

LEARNER AUTONOMY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING CLASSES: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

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ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy is of much importance in the context of teaching and learning with an emphasis on the learner. It is more important for the learners to be autonomous in language learning and teaching in general, and English language learning in particular. Giving students an opportunity to have their active part in decision making positions in advance level is a good strategy adopted by a number of teachers and learners. Considering the importance of learner autonomy in ELL, the study was conducted to find out whether the learners in English language classes are autonomous or not, to explore the teachers' perceptions regarding learner autonomy in English language classes, to identify teaching practices to promote learner autonomy in English language classes. The study was qualitative in nature. Population for the study was English language students and teachers at advance level. From the population, forty students and eight teachers were selected as a sample of the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from teachers and students. Thematic analysis was done to analyze the data. The results indicate that Students are not self-directed learners in general. They do not set their learning goals, do not select the content or use other books and rely only on what the teacher has told them. The students are confident enough to declare that they will reach a good level in the English language. However, they need the help of the teacher in every assignment to score and correct it, as well as helping them learn better English. So they have a weak approach towards decision making position.

Key words: learner autonomy, Teacher's perception, English language.

INTRODUCTION

Learner autonomy is of a much importance in the present age with an emphasis on the learner in the context of teaching and learning. It is more important when we talk about language learning and teaching, in particular, English language learning, because of the importance of English language being the international language. Learner autonomy is important in teaching languages with the focus to make students independent in learning process (2009; Burkert & Schwienhorst, 2008; Murphy, 2008; Benson, 2007; Little, 2007; Lamb & Reinders, 2007; Barfield & Brown, 2007; Lamb & Reinders, 2006; Palfreyman & Smith, 2003; Benson, 2001;

Smith, 2000; Dam, 1995; Little, 1991; Holec, 1988; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981). Learner autonomy means encouraging students in classroom to decide objective, content, methodology and techniques in order to monitor the progression and evaluation of what has been learned. Eventually, this process of autonomy makes the learners able to establish their own learning (Balcikanli, 2010).

Learner autonomy is an important area of research in the field of applied linguistics (Nakata, 2014; Hardy-Gould, 2013). The basic reason for the growing interest in learner autonomy is because of its focus on individual learners. Learner autonomy is

widely researched and quoted area in language learning classes (Smith 2008; Little, 2007; Dafei, 2007; Cotteral, 2000; Fenner, 2000; Trebbi, 1989; Wenden, 1987). Holec, the father of learner autonomy defines learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (1981, p. 1). In View of Thornbury (2006), “autonomy is your capacity to take responsibility for, and control of, your own learning, whether in an institutionalized context, or completely independent of a teacher or institution” (p. 22). For Benson (2011), “autonomy is multidimensional and takes many different forms according to the person, the setting, and multiple contextual and micro-contextual factors. Learners display autonomy in very different ways... (and autonomy) is essentially the capacity to take charge of one’s learning” (p. 16). Learner autonomy is the capacity of a learner to take charge of his own learning. This charge can be extended to all aspects of learning, from smaller decisions in the class to the larger aspects of assessment and evaluation.

However, in most of the cases it is observed that the classrooms are mostly, teacher centered. Designing a syllabus, decisions for content, selections of book, divisions of marks, types of activities in the class are determined by the teacher. Thus giving students an opportunity to have their active part in decision making positions, even in an advanced level does not seem applicable and the teacher dominate the advance level students same way as they do at elementary (beginner) level. As a result a student lack autonomy, self-confidence and power of decision making in the future, that is in fact the purpose of language classes as language classes are meant to make learner able to speak in foreign language, confidently. The following paper explores the learner autonomy in English language classes at advance level.

Statement of the Problem

English is taught at three levels, basic, intermediate and advance. Learner autonomy usually is related with the latter one, as there is no concept of learner autonomy at beginning level. Dependent learners lack autonomy, self-confidence and power of decision making, which have been considered some of key elements of language learning classes. On the other hand, providing students with an opportunity to have their active part in decision making positions in an advance level is a good strategy adopted by a number of teachers and learners. Considering the importance of learner autonomy in language learning classes, this study is conducted to check the presence of learner autonomy in ELL classes in National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI).

Objectives of the Study

- To find out whether the learners in English language classes are autonomous or not
- To explore the teachers’ perceptions regarding learner autonomy in English language classes
- To identify teaching practices to promote learner autonomy in English language classes

Research Questions

1. Are the learners in English Language classes autonomous?
2. What are the teachers’ perceptions about learner autonomy?
3. How do the teachers develop learner autonomy in English language classes?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for the students who are the main emphasis as an importance factor in learning will be highlighted in this research. The teachers will also be the beneficiaries as they will learn about various strategies to promote learner

autonomy. The study also has pedagogical significance as besides benefitting the teachers and students, it will be platform for researchers providing them a data on learner autonomy.

Delimitation of the study

The study is delimited to:

Two public universities International Islamic University Islamabad and National University of Modern Languages Islamabad.

LITERATURE REVIEW

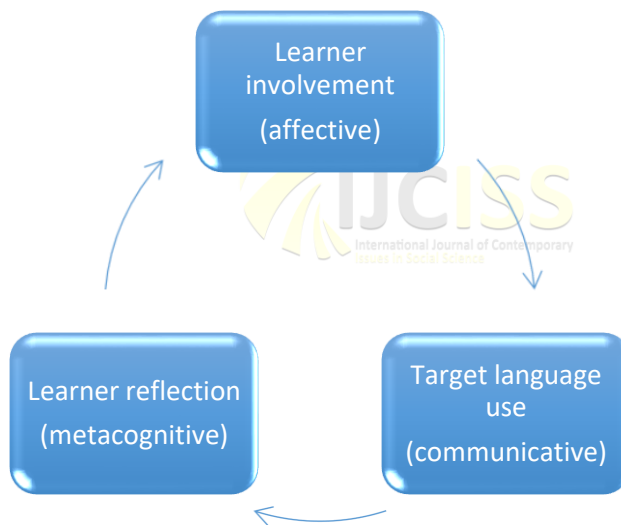
The concept of learner autonomy

Holec (1981) described Learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s learning” and this “grows out of the individual learner's acceptance of responsibility for his or her own learning.”

According to Little there are three pedagogical principles:

1. Learner involvement: “engaging learners to share responsibility for the learning process” (the affective dimension)
2. Learner reflection; “helping learners to think critically when they plan, monitor and evaluate their learning” (the metacognitive dimension)
3. Appropriate target language use: “autonomy in language learning and autonomy in language use are two sides of the same coin” (the communicative dimension)

These three principles are not hierarchically related, each implies the other two.



It is obvious that in language classes, students are required to be cognitively and affectively engaged in communication, constructing, the meaning of language being learned (Wang & Peverley, 1986). They are also required to be able to express their own perspectives on language interpretation and appreciation.

The term has also come to be used in at least five ways (Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 2)

- 1) “for situations in which learners study entirely on their own”

- 2) “for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning”
- 3) “for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education”
- 4) “for the exercise of learners’ responsibility for their own learning”
- 5) “for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning”

Omaggio (1978) lists seven key attributes of autonomous learners as follows (Wenden, 1998, pp. 41- 42)

- 1) "Autonomous learners have insights into their learning styles and strategies"
- 2) "take an active approach to the learning task at hand"
- 3) "are willing to take risks i.e., to communicate in the target language at all costs"
- 4) "are good guessers"
- 5) "attend to form as well as to content, that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy"
- 6) "develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply"
- 7) "have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language"

Kohonen (1992) and Boud (198) define autonomous learners as "To all intents and purposes, the autonomous learner takes a (pro-) active role in the learning process, generating ideas and availing himself of learning opportunities, rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher". This places emphasis on learners' activeness and independence in learning, which is reinforced by Wang and Peverley (1986) who stated that autonomous learners are cognitively and affectively involved in the learning process.

Cakici (2017) quotes Blin (2004) in his study who posits that learner autonomy is a "multidimensional" concept in different educational settings which takes us towards the concept of autonomy in language learning classroom.

Autonomy, as a multi-faceted nature of concept, is considered as developing a sense of independent learning in the context of foreign language learning. Hedge (2000) declares that autonomy is "the ability of the learner to take responsibility for his or her own learning and to plan, organize, monitor the learning process independently of the teacher" (p, 410). This independency can be measured by the following important aspects of EFL teaching which in fact gives a view of how English language teaching classes must work.

Language teaching and learning have some principles as;

- Motivation is an important factor and EFL teachers should motivate the learner. (Cook, 2001).

- Using target language outside the classroom is an essential factor in EFL learning. The students must be given an opportunity to do so (Cook, 2001).
- "Language learning and teaching are shaped by students learning and goals" (Rivers, 1997).
- "Language learning and teaching are based on communication" (Rivers, 1997).

All of these principles focus on what and why the students are learning, giving them a freedom to communicate and give them the confidence to use target language in the class, without fear of being wrong.

For Little there are following important things that a teacher need to follow in an English language class.

- She/ he must use target language in the class as a medium of instruction.
- He/ she must involve her learner in various activities in the classroom, by given them opportunity to use language freely, experimenting it according to their own will. This will make the learning easier for the learners.
- He/ she should help the learners in setting their goals in an EFL class and also how to discuss, analyse and evaluate their learning in the target language.
- He/ she must "require her learners to identify individual goals but pursue them through collaborative work in small groups".
- Help he students "to keep a written record of their learning plans of lessons and projects, lists of useful vocabulary, whatever texts they themselves produce".
- He/ she must be able to help the learners in their self-evaluation, in the class, in the process of learning a foreign language.

Wenden (1991) adds that successful learners have learnt how to learn. They have been equipped with

1. Learning policies
2. The knowledge about language learning
3. Attitudes that enable the students to use the skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher.

Developing learner autonomy, in short, is unquestionably essential for learners' life-long study and for their retaining of their knowledge.

Learner autonomy has received an increasing amount of attention. In particular, it is seen that the practical implementation of learner autonomy in formal contexts such as formal foreign language teaching has given rise to numerous theories and studies that have elaborated on the issue. Although learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept with various interpretations, its promotion still requires further research. This study aims at offering an additional viewpoint to the issue by exploring the extent to which learner autonomy is promoted in formal English teaching in IIUI and NUML.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The study was based on investigation of the learner autonomy in English language learning classes. The study was qualitative in nature. The population of study included teachers and students from two universities (IIUI, NUML). Eight teachers (4 from each university) and forty students (20 from each university) were selected as a sample of the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from teachers and students. Keeping in view the ethical values the researcher get permission for interview conduction and recording. Thematic analysis was done to analyze the data.

Validation of research instruments

The questionnaires for conducting interview were developed by the researcher based on the literature review. The questionnaires were validated with the purpose to get views and suggestions from experts on the instruments before data collection. The questionnaires were circulated among five teachers for ensuring the validity. After validation, the questionnaires have been modified according to the suggestions from teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forty students from two universities were interviewed in order to know the level of students' autonomy in ELL classes. There are two basic aspects focused in this research; the students' efforts to learn English language and the teachers' role in ELL classes. Questions were designed keeping in

view both of the domains. Following themes emerged from students' responses.

1. Students' Role in ELL Classes

This part of analysis highlights students' efforts to learn English language both inside and outside the classroom. Through their responses, it is discussed either or not the students are autonomous.

i. Setting Goals at the Start of the Term

It is analyzed through the responses of respondents that students do not set goals for themselves in each semester. They depend on teachers for learning language. As one of the respondent reported that "teachers provide outline there is no need to set separate notes or goals because it already contains a lot of content for the semester". A few of the students reported that they set goals depicting what they aim to learn. They also make notes. Most of them do not set goals and come in the classroom without any idea of what's going to happen next.

ii. Use of Target Language Outside the Class

Some of the students were concerned about the use of target language in their home. They were enthusiastic about their learning and focus on whatever and wherever someone is talking in English. They also practically try to speak English. One of the respondents reported that "I want to talk in English with my family and friends but can't speak it to everyone". Another respondent said that "I try to chat in English with my friends".

Some of them use the target language in their conversation outside the classroom. The rest only use the target language in the class and even that was with an emphasis by the teacher. Outside the class, they were least concerned about using English language. They were not confident enough to speak English openly in front of everyone. Their use of English was limited to English learning class only.

iii. Efforts to Learn Language Outside the Class

Most of the students learn the grammatical forms taught by the teacher in the class. They do repeat them in their homes, but they were less concerned about exploring the other similar forms on their own at home. As one of the respondents said "my teacher teaches me everything."

Only a few students make efforts to learn the language outside the class by reading grammar

books, listening news, watching movies and listen to people talking about in English. One of the students said “I read English news paper daily”. Another respondent said “I watch English movies and sometimes read English novels”. Some students try to learn English by practicing it at home as one said “I write essays”.

iv. Efforts of the Students to Learn English Language Inside the Classroom

It is analyzed from the responses of participants that they do not consciously adopt any strategy for learning and rely only what the teacher has given to them. Some of the students said that they can never catch the concept skipped in the class. The respondents reported that they focus on lectures, listen it attentively and try to speak in English in the classroom. They present certain topics and role-plays in the class to learn English language.

The teachers allow them to select the topics of presentation and activities on their own. The students like working in pairs and groups for their presentations.

v. Kind of Material Used to Learn Language

It is analyzed that most of the students had bilingual mobile dictionaries and they do use them in case of difficulty in understanding the meaning of a word. However, they do not use any of the other sources to learn English vocabulary. One of the participants said that “I read newspaper daily”. Some watch English movies and watch talk-show or English news. Majority of students rarely use any of these sources to learn English.

2. Role of Teachers in ELL Classes

It is analyzed from the responses of students that teachers were considered important in learning English language. Some of them showed complete dependency over teacher. Others showed independency while learning under teachers’ guidance. However, it is evident that the teachers play a vital role in ELL classes. The following themes were generated from the responses of students about the role of teachers in ELL classes.

i. Need of Teachers in Understanding the Content

It is analyzed from the responses of students that most of the student are in a kind of fear that they do not understand the lesson if they missed the class.

They are dependent on the teacher’s lectures. Although they get notes from other students in the next class, but they think that note taking can take the place of a teacher’s lecture. The responses of the students were like;

“I learn better when the teacher explains something on the board”.

“I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English”.

“The content or course outline is provided by the teacher and I have to learn accordingly”.

The students were asked about content designing, about which they were completely unaware.

ii. Need of Teacher for Confidence Building

It is analyzed from the responses of students that most of the students cannot speak confidently in front of fellow students and start shivering even in front of the teacher. So they all need the teacher as a guide in Learning English while some students feel shy and remain reserve in front of other people, other class, other teachers and in social communication. They need proper guidance, attention and support from their teachers. One of the students explained that “my teacher always has to guide me in learning English”. The learners depend upon the teacher, but they are free to select the topic of presentation and activities according to their level of understanding.

iii. Need of Teacher For Repeating the Content

A few of students reported that they need repetition of grammatical rules by the teacher in terms of learning, but according to most of the students, they can learn while the teacher once tells the rules. There is no need for repetition. Moreover, the students are happy when the teacher tells them details of English language use. They personally like it and use it to understand the things.

iv. Correction of Mistakes and Removing Weaknesses

Teacher was also regarded an important part in building students’ strengths up and removing their weaknesses. It is analyzed that students seem confused, about their own mistakes. They are of the view that how will they know about their mistakes without correction from the teachers? So they need teacher evaluation in order to learn their weak areas. The Students also highlighted different some aspects which show the role of teacher in building strengths

and removing the weaknesses. Some of them think that they were mostly given a chance by the teacher to present the content orally, others noticed that written work was emphasized more. Thus the areas an individual students needs attention, was focused in the classes.

One of the students reported that “if I find a concept difficult to understand or take more time than others, I am being helped by my fellow students as well as by the teacher”.

v. Need of Teacher to Provide the Content

It is analyzed from the responses of the respondents that learners are dependent and want the teacher to set syllabus and even provide the vocabulary to memorize. One of the respondents reported that “I write the new words spoken by teachers in class and memorize it”. Most of the student said that besides delivering a lecture and providing them syllabus, they also want the teacher to provide them new words to learn.

2. Teachers’ Perceptions about Learner Autonomy

i. Teachers’ views on Lerner autonomy

It is analyzed from the responses of participants that the teachers have different views on learner autonomy. One of the participants called it “students ‘self-confidence’ that makes him able to attend the classes as an active participant and get the higher scores at the end of the term.

Another defined learner autonomy as “having the ability to take charge of their learning like allowing the students to participate freely in the class and giving them an access to form groups within the class without teachers’ interference and having an access to make their presentations or choose their roles for different activities in the group”.

One of them said that “we shift our focus from teaching to learning. Our focus is not just to deliver a lecture in the class and come out, rather we have to make the learner able to speak the language confidently not only inside but outside the classroom. With different worksheets and activities students’ learning is ensured”.

According to one of the participants, autonomy means freedom. Freedom with the ability to ask questions, the ability and opportunity to

critique the things, the students do not understand or do not like.

According to one of the participants “autonomy means allowing students to use latest technology like cell-phone, laptop and other digital materials inside the classroom. These are not allowed for personal use, but are sometimes used to bring the outside world in the class. I personally sometimes show some videos in phonetics class in order to provide the learners the pure accent”.

Learner autonomy is also seen as a way of students’ self-grooming, self-evaluation and self-regulation, where under the teachers’ instruction the learner chooses his/hers own will.

ii. Importance of Developing Learner Autonomy

It is analyzed from the responses of teachers that learner autonomy is an important phenomenon and process in teaching and learning settings with an aim of including students in different classroom matters. Learner autonomy in language learning classes is admired and appreciated by the participants. One of the participants associated it with student’s self-confidence, the other with self-grooming and even one linked it with the freedom. The responses of the respondents were like;

“Learning under the guidance of the teachers helps students in understanding the things better not only in the current semester but also in later stages of learning”.

“The feeling that I am able to be consulted in the class, I am able to choose my role for any activity, I am able enough to present the content in the class, and many other aspects that are used in the class with the introduction of learner autonomy give students a feeling of self-worth, making them confident to freely and confidently move on in any stage”.

“Since learner autonomy is associated with motivation from teachers’ side and confidence and effort from students’ side, it makes a perfect environment of learning and is essential for students’ success”.

iii. Characteristics of an Ideal Autonomous Learner

Autonomy never leads to disruption rather helps the teachers in making the things easier for the students. If the students are given autonomy, they are expected to behave properly in the class.

Autonomous learners are expected to be self-reflexive, confident and active in the classroom. Autonomous learners are the one to check their own mistakes, judge their peers and have to come in front of the class and express their views openly.

According to a few of respondents, questioning is the basic component of autonomy. Since the learners have the freedom to speak in the class, they are open and welcomed to question and even critique, but this aspect is often absent in the class.

iv. Learner Autonomy in ELL Classes

It is analyzed from the responses of respondents that autonomy is essential part of learning language as the purpose of language classes is not only to teach but make students efficient learners speaking the language fluently inside and outside the class. One of the participants said that “it is essential in ELL classes to be autonomous as these classes are student-centered”. Another participant reported that “our focus is to teach language not about the language, but the language, and we can get this purpose only through an interactional process with the students”.

A respondent reported that “learning processes and learning strategies are made better for the learners. The learners have to set their goals before the session what actually they want to learn. How much knowledge do they have of a thing and then choose among three of the courses of language learning, called two-months, three-months, and six-months respectively. So a language learner before coming to class has an ability to reflect his present knowledge and set goals for the next”.

According to one of the participants, “in language learning class students choices are always welcomed. The class does not contain some A to Z syllabus, rather content is generated taking example from the students. The topic is defined by the teacher, but what inside will be discussed is usually determined by the student”.

A few of the respondents linked autonomy with teacher control. Learner autonomy cannot be given to any student or at any level, as it will lead towards disruption within the class and failure of the students at the end. According to one of the respondents “I am in favor of giving students opportunities to learn on their own but I can’t leave

them on their own, rather I will provide complete guidance and autonomy under my supervision”.

v. Promoting Learner Autonomy

It is analyzed from the responses of respondents that learner autonomy is encouraged in ELL classes. It was appreciated by almost all the participants. The responses of the respondents were like;

“Language learning is a process where learners have to learn to speak. So they need to be heard more instead of teaching and delivering the content. Student may find the class disruptive and may lose interest if the teacher speaks more of the time”.

“A learner, who tries on his own, learns better than the one who depends upon the teacher for each and everything. Since the teacher can ask you to speak English inside the classroom but can’t force you to speak it outside. So a responsible learner makes his position and takes charge of his responsibility of learning a language”.

3. Teachers’ Practices to Foster Learner Autonomy

i. Decision Making in Classroom Content or Lesson

It is analyzed according to the responses of respondents that decision making in classroom content or lesson is neglected in most of the cases. According to most of the participants, students cannot be given autonomy in selecting the content. However, activities can be organized according to their will and convenience like arrangements of classes, make-up classes, presentations and papers.

One of the participants said, “I support autonomy in the classes, but can’t allow my students to decide the course outline or the sequence of topics to learn as the teacher can do it better. However, how to learn can be decided by the students”.

Another participant said that “the course outline is pre-designed by the department. Teachers get a copy of it from the department and decide the arrangement. However students have autonomy when deciding the activities, role-plays or other kinds of activities”.

ii. Focus on Students’ Strengths and Weaknesses

It is analyzed from the responses of respondents that students are the focus of attention in language learning classes. Students’ weak areas are

identified through their performance in classroom activities, presentations, and participation. Once knowing the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of students, the teachers than plan different kinds of strategies to make sure that every student learns. Students with poor presentation skills are given chances to speak more in the class. Students with poor writing skills are given different kinds of writing activities. In this way every students gets motivated and participates actively in the class.

One of the participants gave her views about student-centered approach by saying that “our main focus is to make the learners confident and fluent speaker without any hesitation. Since there are different kinds of students with different kinds of backgrounds which makes it a difficult task for the teacher to handle but we make sure that each student is learning by giving him/her individual attention”.

iii. Peer Evaluation

The respondents reported that in ELL classes, group work is always appreciated. Students are encouraged to form groups and participate in different activities freely. Since they work in groups, they are also given a chance to evaluate one another’s performance, generally referred to as peer evaluation.

Students are asked to evaluate their performance after some written activity. Sometime they are asked to check each other’s work in pairs or in groups. However, peer evaluation also requires proper teachers’ observation, check and control.

One of the respondents responded that “students are encouraged for peer-evaluation. There are group presentations, assignments and other tasks. Students are free to join the group according to their choice. They can freely choose the content to present in the class. All of these things give him confidence and he performs in a better way”.

iv. Role-plays and Presentations

It is analyzed from the responses of respondents that role-play and presentations are considered the spirit of ELL classes. Role-play and presentations are practiced in every class. Students are encouraged and are motivated to speak in front of the class.

According to one of the participants “role plays are used in every class. It is just like a stage drama, which boosts students’ confidence up, giving them a chance to speak confidently in front of the

class and in the long run in front of their actual roles in society”.

Another respondent reported that “presentations are considered important in boosting students’ level of confidence up. It’s a platform of letting the students speak and gives them a chance to take the charge of the class that motivates the students and makes them able to speak”.

v. How to Foster Learner Autonomy in ELL Classes

The participants highlighted a number of methods, techniques and strategies to foster learner autonomy in ELL classes. These are discussed in the following.

- Give the students, confidence that they are able to learn on their own. They are able to learn and they will succeed in whatever they are doing.
- Students need to take the responsibility of their learning. None can be fruitful if the learner does not efforts.
- Positive attitude from students showing that they are able to learn and can achieve their goals if they work.
- Learning from previous experiences, both from the failures and success.
- Proper coaching, guidance and counselling from the teacher.
- A perfect environment of learning created with the efforts of the teacher and the students.
- Understanding the fact that a student cannot be given autonomy overnight. It takes time and stages to be an autonomous learner.
- The use of technology in the classes to give learners autonomy inside the class.
- Encouragement of the students to question and critique.

CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn from the analysis

Students are not self-directed learners in general. They do not set their learning goals, do not select the content or use other books and rely only on what the teacher has told them. The students are confident enough to declare that they will reach a good level in the English language. However, they

need the help of the teacher in every assignment to score and correct it, as well as helping them learn better English. So they have a weak approach towards decision making position.

They are dependent upon teachers in terms of understanding lessons and using materials for learning English language on their own. So they are not independent in terms of their work in language learning.

Students take the teacher as a guide, a helper, a support, a source confidence and admiration. This high level of dependency upon the teacher, takes them far away from autonomy. They want the teacher to correct their mistakes, teach them the lessons, and select the content, so that they can learn better. This is again a sign of dependency, which shows that the majority of students is not autonomous.

Students do not know their weaknesses, as they have pronunciation and spelling issues. Other go with, whatever, the teacher tells them about. They are not reflective enough to know about their own mistakes. The strategies towards the solution are thus beyond their reach. So, the students are dependent, upon the teacher in terms of pointing their mistakes out and correcting them. However, their attitudes towards learning activities were positive. Students like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson. They are confident enough to speak fluently and they all confess that if they are unable to learn a thing, it is their own mistake.

Students were dependent in terms of content of language. They were unaware of their mistakes. They did not test their own learning and want the teacher to conduct tests and mark their performance. Students are not able to define their objectives. However, they want autonomy. So the need is to help them out in doing so.

For the learners, classroom is the rich source of learning. They find it difficult to try any of the other method to learn English on their own. They said that they want to speak fluently, but are unable to use the outside resources and rely only on the class.

An analysis shows that the students give a lot of importance to teacher explanation and supervision. They made very less effort on their own in terms of their learning. So, it can be concluded that except the few, learners are dependent. However, they have abilities. They are confident enough to

learn English. They want to highlight their mistakes and strive to learn better. All they need is a little attention and support to do all that.

An analysis of teachers' interviews shows that teachers try to promote learner autonomy in ELL classes. They have positive views about promoting learner autonomy and they do it using various strategies, including, presentations, role-plays, home-tasks, group and peer assessment and evaluation, promoting questioning and critique.

Throughout this study, it has been argued that are the learners in ELL classes autonomous or dependent. The findings of the research show that only in certain aspect the learners showed some autonomy, e.g. positive attitudes towards learning and their confidence to speak English fluently. Autonomous learning leads to greater motivation to learn a language. This sense of responsibility is required by the students who need to utilize their time to follow the instructions properly, realize the responsibility of their learning and make efforts for fluent English speakers.

Recommendations

- Attention of individual differences is rarely paid in English language learning classes. It is recommended that the teachers may use different strategies keeping in view the individual differences of the students so that all the students may learn equally.
- Students' support and responsibility is among one of the key characteristics of ELL classes. Without students' efforts no one can teach a language. So the teachers may encourage the sense of responsibility among the students.

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