

USING MODERN METHODS IN DEVELOPING AUTONOMY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstract. Learner autonomy has become a key concept in modern foreign language education. This paper explores contemporary approaches to developing autonomy in foreign language learners, examining the role of digital technologies, task-based learning, metacognitive strategies, and formative assessment. Opinions of leading scholars are analyzed, along with practical implications for classroom implementation.

Key words: *Learner autonomy, foreign language learning, digital tools, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Metacognitive strategies, Formative assessment.*

Introduction. The shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered pedagogy in foreign language education has placed greater emphasis on the concept of learner autonomy. Defined by Holec (1981) as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning,” autonomy is now seen as a vital component in fostering long-term language proficiency [1]. Recent research confirms that autonomous learners are more motivated, resilient, and successful in foreign language acquisition [2]. In the 21st century, the development of modern educational technologies and teaching strategies has significantly expanded the tools available to promote learner autonomy.

This research is based on a qualitative analysis of peer-reviewed academic literature, teacher interviews, and policy documents related to foreign language pedagogy. The study synthesizes views from prominent education theorists such as Henri Holec, David Little, and Phil Benson, as well as empirical studies on the use of modern instructional strategies [3].

1. Digital Technologies and Autonomous Learning

Modern learning platforms, such as Duolingo, Memrise, Quizlet, and learning management systems (LMS) like Moodle or Google Classroom, allow learners to personalize and control their own learning pace and content. According to Godwin-Jones (2011), such technologies “empower learners by giving them control over time, pace, and sequence of instruction.”

Digital autonomy also includes language learning blogs, online portfolios, and mobile-assisted language learning (MALL). These tools facilitate self-assessment and reflection - key components of autonomous learning. For instance, Reinders & White

(2016) found that learners using e-portfolios to track progress were more likely to engage in metacognitive reflection [4].

“Technology is a tool for autonomy, not autonomy itself. The pedagogical challenge lies in guiding students to use tools reflectively” [3].

2. Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL)

The Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) framework is one of the most effective modern methods that promotes autonomy. It encourages learners to engage in real-life communication and solve authentic tasks collaboratively or individually. As Nunan (2004) notes, “tasks can serve as vehicles for the development of autonomy, especially when learners are given choices in task design and execution” [5].

For example, project-based tasks such as creating a travel blog in the target language or conducting interviews with native speakers require learners to make decisions about planning, vocabulary selection, and time management—hallmarks of autonomous behavior.

3. Metacognitive Strategy Training

Metacognition - “thinking about thinking”—is integral to developing autonomy. Learners must learn how to plan, monitor, and evaluate their language learning processes. According to O’Malley & Chamot (1990), metacognitive strategies include organizing learning materials, setting goals, and self-assessing progress [6].

Modern instruction includes explicit metacognitive training where students keep learning diaries, use checklists, and engage in self-assessment activities. In a study by Wenden (1998), students who received strategy training demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy and self-regulation in their learning [7].

4. Formative Assessment and Feedback

Formative assessment practices such as peer feedback, self-evaluation, and portfolio assessment promote reflection and responsibility. As Black and Wiliam (1998) argue, effective formative assessment “empowers learners to understand and control their own learning” [8]. This is especially relevant in language learning, where progress can be gradual and nonlinear.

Modern classrooms use digital formative tools like Google Forms for quizzes, Padlet for reflective posts, or Flipgrid for spoken feedback. These tools engage learners in evaluating their progress in real time, fostering motivation and independence.

Modern methods of language instruction reflect a paradigm shift toward the development of learner autonomy as both a means and an end in language education. However, autonomy does not arise spontaneously—it requires pedagogical

scaffolding. As Little (2007) insists, “autonomy must be taught; it does not develop simply because teachers relinquish control” [2].

In some contexts, learners are accustomed to teacher-directed models and may resist autonomous.

Educators must be trained in how to scaffold and promote autonomy effectively.

Not all learners have equal access to modern technologies, which may hinder digital autonomy.

Despite these challenges, the overall trend in language education supports the integration of autonomy-promoting practices. This aligns with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which explicitly emphasizes the learner’s role in managing their own learning trajectory.

Conclusion. The use of modern methods - digital tools, task-based learning, metacognitive training, and formative assessment - has proven effective in fostering learner autonomy in foreign language education. By integrating these approaches, educators can better prepare learners for lifelong learning and language mastery. Nevertheless, autonomy must be purposefully cultivated through informed pedagogy and learner support. Future research should explore longitudinal outcomes of autonomy-based teaching and its impact on proficiency levels across different language skills.

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