

Recognizing the Relationship between the Foreign Languages

Learners' Autonomy and their Language Knowledge

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Abstract

process of comprehending and using languages. For many years, learning a foreign language independently and autonomously has attracted the attention of a great number of teachers and educators. There are many variables for an autonomous learning; however, willingness and taking responsibility for the learning tasks are the two factors of an autonomous learning. Dafei (2007) studied the relationship between autonomy and learning a language and represented that learner autonomy influences students' language proficiency. In educational contexts, the concept of autonomy has attracted a lot of attention. Indeed, this ability should be true to have better learning.

II. Review of literature

A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the role of learner autonomy in second language teaching and learning. In a study conducted by Wachob (2006), the participants of the study included first year students at Nanyang Business School, Singapore, who began their English Proficiency course and described as poor in language skills and less motivated in their study of English. The main aim of the study was to help students manage their own learning and be more autonomous learners. To this end, the prior methods involving grammar-based, teacher-centered, and recourses, including standardized American textbooks written for ESL students were changed and modified to develop motivation and autonomy. It is worth noting that the methodology was also altered to use cooperative learning, learner choice, thoughtful and more active classroom. Results of questionnaires from four cohorts of students showed positive responses to the changes.

A noticeable disconnect between the goals of students (better writing and speaking skills) and a preferred strategy (reading) points toward

The current experiment sought to investigate the relationship between the Foreign Languages Learner's autonomy and their language knowledge. Initially, 170 female and male Iranian students were randomly selected out of 300 from foreign language institutes in Ahvaz. They consisted of 100 females and 70 males and the age of the students ranged from 16 to 19. Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used for making participants homogenous. Upon the obtained scores, the participants were divided into 3 groups defined as elementary, intermediate and advanced (EFL) learners. The data was collected through OQPT test as well as the autonomy questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha was applied to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the foreign language learner autonomy and their language knowledge. The mean difference between foreign language learners' autonomy scores at the elementary level is significant for both the intermediate level and advanced level. This was also the case regarding the difference between the autonomy of intermediate and advanced learners.

Key words: foreign language learners, autonomy, language knowledge

I. Introduction

People as language users, read, write, speak, and listen. They do all of these things in the natural languages like Persian, English, Russian, and Arabic. In fact, to know a language means to know the system of rules and principles which is the grammar for that language. To understand a language system we need knowledge about what the words mean, how sentences are made, how words combine to form sentence meanings, and so on. There are different forms of knowledge for language understanding which are concerned with the