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THE ROLE OF IDENTITY ON AUTONOMY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Abstract:

Most of the studies conducted so far has emphasized the factors affecting the students' being autonomous and made suggestions. However, there are two outstanding questions to be answered: To what extent are the students aware of their own autonomy? What are their opinions and suggestions on this issue? Providing answers to these questions is essential for teachers to re-adjust themselves and their teaching to foster learner autonomy.

The aim of this study is to reveal the opinions of students in a preparatory class in Turkey regarding how to become autonomous and their suggestions to their instructors and institution. For that purpose, 20 language learners whose English proficiency levels were elementary were interviewed. According to the results, most of the students believe in the importance of taking their own responsibility and they consider that they are more successful when they are in charge of their studies. However, there are a few students who has not thought of their study habits or initiated their studies on their own. Another interesting finding of the study was that learners think that they are in full control of their own learning without any teacher intervention when they are in the position of passing a test, which is related to "test-taker" identity. However, they have some certain difficulties when they are trying to transfer their "autonomous learner identity" into their language learning. This indicates us that we should devote some time to become familiar with the identities of learners and promote autonomy. The study is significant in providing insights on understanding the issues of diversity and identity in the aspect of learner autonomy.

Keywords:

Autonomy, identity, test-taker identity, language learner autonomy, multiple identities, autonomy and identity,

JEL Classification: I23, I29