3

Likert Scale	Students' Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	40%
Agree	10	50%
Disagree	2	10 %
Strongly Disagree	-	0 %

According to the study, 40% of students strongly agreed and 50% agreed with the third question, making a total of 90% of students highly interested in improving their English language proficiency. Due to the consequences of independent study using digital learning resources during Covid-19 pandemic, students tend to be used to learning English even when teachers do not assign projects or administer assessments. According to Saputri's research, project-based digital learning media effectively promote student learning independence (Saputri, 2021). As a result, throughout the curriculum of autonomous learning with a creative project, the awareness and independence of learning have already been created by the learners in such remote learning continue effectively.

Question 4: The atmosphere of learning English is so pleasant that I can understand lessons more easily.

The fourth question shows that learning situations and strategies are very influential for students, so if the class atmosphere is very supportive then students will also easily absorb English lessons. The results of questionnaire in the fourth question can be seen from the following presentation table:

Table 4. Respondents' Percentage Result of Question 4

Likert Scale	Students' Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	15%
Agree	14	70%
Disagree	3	15
Strongly Disagree	-	0%

The survey showed that 15% of students strongly agreed and 70% agreed with the fourth question, so 85% of students in total agreed when the situation and class atmosphere were very influential in learning English. A pleasant situation and atmosphere can make it easier for students to absorb the material provided by the teacher. In accordance of this result, the independent curriculum gives students the freedom to export their abilities and interests so that students tend not to feel depressed to reach the minimum value according to what is already set (Rahayu et al., 2022).

Question 5: I learned English to get a good score in English lessons.

The fifth questionnaire showed that students were highly motivated to their goal of achieving performance in the class so that they had an incentive to obtain a satisfactory score in English language lessons. The results of questionnaire in the fifth question can be seen from the following presentation table:

Table 5. Respondents' Percentage Result of Question 5

Likert Scale	Students' Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	15%
Agree	15	75%
Disagree	2	10%
Strongly Disagree	-	0%

An overview of the table above can indicate that as many as 3 students with a percentage of 15% strongly agreed and 15 students with the presentation of 75% agreed with the fifth statement. A total of 90% of students in class XI-A at SMK Analis Kesehatan Nasional Surakarta have the motivation and interest to learn English with the aim of improving the learning performance in the assessment report. In this case, the academic demands to get a good score become the target behind the motivation of those students in learning English. Research from Rahmawati et al showed that academic target has a significant impact on the academic performance of students (Rahmawati et al., 2017). Therefore, the role of teachers serves to provide guidance or guidance so that learning English is more likely to be a pleasant and useful activity and the academic demands do not have a negative effect as a pressure on students.

The results of the survey can be seen from the chart below:

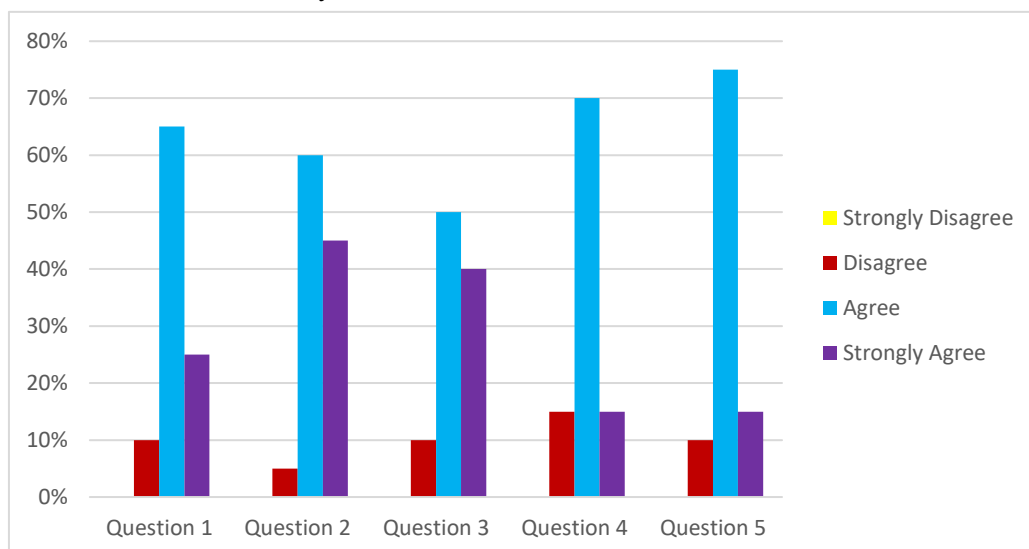


Figure 1. Students' Survey Result

Independent Learning Curriculum for Vocational Students' Motivation and Interest in Learning English Language

The chart above shows that implementing an independent learning curriculum can increase students' motivation and interest in learning English. This is evident from the calculations of the questionnaire. From the chart above, 90% of students had a high motivation in solving difficulties in learning English, while 95% have high curiosity in studying English in depth. Meanwhile, 90% of students had a high interest in deepening their English language skills independently while 85% of students argued that enjoyable learning situations have a great impact on learning English. In addition, 90% of students also had a very high goal of being able to improve their learning performance in English. This shows that Independent Learning Curriculum offers expressive learning according to the ability, needs, motivation, and interests of the student with the project so providing a real experience for the students to be able to be responsible, communicate, and think creatively. It is consistent with Rahayu that the independent curriculum is conceived as a learning design that gives students the opportunity to study calmly, relaxed, enjoyable, stress-free and stress free, to demonstrate their natural talents (Rahayu et al., 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

Implementation of independent learning curriculum at SMK Analis Kesehatan Nasional, Surakarta affected the motivation and positive interest of eleventh grade students on class A. In this study, 90% of students had a high motivation in solving difficulties in learning English, 95% had high curiosity in studying English, 90% had a great interest in deepening their English language skills independently, 85% of students stated that pleasant learning situations influenced the learning of English, and 90% of the students also had a very high goal of being able to improve their English learning performance.

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