

Students' Responses to Learner Autonomy in Taiwan: An Investigation into Learners' Beliefs

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Abstract

This article reports students' responses to learner autonomy in Taiwan as an investigation into Learners' beliefs. Learner autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning. Teachers' have to motivate these dependent students to develop responsibility for their own learning without the need for repetitive guidance. One-hundred, twelve first-year non-English majors from four English communication classes answered a 47-item questionnaire with eight items specific to learner autonomy. Data analysis revealed: (a) students regard learning autonomy as significantly beneficial because of the positive learning environment it engenders; (b) students' development of learning strategies offers real opportunity to monitor the learning processes during instruction; and, (c) teachers' awareness of students' thoughts on learning autonomy promotes motivation and develops cooperation between students and teachers. Based on these findings, implications are discussed to raise students' awareness of learning autonomy and responsibility to comprehend what is learned and thereby engender academic independence.

Key Words: learner autonomy, scaffolding, participation, teacher-student interaction, self-development

1. Introduction

Learning a foreign language is not easy because of the amount of personal adaptation it may require. For example, ESL students frequently encounter a change in their new teacher's fundamental approach to classroom instruction and in the culture of learning they may have been accustomed to back home. Littlewood (1981) explained that the ubiquitous idea of the CLT approach found in western classrooms may conflict with certain pre-existing cultural notions students may harbor about supposed teachers' roles and appropriate teaching methods. Karava-Doukas (1996) indicated that the mismatch between the teachers' beliefs and western classroom practices may yet be attributable. A mismatch may exist because the teacher did not examine the EFL students' attitudes prior to implementing new classroom instructional approaches that are outside their students' cultural frame.

There are some cultural barriers for Taiwanese students to learn English. Tsai (2007) indicated that the traditional Confucian pedagogy in Taiwan's education system that EFL students are discouraged to communicate in English since grammar and reading skills were of more immediate concern to learn than content knowledge. As such, it is understandable that Taiwanese students will focus on form and content but not content of texts. Ting-Toomey (1985) indicated that Asian students from high-context cultures experience barriers to understanding from a collective or traditional expectation of what is acceptable as classroom behavior. On the other hand, western teachers from low-context cultures experience barriers to understanding and potential conflicts whenever their individual normative expectations of acceptable classroom behaviors are violated. As such, Asian EFL students often interact on a completely different level than western teachers might presently understand or appreciate. In Asian culture, open confrontation is to be avoided, risk is to be avoided, and uncertainty is to be avoided (ibid.). As a result, it is felt that it is the responsibility of students from high-context cultures to overcome their own cultural barriers if they are to achieve their goal of language in low-context cultural environments.

The cultural barriers that EFL students experience may be somewhat disagreeable since they can be influential, paradigmatic, institutional, stereotypical and even hyper-localized to the classroom setting and learning (Kim, 1997). In the case of the international college EFL classroom, the forms of cultural barriers that EFL students are most likely to face involve the paradigmatic and stereotypical. In such a paradigm, the host environment of a western EFL classroom where the CLT approach tends to govern communicative norms of behavior and assessment (Kim, 2001). This choice of learning context means that EFL students are required to conform to western (low-context) teaching or learning conventions. Opposition will occur because of differing notions of what constitutes classroom learning. From an Asian point-of-view, very little must change relative to prior classroom learning experiences because the classroom and students are Asian. From a western point-of-view, the native English-speaking teacher (NEST) and the communicative approach to language teaching he or she instructs with should be accommodated. As a result, Asian EFL students are faced with definitive cultural barriers. Foremost, is the stereotype that they are confronted with when they are labeled as reticent in the classroom (Lee, & Ng, 2010). In such a situation, EFL teachers will characterize their classrooms as “silent” or their students as “passive and reticent” because of the comparisons made to western models used as a cultural yardstick. Similarly, the teacher’s expectation of students achieving their own level of learner autonomy may be completely lost on students accustomed to “giving back to teacher” all that is learned throughout the instructional period.

This paper is an attempt to investigate the language beliefs, both in general terms and with regard to learner autonomy, among Taiwanese learners of English. It intends to provide answers to the following questions:

- ◆What do the Taiwanese learners of English think about learner autonomy?
- ◆What motivates the students to acquire learner autonomy?
- ◆What is the current awareness of learner autonomy in Taiwanese ESL classrooms?

Questionnaire results are presented as indicators of students’ beliefs. The general patterns emergent are then discussed with selected excerpts from interviews with university students in Taiwan.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Learner Autonomy in the EFL Classroom

In an optimal pedagogy, learners are active and responsible participants in the learning process. According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), when learners become more aware of the learning process, make choices and decisions, and self-assess their progress in the classroom they develop learner autonomy.

Learner autonomy is “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning (Holec, 1981, p. 3). According to Holec, autonomous learners would do the following: (a) taking responsibility for determining their own learning objectives, (b) defining the contents and progressions of their learning; (c) selecting the methods and techniques to be used, (d) monitoring the acquisition procedure, and (e) evaluating what had been acquired. Benson (2001) indicated that learner autonomy required the content of learning which should be freely determined by learners. Scharle and Szabó (2000) suggested that learner autonomy requires a combination of responsibility and active involvement that are strongly interrelated. Ponton (1999) defined learner autonomy as “the characteristic of the person who independently exhibits agency [i.e., intentional behavior] in learning activities” (pp. 13-14) and stated that autonomy represents a subset of the attributes associated with self-directedness. Ponton suggested that autonomy, like self-directedness, represent cognitive and affective qualities of the agent while autonomous learning refers to subsequent conative manifestations. In autonomous learning, learners use and ensue intentional activity (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Learner autonomy refers to a broad, subjective approach to the learning process, rather than to a particular mode of teaching or learning. A self-directed, learner-based approach to autonomy directly focuses on the production of behavioral and psychological changes that will enable individual learners to take greater control over their own learning. In the notion of learner autonomy, good language learners engage in active participation and contribute to their own learning (Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, & Robbins, 1999). To illustrate, autonomy may occur when learners learn how to construct knowledge for themselves about how to speak in a target language that will be in addition to the teachers’ prior scaffolding. For this reason, learners have to develop autonomy through an interdependence, rather than independence, with the teachers’ instructional methods. The current value of the learner autonomy concept lies in its usefulness as an organizing principle for practical considerations within the communicative and learner-centered pedagogies (Benson, 2001).

Learner autonomy may facilitate the quantity of learning, the diversity of learning preferences, the need for self-access, the use of technological innovation, and the commercialization of language learning that must take place because of external market-driven pressures (Benson, 2001). As more students seek access to English language learning, both public and private schools must derive ways to teach more students, greater content, in a shorter period of time to achieve higher profits (Wong, & Wu, 2011). As a result, self-directed EFL instruction has become commodified through the internationalization of higher education in order to meet greater demand. The amount of self-help, self-directed, and distance learning materials in language learning is marked evidence of this trend.

In a study, Esch (1997) found that his learners of intermediate French at the University of Cambridge were able to determine the content and conduct of training workshops without the involvement of an outside authority. For the duration of the study, meetings were held once a week and included a pre-planned activity carried over from the previous week. Esch ascribed the workshop activity, an integral of the part of the study, to be “successful” solely on the basis of the autonomous self-instructional approach. The implication of this is that learner autonomy, by itself, could be beneficial to the language learning process.

In sum, the purpose of teaching is to enable learners to become independent learners or autonomous learners (Brown, 2001). The learner-based approach to learner autonomy is an educational goal that assists in the positive development and progressive development of a culture (Holec, 1981). With communicative competence, learners can focus the production of behavioral and psychological changes that will enable learners to take a greater control over their personal learning experience (Benson, 2001). This approach can provide opportunities for EFL students to speak in the classroom based on self-initiative and self-interest.

Scharle and Szabó (2000) identified the essential aspects of learner autonomy as a set of skills and attitudes any student may obtain. These so-called “building blocks” (p. 7) included the following: a.) motivation (i.e. intrinsic and extrinsic) as a prerequisite for learning and responsibility development; b.) self-confidence that contributes to the development of responsibility; c.) focus on the process of learning rather than on the outcome of learning; d.) improvement of learning competencies; e.) cooperation with peers and teachers; f.) willingness to share in the learning experience; g.) establishment of clearly controlled expectations, limitations, and consequences involved in learning; and, h.) delegation of tasks and decisions from the teacher’s role to the students’ role.

For learner autonomy to take place, learners must assume a greater responsibility in their own learning process. This can be accomplished through a combination of learner development within the curricular aims in order to save time and money. By raising awareness, changing attitudes, and transferring roles, teachers and students can cooperate to achieve learner autonomy both inside and outside the classroom setting. It can provide attention to those students requiring more motivation to learn in an indirect way. And, it can utilize the course content as a meaningful context for strategy training to take place.

3. Research Methods

This study is part of a larger project which aimed to investigate reticence in the English language classroom in Taiwan. University students were the main research subjects and data was collected via a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. Eight items taken from the original 48-item questionnaire and six excerpts from the interviews have been selected as they touched upon issues of learner autonomy. It should be noted that the questionnaire was designed, piloted and administered simultaneously with the interviews, which means that the questions asked during interviews were very similar to items on the questionnaire.

3.1 Students’ Responses to Learner Autonomy in an Asian ESL Classroom

In an effort to create awareness among students of the need, benefits, and responsibilities of learner autonomy, questionnaires present a good starting point (Scharle, & Szabó, 2000, p. 16). The students’ responses to learner autonomy in an Asian ESL classroom were explored through a comparison of given responses after term instruction. Items 1~8 referred to student-teacher interactions relevant to self-development of learner autonomy aimed at students’ self-monitoring, goal-setting and perceived independence. In Table 1, descriptive statistics analysis was employed to compare both the students’ responses to learning autonomy.

First, as shown in Table 1, results indicate that there were no significant differences in students’ awareness of learning autonomy to Items 1~8 in the students’ responses.

These items were reflective of the students' traditional pre-dispositions to the potential development of learner autonomy in a given instructional context -- the ESL classroom.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistical results of the students' responses on the eight questions related to learner autonomy and ESL instruction. Responses are provided as follows.

1. I expect the teacher to be responsible for evaluating how much I have learnt in the English class

Item 1 was designed to elicit the subjects' responses about how much responsibility the teacher took for evaluating classroom English learning. To illustrate, in the students' responses to Item 1, 64% of the students (56% agreed and 8% strongly agreed) acknowledged that the teacher should be the responsible party for evaluating how much students have learned in the English class. It has been recognized that the teacher may be viewed as a control-point for learning through planned tasks which serve the technical needs of the discourse rather than the student (Holliday, 2003). However, the real and ongoing developer of learner autonomy is always the student him or herself (Holliday, 1999) regardless of sentiment to the contrary. Similarly, Item 2 and 3 were used to elicit a response of how much self-monitoring and self-evaluation took place during the subjects' overall target language use.

2. I can monitor my own language use

For responses to Items 2, 46% of the students (43% agreed and 3% strongly agreed) acknowledged that they could monitor their own language learning and achievement in the English class. According to Riley (2003), language learners utilized culturally specific concepts to decide how much or how little they wish to engage in the negotiating their own language learning. The given role of a language learner automatically required students' to report their own level of understanding to the teacher, while at the same time internalizing what was considered to be comprehensible input. Thus, the authority figure held by teachers in Asian culture is undeniable to the learner.

3. I can evaluate the quantity and the quality of the language that I have acquired

For responses to Items 3, 72% of the students (62% agreed and 10% strongly agreed) acknowledged that they had the ability to evaluate the quantity and the quality of the language they had acquired so far in the English class. The results conform to Clemente's (2011) suggestion that language learners are greatly influenced by the processes of interaction in the classroom. The subjective dynamics of the given learning culture were said to determine how much and to what extent learners wished to acquire language competency. Clemente claimed that the authority to decide what a student is to learn and how much to learn generally remains with the teacher in most traditional classroom venues. If learner autonomy is to take place, it will have to be a joint-culture creation shared between the student and the instructor. Items 4 and 5 were designed to elicit responses related to the subjects' sense of discovery of knowledge and motivation to learn spoken English.

4. I see knowledge as something that I I should discover by myself

For responses to Items 4, 60% of the students (58% agreed and 2% strongly agreed) acknowledged that they saw knowledge as something that they should discover on their own in the English class. Little's (1997) study of social interaction in the development of learner autonomy reflected an emphasis on discovering the target language through authentic interpersonal activities between learners and their peers. This meant that discovery could be both reflective and well as introspective.

5. I was highly motivated to learn spoken English

For responses to Items 5, 74% of the students (54% agreed and 20% strongly agreed) acknowledged that they were highly motivated to learn spoken English. The increased prestige of English in academic settings world-wide is undeniable. Speaking English is seen as a distinct advantage since access to textbooks, the internet, and social media are dependent on it. Therefore, it is strongly considered that Asian students are highly motivated to learn the English language in much the same way they learn the language mathematics and science for purely practical reasons (Wong, & Wu, 2011). Items 6 and 7 were designed to elicit responses about the subjects' setting of appropriate learning goals and selection of strategies to overcome perceived problems encountered in speaking English.

6. I set appropriate learning goals for speaking English

For responses to Items 6, 92% of the students (79% agreed and 13% strongly agreed) acknowledged that they set appropriate learning goals for themselves to learn spoken English.

According to Aoki and Smith (1999), students' goal setting should be centered on possible educational goals (i.e. higher education), willingness to take charge of one's own learning which learners may already possess in varying degrees, or attending to practical issues related to grades and attitudes toward classroom decorum. The judgment of what is considered appropriate is depending on how much or how little autonomy is desired by the learner and may be subjective as a result.

7. I consciously select learning strategies to overcome problems I encounter in English

For responses to Items 7, 59% of the students (55% agreed and 4% strongly agreed) acknowledged that they consciously select strategies to overcome problems they encounter in spoken English. According to Jin and Cortazzi (1996), students are wary of changing their adopted learning strategies because such change may tend to directly impact on their learning outcomes. For most Asian learners, what is to be learnt is largely defined by what is to be examined; therefore, most students choose those strategies that optimize results on specific learning goals like test scores and graduation.

8. I am an independent learner

Item 8 was designed to elicit a self-assessment of the students' independence as English language learners in the ESL classroom. For responses to Items 8, 75% of the students (50% agreed and 25% strongly agreed) affirmed that they were independent learners. According to Benson (1997), learners perceive of themselves as being independent from one of three perspectives. Students may be technically (emphasizing skills development), psychologically (emphasizing broader attitudes and cognitive abilities), or politically independent (emphasizing empowerment or emancipation) in terms of their given learning perspective. The scope of each orientation depends on the individual's learning goal.

3.2 The Qualitative Analysis

A qualitative analysis was administered to provide a better understanding of the student responses to the English language instruction. In addition to responses from the survey portion of this study, the data of the two open-ended responses taken from the survey were analyzed qualitatively. Further, personal interviews were conducted with 28 participants from one entire class. The results assisted researchers to understand the factors for the students' perceived benefits and limitations from teacher's scaffolding instruction and their own learning autonomy on English speaking development through English language instruction at the university.

3.3 An Interview Form

In order to further explore students' responses to learner autonomy in the ESL classroom during English speaking study, two open-ended interview questions were chosen to provide qualitative data for analysis. The researcher asked students from one entire class, with 28 respondents in all. Each class session had involved a two-hour class period for 16 weeks of the 18 week semester for purposes of individual recall. The first and last three week periods of the semester were not included in the recall period since these periods were used to gather the pre-test and post-test data. Twenty-eight selected student participants were interviewed by the researcher using an individual semi-structured interview technique "in order to provide valuable information about the language class" (Block, 1997, p. 348) and about the proposed treatment involved. The use of interviews to generate data is usually characterized by a degree of formality ranging from unstructured to semi-structured to structured formats (Nunan, 1992).

Semi-structured interviews are made up mostly of the questions that are probably open-ended questions with comments, examples, and / or follow-up probes (Wallace, 1998). Because of its flexibility and high-probability of eliciting relevant ideas from the interviewee, the semi-structured interview was chosen for this study. The design of an *Interview Form* was adapted from the semi-structured interview battery found in Liu (2009, pp. 294-298). Interview questions were focused on students' educational experience, self-assessment of personality and abilities, expectations of English lessons at the university, behavior in the English speaking classroom at the University, participation in classroom activities, self-assessment in assisting others in scaffolded speaking activities, self-rated assessment of English proficiency before and after the English speaking program, and strategies in English learning.

To better understand the subjects' perceptions of the gains and limitations of learner autonomy in the development of English speaking, the subjects' responses to two open-ended questions (Items 49-1 and 49-2) of the overall survey were asked, and were analyzed qualitatively in addition to those of the survey. The qualitative analysis results of the perceived gains (Item 49-1) related to the development of learning autonomy are summarized in Table 2; whereas, Table 3 presents the perceived limitations (Item 49-2) when developing learning autonomy.

In Item 49-1, the subjects reported that the aspect of self-directed instruction was the most beneficial consideration for pursuing learner autonomy. The ability to determine the pace of one's own learning, while studying what was of unlimited personal interest, while utilizing one's own learning methods was of chief virtue. More than three-quarters (62%) of subjects had affirmed. These results were supported in Gao (2003) which provided qualitative data based on the in-depth interview of 13 Chinese EFL students in the UK. Likewise, students thought that a notion of learner autonomy would provide them with a stress-free learning environment that might provide the prospect of independent, active, motivating, and imaginative learning opportunities. Kelly (1991) emphasized that favorable environments was needed to effect changes to construct systems that will facilitate the development of learning autonomy. The following excerpts of actual student responses to Item 49-1 provide additional information and explanation.

Learning what I like motivates me. (Student – 28)

It encourages our independence. (Student – 19)

There are no limitations to what I can learn. (Student – 17)

According to Student – 17, learner autonomy represents an endless set of possibilities on what to learn and how to learn. The question of what is appropriate and inappropriate to learn are of major concern for teacher and student alike (Smith, 2003). The approach to developing learner autonomy requires teachers to establish boundaries for purposes of assessment, clarity, and direction. It is up to the student to negotiate with the teacher to establish what is and is not appropriate to the pedagogy. Most importantly, this form of non-stereotypical pedagogy must offer the opportunity to connect classroom learning experiences with students' lives outside of the classroom. In addition, Student – 28, learner autonomy provides an opportunity to be motivated by learning what she likes. This is supported by Scharle and Szabó's (2000) notion that intrinsic motivation is a pre-requisite to learning and responsibility development which leads to and reinforces learner autonomy. This form of motivation comes from the student's stated self-determination to take charge of what to learn. Moreover, Student – 19 considered that learner autonomy encouraged students' sense of independence. However, it should be noted that the orderly transfer of responsibility for independent learning, from the teacher to the student, is not always an easy process. This is supported by Littlewood's (2000) representation of students as "independent agents who pursue their own agenda, yet who must function in interaction with organizational frameworks such as the classroom" (p. 433). The encouragement of independence is desirable to the extent it is then directed toward shared learning outcomes pre-established by the teacher and the student.

The above excerpts drawn from subjects' responses to the survey – Item 49-1 indicated that the initial contact with learning autonomy presents many of the students with hope of independent and interesting classroom instruction without a focus on testing. The excerpted comments of the subjects illustrated above are generally quite positive in their perceived notion of what learner autonomy represents. Albeit subjective, the nature of these statements is consistent with what are reported with Bandura's (1997) notions of self-efficacy and motivational development. For most learners to achieve success in language acquisition there should a definite "belief in one's capabilities to organize and organize the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3) present. It was motivating to students' learning of languages because they could see more potential for self-growth and realization lacking in more traditional classroom knowledge transmission practices. The qualitative results related to the subjects' perceived limits of learning autonomy may be characterized in the following table.

In Item 49-2, the students reported what they considered to be the limitations of learner autonomy, as far as they were concerned, as students. Once again, the notion of the teacher's correction and direction (i.e. representing the notion of "best practice") was at the fore-front of students' concerns. This was supported by the findings of Bartram and Walton (1991), which indicated that teachers were viewed as the exemplars and served to correct students by reformulating students' errors into natural language forms.

Without the direct, sustained intervention of a teacher through the use of meaningful feedback, more than half (56%) of the student's felt that there could be little or no progress in the students' language skills' improvement. A total of 20% of the students were truly concerned about how learner autonomy inhibited or eliminated the possibility for student-to-student practice and social interaction. Another 16% of the students considered that ill-disciplined students would be encouraged to pursue passive, unmotivated, or even non-constructive behaviors which are similar to findings in Pierson (1996), if allowed to pursue their own structure of learning through a new direction provided by learning autonomy. The following excerpts of student responses to Item 49-2 provide additional information and explanations.

Passive students learn lesser language skills. (Student – 2)

Lots of English we don't know if there's no teacher to teach us. (Student – 3)

I have no confidence. (Student – 22)

The above excerpts were drawn from students' responses to the survey – Item 49-2. According to Oxford (2003), the psychological perspective on learner autonomy did not look in depth at the details of any given socio-cultural context, such as with the language-learning classroom, nor does it consider the role of “mediated learning” (p. 85). As noted in the excerpted comment made by Student – 2, there is a firm belief by many learners that without the direct presence of the teacher as the “more capable other” (Vygotsky, 1978), some students would not be able to develop the kind of disciplined and self-regulatory abilities that would allow him or her to act intentionally and independently. Respective of learner autonomy ever taking place, Oxford (2003) claimed that “scaffolding is not a one-time thing, and neither is its removal” (p. 86). If students felt uncertainty or insecurity during instruction the learning autonomy will be inhibited. This is precisely a description of the potential cultural barrier this research hoped to address. Scaffolding raises the awareness of learner autonomy “by creating a balance of support and the challenge” (Hogan, & Pressley, 1997, p. 9) for learning. However, it should be noted in the excerpted comment made by Student – 22 that language learning requires a matter of initial confidence, without which the scaffolding would be without any foundation.

In sum, students bring their own cultural backgrounds to the classroom, so it is necessary to recognize that teachers should “support autonomy” (Pemberton, et al., 1996, p. 23), “promote autonomy” (Carter, 2001, p. 26), and “engage autonomy” (Lai, 2001; p. 35) in the classroom whenever and however possible. These descriptive and qualitative findings support Smith's (2003) claim that both the appropriateness and feasibility of promoting autonomy depend largely on the fit of the teacher's conceptions with those of their students. The promotion of learner autonomy is by no means a generally established goal in practice in many teaching contexts, and it is sometimes hindered because of the traditionalism and patronization that are somewhat a part of Asian cultural and learning environments. Self-awareness on the part of teacher and student alike are required to create new opportunities for learner autonomy to flourish as well as to construct new resources for shared learner and teacher development.

The students' responses to learner autonomy facilitated by scaffolding techniques were generally favorable; they viewed the teacher's scaffolding as advantageous for enriching their English individual development as language learners. To be specific, most of the students agreed that the teacher gives lots of tips on how to improve their language skills and correct mistakes. In addition, the students' responses to learner autonomy were positive. For instance, most of the students agreed said that they set appropriate goals for speaking English.

4. Discussion and Implications

Within the scope of this particular study, the students' responses to learner autonomy were positive. For instance, most of the students agreed that they set appropriate goals for speaking English.

Students' responses to scaffolding were generally favorable; they viewed the teacher's scaffolding as advantageous for enriching their English spoken content. To be specific, most of the students agreed that the teacher gives them lots of tips on how to improve their language skills and correct their mistakes by themselves. For instance, the students were asked to identify ways in which they could better initiate small talk with foreign guests and visitors by pre-selecting a range of suitable material (i.e. sports, weather, travel, language learning, etc.). They also participated in a regular viewing of DVD's related to English cultural affairs and travel to the UK that promoted discussion about personal experiences of travel abroad. In addition, the students' responses to learner autonomy were also positive. Most of the students agreed that the teacher was patient in helping them understand corrections to their English speaking.

For instance, students were requested to write down any and all questions they might have about being corrected. This allowed the students to address the teacher before or after the class to avoid embarrassment or undue attention. The findings demonstrate that scaffolding and learner autonomy provide the students with the right balance of independence and support they needed to improve their English speaking performance after directed instruction.

Finally, for long-term effects of developing learner autonomy, the study time should be prolonged into a full academic year. Due to the time constraint in the present study, the length of observations and treatment integration was comparatively short, only 16 weeks with 32 instructional hours. The long-term results of the classroom scaffolding and learner autonomy may not be reflected fully in this study as a result. With the limited amount of time available and the abundance of content to be covered, students participating in this study did not seem to have sufficient time for the kind of brainstorming, thinking, discussing, and sharing that result from enhanced levels of learner autonomy. To improve development in speaking, to reduce reticence, and to increase awareness of learner autonomy as an individual responsibility, more time for practical English speaking exercises and practice should be provided.

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5. Tables

Table 1. Comparison of Students’ Responses to Learner Autonomy after Term Instruction

Item		SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
1. I expect the teacher to be responsible for evaluating how much I have learnt in the English class.	<i>f</i>	9	64	18	21	0	112
	%	8%	56%	16%	20%	0%	100%
2. I can monitor my own language use.	<i>f</i>	3	46	35	28	0	112
	%	3%	43%	29%	25%	0%	100%
3. I can evaluate the quantity and the quality of the language that I have acquired.	<i>f</i>	11	70	22	9	0	112
	%	10%	62%	20%	8%	0%	100%
4. I see knowledge as something that I should discover by myself.	<i>f</i>	2	65	35	14	0	112
	%	2%	58%	29%	12%	0%	100%
5. I was highly Motivated to learn spoken English.	<i>f</i>	22	65	35	0	0	112
	%	20%	54%	29%	0%	0%	100%
6. I set appropriate Learning goals for speaking English.	<i>f</i>	15	88	9	0	0	112
	%	13%	79%	8%	0%	0%	100%
7. I consciously select learning strategies to overcome problems I encounter in English.	<i>f</i>	4	60	35	13	0	112
	%	4%	55%	29%	12%	0%	100%
8. I am an independent learner.	<i>f</i>	28	56	28	0	0	112
	%	25%	50%	25%	0%	0%	100%

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 2. The Students’ Gains from Learning Autonomy in Their English Speaking Development

N	Items	<i>f</i>	%
28	1. Learning at one’ own speed / pace	7	25%
	2. Learning what is of personal interest	6	20%
	3. Learning by one’s own methods	5	17%
	4. No limitations to what may be learned (learn more)	4	16%
	5. Having a <i>no-fear</i> , <i>no bother</i> , or <i>stress-free</i> learning environment	3	11%
	6. Becoming independent / active / motivated / imaginative	3	11%

Note. N = Number, *f* = Frequency, % = Percentage

Table 3: The Students' Limits of Learning Autonomy in Their English Speaking Development

N	Items	f	%
	1. No correction (i.e., <i>unable to observe own mistakes</i>)	10	36%
	2. No direction (i.e., <i>undefined, or ill-defined learning goals</i>)	6	20%
28	3. Little or no social interaction or engagement possible	6	20%
	4. Impractical, or irrational (i.e., <i>a practice partner is required</i>)	2	8%
	5. Difficult to maintain self-motivation to learn	2	8%
	6. Encourages passivity with ill-disciplined students	2	8%

Note. N = Number, f = Frequency, % = Percentage