

Learner Autonomy and Teachers' Beliefs

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Abstract – There is a large amount of studies with the subject of autonomy. Many researchers have studied the concept of autonomy, and learner autonomy throughout the world over the last 30 years. Comparing with learner autonomy and ways of promoting it, there is not many about teachers or their roles in relation to learner autonomy. After studying lots of papers and articles, the writer find a few related to teachers. This study has conducted to explore more about teachers' beliefs in Iran. Simon Brog (2012) "learner autonomy: teachers' beliefs and practices" questionnaire was used to do this research. The questionnaires were distributed to 20 teachers of Imam Reza English institute in Mashhad. They were studied and analyzed via a 37 question questionnaire. Most of the participants described autonomy as a positive aspect of the learner and believed that they have tried to promote it in their classes. Findings of the present study revealed that teachers would like to have students that are more autonomous, but actually the educational system of Iran has no attention to this important concept for learning a foreign language and it is a forgotten subject. It is suggestible to do this study with a larger population and consider teachers' personalities and learners' age to bring more comprehensive and sensible results.

Keywords: autonomy- autonomous learner- teacher's beliefs

1. INTRODUCTION

The last 30 years have seen an increasing amount of attention to learner autonomy, self-directed learning, self-access systems and individualized independent learning literature (Holec, 1981, 1985; Dickinson, 1981, 1992, 1995; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Little, 1989, 1991, 1995; Cotteral, 2000, cited in Dong Tian, 2005). According to Little (1991), over the last two decades the concept of learner autonomy and independence have gained momentum, the first one becoming a "buzz-word" within the context of language learning. Learner autonomy has been influenced by other researches and has been central to the council of Europe's thinking about language teaching and learning since 1979 (Little, 1991). Since the 1970s, autonomy has grown fast as an areas of interest in language teaching (Benson, 2006). Another researcher has found that "there exist a new language teaching and learning settings perspective which change the role of teacher from knowledge-giver to knowledge mentor, this view was a consequence of constructivist view of learning that believed, learners must construct knowledge in their own minds" (Abdul Kadir Hussein & Sueraya Che Haron, 2012). The theoretical and pedagogical rationale for the implementation of more learner-centered approach to teaching is well developed and goes back many decades, starting from the 1950s, and influenced by the work of George Kelly (C.F. Kelly, 1955). In higher education teaching, enhancing learner autonomy has become a key concern for curriculum planners and classroom teachers. The significant body of research about learner autonomy in language learning over the last 20 years (e.g. Holec

1981, 1988; Riley 1985; Dickinson 1987, 1992; Wenden & Rubin 1987; Little, 1991; Dam, 1995; Benson & Voller, 1997)(see The online platform for Taylor & Francis Group content). The importance of helping students become more autonomous in their learning has become one prominent themes (Benson, 2001) “there are two general arguments in favor of trying to make learners more autonomous: first if they are reflectively engaged with their learning, they are likely to be more efficient and effective, second if learners are proactively committed to their learning, the problem of motivation is solved .Among all definitions of autonomous learner this one is comprehensive one, “Autonomous learning is defined as a type of learning which is characterized by personalization, self-directedness and less dependency on the educator for affirmation and which therefore enhances rather than hinders the capacity for constructive collaborative participation in the workplace”(Margart Macdougail, 2008: p.224).

There are lots of researches on learner autonomy from the learner’s point of view for example, Cotteral, 1995 & Benson, 2001, but teacher’s perspectives remain unexplored (Thanasoulas, 2000), and so this study is done to explore more about teacher’s beliefs and their attempt to make an autonomous learning situation.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. What is Learner Autonomy?

As mentioned before autonomy can be a vital concept for learning a foreign language. I want to start the definition of autonomy by reviewing other researchers’ works. Holec (1981), defined learner autonomy as “taking charge of their own learning”, he emphasizes on learner’s behavior in learning. Little (199: 4) defined it as a “capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action”, he focuses on psychological factors of learning.

Benson (2000, P.49) specified that, “the content of learning should be freely determined by learners”, political aspects of learning and freedom of choice. Some relevant literatures are riddled with innumerable definitions of autonomy and other synonyms for it, based on Dimitrio Thanasoulas,(2000) here is mentioned different names for learner autonomy according to a number of researchers : “Independence” (Sheerin,1991), “Language awareness” (Lier,1991; James & Gambert,1980), “Self-direction” (Condy,1991), and “Andragogy” (Knowles, 1980, 1983). For more elaboration there exist other definitions for our magic word, autonomy. Richards & Schmidt (2002), defined autonomy as “ in language teaching the principle that learners should be encourage to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it”. Dickinson (1992) states that “autonomy is primary a matter of attitude to learning rather than the physical setting of learning”. And also Benson (2001) found similar one “autonomy can be defined as the capacity to take charge of one’s own learning and the ability of learners to control their own learning”. This definition of Benson (2001) is more comprehensive and wisdom in comparison to, Benson (1997, p.19) “learner autonomy is an act of learning outside the framework of an educational institution and without the intervention of the teacher”. By passing through ages, people and their ideas changes drastically. Based on my studies learner autonomy does not mean, doing without the intervention and the guide of teacher completely. According to Holec (1981, p.3) “This ability is not inborn but must be acquired either by natural means or by formal learning, i.e. in a systematic, deliberative way.”(Little, p.1). Dickinson (1991, p.330-31) believed that, there are five reasons to promote

learner autonomy: 1. practical reasons, 2. individual differences among learners, 3. educational aims, 4. motivation and, 5. learning how to learn foreign languages (Dong Tian, 2005).

2.2. Why Is Learner Autonomy Important?

This issue (autonomy) attract the attention of most researchers from different views. Starting from the 1950s, and influenced by the work of George Kelly (c.f. Kelly, 1955) and others in psychology, there emerged an increased recognition of the importance of the learner as an active individual who brings previous experiences, beliefs and preferences to the classroom. Rather than seeing the learner as a passive container to be filled with the teacher's ideas, these humanist approaches considered the learner as someone who actively shapes his or her learning experiences with the purpose of self-development and fulfillment (Stevick, 1980, Atkinson 1993). Similarly, constructivism gives a more central stage to the learner by focusing less on the knowledge to be transmitted, and more on the process of constructing, reorganizing and sharing that knowledge. In this process, the learner plays a key role. In order to be successful, learners need to be made aware of their own learning and how to manage it. These developments also influenced language education, both through the development of specific teaching methods rooted in these ideas, such as the Silent Way and Suggestopedia (Gattegno, 1963; Lozanov, 1978) and—perhaps more importantly—through a general influence on language teaching toward a greater focus on the learner (cited in Reinders, 2010). According to Smith (Smith, 1997, p.2), “learners have the power and right to learn for themselves”. Cited in (Cem Balcikanli, 2010). According to the large body of research in social psychology, autonomy—“feeling free and volitional in one’s action” (Deci, 1995, p.2) is a basic human need. Increasing the level of learner control will increase the level of self-determination (Benson, 2000), thereby increasing overall motivation in the development of learner autonomy” (Chan, 2001; cited in Cem Balcikanli, 2010, p.3). in addition to the learning aspect however “autonomy also includes a more political element, relating to the idea of the individual freedom of choice, as applied to the education, learners are made unable to take control or make choices about their learning, unless they are free to do so” (Hayo Reinders, 2010, p.5).

2.3. Autonomous Learner

For being an autonomous learner, we must know some features and abilities of these good learners. There exist various definitions for autonomous learners. As cited in Kadir Hussein & Haron (2012).The essential quality that autonomous learners have is an active and independent involvement with the target language (Dickinson, 1993) or Dickinson (1987) included that the individual learner takes responsibility for all decisions regarding his or her learning as well as takes on the implementation of the decision . According to Oxford (1990), “autonomous learners are those who have developed a degree of control over their learning management, managing their time, seeking help and coping with pressures and stresses (cited in Hisaco Sugawara, 2007, p.1). Holec (1980, p.4) states that “to say a learner is autonomous is to say that he is capable of taking charge of his own learning” (as cited in Kobayashi Toshihiko, 2011). Kobayashi has a more comprehensive definition of autonomous learner “ autonomous learners are those who can monitor their whole learning process, they can select their point of departure of learning, i.e. what to begin with; they can fixed the boundaries of what they are

learning, i.e. what goals to set to reach. In other words, the advocacy of learner autonomy is the transfer decision-making from teacher to learner” (Kobayashi Toshihiko, 2011, p.3). As you see this definition has all three dimensions which we have mentioned in this paper for defining autonomy. According to Kobayashi, (2011, p.3) “autonomous learners must decide what to learn, how to learn it, and how to determine just how well they have learned it.” As Wenden suggests “Autonomous learners must lead to clarify, refine and expand their views of what language means and what language learning entails” (Wenden, 1987, p.12; cited in Kobayashi, 2011, p.3). Dickinson (1987) has a definition for autonomous learners specially in learning English which is this paper goal: autonomous learners of English are expected to fully aware of what learn and how to learn it, they are totally responsible for making and implementing all of the decisions concerned with their own learning.

Dickinson (1992) suggests five skills or abilities on the part of learners: 1. Identify what is being taught (they are aware of teacher's objectives), 2. State and follow up their own purposes in addition to teachers (they are able to formulate their own learning objectives), 3. Select and implement appropriate learning strategies, 4. Monitor and evaluate their own use of learning strategies, 5. Monitor their own learning. Learners should be able to select appropriate materials, they by themselves and use the materials in proper manners to maximize their effects they must make a plan to manage their learning and keep themselves motivated to achieve the goals. Autonomous learners do not always act alone, according to Schemenck (2005), “autonomy refers to working individually, independently and in isolation”.

But learners need to ensure feedback to their own output, i.e. speech & writing: otherwise they cannot improve their productive skills (Kobayashi, 2011). The autonomous learner takes a proactive role in the learning process, generating ideas and availing himself of learning opportunities rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher (Bond, 1988; Kohonen, 1992; Knowles, 1975; cited in Dimitrios Thanasoulas, 2000). Again according to Thanasoulas (2000) “autonomous learner is not one to whom things merely happen, learning is seen as the result of his own self-initiated interaction with the world.” Thanasoulas (2000) suggests that autonomous learners:

- Have insights into their learning styles and strategies
- Take an active approach to the learning task at hand
- Are good guessers
- Are willing to take risks
- Attend to form as well as content
- Develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply
- Have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language

Another important subject in this area is the motivation of learners, because learners who are more motivated can learn better specially learning English as a foreign language, so increasing the motivation of students in an autonomous situation is very important aspect. According to Little (1991, p.3), “learner autonomy solves the problem of learner motivation: autonomous learners draw on their intrinsic motivation when they accept responsibility for their own learning and commit themselves to develop skills of reflective self- management in

learning, and success in learning strengthens their intrinsic motivation, precisely because autonomous learners are motivated and reflective learners, their learning is efficient and effective.”

2.4. How to Promote Learner Autonomy?

According to Holec (1981), autonomy is not inborn but must be acquired either by natural means or by formal learning. “In recent history of language teaching, language teachers struggle with the ways to promote learner autonomy or at least to encourage the idea of autonomy in language classrooms.” (Dickinson, 1992; Nunan, 1997; Littlewood, 1991; Brajcich, 2000; Hurd, Beavan & Ortega, 2001), as cited in (Cem Balcikanli, 2010). Learners will become autonomous in different ways because they have different personalities, ideas, interests, needs and other things. According to (Tumposky, 1982), “at any rage individual learners differ in their learning, habits, interests, needs and motivation and develop varying degrees of independence throughout their lives” (cited in Dimitrios Thanasoulas, 2000). Some of them will be ready for being autonomous but others will take more time to become autonomous. According to Benson (2001, p.183), “learner autonomy achieved through learner training and strategy training, which have been described as methods of developing the skills that learners need for autonomy.” (Deng Dafie, 2007). As Little (1991: p.2) “The development of autonomy in language learning is governed by three basic pedagogical principles:

- Learner involvement: engaging learners to share responsibility for the learning process(the affective and meta-cognitive dimensions)
- Learner reflection: helping learners to think critically when they plan monitor and evaluate their learning (meta-cognitive dimension)
- Appropriate target language use: using the target language as the principal medium of language learning (the communicative and meta-cognitive dimensions)

“The sense of authenticity which is derived from autonomous learning enhance by liberating the learners to view their own perspectives as valid and embark on a personal learning journey whereby these perspectives must inevitably change over time” (Margart Macdougail, 2008, p.224). According to Roger (1967), “the teacher who can warmly accept, who can provide an unconditional regard, and who can empathize with the feelings of fear, anticipation, and discouragement, which are involved in meeting new material, will have done a great deal toward setting the conditions for learning”, and also this kind of teacher can provide a situation in with autonomous learning will increase. Use of current knowledge is a sign of respect to students so learners will aware of their capacities and enhance their learning with autonomy (as Baxtor Magolda, 2001, cited in Margart, 2008, p.226). Straka (2000) suggests that self-directed learning takes place when learner’s needs and goals are concern of study and also learners must be evaluated.

2.5. Teachers’ beliefs about autonomy

Fundamentally, this research has carried to know more about this area of subject matter, from the perspective of teachers and their roles in classroom which has attracted a few researchers’ attention. As mentioned before teacher has an important role for promoting learner autonomy,

and this task will not happen unless teacher himself has accepted students' independency and autonomy in class. "Few teachers will disagree with the importance of helping language learners become more autonomous as learners."(Wenden, 1991, p.11) cited in (Deng Dafie, 2007). Most of the teachers are experienced enough to use self -awareness and autonomy strategies in their classes to have more successful students. I was curious to know about teachers' ideas in this area and about how desirable and feasible is to have autonomous learners, because I myself am a teacher, as follow this paper there is the results of the questionnaire. "Only a few studies addressing language teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy were available to study there were just a few, For example, Camilleri (1999) presents questionnaire data collected from 328 teachers in six European contexts (Malta, The Netherlands, Belorussia, Poland, Estonia and Slovenia). Results of Camilleri and others show that teachers were positive about involving students in decisions about a wide range of classroom activities, though, again, they were less positive about involving students in decisions about when and where lessons should be held" (Borg, 2012, p.6)

2.6. Teachers Roles to Foster Learner Autonomy

Teacher has an important role to develop autonomy and it's his/her real job in teaching language. "Learner autonomy doesn't mean that the teacher becomes redundant, abdicating his/her control over what is transpiring in the language learning process." (Thanasoulas, 2000, p.1). According to Balcikanli(2010), the ability to behave autonomously for students is dependent upon their teacher, creating a classroom culture where autonomy is accepted. "Before any attempt to promote autonomy among learners, readiness for autonomy, it is very essential to pinpoint how ready they are and how to deal with their shortcomings" (Wenden, 1991; Little, 1991, Cotterall, 1995; Scharle et al., 2000; Chan 2003) cited in (Abdul Kadar Hussein & Sueraya Che Haron,2012, p.2). According to Kohonen (2002 : p.1), "language teacher has an important role in how his students experience their foreign language, they are significant resource persons for self-directed, reflective-learning aimed at students' autonomy." (Kohonen, 2002). One of duties of teacher for managing his class is to respect and dignify students' personality, learners who are more respected (to their personality, activities, ideas, attitudes...) will be more autonomous pedagogically. According to (Kohonen, 2000 & 2001) " those teachers who know their students better(about their interests and hopes) are more successful in managing their class and so there is dignity to students in the classroom and also are more autonomous" (Kohonen, 2002). "The learner autonomy teacher is one who helps learners become more aware of themselves as language learners (e.g. styles, needs, difficulties) and encourages greater independence in learning 'while recognizing that as learner expertise increases, teacher involvement inevitably decreases'" (Hurd, 1998, p.70; cited in Francesco Barillaro, 2011). Little (1991) suggests some teacher roles for learner autonomy:

- Use target language as the preferred medium of classroom
- Involve her learners in a non-stop quest for good learning activities, which are shared, discussed, analyzed and evaluated with the whole class
- Help her learners to set their own learning targets and choose their own learning activities, subjecting them to discussion, analysis and evaluation

- Require her learners to identify individual goals but pursue them through collaborative work in small groups;
- Require her learners to keep a written record of their learning – plans of lessons and projects, lists of useful vocabulary, whatever texts they themselves produce;
- Engage her learners in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners and as class

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Questions

1. What does ‘learner autonomy’ mean to English language teachers?
2. To what extent, according to the teachers, does learner autonomy contribute to L2 learning?
3. How desirable and feasible do teachers feel it is to promote learner autonomy?
4. To what extent do teachers feel their learners are autonomous?
5. To what extent do teachers say they actually promote learner autonomy?

To answer these questions the present study is conducted, which is a replication of (Simon Borg, 2012) “*Learner autonomy, English language teachers’ beliefs and practices*”. The first research was carried about the beliefs and reported practices regarding learner autonomy of 61 teachers of English at a large university language centre in **Oman** were studied via questionnaires and interviews. After studying this article, I became so interested to do this in Iran from the view of teachers of some private English institutes in Mashhad. To do this job I used the questionnaire of (Simon Borg, 2012). The questionnaire consists of 3 sections, the first section has 37 (psychological, political, and sociological) questions, the second section has 2 questions about the teachers’ ideas of learner autonomy, and the third section has 14 questions about how desirable and feasible learners are according to teachers (see the appendix), but because of limited time I ignored the interview and workshops. This research was a kind of pilot study in Iran. The questionnaire was distributed to 20 teachers of private institutes, but just 7 persons filled it out so I sent it to some graduated English teachers students. Finally, I could collect 14 answers.

3.2. Data analysis

The questionnaire data were analyzed statistically using SPSS descriptive statistics, frequency counts and percentages were calculated for all questions.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Learner autonomy is known as an important subject to promote student’s motivation which is very crucial for learning a foreign language. This study was conducted in Iran to know to what extend English teachers are familiar with this concept.

I could collect 14 respondents (58 percent of population of Imam Reza English institute), 57% were female and 42% male, 85% with MA degree. Descriptive statistics shows that,

answer4 (in section 1) had the highest percent which means most of the teachers are agree with learner autonomy.

In section 2, I asked whether teachers agree their students are autonomous, 35% of participants agreed that their students have a fair level of autonomy in classroom and about 64% of teachers claimed that they have made opportunities for learners to be autonomous.

Section 3 of the questionnaire (desirability and feasibility), the first 7 questions, ask how desirable and feasible is for teachers that learners have freedom in decision making in different occasions (see figure 1).

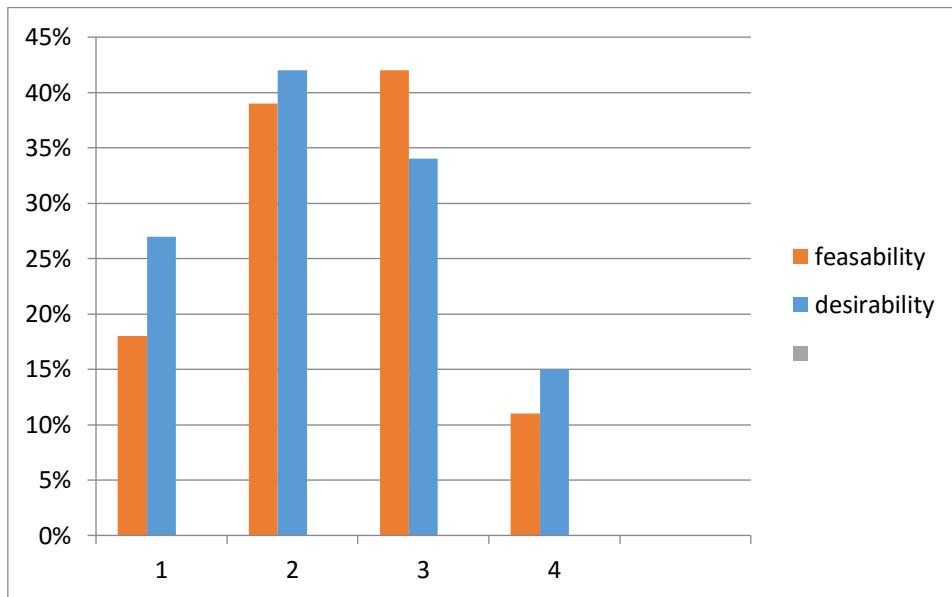


Figure1: desirability and feasibility of student involvement in decision making (1.udesirable/unfeasible- 2. Very desirable/very feasible)

The other 7 questions show teachers' opinion about developing in learners abilities and skills to be autonomous (see figure 2).

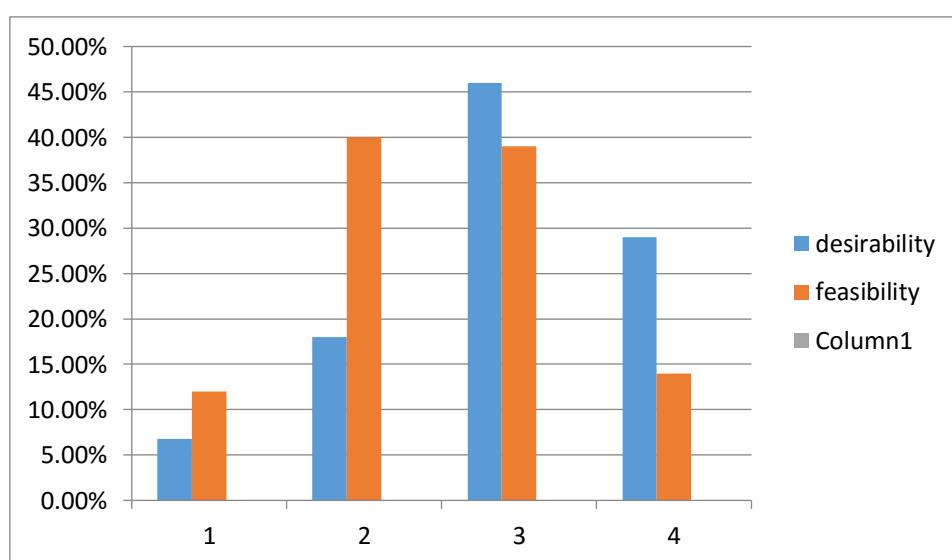


Figure 2: desirability and feasibility of learning skills and abilities (1. Undesirable/unfeasible- 2. Very desirable/ very feasible)

In section 2, the first question asked teachers to give some comments on to what extend their students are autonomous and what they do to help them become autonomous (see appendix), after I checked the answers and analyzed them, I realized that most of the teachers (57%) comment their learners can work in group independently, give suggestions for activities, and also do some tasks in/out of classroom , “autonomous learners are those who have developed a degree of control over their learning management” Oxford(1990), so their students have a level of autonomy, 35% disagreed with this answer and 21% were unsure. In second question teachers were asked about how they feel they promote autonomy in their students. 64% agreed and felt they could promote autonomy in their classes, 14% disagreed, 15% were unsure, and 7% strongly agreed (there is high level of autonomy). Some teachers’ ideas and suggestions for helping learners to become autonomous were: giving real-life tasks, working in group, allowing students to choose topic of discussion, etc. As Little (1991) mentioned, “teacher must Involve learners in a non-stop quest for good learning activities”. Some teachers mentioned that the level of autonomy is highly dependent on learners. There were several teachers who teach in general schools too, these English teachers who have more than 5 years teaching experience claimed that, educational system and rules of these schools do not allow them to promote learner autonomy despite of their interest and of course it doesn’t mean to say:” I want my students to have high level of autonomy in a learner-centered class.” In the review of literature, we have seen the necessity of autonomy in English classes and analyzed it from various perspectives.

5. CONCLUSION

As many researches show, autonomous learner is a good learner. A high motivated learner can learn better and as we have seen before, autonomy increases the level of motivation, so autonomous learners learn better. Teachers have a crucial role in this area, they are the most impressive person to promote learners autonomy even more than their parents are. Pair and group works, real life tasks and going to the library are some ways, which can help teacher to promote autonomous learners. Autonomy has not a fix meaning it depends on situation or may change from a person to another. From one aspect autonomy means independency, it is political aspect of autonomy, for example when a learner can complete a task alone, he has autonomy. Another meaning of autonomy is language awareness, focus on psychological factor of learner; if a learner can make decisions freely in class, he is an autonomous learner; “Self-direction” (Condy, 1991), and “Andragogy” (Knowles, 1980, 1983) also are other meanings for autonomy. There are also other aspects. This study shows that most of the English teachers (specially private institute teachers) agreed that promoting autonomous learners, will increase their motivation and proficiency in learning. Teachers’ views and beliefs in relation to autonomous learners to promote learner autonomy, and to have more high proficient students should be analyzed and elaborate on in more comprehensive way. The present study has conducted in Mashhad, it is worth doing the same job in other provinces of Iran.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study should conduct in more institutes with more participants and it's better to elaborate more on different views (political, social, and psychological) of autonomy. The same study is proper to use for creating a curriculum based on promoting learner autonomy according to teachers' ideas. For future studies, the researcher should consider learner's age, teacher's personality and gender, which are essential factors that affect teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1- Questionnaire

Thank you for your participation

Section 1: Learner Autonomy

Please give your opinion about the statements below by ticking ONE answer for each. The statements are not just about your current job and in answering you should consider your experience as a language teacher more generally. Please put just the number of each answer.

Strongly disagree (1)

Disagree (2)

Unsure (3)

Agree (4)

Strongly agree (5)

1. Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy
2. Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy
3. Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.
4. Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.
5. Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.
6. Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.
7. Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.
8. Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.
9. It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.
10. It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.
11. Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.
12. Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.
13. Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.
14. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.
15. Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centred classrooms
16. Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.
17. Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.
18. Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.
19. Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.
20. Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.
21. Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre.
22. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.
23. Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.
24. Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.
25. Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.

- 26.** Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.
- 27.** Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.
- 28.** Learner-centred classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.
- 29.** Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.
- 30.** Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.
- 31.** Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.
- 32.** The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.
- 33.** Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.
- 34.** The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.
- 35.** The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.
- 36.** Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.
- 37.** To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.

Section 2: Your Learners and Your Teaching

This section contains two open-ended questions. These are an important part of the questionnaire and give you the opportunity to comment more specifically on your work at the Language Centre.

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Choose ONE answer:

In general, the students I teach English most often have a fair degree of learner autonomy.

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Unsure 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Please comment on why you feel the way you do about your students' general degree of autonomy:

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Choose ONE answer:

In general, in teaching English I give my students opportunities to develop learner autonomy. (answer from above numbers)4

Please comment. You may want to explain why and how you promote autonomy, if you do, or to explain....by asking them do their task individually sometimes

Why developing learner autonomy is not an issue you focus on in your work?

Section3: Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

Below there are two sets of statements: The **first** gives examples of decisions LEARNERS might be involved in; the **second** lists abilities that learners might have. For each statement:

a. First say how **desirable** (i.e. ideally), you feel it is.

b. Then say how **feasible** (i.e. realistically achievable) you think it is for *the learners you currently teach most often*.

You should put **TWO** numbers for each statement – one for desirability and one for feasibility.

Desirability

Undesirable (1) Slightly desirable (2) Quite desirable (3) Very desirable (4)

Feasibility

Unfeasible (5) Slightly feasible (6) Quite feasible (7) Very feasible (8)

Learners are involved in decisions about:

- The objectives of a course 1----7
- The materials used 4---7
- The kinds of tasks and activities they do 4--7
- The topics discussed 4---8
- How learning is assessed 3---8
- The teaching methods used
- Classroom management 1----3

Learners have the ability to:

- Identify their own needs 4---8
- Identify their own strengths 4---8
- Identify their own weaknesses 4--7
- Monitor their progress 4---8
- Evaluate their own learning 4---8
- Learn co-operatively 3----7
- Learn independently 3----6

Section 3: About Yourself

Please tell us about your background

Have got my BA in English literature and studying MA right now. Teaching for about 1 year.

1. Years of experience as an English language teacher (Tick ONE):

0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25+

2. Years of experience as an English language teacher (Tick ONE):

0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25+

3. Highest qualification (Tick ONE):

Certificate: Diploma Bachelor's Master's Doctorate Other

4. Nationality

5. Gender (Tick ONE):

Male Female

6. At the Language Centre, which English program do you teach most hours on? (Tick ONE):

English Foundation Program (Levels 1, 2, or 3)

English Foundation Program (Levels 4, 5 or 6)

Appendix 2: Descriptive Statistics for section1 of questionnaire

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1. Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy	7%	35%	35%	21%	0
2. Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy	0	0	21%	50%	28%
3. Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.	0	0	14%	64%	21%
4. Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.	0	14%	28%	42%	14%
5. Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.	7%	21%	35%	28%	7%
6. Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.	0	28%	7%	50%	14%
7. Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.	0	7%	35%	50%	7%
8. Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.	7%	35%	35%	14%	7%
9. It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.	42%	35%	14%	7%	0
10. Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	0	7%	42%	50%	0
11. Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	0	0	0	64%	36%
12. Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.	0	0	14%	78%	7%
13. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.	0	7%	35%	35%	21%
14. Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centred classrooms	0	7%	28%	64%	7%
15. Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.	0	14%	14%	21%	28%
16. Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.	0	0	0	100%	0
17. Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.	0	7%	28%	57%	7%
18. Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre.	14%	7%	14%	57%	7%

22. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.	0 28%	21% 35%	7% 21%	57% 14%	14% 0
23. Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.	0	0	42%	51%	0
24. Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	0	14%	35%	28%	21%
25. Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	28%	50%	21%	0	0
26. Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.	7%	71%	14%	7%	0
27. Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.	0	14%	21%	50%	14%
28. Learner-centred classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.	14%	42%	28%	14%	0
29. Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.	7%	14%	14%	42%	21%
30. Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	0	0	14%	71%	14%
31. Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.	7%	14%	28%	50%	0
32. The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.	7%	14%	14%	42%	21%
33. Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	0	7%	14%	64%	14%
34. The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.	0	7%	7%	64%	14%
35. The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.	0	0	0	50%	50%
36. Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	14%	42%	35%	7%	0
37. To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.	0	0	14%	57%	21%
	0	0	7%	64%	28%
	0	0	7%	57%	35%