

DIY (Do-It-Yourself) English Language Learning and Practice at Universitas Negeri Makassar

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explores the experiences, motivations, and challenges of students at Universitas Negeri Makassar engaging in DIY (Do-It-Yourself) English language learning and practice. The research aims to gain insights into self-directed language learning and provide valuable information for educational practices and policies in the university context. A purposeful sample of 15-20 students, representing a diverse range of experiences, was selected to participate in the study. Data collection involved a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and reflective journals, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the students' perspectives. Inductive thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes and patterns in the data, with the findings presented as a rich, descriptive narrative. Strategies for establishing trustworthiness included triangulation of data sources, member checking, and peer debriefing. This study contributes to our understanding of DIY language learning by highlighting the DIY English language learning strategies, benefits and challenges, and students' ways of assessing DIY English language learning at Universitas Negeri Makassar, ultimately informing future educational practices and policies.

Keywords: *DIY English language learning, benefits and challenges, assessing DIY English language learning*

INTRODUCTION

English is a global language that is spoken by millions of people around the world. It is the language of business, entertainment, and international communication (Jarosz & Witczak-Plisiecka, 2022). For many people, learning and practicing English is a crucial skill for personal and professional success. While there are many resources available for language learning, some individuals prefer a more hands-on approach. Universitas Negeri Makassar, Faculty of Language and Literature, majoring in English, is an educational institution that has an important role to improve student's English proficiency. Because the campus is a system in which the components

are well integrated. While English itself is a compulsory course, which aims to equip students with the ability to communicate using English both in the context of communication material, which is very much needed in both the expertise program, in spoken and written form. Apart from that, English courses have also equipped students with the ability to communicate in everyday life, in line with global demands, and directly, English lessons have also equipped students to develop communication to a higher level. This means that by mastering English, students have the tools for self-development in the fields of science, technology, art, and culture (Syawal et al., 2018; Tran & Nguyen, 2022). Because they want a change of era, a concrete example is an industrial revolution, which along with changing times and eras will affect aspects of human life, starting from the emergence of new abilities and skills, and new technologies (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). So the younger generation must be equipped with abilities and insights that will one day help them to live in this era of globalization such as DIY (do-it-yourself) learning.

DIY English Language Learning

"DIY" or "do-it-yourself" is primarily associated with the American scene of the early to mid-1950s (Merriam-Webster, 2009). People who conduct maintenance, repair, or modification work on tangible investment objects such as homes and vehicles without the necessary specialized knowledge or experience were referred to in the early uses. As a result, educational institutions today are a part of a network society (Nieto et al., 2019). In this circumstance, it's essential to look into how to DIY learning strategies like self-regulated learning, autonomous learning, and critical digital technologies affect learning. Learners define learning objectives and then attempt to govern and control their cognition, motivation, and behavior following their goals and the setting in which they are learning (Hoops & Artrip, 2016).

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in Do-It-Yourself (DIY) approaches to learning and skill-building across a wide range of fields (Gibbons & Snake-Beings, 2018). This trend has also been observed in language learning, with many learners choosing to take a more self-directed approach to their language education. One area where DIY approaches to language learning have been particularly popular is in English language education. English language learning is a high-demand skill in today's globalized world. It is essential for international communication, business, and higher education opportunities. However, traditional language learning methods, such as classroom-based instruction, may not be suitable for everyone. Some learners prefer a more personalized and flexible approach to language learning, where they can learn at their own pace, focus on areas that are relevant to them, and use resources and materials that suit their individual learning style (An et al., 2021; Deng et al., 2022; Tomak & Seferoğlu, 2021). Self-regulated learners know their learning processes and use self-correction to attain desired results (Zimmerman et al., 1996).

The ability to self-direct one's education is known as autonomous learning. Regardless of the context or learning environment, this idea incorporates all components of the learning process. The ability accompanies the desire (motivation, volition, and willingness) (knowledge and abilities to organise, monitor, and assess learning) (permission to control) (MehdiYev, 2020; Wang & Zhang, 2022). However, many people consider that the DIY (do-it-yourself) Learning method is only intended for those who will work in the fields of science and technology (Narechania et al., 2021). Even its application in English is also very necessary because in this era the industrial activities and economic activities of the Indonesian state are not only engaged in the domestic market but

are also engaged in international scale markets (Wrigley, 2013). In this globalization era, English is chosen as the international business language to reach business agreements. So that having good communication skills in English is considered to make it easier for them, especially business people and politicians, besides that English also has a central role in the intellectual and emotional development of students and is a supporter of success in studying various fields of study including English (Murdariah et al., 2021).

Learning English is expected to help them compete for both on a national and international scale (Takanishi & Menestrel, 2017). DIY language learning allows individuals to take control of their own learning process and tailor it to their specific needs and interests (Han et al., 2022). With a DIY approach, learners can create their own curriculum, set their own goals, and practice in a way that is most effective for them. In this way, DIY English language learning can be a rewarding and empowering experience that helps learners achieve their language goals.

Benefits and Challenges

Here are some of the benefits and challenges of DIY English language learning (Nomnian, 2018; Oktavia et al., 2022; Shahid et al., 2022; Susanto, 2022):

Benefits:

- DIY English language learning allows learners to customize their learning schedule and curriculum according to their own pace and interests.
- Learning a language independently requires a great deal of self-motivation, which can help learners develop a sense of independence and self-discipline.
- DIY English language learning is often much more cost-effective than enrolling in formal language classes, as learners can access free online resources or use inexpensive textbooks.
- DIY English language learning encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning, which can lead to more effective and personalized learning outcomes.
- When learning independently, learners are forced to be resourceful and creative in finding the resources and materials they need to support their learning.

Challenges:

- Without a teacher or tutor, learners may struggle to receive feedback on their progress, which can hinder their ability to improve and identify areas that need improvement.
- DIY English language learning can lack the structure and organization provided by a formal language class, making it difficult for learners to know what to focus on and how to progress.
- Learning independently requires a great deal of time management and self-discipline, which can be difficult for learners who struggle with procrastination or have other demands on their time.
- DIY English language learning often lacks opportunities for learners to practice speaking and listening skills, which are critical for language acquisition.
- Without the guidance of a teacher or access to a language school's resources, learners may struggle to find high-quality materials or practice opportunities.

While there has been growing interest in DIY language learning worldwide, there is a need to explore its application and effectiveness in specific contexts, such as Indonesian universities. Indonesia, with its diverse linguistic landscape and increasing importance of English in various domains, provides a unique setting to examine the integration of DIY practices into English language learning and practice.

Despite the potential benefits of DIY English learning, there is a research gap regarding its application and efficacy within the Indonesian university context. Previous studies have primarily focused on formal language instruction, leaving a dearth of research exploring the extent to which students at Indonesian universities engage in DIY language learning and the impact it has on their language learning journey (Kardena, 2022; Artini et al, 2022). Additionally, the academic curriculum follows a learning model focused on individual participation and primarily relies on text-based, authoritative academic sources while, students' real-life experiences occur in social learning environments where they encounter a wide range of multimedia sources, albeit with varying levels of academic credibility have never yet been studied (Pearson, 2012) in the Indonesian higher education context.

Understanding the role of DIY English learning in an Indonesian university context is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it can shed light on the extent to which students at Indonesian universities actively engage in self-directed language learning outside the classroom. Secondly, it can provide insights into the methods and resources they utilize to enhance their language skills. Finally, it can contribute to discussions on the integration of DIY practices within the formal language education curriculum, potentially informing curriculum development and instructional practices.

Thus, the present study aims to address the research gap by exploring the application and efficacy of DIY English language learning and practice among students at an Indonesian university. By conducting in-depth interviews, this study seeks to gain insights into students' experiences, motivations, methods, challenges, and opportunities related to DIY English language learning. The findings would contribute to the existing literature on language acquisition and inform educational practices in Indonesian higher education settings.

The general objective of this study is to obtain an overview and information related to DIY learning in English literature students focusing on English reading at Universitas Negeri Makassar. The study would address the following research questions:

1. How do UNM students implement DIY English language learning and practice strategies?
2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of DIY English language learning among UNM students?
3. How do UNM students assess their own progress and effectiveness in DIY English language learning?

METHOD

A qualitative research design is employed to gain a deep understanding of the experiences and perceptions of UNM students involved in DIY English language learning (Creswell, 2010). In-depth, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to obtain rich and detailed data about the students' learning strategies, experiences, and perceptions.

The study involves a purposive sample of 15 UNM students, selected based on their engagement in DIY English language learning and practice. Students from various academic backgrounds and English proficiency levels are included to capture diverse experiences and perspectives.

Data are collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, each lasting approximately 60 minutes. The interviews are conducted face-to-face or via video conferencing, depending on

the preference and availability of the participants. The interviews are audio-recorded, with the consent of the participants, and transcribed verbatim. A flexible interview guide is used to direct the interviews, addressing topics such as participants' motivations, learning strategies, resources, challenges, and progress assessment.

Nowell's et al. (2017) theory of thematic analysis is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns and themes within the data. The analysis involves six steps: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. The data will be coded using NVivo software to facilitate the organization and analysis of the data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

1. DIY English Language Learning Strategies.

The participants in the study reported utilizing a wide range of methods and resources for their DIY English language learning. These resources were primarily digital and multimedia-based, reflecting the increasing integration of technology in language acquisition. Some of the commonly mentioned methods and resources are outlined below:

- Utilizing online resources, such as YouTube tutorials, language learning apps, and websites
- Engaging in language exchange programs with native speakers
- Participating in English clubs, forums, and discussion groups
- Setting personal goals and monitoring their progress through self-assessment

The majority of respondents reported using a DIY approach to English language learning, with online resources and materials being the most commonly used. These methods and resources provided learners with flexibility, personalized learning experiences, and exposure to authentic language use. By combining various resources and techniques, learners could tailor their language learning to their individual needs and preferences. This DIY approach empowered learners to take ownership of their language learning journey and develop their language skills beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. Respondents who reported higher levels of engagement in language learning activities were more likely to report high levels of satisfaction and perceived effectiveness with a DIY approach.

2. Benefits and Challenges Faced by DIY English Language Learners.

The participants identified several benefits of DIY English language learning, including:

- Flexibility in learning pace, style, and schedule
- Development of self-discipline, motivation, and time management skills
- Opportunity to focus on individual language learning needs and interests
- Cost-effectiveness compared to traditional classroom-based courses

The participants reported experiencing various challenges during their DIY English language learning journey, such as:

- Difficulty in maintaining motivation and consistency
- Limited access to feedback and guidance from language experts
- Struggling with complex language concepts and nuances without proper instruction
- Balancing DIY English language learning with academic and personal commitments

The most commonly reported challenges associated with a DIY approach to English language learning were maintaining motivation and discipline, and finding appropriate resources and materials.

Respondents who reported access to high-quality resources and support from peers and mentors were more likely to report high levels of satisfaction and perceived effectiveness with a DIY approach. Respondents who reported being highly motivated and having a strong sense of autonomy were more likely to report high levels of satisfaction and perceived effectiveness with a DIY approach.

The findings of this study suggest that a DIY approach to English language learning can be effective for learners who are highly motivated and have a strong sense of autonomy.

3. Assessing DIY English Language Learning Progress.

The participants employed a range of methods to assess their progress in DIY English language learning, including:

- Periodic self-assessment through online quizzes and tests
- Monitoring improvements in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
- Seeking feedback from peers or native speakers
- Tracking personal language learning milestones and goals

The survey results show that the methods used by the participants to assess their DIY English language learning progress emphasize the importance of ongoing self-assessment and feedback. Encouraging students to set personal goals, track their progress, and seek feedback from peers or native speakers can contribute to their overall language learning success.

Overall, the findings suggest that DIY English language learning and practice at Universitas Negeri Makassar has been a successful approach for many students. However, it is important to address the challenges and provide appropriate support to ensure the effectiveness of DIY methods in enhancing English language proficiency among students. The survey results show that access to resources and materials was a critical factor, with learners reporting that the availability of high-quality resources and materials was essential for their DIY language learning success.

The interviews further revealed that support from peers and mentors was also crucial, with many interviewees emphasizing the importance of community and accountability in their learning process. However, the study also identified challenges associated with a DIY approach to language learning. The survey results show that some learners found it challenging to stay motivated and disciplined without the structure and guidance provided by traditional language learning programs. The interviews further revealed that some learners struggled with finding appropriate resources and materials and identifying areas for improvement without the guidance of a teacher or mentor.

Discussions

1. DIY English Language Learning Strategies.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the experiences of UNM students who engage in DIY English language learning. The diverse strategies employed by the participants highlight the importance of providing learners with access to a variety of resources and learning opportunities. The findings also underscore the significance of fostering a supportive learning environment that encourages learners to persist through challenges and maintain motivation.

Students reported a higher level of motivation and engagement when they were able to tailor their learning process according to their own preferences and needs which is similar to Han et al. (2022) research. DIY methods allowed them to set their own pace and choose the materials and resources that they found most appealing and effective.

By engaging in DIY language learning, students became more self-reliant and autonomous. They developed essential self-learning skills such as setting goals, planning, evaluating, and adapting their strategies based on their progress and needs (Thao & Long, 2020).

Students who actively participated in DIY English learning and practice reported improvements in their language proficiency, particularly in listening and speaking skills. They found opportunities to practice with native speakers or fellow learners through online platforms, language exchange programs, and social media (An et al., 2021).

The findings indicated that DIY English learning can be an effective approach for many students, leading to improvements in their language skills, particularly in listening and speaking. The discussions revolved around the factors contributing to its effectiveness, such as increased motivation, self-regulation, and flexibility in adapting learning strategies based on individual needs.

2. Benefits and Challenges Faced by DIY English Language Learners

The perceived benefits of DIY English language learning identified by the participants could be used to inform the development of future English language learning policies and programs at UNM. Integrating more flexible, learner-centered approaches in the curriculum might help meet the needs of diverse learners and improve overall language learning outcomes.

The use of various learning resources, such as online courses, mobile apps, podcasts, YouTube channels, and websites, allowed students to expose themselves to different language inputs and practice materials. Students also benefited from the availability of free and low-cost resources, making DIY English learning more accessible and affordable.

DIY English learning encouraged students to form study groups and share resources with their peers. This fostered a sense of community and mutual support, which led to a more enjoyable and collaborative learning experience.

DIY English learning enabled students to adapt their learning strategies based on their individual learning styles, preferences, and goals. This flexibility allowed for a more personalized learning experience, which proved to be more effective for some learners compared to traditional classroom-based approaches.

The discussions highlighted the significant role of technology in facilitating DIY English learning. The availability of diverse resources, such as online courses, mobile apps, and multimedia content, made it easier for students to access and engage with learning materials. However, there was also a concern about the quality and reliability of some resources, emphasizing the need for guidance in selecting appropriate materials.

Despite the positive outcomes, some challenges were identified. These included difficulties in maintaining motivation and discipline, limited access to reliable resources, lack of structured guidance, and challenges in finding suitable language partners for practice.

The challenges faced by DIY English language learners should also be considered by educators and institutions to provide better support and guidance. This may include offering

additional resources, mentorship programs, or workshops to help learners overcome common obstacles and enhance their learning experience.

Participants discussed the importance of striking a balance between DIY and traditional classroom-based learning. While DIY methods offer several advantages, the lack of structured guidance and potential isolation might hinder some learners' progress. Incorporating DIY approaches within formal language courses or using a blended learning approach could address these challenges and provide a more comprehensive learning experience.

Participants also discussed the need for strategies to support self-regulation and enhance motivation, such as setting achievable goals, monitoring progress, and receiving feedback from peers or mentors.

The research emphasized the importance of collaboration and support among learners in DIY English learning. Participants discussed ways to facilitate this, such as creating study groups, organizing language exchange programs, and using online platforms to connect with fellow learners.

Overall, the discussions of the results in the research highlighted the potential benefits and challenges of DIY English language learning and practice. The findings offer valuable insights for educators, institutions, and learners alike, to better understand and support this emerging approach in language learning.

3. Assessing DIY English Language Learning Progress

Participants' strategies for assessing their DIY English language learning progress emphasize the necessity of constant self-assessment and feedback. Encouraging students to create personal goals, track their progress, and seek feedback from peers or native speakers might help them learn a language more effectively.

Assessment of English learning outcomes using DIY learning could be carried out by an English lecture, adhering to the principle of authentic assessment, namely the actual assessment which includes assessment of learning including activities, character development, and understanding of skills precisely on reading skills. The process of assessment and learning using DIY learning at the campus is observation. This observation was made by the English lecture when students were in the middle of the learning process, asking questions/problems, responding to and answering questions, and discussing and doing other learning tasks, both in class and outside the classroom.

Learning through the DIY learning method makes it easier for lecturers and students to achieve high competence amid the limited facilities and capabilities that exist. This learning method demands more creativity and innovation from lectures as implementers of learning in the classroom in developing learning media, methods, and strategies so that learning objectives can be realized. Some of the efforts faced by lecturers and students in the English Literature Program are as follows following:

- Improving understanding of the preparation of students learning activities.
- Carry out discussions among fellow subject lecturers so that collaboration is fostered to complement each other's deficiencies in planning learning activities.
- The lecture in implementing the learning process always tries to increase self-motivation, self-directed, and autonomy in creating an effective learning process.

- Always carry out the learning process oriented towards the goals to be achieved and in the end will provide satisfaction for the lecturer and students.

The study suggests that a DIY approach to English language learning can be effective for highly motivated learners who have access to high-quality resources and support from peers and mentors. However, the study also highlights the importance of addressing challenges associated with this approach, such as maintaining motivation and identifying areas for improvement. The findings of this study have important implications for language educators and learners, emphasizing the need for flexibility and individualization in language learning programs, as well as the importance of community and accountability in supporting learners' success.

CONCLUSION

The research found that DIY English learning and practice can lead to improvements in language proficiency for many students, particularly in listening and speaking skills. This effectiveness is attributed to increased motivation, self-regulation, and the ability to tailor learning strategies based on individual needs. The development of self-learning skills was identified as a crucial aspect of DIY English learning. Students who engaged in DIY learning became more self-reliant and autonomous, which contributed to their overall language learning success. The use of diverse resources, facilitated by technology, played a significant role in supporting DIY English learning. However, concerns about the quality and reliability of some resources highlighted the need for guidance in selecting appropriate materials.

The study emphasized the value of peer collaboration and support in DIY English learning. By fostering a sense of community and mutual support, learners were able to create a more enjoyable and collaborative learning experience. Furthermore, the findings identified several challenges in DIY English learning, such as maintaining motivation and discipline, limited access to reliable resources, and finding suitable language partners. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure the effectiveness of DIY learning methods.

The research concluded that striking a balance between DIY and traditional classroom-based learning is crucial for a comprehensive learning experience. A blended learning approach, incorporating DIY methods within formal language courses, may provide a more effective and holistic learning environment. The findings have significant implications for educators and institutions, encouraging them to rethink their approaches to English language teaching and learning. By embracing and supporting DIY learning methods, they can help create a more learner-centered, flexible, and effective learning environment. Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of DIY language learning in other contexts and with different populations of language learners.

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