CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Self Access Center

Self-Access Center can be broadly defined as any purpose-designed facility in which learning resources are made directly available to learners. These resources typically include audio, video and computer workstation, audiotapes, videotapes and computer software, and a variety of printed materials. Many SACs also contain areas for group work and a help desk, and many provide counseling services or serve as a location for other services, such as one-to one writing support and language learning exchanges. Some SACs have their own web sites and offer some of their services and resources on-line.

According to Gardner and Miller (1999) cited in Benson (2001:114) SAC is an environment for learning involving resources, teachers, learners, and system within which they are organized. Aston (1993) cited in Detaramani (1999:124), defines SAC as a place where an individual is free to choose the activities to carry out and the time to dedicate to the materials. That is to say that a SAC requires learners to be responsible, diligent, and motivated. Teachers in SAC act as counselors or guides (Riley: 1997). They act as the facilitators who enable learners to learn by providing materials that give learners a lot of choices in the learning method they want to adopt.

SAC usually provides a computer as a tool for the users in choosing what they want to learn and improve their ability. Kern and Warschaeur in Simpson

(2002) say that the computer's role is to provide alternative context for social interaction, to facilitate access to existing discourse communities and the creation of the new ones.

SAC exists in a wide variety of forms. OAC or Open Access Center is one form of SAC that is provided by the Faculty of Letters Soegijapranata Catholic University Semarang. In OAC students are free to choose the activities that they want to do. They could use computer facilities not only for typing their task or assignments from their lecturers but also for surfing on the Internet and other activities like watching films, sending email, learning language skills, etc.

2.2. Self Access and Independent Learning

University students are generally expected to learn actively and independently. Indonesian students are often criticized for being passive and dependent. They are not really interested in self-study. However it might not be the case when the learning environments are confined to teacher-centered classroom, the lecturers are mostly presented by the lecturer so that the students do not really have the sense of involvement. According to Hartono (2001:2) this learning condition is influenced by Indonesian language learning background that is:

(1). Indonesian people especially Javanese are very self-conscious when they are asked to express their view or opinion in public. It is based on the history that before Indonesia gained the independence in 1945, other countries had colonialized it for a long of time. It has made Indonesian people lose their

freedom including their freedom to express their ideas. This fact also drives the language learners to a situation when they prefer not to speak in English because they are afraid of making mistakes and being ridiculed.

(2). The political system of Indonesia. People of Indonesia are afraid to express their own views.

(3). The teaching of English in Junior and Senior High School is very textbook centered. Learners learn a lot on grammar and reading textbooks and the worst thing the teachers deliver English in Indonesian. This fact makes English learners tend to be English passive users.

(4). English has been learned as a science not as a skill. Students tend to memorize the English grammar as a formula when they are having a test. The final target of learning English is to be successful in the test.

Thus, there is a need to provide other ways for students to learn more actively. Self-Access learning comes as one of the more desirable alternatives to reduce students' dependency.

Sheerin (1997:55) points out that one of the main reasons for setting up Self Access facilities is to cater for learner's individual needs. Individuals have particular weaknesses that they may wish to work on alone or in a small group with similar needs. According to her, the provision of SAC is also based on the reason that good SAC facilities create the opportunity for highly effective individualization of learning. Trim (1977) cited in Sheerin (1997:55), also has said it is possible to pursue individualization in a thoroughly authoritarian framework.

In term of Self Access this means that it is possible to have a marvelously well stocked Self Access for students to be totally directed within that center.

The other reason for providing SAC is the promotion of independent learning. It involves learners taking responsibility for their own learning and developing effective learning strategies, or in other words, learning how to learn. There is a general belief among educators that learning is more effective when learners are active in the learning process, assuming responsibility for their learning and participating in the decision that affects it. The learners have to engage in and take the responsibility for the learning process.

2.3. Learning Style

Style as a term refers to a consistent and rather enduring tendencies or preferences within an individual. Brown (2000:113) defines styles as general characteristics of intellectual functioning that pertain to differentiate one to another. From this definition it can be summarized that learning style is associated with students' preferred ways of learning.

Oxford (2001:360) classifies learning styles that are closely related to second language learning into four major dimensions:

1. Based on sensory preferences

    Oxford (2001:360) defines sensory preferences as "physical, perceptual learning channels with which the student is the most comfortable". She groups sensory preferences into four

a. Visual students prefer to obtain information through visual simulation. For them, lecturer conversation and oral instructions without any visual back up can be very confusing.

b. Auditory students prefer explanation, lecturer and oral instructions without using any visual aids.

c. Kinesthetic students prefer to do a lot of movement

d. Tactile students do not like to study by sitting for hours on their desks. They like to move around the class.

2. Based on personality types,

Oxford (1990:360) groups students into three:

1) Extroverted versus introverted

Extroverts prefer to interact with many different people to gain knowledge, while introverts interact with only certain people.

2) Intuitive – random students versus sensing sequential.

Intuitive random students like to guide their own learning and prefer to create new possibilities to achieve a goal. Sensing – sequential students prefer facts to theories. They want others to tell what to do.

3) Thinking students versus feeling students

Thinking students are oriented toward the stark truth, even if it hurts some people's feeling. They want to be viewed as competent and do not want to offer praise easily. Feeling students do not want to hurt some people's feeling.

3. Based on desired degree of generality.

   Under this classification, students are grouped into global and analytic criteria. Global students prefer communicative activities. They do not like studying grammatical items. Analytic students, on the other hand, like studying grammar and avoid involving in communicative language activities.

4. Based on biological differences

   Students are grouped into:

   1) Biorhythms refer to preferred time of learning. Some students like to study in the morning, while others prefer to study in the afternoon.

   2) Sustenance is related to the need for food or drink while studying. Some students, according to Oxford (1990:361) "feel comfortable learning with a candy bar, a cup of coffee, or a soda in hand, but others are distracted from studying accompanied by food and drink".

   3) Location involves the nature of the environment: temperature, lighting, sounds and even the firmness of the chair.

Thus, further discussion will be based only on sensory preferences, personality type and desired degree of generality.

   Each individual has different learning style. Oxford and Ehrman (1990) cited in Tudor (1996:113), state two definitions; first, learning style consists of distinct behaviors that serve as indicators of how a person learns from and interacts with their environment. Second, learning style also can be defined as a consistent pattern of behaviors but with a certain range of individual variability. Styles then are overall patterns that give general direction to learning behaviors.

Willing (1988) cited in Tudor (1996: 113), defines learning styles as a notion of inherent, pervasive sets of characteristics which group people into types or places an individual at a particular point along a descriptive scale. Learning style is (more concrete than cognitive style), in that it looks directly at the totality of psychological functioning as this affect learning.

Oxford and Ehrman (1993) cited in Tudor (1996:113), list three categories of learning style:

- Visual learners.

  Learners prefer to read and to obtain information by means of visual stimulus provided by films, posters, charts, etc. Such learners may find lecturers, discussion or oral direction without any visual back up to be difficult to follow.

- Auditory learners.

  Learners who can do without visual support quite easily and therefore tend to enjoy lecturer and conversation; they react well to class activities but may experience difficulties with written work.

- Hand on learners.

  This is a type of learners who enjoy a lot of movement and activity within their learning environment, and they react well to working with tangible objects.

SAC might become good alternative for different kinds of learners because in SAC they could find any learning resources that could help them visually and

could find other activities to work on their own or in a group and pairs, in accordance with their individual learning styles.

The information above supports the use of OAC as a learning resource that could be a good alternative for different students with different learning styles and strategies. It could be the best place for students who are better learners in using visual or others who love independent learning. Brown (2000:113) says that successful second language learner are usually people who know how to manipulate style as well as strategy levels in their day to day encounter with the language. It means that they are first aware of general personality and cognitive characteristics or tendencies that usually lead to successful acquisition and strive to develop those characteristics.

The choice of learning style by learners can stimulate them to achieve the best progress. However, since learning style is also influenced by physiological factors, the achievement gained by a learner cannot be guaranteed. According to Hartono (2001:7), Learners who enjoy having a lot of conversation or speaking practice will tend to be English active users. These learners are usually those who are easygoing and extrovert. On the other hand, learners who enjoy reading and writing practice will tend to be English passive users. The combination of those learning styles would contribute a lot to the best achievement by learners.

2.4. Learning Strategies

Brown (2000:113) describes strategies as specific methods of approaching a problems or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, or planned

designs for controlling and manipulating certain information. Strategy use often relates to style preferences. Students use learning strategies that reflects their basic learning style. Oxford (2001:362) points out that a strategy will be helpful for the learner if the strategy fits the particular students learning style preferences to one degree or another. Thus, we could say that we might investigate students learning style through the strategies they employ.

Based on Brown (2000:123), there are 2 types of strategies: learning strategies and communication strategies. Learning strategies related to input- to processing, storage and retrieval, to taking in messages from others. Further discussion will be specified only on learning strategies.

According to Willing (1988) in Tudor (1996:201) learning strategy is a means of being specific about what is intended to be happening cognitively, for the learners, that is how the experience provided is expected to result in actual learning. He suggests that the concept of learning strategy may be used as a tool for analyzing the type of learning processes that are sets in motion by different methodological choices.

Oxford (1990:1) defines language strategies as the steps taken by students to enhance their own learning. Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. Appropriate language learning strategy result in improved proficiency and greater self-confidence. Learning strategies are the way students learn a wide range of subjects. She offers an analysis of learning strategies in which there are two main categories of

strategy, direct and indirect, each with sub-category. The main distinction Oxford makes is between direct strategies, which relate to the ways in which the learners deal with and work on the target language itself, and indirect strategies, which relate to the general management of learning.

O'Malley and Chamot et al. (1990) cited in Oxford (2001:363-364), have offered six main categories of second language learning strategies, alternative taxonomies.

a. Cognitive strategies

These strategies enable the learners to manipulate the language material in direct ways, e.g. through reasoning analysis, note taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structure), practicing in naturalistic settings and practicing structure and sound formally.

b. Metacognitive strategies

These strategies are employed for managing the learning process overall. E.g., identifying one's own learning styles preferences and needs, planning for an second language learning task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, evaluating task success, and evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy

c. Memory – related strategies

These strategies help learners link one second language item or concept with another, but do not necessarily involve deep understanding.

d. Compensatory strategies

They help up the learners make up for missing knowledge, such as guessing from context in listening.

e. Affective strategies

These strategies help identifying one's mood and anxiety level.

f. Social Strategies

These strategies help the learner work with others and understand the target culture as well as the language.

Gardner (1999) cited in Hartono (2001:7-8) also suggests intelligence, which should be applied when learning a language. It is called multiple intelligence. He divides multiple intelligence into:

1. Bodily Kinesthetic Intelligence: the ability to use the body to express ideas and feeling to solve problems.

2. Interpersonal Intelligence: the ability to understand ourselves; our strength, weakness, desires, and intentions.

3. Interpersonal Intelligence: the ability to understand another person's moods, feeling, motivation and intention.

4. Linguistic Intelligence: the ability to use words effectively, orally and in writing.

5. Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: the ability to use numbers effectively and reason well including the principles of cause and effect.

6. Musical Intelligence: the ability to sense rhythm, pitch and melody.

7. Spatial Intelligence: the ability to sense form, space, color, line, and shape.

8. Naturalist Intelligence: ability to recognize and classify plants, minerals, animals and variety of flora and fauna.

By applying the multiple intelligence, some problems dealing with language learning could be overcome or at least minimized.

Every learner has his/ her own learning strategies to achieve his/ her goal in language learning. In SAC students could apply their strategies in some different ways based on their needs and strategies. It will be interesting to know that students use SAC facilities for learning resources finding and not mainly to entertain themselves by using it with no means of learning more. However, Tudor (1996:202) points out that the term learning strategy has been used on a number of occasions so far to refer to purposeful action learners engage in (either consciously or unconsciously) with the goal of promoting their understanding of or proficiency.

The activities that the students do in SAC will measure the success or failure of the center. Sturtridge (1997:69) says that it is not easy to evaluate the success of a center in term of whether it contributes more to learner proficiency. One obvious way of defining the success of the center is by the number of students using even though such figure may not be a true measure of the value of the center. Failure, then, is an empty center or one where the number of the students is consistently low, only some few students attend or it may be full of students who are there not to learn language but who use it merely as convenient place to do other work.

2.5. Learning Resource Finding Activities in SAC

There is diversity in the nature of self-access practice all over the world. Students may come to SAC with different purposes. They may come as a must as a result of their lecturer request or may come by themselves.

There are various exercises and task that students could do in SAC that could be divided into various categories such as grammar, listening, speaking, search for topic and so on that indicate the language level required by each test. Littlejohn (1997:184) points out that there are also additional resources for extensive language work, such as video, literature, CD-ROM and audio recording. Based on a survey conducted by Detamarani (1999:131) there are some materials that could be the source of learning resource finding. The respondents decided that they like to use films, magazines, cassette tape, computer, and interactive video and Internet to learn and find more information or literature. The most favorite resource is films and the least favorite is grammar books. The reason for choosing films as the favorite learning resource probably the fact that students have learned a lot of grammar in the class. By watching films students are not mainly learning on the language and its pronunciation but also have the time of relaxing. Students could enjoy the story and learn the culture on the movie.

Self-Access Center provides materials/ resources that could be chosen by the students to work on. Based on Ryan (1997:220) there are many activities that could be done by the students in a SAC.

The activities that students are likely to do in SAC are:

No	Facility	Resource Finding Activities
1.	Video	Learning culture
		Learning new vocabulary
		Literary work
2.	Internet	Journal finding
		E-mailing
		Chatting
		Reading newspaper
		Reference
3.	Computer	Typing the assignment
		Improving computer skill
		Language skill practice such as TOEFL, or English quizzes
		Spell-checking, Grammar-checking
4.	Books	Reading the books and learn on the new vocabulary
		Finding new information
5.	Tape Player	Listening to a cassette
		Listening to a new song
		Learning the pronunciation from the cassette, etc.

The table above only informs a small number of activities the students could do in a SAC. There are so many others activities they could do in OAC by manipulating all SAC's facilities. With regard to technology, facilities have contributed a lot to the success of English language teaching and learning. Fogerty (2000:5) points out that 'as technology extent its reach, knowledge becomes even important. Machines, after all, are only as good as the people who create and use

them. The human element remains the key-system can only work and dealt, can only take place if people communicate (even if it is via satellite). Thus, only the student who able to make the better use of OAC facilities and the Faculty to improve the facilities and materials.