

The Issue of Learning Culture as A Hindrance in Promoting Learner Autonomy

Nuray Okumus Ceylan

Associate Professor, Zonguldak Bulent Ecevit University, Kdz. Eregli, Turkey

Abstract

The patriarchal structure in Turkish society along with teacher-centered instructional style cause Turkish learners to become passive and dependent learners. Teacher as accepted as an authority figure in the classroom, who should take most of the responsibilities and make most of the decisions about their learning in the classroom context. Also, teaching English is regarded as a subject to be taught, but not a language of communication. These characteristics of Turkish learning culture are considered as factors that hinder students in the continuum of independent or autonomous learning. This study aimed to figure out learning realities of learners and the specific conditions affecting the development of learner autonomy into consideration to identify students' readiness for autonomous study. The analysis of the learner autonomy questionnaire results indicated that participants had weak control over their own learning process indicating low level of autonomy. Moreover, they do not feel very competent in making decisions about their own learning in formal classroom environment.

Keywords: learner autonomy, learning culture, independent study