

## **EFL Teachers' Beliefs in Learner Autonomy: A Study on Non-Formal Education Context in Indonesia**

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### **Abstract:**

*This descriptive quantitative study aims to describe teachers' beliefs in learner autonomy (LA) with participants who are senior high school teachers of non-formal education (Paket C) in Indonesia. Applying a survey method, this research involved 126 teachers fill a questionnaire. The research uncovers that teachers were knowledgeable about the notion of LA. Teachers were convinced that LA contributes to successful language learning. This research also uncovered that among four perspectives (psychological, technical, sociocultural, political critical) in viewing LA, teachers' beliefs lean more toward psychological perspective than others. Although teachers were knowledgeable about LA, the research found that they were less optimistic in the implementation of LA. In addition to this, teachers' beliefs in LA were not significantly different across their education backgrounds and length of teaching.*

**Keywords:** *learner autonomy, non-formal education, teachers' belief*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

For more than three decades, endless discussion on the issue of learner autonomy ensued. Since its' first appearance in 1980' up to the present, scholars keep discussing and researching this topic. Research on this topic keeps developing along with the contribution that this issue offers to the achievement of language learning. In the early publication, arguments were presented in terms of the notion such as raised by Holec (1981), Dickinson (1987). This argument even grows larger as many scholars such as Wall (2003), Sinclair (2000), Benson (2011), Huang & Benson (2013) attempted to define this issue variously. Besides the arguments on the notion, experts also tried to see the reason for promoting autonomy in language learning (Ekin & Balicikanli, 2019; Cotteral, 2000). Some research argued on its' implication to the teaching and learning process with the main attention on the practices of LA (Yagciouglu, 2015; Le, 2013).

Despite many publications in this area, there was little concern to the examination of teachers' beliefs about LA. As previously stated, attention on LA was much paid to the notion, the reason to promote, the result of implementation, teachers and their roles, the ways to develop, and other behavioristic studies (see Dam, 2011; Xu, 2015; Benson, 2016; Sheerin, 2013; Voller, 2013). Concern on teachers' beliefs was very little (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). Studies in the area of teachers only touched on the issue of teachers' role in promoting LA (see Dam, 2011; Xu, 2015; Benson, 2016; Sheerin, 2013; Voller, 2013). The investigations of what teachers feel, know, think, and believe were less studied (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

This is a substantial gap in arguing many aspects of LA while teachers' beliefs in this issue were less voiced. Teachers' belief is necessary to study since it guides teachers in the teaching and learning process (Skott, 2015). Rokeach (1969) called belief "a disposition to act" where all teachers' practices in the classroom are driven by this.

Aside from the presented gap above, this study was conducted in the non-formal education context where learners are expected to be autonomous ones. Learners are mostly dropout students from formal school with low motivation which results in learners' low achievement. Many of them also have to work, therefore learning autonomously becomes a necessity.

Considering the gap that has previously been explained, this research filled this gap by investigating teachers' beliefs in LA under four research questions; (1) what do teachers believe in LA (2) what do teachers perceive about the contribution of LA in promoting L2 learning, (3) how desirable and feasible to promote it in *Paket C* context, and do teachers differ significantly in their beliefs in LA across their education background and length of teaching.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Teachers Beliefs**

The first principle theory behind this study is the theory of teacher beliefs. Work of literatures have argued that teachers' beliefs are important since they serve as truth that guides goals, actions, decisions (Bandura, 1997). Skott (2015) has also claimed that in many conditions, teachers' beliefs strongly govern their practices in the classroom. In a similar argument, Skott (2015) claimed that teachers' belief becomes the most important tenet that guides teachers' instructional activities. Rokeach (1969) and Skott (2009) have also stressed the importance of teachers' beliefs which they claimed as the explanatory principle of teachers' practices that powerfully influence teachers' teaching. Therefore, studies on teachers' beliefs are essential as they become the main determinant of teachers' teaching practices which in turn influence students' learning process and outcome.

Teachers' beliefs come from several sources. Buehl & Fives (2009) classified teacher's sources of beliefs internally and externally into six including formal preparation in the form of course work, professional workshops, studies, etc., formal information, personal evaluation, cooperation with other teachers, and teachers' teaching experiences. In line with this, Levin & He (2008) claimed that both external and internal factors may contribute to shaping teachers' beliefs such as parents' involvement, personal experience as students and as teachers, education background, etc. In sum, various experiences that teachers have in their whole life surely shape their beliefs in certain things.

Discussing teachers' beliefs, it is necessary to consider teachers' practices as an inseparable part of the discussion. Teachers' beliefs as previously stated has closely related to teachers' practices. There are some arguments concerning this issue. Firstly, teachers' beliefs powerfully guide teachers' practices (Skott, 2015). This means that teachers' beliefs precursors to the practices. This argument is consistent with what Wilkin (2008) found in his study which displayed that beliefs were found to be a significant predictor of teachers' instructional practices. Research by Brown et al., 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009 have also found that teachers' rooted beliefs forcefully affect teachers' practices. Another argument on the possible connection between teachers' beliefs and practices is raised by Buehl & Back in 2015. Buehl & Back (2015) contend that teachers' practices influence teachers' beliefs. A study by Lumpe et al., 2012 has corroborated this argument. They claimed that after engaging in particular teachers' professional development, teachers' beliefs were increased. Furthermore, Buehl & Back (2015) also proposed that teachers' beliefs can be unrelated to each other. This claim is supported by Liu, 2011; Lim & Chai, 2008; Jorgensen et al., 2010 who found in their research that teachers' beliefs disconnect with their practices. In other words, teachers' beliefs were not manifested in their real practices. Lastly, Buehl & Back (2015) argued that the other possible connection between teachers' beliefs and their practices is a reciprocal relationship.

This argument is in line with what Potary & Georgiadou (2009), Roehrig et al. (2009), Mansour (2009), Basturkmen (2012) revealed on the interdependency between teachers' belief and their practices. They are influencing each other. In brief, beliefs make changes in the practices while the practices make differences in their beliefs.

As discussed previously, teachers' practices are underpinned and guided by teachers' beliefs. In the application of teachers' beliefs into practices, there are some constraints and also supports. Fives & Buehl (2012) argued that some factors both internal and external found to facilitate and impede the application of teachers' beliefs into practices. Bronfenbrenner (1989) displayed an ecological model of this relationship in which some internal factors can support and obstruct the implementation such as experience, insight, self-realization, and other beliefs. While external beliefs cover many factors such as learner factors, classroom factors, school factors, instructional resources, etc. Buehl & Back (2015) argued that in the implementation of beliefs, teachers need to arm with the required information. In line with this, Mouza, 2009; Kang, 2008; Bray, 2011; Rushton et al., 2011 argued that teachers who are lack content and pedagogical knowledge cannot enact their beliefs into practices. In addition to this, Roehrig et al., 2011; Kang, 2008 claimed that teachers' lack of self-awareness and self-reflection hinder the enactment of their beliefs into practices.

## **2.2 Autonomy**

Another supporting theory of this research comes from the theory of autonomy. Some aspects of autonomy are used as the theoretical foundation of this research as follow:

### **2.2.1. Definition**

Since the early development of autonomy about thirty years ago, many scholars have tried to define this term differently. The earliest famous definition of autonomy refers to Holec (1981) which he described as "the capacity to take charge of one's own learning". This capacity is manifested in the form of responsibility in learning aspects covering the learning goals, contents and progression, procedures and methods, monitoring, and evaluation. Still using a similar term, Benson (2001) described it as "the capacity to take control of one's own learning". Based on these arguments, there are some key points to refer to autonomy; ability/capacity, control/taking charge of, and aspects of learning.

Dickinson (1987) provides a little different point of view in defining this term. He argued that autonomy refers to learners' condition of being totally independent in taking control over learning. There is no involvement of others such as teachers and institutions. Based on these arguments, it can be summarized that learners' independence from others becomes the key point of autonomy.

Up to date, debates on defining this term continued into much varied. Palfreyman (2018) argued that defining autonomy cannot be separated from social processes that happened within the individual. This argument is supported by Wall, (2003) who argued that autonomy does not merely refer to learning alone without the existence of others. However, he argued that autonomous learners as social human beings are restricted by their surroundings for example teachers and other learners. In a more specific explanation, Wall (2003) proposed two basic factors that build autonomy; inside and outside the learners. Factors that come from inside learners dealing with psychological capacities including intentions, desires, motivations, commitment, self-consciousness, etc., while external factors relate with the environment and others.

Despite the arguments of viewing the definition of autonomy above, Sinclair (2000) suggested a broader explanation of this term. He explained that autonomy is an individual construct of capability involving his/her willingness to be responsible with his/her learning. Further, he claimed that full autonomy is the idealistic goal since learners have unstable and variable degrees of autonomy. Also, he argued that developing autonomy cannot simply be done by putting learners in an independent situation but it requires conscious awareness in many aspects of learning. Thus, developing autonomy covering many dimensions including individual, social, and political.

### **2.2.2. Autonomy and L2 learning**

The idea of autonomy firstly arose in the area of L2 teaching in 1971 under the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project. Up to date, autonomy in L2 learning has been largely discussed and studied as shown by many publications in the form of books and articles. The growing interest in language autonomy cannot be separated from the arguments that autonomy is important in the achievement of successful language learners. Palfreyman & Benson (2019) and Little (2007) pointed out that some key aspects of autonomy such as control, involvement, and reflection become a central point in the achievement of successful language learners. Studies by Smith et al. (2018), Dam (2011), Benson (2011) have corroborated that autonomy in language learning proved to lead to successful language learners. Thus, promoting autonomy in language learning becomes a central point to study.

### **2.2.3. Designs of L2 Learner Autonomy**

As discussed previously, scholars have agreed that autonomy is essential to develop in the language learning area. Therefore, studies in this area grow rapidly in wider directions. Some scholars tried to approach L2 learner autonomy in different designs. Oxford (2003) provided a comprehensive design as she categorized L2 learner autonomy into psychological, technical, political-critical, and sociocultural perspectives. Psychological perspective is drawn from some theories underlying the notion of autonomy as it deals with the characteristics of learners mentally and emotionally. Further, Oxford (2003); also corroborated that psychologically,

autonomous learners were characterized by their individual characteristics such as high motivation, capability to manage learning, good attitudes, and learning strategies. Paiya (2006) as cited in Paiya & Braga (2008) clearly defined autonomy as a combination of socio-cognitive system which covering ability, attitude, strong desire, and decision making in the learning process. Holec (1981), Huang & Benson (2013), Benson (2013), Wall (2003) argued on the notion of autonomy as it refers to someone ability or capacity in taking control of his/her learning and this control is expressed in the form of the capability to make the decision in the process of learning. Furthermore, the technical perspective focuses on a situation or created conditions in which learners can develop their autonomy (Oxford, 2003). This perspective emphasizes the importance of created conditions where the availability of learning resources turns to be the key point of discussion. Related to this perspective, Benson (2013) and Reinders (2018) argued that technology becomes an integral part of an autonomous environment as it provides opportunities for learners to develop their autonomy by working independently with the rich learning resources and reflect critically upon their works (Lee, 2011). Political-critical perspective in viewing language learner autonomy is approved to be one of essential part to discuss. Oxford (2003) described this as something that relates to freedom, authority, accessibility, and dogma. Some arguments support this perspective such as Winch (2004) who argued that developing autonomy presupposes learners' right in picking up some choices from their learning. Learners have to struggle for their freedom by being the author of their own world. Referring to these arguments, freedom in the form of given opportunities for learners to choose their own preferences in aspects of learning is considered as an essential element of developing language learner autonomy. Additionally, Oxford (2003) raised sociocultural perspective as another important aspect of fostering learner autonomy in L2 learning. This perspective emphasizes the importance of social engagement as an inseparable part of language learning. Many arguments underpin this perspective such as Sinclair (2000) who argued that learners' capacity in autonomy requires both individual and social dimensions. White (2011), and Wall (2003) also underlined that learners are socially interdependent with others and collaboration cannot be ignored in language learning. Supporting these arguments, Palfreyman (2018), and Lantolf (2013) found in their studies that group work as a kind of collaborative learning gives many benefits to the promotion of L2 learner autonomy. Further, they claimed that group work helps learners to make decisions and stimulates their responsibility in learning. They also claimed that cooperative learning offers learners to promote their individual learning abilities that lead to shaping their collective intelligences. This proves that collaboration supports the development of individual autonomy.

### **2.2.3. Degree of Autonomy**

Another aspect of autonomy that supports this research is the issue of a degree in autonomy. Scholars such as Sinclair (2000), Benson (2007), Nunan, (2013) have

raised the issue of degree in their discussion. Nunan (2013) argued that autonomy in language learning has some degrees depending on many factors such as learners' personality, motivation, and cultural environment. Thus, he suggested five levels of autonomy starting from the basic level called awareness followed by involvement level where learners are encouraged to make choices, intervention level, creation level and the highest one is transcendence level. Scharle & Szabo (2000) also categorized autonomy into some levels including awareness, changing attitudes, and transferring roles. Additionally, Smith (2003) differentiated between weak and strong pedagogies in which weak pedagogy means level which learners are still lack autonomy and demanded to be drilled in autonomous learning approach. In contrast, strong pedagogy means the degree of autonomy that learners are already autonomous and able to exercise in autonomous learning mode. In brief, autonomy has some levels and these levels of autonomy indicate that there is a progress from lower to higher levels of autonomy.

#### **2.2.4. Other Related Issues of Learner Autonomy and Previous Studies**

Some other related theories of autonomy have been used as the theoretical foundation of this research. Theories on LA in relation to age as suggested by some scholars such as Dam (2011), Lamb (2004), Lamb (2013), Kuchah (2013) used to supports this research. Issues on LA related to culture were raised by some scholars such as Smith (2001), Palfreyman & Smith (2003), Sonaiya (2002), Benson et al. (2003), Lamb (2004), Fonseka (2013), Blidi (2017). Furthermore, studies on the area of teachers' role in the promotion of LA such as conducted by, Dam (2011), Sheerin (2013), Benson (2016), Voller (2013), Xu (2015) also support the finding of this research. Studies by Sakai & Takagi (2009), Dafei (2007), Abedini et al. (2011) on the correlation between autonomy and English proficiency were also used as the reference of this study. Additionally, arguments on LA and learner-centered approach as raised by Brown (2000) and Nunan (2013) have also been used as the supporting references of this finding.

Previous research on teachers' beliefs in LA have also contributed to the discussion of this study. Studies by Borg & Al Busaidi (2012), Nguyen Van Loi (2016), Stroupe et al. (2016), Keuk & Heng (2016), Othman & Wood (2016), Tapinta (2016), Madrunio et al. (2016), Lengkanawati (2016), Borg & Alshumaimeri (2019) have been used as the supporting studies of this study. As additional references, findings of studies in the context of Indonesia's non-formal education such as conducted by Senjawati (2015) and Winata (2012) have also corroborated the finding of this research.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This is a descriptive quantitative research. Conducted in South Kalimantan Province which covers 2 cities and 11 districts, this research employed a census sampling in which all (169) EFL teachers of non-formal education equal to senior high school (*Paket C*) were involved. Thirty of them were excluded from the participants as they

were involved in the pilot test of the instrument. The rest were surveyed in a one-shot survey by applying the mix mode technique of collecting data. The data were collected online through *Google* form, email, and also personal delivery/pick-up paper-based questionnaire.

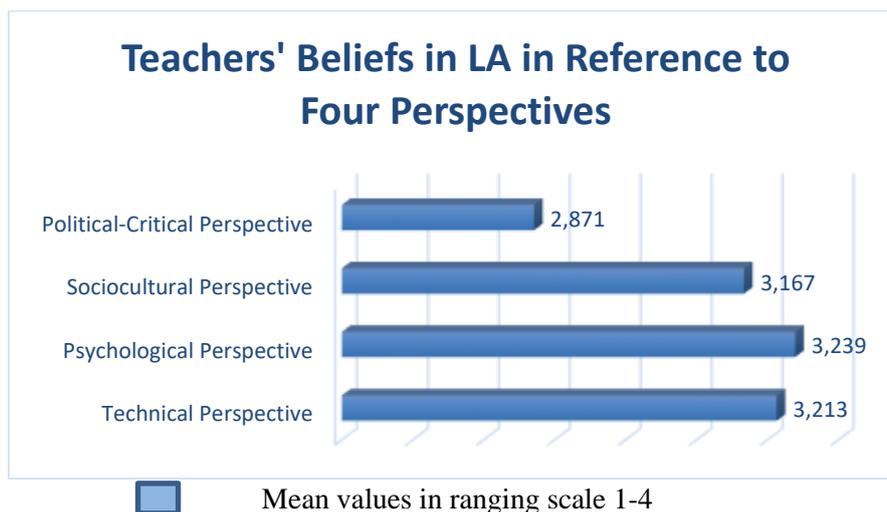
This research used Borg & Al Busaidi's instrument (2012) with some adaptations. Adjustments were made and some additional items were added as suggested by the experts. There were three sections of the questionnaire; participants' background, beliefs in LA and desirability and feasibility to promote LA. The first section provides 6 questions concerning with demographic information of respondents. The second section covers 40 questions. Every question provides options in the form of a *Likert* scale. Respondents choose the options that range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Lastly, the last section consists of two sets of statements about learners' involvement in decision-making and abilities that range from undesirable/unfeasible to very desirable/very feasible.

The data were analyzed statistically using SPSS 21 by calculating the frequency counts and percentages. Each statement is measured in the form of its means and then interpreted descriptively. Further, the data of teachers' beliefs were classified into two: the length of teaching and their educational background. Based on this classification, the data were compared using one-way *Anova*.

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

##### 4.1. Research Question 1 – Teachers Beliefs in Learner Autonomy (LA)

Answering the first research question about teachers' beliefs in LA, the following chart illustrates teachers' respond to four perspectives in viewing LA as proposed by Oxford (2003).



**Figure 1.** Teachers' Beliefs in LA in Reference to Four Perspectives

Addressing the first question of this research, teachers of *Paket C* disposed to view learner autonomy as a psychological attribute of learners as shown by the chart to be the most supported aspect with a mean value 3.23. This means, teachers positively believed that LA is something related to the mental and emotional attributes of learner (Oxford, 2003). Teachers' responds to statement number 10 "The ability to monitor one's own learning is central to learner autonomy" indicated that learners' ability in managing own learning becomes a central aspect of LA. This is in line with the notion of autonomy as proposed by Holec (1981), Paiva & Braga (2006), Huang & Benson (2013). Teachers believed that psychological aspects of learners in terms of motivation, self-agency, and learning strategies are essential aspects of developing learner autonomy (Oxford, 2003; Liu, 2015) as indicated by their responses to statement number 12 and 13. Previous research by Borg & Al Busaidi (2012) and Tapinta (2016) have also corroborated that psychological aspects are central in the development of LA. This is interesting to discuss this finding since many problems have been attached to the psychology of *Paket C* learners. Students of *Paket C* are mostly low motivated students since many of them are dropout students from formal schools. This finding indicates that promoting LA in this context requires hard efforts from the teachers especially in building their motivation and responsibility to learn.

Next, the technical perspective was believed to be the second most supporting aspect of developing LA as illustrated by the chart. As previously stated in the literature review, the technical perspective concerns mainly with the situation that may support the development of LA (Oxford, 2003). This argument refers to what Dickinson (1987) claimed on the LA as the situation in which learners managing their own learning without other interventions. The availability of learning resources becomes the crucial point of this perspective. Teachers' responses to statement number 1 "Independent study in the library develops learner autonomy" indicated that 97% of teachers (almost all) agreed to this statement. Similarly, responses to statements number 3 and 4 about the use of technological devices show teachers' strong agreement on this perspective. This finding supports what Benson' (2011) and Lee (2011) argued on the importance of technology as it provides learners with the spaces to learn the target language and gives the chances to promote their aspect of language LA. Furthermore, out-of-class in the form of online resources provides innovative ways of learning language (Benson, 2011). In brief, developing L2 LA cannot be separated from the supporting environments where learners develop their autonomy. Thus, providing learners with adequate learning resources turns to be urgent work for both teachers and the institutions who are in charge of the improvement of non-formal education programs including *Paket C*.

In addition to this, the third supported aspect of LA was found to be socio-cultural one. This means that teachers' positively believed that socio-cultural aspects are as essential as other factors in the development of language LA. Their responses to statements number 15, 16, and 17 uncovered that teachers strongly agreed on the

advantage of group work activities and collaboration in promoting language LA. Almost all of the teachers were certain (96%) on the role of cooperation and social interaction as the essence of socio-cultural aspect to be important elements in promoting LA. This finding supports what Palfreyman (2018) and White (2011) explained on the social arrangements that exist around the capability of learners as social human beings. Thus, cooperation cannot be neglected in viewing LA, since everyone including learners are social human being which in fact are dependent on others. Palfreyman (2018) confirmed that collaborative group work where social engagement occurred between learners supports the development of individual autonomy. Cooperative group works were proven to be able to enhance learners' motivation, responsibility, learning strategies which leads to 'collective intelligence' and resulting in effective language learning (Palfreyman, 2018; Lantolf, 2013). Developing LA with main attention on this aspect might be the most feasible way that teachers can do in *Paket C* context since cooperation as the central point of sociocultural perspective is proven to enhance learners' motivation and responsibility and learning strategies. In brief, group autonomy makes a difference to individual autonomy.

The least supported aspect of LA as shown by figure 1 is the political-technical aspect. As previously explained, Oxford (2003) described this as something that relates to freedom, authority, accessibility, and dogma. Although selected to be the least supported aspects of LA, teachers also positively believed in this aspect. Teachers' responses to statements number 19, 22, and 23 show that they positively agreed to grant controls over their learning. Finding on statement number 19 indicates that 85% of participants believed that decision making becomes a central aspect of language LA. Giving learners freedom in the evaluation of their learning as reflected in statement number 22 is believed by 64% of teachers. Further, 58% of them agreed that deciding own learning materials is also part of language LA. This finding is consistent with what Oxford (2003) and Winch (2004) argued on the learners' ability to fight against the existing ideologies in controlling over the learning process, content, and materials therefore learners should be free from any institutional bounds. Generally, the political-critical aspect of LA was revealed to be essential in this finding, their responses on both statements number 22 and 23 indicate that there were still some teachers (36%) shown to be less certain on transferring control over the learning assessment and learning materials to learners. Indeed, autonomy requires transferring control over the learning process from teachers to learners in the form of negotiated learning (Dam, 2011; Voller, 2013).

Table: 1 Teachers' beliefs in LA and Related Factors

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
LA and Teacher Role	1.0	4.0	2.758	.6469
LA and Culture	1.0	4.0	2.655	.7168
LA and Age	1.0	4.0	2.791	.7146
LA and English Proficiency	1.0	4.0	2.349	.5686
LA and Teaching Approach	1.0	4.0	2.881	.4570

Table 1 outlines the teachers' beliefs in LA and other related factors. As displayed above, teachers of *Paket C* were positive about the role of teachers in promoting language LA. Their positive agreements on statements number 24, 25, and 27 represent that they believed in their central role in the development of LA. In promoting LA, the teacher plays an important role as he/she becomes a facilitator and a source person to whom learners refer to when making a decision. This finding supports the previous arguments that have been raised by some scholars such as Dam (2013), Voller (2013), Little (2004), Xu (2015).

Another related factor displayed by the table above is teachers' beliefs in LA related to culture. Teachers positively agreed that language LA can be developed in any social and cultural background of learners (statement 28). Teachers' beliefs in this related aspect might stem from their experience of being teachers of *Paket C* which learners are varied in the term of their social backgrounds. Concomitant with this finding, Benson & Voller (2013), Benson et al. (2003), Lamb (2004) have argued that autonomy deals with an inborn capacity which is valid to all cultures including Asian learners.

The relation between LA and age was also revealed in this study. As shown by the table, teachers were positive about the possibility of implementing LA to both adults and young learners. Teachers positively agreed that promoting autonomy does not limit to certain ages (statement 30). Almost all respondents (99%) agreed on statement number 31 about the possibility of both young and adult learners in developing their autonomy to learn English. Teachers of *Paket C* have experienced teaching learners of a variety of ages consisting of those who are school-age and out-of-school-age learners. Studies by Lamb (2004) and Kuchah (2013) have corroborated this finding. They claimed both adults and young learners can develop language LA. In sum, this finding also confirms that LA is not a matter of age, indeed it is a matter of degree.

Furthermore, the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teaching approach has also been uncovered in this study. As displayed in Table 1, teachers believed that LA and learners' English proficiency have a relationship. Their responses to statement number 33, about the possibility of promoting language LA to those proficient and beginner, indicates that they (76%) agree implementing LA to those proficient learners is easier. In addition to this, their responses to statement number 34 shows that 56% of them agree that learners' proficiency in English does not affect their capability to promote autonomy. In brief, the finding shows that teachers positively believed in implementing language LA to all learners including proficient learners and beginners. This finding also implies that although they are certain in developing autonomy for all learners, they also have a strong belief in the feasibility to develop it for those who are proficient learners. Arguments on the levels of autonomy as discussed previously corroborates this finding. Those who are

proficient possibly have some higher levels of autonomy than those who are beginners. Studies by Abedini et al. (2011), Dafei (2007), Sakai & Takagi, (2009) also confirmed that positive correlation is found between English proficiency and learner autonomy.

Table 1 also displays teachers' beliefs in LA related to the teaching approach. The finding shows that teachers positively believed in a learner-centered approach to be implemented in developing LA. Teachers' responses to statement number 36 show their agreement on the issue of learner-centered to be the ideal approach in promoting language LA. In contrast, their responses to statement number 37 indicates that the teacher-centered approach cannot be applied in the development of language LA. This finding supports Holec's (1981), Dickinson (1987), Benson (2013) argument on the notion of autonomy as learners' attribute in which taking control over learning attached heavily on learners. Similarly, the learner-centered approach as suggested by Nunan (2013), Brown (2000) is characterized by granting control over aspects of learning in the form of negotiation between teacher and learners and it has become the most essential aspect of LA.

#### **4.2. Research Question 2 – Teachers' Perception on The Contribution of Learner Autonomy in L2 Learning**

Addressing the second research question, teachers of *Paket C* positively believed that learner autonomy supports the achievement of L2 learning. Their responses to statement number 39 show their agreements to the effective learning that learning autonomy offers. Moreover, they strongly believed in the positive effect of LA on successful language learners (statement 40) as indicated by 99% of the respondents agree to this statement. This finding supports what Palfreyman & Benson (2019), Little (2007) argued on some autonomy attributes that contribute to successful language learners. Palfreyman & Benson (2019) argued on the characteristics of a successful language learner as he described as the one who is able to communicate the target language system into his own language which is reached by controlling over aspects of learning. In a similar vein, studies by Smith et al. (2018), Dam (2011), Benson (2011) also found that language LA contributes to successful language learners as they found that many students in the developing countries were successful in learning English autonomously. Still related to this finding, it is noteworthy to discuss the education background of *Paket C* teachers. In the previous explanation, it has been informed that *Paket C* teachers are varied in their education background; some hold English Education background and some do not. Although some teachers do not have formal school in learning English, it is certain that they learn English by independent means. Therefore, this finding is somewhat influenced by their experience as autonomous learners.

### 4.3. Research Question 3 - Desirability and Feasibility of Promoting LA in *Paket C* Context

Figure 2 indicates the teachers' general desirability and feasibility of granting control on aspects of learning.

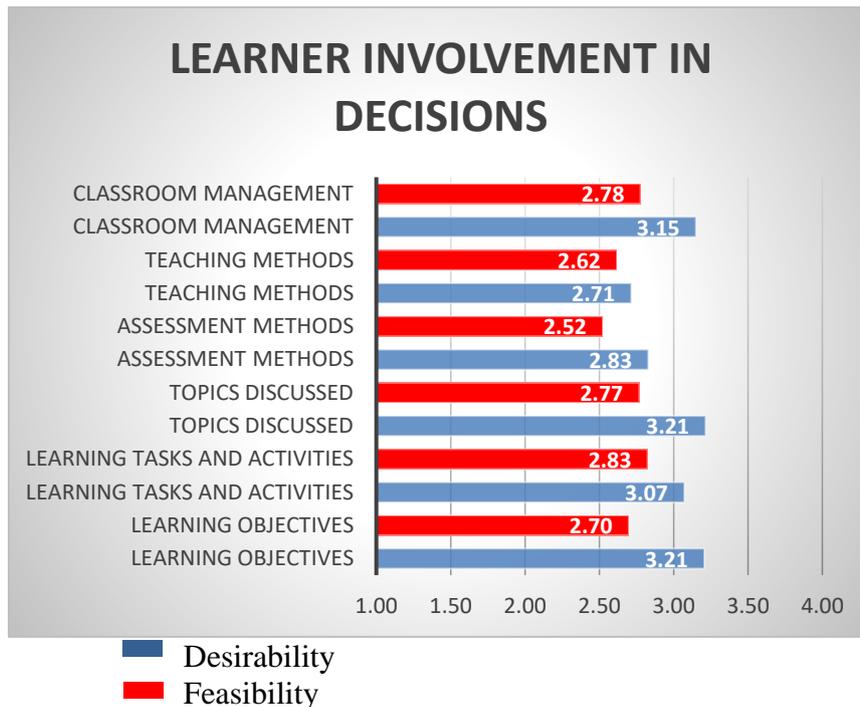


Figure 2. Desirability and feasibility of learners to be involved in decision making

As shown by the figure above, teachers' views on granting those aspects of learning to learners were more desirable than feasible. On a scale 1 (undesirable/unfeasible) up to 4 (very desirable/very feasible) teachers were more positive in the desirability of those aspects as indicated by mean values (2.83-3.21) rather than the feasibility (2.52-2.83). This finding supports the arguments that Holec (1981) and Blidi (2017) raised on the practical implication that will be faced by teachers in implementing autonomy. They argued that teachers will find learners who are not capable making decision but are responsible to do that. In addition to this, teachers were less feasible on the implementation of these aspects as their beliefs are influenced by the condition of learners who are mostly low motivated ones and learning institutions which are poor in learning resources (Senjawati, 2015; Winata, 2012). This will be a difficult challenge for teachers to develop LA where psychological aspects require learners to be highly motivated and responsible in all aspects of learning and technical aspects such as technological devices are also needed in the development of LA. Thus, teachers of *Paket C* should make a hard effort to make the development of LA is feasible.

In addition, the figure above also summarizes that among six aspects of learning, involving learners to decide on learning tasks and activities was perceived to be the most practicable one. In contrast, engaging learners to decide assessment methods was perceived to be unreasonable one. The progressing level of autonomy from the easy activity to the complicated one clarifies what scholars have argued on this issue. This finding reinforces the theory of level in autonomy as raised by Benson (2006), Sinclair (2000), Scarle & Szabo (2000).

The following figure displayed teachers' views on developing learners' abilities for autonomy:

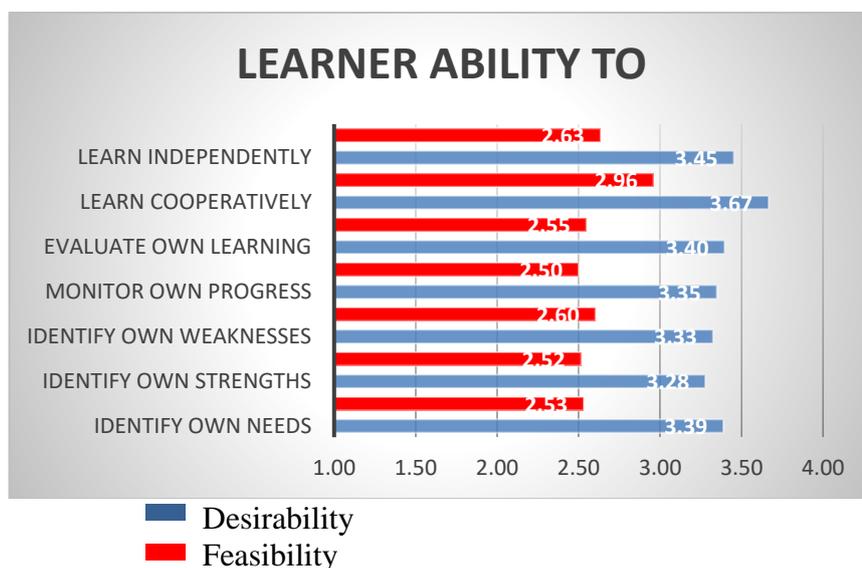


Figure 3. Desirability and feasibility of developing aspects for LA

Similar to the previous finding, the finding on desirability and feasibility on developing aspects of LA as displayed above indicates that teachers perceived desirability rather than feasibility. This is indicated by all mean values of desirability that are above 3 (3.28-3.67) whereas all mean values of feasibility are below 3 (2.5-2.96). Among the seven cases above, learning cooperatively is perceived to be the most feasible skill that can be developed by learners of *Paket C* with a mean value 2.96. This implies that sociocultural aspects of LA are believed to be the most feasible aspect that can best be developed in supporting the development of LA in *Paket C* context. This finding supports what White (2011), Wall (2003), Palfreyman (2018), and Lantolf (2013) argued on the significant aspect of learners as a social human being who is dependent to others. In line with this, Blidi (2017) argued that developing LA in Asian culture cannot be separated from the value of collectivism, therefore putting the socio-cultural aspect as the focus of fostering LA might lead to the successful development of LA.

#### 4.4. Research Question 4 - Comparison of Teachers' Beliefs in LA Based on Educational Background and Length of Teaching

Addressing the last research question, the following tables illustrate the comparison of teachers' beliefs in LA based on teachers' educational background and their length of teaching experience. Compared with these two variables, the data found that they do not have a significant difference. The *Anova* test result shows this finding.

**Table: 2** Teacher beliefs in LA – Educational Background

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.724	2	9.362	.329	.721
Within Groups	3503.435	123	28.483		
Total	3522.159	125			

**Table: 3** Teacher Beliefs in LA – Length of Teaching Experience

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	168.950	3	56.317	2.049	.111
Within Groups	3353.209	122	27.485		
Total	3522.159	125			

Table 2 above displays the *Anova* test result of teachers' beliefs in LA based on their difference in educational background. The result found that there is no significant difference in this comparison as indicated by *Sig* which is higher than 0.05 ( $0.072 > 0.05$ ). This means that teachers having different backgrounds of education covering English, Non-English and other languages share the same belief about language LA. This finding is concomitant with theories raised by Levin (2015), Buehl & Fives (2009) about the internal factors such as experience, reflection, and external factors such as education and informal training that shape their belief. Furthermore, teachers of *Paket C* were not significantly different in their beliefs in LA since they might have experienced being English autonomous learners therefore they were successful and able to teach English. Besides the theory of sources of beliefs, the theory raised by Benson (2007) also corroborated this finding. Benson (2007) claimed that autonomy is an education goal whose purpose is promoting individual character so that they become potential humans in society. In sum,

autonomy is an education goal therefore any educational major supports the development of learner autonomy.

Similarly, finding on teachers' beliefs in LA based on their length of teaching shows that there is no significant difference as referred in table 3. The *Anova* test result indicates that  $\text{Sig } 0.11 > 0.05$  meaning that teachers' belief in LA was not significantly different based on their length of teaching. As previously discussed, experience has a big contribution to shaping teachers' beliefs (Rushton et al., 2011; Lumpe et al. 2012). Bigelow (2000) claimed that those experienced teachers learned more from their teaching experience. In contrast, the finding of this research presents that teachers with different lengths of teaching do not have different beliefs in LA. It can be concluded that despite their different length of teaching, they may not have experience of promoting LA in their practices. This finding justifies the previous finding on the feasibility of implementing language LA. In a nutshell, the finding of this research uncovered that teachers have positive beliefs in the notion of language LA but they are less positive in implementing it. Buehl & Back (2015) and Lim & Chai (2008) have claimed the possible disconnection between teachers' beliefs and their practices.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The issue of learner autonomy becomes a never-ending topic of discussion. Since its' first resonance in 1980s, this issue always attracts the attention of many scholars. This is undoubted because they realize that LA is central to develop in language teaching and learning. This study investigated Indonesian EFL teachers' beliefs in LA with the participants are teachers from non-formal education equal to senior high school as they called *Paket C*. Some studies have tried to approach this issue. This research tried not only to see teachers' beliefs in LA but also examined whether there is a significant difference in their beliefs in LA based on teachers' different educational backgrounds and length of teaching. This research addressed four questions concerning teachers' understanding of this concept, its' contribution to L2 LA, the desirability and feasibility in the implementation, and the comparison of teachers' beliefs based on the two variables; educational backgrounds and length of teaching. The findings represent that their beliefs in LA lean much on the psychological aspect of learners which covers motivation, self-agency, responsibility, and learning strategies. This research also uncovered that teachers were knowledgeable about the notion of L2 LA but less positive in the implementation of LA in their practices. Some factors covering learners who are mostly low motivated ones and institutional factors which are poor in learning resources might be the hindrances of fostering L2 LA in this context. The result of this research can be used as the initial data for government or private organizations in designing teachers' development programs. EFL teachers can also use this data as their reference in preparing a better preparation to develop LA in their classroom. Also, this study enables other researchers who are interested in this issue to conduct

follow up studies in related areas such as teachers' role in the implementation of LA, the feasible psychological and sociocultural aspects to develop in LA, teachers' practices of LA, workshop of LA, possible constraints in the development of LA, etc. Lastly, this is a quantitative research in methodology. Indeed, data in the form of qualitative is also needed to corroborate this finding. Therefore, the result of this study only displays the surface level of teachers' beliefs in LA. Researchers need to dig more into the result of this especially on the possible constraints that cause teachers to be less optimistic in the implementation of LA.

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