

CHAPTER 6: TOWARDS LEARNER AUTONOMY: WAYS TO DESIGN LANGUAGE COURSES

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1. Introduction

At its simplest, autonomy rotates around the key terms of self, i.e., self-regulation, self-direction, self-reliance, self-control, etc. Many fields, notably the teaching and acquiring foreign languages, have recently been more interested in autonomy. Currently, with quite an upside-down perspective as against prior views, the foreign language teaching field has shown a tendency to adopt the philosophy towards taking the learners as the focus and letting them be autonomous, thus making autonomy both an aim and output. Speaking of, taking the individual responsible for the actions, autonomy has its own power to take the person both as the actor and the participant in the learning process.

From the language teacher's perspective, training the learners in a way that they finally become autonomous learners might seem challenging. The challenges revolve around the techniques, materials, assessment, and assignment. However, with the inclination of the methodology and the advancement of technology, teachers have gained the strength to design their courses accordingly.

The main concern of this chapter is to provide some ways of designing English language learning courses contributing to the potential of autonomy. With this objective in mind, the chapter presents a quick theoretical framework of learner autonomy. Under the “Designing courses to foster autonomy” heading, one concern is employing methodologies that have learners as the core, get them to take responsibility for their own learning, and regulate their own learning process. The second focus is the use of materials that are studied by the students individually and personally at their own pace. The other subtitles cover the assessment and assignment.

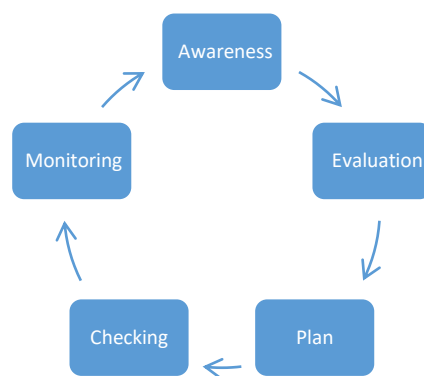


Figure 2. Cycle-form representation of autonomy

2.2 Importance of Learner Autonomy

It was not long ago that the need for autonomy was realized, so the idea of individualisation is a relatively new concept within the language teaching field. With some changes in perspectives around the world and in the teaching and learning fields, autonomy has emerged. The shift in focus from the teacher to the learner, from improving teaching to individual learners going through their learning (Gremmo & Riley, 1995), and the advent of technology and its reflections on education have suggested the idea of learner autonomy and its implications in the field of education. Finally, autonomy has found its place as a fundamental component of language policy in education systems worldwide with the trends of independent learning and new technologies (Benson, 2013).

It is quite open to question how far the schools can get the needs of the students. Of course, the schools have their own objectives and finalised goals and tasks to fulfill. However, it is not always the case when the needs are of concern. Learner autonomy may matter more in developing countries with the mismatch between what is taught at school and what is really needed in real life (Smith et al., 2018). This challenge might be regulated with the help of a classroom profile fostering autonomy. Generally speaking, classes would not be enough alone; thus, an out-of-class follow-up to activate autonomy should be enhanced.

Little (2003) associates learner autonomy with three key aspects crucial for the learning process: efficiency and effectiveness, motivation, and effective communication. First, the more engaged the learners are in the learning process, the more effectively they learn. With proactive commitment, learners become motivated, and readiness to learn arises. Autonomy can also lead to a social enhancement to fully master the exchanges related to language learning practice, especially speaking. Developing such a capacity is beneficial to learning as an end in itself.

Thus, the significance of the need to try to make learners autonomous is underlined and highlighted.

2.3 Designing courses to foster autonomy

As Holec (1981) asserted, autonomy is not by birth and should be acquired and shaped, which makes training crucial. However, learner autonomy cannot be limited to classes only; rather, it might start with the sparkle within the class and keep it going as part of a lifelong learning process. Therefore, creating the right atmosphere for language learning and fostering autonomy, thus maximizing the potential of the classroom (Nunan, 1988), is necessary. The classroom instruction should equip the learners in terms of the following:

- Efficient learning strategies
- Identification of their preferred ways of learning
- Skills needed to negotiate the curriculum
- Encouragement to set their own learning objectives
- Support for learners to set realistic goals and time frames
- Skills in self-evaluation (Nunan, 1989 as cited in Diaz-Rico, 2004).

Autonomy involves the involvement of the individual within the learning experience. The teacher's role here is to get the students in the process and lead them to make autonomous learners. The main concern of the class should rely upon promoting learners' freedom by providing chances to implement, finally taking them to be autonomous as suggested by Holec (1979), teachers should be setting new objectives to help learners define their objectives on their autonomy journey. It is better to call the process as training rather than 'teaching' or 'learning' because of the involvement of development and fostering.

Designing courses to make learners autonomous involves a number of elements to cover. A method that would fit into the classroom setting and the needs of the students, which also should let the learners take responsibility for their own learning, needs to be chosen for the class. Next, materials to back up the course methodology will necessarily be required to fit into the course design. These materials should also support the learners in terms of practising the language on their own. Then, the content should be checked and evaluated to understand whether the learners fully comprehended it. The process of checking should be better regulated and carried

out by the learner to foster autonomy. Thus, the teachers had better assign learners accordingly. The final step would be assessment. Again, the responsibility for the learning process should be carried out by the learner. Therefore, alternative assessment techniques would be better options to bring about a change and take the students towards being autonomous learners. Some ideas for the choice of items to create an autonomous atmosphere for the learners are shared as follows:

2.3.1 Setting the scene:

To create a classroom setting where autonomy is aimed to be fostered, it is of crucial significance that at the beginning of the term, a warm atmosphere should be provided where everyone is heard, each idea is welcomed, and the students' insights are supported. Setting objectives, establishing classroom rules (see Figure 3), and making decisions on content collaboratively with the involvement of learners would inject the idea of active participation and having a say in the learning process into their minds. With the feeling of commitment, learners would be more motivated to contribute to the learning process, which eventually ends up in having them to be autonomous learners.

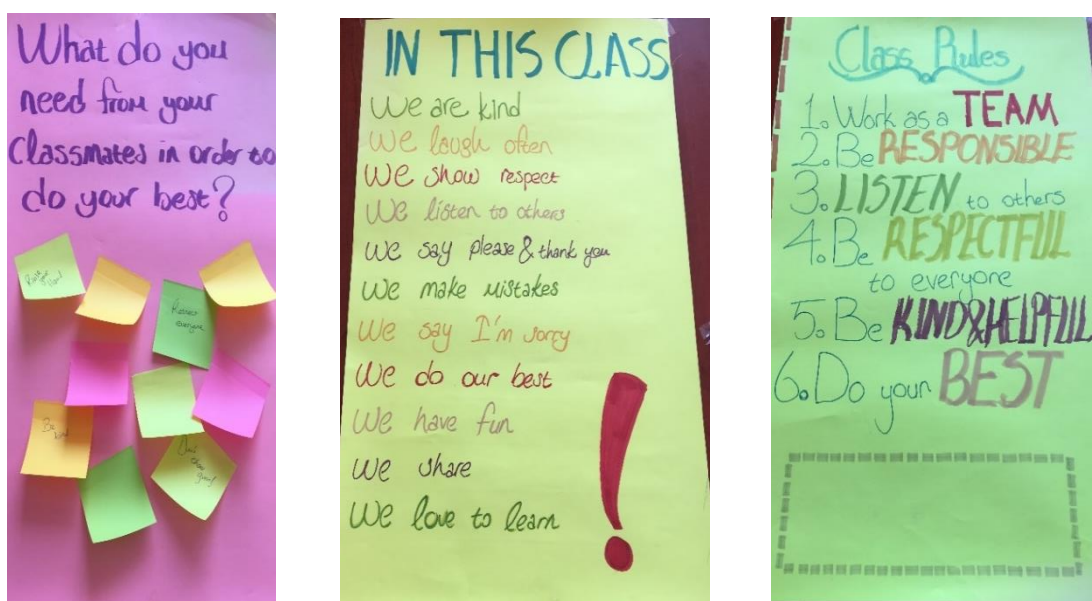


Figure 3. Examples of setting classroom rules in collaboration with learners by asking for their opinions

2.3.2 Methods and techniques:

Together with the other advancements in the teaching and learning field, approaches, methods, and techniques have given a shift from teacher-based ones to new trends of individualised learning, which has brought forward the wind of *autonomy*. The language acquisition process

has a transformation over the years, starting with behavioural psychology, followed by cognitive one, and finalised with cognitivism in a century (Brown, 2007). The behaviourist view regards the learner as passive in the learning process and counts on the effects of conditioning. Cognitive psychology focuses on mental processes. Figuring the cognitive and social elements together, constructivist pedagogy relies upon the learner's constructing meaning along with the social interactions. Thus, constructivism leans on two layers of cognitive and social facets.

Along with the wind of change, the learner has gained a place within the learning and teaching process, which is how learner-centred approaches emerged. Thus, it is not surprising that current approaches tend to take the learners as the core and try to let them have a say in their learning process. They provide control to the learner, enhancing self-confidence and self-worth (Brown, 2001). Therefore, the teachers aiming at developing their students' self-regulation skills, need to, first of all, decide on the method to nourish settings for autonomy. Finally, the self-directed learner might be able to choose methods of instruction appropriate for them through trial-and-error (Holec, 1979). When it comes to fostering autonomy in and out of the classes, a few methods can be suggested. Below given are some effective methods for fostering autonomy.

Learner autonomy stands at the heart of an interchange among social interaction and collaborative work, focusing on figuring out the key to learning effectively and thinking critically about the learning process (See Figure 4). Some methodologies stick to the concept of critical thinking, some stay focused on collaboration, and others on learning to learn. Actually, autonomy is the essence when there is an interplay among them all.

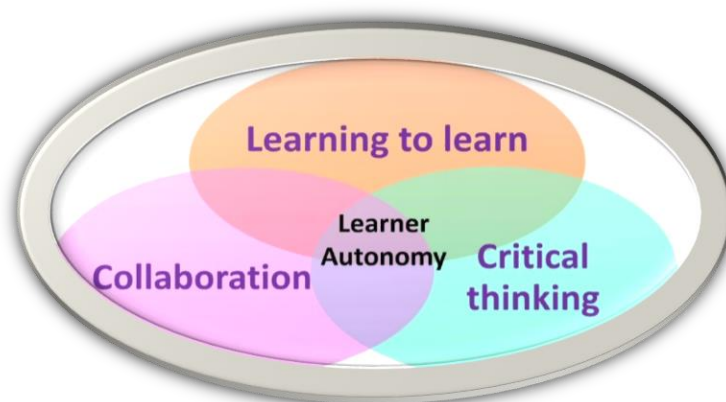


Figure 4. Learner autonomy context/ www.CambridgeUniversityPress.com
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=uN-90zM4KmM>)

Not full-blown methods, *Learning Strategy Training*, *Cooperative Learning* and *Multiple Intelligences* take the language learner as the main concern (Larsen Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p. 229). These methodologies prioritize "how to learn" over "what to learn" by focusing on the language learner rather than "teaching language" being complementary to teaching methods enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of learning. Relating *Content-based Learning*, *Task-based Learning*, and *Project-based Learning*, as well, where the center of attention stands rather than "learning the language", but upon "fulfilling the task", "getting the content", and "completion of the project". Some other methods emerge with technological advancements and reflections on language teaching, such as *Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)*, *Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL)* or *Flipped/Blended Learning*. What all these abovementioned methods have in common is that they have some practices and implications fostering autonomy. The nature of fostering autonomy is not spoon-feeding the learners but through presenting and applying some methodologies, materials, assignments and assessment tools, guiding and encouraging them to keep themselves aware of their own learning journey while trying to find their ways tailored to them.

2.3.2.1 Learning strategy training:

Many researchers have dealt with language learning strategies and made categorisations on them. Language learning strategies are classified as *Learning Strategies (Cognitive and Metacognitive strategies)*, *Communication Strategies*, and *Social Strategies* by Rubin (1987), grouped into two as *Direct Strategies (Memory, Cognitive, Compensation)* and *Indirect Strategies (Metacognitive, Affective, Social)* by Oxford (1990), proposed under three basic categories as *Metacognitive Strategies*, *Cognitive Strategies*, and *Social/Affective Strategies* by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), and listed in five as *Management and Planning Strategies*, *Cognitive Strategies*, *Communicative- Experiential Strategies*, *Interpersonal Strategies*, and *Affective Strategies* by Stern (1992). These taxonomies have very much in common and basically emphasize how to deal with the learning process.

Taking the taxonomy of O'Malley and Chamot (1990), *metacognitive*, *cognitive*, and *socio-affective strategies* are meant to guide the learners to interact with the target content to be learnt with awareness, giving them a chance to learn by themselves and take responsibility for their own learning process interacting with others. Especially with *Metacognitive means*, the learners get the 'beyond cognition' and 'thinking about thinking' levels. Here, they acquire a view for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning. *Cognitive means* provide chances for how

to practice the language to be learnt. *Socio-affective means* support learning to interact with others and cope with the feelings.

Learning strategy training aims to boost the capacities of the learners to be ‘better learners’ and provide chances for their contribution to the learning process. In a nutshell, the heart of *Learning Strategy Training* lies in teaching how to learn rather than what to learn. Learner autonomy is defined by Little (2003, p.1) as a "holistic view of the learner that requires us to engage with the cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social dimensions of language learning and to worry about how they interact with one another", which has given the teachers the responsibility to consider the learner within the strategies aspect and teach them how to use these strategies to learn better, more effectively and more efficiently.

The primary concern of *Learning Strategy Training* is to implant effective learning strategies in individuals rather than just instructing them on what to learn. The essence of this training revolves around developing the ability to learn in a more efficient manner. In *Learning Strategy Training*, the teacher teaches the strategies to the learner rather than the language content, and then the learners use these strategies to learn the language. In this way, they transfer the strategies into new experiences, learn how to become independent learners and self-regulate their learning journey. These aforementioned principles of *Learning Strategy Training* serve for the active participation of the learner, take the learner as the core, and thus finally provide chances for further practices of self-regulation, and autonomy. Therefore, this might be a choice for the teachers trying to create an autonomous atmosphere for learners.

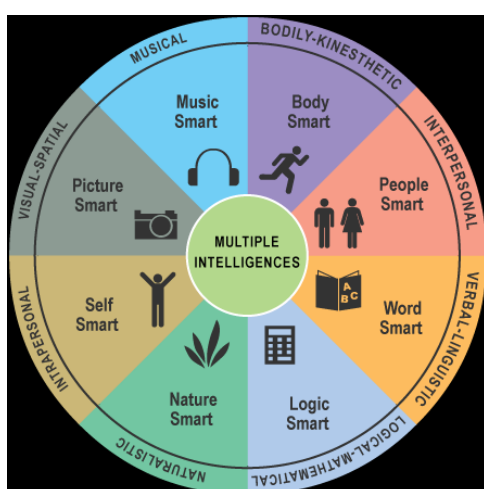
2.3.2.2 Cooperative learning:

In a nutshell, *Cooperative Learning* can be defined as creating opportunities for learners to work together in groups that stimulate their social interaction with others to learn from each other in addition to getting the responsibility for both their own learning and the group members’ learning. The spirit of *Cooperative Learning* lies in peer learning made possible within heterogeneous groups, which are basically called cooperative groups, as also suggested in the name itself. The learners work together in teams to successfully fulfill objectives (Brown, 2001), promoting peer support. Cooperation -not competition- is emphasised. Heterogeneous grouping matters considering the gap among the learners in terms of academic success, social relations, and some other dispositions. Using the gap as fuel for peer learning, the concept of *Cooperative Learning* emphasizes the importance of both social and academic interdependence

on one another. The teacher's focus in *Cooperative Learning* class is to create cooperative groups to ensure that the students get together to learn more effectively and acquire the skill of learning from each other, taking responsibility for learning both for themselves and the other group members. In fact, based on interdependence, the learners take control of their own learning for the sake of the cooperative groups they belong to. With a sense of responsibility and accountability (Larsen Freeman & Anderson, 2011), commitment and interdependence, the learners learn to develop self-skills. This nature of the method serves autonomy.

2.3.2.3 Multiple intelligence theory:

There once was a misbelief that intelligence was only a one-type skill and could only be measured through an only-one type of intelligence test. For a person to be called “intelligent”, s/he needed to have a set of qualifications such as quick adaptation to changes, being a quick learner, etc. “Being intelligent” used to be associated with mental/cognitive skills mostly. In direct contrast to what has been thought, it was soon asserted that some other strengths might be counted as indicators of intelligence. Gardner (1983) questioned the traditional notion of intelligence and gave a chance to different potentials of individuals (Scott-Monkhouse, 2012). Gardner (1983) theorised eight major intelligence types as follows:



- Linguistic-verbal intelligence
- Mathematical intelligence
- Visual-spatial intelligence
- Kinesthetic intelligence
- Interpersonal intelligence
- Intrapersonal intelligence
- Musical intelligence
- Naturalistic intelligence

Figure 5. Multiple intelligences

Multiple Intelligence Theory suggests that each individual owns these intelligence types with different dominances, and they might be improved. Inserting the theory into the classes, the language teacher designs activities, materials, and tasks appropriate for the learners' dominance of the skills, and as many different as possible to offer many chances for the neglected ones to be improved as well. In this way, aiming at leading the students to know about themselves, the teacher guides learners for autonomy. *Multiple Intelligence Theory* gives a chance to the

learners to get to know themselves and learn better this way. It is of great significance for the learners to understand their personalities, strengths and weaknesses and act accordingly. Through developing self-knowledge, the learners finally become autonomous learners. Thus, implementing *Multiple Intelligence Theory* into language classes would be a good idea for the learners' autonomy.

2.3.2.4 Content-based learning / task-based learning/ project-based learning:

Integrating content with language, *Content-based learning (CBL)* or *Content-based Instruction (CBI)* yields so much space for realistic use of language. It stands in direct contrast to skill-content isolated practices (Brown, 2001), which lack authenticity. In *Content-based Learning*, the focus is on specific content such as maths, science, geography or else. Thus, the language is used as a means to learn the content. *CBL* has a stance where communication plays a fundamental role in learning. Within the process, getting the content is the core, and language is used as a means. Actually, language is used as a tool to learn it. Communication is the key here.

In the same way, in *Task-based Learning*, the students work together on specific tasks which require their using the language independently from the “learning the language” purpose primarily. The first objective is to focus on the task and to use the language to complete or fulfil the task. The learners not only practice language but also complete problem-solving and critical-thinking activities, and tasks. For both *CBL* and *TBL*, the idea of “teaching through communication rather than for it” is prioritised (Larsen Freeman & Anderson, 2011, p.137). Having the strong version of the Communicative approach, both methods aid learner autonomy providing chances for choice of content and task, authenticity, and student-centredness.

Similarly, in *Project-based learning (PBL)*, assigning the learners long-term projects of their own choice allows them to explore content and search for information themselves, taking the initiative. They do research, plan, organise, and present in English. They participate in short-term or long-term projects based on realistic tasks providing real-world contexts. The learners practise the language in a realistic context while working on real-life related, meaningful tasks. Considering the advantages, these methods yield opportunities for self-regulation and autonomy.

2.3.2.5 Computer-assisted language learning (CALL)

Although autonomy seems to be mostly integrated and only related to technology, rooms full of computers, or students isolated to learn by themselves, it is not always the case. Still, that

might well be accepted as the starting point. In the field of Language Teaching and Learning, *Computer Assisted Language Learning* or *CALL* includes applications supplementing learning a language through the use of computers, digital programs, digital resources, and information technology. The digital resources supply the presentation, practice, production, evaluation, assignment, and feedback on the content to be learnt.

CALL offers several advantages of implementing technology into the language learning and teaching process. Technology allows teaching experiences to be customized for individuals, which is one of its greatest benefits. According to Larsen Freeman and Anderson (2011), *CALL* programs can easily adapt to the needs of different learners by analysing their input and offering personalized feedback and exercises matching their proficiency level. In addition to personalised choices for learning, the feedback is as immediate as seconds. What's more, there are unlimited chances for trial and error. Those might be counted as spending so much time in a regular class considering the individual differences among the students' academic levels. In *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, these differences are taken for granted and used in favour of the individuals spending only the needed time per person.

Computer Assisted Language Learning enhances learner autonomy by equipping students with the need to have a say in their learning, construct meaning, and track their own progress (Diaz-Rico, 2004). When appropriately implemented by the teachers, *CALL* offers the learners control over their own learning. The learners evaluate and monitor the process to make decisions on the learning content, time, and place. Thus, through self-decision-making and self-regulation, the students eventually develop autonomy.

2.3.2.6 Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL)

With the advancements in technology and mobile phones being commonly in use, and “Digital immigrants” (Prensky, 2001) who are born to the digitalised world tending to use mobile phones in nearly all aspects of life, including education, the idea of using mobile phones for learning has been widely in use. This is how the idea turned out to be the materialisation of *MALL*. *Mobile-assisted Language Learning* or *MALL* could be regarded as mobile applications or upgraded versions of *Computer-assisted Language Learning*. Despite what is included in *CALL* (*Computer-assisted Language Learning*), there is no need for a set-up computer or computer programme in *MALL*. The need for an established system, computer hardware and software was challenging the learners regarding mobility and accessibility in *CALL*. On the contrary, independently from curricula, institutions, and timetables (Taylor, 2006), *MALL* presents easy access with mobility, and practicality regardless of time and place.

MALL includes the implementation of mobile applications and programmes in education. Some *MALL* applications can be listed as *Duolingo*, *Memrise*, *Preply*, *Mondly*, *Busuu*, and alike. Keeping a record of the learner's achievements, improvements, needs, and incompetencies, *MALL* applications realise an individualised learning assistant providing self-structured activities and progress serving for independent learning out of the class. *MALL* motivates the learners towards the self-quest for knowledge. The learners have the chance to learn however, whenever and wherever they like at their own pace. Materialising *MALL* into language classes gives opportunities for autonomous learners. As in *CALL*, the learners have control over their learning. Keeping in mind that almost all learners have mobile phones, not computers, to carry around everywhere, it would be wise to credit for the advantages of using *MALL*. Thus, the teachers may choose to encourage and lead the students to be autonomous learners using *MALL*.

2.3.2.7 Flipped learning/blended learning

Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams get many credits and are regarded as the pioneers of *Flipped Learning* (Arnold-Garza, 2014). The idea of flipping classes has been popularised in the early mid-2000s. *Flipped learning* is a method of instruction that utilises technology to render classroom learning simpler and more comfortable. This offers the opportunity for the teacher to dedicate their entire class time to engaging students in student-student or teacher-student interaction instead of lecturing. The procedures of a flipped class can simply be explained within three sections: before, during and after class.

Before the class, the students are given access to language learning materials, videos, recordings, online references, and resources outside the class, so they get prepared for the class. The students watch the recording as many times as they like, regardless of time and place constraints at their own pace, taking responsibility for their learning. During class time, the focus is all allocated to the practice and review of the content, interactive activities, and discussions engaging the students with the active use of the language. Therefore, the burden of lecture and homework are just reversed. After class, the learners can easily complete what is assigned now that they have had enough practice earlier.

In all parts of *Flipped Learning*, the learners are taken as the core of learning. Before the class, they have the chance to learn independently at their own pace with the help of the videos or materials in the comfort of their houses. With flipped classes' flexibility, different modes such as group work, individual study, performance, and assessment can be chosen (Hamdan et al., 2013). By keeping class-time for peer interaction and student-teacher practice, and providing chances for monitoring their progress, the students feel free to get help from their peers or

consult the teacher whenever they want. After class, they have the comfort of having practised enough. With all its qualifications aiding self-regulated means, implementing *Flipped Learning* would end up in good results for autonomy.

2.3.3. Materials:

To begin with, *authentic materials* provide real context for learning. Being exposed to authentic materials such as newspapers, magazines, articles, podcasts, videos, songs, poems, series, and films, learners get in touch with real-world language. In addition, the learners can have the freedom to choose learning materials of their own choice, which in turn contributes to autonomy. With the improvements of the new era, it has been as easy as a click to reach these materials online. Integrating technology provides more and more materials, learning apps, virtual sources, websites, tools and AI into use.

Digital materials and web tools are especially perfect as they are practical, easily accessible, and abundant. However, it is not all those that make it a perfect match for autonomy. First of all, learning apps, online resources, and interactive platforms allow learners to practice independently and at their own pace. They come in handy when the learners are to take charge of their own learning. What's more, learners are provided with an independent exploration of materials, get to take initiative, have freedom of choice, and make decisions about their learning experiences. In addition to being empowered to learn independently, the learners also have the chance to collaborate with peers, professionals, and even natives around the world. When the chances for self-directed learning are given to learners, they develop self-skills so, in turn, they become autonomous learners.

For example, a significant number of *websites* such as *British Council*, *National Geographic Learning*, and *BBC Languages* and alike offer a variety of ready-to-use materials such as audio and video, blogs, wikis, podcasts, games, activities, tests, and practices for different levels and age groups provided. Students themselves can have a choice on their preferences from all provided tons of materials, which are only a click ahead. Some online language learning courses like Udemy offer a variety of online courses. Also, there are options of interactive lessons with personalised feedback and progress tracking.

In addition to ready-to-use materials, another and a better-to-fit context idea would be student-created digital materials with distinct possibilities (Kiddle, 2003). This point of view without a doubt, would boost students' motivation and contribution to learning. These materials, such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, and social media, which are also essential tools for individual learning

and social interaction in education, might be used as tools for assignment or assessment, as well.

It is for sure that learning can in no way be restricted to classes only. The idea is not new, but some relatively newer ones have emerged. Some modes of learning outside the classes are '*self-directed learning*', '*self-instruction*' and '*self-paced learning*' (McDonough et al., 2013). For example, through self-access centers, learners can have direct and easy access to resources of their interests and learning styles. They use these resources independently at their own pace. The resources vary from books, online materials, software, applications and alike. *Mobile tools*, as well, can easily be regarded as an example providing language practice keeping a record of strengths and weaknesses, therefore regularly checking and setting new objectives, adjusting the difficulty, offering new options and maximising learning exclusively. Mobile applications such as Duo-lingo, Memrise and alike might be counted as examples.

One step ahead, is welcomed *Artificial Intelligence (AI tools)*. Along with the advantages of digital tools and apps, AI tools utilise advanced algorithms and machine learning to provide the comfort of more personalised and exclusively adapted environments for learners. Analysing learner's performance, AI creates and presents a more tailored interactive approach as if being tutored by a teach-bot. AI regularly checks, monitors, tracks learner performance, and re-arranges training accordingly. Even some AI-based mobile apps, like *Annie*, stimulate real-life conversations and serve as a virtual friend, or add up some other choices like a popstar, a 1920s English lady, a legendary king, or even an astronaut hamster to chat with. Keeping training with the comfort of their preferences, learners would make choices, take charge of their own learning and be more likely to lead their learning experiences themselves.

In conclusion, incorporating technology into the classrooms gets the new generation's attention and helps them be more motivated. Moreover, by integrating these kinds of abovementioned materials into the learning and teaching process, the teachers would be more likely to lead and encourage learners to get to know themselves and critically think about their experiences so that they can make choices based on what works best for them. The thing that is common among the modes, as mentioned earlier, is that they aid the learners in taking responsibility for their own learning by setting objectives, choosing materials, assessing their learning, and monitoring their progress. Thus, self-reliance, taking responsibility, independence, self-motivation, and self-regulation are boosted.

2.3.4. Assignments:

The key to fostering autonomy through assignments is to provide learners with choices and opportunities for exploring their preferences while working on realistic, purposeful, authentic and meaningful content. When the learners are given choices on realistic tasks, it adds up to their autonomy. Having the learner as the core and the decision-maker of the process, these assignments, such as portfolios, tasks, projects, and reflective work, also function as assessment tools.

Assigning learners with a piece of work that requires research, organisation of the content, use of language with realistic purposes, cooperation, working and completion of a realistic task - any activity in which a person engages, given an appropriate setting, in order to achieve a specifiable class of objectives (Bachman & Palmer, 1996) - would without a doubt, serve for the autonomy of the learners. Thus, choice-based project assignments would perfectly work for the objectives of autonomy. In this respect, digital work offers a variety of choices in addition to practicality and easy access to resources. WebQuests, for example, make a combination of “web” use and “quest” for information. The history of WebQuests dates back to 1995 (Dodge, 1995). The learners are scaffolded in a digital environment, searching for information through inquiry-based activities. The learners are guided with pre-arranged lists of internet resources to complete a task in the short-term or long-term. They are given clear routes and outcomes having options and choices of resources. Dodge (1997) explains three distinct features of WebQuests: creating tangible and *hi-tech tasks*, *an audience* to create for and get *feedback* from. Encouraging critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, thus supporting 4C skills as well, WebQuests regulate both self-skills and social skills, besides aiding autonomy in terms of the student-judgement-based characteristics. They also serve as a significant and motivating investment for the material-production side (Dudeney & Hockly, 2012).

As stated earlier in this section, employing other examples of autonomy-fostering assignment models, such as portfolios and reflective work, will be discussed in the assessment section below.

2.3.5. Assessment:

Assessment is of great importance in terms of providing chances for autonomy and self-regulation. In general, assessment tools highlight the strengths, weaknesses, and what is going right or wrong during the learning process. Assessment tools are basically used for evaluation purposes. In fact, the real aim is to check for the standards and get feedback on the fulfilment of objectives, achievement of the learners, and efficiency of the learning/teaching process. For

example, language tests can be used for formative evaluation purposes helping students guide their learning and teachers re-arrange their teaching (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). However, tests are criticised for failing to represent real-life situations in terms of both content and performance, and not emphasising student improvement and growth (Peköz, 2017). Thus, as complementary (Brown, 1994 as cited in Peköz, 2017), but unlike traditional assessment, alternative assessment focuses on the overall process of learning.

Phongsirikul (2018) summarises general aspects of alternative assessment as the requirement of the students to perform, create, and produce something (Herman et al., 1992), use of real-world contexts or simulations, focusing on processes as well as products (Aschbacher, 1991), and providing information about both the strengths and the weaknesses of students (Huerta-Macias, 1995). Alternative assessment is giving meaningful and constructive feedback on the work done and covers the observation of the overall learning process as well as the product. Alternative assessment tools include self-assessment, peer assessment, journals, learning logs, portfolios, projects, conferences, presentations, exhibitions, observations, interviews, and student-generated tests (Peköz, 2017). Some suggested ones will be presented here.

2.3.5.1. Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a key strategy for autonomous language learning (Brown, 2006; Harris, 1997) and a powerful weapon for the teacher to train students to evaluate their own learning (Lianisya, 2014). Self-assessment aims for the learners to have a fuller understanding of what they have done right and what they have done wrong or what is missing in their own learning journey. Self-assessment gives the responsibility for learning. Checklists, rubrics, and KWL charts (See Figure 6) enhance the process.

Checklists provide a list of items to be checked at the end of the learning process. Similarly, rubrics, similarly present statements related to the efficiency of the learning process. KWL charts make use of full awareness of the learners by using remarks to be checked before, during, and at the end of the process. Also, self-grading on the learned content using a rubric, checklist or pre-discussed set of criteria would be aiding the contribution and active participation of the learners. The criteria might also be created with the active participation, collaboration and contribution of the learners, as well, which encourages self-reflection and responsibility. The learners can monitor and assess their own language skills by editing and setting realistic goals, getting the opportunity for self-improvement. This provides an atmosphere for learners to become less dependent on their teachers, take on a more proactive role (Yalçın Tılfarlıoğlu, 2017), develop a sense of responsibility and self-confidence for their own learning in addition

to creating a more reliable assessment mode (Ur, 2018). Learners' involvement and autonomy also substantially contribute to their motivation to learn the language in question (Brown & Hudson, 1998).



Student Self-Assessment Rubric

4 Exceeds
I can do it without mistakes.
I can help others.

3 Proficient
I can do it by myself!
I make little mistakes.

2 Developing
Sometimes I need help.
I am starting to understand.

1 Novice
I can't do it by myself.
I don't understand yet.

Cambridge English examiners consider four things when marking the Writing paper:

Content	
✓	You have done what the task asked you to do. You have included all the important information.
✗	You did not include everything you were asked for. Perhaps you have written something irrelevant or not understood what you had to write about.
Communicative Achievement	
✓	The writing is appropriate for the task. You used the right style for what you're trying to communicate.
✗	The writing isn't suitable for the task – for example, it might be too formal or too informal.
Organisation	
✓	The writing is put together well. It is logical and ordered. The ideas are clearly connected.
✗	It is difficult for the reader to follow. For example, the paragraphing is poor, there aren't many linking words, the ideas aren't organised logically so it's difficult for the reader to follow, etc.
Language	
✓	There is a good range of vocabulary and grammar, and these are used accurately. Even if there are some mistakes, the reader can still understand the text.
✗	There are mistakes that could make the text difficult or confusing for the reader.

Name: _____

Topic: _____

 What do you already know about this topic?	 What do you want to know about this topic? What do you wonder about?	 What did you learn about this topic?

Figure 6. Examples of rubric, checklist, and KWL chart

<https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/573083121316574589/> (Student Self-assessment rubric)

www.cambridgeenglish.org (Cambridge Checklist)

<https://www.chompingattheliter.com/kwl-chart/> (KWL chart)

In the same way, peer assessment, which is basically providing feedback on each other's work through feedback forms, discussions, reflections, peer-check or peer-editing activities would employ collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills thus- in addition to self-awareness- learners would develop awareness for each other's performance. Andrade and Valcheva (2009) assert some advantages of self and peer assessment as “direct involvement of students in their own destiny” and “encouragement of autonomy” (as cited in Brown and Abeywickrama, 2004).

2.3.5.2. Portfolio:

A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student's work in specific areas (Genesse & Upsher, 1996). Portfolios are a variety of samples of learners' work produced within the learning

journey such as written products, audio-video recordings, and presentations. Students collect and organise these products to showcase their progress, assess the effectiveness of their work, think critically, and set future goals. With their student-centred, collaborative, holistic (Genesse & Upsher, 1996), longitudinal effort, and personal decision-making nature; portfolios raise awareness, provide authenticity, critical thinking through self-reflection, and develop autonomy and decision-making skills (Peköz, 2017). While creating their portfolios learners see their work and keep track of their progress, critically and creatively think to choose among the products, make decisions and monitor the process, thus raising awareness on their learning and re-planning their schedule if needed.

2.3.5.3. Reflective Journals:

Reflections are of great importance as they significantly play an essential role in the autonomy of the learner. The reason lies beneath the fact that reflections provide self-regulation, self-awareness and a closer and more critical look at the learning process. The learners should better understand the need to reflect on their own learning process to have the focus and control of their own learning.

Reflective journals serve as quick notes working as feedback - also for the teacher - on learning efficiency. Throughout the process, they visualise and materialize the goals, challenges, achievements, and progress. To this extent, the students observe and pay attention to the learning experience with full awareness at each stage of reflective learning, so they take charge of their learning and autonomy is promoted.

In reflective learning, the key is to encourage learners to reflect on their learning in all aspects of their learning process. Encouraged to reflect on their learning objectives, progress, outcomes and process, the learners are motivated to keep track of their progress, check out their needs, successes and failures, step by step to take ownership of their own learning. Incorporating regular reflective activities gives learners the opportunity to think critically about their learning experiences, thus learners get to know about their strengths and weaknesses. Realising their strengths and weaknesses, learners improve their learning performances.

3. Conclusion

Designing English Language courses aiming to foster autonomy is crucial in empowering students' self-awareness and taking control of their own learning journey. The key to fostering learner autonomy is to provide chances for students to set goals, make choices, decisions, and

changes, take an active role within the learning process, reflect on their progress, take responsibility, develop awareness and self-regulation, and autonomy eventually. To enhance autonomy, a few key steps should be taken by the teachers in class: incorporating methodologies based on student-centeredness, choosing materials aiming at self-regulation of the learners, using assignment and assessment tools that make learners monitor the process.

Providing choices would be wise in accessing the long-term goals of raising autonomous learners and creating autonomous atmospheres for learning. Therefore, the decisions should be made with the collaboration of all stakeholders in the learning process. Especially the learners should be carefully included in the planning and implementation, and decision-making processes to practise actively and effectively. They should have the freedom of choice in terms of choosing topics that are of interest to them, activities and materials that challenge them, and assessment tools that give them the chance to check their progress themselves. This enhances self-motivation and self-engagement. The more engaged they feel, the more actively and motivated they participate in the learning process.

In conclusion, teachers play a significant role in leading learners take control over their own learning considering their learning styles, preferences, specific goals, and characteristics. Creating a supporting and engaging learning environment, the teachers empower critical thinking, reflection on learning, taking control, creating awareness, and self-regulation in the classroom environment. Teachers guide the students in having control of their progress and supporting independency so help them develop awareness of their learning. Finally, making them active participants in their own learning journey and empowering them to take charge of their learning, teachers will make the learners become independent, autonomous learners.

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