

**AUTONOMY AND MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE
STUDYING**

The issue of autonomy in language learning has been widely spoken about. The increasing role of the individual learning has become the main factor of the development of autonomy as an innovative technology in education.

The **object** of our research is autonomy in foreign language mastering.

The present study **aims** to investigate the main features of the learner's autonomy and detect the interconnection between the autonomy in language learning and students' self-motivation aspects.

According to the aim the following **tasks** have been identified: consider and analyse the existing points of view relevant to the given problem, outline the main characteristics of autonomy in learning, explain and specify the role of autonomy and motivation in second language studying.

Focusing on the recent literature, the present review explores how this growing interest in autonomy is influencing theory and practice, leading to the emergence of new directions in research.

The early history of autonomy in language education begins with the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, which led to the publication of Holec's seminal report, in which autonomy was defined as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' [3, p. 24].

Practical applications focused on self-directed learning and led to the development of self-access centres and learner training as focal points for experimentation. Although Holec treated autonomy as an attribute of the learner, the term was also used to describe learning situations. Holec's definition of learner autonomy has proved remarkably robust and remains the most widely cited definition in the field.

Many advocates of autonomy argue that some degree of freedom in learning is required if learners are to develop their autonomy. But most accept

that freedom in learning is not the same thing as autonomy and this freedom will always be constrained.

A second important development has been a growing emphasis on the psychology of learner autonomy. Although Holec frequently discussed the qualities of autonomous learners, his description of what ‘taking charge of one’s own learning’ involves, which emphasized planning, the selection of materials, monitoring learning progress and self-assessment, arguably focused on the mechanics of day-to-day learning management [3, p. 28]. In contrast, Little placed psychology at the heart of learner autonomy. In one interesting recent definition, Little combined Holec’s definition with his own one [4, p. 69].

Autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action; [4, p. 70] autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm and method of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes [3, p. 15].

Each of these models implies a possible progression from ‘lower’ to ‘higher’ levels of autonomy. They may also be related to the movement of the idea of autonomy into mainstream language education and a perceived need to identify spaces at the lower levels, where autonomy might be fostered without radical educational reforms.

Different authors presented different models which included different levels of autonomy. For example, Littlewood’s [5, p. 428] three-stage model involved dimensions of language acquisition, learning approach and personal development. In the context of language acquisition, autonomy involved ‘an ability to operate independently with the language and use it to communicate personal meanings in real, unpredictable situations’ (autonomy as a communicator). In the context of classroom organization, it involved learners’ ‘ability to take responsibility for their own learning and to apply active, personally relevant strategies’ (‘autonomy as a learner’). And in a broader

context, it involved ‘a higher-level goal of greater generalized autonomy as individuals’ (‘autonomy as a person’).

In the 1990s, however, the self-access centre became a standard feature of institutionalized language learning in many parts of the world and other alternatives also emerged to challenge the idea that the classroom-based learning is the norm. Each of these modes of practice deserves its own more detailed review. There are different modes of practice : Self-access, Call, distance learning, tandem learning, in which «two people who are learning each others’ language work together to help one another»; study abroad (language learning programmes now frequently incorporate periods in which students spend time in target language communities), out-of-class learning, self-instruction (in a narrow sense, self-instruction refers to the use of printed or broadcast self-study materials. In a broader sense, it refers to situations in which learners undertake language study largely or entirely without the aid of teachers). The relationship between learning beyond the classroom and autonomy is complex. The important question is whether engagement in learning beyond the classroom fosters the development of this capacity or not. One of the most prominent themes in the literature on this area is the need for teacher support. This is also recognized in the emerging concept of ‘blended’ or ‘distributed’ learning, which refers to various combinations of modes of teaching and learning, most frequently those that ‘combine an electronic learning component with some form of human intervention.

As the idea of autonomy has moved beyond the specialist literature into mainstream language education contexts, it has also begun to interact with other important concepts in the field. These include learning strategies and self-regulation, motivation, individual differences and sociocultural theory, and teacher development.

The concept of learning strategies is directly related to the practice of ‘strategy training’ and contributes to the practices of ‘learner training’, or ‘learner development’. Many scientists explored the links between autonomy

and motivation based on these new paradigms, and subsequent work has developed the idea that enhanced motivation is conditional upon learners taking responsibility for their own learning. Human motivation to learn is a complex phenomenon involving a number of diverse sources and conditions. Some of the motivational sources are situation-specific, that is, they are rooted in the student's immediate learning environment, whereas others appear to be more stable and generalized, stemming from a succession of the student's past experiences in the social world [2; p. 72].

Motivation is not a linear phenomenon and small changes in the student's experiences can yield an enormous change in motivation. On the other hand, motivation may disappear in the face of monotonous activities in the classroom, but can revive if the learner meets a new teacher, a new school or interesting experiences outside school. The L2 (second language) Motivational Self System proposed by Dörnyei (2009) is made up of three dimensions, which are named the Ideal L2self, the Ought-to self, and L2 Learning experience:

- The Ideal L2 self is the «L2 specific facet of one's 'ideal self». It represents the ideal image a learner would like to have in the future.

- The Ought-to L2 self «concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes». Obligations, responsibilities and perceived duties are the attributes which control this dimension.

- The L2 Learning experience concerns “situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience”. Situation - specific motives such as the curriculum, the L2 teacher, the peer group and the teaching materials can have a strong influence on motivated behavior. This dimension is not related to self - image but with the situation in the learning process.

For some language learners, the motivation to learn an L2 is not from self - images but from the enjoyment of the learning environment. This last

dimension is related to intrinsic motivation, since the adequate environment or situation might make learner's attitude or study improve [1, p. 34].

The combination of these three dimensions, which could be summarized as the learners' vision of themselves as L2 speakers, the social pressures from the outside and a positive environment, are supposed to motivate to learn a second language. No matter how different student's routes are, the fact is that identity, motivation and autonomy have an enormous influence on the language acquisition system changes and self-organization.

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