

## ESP STUDENTS' READINESS FOR LEARNER AUTONOMY: PUBLIC HEALTH STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS

By

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**Abstract:** *In English learning, students must have learner autonomy which means that they are responsible for their own learning by setting learning objectives, selecting learning methods, and evaluating progress. Autonomous learning also involves overcoming learning obstacles independently. This study aims to find out the public health students' perceptions of learner autonomy in English learning through descriptive statistics research, involving 66 respondents using questionnaires and interviews. Perceptions are evaluated in four categories of Learner Autonomy, namely Responsibility, Ability, Motivation, and Learning Activities. The results show that although students are highly motivated and perceived to be good in English ability, they remain teacher-centered and perceive that the teacher has greater responsibility for their learning. The outside-class learning activities were rated "very poor" to "poor" while inside-class learning activities were rated "poor" to "fair". Public health students need to enhance their learner autonomy since they are good in some categories (ability and motivation), but poor in others (responsibility and learning activities).*

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## INTRODUCTION

Learner autonomy (LA) is essential in the educational process, particularly within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) instruction. In the context of English language learning, and specifically ESP, students are expected to develop learner autonomy, which enables them to take an active role in their learning both inside and outside the classroom environment. Learner autonomy refers to the capability to assume responsibility for one's independent learning (Holec, 1981). Each student is responsible for their plan, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of their learning (Little in Cao, Jeyaraj, & Razali, 2024). LA is also related to students' ability to overcome their learning problems and make their own decisions about their learning. They are responsible for developing their learning strategies and procedures, as well as choosing the material, methods, and assessments for their learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

High levels of autonomous learning are anticipated to facilitate students' proficiency in acquiring English. The students' ability to face problems and tasks independently, without relying on others, in this case, their schoolmates shows their level of autonomous learning. Without relying on others, it is hoped that students can achieve learning outcomes according to their efforts. This supports that the effectiveness of students' performance in higher education is significantly influenced by learner autonomy (Baranovskaya & Shaforostova, 2018).

Benson & Voller classified the term autonomy in five distinct ways (Persukova, Nikolska, & Vasiukovych, 2022), namely (1) in situations where students learn in their own way, (2) in a set of skills that can be learned and applied in self-directed learning, (3) in the inborn capacity that educational institutions must fulfill, (4) in providing students with responsibility in their learning, and (5) in the right of students to determine the direction of their learning. To become an autonomous learner, students are expected to be able to determine their learning goals, identify their learning strategies, develop study plans to achieve their learning objectives, select relevant resources and support, and assess and reflect on their learning progress (Gamble et al., 2018).

Learner autonomy, especially in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), emphasizes the importance of taking responsibility for one's own learning process. This approach is crucial in supporting students to direct their learning experiences according to their academic and professional needs (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012). In ESP, where language skills are often very specific and context-related, autonomy enables students to focus on mastering vocabulary, phrases, and communication skills that are highly relevant to their field (Xu, 2012). For example, students majoring in public health will benefit from their learner autonomy in learning English related to medical terminology, patient interactions, and public health policies. With autonomy, teachers can assist students in developing language skills that are relevant to their needs so that they can improve their language proficiency (Maulana & Singh, 2023) and their confidence in using English in a professional context.

In ESP instruction, students typically study English because they need it to accomplish their academic and professional objectives rather than because they are interested in learning the language (Xu, 2012). Since many references in their area are in English, they are forced to study the language to succeed in their future employment. ESP is specifically designed to support learner needs as well as learning demands. For several reasons, learner autonomy is essential for college students, particularly those majoring in public health. Firstly, it supports lifelong learning (Bala, 2022; Saeed, 2021), and what is important for the public health department is that research and knowledge always continue to evolve. LA will keep them updated with the latest developments and help them adapt to their knowledge. Secondly, LA increases motivation (Nuray & Ceylan, 2021) and involvement because students must actively participate in determining their learning goals (Benson, 2007). Learner autonomy will help them comprehend the language and specialized ideas in their profession more completely. In the field of public health, where students are expected to present their research, interact with experts from all backgrounds, and connect with a variety of people, effective communication is very important. They must be able to develop themselves and interact with others/social dimensions (Ünal, Çeliköz, & Sari, 2017). Because LA leads

students to be able to plan and evaluate themselves as individuals/individual dimension (ÖZTÜFEKÇİ & MEDE, 2019; Ünal et al., 2017) in learning language. Equipping them with autonomy provides flexibility to meet demands, enabling them to contribute to their success in the field of public health.

Various studies have examined learner autonomy, both at the level of ESP and concerning students' perceptions towards learner autonomy, such as (Jilani & Yasmin, 2016) about ESP for hotel management students, (Persukova et al., 2022) about ESP for aviation students, (Holúbeková, Fördösová, & Klimentová, 2016) about ESP for Economics and Management, (Ghobain, 2016) about ESP for medical students, and (Nguyen & Habók, 2020) about ESP for non-English major departments. Therefore, this research aims to assess students' perceptions of learner autonomy in English for Specific Purposes, especially for public health students. By knowing the extent of autonomous learning of public health students, it is hoped that the researcher can provide appropriate ESP instruction based on their needs.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Learner Autonomy in Language Learning

Learner autonomy is about how an individual has freedom over themselves. According to (Crabbe in Rakaj, 2021), learner autonomy is where each individual has the right to freely determine their own choices, both in learning and in other areas, and is not a victim of choices made by social institutions. According to Littlewood, autonomy has two main components: ability and willingness. Ability includes knowledge about various options offered to students as well as the skills to implement those choices, while willingness pertains to motivation and self-confidence in taking responsibility for one's decisions. The higher the student's motivation, the greater the possibility that they also have high learner autonomy (Güneş & Alagözlü, 2020; Qi, 2022). Meanwhile, the development of autonomy in language learning consists of three basic pedagogical principles: learner involvement, learner reflection, and appropriate target language use (Karababa, Eker, & Arik, 2010). Therefore, autonomous learners are those who have awareness, are democratic, and capable of critical thinking. On the other hand, those who lack engagement, do not reflect, do not use the target language effectively, and cannot determine their own learning goals can be referred to not autonomous learners (Littlewood in Persukova et al., 2022).

In language learning, learner autonomy is related to the fact that students need language learning not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom. EFL students perceived that they would be more responsible for outside learning. When the students have strong learner autonomy, they are highly motivated which leads them to invest time in learning the language (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002). To master language skills, they must practice them frequently both inside and outside the classroom. Learner autonomy is significant in vocabulary learning, where students, by identifying their language learning strategies, will develop independence by selecting and applying different words in diverse contexts. Learner autonomy is needed here. Autonomy in language learning means that students have the freedom to control the management, content, and cognitive processes in their learning (Al-Khasawneh, Huwari, Alqaryouti, Alruzzi, & Rababah, 2024) where the

students have space for creativity and stimulation (Almusharraf, 2021). They can actively monitor their role during learning by choosing methods and materials they prefer.

### **Level of Autonomy**

Regarding learner autonomy, Nunan presents a model of five learner levels: learner action, awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence (Dang, 2012). At the awareness level, learners are aware of pedagogical goals and content, able to identify the implications of pedagogical exercises and identify suitable learning styles for themselves. At the involvement level, the students are engaged in selecting their learning objectives. At the third level, which is intervention, the students are engaged in modifying and adapting learning objectives and content. At the fourth level, which is creation, students create their own objectives. Finally, at the transcendence level, the students will make connections between classroom learning content and real-world applications.

### **Teachers' Roles in Learner Autonomy**

To create learner autonomy, teachers should understand students' personal and cultural backgrounds and create a supportive learning environment. Teachers should also enhance their own expertise and involve students in learning activities, changing from a teacher-centered method to a student-centered one by providing support and monitoring their progress in learning English (Rakaj, 2021). Teachers must be able to assist students in learning how to self-regulate their learning, while also helping to address any issues that arise in their self-regulation process (Little in Nakata, 2014). The teachers should support learner autonomy because students tend to be passive and silent in the classroom. (Chaiyasat & Intakaew, 2023) stated that if students show silent behavior in the classroom, it may be due to a lack of engagement caused by a traditional EFL context that employs a teacher-centered approach. According to (Talley & others, 2014), teachers and students should work together to achieve learner autonomy both inside and outside the classroom. That is why learner autonomy needs to be supported by the teacher.

To support learner autonomy, teachers must carefully manage the learning environment. There are six principles to enhance learner autonomy (Mynard, 2017): focus on learning rather than teaching, provide students with models for managing their learning, always use the target language, respect students' contributions to their learning, identify students' obstacles and difficulties, and ensure that students and their parents receive adequate information about the teaching approach. In LA, it does not mean that students do not need others (teachers) in their learning process. It also does not mean that teachers allow students to do whatever they want (Little, 1991). However, the role of a teacher is to provide presentations and explanations, set standards, and assess students' projects. The main task of a teacher is to train students to help them become autonomous by teaching them proper learning methods (Holúbeková et al., 2016). Teachers also provide students with opportunities to control their own learning and to learn positively (Almusharraf, 2021; Rakaj, 2021). The teacher and students can share responsibility in the formal education setting (Win, 2022). In vocabulary learning, for example, with the help of a teacher, learner autonomy will be an effective method to improve students' vocabulary (Tuan, 2021).

### **Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in Language Learning**

Numerous researchers examined how students perceived their learner autonomy, one of which is (Win & Kálmán, 2023) who investigated students' perceptions regarding their

responsibilities and their teachers' responsibilities, particularly in language learning. This research result indicates that according to their perception, teachers have greater responsibility for learning inside the classroom. This finding was also in line with a study by (Win, 2022) where students perceived that their teachers were more responsible for in-class learning, but they perceived learning outside the classroom as their own responsibility. Meanwhile, (Bala, 2022) researched to understand the perceptions and practices of learner autonomy in English language learning among undergraduate students. The study's findings showed that while students were highly motivated to learn English, they lacked sufficient autonomy to accept some of the responsibility for their learning. Research by (Ünal et al., 2017) on students' perceptions of learner autonomy showed different views on learner autonomy, the benefits of learner autonomy in language learning, and the role of teachers in supporting learner autonomy.

Other research was conducted by (Ho, Dang, & Nguyen, 2023) who investigated the relationship between students' learner autonomy and parental support. The results showed a positive correlation between the two, indicating that parental involvement influences students' autonomy, especially in language learning. Meanwhile, (ÖZTÜFEKÇİ & MEDE, 2019) researched students' and teachers' perceptions regarding learner autonomy to examine whether there are differences between them related to English language learning in tertiary education. The research findings indicated that both of them showed differences regarding the amount of time needed to carry out activities in the classroom and how to evaluate student learning. Other research by (Al-Khasawneh et al., 2024) indicated that there were five internal factors: psychological aspects, learning strategies, cognitive skills, metacognitive skills, and critical thinking, as well as three external factors: the role of the teacher, the provided exercises, and the environment that influenced learner autonomy.

## METHODOLOGY

The population of this study is students from the Public Health study program who are taking the English language subject. Due to the large number of students and limited time, the researchers decided to select those who are taking the English language subject in their first year as the research sample. A total of 66 students participated in this study, filling out questionnaires after completing one semester of learning. The questionnaire was arranged and adapted from Learner Autonomy Perceptions by (Spratt et al., 2002) with some adjustments. The questionnaire was distributed through an online form with 52 items. The researchers also conducted interviews with five students to support the findings from the questionnaire through WhatsApp, where the researchers delivered a series of questions and participants provided answers in the form of voice notes or written notes through the application. In this study, quantitative data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics using Microsoft Excel to find the percentage, Mean value, and Standard Deviation. The descriptive statistical results were then categorized into five categories as follows:

**Table 1. Data Conversion Scales Interval of Mean Value Categories**

Mean Value	Categories
$2.00 \leq \bar{X} \leq 2.60$	Very Poor
$2.61 \leq \bar{X} \leq 3.21$	Poor



$3.22 \leq \bar{X} \leq 3.82$	Fair
$3.83 \leq \bar{X} \leq 4.43$	Good
$\bar{X} \geq 4.44$	Very Good

The researchers analyzed the qualitative data obtained from interviews by processing it in the form of coding. The researchers created categories from respondents' answers and then interpreted them. There are six main questions given to the respondents: (1) Who is the most responsible for your English learning? (2) How would you rate your ability in English? (3) How would you rate your motivation in English learning both inside and outside the classroom? (4) How autonomous are you in English learning within the class? (5) How autonomous are you in English learning outside the class? (6) What is your perspective on the teacher's role in English learning?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Demographic Data

The respondents in this study are a total of 66 students with the following details.

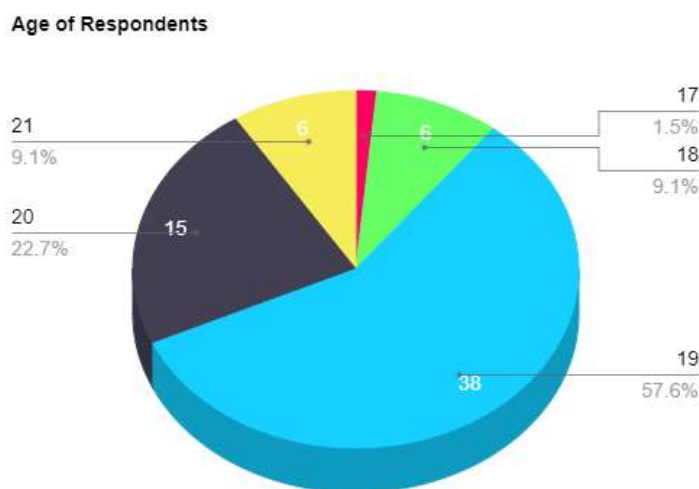


Figure. 1 Age of respondents

The age range of the respondents is 17 to 21 years old. Out of 66 respondents, only one respondent is 17 years old (1.5%), and 38 respondents (57.6%) are 19 years old.

### Quantitative Data

The quantitative analysis in this study was organized based on the research questionnaire based on (Spratt et al., 2002), which is categorized as follows: Responsibility, Ability, Motivation, and Learning Activities.

**Table 2. Students' perceptions of their teachers and their responsibilities in learning English**

Question Number	Whose responsibility should be to:	Myself		My Teacher		Both	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1.	make sure I make progress during English lessons?	4	6.06	9	13.64	53	80.30
2.	make sure I make progress in English lessons outside class?	35	53.03	9	13.64	22	33.33

3.	stimulate my interest in learning English?	25	37.88	15	22.73	26	39.39
4.	identify my weakness in learning English?	34	51.52	12	18.18	20	30.30
5.	make me learn English harder?	36	54.55	6	9.09	24	36.36
6.	decide on my English learning goals?	33	50.00	11	16.67	22	33.33
7.	decide what should I learn next in my English lessons?	16	24.24	36	54.55	14	21.21
8.	select activities in learning English?	23	34.85	17	25.76	26	39.39
9.	decide how long to spend in each activity?	22	33.33	23	34.85	21	31.82
10.	select materials to use in learning English?	6	9.09	54	81.82	6	9.09
11.	evaluate my English learning?	11	16.67	26	39.39	29	43.94
12.	evaluate my learning?	15	22.73	24	36.36	27	40.91
13.	decide what should I learn outside the class?	4	6.06	9	13.64	53	80.30

From Table 2, the students perceived that making sure they made progress in English lessons outside the class, identifying weaknesses in learning English, making themselves learning English harder, and deciding learning goals were their responsibility. Meanwhile, they perceived that making progress during English lessons, stimulating interest in learning English, selecting activities in learning English, evaluating my English learning, and deciding what they should learn outside the class were their and their teacher's responsibility. According to the results of the table, 54.55% of respondents perceived that their teachers were fully responsible for what they should learn next in English lessons, and 81.82% considered that selecting the materials used for learning English was entirely the responsibility of their teachers.

The results are in line with (Win, 2022) study where the students perceived that their teachers were more responsible for learning inside the class and that the students were more responsible for learning outside the class.

**Table 3. Students' Perceptions of Their Ability in English Learning**

Question Number	How good do you think you would be at:	Mean	SD	Category
14.	Choosing learning activities inside the class?	3.924	0.933	Good
15.	Choosing learning activities outside the class?	3.424	0.946	Fair
16.	Choosing learning goals inside the class?	4.061	0.857	Good
17.	Choosing learning goals outside the class?	3.667	0.829	Fair
18.	Choosing learning materials inside the class?	3.758	0.962	Fair
19.	Choosing learning materials outside the class?	3.545	0.863	Fair
20.	Evaluating my learning?	3.909	0.854	Good
21.	Evaluating my English course?	3.864	0.959	Good
22.	Identifying my weakness in learning English?	3.606	0.943	Fair
23.	Deciding what should I learn next in my English learning?	3.788	0.969	Fair
24.	Deciding how long should I spend doing each activity?	3.697	0.841	Fair

It can be seen from Table 3 that the students perceived they were good at choosing learning activities inside the class, choosing learning goals inside the class, evaluating their learning, and evaluating their English course. The others were categorized as “fair”.

**Table 4. Frequency of students' perceptions of their level of motivation in learning English**

25. How would you describe yourself in learning English?	Number	%
Highly motivated	28	42.42
Well motivated	26	39.39
Motivated	9	13.64
Slightly motivated	1	1.52
Not at all motivated	2	3.03

In this section, students were asked about how they perceived their level of motivation in learning English. The results are shown in Table 3. A total of 28 students (42.42%) perceived that they were highly motivated to learn English. This means that during English lessons, they had high motivation to learn English. Out of 66 respondents, only 2 respondents had no motivation at all to learn English. With high motivation, they are likely to allocate time to learn English according to (Spratt et al., 2002).

**Table 5. Students' engagement in outside class learning activities**

Question Number	How often do you:	Mean	SD	Category
26.	Read grammar books on my own	2.591	0.803	Very Poor
27.	Do non-compulsory assignment	2.636	0.835	Poor
28.	Note down new words/meanings	2.848	0.949	Poor
29.	Write in English?	2.924	0.708	Poor
30.	Read announcements/notices in English	2.758	0.805	Poor
31.	Read news in English?	2.409	0.841	Poor
32.	Send chat/message in English	2.394	0.820	Very Poor
33.	Read books, magazines, or other reading sources in English	2.258	0.810	Very Poor
34.	Watch programs/content in English	2.848	0.789	Poor
35.	Listen to content/news in English	2.636	0.853	Poor
36.	Listen to English songs	3.212	0.953	Poor
37.	Speak English with foreigner	1.697	0.784	Very Poor
38.	Practice English with friends	2.742	0.771	Poor
39.	Do English self-study with a group	2.455	0.788	Very Poor
40.	Do grammar exercise	2.455	0.727	Very Poor
41.	Watch English movies	3.061	0.762	Poor
42.	Write a diary in English	1.924	0.847	Very Poor
43.	Use the Internet in English	2.606	0.875	Poor
44.	Do revisions not required by the teacher	2.167	0.870	Very Poor
45.	Attend in English course on my own	1.864	0.857	Very Poor
46.	Collect English text (articles, brochures, labels)	2.106	0.947	Very Poor
47.	See the teacher to discuss project	1.985	0.754	Very Poor



Table 5 shows how often students engaged in activities outside of English language learning in class. The results show that almost all activities were rarely done by the students. Eleven activities were categorized as “very poor” which means that the students rarely did the activities outside of the class and the other got “poor” which means that only a few numbers of students did the activities while most of them did not. Only one activity received the highest mean value which was listening to English songs though it is still in the “poor” category. The lowest mean value is speaking English with a foreigner (1.967). It can be concluded that they had not effectively used the target language which indicates that they are not autonomous learners (Littlewood), especially outside the classroom. This result is also not in line with (Spratt et al., 2002) in which the students should be more responsible in the outside learning.

**Table 6. Students' engagement inside class learning activities**

Question Number	How often do you:	Mean	SD	Category
48.	Ask the teachers when I don't understand	2.682	0.862	Poor
49.	Note down new information	3.424	0.681	Fair
50.	Make suggestions to the teacher	1.955	0.689	Very Poor
51.	Take opportunities to speak in English	2.591	0.928	Very Poor
52.	Discuss learning problems with classmates	3.348	0.774	Fair

It can be seen in Table 6 that out of the four activities, two activities get “fair” category namely noting down new information, and discussing learning problems with classmates. It means that in these two categories, the students can be called autonomous enough. For asking the teachers when they do not understand get “poor” category and two other activities namely making suggestions to the teacher and taking opportunity to speak in English get “very poor” category which means that the students are not autonomous in those activities. The silence of students to communicate with teachers may be due to the teacher-centered instruction which is typically applied in language learning and limits students from being active participants. This is in line with (Chaiyasat & Intakaew, 2023) that students may become passive and inactive due to their familiarity to a teacher-centered approach in language learning in the classroom.

### Qualitative data

#### Question 1. Who is the most responsible for your English learning?

For this question, four respondents had similar answers that the most responsible for learning English is oneself and also the teacher. The teacher is responsible for providing teaching materials and transferring knowledge, while students are responsible for receiving the learning and applying the knowledge provided by the teacher.

“Both the teacher and the student share the responsibility for learning English because the students' understanding of the material taught depends on how well the teacher explains it and because the students are responsible for implementing the knowledge they have acquired” (R3Q1)

“The responsibility in the process of learning English lies with both the teacher and the students. The teacher is responsible for sharing their knowledge, while the students are responsible for receiving the knowledge provided by the teacher...” (R4Q1)

Meanwhile, out of 5 students, 1 student responded that the main responsibility for learning English lies with herself. The teacher is only required to explain the learning materials, and it is the students themselves who determine whether to listen, review, or not.

"The most responsible for learning English is the student herself, as the teacher's task is only to explain related learning materials. It depends on the students whether they want to listen attentively in class, review the materials they have received, or just play around." (R1Q1)

The students' answers show that they perceived they shared responsibility in learning with their teacher. It is in line with (Win, 2022) that the teacher and students can share responsibility in the education context.

### **Question 2. How do rate your ability in English?**

Two respondents explained that they believed their English language skills were quite good, while three other respondents stated that they were still trying to do their best in learning English. They were aware of their weaknesses and learning objectives, including speaking, grammar, and vocabulary. They tried to answer English language questions, tests, and quizzes, practiced using English, and identified which areas they needed to improve and enhance.

"I think my abilities are pretty good but I still need to work on my English speaking skills" (R1Q2)

"... However, the difficult part is that even though I know a lot of vocabulary, in conversations I always make mistakes and don't follow the grammar rules. So, I think I need to choose a lesson related to constructing sentences or phrases that follow to grammar..." (R2Q2)

That they were aware of their ability, weaknesses, and learning objectives is part of learner autonomy (Gamble et al., 2018). As (Al-Khasawneh et al., 2024) said autonomy in language learning means that students have the freedom to control the management, content, and cognitive processes in their learning.

### **Question 3. How do you motivate yourself in English learning inside and outside of the classroom?**

All respondents had their own ways of motivating themselves to learn English. They were aware that English is an international language necessary for broad communication, so mastering English provides benefits for their future. One respondent wants to travel the world and continue her education abroad, making it one of her motivations to learn English. A respondent also wants to master English both orally and in writing to communicate in everyday life.

".. I want to be able to travel around the world and what motivates me to improve my English is because I want to continue my studies abroad." (R2Q3)

"My motivation is that I can speak English well and correctly, and I can use English effectively in everyday life" (R1Q3)

Meanwhile, one respondent provided a simple answer related to motivation that can understand English materials taught in the classroom.

".. My motivation is to be able to have a better understanding of English in class.." (R5Q3)

By knowing their motivation, the respondents will spare time to give their best effort in learning English. It is in line with (Spratt et al., 2002) that motivation is the reason for students to invest more time in learning a language.

### **Question 4. How autonomous are you in English learning inside of the class?**

The respondents perceived that they were sufficiently autonomous in English learning inside the class, ranging from fair to good independence. This is indicated by their efforts to understand materials and explanations from the teacher, answer questions given

by the teacher in class, practice exercises, seek solutions to difficulties they encounter, and ask about what they do not understand, both to classmates and the teacher.

"...When I don't understand the meanings of an English sentence I usually ask a friend who understands it, or sometimes directly ask the teacher" (R4Q4).

"I try to understand and listen to the explanation being given, and I ask if I really don't understand after trying several times to comprehend a topic and discussing it with my friends.." (R2Q4)

"When I come across difficult words or vocabulary I haven't encountered before, I first search on the internet or in the module. If I still can't find the answer, then I'll ask the teacher" (R1Q4)

Finding solutions to overcome their learning problems is a part of learner autonomy as stated by (Gamble et al., 2018). It means that based on the interview result, the respondents are autonomous inside of the English class.

#### **Question 45. How autonomous are you in English learning outside of the class?**

Regarding English language learning outside the classroom, three respondents clearly stated that they are quite autonomous by taking the initiative to watch English content on social media, use English language learning apps, listen to songs, and practice English in their daily lives. The other two respondents, although not specifying the extent of their autonomy, also engage in similar activities related to learning English outside the classroom.

"To practice my vocabulary, I listen to English songs and try to (the lyrics) it into Indonesian." (R1Q5)

"My autonomous learning outside of class right now is big enough, because I also have a target for each semester in learning English. I make watching English movies and songs as one way to find new vocabulary or sentences to be easy to remember." (R2Q5)

"..Sometimes I apply it (English) to my daily activities.." (R5Q5)

Based on respondents' answers, activities such as watching English content, using English learning apps, listening to English songs, and practicing English are considered part of their learning strategy, indicating autonomous learning (Holec, Nunan, Benson) outside the classroom. This contrasts with the questionnaire data, which showed different results.

#### **Question 6. How do you see about teacher's role in English learning?**

Regarding the role of teachers in English language learning, there were several ideal roles that they expected from teachers: (1) Teachers should explain the material in a relaxed, clear, and effective manner with clear pronunciation, (2) Teachers should provide interesting teaching methods, various exercises, and regular evaluations, (3) Teachers should pay attention to students individually as they come from different backgrounds and English language abilities, (4) Teachers should not underestimate students and must be patient in dealing with students, especially those who lack proficiency.

"..And we hope for an evaluation from the teacher after the lesson ends, which can be a reference for us to further study the material that needs to be reviewed." (R2Q6)

"I want the teacher to play a role in creating interesting teaching methods, and also to give assignments and directly evaluate the assignments that were given earlier" (R4Q6)

"..I want the teacher, in her teaching method, may require interaction with her students..." (R5Q6)

“The teacher explains the materials clearly. For evaluation, she asks whether the students can understand the learning materials or not...” (R1Q6)

The respondents assumed that the teacher was the only one responsible for providing teaching methods, tasks, and evaluation for their learning. This result is in line with (Win, 2022) that the students perceived that their teacher has greater responsibility in the learning process. However, learner autonomy is a learner-centered approach, the teacher’s main task should be to facilitate the students’ autonomy by teaching them proper learning methods (Holúbeková et al., 2016) and not providing all the things. What teacher should do is to control the students’ own learning and to learn positively (Almusharraf, 2021; Rakaj, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

Learner autonomy is crucial for every learning, including ESP for public health students. The students are expected to control their own learning by determining their learning goals, determining the learning methods and strategies, and also evaluating their learning. By assessing students’ readiness for learner autonomy, teachers can tailor instructions to effectively foster autonomy, both inside and outside the classroom. The findings of this study highlight various aspects of learner autonomy, namely Responsibility, Ability, Motivation, and Learning Activities. Regarding Responsibility, the majority of students perceived that their teacher held greater responsibility for their English learning. Interview results further revealed that students believed the teacher was solely responsible for providing materials, selecting teaching methods, designing exercises, and evaluating their learning. Regarding Ability, four items were rated “good” for choosing learning activities inside the class, choosing learning goals inside the class, evaluating their learning, and evaluating their English course and the others were rated “fair”. Interview results show the similar results that the students were aware of their abilities, weaknesses, and learning objectives. Regarding motivation, both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that students perceived themselves as motivated to learn English. However, in the category of learning activities, quantitative data reveal a lack of engagement in outside-class learning activities. For in-class learning activities, only noting down new information and discussing learning problems with classmates were rated as “fair,” while other activities fell into the “very poor” and “poor” categories.

Therefore, it can be concluded that public health students need to enhance their learner autonomy since they are good in some categories and poor in others. Despite the interview results indicating that students have higher autonomy in language learning—evidenced by their motivation, awareness of weaknesses, and learning strategies, including problem-solving—it is recommended that teachers implement appropriate teaching methods to enhance student autonomy in English learning both inside and outside the classroom.

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