



## **AUTONOMY IN LEARNING: TEACHER IN THE MIDST OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Teaching English to the non-natives offer wide scope in the world of emerging technology. The present day teacher, being the sole role player, is in the midst of these newer challenges and the opportunities. This era enables teacher define and concentrate upon the productive and constructive role as the key person manipulating personal resourceful potentials. Students of this time, irrespective of their educational background, appear as the ready resources to plan and implement the innovative strategies in teaching and learning of English. A teacher, apart from popular ELT methods can initiate autonomous learning for students with the help of technology which is ready at hand. The TALL, CALL, MALL, the Media etc have emerged out as the effective manipulative technological resources which eventually get students involved in autonomous learning environments. Teacher's role of a catalyst in this entire student-centred and technology-oriented process can bring the desired results in the teaching and learning of a foreign language.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching-learning process in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is marked with innovative strategies and numerous student-centric practices. In this entire process, the role of technology is quite crucial and advantageous to both the tutor and the taught. The traditional methods adopted and practiced are now overpowered by technology enabled tools. However, the significance of the tutor's role remains indispensable and inevitable. It's true to regard George Couros that, technology will not replace great teachers but technology in the hands of great teachers can be transformational.

It is the time to invite the teaching fraternity to promote and motivate among learners the ability to adept themselves with learning autonomy by providing technology enabled opportunities. The platform raised in the form of technological tools derives their interest to create self-motivated and independent learning environment. The learner's autonomy here doesn't mean the complete detachment from the learners but to monitor the entire process as being a catalyst. According to Henry Holec, "learner autonomy is the ability to take charge of

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one's learning". It is basically a teacher monitored enterprise to involve learners learn through their self-experiences by facilitating them to attain the target achievement. It is a functional approach, as in the words of David Little, "autonomy to learners mean an essentially a matter of the learners' psychological relation to the process and content of learning-a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action".

Initiating this practice requires a resourceful and practical approach with emphasis on the steps like- planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. It needs complete involvement of both the teacher and the learner; as the former is known to set the target and also to monitor, supervise and evaluate the progress of the latter. Here, the role of the teacher is at the centre who needs theoretical knowledge and individual practice of recent technological advances in English language learning resources. Besides, the teacher needs to select a target group of learners with certain requisites such as- insight, positive attitude, capacity for reflection, ready to self-management, and readiness to form interactions with others. However, a teacher must brief in advance about the learning resources from the technological devices, and should direct to a few learning resources from computers (CALL) and mobile phones (MALL). Similarly, teacher can define objectives of learning through these devices and provide them training in handling the devices by stressing their importance as the best learning devices. Therefore, before expecting the cause of learner autonomy, a teacher tends to organize training sessions to lead the select group to achieve the desired task. To organize independent or autonomous learning, following perceptions may offer wide scope to a teacher.

- Assigning of daily tasks to log on to websites and mobile apps
- Directing learners to the LSRW skills related audio-video sites and apps
- Making learners confident about using resources independently
- Asking them to learn from learning point of view
- Expecting learners to develop critical thinking, reflective thinking, and participatory approach
- Enabling learning from both the on/offline devices
- Motivating learners to participate in new experiments and apply pre-knowledge concepts
- Making learners generate ideas and find opportunities
- Developing capacity of reflection and invent strategies
- Convincing learners their independent capabilities in learning by citing few successful examples of self-learning
- Helping learners form strategies to learn independently
- Stressing importance on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation practice
- Informing learners make effective use of audio-visual apps cautiously and repetitively

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Organizing learner autonomy in learning foreign language, a teacher (trainer) adopts encouraging strategies for independent learning. The learner strategy, if thoughtfully planned, regulated and implemented with the second language learners ultimately directs the teacher to concentrate on the following learning strategies, viz. cognitive, metacognitive, communicative, and socio-affective etc.

### **Cognitive Strategies:**

In learner autonomy, thought process seems to be a natural aspect; hence, in direct learning experience through the technology tools, the learner individually confronts with the tasks and materials and therefore eventually engages into the cognitive experience. Here, the learner independently faces the task and thus applies the principle of understanding in finding analogy and distinction between the linguistic tools. The process enables learner to apply the strategies of reasoning, memorizing, interpreting, repeating, guessing, inferencing etc to grasp the audio-visual materials.

Technology enabled tools can very well serve the function to lead the learners to the cognitive learning experiences. A learner can independently practice on all basic skills of language, viz. LSRW. The tools as machines help learner avoid intervention of any incessant guiding force like a teacher. It rather opens up avenues of knowledge to the learner to independently rely on individual assumptions, methods and practices in learning. Some software or applications installed on a computer or a mobile phone avail learners the strategic experience by applying reasoning, memorizing, interpreting, repeating, guessing, inferencing etc in complete absence of a teacher. The tools offer them tactics like –editing, deleting, revising, forwarding, copying, pasting, storing, recording in both audio and video forms etc. The easy availability of these means a strategy provided in making learning easy. However, in learning autonomy, neither the teacher strictly monitors the learners nor do the learners get pressed of immediate results. But, the teacher is a must role player in evaluating learners' cognitive abilities even though they are given freedom and experience in use of technology assisted language learning

### **Metacognitive Strategies:**

In autonomous learning process, the planning arranged for learning, the thinking about effective learning, self-monitoring during learning and evaluating on successful learning are some important strategies adopted by learners and are effectively planned and organized by teacher. Apart from teacher's planning, monitoring and evaluating learner's full involvement keeps equally strategic in autonomous learning process. Learner's review the learning process with their teacher's evaluation made on their learning progress. It thus provides learners to



follow the feedback consciously and deeply. In a second language learning process learners get teacher's remarks on vocabulary, grammar, and LSRW related practices.

### **Communicative Strategies:**

This strategy looks for learners' conversational practices purposefully organizing learners' interactions. It motivates learners apply their first language mimes, gestures, expressions etc during the second language acquisition practices. Communicative strategy underlines the importance of learners' possible involvement in spoken practices. In this regard, technology provides them an opportunity to listen and watch through audio-visual media and get thereby a situation to fall freely into conversation practices, i.e. to follow and discuss on to the tasks by applying cognitive and metacognitive strategies as well.

Computers and mobile phones avail such situations through the social sites and other friendly Apps. The spoken and written practices are performed by Skype, speeches in form of audio-video recordings, some apps like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, WeChat, Hike, voice and video calls, SMS/MMSing, audio-video lecture storage. The examples in form of availing situations effectively carry the significance of communicative strategies.

### **Socio-affective Strategies:**

This is the most impressive strategy to the autonomous learner to create and avail opportunities for practice. The learners are completely free to form conversations with the native speakers of the language. This strategy works upon the 'practice' initiated by the learner. In technologically advanced society, learners get wide scope to avail situations for oral and written practice. Here, the second language learners need to follow strategically the linguistic knowledge and practice from the native users of English. A learner can personally form conversation with the native speaker or can interact with them by effectively making use of the technology enabled tools like computers and cell-phones. There are several off and online resources available. The appearance of media in the form of everyday necessity of the learners has provided an unprecedented scope. The radio, TV, I-phones, I-pads, computers, laptops, mobile phones etc have been the part of life and are the tools which somehow govern a learners everyday life. The social media networking plays a crucial and dynamic role in enhancement of knowledge resources to the non-native learners. In India, most of the college attendants keep cell-phones as an essential learning tool. The learners interact with thousands of foreign language learning applications and are closely concerned with the social-media Apps such as –Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, WhatsApp, WeChat, Hike, etc. These Apps are proved quite impressive which form their interactions in the form of spoken or oral practices. There are several language learning situations created by learners by writing/typing of the text with the help of predictive texts, downloading of kindle and e-book editions, voice-loud



readers, oral and written conversational apps, apps on vocabulary, grammar, composition practices, pronouncing dictionaries in both off and online forms etc. Therefore, the revolution made in terms of digital knowledge resources have proved as a big gift to the non-native learners to use and practice English language.

Learner autonomy, being an outside classroom strategy is practiced more effectively and enthusiastically with the assistance of technological tools. Learners in the outside conditions may apply several individualistic learning skills and derive pleasure, fun, freedom, and also enjoy the learning tasks. In response to learn English language, learners get well-versed in writing blogs, preparing digital portfolios, arranging electronic chatting, electronic presentations, retrieving and storing information from wikis, engaging in playing off and online games, riddles, puzzles etc. These practices are regularly followed as necessary schedules. In short, even the non-native learners ultimately get skilled and well trained in comprehending the directions, suggestions, and guidelines given on the electronic screens. The surfing on internet and handling of cell-phone becomes an effortless strategy to enter into the knowledge domain. It is also seen that several research studies have been agreed upon the fact that there is consistent growth in use and practice of the technology enabled devices in teaching and learning of English language.

The study vitalizes the significance initiate student-centric learning strategy by freeing them to the familiar and self-motivated concepts in learning a foreign language. Finally, following observations have turned out in the form of an outcome which necessitates the launching of learner autonomy. The system derives promising beliefs such as-

- The learner autonomy proposes the difference between the classroom training and self-motivated learning which ultimately keeps learner create a self-autonomy in learning foreign language.
- This strategy is quite beneficial for practice in recent time since there is availability of several ready resources.
- Learners seek complete liberty in exercising self-motivated and teacher directed concepts independently with the handy tools like cell-phones and other electronic devices.
- This strategy removes learners' passivity and invites them learn with self-created concepts in learning.
- Learner autonomy develops among them the capacity to carry on learning independently throughout life.

- It offers scope to provide and adopt self-access facilities
- Learners avail learning opportunities in community
- Teachers as trainers provide techniques in learning through audio-visual aids the language related aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation etc.
- The strategy provides scope to work efficiently on self-assessment activities.
- Short targets, questionnaire, assignments designed by teacher offer learners an opportunity to exercise their individual potentials through the technology enabled tools.
- The learners can plan outside classroom the activities such as news broadcasts, writing and responding through blogs, SMS, emails, and initiate talks and chats through Facebook, WhatsApp etc.

In this way, learner autonomy underlines an efficient strategy to organize student-centric learning environment and enabling thereby apply creative ability to the learners. The strategies like cognitive, metacognitive, communicative and socio-affective turn impressive if the teacher as a trainer organizes training sessions and monitors the learners' progress as a catalyst. A teacher is expected to keep regular observations without directly intervening the self-motivated learning process and bring the desired results to promote the learner autonomy process.

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