

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the study background, research problem, the objective of the study, as well as the significance, the scope and limitation of this research, and to avoid misunderstanding of the terms used in this research, the writer provides the definition of the key terms.

#### **A. Background of The Study**

So far, with all due respect for the eastern culture, autonomous learning has been associated with the cultural values of the West. Pennycook (1997) suggests that autonomy is a Western value. Yet, autonomous learning should not have been related to western culture since the idea of the autonomous learner is the ability and the opportunity for the learner to make his or her decision without anyone else's interference. Demaiziere (2000) proposes the concept of autonomous learning in the educational field is developed to oppose classic education in all aspects.

As we conceive the issue of autonomous learning, a reformation in education must be involved, which during the pandemic of Covid-19 has been a great challenge and an advantage at the same time. It becomes an advantage because almost all school levels have changed their education which means a reformation in any way. So, there is a change in the learning process

implementation because, before the pandemic of Covid-19, the teaching-learning activities were carried out in schools with a face-to-face system. On the other hand, it is extremely challenging to make a reformation in the middle of the pandemic because all parties - such as teachers, students, stakeholders, etc., - involved in the reformation have limited chance to interact face-to-face, which is a very common way in teaching-learning activities. As the result, the activities are done through an online class or virtual class.

In addition to virtual classes, many online platforms can be used to continue the teaching-learning process, one of which is E-Moodle. Rogers (2009) defines E-Moodle as a free, open learning platform for distance education. Following the definition, Ismanto (2012) argues that E-Moodle can be a pioneer to build creativity and ideas in an unlimited education.

Concerning the use of E-Moodle as a new education online platform during the pandemic of Covid-19 at schools, most students find it challenging in their learning process. Yet, it is understood since they used to have classical teaching-learning activities in the classroom. In other words, it is understandable that most learners found it difficult to use E-Moodle concerning that they never kept in touch with technology in their learning activities previously. Therefore, the use of E-Moodle to substitute the classic teaching-learning process has brought some changes to the previous education system. Both the teacher and the students must adapt to the new behavior in the teaching-learning process. Both of them, who used to communicate directly face-to-face in the classroom, must change it to the virtual class. They both also have to learn how to use the platform properly. This

phenomenon happens at most schools – from primary to secondary school levels – including at SMK Islam 1 Blitar.

Based on the first preliminary research that the researcher did on 24-25 September 2021, SMK Islam 1 Blitar is located on Musi Street no 6 Blitar. With almost a total of 2500 students, the school has a big chance to be researched on the phenomenon of autonomous learning, in which the researcher was interested. Since SMK Islam 1 Blitar is one of the biggest private vocational schools in East Java, Indonesia which provides loads of data needed for the research, and also the school is applying the use of E-Moodle during the pandemic, the researcher is interested in figuring out how to promote autonomous learning by using E-Moodle, students' autonomy level, and the teacher's role in a virtual class by using E-Moodle at this school because several students successfully met the criteria set by the researcher in relation to autonomous learners.

The finding obtained from the first preliminary research revealed that the students could not be categorized as autonomous learners because they did not show all the characteristics that autonomous learners must have, such as "planning, choosing materials & methods, completing tasks, monitoring, evaluating, cooperating, and managing my learning" (Tassinari, 2012). All the learners showed dependency on their teacher. They never studied the learning material until their teacher requested them to do so.

The second preliminary research was conducted on 5-6 October 2021. It revealed a different result. A few students showed some progress compared to the previous research. They started to learn and do the tasks without being asked by

their teacher. This behavior led to the process of autonomy learning which interested the researcher to conduct more research. Therefore, the researcher conducted the third preliminary research on 1-2 November 2021 to make sure that this research was necessarily conducted. The result of the third preliminary research showed the same as the second preliminary one. Only a few students actively participated in E-Moodle. This was an interesting phenomenon to study further because all the teaching-learning processes used E-Moodle. Moreover, this study is expected to give a contribution for the teacher to improve their teaching technique or extend their strategies to make students become autonomous learners.

There have been some previous studies on autonomous learning and online learning. A study by Vile and Buyukduman (2013) reveals that college students attempt to use certain strategies to overcome their weaknesses. The other studies find that online learning, on one hand, is perceived to be very helpful (Allo, 2020), more fun, and flexible (Rakhmanina et.al.,2020) during Covid 19 pandemic. On the other hand, it spots the light on the availability of internet access, financial issue, and online learning implementation by college students (Allo, 2020; Rahman, 2020). In the context of vocational school at higher education, it was revealed that online learning is useful because they can learn comfortably at their own pace but is not all engaging because of network and bandwidth problems (Sreehari, 2020), and it does not provide students with better experience and productivity in mastering competencies. (Syauqi et.al., 2020). However, it is rarely found a study focusing on promoting autonomous learning

by using E-Moodle at the vocational secondary level, figuring out the level of vocational students' autonomy, and analyzing the teacher's roles in promoting autonomous learning while using E-Moodle. Thus, to fill in this gap, this research is necessarily conducted.

## **B. Research Problem**

Based on the background of the study, the problem of the study can be formulated as follows:

1. How does the use of E-Moodle promote autonomous learning for the students at SMK Islam 1 Blitar?
2. Into what autonomy levels are the students at SMK Islam 1 Blitar categorized?
3. How do autonomous learners at SMK Islam 1 Blitar behave?
4. What roles are played by the teacher in E-Moodle to promote autonomous learning for the students at SMK Islam 1 Blitar?

## **C. The Objective of The Study**

Concerning the research problem, this study aims at finding out:

1. How the use of E-Moodle can promote autonomous learning at SMK Islam 1 Blitar.
2. The autonomy levels of autonomous learners at SMK Islam 1 Blitar.
3. The behavior of autonomous learners at SMK Islam 1 Blitar.

4. The teacher's roles in promoting autonomous learning for the students at SMK Islam 1 Blitar.

#### **D. Significance of The Study**

There are several significances of this study for students, teachers, other researchers, and the researcher herself. For students, it is hoped that the result of the study will open a new horizon to improve the autonomous learning process. Teachers, it is expected that teachers will use the result of this study to encourage students to be autonomous learners. Moreover, for other researchers, this study might be a guideline for them to research similar subjects. In addition, it is hoped that this study can inspire other researchers to conduct further research to enrich the previous studies. Last but not least, for the researcher, it can become an additional input and useful knowledge for the researcher herself about how an online platform can promote autonomous learning for students.

#### **E. Scope and Limitation**

Since it is impossible to discuss all problems relating to autonomous learning, it will be necessary for the researcher to make the scope and limitation of the study to draw up the problem. Therefore, this study is limited to discussing how the E-Moodle promotes autonomous learning for the eleventh graders of SMK Islam 1 BLITAR in the academic year of 2021/2022 in learning English from the students' perspectives. In addition, the researcher uses Nunan (1997) to analyze the autonomy levels of the students of SMK Islam 1 Blitar and uses

Holec's autonomous learner behaviors (1980) to analyze the behavioral patterns that are shown by the autonomous learners at SMK Islam 1 Blitar. Last but not least, to analyze the teacher's roles in promoting autonomous learning for the students at SMK Islam 1 Blitar, the researcher applies theories proposed by Knowles (1975), Higgs (1988), Nunan (1993), and Xu & Xu (2004)'s theory.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

To avoid misunderstanding in the term used in this study, some terms need to be defined as follows:

1. Autonomous learning refers to the motivation of the students to study, to decide the content of their learnings, and to take responsibility for their learning progress.
2. *E-Moodle* is defined as an online education platform used in teaching-learning activities at schools during the pandemic of Covid-19.