Autonomous Learning [Language and ELT]

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Abstract: This article delineates on the autonomous learner'sand their attempts in the direction of mastering the foreignlanguage;it also summarises the influences in favour of helping language learners to become autonomous. Learner autonomy is a challenging term because it is widely tangled with self-instruction. Learner autonomy in foreign language teaching and learning has been a favourite topic for a long time. In recent years, many new approaches and innovations have been used to develop learner autonomy in different levels of foreign language education at different schools and at different universities. Helping foreign language learners to become autonomous is one of the essential and wide-reaching negotiation going on at present. Learners who think that their learning styles and their efforts are necessary to develop the learning methods in achieving the foreign language can also give some constructivedrive to their teachers or professors to develop their teaching methods and techniques, if acknowledged. The concepts of autonomyleads one to be more responsible and active. One of the key aspects to consider in defining Learner Autonomy is whether we view it as a means to an end (learning a foreign language) or as an end in itself (making people autonomous learners). These two options do not exclude each other, both of them can be part of our views towards language learning or learning in general.

AUTONOMOUS LEARNING

Autonomy (Ancient Greek: αὐτονομία autonomia from αὐτόνομοςautonomos from αὐτο- auto- "self" and νόμοςnomos, "law", hence when combined understood to mean "one who gives oneself one's own law") is a concept found in moral, political, and bioethical philosophy. Within these contexts, it is the capacity of a rational individual to make an informed, un-coerced decision.

The term "learner autonomy" was first coined in 1981 by Henri Holec, the "father" of learner autonomy. Many definitions have since been given to the term, depending on the writer, the context, and the level of debate educators have come to. It has been considered as a personal human trait, as a political measure, or as an educational move. This is because autonomy is seen either (or both) as a means or as an end in education.

Some of the most well-known definitions in present literature are:

'Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning' (Henri Holec)

'in order to help learners to assume greater control over their own learning it is important to help them to become aware of and identify the strategies that they already use or could potentially use' (Holmes & Ramos, 1991, cited in James & Garrett, 1991: 198).[3]

'Autonomy is essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning' (David Little)

'Autonomy is a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his [or her] learning and the implementation of those decisions'. (Leslie Dickinson)

Autonomous Learning or Self-instruction or self -learning can be defined as the ability of anindependent learner to be an investigator, acting separately to make judgments about what should be done to evaluate one's own learning without teacher's backing. He should plan and organize himself in acquiring the subsequent target language without demanding or depending on others for aid or support.

In a wide-range of vision we can perceivethat both in the past and in the present day age,autonomous or self-learning is booming conversant in the society. This type of self-learning is applied noticeablyin the existing social order in a vast capacity. This acquisition includes not only a process of different learning but also different group of learners and their learning.

Autonomous learning as supposed is independent to achieve, can be interpreted easy,butat times a tough task to be accomplished. In the process of progress, the target language is learnt in twofold, onethe natural and other traditional. To our understanding, autonomous or natural learning adopts the former (easy),whereas the traditional school system implements the later (tough).Natural way of learning is easy because it does notessentially have any accountabilityto be recorded. The traditional,on other is a line of attackwhich is a customary andtruly tough and challenging.It should be governed and favoured with different pedagogies, rules and regulationaccounted with an extra effort.

Universally there are people who experience this autonomous learningnot only for their foreign language but also for learning their mother tongue or basically any language as their first language or to some extent an introductory language generally. A child actively or naturally learns through the process of autonomy. It learns its mother tongue uninformed. Accounted as a natural process it also learns the skills of the language uninformed .In addition toL1 and L2 sometimes it learnsmore than one language,adjacent applying the similar technique of autonomy.

The same autonomous learning or self-learning cannot be applied for physically challenged people because they cannot learn languageuninformed or without any guidance. We believe that they have problem with their body that makes it difficult for them to do things that other people can do easily. Inspite of all their inability they are competent enough to challenge the world by mastering the target language (English). Reasonable, more than a handful shine as leadingEducationalist, Professors, Writers, and Orators etc. They may be dependent in learning but the speed of their learning will be unique and limitless. Their wavelength is

unparalleled.We must follow the efforts of them in learning the language which is exceptionally praiseworthy .They are simply unsurpassed.

Over and done withthe confidence and the significance of the learner in mastering the second language, a strong foundations, with a stimulating environment should be created. It's also worth remembering that autonomous learning resources don't have to be only overtly educational things like books, art supplies and musical instruments. They can be anything likeGoogle-boxes, cassettes, DVDs, audio-visualassistances, scrap packages, creative articles, access to the outdoors, non-verbal activities, etc. Anything that helps people to generate their own concepts or ideas,extraordinarily as a learning tool.

When we reallymake an attempt to learn a foreign language it should bemore likely, enjoying the experienceslikefondness, accomplishment, pleasure andconsiderate in adventuring it.Autonomous learners should displaytheir responsibility for learning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning and should show a considerable growth. Basically,they can beinspired as a life-long learner in handling and adapting the processes and procedures in learning the language.

The students who can take responsibility for their learning are more successful than those who have faith exclusively on the teacher.Main idea behind learner autonomy is that students should take responsibility for their own learning, rather than be dependent on the teacher (Holec 1981). Majority of them now have a smart phone or iPad/iPodto access the information all over within few seconds. The autonomous learners can use the technology in maxima to acquire the target language.It helps to record conversation, listen to the sounds, have audio visual effect etc.

The technology sound more in 'English' which is more advantageous in learning English habitually. Deprived of English it is a mere waste of having an expensive mobile. It helps to identify mistakes when entered wrongly. If it can teach a man anything, it can also teach English, consistently of the different levels- phonetically and orthographically.

Through autonomous learning students will develop responsibility, positive self-esteem, decision-making and problem-solving skills, interpersonal skills, critical and creative thinking skills, and a passion for areas of learning that interest them.

 According to Candy (1991; 459-66), there are over 100 competencies associated with autonomy in learning. Candy (1991) states that autonomous learners are;

Methodical/disciplined
Logical/analytical
Reflective/self-aware
Motivated/curious
Flexible
Interdependent/inter personally competent
Responsible/persistent
Venturesome/creative
Creative/have positive self-concept
Independent/self i sufficient
Skilled in seeking/retrieving information
Knowledgeable about/skilled in learning
Able to develop/use evaluation criteria

Time management is one of the factor whichdemands the autonomous learners to adapt the online learning at a pace they pick. The learning environments, correspondingly, will be structured Self-paced and customizable. Autonomous learning is easiest and best managed through technology.

Autonomous learners should have an optimistic and long term view in learning. In other words if a person learns things with heartfelt effort and determination, he will be more efficient or more appropriate to become a unique person. Learning a language cannot be kept considered into one section of life one of the key aspects to consider in defining Learner Autonomy is whether we view it as a means to an end (learning a foreign language) or as an end in itself (making people autonomous learners). These two options do not exclude each other, both of them can be part of our views towards language learning or learning in general.

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